

KS3 Curriculum Overview

Rationale: This conceptual curriculum is designed to develop students' sense of English as an academic discipline by linking its abstract frames and metaphors to concrete examples within a wide range of challenging texts including whole books, short stories, poems and plays with a wide coverage of genres, historical periods, form and authors. These are detailed in the medium term plans. Each concept is foregrounded, introduced and exemplified using extracts drawn from both fiction and non-fiction, before being explored in a longer key text. Concepts can't be separated from each other and taught in isolation, but we are able to foreground each one in turn so that it can be explored and exemplified thoroughly, enabling students to develop their own complex schema about English as a subject over time. The concepts also underpin the teaching of writing and grammar. Throughout KS3, students will use the range of texts and extracts they study in their reading as models of writing, which they will emulate. As they practice and become more fluent in a range of writing styles, we develop their independent application.

Year 7

Autumn Term – Story and Context

This scheme develops pupils' awareness that texts are constructs and that writers are influenced by their experiences and their cultural contexts.

Key text: Sir Gawain & the Green Knight translated by Simon Armitage. This text allows us to explore a particular historical context and its impact on the themes and characters a writer includes in their story. Through this text, we introduce the themes of identity and belonging.

Curriculum links: this concept underpins all the others. Once pupils are confident in seeing texts as constructs, further aspects of a conceptual disciplinary schema can build around this core understanding.

Spring Term – Characterisation

This scheme focuses on connecting people and places with understanding of how and why they express a writer's intention.

Key text: The Graveyard Book by Neil Gaiman. Gaiman's novel is both a fantasy and something of a bildungsroman. We can use it to analyse a writer's exploration of aspects of growing up. Gaiman uses a range of strategies to present his characters, allowing students to explore these approaches and use some of them in their own writing..

Curriculum links: this concept builds on the previous one by focusing in on characterisation. These are easier to grasp and to exemplify than some of the more abstract ideas pupils will study later. It also explores a different kind of heroic character to the one we see in Sir Gawain so adds a further example of a heroic protagonist. It also begins to introduce the notions of genre and theme.

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Summer Term Genre & Theme

This scheme is focussed on understanding genres and themes. How and why writers create themes and how different texts are connected.

Key text: The Giver by Lois Lowry. This text allows us to explore a particular genre - dystopia - in detail. The novel incorporates all of the common features you would expect to see in a dystopian story. It is a very clear example of this genre and allows us to explore the idea of self-versus society.

Curriculum links: Dystopian writing makes particularly rich use of settings in conveying meaning so this scheme will build on the previous one, 7.2. By the end of year 7, pupils will have a good conceptual grounding in all of the most fundamental aspects of English. They will understand texts as constructs, used deliberately to convey meanings through a range of approaches.

Year 8

Autumn Term - Perspective

Building on the schemes studied so far, particularly 7.1, Story & Context, this looks at how a writer's perspective is influenced by their context, and how that in turn influences the writing they produce.

Key text: Journey's End by RC Sherriff. This text allows us to explore a work written by someone with a particularly keen perspective - Sherriff was a war veteran writing a play based on his own experiences.. He creates an authentic view of life in the trenches in order to put forward a more realistic perspective of WWI. This makes it a particularly good text for exemplifying the concept of perspective. We also introduce the trauma as a theme.

Curriculum links: this is the first play that pupils will have studied at KS3. It allows pupils to see how the conventions they have already studied are reflected in a play-text. It also further develops their understanding of the complex and challenging notions of heroes and heroism.

Spring Term– Rhetoric

This scheme will seek to delve into the more profound notions of ethos, pathos & logos expounded by Aristotle. We also take a broad view of 'rhetoric' by including more subtle approaches to the notion of influencing.

Key text: Animal Farm by George Orwell. This text exemplifies the significance of rhetoric in relation to political oppression, which is an important theme for students to study. We will also look at ideas within this, such as the relationship between emotion and reason in the human psyche.

Curriculum links: this concept builds on the idea that writers have a perspective by exploring how a perspective might be developed and expressed in both written and spoken language, in order to influence an audience.

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Summer Term Symbolism

In this scheme, we explore metaphorical thought and language so that students learn about the conventions and shared meanings that underpin English.

Key text: Lord of the Flies by William Golding. This text is allegorical and Golding draws on many symbols to create meanings. Those meanings can be tied to a clear overarching core idea about the duality of humanity, which can be tracked across the text in order to explore how it develops.

Curriculum links: this fundamental concept will ripple through every single scheme but is foregrounded here at a time when pupils will have a secure understanding of texts as deliberate and purposeful constructs that convey complex meanings. We will build on this by exploring how language underpins the meaning making and ensure that pupils' language analysis is always rooted in meanings and authorial intentions.

Year 9

Autumn Term – Representation

This scheme explores how groups in society are represented in texts. It draws on all of the previous concepts to develop a more mature understanding that every text is a representation of reality.

Key Text: Othello by William Shakespeare and otherness in other Shakespeare texts. This text allows us to explore representation using a range of examples as well as building students' understanding of and confidence with Shakespearean texts. We also explore jealousy and betrayal through this text

Curriculum links: this concept builds on the previous ones by drawing together ideas about how writers, responding to their context and their perspective on that context, might convey messages about society through characterisation, language and structure.

Spring Term - Structure

Students will have encountered this term already but this scheme will allow for a more in-depth exploration of how different forms create different kinds of experience for audiences. We also look at how sequencing relates to meaning.

Key Text: Heroes by Robert Cormier. The manipulation of time makes this an interesting text through which to explore structure. It also allows us to reflect on the notion of a 'hero', an idea students will have come across before, and deepen students' understanding of this idea as well as introducing guilt as a theme.

Curriculum links: This scheme builds pupils' sense of how writers create meanings. They will explore imagery and subtle grammatical choices, and through the novel pupils will be ready to move on to learning about broader structural devices and gain deeper insight into how narratives are constructed.

Summer Term –Advanced Application of the Concepts

The final scheme of KS3 continues building on the knowledge and skills developed in KS3 through advanced additional practice of the concepts in reading, writing and spoken language.

Key Text: A range of diverse extracts from C19 texts. There is also other increasingly challenging material including non-fiction and short stories

Curriculum links: This scheme consolidates the conceptual learning from throughout KS3 and applies this to a variety of texts and their own writing.