



**Key Stage 4 Curriculum Overview – English**  
**AQA GCSE English Literature 601/4447/6 &**  
**AQA GCSE English Language 601/4292/3**

**Curriculum Intent**

The intent of our KS4 English curriculum is to equip students with the essential skills and knowledge to become confident, critical, and creative communicators, preparing them for success in their GCSE examinations and beyond. Grounded in the AQA specification, our curriculum is designed to develop students' proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening through a balanced focus on both English Language and English Literature. We aim to cultivate a deep appreciation and understanding of a diverse range of texts, including Shakespearean drama, 19th-century prose, poetry anthologies, and modern non-fiction, reflecting a broad spectrum of cultural perspectives and historical contexts. This exposure enables students to engage thoughtfully with complex themes such as identity, power, conflict, and morality, fostering empathy and encouraging critical reflection on the world around them.

Our curriculum prioritises the development of analytical skills, teaching students to closely examine language, form, and structure to interpret meaning and purpose. Alongside this, we focus on cultivating sophisticated writing abilities, encouraging students to express ideas clearly and creatively across various forms and audiences, in line with the demands of the Language Papers. Inclusion and accessibility are central to our approach; we are committed to challenging all learners while providing appropriate support and scaffolding to ensure equity of opportunity. We encourage independence, resilience, and intellectual curiosity, preparing students not only for academic achievement but also for lifelong learning, effective communication, and responsible citizenship.

Through this curriculum, students acquire transferable skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective argumentation, which are essential for progression to further education, employment, and active participation in society. Ultimately, our KS4 English curriculum aims to inspire a lasting love of language and literature, empowering students to find their voice and confidently engage with the world.

**Aims and Vision**

The KS4 English curriculum, aligned with the AQA specifications, aims to provide students with a comprehensive and challenging education in both English Language and English Literature that fosters critical thinking, creativity, and effective communication. Our vision is to develop confident, articulate students who can engage thoughtfully with a wide range of texts, both literary and non-fiction, from diverse contexts and periods. Through rigorous study of key literary works—such as Shakespearean drama, 19th-century novels, and poetry anthologies—alongside the mastery of language analysis and transactional writing, students build strong analytical skills and a rich vocabulary. The curriculum is designed not only to meet the demands of the examinations but to inspire a lifelong appreciation of literature and language, nurturing empathy and cultural awareness. We are committed to ensuring that all learners, regardless of background or ability, are supported to reach their full potential through differentiated teaching, targeted intervention, and opportunities for creative expression. Ultimately, the curriculum prepares students to succeed academically and equips them with transferable skills—critical reading, persuasive writing, and confident communication—that are essential for further education, employment, and active citizenship.

**Our curriculum is underpinned by the following core principles:**

Our curriculum is designed to be inclusive and accessible, ensuring that all students—regardless of ability or background—engage with a diverse and enriching range of texts and learning experiences that both challenge and support them equally. We uphold high expectations for academic excellence, particularly in literacy, by fostering sophisticated reading, writing, and analytical skills that will prepare students for success in further education and future careers. Through the study of literature, students encounter complex themes such as identity, power, justice, and morality, which promote cultural enrichment, empathy, and critical thinking. Moreover, our curriculum deliberately develops transferable skills—including problem-solving, interpretation, evaluation, and argumentation—that are essential not only for academic progression but also for effective participation in the modern workplace.



### Curriculum Structure

The KS4 English curriculum is split into two strands: English Language and English Literature, both of which are assessed by AQA.

**English Language:** Students will develop:

The ability to read and critically evaluate a range of 19th, 20th, and 21st-century texts, both fiction and non-fiction.

Analytical skills to explore writers' methods and their impact on readers.

Proficiency in writing for different audiences and purposes, with a focus on accuracy, style, and effectiveness.

Spoken language skills through presentations, discussions, and role-play activities.

**English Literature:** Students will explore:

A Shakespeare play, delving into language, themes, and dramatic structure.

A 19th-century novel, examining its historical context and narrative techniques.

A modern text (play or novel) that reflects contemporary issues and diverse voices.

A selection of poetry, including both seen and unseen poems, to enhance analytical and comparative skills.

#### KS4 English Language

Below is an overview of the units for assessment for AQA GCSE English Language. The course is 100% examination and is assessed at the end of the two-year course.

##### Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing (50% of GCSE)

- Section A: Reading – one literature fiction text
- Section B: Writing – descriptive or narrative

The exam is 1 hour 45 minutes and is worth 80 marks.

##### Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives (50% of GCSE)

Section A: Reading – one non-fiction text and one literary non-fiction text

Section B: Writing to present a viewpoint

The exam is 1 hour 45 minutes and is worth 80 marks.

##### Non-Examination Assessment: Spoken Language

##### Separate endorsement (0% of weighting of GCSE)

Students will be assessed on presenting, responding to questions and feedback, and their use of Standard English.

**AO1:** Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas; select and synthesise evidence from different texts

**AO2:** Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support views

#### KS4 English Literature

Below is an overview of the units for assessment for AQA GCSE English Literature. The course is 100% closed book examination and is assessed at the end of the two-year course.

##### Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th century novel (40% of GCSE)

- Section A: Macbeth – William Shakespeare
- Section B: A Christmas Carol – Charles Dickens

The exam is 1 hour and 45 minutes and is worth 80 marks.

##### Paper 2: Modern texts and poetry (60% of GCSE)

- Section A: An Inspector Calls – J.B. Priestley / Animal Farm – George Orwell
- Section B: Comparing anthology poetry - Power and Conflict poetry

**AO1:** Read, understand and respond to texts; maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response; use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations

**AO2:** Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate

**AO3:** Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written

**AO4:** Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.



<p><b>AO3:</b> Compare writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts</p> <p><b>AO4:</b> Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references</p> <p><b>AO5:</b> Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences; organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts</p> <p><b>AO6:</b> Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation</p>			
Term	Year 10	Year 11	
<b>Autumn term 1</b>	<p><b>Title of unit: Language Paper 1 + Spoken Language</b></p> <p><b>Main focus / Big Picture:</b> Creating a convincing writing voice (including that for formal spoken language), through choice of language to shape meaning and appropriate linguistic devices for form, builds on the development of authorial intent established in KS3.</p> <p><b>By the end of this unit of work, students will:</b> Understand how writers use narrative and descriptive techniques to engage the interest of readers; how to read critically and analyse writers' use of linguistic and structural techniques; how to employ those techniques effectively in their own writing according to audience, purpose and form.</p>	<p><b>Title of unit: Language Paper 1 (3 weeks) + Language Paper 2 (3 weeks)</b></p> <p><b>Main focus / Big Picture:</b> Revision of reading comprehension skills will support their reading in all other GCSE units</p> <p><b>By the end of this unit of work, students will:</b> Know and understand how writers use narrative and descriptive techniques to engage the interest of readers; how to read critically and analyse writers' use of linguistic and structural techniques; and how to garner marks on the higher tariff questions. Through exposure to and deconstruction of levelled examples, joint construction of live models, and independent construction practice students will hone their abilities and improve their confidence. Read a wide range of high-quality, challenging, classic literature and extended literary nonfiction, such as reviews and journalism.</p> <p><b>Exam Preparation &amp; skill development:</b> Essay writing skills Revising key content Dramatic methods Use of mark schemes, exemplar material, indicative content and other revision resources</p>	
Evidence of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading comprehension</li> <li>• Mock exam: Language Paper 1</li> </ul> <p>AO1, AO2 and AO4 for reading AO5 and AO6 for writing AO7, AO8 and AO9 for Spoken Language</p>	<p>Mock exam: Language Paper 1 Language Paper 2 Literature Paper 1</p> <p>AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4</p>	

