

Herschel Grammar School

English Curriculum Overview 2025/26

Curriculum Intent

Our vision in the English Department is to enable personal growth and to provide every student with pathways to success. Our aim is to ensure that students can write clearly and accurately as well as to enthuse students so that they become lifelong learners in the process

Curriculum Impact

We hope to equip our students with the skills and the confidence to speak articulately; to read for pleasure and analytically and to write according to purpose. Our aspiration is that students will be able to respond to a range of challenging and thought-provoking fiction and non-fiction texts from a diverse range of authors. We hope that they will embrace their multicultural identity through studying diverse voices from across the globe and their national identity through celebrating British texts from the literary heritage. In doing so students will explore context and how it shapes meaning. Ultimately, they will grasp the power that lies in the spoken and written word and appreciate that literature can open our minds. We also aim to provide students with a sense of consistency and familiarity regarding external exam requirements. Our hope for our students is that they become critical thinkers who are thoughtful, expressive and tolerant.

Through education, we have the privilege of engaging directly with children and young people who:

- are passionate about the natural world
- want to do their best to protect it
- can influence their wider communities

Throughout this document, whenever the following icon is used , it indicates that the teaching and learning is linked to one or more of the following:

- nature
- the causes and impacts of climate change
- careers in the green economy
- the importance of sustainability

Year group	Year 7
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Rationale for sequencing	We have based our curriculum around skills. Super 8 skills in reading, writing and speaking and listening. Year 7: 'Introductions.' We are aiming to introduce year 7 to a range of genres and texts and for them to develop skills in reading, writing and spoken language which they will further develop throughout KS3. We hope the topics and texts will enthuse our students and help them on their learning journey to become critical thinkers.
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Term 1	
Half term	Half term
Introduction to Fiction Focus: Variety of short stories and extracts from different genres, times, and places. T1 Focus – extract question on character or theme (language analysis). Reading skills 1, 2, 3, 4, 8	Introduction to Shakespeare` Focus: Context – background to Shakespeare and familiarisation with Shakespeare’s plays and works. Reading skills 1, 2, 3, 4, 8 T2 Focus: Descriptive writing: constructing descriptions of characters and settings. T2 – Descriptive writing. Writing skills 2, 4, 5, 6, 8.
Term 2	
Half term	Half term
Introduction to Drama: Dracula Read the play, with excerpts from the novel to assist in language analysis. Develop reading and understanding of plays and gothic conventions. T3 – Based around an opening extract from “Dracula”. Reading skills 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8.	Studying a Novel Focus: “The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas” OR ‘Tyger’. Develop reading and literacy skills, analysing themes, characters, historical context, and how they all shape meanings. T6 – Extract-based question on theme or characterization. Reading skills 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8.
Term 3	
Half term	Half Term
T5 (EOY Exam) – One extract question on character of theme, analyzing language OR a descriptive writing task. Skills match T1&2. Studying Myths <i>Begin exam prep prior to Myths and Legends.</i> Focus: Myths Geraldine McCaughrean	Myths, Legends, and Fairy Tales Read a range of myths, legends, and fairy-tales, discussing plot and characterization, with an aim of writing creatively. T4 - Creative Writing, skills 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

Assessment Plans:	
Term 1	T1 extract question on character or theme (language analysis). Reading skills 1, 2, 3, 4, 8 T2 – Image-based description. Writing skills 2, 4, 5, 6, 8.

ENGLISH Curriculum Overview 2025/26

Term 2	T3 – Based around an opening extract from “Dracula”. Reading skills 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8. T4 – Create own myth. Writing, skills 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.
Term 3	T5 (EOY Exam) – One extract question on character of theme, analysing language OR a descriptive writing task. Skills match T1&2. T6 – Extract-based question on theme or characterization. Reading skills 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8.

