



Independent Learning Guidance for Parents

Department: English

Year Groups: 7-9

Date published: September 2012

Why is independent learning in English important?

- Independent work can be set to extend knowledge, consolidate knowledge or provide the basis for future work in class.
- It can encourage students to read widely and independently. Wider reading has been shown to help improve students' vocabulary and written accuracy.
- It develops students' research skills.
- It allows students to think about and plan tasks using class notes.
- It encourages independent and creative personal responses to texts.
- It is important to develop the independent learning of young people and to develop resourcefulness, resilience learning and the ability to work towards a deadline.

How will independent learning be set?

Independent work will be set in class and will always be published on Fronter for further reference.

Students will be expected to record work in their planners.

Independent Units

- In each Year students will work through 3 'Independent Units' at home. These will be set for a whole half term.
- Independent Units will consist of a number of compulsory tasks and further extension tasks to challenge students and to encourage them to research and read widely. There will be both shorter and more extended written tasks included.
- Because there are a number of tasks and they are not set weekly, students will need to manage their time effectively and should still be doing English work at home each week.

Homework

- When students are not following an Independent Unit homework will be set weekly.
- Homework will not always be a written task but a written piece will be set at least once a fortnight.
- Homework could be collecting examples of texts for use in lessons.
- It could be planning or researching a writer or topic for debate in class.
- It could be reading in advance of a lesson.
- It could be learning a piece of oral work for performance in class.
- It could be planning an essay or piece of creative writing.
- It could be writing a section or all of a longer piece of writing or redrafted work produced in class in response to feedback received.
- Homework will expect students to use their class notes, research, think, debate, develop empathy and evaluative skills and to read widely.

What expectations do staff have of the work being completed?

- Independent should be completed on time, without fail.
- A note from parents should be provided should a pupil be unable to meet deadlines.
- It should be completed to the best of the student's ability.
- It should be attempted on the night that it is set so that help/clarification can be sought if needed before the due date.
- Plagiarism is unacceptable.
- Help from parents may be sought but the task should be completed by the student in order to gauge a realistic picture of the student's ability and understanding.

What help and support is available?

- The teacher will be available in lunchtimes if requested.
- Extra resources and tasks, including all independent units, are on Fronter.
- Reading lists are on Fronter.
- The ICT rooms and the library are available during lunchtime for students to complete ICT and research based homework.
- Homework club runs during lunchtimes in the Learning Support Room where Teaching Assistants are available to help with any homework.

What work can be completed in addition to the set tasks?

- Students can learn spellings that have been highlighted by their teacher when marking work.
- Reading is the best homework a student can do! Non-fiction texts and newspapers are excellent sources and reading lists are published for fiction ideas on Fronter.
- Talking/debating with peers and parents about what is covered in lessons is also invaluable as this will help to extend students ideas and develop their speaking and listening skills.
- Independent units on Fronter provide a wide range of tasks.
- Join one of the extracurricular clubs – BBC School Report, public speaking, debating, creative writing club, reading groups, spelling Bee, Poetry Slam....the list is long!