## Holywell School Curriculum Overview



<p>Links to prior learning</p>	<p>Throughout Years 7 to 9, students build a strong foundation in understanding fiction texts, engaging with novels and short stories that develop their retrieval and inference skills through targeted comprehension tasks. They are introduced to key language and structural analysis techniques, such as identifying similes, metaphors, and paragraphing methods, while also developing descriptive and narrative writing skills focused on story starters, character, and setting creation. Emphasis is placed on sentence variety, vocabulary expansion, and effective paragraph structuring to enhance written communication. Oral skills are fostered through group discussions, debates, book talks, and assemblies, supported by structured speaking tasks that encourage clear introductions, supported arguments, and concise conclusions. Confidence in formal speaking is further developed through drama activities and presentations across subjects. Additionally, students gain an understanding of tone, register, and audience awareness in their writing, alongside the ability to annotate and rehearse scripts or prompts—skills that seamlessly transition into the more advanced speaking and performance tasks encountered in KS4.</p>	<p>Both <b>Language Paper 1 (Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing)</b> and the <b>Spoken Language Endorsement</b> in Year 11 build on foundational knowledge and skills developed across Key Stage 3 and earlier parts of the GCSE course. Students revisit and refine skills they have previously encountered, applying them with greater independence and precision in preparation for their final assessments.</p>
<p>Links to future learning</p>	<p>The skills developed through Year 10 English Language and Literature studies provide a vital foundation for future academic and professional success. For post-16 education, these skills underpin advanced textual analysis required at A-Level, enabling students to identify writers' techniques and analyse their effects with precision—abilities essential for close reading and discourse analysis. Beyond English, the critical reading and inference skills gained are transferable to subjects such as History, Sociology, Psychology, and Media Studies. Employers and further education providers highly value the capacity to interpret information, summarise ideas, and respond critically, all of which are honed through rigorous study of language papers. Creative writing skills developed during GCSE support creative modules in English Language, Media Studies, and beyond, fostering individual voice and writing style that are crucial for coursework and professional writing careers such as journalism, advertising, film, and publishing. Communication and presentation skills cultivated through speaking and listening tasks are fundamental for further study—such as EPQ presentations and university seminars—and vital in many career paths including teaching, law, business, marketing,</p>	<p>Studying <b>Language Paper 1</b> and completing the <b>Spoken Language Endorsement</b> in Year 11 provides students with core analytical, creative, and communication skills that are essential not only for GCSE success but also for future academic, vocational, and personal development. Speaking and listening skills are essential for delivering presentations in A-Level subjects (e.g. EPQ, English, Business) and in university seminars and assessments.</p>



	and customer service. These experiences build confidence, clarity, and articulation, empowering students to express ideas persuasively. Moreover, the ability to debate, reason, and present structured arguments contributes significantly to personal development, enhancing civic engagement, self-confidence, and lifelong learning.	
<b>Autumn term 2</b>	<p><b>Title of unit:</b> A Christmas Carol</p> <p><b>Main focus / Big Picture:</b> Students will use contextual knowledge to underpin interpretations and the study of dual interpretations. Knowledge of psychology and the supernatural are key and will be revisited through the study of Macbeth and provide students with a schema with which to approach an academic response to literature.</p> <p><b>By the end of this unit of work, students will:</b>  Know and understand aspects of: plot, characterisation, motivation, settings, events, sequence of events, the relationship between actions or events and the significance of Victorian social, historical and cultural contexts. They will be able to identify and distinguish between themes and recognise the possibility of and evaluate different responses to a text. They will be able to use linguistic and literary terminology to analyse and evaluate. Dickens' use of language, structure and form. They will also be able to make an informed personal response to the text.</p>	<p><b>Title of unit:</b> Unseen poetry and Comparative Essay</p> <p><b>Main focus / Big Picture:</b> Understanding of core metaphors, symbols, allegories and resonances in the English language will support students in approaching the unseen texts on the GCES Language papers, and provide the students with a schema for identifying the deeper levels of meaning inherent in texts, linked to 'bigger ideas'.</p> <p><b>By the end of this unit, students will:</b>  Know and understand how to analyse an unseen poem and use annotation to support understanding and the structuring of a written response. They will also know how to look for 'bigger ideas' and then use these to inform an interpretation. They will be able to compare key features such as content, theme, structure and use of language.</p>
Evidence of learning	<p>PDEA text analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 x mock question</li> </ul> <p>AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 x mock question on Literature Paper 2: Unseen Poetry</li> </ul> <p>AO1, AO2, AO4</p>
Links to prior learning	<p><b>Narrative and Character Study (Years 7–9):</b>  Students have previously explored how writers develop characters and relationships in texts. This helps them analyse Scrooge's transformation and the roles of the Cratchits, Marley, and the three spirits.</p> <p><b>Theme and Message:</b>  Familiarity with moral and social themes (e.g. inequality, redemption, and compassion) from earlier texts supports deeper understanding of Dickens's purpose and the novella's moral message.</p> <p><b>Contextual Awareness:</b></p>	<p>Studying Unseen Poetry and writing Comparative Essays in Year 11 builds upon analytical, interpretive, and comparative skills developed throughout Key Stage 3 and earlier parts of the GCSE English Literature course. This unit helps students consolidate their ability to read critically, respond independently, and compare texts effectively under exam conditions.</p>

# Holywell School Curriculum Overview



	<p>Foundational understanding of historical settings (Victorian London, the Industrial Revolution, poverty) introduced in Year 8 history or earlier English texts enhances students' appreciation of the novel's social critique.</p> <p><b>Analytical Writing:</b> KS3 analytical paragraph structures (e.g., PEE or PEEL) prepare students to write extended responses using embedded quotations, inference, and terminology.</p> <p><b>Language Techniques:</b> Prior identification of devices such as simile, metaphor, personification, and symbolism allow students to analyse Dickens's descriptive style and the novella's allegorical elements.</p>	
Links to future learning	<p>Studying A Christmas Carol in Year 10 provides a strong foundation for future learning across English and other academic or vocational pathways. It develops critical reading, contextual understanding, and essay writing—skills that are essential for success in GCSE assessments and beyond.</p> <p>GCSE English Literature Exam Preparation Paper 1: 19th-Century Novel (AQA): Understanding of structure, themes, and character development directly prepares students for the Literature exam. Teaches how to respond to extract-based questions—essential for other set texts like Macbeth or An Inspector Calls.</p> <p>Transferable Skills to Other GCSE Texts Contextual Analysis: Victorian context and social commentary link to An Inspector Calls and its critique of class and responsibility.</p> <p>Thematic Links: Themes of redemption, inequality, and change appear across other GCSE texts, allowing students to make comparisons and deepen understanding.</p> <p>Literary Devices: Understanding Dickens's use of symbolism, imagery, and allegory supports analysis of other authors' techniques in both Language and Literature.</p>	<p>Studying <b>Unseen Poetry</b> and writing <b>Comparative Essays</b> in Year 11 provides students with critical reading, evaluative thinking, and comparative writing skills that are essential for academic success beyond GCSE. These skills also support a wide range of post-16 subjects and professional communication in future study and work environments. Skills developed in interpreting unseen poems are directly transferable to A-Level literature, where students are frequently asked to analyse texts they have not encountered before.</p>

# Holywell School Curriculum Overview



	<p>English Language GCSE</p> <p>Paper 1 – Descriptive/Narrative Writing: Exposure to Dickens’s vivid descriptions helps model high-quality narrative writing. Students can draw on Dickens’s use of setting, mood, and characterisation in their own creative writing.</p> <p>A-Level English Literature (and Beyond)</p> <p>Introduction to 19th-Century Literature: Builds the contextual and literary background necessary for A-Level texts such as Jane Eyre, Dracula, or The Picture of Dorian Gray.</p> <p>Critical Thinking: Encourages the development of interpretive skills and the ability to evaluate authorial intent, preparing students for more complex literary analysis at A-Level and university level.</p> <p>Broader Academic and Life Skills</p> <p>Ethical Reasoning and Empathy: Encourages reflection on themes like generosity, poverty, and personal change—valuable for PSHE and citizenship education.</p> <p>Cross-Curricular Links: Reinforces historical learning from Humanities about the Victorian era, industrialisation, and social reform.</p>	
Spring term 1	<p><b>Title of unit:</b> Power &amp; Conflict Poetry</p> <p><b>Main focus / Big Picture:</b> Approaching the comparison of themes, ideas and attitudes in the poetry anthology enables students to hone the comparative skills employed in the Language Paper 2 unit.</p> <p>Literature Paper 2: Poetry</p> <p>AO1, AO2, AO3</p> <p><b>By the end of this unit, students will:</b></p> <p>Know and understand how to take a conceptualised approach, employing analysis of language, form and structure supported by judicious references and use of terminology. They will be able to make a critical, well-structured comparison, in which they make a convincing exploration of one or more ideas/ perspectives/ contextual factors/ interpretations. They</p>	<p><b>Title of unit:</b> Language Paper 1 (2 weeks) and Language Paper 2 (3 weeks)</p> <p><b>Main focus / Big Picture:</b> Revision of narrative and opinion writing – form, style, tone, register, methods – allows students to consolidate and refine their writing skills and to employ the ambitious vocabulary garnered through prior study</p> <p><b>By the end of this unit, students will:</b></p> <p>Know and understand how to employ techniques effectively in their own writing and how to match tone, style and register to audience, purpose and form, to enable convincing and compelling communication. They will know how to plan a written opinion response and how to proofread effectively. They will be able to organise a range of convincing and complex ideas and use discourse markers for effect. Write accurately, fluently, effectively and at length for pleasure and information.</p>

