

ENGLISH LITERATURE AT SSFC

Why study English Literature?

If you enjoy reading, arguing your opinion, writing critically and have a keen eye for detail and analysis, you will be well suited to a Literature A-Level. It is a rigorous and demanding course, and you will need to be a confident independent learner.

The course is themed around the genres of the Gothic, Comedy and Melodrama. We explore the development of the Gothic from its roots in the eighteenth century through to the modern day. You will explore how narratives work and explore a range of different forms: poetry, prose and drama; analyse texts as products of their time and consider the function literature has played in shaping out culture. You will also explore how different texts may express the anxieties of their age.

In the first year we will concentrate on Gothic texts from different eras and in different styles, in particular Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Angela Carter's collection of dark and re-imagined fairy stories, *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*.

Course Overview

What does the course consist of?

- Studying a selection of modern and pre-twentieth century novels, poetry and plays (including Shakespeare)
- Reading a variety of literature from all periods to help develop literary analysis skills
- Developing strong, independent, critical skills
- Workshops, DVDs, independent study, essays and theatre visits
- Much of the work is done by discussion in groups.

Lessons are focused on the teaching of the **set texts** such as Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*, Christina Rossetti's *Selected Poetry*, Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband* and Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, but will branch off in many different directions. For example, the teaching of Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber* may lead to in-depth research and debate surrounding sexuality and gender roles or the role of fairy tale in narrative expectations. Students should be prepared to have lively discussions in class, and for good reason. The examinations are established around debate and perspective; at A-Level English Literature is always about scrutinising a position or way of thinking.

Finally, an **appetite for wider reading is absolutely essential**. Not only will students be completing two pieces of independent non-examined assessment, but they will also be required to read around their set texts. This might mean reading your choice of modern play, novel and poetry for independent coursework as well as critical material or theory. An open-mind and enquiring spirit is key!

Some further core texts the OCR exam board encourages students to read (not all, not exclusively):

- William Beckford's **Vathek**, 1786
- Ann Radcliffe's **The Italian**, 1797
- Mary Shelley's **Frankenstein**, 1816
- Oscar Wilde's **The Picture of Dorian Gray**, 1890
- William Faulkner's **Light in August**, 1932
- Cormac McCarthy's **Outer Dark**, 1968
- Iain Banks' **The Wasp Factory**, 1984
- Toni Morrison's **Beloved**, 1987

How will I be assessed?

The course is assessed by two formal examinations (80% of marks) and one written non-examined unit of personal study (20% of marks).

Careers

Higher education: English Literature can facilitate a wide range of future academic or work-based pathways. **Russell Group** universities consider it to be one of their 'facilitating' subjects, looked at very favourably by the country's elite academic institutions. Many of our students go on to study a Literature or English based degree. It is a qualifying subject for Law and is a popular choice alongside History, Psychology, Sociology and Modern Foreign Languages. Other related degrees include Politics, Philosophy and Media.

Any career which requires good communication skills, creativity and confidence – journalism, politics, broadcasting, film, TV, radio, publishing, advertising, marketing, teaching, law, media management, digital and social media and theatre.

What subjects go well with English Literature?

Here at SSFC you have the opportunity to study a combination of three subjects. English Literature is an essay-based subject, so it complements other essay-based subjects such as: A Level History, English Language, Law, Media Studies, Sociology, Psychology, Religious Studies and Philosophy. However, all our other subject offerings can accompany English Literature.

Entry requirements

As English Literature is an essay-based subject, we require you to have a grade 4 or above in GCSE English Literature and GCSE English Language. If your school did not offer the chance to do both English Literature and English Language, then a pass grade in English will suffice. Due to the demands of the course, however, we recommend that you should have a grade 5 pass or higher.