



Meridian  
Trust

# Curriculum Overview English



# Curriculum Overview

## Key Stage 3

### Curriculum Aims

English is the key to learning about the world around us and within. It is a vital force in developing empathy, understanding and communication skills.

Our KS3 curriculum aims for all students to become confident and effective readers, writers and speakers. The KS3 curriculum builds on the successes of our partner primary schools and the skills and knowledge our students already have. We aim to advance their understanding of how literary texts work and give them the experience of studying a range of excellent texts. Students develop a bank of reading experiences that they can draw on. These experiences help them to make sense of the wider world and what it means to be alive. The curriculum allows students the time and space to think deeply, thoughtfully and critically.

Students gain a broad and diverse experience of English across years 7 and 8 and develop the key skills and knowledge that they need to be successful GCSE students. We hope to inspire students to become life-long lovers of reading and effective communicators, through both the written and spoken word.



### Key Curriculum Content

The Key Stage Three curriculum is made up of a range of topics studied across years 7 and 8. These topics include:

- **Modern literary fiction** – students study at least two novels in depth (one in Y7 and one in Y8) exploring themes, characterisation and narrative technique.
- **Non-fiction** – students study a range of non-fiction texts such as political writing, travel writing and transactional writing. They develop a keen awareness of writing for a purpose and a particular audience which they apply to their own writing.
- **Pre-1914 Texts** – through fiction, poetry and non-fiction sources students explore the language and culture of pre-1914 Britain.
- **Poetry** – students read and study a range of poetry opening them up to the breadth of British cultural experience as well as poetry from around the world.
- **Genre** – an understanding of genre is developed through exploration of a range of texts e.g. Gothic fiction, Greek myths, dystopian fiction or crime writing. Students apply this knowledge of genre to their own original creative writing.



- **Shakespeare** – students delve into the rich world of Elizabethan life building an appreciation of drama as performance. They study at least one play by Shakespeare.

Specific topics, such as fiction text choices or poets studied, may differ in schools across Meridian Trust.

## How are students taught and assessed?

Students are taught through a range of strategies that interleave reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Teaching styles vary from school to school, but there is a common focus on exploratory and collaborative learning throughout.

### Assessment at Key Stage Three:

- All students complete nationally benchmarked Progress through English tests (GL assessments) in Years 7 and 8. This allows their progress to be monitored and compared with other students nationally as they journey through the Key Stage Three curriculum.
- Formative continual assessment takes place throughout the school year, with summative assessment points occurring at the end of topics.



Typical Curriculum Allocation:  
6-8 hours per fortnight

# Curriculum Overview

## Key Stage 4

### Curriculum Aims

The curriculum aim of years 9, 10 and 11 is to develop our next generation into assured, thoughtful and articulate young adults. We want them to gain an appreciation of the power of communication, a command of a developed range of skills in reading, writing and speaking, and the ability to confidently move into the world of work or further academic study.



### Key Curriculum Content

**Year 9:** The intent of GCSE study in year 9 is to begin to integrate the skills required to succeed at GCSE level by introducing students to higher level texts and approaches.

**Year 10 & 11:** The intent of the **GCSE English Language** course is to develop the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Students will be taught to: communicate accurately, appropriately and effectively in speech and writing and to understand and respond imaginatively to what they hear, read and experience. A range of texts (fiction and non-fiction) and media will be drawn upon.

The intent of the **GCSE English Literature** course is to develop informed and critical responses to a range of texts in the form of prose, poetry and drama. Students will experience and explore different times, cultures, viewpoints and genres as found in literary texts.

## How are students taught and assessed?



In year 9 students will begin the study of poetry and non-fiction texts of the type and level of sophistication covered in the GCSE course. As student confidence develops, they will begin the study of at least one of the longer texts they will ultimately be examined upon. Spoken language activities and skills continue to be developed. Students are continually assessed at each learning point throughout the year.

*"THROUGHOUT THE CURRICULUM STUDENTS DEVELOP A LIFELONG LOVE OF LEARNING AND THE NECESSARY SKILLS TO BE A RESILIENT, CONFIDENT AND INDEPENDENT LEARNER."*

In year 10 students will continue to experience an interleaved approach to the development of skills required for the language and an understanding of the texts required for the literature courses. Students will sit two full GCSE length examinations towards the end of year 10.

In year 11 teaching will place a strong emphasis upon the enjoyment of the subject, an understanding of the examination requirements and a confidence in how to respond to the examination. We will begin to encourage students with an aptitude in the subject to consider further study at A Level. A full round of mock examinations are calendared for November and March.