# Holywell School Curriculum Overview



	<p>will also be able to read in depth, critically and evaluatively, so that they are able to discuss and explain their understanding and idea.</p> <p><b>Key Themes:</b>          What is power?          What is conflict?          Where do we encounter these themes in our society and lives?          Power and conflict in history?          Poetic terminology – developing knowledge and understanding</p> <p><b>Poems to study:</b>          Ozymandias          London          The Prelude          My Last Duchess          The Charge of the Light Brigade          Exposure          Storm on the Island          Bayonet Charge          Remains          Poppies          War Photographer          Tissue          The Emigree          Checking out me History          Kamikaze</p>	
Evidence of learning	Assessment 4: Compare how poets present the ways people are affected by war in 'War Photographer' and one other poem. (Past paper 2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mock exam: Language Paper 1 Language Paper 2 Literature Paper 2 AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4 AO5, AO6 AO1, AO2, AO4</li> </ul>
Links to prior learning	<p>Studying the AQA Power and Conflict poetry cluster in Year 10 builds on a wide range of knowledge and skills developed during Key Stage 3. Students apply their earlier understanding of poetic form, language, and theme to explore more complex texts and ideas, preparing them for GCSE-level analysis and comparison.</p> <p>Understanding of Poetic Techniques</p>	<p>Studying <b>Language Paper 1 (Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing)</b> and <b>Language Paper 2 (Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives)</b> in Year 11 builds directly on key reading, writing, and analysis skills developed throughout Key Stage 3 and earlier stages of the GCSE course. These papers consolidate and extend students' understanding of how texts work and how to communicate effectively for different audiences and purposes. Students have studied a range of fiction texts (short stories, novels, and extracts) and practised identifying narrative structure, characterisation, and descriptive language at KS3.</p>



# Holywell School Curriculum Overview



	<p>Key Stage 3 Experience: Students have already been introduced to key poetic devices (e.g. metaphor, simile, personification, enjambment, caesura, and alliteration). Prior analysis of poems in Years 7–9 gives students the language and confidence to approach GCSE poetry critically.</p> <p>Theme-Based Learning Key Stage 3 Texts: Themes of conflict, identity, injustice, and resistance may have been explored in texts such as <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>, <i>Refugee Boy</i>, <i>The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas</i>, or war poetry units.</p> <p>Development in Year 10: These themes are revisited in more depth and from multiple perspectives, helping students draw connections between historical, political, and emotional contexts in poetry.</p> <p>Comparative Skills Basic comparison skills introduced in KS3, such as comparing characters or themes across novels or poems.</p> <p>Contextual Understanding Previous Exposure: Students have encountered historical context in texts like <i>A Christmas Carol</i> or through units.</p> <p>Essay Writing and Analytical Structure KS3 Skills: Use of paragraph structures like PEE/PEEL to construct responses to literature.</p>	
Links to future learning	<p>Studying the <b>Power and Conflict poetry cluster</b> in Year 10 provides students with critical skills and knowledge that directly support both their <b>GCSE success</b> and their development as analytical thinkers. The unit acts as a foundation for more advanced comparative analysis, interpretative writing, and contextual understanding across future academic pathways.</p> <p><b>GCSE English Literature Exam Preparation</b> Paper 2: Section B – AQA Poetry Anthology: Students build the skills needed to confidently respond to comparative questions under timed conditions.</p>	<p>Studying <b>Language Paper 1</b> and <b>Language Paper 2</b> in Year 11 equips students with essential reading, writing, and communication skills that prepare them for a wide range of future academic and career pathways. These papers develop core competencies in analysis, interpretation, creativity, and argumentation that are transferable beyond the English classroom. The skills of close reading, language analysis, and exploring writer’s choices in fiction and non-fiction texts directly support A-Level study, where texts are studied in greater depth.</p>

## Holywell School Curriculum Overview



	<p>Knowledge of these poems and themes is essential for success in the final Literature exam.</p> <p>Cross-textual skills developed here (theme comparison, language analysis, contextual relevance) also support other areas of the Literature GCSE, including <i>An Inspector Calls</i> and <i>A Christmas Carol</i>.</p> <p>English Language GCSE Paper 1 and Paper 2: Analysis of how writers use language and structure is transferable to unseen fiction and non-fiction texts. Familiarity with tone, voice, and perspective aids in creative writing and rhetorical writing tasks.</p> <p>Writing Skills: Exposure to emotive, persuasive, and narrative voices in poetry helps model techniques students can apply in their own writing.</p> <p>A-Level English Literature Thematic and Comparative Analysis: Builds foundational skills for comparing literary texts across time periods and genres at A-Level. Supports deeper discussion of power, identity, conflict, memory, and the human condition—common themes in texts such as <i>Othello</i>, <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i>, or <i>Feminine Gospels</i>.</p> <p>Poetic Form and Structure: Early exposure to varied poetic forms (e.g. dramatic monologue, free verse, sonnet) prepares students for more technical and critical exploration at A-Level.</p> <p>Cross-Curricular and Life Skills: Critical Thinking and Empathy: Encourages thoughtful reflection on war, oppression, injustice, and the human cost of conflict—developing emotional intelligence and ethical reasoning.</p> <p>Cultural and Historical Awareness: Strengthens understanding of global and historical contexts, enriching learning in subjects like History, Citizenship, and Politics.</p>	
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# Holywell School Curriculum Overview



	<p>Public Speaking and Debate: The discussion of controversial and powerful themes helps develop argumentation and presentation skills valuable in future education and employment.</p> <p>Personal Development: Encourages personal reflection on identity, resilience, and moral responsibility—helping students become more thoughtful and aware individuals.</p>	
Spring term 2	<p><b>Title of unit:</b> Language Paper 2 + Spoken Language</p> <p><b>Main focus / Big Picture:</b> This unit will allow students to revisit, transfer and develop the comprehension and writing skills from Autumn 1. It also builds on the transactional writing skills developed through the Year 9 Spring 2 unit. Honing of reading skills, in particular, through making comparison between texts and writers' perspectives, is a strong foundation for thematic and contextual poetry comparison in the Summer term.</p> <p><b>By the end of this unit, students will:</b>          Know and understand aspects of: plot, characterisation, motivation, settings, events, sequence of events, the relationship between actions or events and the significance of the relevant social, historical and cultural contexts. They will be able to identify and distinguishing between themes and recognise the possibility of and evaluate different responses to a text. They will be able to use linguistic and literary terminology to analyse and evaluate the writer's use of language, structure and form. They will also be able to read in depth, critically and evaluatively, so that they are able to discuss and explain their understanding and ideas, evaluate different responses to the text, and use their understanding of contexts and language analysis to construct an informed, critical, personal response.</p>	<p><b>Title of Unit: Macbeth (3 weeks) and A Christmas Carol (3 weeks)</b></p> <p><b>Main focus / Big Picture:</b> Revision of constructing a personal, critical response to literature will support students with all GCSE units.</p> <p><b>By the end of this unit, students will:</b>          Know the significant ideas, events, themes and quotations from both texts. They will also reconsider the significance of different audiences and differing perspectives, and make value judgements about different readings, thus becoming both more independent in accessing alternative interpretations, and in writing academically about them. Read a wide range of high-quality, challenging, classic literature and extended literary nonfiction, such as essays, reviews and journalism</p>
Evidence of learning	1 x mock question AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revision quiz               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice mock exam questions with guided walk-thru</li> </ul> </li> </ul> AO1, AO2, AO4
Links to prior learning	Understanding of fiction texts (from Year 7–9 units on novels and short stories)	In Year 11, students revisit and deepen their understanding of <i>Macbeth</i> and <i>A Christmas Carol</i> , two key GCSE English Literature texts. Their study builds on prior exposure in Year 10

