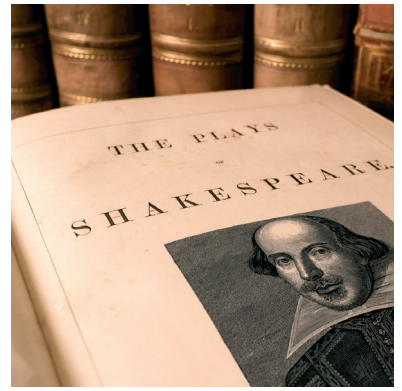


English Literature

N
D6

Examination Board: Edexcel



■ What is the course about?

The English literature A Level gives students the chance to attain a broad overview of literature through the ages and across genres. It prepares students to study English literature at degree level and allows them to choose an area of literature that they are passionate about. It incorporates several other subject areas, such as history, philosophy, theology, science, sociology, drama and politics and would marry well with any of these subjects.

■ For the A Level you will study:

Drama - either features of a comedy or tragedy, with focus on a Shakespeare play e.g *Othello/Twelfth Night* and one other play (such as *A Streetcar Named Desire* or *The Importance of Being Ernest*).

Prose - you will compare a modern and pre-20th century text with a shared theme, such as Women and Society or Science and Society, which allows for a contextual overview of how women or science has changed over time and how this has been reflected in literature. Examples of texts you may study include *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Never Let Me Go*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

Poetry - you will study *Poems of the Decade* - a book of 21st century poetry. In the exam, this will be compared with an unseen poem.

The last examined component is the study of a particular poet or poetry movement, such as Christina Rossetti, The Romantics or Modernists.

Finally, 20% of the grade is from coursework. For this, students choose a focal point and two related texts. There is scope here to be independent and undertake research, which is an essential skill for university. Students are also able to choose a drama text or a poetry text, if they wish. Examples of texts which students have compared are:

- *Americanah* and *Things Fall Apart*, with a focus on the presentation of Nigerian culture.
- *Jane Eyre* and *The Wide Sargasso Sea*, with a focus on female 'otherness'.
- *Atonement* and *The History Boys*, with a focus on the coming-of-age.

■ How is the course assessed?

The drama examination is 2 hours 15 and is worth 30%. The prose examination is 1 hour and is worth 20%. The poetry examination is 2 hours 15 and is worth 30%. The coursework is worth 20%.

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

You will need effective communication skills and be willing to read all the course material and critical materials, and to undertake independent research and reading to broaden your knowledge and understanding. By the end of an A Level you will have developed an impressive collection of transferable skills including critical and comparative analysis skills, detailed understanding of contextual factors and different genres and the ability to empathise, communicate and express yourself at a high level.

■ Subject combination advice:

Literature is a very flexible A Level and combines well with many other subjects including sociology, history, theology, languages, and drama. However, it would also be a positive third option for anyone studying sciences and hoping to study medicine, as it engenders excellent communication skills and empathy. Studying English literature and linguistics (English language) is allowed, even encouraged, for students who have a love of language and analysis, as well as anyone studying history or drama.

■ What can the course lead to in terms of higher education and future careers?

Progression from English literature to a degree in any academic subject is a possibility. English literature is a highly regarded A Level because it develops analytical and evaluative skills.

■ What are the formal entry requirements?

GCSEs in English language and English literature at Grade 6 is a minimum.

■ What activities enrich this subject?

Reading widely and an enjoyment of reading literature is key. Going to plays and talks to enrich knowledge is beneficial, as are interests in historical context and creative writing.