



## English - Year 7

### Common approach at Key Stage 3

Our aim is to read a range of challenging and inspiring texts with students, and to instill in them a genuine and lasting love of the written word. Our curriculum provides an increasing range of depth and challenge for students, where we revisit Shakespeare, the Nineteenth Century Novel and poetry each year, so students are well equipped to explore these genres at Key Stage 4. We increase the level of challenge over Key Stage 3 introducing more challenging texts later, or introducing challenging texts earlier using extracts. By the end of Year 7, all students have had the opportunity to express themselves creatively, inspired by their own lives and various literary texts. With all schemes of work students study tier 2 and 3 vocabulary in context.

### The Curriculum

We start Year 7 with a personal writing unit where students look at a range of autobiographical writing and emulate techniques, such as the use of imagery, sentence variety and vocabulary, in their own work. This unit works well as a transition from primary to secondary because it makes students reflect on their own life experiences as they begin a new phase in their own development. It also revisits and extends the writing skills that they learnt at primary school, at vocabulary and sentence level. It aims to provide them with a broad range of texts from varying cultures and periods of history; thus reading Anne Frank's diary deepens their knowledge of the effects of the Second World War, while also providing an inspiring literary model. This text also provides a context for the study of the Second World War in History in Year 9. Zlata's diary, set in Bosnia, is also chosen to provide contextual knowledge of recent European history. We look at Arundhati Roy's first person account of a monsoon in *The God of Small Things* to really stretch vocabulary, as well as an extract from Michaela De Prince's *Taking Flight: from War Orphan to Star Ballerina* was chosen to reflect the refugee experience - something a number of our students have first hand experience of.

Students then go on to do a 'quick read' of 'Once' which is a story about a Polish orphan during World War Two. The text's value comes from its compelling narrative and introduction to a key period of history. 'Once' has a powerful effect on students; they often read other books in the series as a result. Students study the narrative perspective and examine the first person narrator's awareness of the events unfolding around him. We look on how the writer develops the protagonist, Felix, over the course of the novel. Reading this text here builds on the knowledge of the World War Two setting introduced in the previous unit, and enthuses students about the power of storytelling. In year 9 in History. Students study the Second World War in History in Year 9, so looking at 'Once' and at Anne Frank's diary introduces them to its effects on individual experience, both real and imagined.

'Great Expectations' is studied next: we look at key extracts, examining Dickens' use of language and focusing on the changes in its protagonist, Pip. We also explore the novel's big ideas and link these to the modern world: topics such as poverty, social responsibility and the power of money are discussed. We introduce students to nineteenth century prose, including the elaborate list sentences and rich vocabulary, and the cultural knowledge going with it, for instance how the industrial revolution caused huge social upheaval. Nineteenth Century prose is revisited in subsequent years to strengthen this knowledge. We also reinforce the notion of a character changing over time, introduced with 'Once'.

After Christmas, students move on to a persuasive writing unit, where they will discuss topical issues such as womens' pay in sport, rewilding and climate change and then produce their own piece of writing on one of these topics. The aim of this short unit is to build students' awareness of current affairs and to form their own opinions of the world around them. We are aiming to develop students' own sense of voice, so they can express their own opinions with clarity and formality. This points forward to study on climate change in Science in the summer term of year 7, as well as allowing students to use the knowledge gained in Geography on weather, climate, river and flooding.

'Wild Things' poetry is the next topic, links clearly with the environmental themes raised in the previous scheme; students study a range of poems related to the animal world and power of nature. These are used as a springboard for a range of activities, such as drama, creative writing, comparison and close analysis. The rich cultural and historical scope of these poems helps to inspire students to produce their own work at the end of the unit. Students gain an understanding of poetic movements and periods, including willaim Blake and the romantic movement, and modern american poets such as maya angelou and Emily Dickinson. Students are encouraged to link the themes and ideas introduced with their own experiences. Students also build their knowledge of poetic terms such as onomatopoeia, metaphor and volta, which is developed and overlearned as they study poetry in following years.

Students study extracts from Shakespeare (The Tempest/ A Midsummer Night's Dream/Macbeth) looking at the characters of Oberon, Caliban and the witches, and using knowledge of them as a springboard for their own creative writing. Much of the creative writing is inspired by nature so this links with the previous scheme well. Students are also introduced to the world in which Shakespeare was writing: we look at bear baiting, the Elizabethan theatre and sayings that derive from Shakespeare. The outcomes are pieces of creative writing that explore character voice, and create a fantasy setting. This serves as an introduction to Shakespeare. Challenge increases in year 8 with Julius Caesar, before studying Romeo and Juliet in year 9, and Macbeth in GCSE.

Year 7 ends with a Heroes and Villains unit. It covers a broad range of literary creations including extracts from Beowulf to The Hunger Games. Students explore the conventions of the genre, including what it means to be a hero, anti-hero and villain and reinforces their knowledge of literary history, looking at characters from nineteenth century fiction and Shakespeare. Studying Beowulf introduces students to language change in the early development of the language.