# Holywell School Curriculum Overview



	<p>Retrieval and inference skills built in comprehension tasks</p> <p>Introduction to language and structural analysis (e.g., identifying similes, metaphors, paragraphing techniques).</p> <p>Descriptive and narrative writing (story starters, character and setting creation)</p> <p>Sentence variety, vocabulary building, and paragraph structuring.</p> <p>Group discussion and oral presentations (debates, book talks, assemblies).</p> <p>Structured speaking tasks with clear introductions, supporting points, and conclusions.</p> <p>Confidence in formal speaking from drama activities and presentations across subjects.</p> <p>Understanding tone, register, and audience awareness (covered in writing tasks).</p> <p>Ability to annotate and rehearse scripts or prompts from earlier speaking tasks in KS4.</p>	<p>and earlier key stages, drawing on skills and knowledge developed across a range of reading and writing experiences. Students were first introduced to both texts in Year 10, where they explored plot, character development, key themes, and contextual background. They will have already studied how Shakespeare and Dickens present ideas such as ambition, guilt, redemption, social inequality, and morality.</p> <p>In earlier years (KS3 and Year 10), students developed core skills such as using PEE/PEEL paragraphs, selecting relevant quotations, and exploring language, structure, and form.</p> <p><b>A Christmas Carol:</b> Prior knowledge of <b>Victorian England</b>, including poverty, industrialisation, and Christian morality, underpins deeper analysis of Dickens' purpose and social commentary.</p> <p><b>Macbeth:</b> Understanding of the <b>Jacobean era</b>, Divine Right of Kings, witchcraft, and gender roles helps students grasp Shakespeare's audience expectations and the political context of the play.</p>
Links to future learning	<p><b>Reading and Analytical Skills</b></p> <p>Post-16 English Language / English Literature:</p> <p>Builds the foundation for advanced textual analysis in A-Level study.</p> <p>Skills in identifying writers' techniques and analysing their effects directly support the close reading and discourse analysis needed at A-Level.</p> <p><b>Across Subjects:</b></p> <p>Critical reading and inference skills are transferable to subjects like History, Sociology, Psychology, and Media Studies.</p> <p><b>Beyond Education:</b></p> <p>Employers and further education providers value the ability to interpret information, summarise ideas, and respond critically — all of which are developed in Paper 1.</p> <p><b>Creative Writing</b></p>	<p>Studying <i>Macbeth</i> and <i>A Christmas Carol</i> in Year 11 prepares students for a range of future academic pathways and real-world contexts by developing their critical thinking, literary analysis, and communication skills. These texts provide a foundation not only for success at GCSE but also for further education and lifelong appreciation of literature, language, and culture.</p> <p>Students who continue to A-Level will build on the analytical techniques used in exploring Shakespearean tragedy and Victorian prose. Skills such as close reading, understanding dramatic structure, and contextual interpretation directly apply to the study of more complex texts (e.g. <i>King Lear</i>, <i>The Great Gatsby</i>, <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i>).</p>

# Holywell School Curriculum Overview



	<p>Post-16 Courses: Supports creative writing modules in English Language or Media Studies. Encourages development of individual voice and writing style, essential for coursework-based subjects.</p> <p><b>Future Careers:</b> Narrative and descriptive writing supports careers in journalism, advertising, film, and publishing Creativity and clarity in writing are transferable skills in business, Communication and Presentation Skills</p> <p><b>Further Study:</b> Essential for oral components in A-Level subjects (e.g., presentations in EPQ, English, or coursework defences in Sciences). Foundation for university interviews, seminar contributions, and academic presentations.</p> <p><b>Careers and Professional Life:</b> Develops public speaking and interpersonal communication, vital in careers such as teaching, law, business, marketing, and customer service.  Builds confidence and articulation, helping students' express ideas clearly and persuasively.</p> <p><b>Personal Development: Life Skills:</b> Enhances ability to debate, reason, and present structured viewpoints — important for civic engagement and personal confidence. Encourages preparation and rehearsal strategies that support lifelong learning and professional development.</p>	
Summer term 1	<p><b>Title of unit: Modern Prose / Drama</b></p> <p><b>Main focus / Big Picture:</b> Analysis and evaluation of character, theme, context, methods and interpretations leading to a fluent critical and academic written response, in the modern drama/prose unit, allows students to utilize the schema shared through Year 10 literary study and</p>	<p><b>Title of unit:</b> Language Paper 1, Paper 2 and final revision.</p> <p><b>Main focus / Big Picture:</b> Final run through of Language Paper 1, Section A and Section B — use of mark schemes, indicative content, exemplar material, revision material. Students to complete past paper questions with a strong focus on exam technique and exam timing.</p>

# Holywell School Curriculum Overview



	<p>to refine the accompanying skill set and become more critical and evaluative in both their reading and written responses to the novel. Understanding how to construct an exploratory, critical and conceptualised response to literature through use of levelled examples and joint deconstruction and construction, prior to independent analysis, will prepare students for the analysis of poetry and Macbeth in the Summer term.</p> <p><b>By the end of this unit of work, students will:</b>          Know and understand aspects of: plot, characterisation, motivation, settings, events, sequence of events, the relationship between actions or events and the significance of the relevant social, historical and cultural contexts. They will be able to identify and distinguishing between themes and recognise the possibility of and evaluate different responses to a text. They will be able to use linguistic and literary terminology to analyse and evaluate the writer's use of language, structure and form. They will also be able to read in depth, critically and evaluatively, so that they are able to discuss and explain their understanding and ideas, evaluate different responses to the text, and use their understanding of contexts and language analysis to construct an informed, critical, personal response.</p> <p><b>Exam Preparation &amp; skill development:</b>          Practise structuring clear, well-supported responses to exam-style questions.          Language Paper 1          Literature Paper 1</p>	<p>Revision Language Paper 2 – as above</p> <p><b>Final Literature revision of:</b>          Macbeth          A Christmas Carol          Power &amp; Conflict Poetry:          Unseen Poetry</p> <p><b>By the end of this unit, students will:</b>          Know the significant ideas, events, themes, quotations and contexts for the Power and Conflict poems. They will also be more confident in making an evaluative response to both studied and unseen poetry through deconstruction of levelled examples, joint construction of live models, and independent construction practice. In the short time prior to GCSE examinations, students will focus their revision on significant individual target areas as identified through patterns in mock and class assessments. They will continue to look at examples and levelled models, quiz for knowledge recall and revise skills through practice responses.</p>
Evidence of learning	Assessment 6: Year 10 Mock Examinations AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4	Assessment 6: Language Paper 1 Reading Assessment 7: Language Paper 2 Writing
Links to prior learning	Studying modern or prose drama in Year 10 builds directly on a range of reading, analytical, and contextual skills developed throughout Key Stage 3. It allows students to deepen their understanding of character, theme, structure, and stagecraft while engaging with social and political ideas relevant to both past and present.	Studying <b>Language Paper 1 (Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing)</b> and <b>Language Paper 2 (Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives)</b> in Year 11 builds directly on key reading, writing, and analysis skills developed throughout Key Stage 3 and earlier stages of the GCSE course. These papers consolidate and extend students' understanding of how texts work and how to communicate effectively for different audiences and purposes. Students have studied

# Holywell School Curriculum Overview



	<p>Students have previously read and studied plays (e.g. <i>The Tempest</i>) and explored key dramatic features like stage directions, dialogue, character entrances/exits, and tension.</p> <p>In Years 7–9, students have practised analysing how characters are developed and how themes are explored in prose and drama.</p> <p>Common themes—such as inequality, responsibility, power, and justice. Use of PEE or PEEL paragraph structures and embedded quotations has been practised regularly at KS3.</p> <p>Prior knowledge of historical and social issues (e.g. World Wars, class systems, gender roles, industrialisation) introduced through KS3 English and History lessons.</p> <p>Drama activities, role-play, and classroom readings in earlier years helped students build confidence with performance, tone, and interpretation.</p>	<p>a range of fiction texts (short stories, novels, and extracts) and practised identifying narrative structure, characterisation, and descriptive language at KS3.</p>
Links to future learning	<p>Studying modern prose or drama in Year 10 equips students with essential analytical, critical thinking, and writing skills that directly support their progression through the GCSE course and beyond. The unit provides a foundation for both exam success and further literary study, while also promoting deeper understanding of society, morality, and human behaviour.</p> <p><b>GCSE English Literature Exam Preparation</b></p> <p>Paper 2: Modern Texts (AQA): Detailed knowledge of the play or novel studied in Year 10 is crucial for success in the final GCSE Literature exam. Builds confidence in responding to essay questions that focus on character, theme, and the writer’s methods.</p> <p>Comparative Skills: Skills developed when exploring themes in modern drama are transferable to poetry comparison and unseen texts later in the GCSE course.</p> <p><b>English Language GCSE Paper 2 – Writers’ Viewpoints and Perspectives:</b> Understanding how writers present ideas about social issues (e.g.</p>	<p>Studying <b>Language Paper 1</b> and <b>Language Paper 2</b> in Year 11 equips students with essential reading, writing, and communication skills that prepare them for a wide range of future academic and career pathways. These papers develop core competencies in analysis, interpretation, creativity, and argumentation that are transferable beyond the English classroom. The skills of close reading, language analysis, and exploring writer’s choices in fiction and non-fiction texts directly support A-Level study, where texts are studied in greater depth.</p>



