

# English Language & Literature

A level

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Exam board: OCR



## What is this subject about?

Providing a refreshing perspective on English, the combined English Language and Literature A Level gives you the opportunity to develop your skills in analysing both fiction and non-fiction texts as well as providing the opportunity to write creatively in a style of your choice. This course provides a broad overview of the different aspects of English Studies and is quite different from English GCSE, featuring both linguistic and literary analysis and a significant element of creative work.

## What will I study over the two years?

This is an ideal course for anyone wishing to learn more about the English Language and how it is used in a variety of contexts. You will study the language of an inspiring anthology of non-fiction texts featuring such variety as Jonathan Swift's satirical text *A Modest Proposal* published in 1729, to Jeremy Paxman and Russell Brand's broadcast television interviews via live music reviews from the national press and the abdication speeches of kings. You will also study literary texts: an anthology of poetry such as Carol Ann Duffy's *Rapture*, or Seamus Heaney's *Opened Ground*; Tennessee William's play *A Streetcar Named Desire* and a novel, for example *Jane Eyre*, by Charlotte Bronte, or *Things Fall Apart*, by Chinua Achebe.

In the second year, you will also produce a coursework folder containing one piece of original creative writing and an analytical essay comparing two modern texts, for example *Stasiland* by Anna Funder and Jeanette Winterson's *Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal?*

## How is the course assessed?

Assessment is by 3 written exam papers (worth 80% of the total mark) and coursework (worth 20% of the total mark), which is written in the second year.

## What skills will I need and develop in this course?

By the end of the course English Language & Literature students will have developed an impressive array of transferable skills including critical analysis, structuring arguments, selecting evidence, debating interpretations of fictional and non-fiction texts and developing effective creative writing skills.

## What does this subject offer for higher education and future careers?

This subject is considered a competitive one in terms of university entrance. It attracts a lot of applicants for university as it combines the academic, creative and analytical skills which are so valued in many careers. The skills are transferable to a range of disciplines and careers, including Publishing, Journalism, Psychology, Law, Advertising and Marketing.

## What are the formal entry requirements for this course?

Aside from the general entry criteria that the College requires, you will also need to achieve at a minimum of a:

- Grade 4 in GCSE English Literature
- Grade 4 in GCSE English Language

## What extra support/enrichment is on offer?

Subject tutorials from our teachers are available. We also have strong links with the Learning Support department, which offers specific help when needed, perhaps with technical skills, planning essays or improving reading skills. We run courses in creative writing as a complementary study and also at the end of the year during Wider Skills Week. English Language & Literature is well represented on our Enrichment programme of talks and seminars, and we have frequent visits to the theatre and cinema.

## What courses might combine with this subject?

English Language & Literature combines well with subjects like History, Classical Civilisation, Drama and Theatre Studies, Media Studies and Sociology. If you choose to study English Language & Literature A level you should not also study either English Language or English Literature A level.

## What is the difference between English Language & Literature and English Language or English Literature?

English Language & Literature is what it says on the tin: it draws together in one course aspects of English Literature and aspects of English Language. So, about half the course is concerned with the study of a range of literary texts (poetry, prose and drama) and the other half is concerned with the analysis of non-fiction texts (both written and spoken). You will also produce your own original creative and non-fiction pieces of writing.

If you are passionate about reading and enjoy reading a wide and diverse range of literary texts in your spare time, you should consider taking A level English Literature, which is solely concerned with the study of a range of literary texts. If you are interested in linguistics and have an aptitude for Modern Languages and good numeracy skills, you should consider studying English Language. English Language A level is NOT closely related to GCSE English and is a specialist course aimed at students who wish to progress to courses or careers in linguistics. It involves close study of language patterns and theories of language development and acquisition.