### **AQA GCSE English Language**

#### **Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing**

- one literary fiction text
- descriptive or narrative writing
- written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes (50% of GCSE)

#### **Paper 2: Writers' Viewpoints and Perspectives**

##### **one non-fiction text, one literary non-fiction text**

- writing to present a viewpoint
- written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes (50% of GCSE)

#### **Non-examination Assessment: Spoken Language**

- presenting
- responding to questions and feedback
- use of Standard English
- separate endorsement (0% weighting of GCSE)

**Typical Curriculum Allocation:  
5-6 hours per fortnight**

### **AQA GCSE English Literature**

#### **Paper 1: Shakespeare and the 19th century novel**

- one Shakespeare play
- one 19th century novel
- written exam: 1 hour 45 minutes (40% of GCSE)

#### **Paper 2: Modern texts and poetry**

- modern prose or drama texts
- a thematic poetry anthology
- responses to unseen poetry
- written exam: 2 hour 15 minutes (60% of GCSE)

**All students will study for entry in BOTH English Language and English Literature.**

**Individual academies will determine the precise texts and sequence of study in accordance with their key stage 3 and 5 provision.**



# Curriculum Overview

## Key Stage 5

### Curriculum Aims

Building upon the breadth of knowledge developed in KS3 and KS4, KS5 offers clear skills of progression from GCSE. These courses allow students to build on the skills already gained and prepare them for their next phase of learning. We want all of our students to become life-long thinkers, curious in their desire to never stop questioning, reading, reflecting and learning.

Studying a discipline in English at key stage 5 is a very exciting venture as students begin to appreciate how an immersion in this field supports global understanding.

Students will be taught to develop their skills in communication, appreciate the subtleties and nuances in speech and writing, and to understand how to respond sensitively to what they hear, read and experience. Students will continue to experience and explore different times, cultures, viewpoints and genres as found in literary texts.



### Key Curriculum Content

All Meridian Trust academies support the study of separate disciplines of English language and literature which will be examined as subjects in their own right at GCSE. KS5 offers the exciting opportunity to take control of how a study within the field of English will support future learning.

A focus upon **English Language** offers the opportunity to work with exciting sources of language, which will introduce the study of English in its various forms and contexts, with the concepts and methods appropriate for the analysis of language underpinning all elements of the course.

To study a course in **English Literature** creates an opportunity to study literature through the lens of historicism, encouraging the independent study of a range of texts within a shared context, giving logic and meaning to the way that texts are grouped for study.

Immersion in the combined course of **English Language and Literature**, will support an investment in unpicking how writers convey ideas of the era, the voice of the communicator and the historic lens of society.

Academies will decide which specification supports their students' aspirations most effectively. Factors such as the learning experience in KS3 and KS4 support text choice at KS5, along with student interest.

#### Courses studied:

- English Language
- English Literature
- English Language and Literature



### Exam Boards:

- AQA: specification a
- AQA: specification b
- OCR
- Edexcel

## How are students taught and assessed?

Students are taught through a combination of student interest and engagement and teacher expertise. Progress is formally assessed through the assessment objectives and mark schemes as provided by the examination boards.

All courses are examined with a final unseen paper and non-examined assessment in the form of coursework.

**Typical Curriculum Allocation:  
8–10 hours per fortnight**



# Curriculum Overview

## Enrichment

### Beyond the classroom

The joy of English extends well beyond the classroom and Meridian Trust schools offer a variety of opportunities for all students. Strong links with school libraries mean unlimited access to high-quality, diverse and modern literature. Established clubs where all students are welcome to enjoy reading, develop their creative writing or hone debating skills are offered in many schools alongside industry-related projects such as the Big Teen Book Club and national competitions like 'Empowered' where writers from the trust have been published. Trips to the theatre and workshops with touring companies bring texts to life and present ideas discussed in the classroom in a new format. English skills lie at the heart of our curriculum and we want our students, both inside and beyond the classroom, to develop a life-long love of literature and communication.

### Cross-Trust Activities

All English teams within the trust work closely and collaboratively to offer enrichment experiences beyond their single schools. Key-stage specific events like The Big Lit Quiz and enrichment days delivered in partnership with the University of Cambridge English department, are just some of the enrichment opportunities on offer. In addition, the trust's 'Write Here, Write Now' competition, culminating in a published anthology and a workshop with a visiting author, is growing each year.









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