	<p>inequality, justice, gender roles) helps students analyse non-fiction texts critically.</p> <p>Descriptive and Persuasive Writing: Exposure to persuasive speeches and emotive dialogue in modern plays supports students' own writing for purpose.</p> <p><b>A-Level English Literature</b></p> <p>Textual Analysis: Students who continue to A-Level will need to explore how writers present social and political ideas through character and structure—skills directly practised in modern drama study.</p> <p>Knowledge of 20th-Century Literature: Familiarity with post-war themes (e.g. capitalism vs. socialism, gender roles, generational divides) provides background knowledge for texts such as <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i>, <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i>, or <i>The Kite Runner</i>.</p> <p><b>Cross-Curricular Skills and Knowledge</b></p> <p>Citizenship and History: Modern drama often explores key societal issues (e.g. class, war, justice), supporting students' understanding of 20th-century history and contemporary social challenges.</p> <p>Ethical Reasoning: Themes of responsibility, justice, and power help develop moral reasoning and empathy—skills essential for subjects like RS, Politics, and Sociology.</p> <p>Critical Thinking: Encourages students to question perspectives, evaluate characters' choices, and consider wider societal implications—valuable for all academic and vocational paths.</p> <p>Communication and Debate: Classroom discussion, character interpretation, and essay writing all build skills in argumentation and</p>	
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	clarity of expression—key for careers in law, media, education, public service, and beyond.	
<b>Summer term 2</b>	<p><b>Title of unit: Macbeth</b> (Literature Paper 1: Play. AO1, AO2, AO3, AO5, AO6)</p> <p><b>Main focus / Big Picture:</b> Students studying Macbeth explore the play's themes, characters, and Shakespearean language, focusing on the tragic consequences of ambition and the supernatural, and how these themes are explored through character development and dramatic structure. The development of an academic style in essay writing will support all GCSE Literature units and GCSE Language reading units.</p> <p><b>By the end of this unit of work, students will:</b> Know and understand aspects of: plot, characterisation, motivation, settings, events, sequence of events, the relationship between actions or events and the significance of Jacobean social, historical and cultural contexts. They will be able to identify and distinguish between themes and recognise the possibility of and evaluate different responses to a text. They will be able to use linguistic and literary terminology to analyse and evaluate Shakespeare's use of language, structure and form. They will also be able to make an informed personal response to the text.</p> <p><b>Key Themes:</b> Context – historical, social, cultural; Power; Machiavelli; Chivalry; Witchcraft &amp; Demonology; Women, Eve &amp; Original Sin – Lady Macbeth; Treason &amp; Divine Rights of Kings; Death of a King/Regicide – Regret; Regicide and the Circles of Hell; Friendship and paranoia; Disillusionment and conspiracy; Tyrants; The role of the witches; Slaughter of innocents; Madness; War; This dead butcher and his fiend-like queen; The form of Tragedy.</p> <p><b>Exam Preparation &amp; skill development:</b> Unseen poetry analysis Creative writing: 200 word in 25-minute tasks to build writing stamina for the English Language GCSE.</p>	<p><b>Title of unit:</b> Revision Classes (Study leave)</p> <p><b>Main focus / Big Picture:</b> The Year 11 English revision programme is designed to consolidate key knowledge and exam skills in preparation for the AQA English Language and Literature GCSEs. The core focus is on improving students' confidence, precision, and performance in high-impact areas across both papers. Sessions aim to deepen understanding of key texts, sharpen analytical thinking, and develop structured, exam-ready responses through targeted practice, personalised feedback, and use of past papers and model answers. Ultimately, the goal is to equip every student with the tools and strategies needed to maximise their potential and succeed in their final exams.</p> <p><b>Timing and Scheduling</b> Duration: Revision classes run throughout the Summer Term, with increased intensity in the weeks leading up to each English exam.</p> <p><b>Session Types:</b> Before-school sessions for targeted intervention. Lunchtime drop-ins for flexible support Walking-talking mocks scheduled just before final exam dates.</p> <p><b>Frequency: Weekly sessions per paper (Language Paper 1, Paper 2; Literature Paper 1, Paper 2),</b> increasing to biweekly as exams approach.</p> <p><b>Content Focus</b> Revision is planned around AQA exam requirements, mock exam performance, and key assessment objectives.</p> <p><b>1.English Literature</b> Texts Covered: Macbeth (Shakespeare) A Christmas Carol (19th-century novel) An Inspector Calls (Modern play) AQA Power and Conflict Poetry cluster</p>



		<p><b>Key Themes:</b> Character, theme, context, and structure analysis Quote memorisation and analysis techniques Practice responding to exemplar questions and unseen poetry</p> <p><b>2. English Language</b> Paper 1 (Creative Reading and Writing): Narrative structure, descriptive techniques Reading comprehension and language analysis</p> <p><b>Paper 2 (Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives):</b> Comparative reading skills Writing to argue or persuade</p> <p><b>Teaching Approach</b> Sessions are highly focused, based on: Mock exam data and identified gaps. Whole-class needs and individual targets.</p> <p><b>Session Format:</b> 5-minute recap on key knowledge or terminology 30-minute practice (exam-style questions or analysis tasks) 10–15-minute feedback, model answers, or peer/self-assessment</p> <p><b>Exam Board Materials:</b> Use of AQA past papers, mark schemes, and examiner reports. Modelling with high-level responses.</p> <p><b>Targeted Intervention</b> Data-driven intervention groups based on: QLA (Question Level Analysis) of mocks Teacher assessments Predicted grades and progress tracking</p> <p><b>Focused support for:</b></p>
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# Holywell School Curriculum Overview



		<p>Borderline Grade 4 students High-achieving students aiming for Grade 7–9 SEND and EAL learners (with scaffolding and support)</p> <p><b>Resources</b> AQA-endorsed revision guides and workbooks Model essays and annotation booklets Online platforms (e.g., GCSEPod, Seneca, Google Classroom) Visual and auditory resources to support all learners</p> <p><b>Student Engagement</b> Incentives: Reward system for attendance and participation, socials</p> <p><b>Study Skills:</b> Guidance on planning revision, using feedback, and managing exam stress</p> <p><b>Parental Communication:</b> Information shared through letters and online platforms to encourage home support</p> <p><b>Evaluation</b> Ongoing monitoring of attendance and engagement Regular review of progress through mini-assessments Final evaluation after exams to inform future planning</p>
Evidence of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mock exam: Language Paper 1 Language Paper 2</li> <li>• Spoken Language presentation</li> </ul> <p>AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4 AO7, AO8 and AO9 for Spoken Language</p>	GCSE Exams
Links to prior learning	<p>Most students will have studied at least one Shakespeare play in Years 7–9 (e.g. Romeo and Juliet, The Tempest)</p> <p>They will already be familiar with key features of Shakespearean drama, such as soliloquies, dramatic irony, and iambic pentameter.</p> <p>Students have identified and analysed techniques such as metaphor, simile, imagery, foreshadowing, and irony in poetry and prose.</p>	<p>As students enter the revision phase of Year 11 English, they draw upon a wide foundation of knowledge, skills, and strategies developed across Key Stage 3 and Year 10. Their understanding of key literary texts—such as <i>Macbeth</i>, <i>A Christmas Carol</i>, and the Power and Conflict poetry cluster—builds on earlier work analysing character, theme, and writer’s craft in both prose and drama. Prior learning in KS3 introduced students to core analytical techniques, including how to identify and comment on language, structure, and form, as well as how to plan and write clear, evidence-based essays. Creative and transactional writing tasks completed in earlier years have also laid the groundwork for the demands of Language Papers 1 and 2, where students must write for different audiences, purposes, and tones.</p>