Year group	8
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Rationale for sequencing	We have based our curriculum around skills. Super 8 skills in reading, writing and speaking and listening. Year 8 'Literary Heritage and Culture/Diversity.' We begin year 8 with the novel 'Ghost Boys' This is an exciting novel by Jewell Parker Rhodes which we think will be an engaging way to begin. We then consider a much more traditional text 'A Christmas Carol.' We hope year 8 will include a rich variety of texts and allow discussion on complex issues surrounding diversity, race representation and transformation, as well as to give pupils the confidence to think critically as they head towards Year 9.
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Term 1	
Half term	Half term
Studying a Novel Focus: Read 'Ghost Boys' Look at context, theme, characterisation, and how it shapes meaning and responding creatively to texts. Reading Skills 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8. T1: Creative writing task. Writing skills 2,4,5,6,7.	Drama Study Focus: Read the play, "A Christmas Carol", with excerpts from the novel to assist in language analysis. Continue developing reading and understanding of 19 th C texts. T2 – Open extract question on evaluating the text in response to a statement. Reading Skills 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8.
Term 2	
Half term	Half term
Cultural Poetry Focus: Read and analyse a range of poems across different cultures, times, genres, and places. Begin to learn how to compare poems and how to consider context to shape meanings. T3 – Compare two unseen poems. Reading skills 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8.	Moving Images Analyse and evaluate the effect of a series of film adverts. Look at film reviews. Watch and analyse a film (Queen of Katwe). T4 Writing skills 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Debate: Is representation important in media? S and L 1-7
Term 3	
Half term	Half Term
T5 (EOY Exam) – One extract on evaluating a text OR a creative writing task. Skills match T1&2. Studying a Novel <i>Begin exam prep prior to reading the novel.</i> Focus: "Of mice and Men"; reading a novel and analysing themes, characterisation, and historical contexts, and how they shape meanings.	Studying a Novel Focus: "Of Mice and Men". Develop reading and literacy skills, analysing themes, characters, historical context, and how they all shape meanings. T6 – Open-extract question on evaluating the text in response to a statement. Reading skills 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8.

ENGLISH Curriculum Overview 2025/26

Key Assessment Plans:	
Term 1	Extract-based language analysis + re-creative writing
Term 2	Unseen poetry comparison + film review
Term 3	End of Year Exam + open-extract statement response

Year group	9
Rationale for sequencing	We have based our curriculum around skills. Super 8 skills in reading, writing and speaking and listening. Year 9 “Conflict.” Our aim is to illustrate the importance of the skills in English and the transferable nature of the skills acquired. We begin with Shakespeare and encourage critical reading/thinking. All of our texts in year 9 reflect upon conflict – both internal/external. We emphasise the style of questions for GCSE although the texts will be different, the skills are transferable.
Term 1	
Half term	Half term
Reading Shakespeare Focus: “Romeo and Juliet” or “Othello.” Refresh dramatic conventions; study the play as a whole and memorise quotations to prepare for closed book question. T1 – GCSE Literature style question on play. Reading Skills 1,2,3,4,5 and 6.	Play: Leave Taking by Winsome Pinnock Focus on layers of conflict and the tensions between two generations; two sisters; the past and the present; individual and society; personal and political. Reading Skills 1,2,3,4,5 and 6. T2 – Narrative/Story writing. Writing skills 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.
Term 2	
Half term	Half term
T3 (EOY Exam) – Language paper 2, Questions 3-5. Reading skills 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8. Writing skills 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. War/Conflict Poetry <i>Exam preparation.</i> When finished, introduce war poetry. Begin with poems by Jessie Pope/ Rupert Brookes/Wilfred Owen and Sassoon. Then begin poems from Conflict anthology: The Charge of the Light Brigade, Bayonet Charge, Exposure, Storm on the Island.	Conflict Poetry Continue analysing Conflict Poems. T4 – Compare two poems from anthology. Reading skills 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8.
Term 3	
Half term	Half Term
Studying a Novel Focus: “Animal Farm”. Develop literature skills, reading a novel, themes, characterisation, and historical contexts and how they shape meanings. T5 – Lit extract question on the novel. Reading skills 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8.	Studying a Novel Focus: “Animal Farm”. Continue with novel, and begin Speaking and Listening GCSE-based topics. T6 – Prepare and deliver a GCSE-style persuasive speech. S and L skills 1-7
Key Assessment Plans:	

ENGLISH Curriculum Overview 2025/26

Term 1	T1 - GCSE Literature style question on play. Reading Skills 1,2,3,4,5 and 6. T2 – Narrative/Story writing. Writing skills 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.
Term 2	T3 (EOY Exam) – Language paper 2, Questions 3-5. Reading skills 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8. Writing skills 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. T4 - T4 – Compare two poems from anthology. Reading skills 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8.
Term 3	T5 – Lit extract question on the novel. Reading skills 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8. T6 – Prepare and deliver a GCSE-style persuasive speech. S and L skills 1-7