



# English Literature A Level

## Examination Board: AQA Specification B

*“When I look back, I am so impressed again with the life-giving power of literature. If I were a young person today, trying to gain a sense of myself in the world, I would do that again by reading, just as I did when I was young.”* Maya Angelou.

If, like Angelou, you are willing to enter into the worlds imagined by writers and if you enjoy reading, discussing and writing both formally and creatively, then the A Level English Literature course is the one for you. The specification we follow offers an exciting approach to literary study through the lens of genre and theory, grouping texts within shared literary contexts and enabling students to become autonomous, critical readers.

A Level English Literature is an enjoyable, inspiring and challenging course, delivered and received with enthusiasm. In studying English Literature, your analytical skills are sharpened: if you can read a text and find its themes, link them to other texts, theories and contextual influences (historical, political, social, literary), you demonstrate that you can understand and organise complex ideas, find patterns and interpret information. The course also offers you the opportunity to develop your planning and research skills along with your skills of discussion, both verbal and written.

The vast majority of our English Literature students achieve the top A Level grades, supporting their pursuit of their future aspirations. We believe the key to their enjoyment of and success in English Literature is a willingness to read and a readiness to explore the ways writers use language to fire our imaginations.

### Assessment:

This is a two year course.

A Level: There are two examinations in summer of Year 13 and one Non-Examination Assessment:

**Paper 1: Literary Genres – Aspects of Tragedy** (written examination, 2½ hours: 40% of A Level)  
We examine three texts: one by Shakespeare; a second drama text; and a third which can be either prose or poetry. The texts link together to offer an exploration of the tragic genre, measuring more modern texts against older historical forms. We are currently studying *Othello* (Shakespeare); *Death of a Salesman* (Arthur Miller); and Keats.

**Paper 2: Texts and Genres** (written examination, 3 hours: 40% of A Level)  
In this module, you will study three texts in both prose and poetry, based around the subject: “Elements of Political and Social Protest Writing”. We are currently studying: *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* by Blake; *The Handmaid’s Tale* by Margaret Atwood and *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini.

**Non-Examination Assessment: Theory and independence** (20% of A Level)  
For this module, you will write two essays of around 1500 words each, responding to a different text for each and linking to aspects of critical theory; one of these essays can be a creative response. In this module, you are guided in choosing the texts you would like to study.

### Careers and Study Progression:

The course will prepare you for a wide variety of careers and is recognised as being one of the Russell Group’s “facilitating subjects” as well as having many links with other subjects. English Literature is often seen as an important qualification in a vast array of professional careers, including: journalism, media, publishing, accountancy, business, law, teaching, public relations, events management and Arts administration.