## Holywell School Curriculum Overview



		Skills such as comparing texts, making inferences, using subject terminology, and applying contextual understanding have been developed over time and are now refined through focused revision. In revisiting all exam components—literature and language—students are not starting from scratch but building on a rich bank of prior learning to sharpen their responses, deepen their interpretations, and improve their confidence under timed conditions.
Links to future learning		The revision and consolidation of English content in Year 11 lays a strong foundation for a wide range of future learning opportunities, both academic and professional. The analytical and critical thinking skills honed through the study of literature—such as interpreting character, evaluating themes, and exploring the impact of language—are directly transferable to A-Level English Literature and Language, as well as subjects like History, Sociology, Psychology, and Media Studies. The ability to write clearly, persuasively, and creatively supports progression in any essay-based course, and is highly valued in further education, university study, and the workplace. Revision of Language Papers 1 and 2 strengthens students’ ability to construct compelling arguments, read texts with insight, and tailor writing for specific audiences and purposes—skills essential for careers in law, journalism, teaching, marketing, and public service. Furthermore, by engaging deeply with texts that explore power, morality, identity, and social justice, students develop empathy, cultural awareness, and the confidence to articulate their own ideas—preparing them not only for academic success, but for thoughtful, informed participation in society.
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reading in the curriculum (Literacy &amp; Vocabulary)</b></p> <p>The ability to read, comprehend, and critically engage with texts is fundamental to success in KS4 English. Embedding literacy and vocabulary instruction across the curriculum ensures students develop the skills needed for both English Language and Literature, as well as fostering lifelong reading habits. This curriculum overview outlines a structured approach to integrating reading skills, literacy, and vocabulary development within the KS4 English curriculum.</p> <p><b>Key Aims and Objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing Reading Comprehension – Develop students’ ability to understand, interpret, and analyse a variety of texts.</li> <li>Expanding Vocabulary – Equip students with a rich and varied vocabulary to enhance comprehension and expressive capabilities.</li> <li>Developing Critical Thinking – Encourage students to engage with texts in a thoughtful and analytical manner.</li> <li>Encouraging Independent Reading – Foster a culture of reading for pleasure to enhance literacy skills and deepen engagement with texts.</li> <li>Strengthening Writing Through Reading – Use reading as a model for effective writing, helping students develop their own voice and style.</li> </ul> <p><b>Curriculum Structure and Implementation</b></p> <p>Core Texts and Literacy Integration</p> <p>Reading comprehension and vocabulary development are embedded within the study of core texts for GCSE English Language and Literature. Strategies include:</p>		



Close Reading Activities: Analytical exercises focusing on language, structure, and meaning.

Contextual Vocabulary Study: Exploring key vocabulary in relation to set texts (e.g., Shakespearean language, 19th-century literature).

Reading Strategies: Teaching skimming, scanning, inference, and summarisation skills.

### **Vocabulary Development**

Tiered Vocabulary Instruction:

Tier 1: Everyday words (basic)

Tier 2: High-utility academic words (e.g., 'analyse', 'evaluate')

Tier 3: Subject-specific terminology (e.g., 'iambic pentameter', 'bildungsroman')

Explicit Teaching of Vocabulary: Introducing and revisiting key words through quizzes, flashcards, and games.

Contextual Application: Encouraging students to use new vocabulary in discussion and writing tasks.

Root Words and Etymology: Examining word origins to deepen understanding.

### **Reading Strategies Across Genres**

Fiction (Novels, Short Stories, Plays)

Analysing character, theme, and narrative structure.

Comparing texts from different time periods.

Non-Fiction (Articles, Essays, Speeches)

Evaluating argument, bias, and rhetorical techniques.

Recognising structural features and persuasive devices.

Poetry

Understanding figurative language, form, and meter.

Comparing poems thematically and stylistically.

### **Encouraging Independent Reading**

Reading for Pleasure Program:

Implementing Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) sessions.

Encouraging participation in reading challenges and book clubs.

Choice Reading Assignments:

Allowing students to explore books beyond the curriculum.

Providing guided reading lists tailored to interests and ability levels.

Reflective Reading Journals:

Encouraging students to track personal responses and make connections across texts.

### **Literacy in Writing**

Using Mentor Texts:

Analysing extracts from literary and non-fiction texts as writing models.

Sentence-Level Literacy:

Teaching sentence variety, punctuation, and grammatical accuracy through reading-based exercises.

Writing with Purpose:



Encouraging students to adopt vocabulary and stylistic techniques from their reading in their own compositions.

**Formative Assessment:**

Regular comprehension quizzes and vocabulary checks.

Peer and self-assessments of reading logs and writing tasks.

Summative Assessment:

Analytical essays and comparative responses.

GCSE-style reading comprehension tasks.

Spoken language presentations evaluating texts.

**Data Tracking:**

Using literacy assessments to monitor progress and tailor interventions.

By embedding reading, literacy, and vocabulary development throughout the KS4 English curriculum, students become more confident, articulate, and engaged learners. This holistic approach ensures students are well-prepared for their GCSEs and beyond, fostering a lifelong appreciation for reading and effective communication.

**Careers in the curriculum**

Journalism (e.g., reporter, editor, columnist)

Publishing (e.g., editorial assistant, literary agent, proofreader)

Teaching and Education (e.g., English teacher, literacy coach, tutor)

Writing and Content Creation (e.g., author, copywriter, scriptwriter, blogger)

Marketing and Advertising (e.g., social media manager, content strategist, PR specialist)

Law (e.g., solicitor, barrister, legal researcher)

Librarianship and Archiving (e.g., librarian, archivist, curator)

Public Relations and Communications (e.g., spokesperson, corporate communications officer)

Human Resources (e.g., recruiter, training and development officer)

Media and Broadcasting (e.g., TV/radio presenter, researcher, producer)

Creative Arts and Entertainment (e.g., playwright, screenwriter, theatre director)

Government and Public Sector (e.g., civil servant, policy analyst)

Business and Management (e.g., business analyst, entrepreneur, consultant)

Translation and Interpretation (e.g., translator, interpreter, subtitles)

Linguistics and Speech Therapy (e.g., speech therapist, language analyst)

**Protected Characteristics in the curriculum**

In the AQA KS4 English curriculum, protected characteristics—outlined in the Equality Act 2010—are embedded through the study of literature, language analysis, and speaking & listening tasks. While the AQA English Language and Literature specifications do not explicitly mention protected characteristics, many texts and writing tasks provide opportunities to explore these themes.



## Protected Characteristics (Equality Act 2010)

Age  
Disability  
Gender reassignment  
Marriage and civil partnership  
Pregnancy and maternity  
Race  
Religion or belief  
Sex  
Sexual orientation

## How Protected Characteristics Appear in the AQA KS4 English Curriculum

### GCSE English Literature (AQA Specification)

Set texts often explore issues of identity, discrimination, and inequality.

#### ◆ Shakespeare

Macbeth – Gender roles, power, and societal expectations.

Romeo and Juliet – Family conflict, gender roles, and prejudice.

#### ◆ Modern Texts

An Inspector Calls (J.B. Priestley) – Class, gender, social responsibility.

Blood Brothers (Willy Russell) – Class divide, gender, and social mobility.

Animal Farm (George Orwell) – Power, oppression, and discrimination.

Lord of the Flies (William Golding) – Human nature, leadership, and social structures.

#### ◆ 19th-Century Novels

A Christmas Carol (Charles Dickens) – Poverty, social injustice, and redemption.

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde (Robert Louis Stevenson) – Identity, morality, and repression.

#### ◆ Poetry Anthology (Power and Conflict / Love and Relationships Themes)

London (William Blake) – Social inequality and oppression.

Checking Out Me History (John Agard) – Race, identity, and historical representation.

## 2. GCSE English Language (AQA Specification)

Protected characteristics are explored through reading and writing tasks, especially in Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives.

#### ◆ Paper 1 (Creative Reading and Writing)

Fiction extracts may explore discrimination, identity, and social issues.

Writing tasks allow students to create narratives that touch on these themes.

#### ◆ Paper 2 (Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives)



Non-fiction extracts often focus on social justice, discrimination, and equality (e.g., historical speeches, newspaper articles, autobiographies).

Writing task: Students may be asked to argue or persuade on issues relating to equality and diversity.

### 3. Spoken Language Endorsement

Students present speeches on topics of their choice, allowing discussions on protected characteristics, discrimination, and inclusion.

Why This Matters

Encourages critical thinking and empathy)

Develops awareness of diversity and social justice.

Helps schools fulfil their statutory duties under the Equality Act 201

### Safeguarding including safety in the curriculum

Safeguarding and Safety in the KS4 English Curriculum (AQA)

Safeguarding in the KS4 English curriculum (AQA) ensures that students engage with texts and discussions in a way that is safe, respectful, and supportive. English lessons often cover sensitive topics such as violence, abuse, discrimination, and mental health, so teachers must provide a safeguarding framework to protect students' well-being.

Key Safeguarding Considerations in AQA KS4 English

Sensitive Themes in Set Texts

Many GCSE English Literature texts explore topics such as:

- ◆ Abuse & Violence – Macbeth, An Inspector Calls, Blood Brothers
- ◆ Poverty & Social Injustice – A Christmas Carol, London (Poetry)
- ◆ Mental Health & Identity Struggles – Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, Lord of the Flies
- ◆ Prejudice & Discrimination – To Kill a Mockingbird, Checking Out Me History

Safeguarding Actions:

- ✓ Trigger Warnings – Before discussing sensitive content.
- ✓ Safe Spaces – Encourage open discussion while ensuring emotional safety.
- ✓ Pastoral Support – Refer students to safeguarding leads if necessary.

