

Curriculum Overview

Subject: English

Ambition

By the end of Year 11 a student of English at Dixons Trinity will:

- encounter and appreciate a wide variety of high-quality literature and literary non-fiction. Students will be well-versed in a range of fictional forms such as poetry, plays, novels and short stories; non-fictional forms studied will include letters, speeches, diaries, essays and articles. This enriching and challenging experience of the world of English is sequenced and arranged thematically by key moral and philosophical concepts, ensuring that students encounter a wide variety of perspectives, cultures and historical contexts.
- know how to be able to craft their writing to match the conventions of a wide variety of forms. Students will be able to make judicious choices regarding voice, language, structure and grammar to manipulate readers in a variety of contexts.

Department Sentence

The department ensures all students blossomed into critical and compassionate thinkers and become articulate and inspiring communicators.

Principles

Intelligent sequencing of powerful knowledge

- Students at Dixons Trinity study plays, poetry and prose every year to ensure a balanced experience of literature and flexibility in reading unseen texts. We believe our ambitious curriculum prepares our students to be successful at university as they are exploring challenging concepts and use of language with unapologetic rigour.
- The study of poetry underpins our curriculum throughout our students' time at Trinity; we believe students should be exposed to an extensive range of poets and forms to master analysis of themes, concepts and literary methods. We believe a diverse range of voices, exposed overtly through poetry, supports our students to become knowledgeable and empathetic individuals. Studying poetry not only allows an appreciation of the literary canon but, also, we use this to reflect the cultural heritage and backgrounds of our students; we are able to reject the more Eurocentric focus of the current syllabus.
- Students also study Shakespeare every year; we recognise that these texts function as vehicles to explore the use of metaphor, motif and allusion but also allow our students the ability to feel as if the plays of the renaissance can truly speak to the modern student. Although we know other texts of the time may offer the same opportunities for study, the cultural significance of the playwright means we prioritise study of his texts in all years whilst explaining the disciplinary choices we have made in lessons.
- Our curriculum promotes underrepresented groups including women, minority ethnic groups and the working class. We do this through the teaching of literature in a sensitive way to champion the plight these groups have faced historically. Furthermore, we challenge this struggle in contemporary society. Students are expected to discuss these matters through a teacher led conversation that attempts to eradicate any misconceptions and more importantly, pre-conceived prejudices.
- In the repeated study of literary non-fiction, we provide the opportunity to advance students' cultural capital and knowledge of current affairs. We advocate students having a clear opinion on controversial and key topics that are prevalent in the news and in society with a view to support their ability to have discursive reasoning. We make frequent references to how this will support them to be successful in their future 'top job' such as a lawyer, a writer, a journalist etc. We showcase these in our career spotlights.
- As a department, we are passionate about the mastery of writing and approach essays with rigour from the beginning of a students' journey at DTA; students write often, and students write independently. We are deliberate in the teaching of thesis statements and topic sentences to prepare our students for later university study.
- We prioritise the teaching of the set texts in Y10 so that mastery of writing can be prioritised in Year 11; this strategy has been proven to be successful with exceptional GCSE English Literature results since 2016. We ask our students to learn the texts with unrelenting attention to detail and believe this promotes joy. We want our students to explore the idea of creativity to enhance their ability to analyse literature which can only come from mastery of the text.
- We believe that intensive study of literature enhances their own skills regarding thinking creatively when writing their own narratives.

Beyond the National Curriculum

- We provide the opportunity to explore aspects of the domain and push students' understanding of the origins of literature and the works many writers have been inspired by: Greek, Roman and Norse mythology plus medieval myths and legends. We aim for our students to be familiar with common allusions often made in works of literature: biblical stories and famous traditional literary works such as Dante's 'Inferno' from his 'Divine Comedy'.
- We focus on rigorous understanding of set texts; our students know the studied texts in a depth beyond what would be expected for their key stage.

Overview

All children are entitled to a curriculum and to the powerful knowledge which will open doors and maximise their life chances. Below is a high-level overview of the critical knowledge children will learn in this particular subject, at each key stage from Reception through to Year 11, in order to equip students with the cultural capital they need to succeed in life. The curriculum is planned vertically and horizontally giving thought to the optimum knowledge sequence for building secure schema.

		Knowledge, skills and understanding to be gained at each stage*		
		Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Year 7	Knowledge Introduced	Shakespeare / drama 'A Midsummer Night's dream'	Nature and world poetry	Voices of fiction and non-fiction
	Knowledge Revisited	Grammar and writing	Writer's method in literature	Writing to describe
Year 8	Knowledge Introduced	Poetry: cultures and identity	Tragedy: 'Romeo and Juliet'	Satire: 'Animal Farm'
	Knowledge Revisited	Essay writing	Poetic methods / poetry of war	Unseen poetry
Year 9	Knowledge Introduced	Poetry: past and present	Modern drama 'An Inspector Calls'	The Gothic
	Knowledge Revisited	Non-fiction voices	Essay writing	Writer's method in literature
Year 10	Knowledge Introduced	19th century fiction: 'A Christmas Carol'	Shakespeare 'Macbeth'	Literary non-fiction
	Knowledge Revisited	Unseen poetry / spoken language	'An Inspector Calls'	Writing to persuade
Year 11	Knowledge Introduced	Power and Conflict poetry	Mastery of texts	
	Knowledge Revisited	Essay writing	Responding to unseen texts	

**A powerful, knowledge-rich curriculum teaches both substantive knowledge (facts; knowing that something is the case; what we think about) and non-declarative or procedural knowledge (skills and processes; knowing how to do something; what we think with). There are no skills without bodies of knowledge to underpin them. In some subjects, a further distinction can be made between substantive knowledge (the domain specific knowledge accrued e.g. knowledge of the past) and disciplinary knowledge (how the knowledge is accrued e.g. historical reasoning). Please refer to the DAT Curriculum Principles, published on the Trust website, for further information about how we have designed our curriculum around these concepts .*

Homework

From Y7 onwards, our belief is that homework should be interleaved revision of powerful knowledge that has been modelled and taught in lessons. This knowledge is recalled and applied through a range of low-stakes quizzing and practice for every year group and is tied to Morning Meeting.

In addition, to support depth of learning and retrieval of powerful knowledge specifically in our subject domain we also:

- Set extended essay homework for all year groups, more frequently as students progress through the curriculum

