

Course title: English Literature A Level AQA

Academic year:	2026
Course Venue:	Sir Graham Balfour High School
Course Type:	A level
Duration:	2 years

Course Description:

The A Level Students follow the AQA Specification for English Literature, which is a two-year course. Students study and respond to a variety of texts; novels, poetry, drama, including modern and pre-20th Century Literature. Texts are grouped by theme, '*Love through the Ages*' and '*WW1 and its Aftermath*'. We study the war unit in Year 12 after a short transition unit designed to ease students into the demands of the course where they are shown how to read closely, understand that the text is a construct and adopt a critical debate to respond to questions. Towards the end of Year 12, we embark on the coursework unit – the comparison of two texts. Although the essay is 2500 words, it should be succinctly capture a student's insight into the themes, style and character of both texts. We teach one text in class to support this unit, and this year we have taught *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Coleridge. Students have free choice of a second worthy text for comparison. Themes explored in this unit include, freedom and imprisonment, justice, the gothic to name a few.

An essential requirement of the course is an aptitude for independent study and thought. For each theme, students must read and study one play, one prose piece and one collection of poetry. There is an unseen element in both examinations and this really does test a student's skills.

Core set texts will be chosen from the following lists:

Shakespeare: *Othello*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *A Winter's Tale*

WW1 and its Aftermath	Love through the Ages
Wilfred Owen's Collected war poems	Anthology of Love Poetry through the Ages Pre 1900
Scars Upon My Heart edited by Catherine Reilly	Anthology of Love Poetry through the Ages Post 2000
Regeneration by Pat Barker	Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte
Bird Song by Sebastian Faulks	Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte
Journey's End by RC Sherriff	The Great Gatsby by F Scott Fitzgerald

Course Content and Assessment:

Paper 1: Love Through the Ages	Paper 2: WW1 and its Aftermath	Non-examination Assessment
What's assessed? Study of three texts: one poetry and one prose text, of which one must be written pre-1900, and one Shakespeare play. Exam will include two unseen poems	What's assessed? Option 2A: WW1 and its aftermath Study of three texts: one prose, one poetry, and one drama, of which one must be written post-2000 Exam will include an unseen extract	What's assessed? Comparative critical study of two texts, at least one of which must have been written pre-1900. One extended essay (2,500 words) and a bibliography
Assessed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> written exam: 3 hours open book in Section C only 75 marks 40% of A level 	Assessed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes open book 75 marks 40% of A level 	Assessed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50 marks 20% of A level assessed by teachers moderated by AQA

Additional Information:

In lessons, students are expected to take an active part, working individually, in pairs or in small groups on reading for meaning, presentations, debates and discussions. Homework tasks will include research, reading, note taking, planning and re-visiting essays to improve their skills. Skills developed in this subject therefore, include communication, analysis, evaluation and how to form an argument.

Entry requirements:

The standard entry criteria to study in the sixth form are a 9-4 in at least seven different subjects, including English and mathematics, which would usually be at grade 4 or above.

You must achieve a grade 5 in both English Language and Literature GCSE in order to be accepted on to the course. Talk to your English teacher about whether this is a suitable choice for you to study at A Level.

Financial Information: N/A

Future opportunities:

Students who study English Literature go on to study a plethora of subjects at university, such as Criminology, History and Law. The challenge of the course prepares students for the workplace by giving them the ability to express their ideas formally, creatively and with well-chosen supporting evidence.