English Language – Safety in Reading & Writing

GCSE English Language texts often include:

- ◆ Real-life news articles about discrimination, abuse, or trauma.
- ◆ Autobiographies discussing oppression (e.g., Malala Yousafzai, Maya Angelou).
- ◆ Persuasive writing tasks on social issues (e.g., domestic violence, mental health awareness).

Safeguarding Actions:

- ✓ Monitor student writing for signs of distress or disclosure.





- ✓ Encourage responsible discussions in Paper 2 (Viewpoints & Perspectives).
- ✓ Reassure students that they can talk to a teacher privately.

#### Digital and Online Safety in English

- ◆ Researching texts online – Ensuring reliable sources, avoiding harmful content.
- ◆ Online discussions (if used) – Preventing cyberbullying and misinformation.
- ◆ Teaching media literacy – Evaluating bias and detecting harmful narratives.

#### Safeguarding Actions:

- ✓ Discuss critical thinking – How media can manipulate truth.
- ✓ Teach digital literacy – How to recognize unreliable or harmful sources.
- ✓ Reinforce respectful online interactions.

#### Spoken Language & Personal Safety

In the Speaking & Listening Endorsement, students might discuss personal or sensitive topics.

#### Safeguarding Actions:

- ✓ Provide topic guidance – Avoid distressing personal disclosures.
- ✓ Encourage respectful debate – No hate speech or discriminatory comments.
- ✓ Offer an opt-out – If a topic is too personal, allow alternative choices.

#### Why This Matters

- ◆ Supports students' mental health and emotional safety.
- ◆ Encourages a respectful and inclusive learning environment.
- ◆ Helps schools meet safeguarding obligations (Keeping Children Safe in Education - KCSIE 2023).

#### Values across the curriculum

Holywell School's **core values** (e.g., **respect, kindness, responsibility, perseverance, honesty, and inclusion**) align well with the **KS4 AQA English Curriculum**, as English encourages students to explore ethical, social, and moral issues through literature, language, and discussion. The KS4 English curriculum is underpinned by core values that resonate closely with key Christian principles, fostering not only academic growth but also moral and spiritual development. Central to the curriculum is the value of respect for all individuals, reflected in the diverse range of texts studied that explore varied perspectives, cultures, and experiences—mirroring the Christian teaching of love and dignity for every person. Through the exploration of themes such as justice, redemption, forgiveness, and compassion found in literature like *Macbeth* and *A Christmas Carol*, students engage with moral questions that encourage empathy and self-reflection, aligning with Christian ethics of mercy and reconciliation. The curriculum also promotes truth and integrity by encouraging students to seek meaning, question ideas critically, and express their own viewpoints honestly, embodying the Christian commitment to truthfulness and wisdom. Additionally, the focus on community and service is fostered through collaborative learning, respectful



discussion, and oral communication skills, preparing students to participate constructively and compassionately in society. Finally, perseverance and resilience—key Christian virtues—are nurtured as students tackle challenging texts and refine their skills, emphasizing the importance of growth through effort and faith in their own potential. Overall, the KS4 English curriculum aims to develop well-rounded individuals who are not only literate and articulate but also guided by values of kindness, justice, and respect, preparing them to contribute meaningfully to the world around them.

### Holywell Values Reflected in GCSE English Literature (AQA)

Value	How It Appears in Set Texts
Respect	<i>An Inspector Calls</i> – The importance of social responsibility and treating others with dignity.
Kindness	<i>A Christmas Carol</i> – Scrooge’s transformation from selfishness to generosity.
Responsibility	<i>Macbeth</i> – The consequences of unchecked ambition and moral responsibility.
Honesty	<i>Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> – The dangers of deceit and living a double life.
Inclusion	<i>Checking Out Me History</i> (Poetry) – The importance of representation and cultural identity.

#### ◆ Teaching Strategies:

- **Character analysis:** Discussing how characters **embody or violate** these values.
- **Moral debates:** Encouraging students to explore ethical dilemmas faced by characters.

### 2. Holywell Values in GCSE English Language (AQA)

Value	How It Appears in Language Study
Respect	Analysing respectful vs. biased language in persuasive writing.
Kindness	Writing tasks that encourage empathy and understanding.
Responsibility	Non-fiction texts exploring social responsibility and activism.
Perseverance	Structuring arguments effectively in writing and speaking tasks.
Honesty	Understanding media bias and distinguishing fact from opinion.
Inclusion	Studying diverse voices and perspectives in non-fiction extracts.

#### ◆ Teaching Strategies:

- **Writing tasks:** Persuasive writing on topics like respect, fairness, and inclusion.
- **Speaking & Listening:** Students present speeches on moral or ethical issues.

### 3. Holywell Values in Classroom Discussions & Safeguarding

- Encouraging **respectful debates** about social issues.



- Promoting **kindness** when discussing sensitive topics.
- Teaching **responsibility** in digital literacy and avoiding misinformation.

Holywell's values are naturally embedded in **KS4 English (AQA)** through the study of literature, persuasive writing, and ethical discussions. Teachers can reinforce these values by **choosing discussion topics, setting expectations for respectful debate, and highlighting positive character traits in texts.**

### Spirituality in the curriculum

A theologically rooted Christian vision emphasizes values such as compassion, justice, integrity, forgiveness, and stewardship, which align closely with the themes explored in GCSE English (AQA). The curriculum encourages students to reflect on moral dilemmas, human nature, redemption, and the power of words, which are all key aspects of Christian teaching.

#### Christian Values Reflected in GCSE English Literature (AQA)

Christian Value	How It Appears in Set Texts
Compassion & Kindness	<i>A Christmas Carol</i> – Scrooge's transformation into a generous, caring figure.
Justice & Social Responsibility	<i>An Inspector Calls</i> – The call for collective responsibility and care for the vulnerable.
Moral Integrity & Truth	<i>Macbeth</i> – The dangers of unchecked ambition and dishonesty.
Forgiveness & Redemption	<i>Blood Brothers</i> – The impact of choices, fate, and reconciliation.
Stewardship & Care for Others	<i>London</i> (William Blake) – A critique of social injustice and neglect of the poor.

#### ◆ Teaching Strategies:

- Encouraging students to reflect on Biblical parallels in literature (e.g., Scrooge's redemption in *A Christmas Carol* and Christian themes of transformation).
- Moral debates: Exploring how characters' actions align with or challenge Christian ethics.
- Faith-inspired creative writing: Students write stories or arguments inspired by Christian themes such as hope, faith, and redemption.

#### Spiritual Development in GCSE English Language (AQA)

Spiritual development in English comes from the ability to express ideas, explore deep questions, and reflect on human experiences.

#### ◆ Paper 1 (Creative Writing & Fiction)

- Encourages students to write stories that explore morality, faith, and hope.
- Fiction extracts often deal with themes of personal growth, resilience, and ethical decision-making.

#### ◆ Paper 2 (Writers' Viewpoints & Perspectives)

- Non-fiction extracts explore injustice, human dignity, and social responsibility, all of which connect to Christian teachings.
- Persuasive writing tasks allow students to argue for compassionate, faith-driven perspectives on issues such as poverty, equality, and community service.

#### ◆ Speaking & Listening Endorsement

- Students present speeches on moral and ethical issues, fostering spiritual and philosophical reflection.



#### Spiritual Development in Classroom Discussions & Safeguarding

- Encouraging reflective discussions on human purpose, morality, and faith.
- Promoting a safe space for diverse beliefs while linking discussions to Christian ethics.
- Using Biblical narratives as discussion starters on universal themes like forgiveness, leadership, and sacrifice.

The KS4 English AQA curriculum naturally fosters spiritual development and reflects a Christian vision by encouraging students to explore moral dilemmas, the human condition, and ethical storytelling. Teachers can enhance this by making links to Christian values, encouraging reflective writing, and guiding discussions that explore deeper questions of faith and morality.

#### How we track your progress

In KS4 English, tracking student progress is a systematic and multi-faceted process designed to provide a clear picture of individual development and to support targeted intervention where needed. We use a combination of formative and summative assessments, including regular classwork tasks, homework assignments, mock exams, and formal GCSE-style assessments aligned with the AQA specification. Teachers carefully evaluate students' performance in reading comprehension, writing accuracy, analytical essays, and spoken language tasks to monitor growth in key skills such as textual analysis, vocabulary use, sentence structure, and communication. Progress is recorded using detailed tracking grids and data management systems that compare current performance against baseline assessments and expected grade trajectories. Regular feedback is given to students through written comments and one-to-one discussions, helping them understand their strengths and areas for improvement. Additionally, personalised targets are set to motivate and guide learners toward achieving or exceeding their predicted grades. Throughout the year, progress reviews involving teachers, students, and parents ensure that everyone is informed and engaged in the learning journey. This robust tracking approach enables timely support, tailored interventions, and the celebration of achievements, all aimed at maximising student outcomes in English.

