

Buckler's Mead Academy

English- Subject Information

The best of what has been written, spoken and thought across time'

In English, we empower students by teaching them the best of what has been written, spoken and thought across time. We teach a highly aspirational, academic curriculum that engages students through success and scholarship. Over five years, students will understand and scrutinise their literary heritage in order to successfully craft their written and spoken communication to become autonomous adults with the aspiration, knowledge and confidence to understand and impact the world around them.

We provide opportunities for students to meet renowned authors, attend the theatre and participate in school wide events and competitions to raise their aspiration and enjoyment in English.

We have crafted our English curriculum to be one of consistent academic rigour and powerful knowledge. In class we use expertly planned workbooks to ensure an entirely consistent experience across the department. Each CONNECT task begins with knowledge retrieval and teaching key vocabulary. This new learning will lead to students completing two DEMONSTRATE tasks per term in an assessment book. These assessment books create a clear and transparent journey of progress for students, allowing them to witness the development of their scholarship. All assessed work is fed back on to students who then take responsibility for improving their task in DIRT lessons. Knowledge tests are repeated throughout the terms and the year to ensure students are memorising key concepts and knowledge that will provide the foundation of their ongoing studies.

Oracy is a key focus of the English curriculum. Each English class will consistently use mini white boards and 'turn and talk' to allow students to speak like an expert and to ensure talk for writing. Across KS3 all students will take part in a 'Spoken Word Festival' as well as a public reading competition.

Mixed ability teaching is a cornerstone of the department. It ensures all students aspire to be the best they can be and are not limited by the mitigating factors of their previous educational and social experience. We ensure aspiration remains high for all, a focus that is supported through our use of 'English passports'. These documents detail the culturally enriching experiences all students partake in across any given year (including theatre trips, author talks etc.).

As a result of studying our curriculum students will become fluent readers with expert understanding of and ability to craft the English language. They will be ready and prepared to study both English language and literature in further education.

In everyday life students will also be able to engage meaningfully with the written and spoken media, understanding their placement as a member of the audience and how meaning is being created and delivered to them. Students will be able to speak comfortably in formal and informal registers, selecting appropriate vocabulary and syntax to allow

them to communicate successfully across a range of different situations. Students will have the confidence, sense of autonomy and mastery of the English language to advocate for themselves.

Students also will be used to reading and engaging with a variety of novels and stories, which will instil reading as a life skill they can continue to enjoy and develop.

Year 7: The Power of Stories

We begin by teaching *A Monster Calls*. Any meaningful engagement in literature comes from an ability to understand the emotions and feelings of characters and readers. This requires the knowledge of emotional vocabulary that we have noticed is a deficit for our cohort. Once students have grasped this knowledge we then teach myths and legends, offering cultural capital and another body of knowledge that underpins literature.

We then teach a non fiction unit- heroes and villains, now considering how these emotions make real people act and feed into motivation and characterisation. We then look at fictional 'heroes and villains' in action in *The Jungle Book*, now introducing 19th century vocabulary and syntax as well as beginning to consider narrative structure.

We now begin to consider author craft through looking at descriptions of setting and pathetic fallacy within *The Jungle Book*, looking at how these can reflect character emotion. We then look at two Shakespeare plays (extracts of) to introduce Shakespearean language and context. Students again look at the use of pathetic fallacy to represent emotion and how this can be recreated in their own effective description.

Year 8: Are We All Equal?

We begin by teaching *The Merchant of Venice*. This leads on from the Shakespearean extracts students have studied in year 7 and introduces key knowledge such as prejudice and antisemitism. Students begin to explore the effects of language on characterisation, building on the introduction of writing craft in year 7.

We then move onto *Oliver Twist*, introducing the Industrial Revolution and Victorian society, as well as building on their knowledge of antisemitism and the notion of heroes/villains/perspective and now authorial intent.

We then teach a non fiction unit - democracy and equality- where students see the transformation of the Elizabethan hierarchy into contemporary democracy. Again, this was needed for our cohort due to a widespread disengagement from the political system. We then look at words of war, moving from The Industrial Revolution and WW1 through to contemporary conflict. This is a mixture of poems, letters and diary entries.

Students end the year looking at Shakespeare's rhetoric, building on their emotional vocabulary, crafting, authorial intent and understanding of Shakespeare's language.

Year 9: Can we change society?

We start with *Noughts and Crosses* and then *Romeo and Juliet*. *Noughts and Crosses* builds on Y7 and 8, their work on emotion and characterisation through shifting perspectives, helping them to understand how to empathise with characters and thus understand the world they live in and prejudice they may face or be part of. Students' understanding of Shakespeare has developed so that they are able to read a second entire Shakespeare play and place the issues within a different context. They consider the transformation of characters across texts and compare them, as well as developing their understanding of the tragic genre. We then teach Romantic Poetry, beginning with Gibran and then moving through to the more 'classic' Romantics. This builds on their understanding of the Industrial Revolution and the Romantic movement. We then teach *A Kestrel for a Knave*, looking at the place of childhood across literature and studying writers' craft closely.

Year 9 ends with a non fiction unit: *Diverse Shorts*. Across this study a series of short stories to understand how writers from different backgrounds can be placed.