



ST. AIDAN'S

CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

19th June 2024

GCSE English Language and English Literature

Dear Parent/Carer

As your child approaches the end of Year 9, I'm contacting you to explain how we will group in English for GCSE.

In September your child will be grouped in a different English class to Year 9 and with a new teacher. We don't start the GCSE courses till the start of Year 10. There will be five mixed ability groups on each side of the year group who will all study both English Language and English Literature. All groups will cover the same content, the only difference being text choices for Literature, which will be chosen by the teacher from AQA's selection on the specification once they have met their classes (see the texts referred to below). We will no longer form an English Language only group as we aim to offer an inclusive approach where we give every child an opportunity to access both qualifications. Students' performance is reviewed at regular intervals and every support given where needed.

When grouping for Year 10, we use the students' KS3 English assessments and consider how much progress they have made since KS2. We also refer to the Year 9 teacher's comments.

This can make for an unsettling period at first, but students adjust very quickly to their new class and teacher. We politely ask parents not to request that their child be placed in a specific group because they like a particular teacher or want to be with their friends. They are not viewed as a reason for movement between classes. Groups are very carefully balanced in terms of gender and to maintain a spread of ability.

What can my child read in readiness for GCSE?

We suggest that your child read a wide selection of texts: autobiography, biography, travel writing, diaries, 19th century to 21st century fiction covering a range of genres, broadsheet newspapers and articles. The learning resource centre has a wide selection of book lists. Reading lists for GCSE can also be found on the English Department pages on the school website.

What can I do to support my child?

- Arrange a visit to the theatre (Shakespeare as well as modern playwrights).
- Ask to see your child's notes or essays and talk about what they have learned e.g. what have they found difficult/interesting/unusual.

- There are many revision guides that may help students in all areas of both courses, for example CGP, Cambridge University Press and Hodder which are both endorsed by AQA.

Both Language and Literature courses are linear and assessed by exam only (with no coursework, other than the spoken language assessment students complete at the end of Year 9). The exams are not tiered; instead, the exams will have questions increasing in difficulty throughout the papers.

Literature text choices are Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde or A Christmas Carol for the 19th Century novel unit (Year 10).

Shakespeare: Macbeth (Year 11)

Modern plays: Inspector Calls, Princess and the Hustler or Blood Brothers (Year 10).
Students will study 15 poems in an anthology published by AQA.

Year 10 teachers will make their literature text choices once they have met their classes, and we will contact you again with information on which editions to buy in September. Please don't buy these beforehand as we like to use the same edition for ease of annotation.

The GCSE learning journey can be found on the department pages of the school website which shows when internally marked unit assessments will be conducted. You will also find wider reading lists, a revision guide list, set text editions and guidance on how to help students in the same area.

Please speak to your child's Year 9 teacher or contact me if you need any further clarification.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Byrne
Head of English

Headteacher: Mrs S Dover