#### Parents/Carers can support their child by:

- 1. Encourage Regular Reading**
  - Help your child develop a habit of reading a variety of texts: fiction, non-fiction, newspapers, and poetry.
  - Discuss books, articles, and poems they are reading to improve comprehension and analysis skills.
- 2. Discuss Themes and Characters in Set Texts**
  - Talk about the themes, characters, and moral lessons in GCSE literature texts (e.g., *An Inspector Calls*, *Macbeth*).
  - Encourage discussions about how these texts relate to real-life issues and values.
- 3. Review Exam Specifications and Resources**
  - Familiarize yourself with the AQA English Language and Literature specifications.
  - Help your child understand what is expected in both the literature and language exams, including assessment objectives and mark schemes.
- 4. Create a Positive Study Environment**
  - Set up a quiet and well-lit study space free from distractions for your child to work on English tasks.
  - Help with organizing study time, including setting aside time for revision, reading, and writing practice.
- 5. Support with Writing and Essays**
  - Encourage your child to plan their essays before writing them. Help them organize their thoughts clearly and coherently.
  - Provide feedback on their writing and suggest ways to improve structure, clarity, and vocabulary.
- 6. Practice Speaking and Listening Skills**



- For the Spoken Language endorsement, discuss ways to improve presentation skills, such as **confidence, tone, and body language**.
- Have practice conversations about topics they may choose for their presentation, encouraging them to speak clearly and persuasively.
- 7. **Use Revision Guides and Past Papers**
  - Provide access to **AQA English revision guides** or practice questions to help your child familiarize themselves with the exam format.
  - Work through **past papers** together to practice answering questions within time limits.
- 8. **Encourage Critical Thinking and Analysis**
  - Encourage your child to analyse texts critically by questioning why characters act in certain ways and how the author conveys messages.
  - Help them to understand **literary techniques** and how these contribute to meaning (e.g., symbolism, imagery, irony).
- 9. **Review Feedback from Teachers**
  - Go over feedback from your child's English teacher on essays and assessments.
  - Discuss ways to improve based on teacher comments, focusing on areas like analysis, argument development, and writing style.
- 10. **Promote Good Time Management**
  - Help your child break down their study time into manageable chunks, balancing revision with rest and activities they enjoy.
  - Encourage a **consistent routine** for homework, revision, and reading, helping them avoid last-minute cramming.
- 11. **Discuss Social and Ethical Issues in Everyday Life**
  - Engage in discussions about the **themes** in texts, such as social justice, morality, prejudice, and human rights.
  - Relate these themes to current events, helping your child connect what they are studying to the real world.
- 12. **Celebrate Successes and Offer Encouragement**
  - Celebrate progress, even small achievements, to help build your child's confidence.
  - Offer encouragement when they are struggling, reminding them that improvement takes time and effort.

#### Additional Tips

- **Stay Positive and Patient** – It's important to offer emotional support and keep a positive attitude toward the subject.
- **Be Involved but Not Overbearing** – Support your child, but encourage independence in managing their own learning.
- **Maintain Open Communication** – Stay in touch with your child's teacher to track progress and address any concerns early on.

By implementing these strategies, parents and carers can play a vital role in supporting their child's success in KS4 English AQA.

#### Sustainability within the subject

Sustainability can be approached from various angles within the AQA KS4 English curriculum through themes, texts, and writing activities that highlight environmental, social, and economic issues. While sustainability is not explicitly mentioned in the AQA specification, many topics and discussions within English Language and English Literature lend themselves naturally to exploring themes of environmental conservation, climate change, social responsibility, and ethical living.

##### 1. Sustainability Themes in GCSE English Literature

In literature, sustainability can be explored in terms of human relationships with the environment, the consequences of unsustainable actions, and moral responsibility. Here are some examples of how sustainability can be explored through the study of set texts:

Environmental Sustainability and Nature



- Poetry Anthology (Power and Conflict / Nature):
  - "The Prelude" (William Wordsworth): Discusses the relationship between humans and nature, exploring how the natural world shapes human identity. It can spark conversations about the need for environmental preservation and respect for nature.
  - "Ozymandias" (Percy Bysshe Shelley): Explores the impermanence of human achievements, encouraging students to reflect on the environmental consequences of power and industrialization.

#### Social Responsibility & Ethical Choices

- An Inspector Calls (J.B. Priestley): Themes of social responsibility and moral choices align with sustainability. The play critiques the consequences of capitalism and unsustainable practices that lead to the exploitation of the vulnerable, including the environment.

#### Impact of Human Actions

- Blood Brothers (Willy Russell): Focuses on poverty and social class, and while not directly about environmental sustainability, it provides an opportunity to discuss the sustainability of social systems and the impact of inequality on communities.
- Frankenstein (Mary Shelley): Explores the consequences of unchecked scientific ambition, touching on the dangers of unsustainable human progress without ethical consideration. It raises questions about the responsibility we have in advancing science and technology.

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## 2. Sustainability in GCSE English Language (AQA)

### Reading and Analysis:

In GCSE English Language (Paper 2), many non-fiction texts explore themes related to social justice, environmental activism, and sustainability. Students may read persuasive texts, speeches, or articles that focus on issues like climate change, conservation, social inequality, and corporate responsibility.

### Examples could include:

- Articles on Climate Change – How humans' actions are impacting the planet and the urgency of change.
- Speeches by Activists – For example, Greta Thunberg's speeches on environmental sustainability or David Attenborough's documentaries. These texts can help students analyze persuasive techniques used to argue for sustainable actions.

### Writing for Change:

Students are often tasked with writing their own persuasive essays or arguments in Paper 2, which can be tied to sustainability issues. Some writing prompts might include:

- Arguing for eco-friendly policies in local communities.
- Writing a letter to a government official advocating for action on climate change.
- Discussing how to make everyday life more sustainable.

Through these writing tasks, students can express their views on sustainability, practice critical thinking, and develop their ability to use language for social good.

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## 3. Spoken Language and Sustainability

In the Speaking & Listening Endorsement, students are required to present a topic of their choice. Sustainability-related topics can be a great focus for these presentations, such as:

- The importance of renewable energy.
- How individuals can live more sustainably.
- The role of technology in addressing environmental problems.



Students can prepare persuasive speeches, discussing personal responsibility and global impact, promoting the idea that individuals and communities should consider their environmental footprint and adopt more sustainable lifestyles.

#### 4. How Sustainability Can Be Integrated into the Curriculum

##### Cross-curricular Connections:

- Link to Science: Texts can reflect on how scientific advancements and human actions affect the environment, sparking discussions about the intersection of language, ethics, and science.
- Ethics and Philosophy: Students can analyse characters' choices and the consequences of unsustainable actions, fostering discussions about ethical responsibility.
- History and Social Justice: Many texts in English focus on social inequality and discrimination, which can be linked to the sustainable development goals, like poverty alleviation and fair access to resources.

##### Classroom Activities:

- Debates: Hold classroom debates on sustainability-related issues, such as "Should schools be more eco-friendly?" or "Is climate change the biggest issue we face?"
- Creative Writing: Have students write short stories or poems imagining a sustainable future or warning of the consequences of unsustainable practices.
- Research Projects: Encourage students to research sustainability topics and present their findings to the class, improving their oral communication skills.

#### 5. How Sustainability Supports Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural Development (SMSC)

The exploration of sustainability in English not only enhances students' environmental awareness but also contributes to their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development (SMSC). By discussing sustainability, students engage in discussions that address:

- Moral Responsibility: Understanding how actions today impact future generations.
- Social Justice: Considering how communities are affected by issues like environmental degradation and inequality.
- Global Citizenship: Recognizing the need to think beyond individual interests and work toward a sustainable and just world.

#### Conclusion

While sustainability is not a core theme explicitly outlined in the AQA KS4 English curriculum, the themes of social responsibility, ethical decision-making, and human impact on the world are inherent in the texts and writing tasks. Teachers can effectively use the curriculum to promote discussions and critical thinking about environmental issues, ethical responsibility, and sustainable living.

Would you like suggestions for specific texts or activities to explore sustainability further in the classroom?