A Level English Literature (OCR)

What does this course involve?
The A level course is comprised of three units over two years. Students study a minimum of eight texts, including at least two examples of each of the genres of prose, poetry and drama, to develop their ability to analyse and evaluate literary texts across a variety of genres and periods. Students must be capable of dealing with concepts and need writing skills demonstrated by a minimum of a grade 6 in their GCSE results.

What will I study?

Component 01: Drama and Poetry Pre-1900
In Section 1: Shakespeare, students study one Shakespeare play from the following:

- Coriolanus
- Hamlet
- Measure for Measure
- Richard III
- The Tempest
- Twelfth Night

In Section 2:
Drama and poetry pre-1900, students' study one pre-1900 drama text and one pre-1900 poetry text.

- Drama texts:
  - Christopher Marlowe: Edward II
  - John Webster: The Duchess of Malfi
  - Oliver Goldsmith: She Stoops to Conquer
  - Henrik Ibsen: A Doll's House
  - Oscar Wilde: An Ideal Husband
- Poetry texts:
  - Geoffrey Chaucer: The Merchant's Prologue and Tale
  - John Milton: Paradise Lost Books 9 & 10
  - Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Selected Poems
  - Alfred, Lord Tennyson: Maud
  - Christina Rossetti: Selected Poems

Component 02: Comparative and contextual study
There are five topic areas:

- American Literature 1880—1940
- The Gothic
- Dystopia
- Women in Literature
- The Immigrant Experience

Students choose one topic area and study at least two whole texts, one of which must be from the core set text list for their chosen topic area:

- American Literature 1880-1940
  - F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Great Gatsby
  - John Steinbeck: The Grapes of Wrath
- The Gothic
  - Angela Carter: The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories
  - Bram Stoker: Dracula
- Dystopia
  - Margaret Atwood: The Handmaid's Tale
  - George Orwell: Nineteen Eighty-Four
- Women in Literature
  - Jane Austen: Sense and Sensibility
  - Virginia Woolf: Mrs Dalloway
- The Immigrant Experience
  - Mohsin Hamid: The Reluctant Fundamentalist
  - Henry Roth: Call It Sleep

Component 03: Literature Post-1900
This component encourages individual study, interest and enjoyment of modern literature. Students study three literary texts, which must include one prose text, one poetry text, and one drama text. All texts must have been first published or performed after 1900, and at least one must have been first published or performed after 2000. Texts in translation are not permitted.
There are two tasks:

- Close reading or re-creative writing with commentary – both must be based on one literary text
- Comparative essay – must be based on two literary texts.

"One of the reasons I love this A Level is how you can express your personal views and passions in each essay. When studying both older and modern texts you will always be able to recognise a theme/debate that's relevant now, I think it's beautiful to see how fiction reflects reality."

Year 12 Student

How is the course assessed?
Written examination: 2 hours, 30 minutes, 40% of qualification. Closed text exam.