



English Literature



Intent – ‘Rooted and grounded in Love’

Intent – Rooted

It is our mission to enable all students to flourish in English. Our English curriculum is designed so that students acquire knowledge about texts and genres cumulatively from year 7 all the way to post 16 study. Our philosophy is to create a rounded and confident English student through exposing them to a range of literature, equipping them with the knowledge about how to write accurately and fostering a love of reading for pleasure. Therefore, the key stage three curriculum ensures that students graduate from Year 9 as confident and literate readers and critical and accurate writers. All students are taught the same curriculum content. Year 7 begin with the study of Dickens’ *Oliver Twist*, moving on to Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and finishing with an introduction to the study of poetry. Year 8 continues to develop students’ understanding of texts and genres through the study of Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes, Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and Orwell’s *Animal Farm*. When our students reach Year 9, they will experience Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*, a collection of WW1 poetry and a stage adaptation of Levy’s novel *Small Island* by Helen Edmundson. By the end of key stage three, they will know more about the foundational texts in literature, will be able to remember more about English Literature’s social and historical context and will be able to do more creative and critical writing which prepares them for the skills and texts they will encounter at GCSE.

At Key Stage 5, genre study is at the heart of English Literature B and the two broad genres available for study are: tragedy and political and social protest writing. This course offers a great platform for university as we read texts through different critical lenses. Just as meanings of texts are not fixed, neither are definitions of genre, which frequently change and become blurred. Through strengthening links to content taught in key stage three and GCSE, we can ensure that students will ‘read much better if they already have background knowledge about the subject,’ Mary Myatt. As a result, students will be able to free up their working memories for critical analysis and probing of the text.

Archangel Gabriel is the English Patron Saint of communication. He is a vehicle to communicate God’s words/message. Literature teaching is rooted and grounded in discussion around Catholic Social Teaching. The texts we encounter in literature explore challenging or difficult situations in which characters overcome adversity. Through our curriculum, we encourage students to empathise, consider the wider messages of texts and become critics of culture.

We always consider why these texts are important and link them to the writers’ message/intent, making connections with many gospel teachings: kindness, humility, courage, compassion and fortitude.

Reading and discussing literature is a shared experience: a dramatic plot twist can evoke the collective feeling of either injustice or joy. We encourage thinking, understanding and empathy. Stories are the key to revealing truths about our lives.



A Level English Literature

Year 12



De Lisle College
A Catholic Voluntary Academy

Curriculum Outline

Link to Catholic Social Teaching:

- **King Lear:** Lear's mistreatment of Cordelia and the suffering of Gloucester highlight the consequences of failing to respect the inherent dignity of others.
- **The Great Gatsby:** Gatsby's pursuit of wealth and status reflects a society that values people based on social class rather than their intrinsic worth.
- **King Lear:** Conflict, betrayal, and revenge create widespread suffering, demonstrating the importance of justice and reconciliation for peace.
- **King Lear:** The storm mirrors the chaos caused by human wrongdoing, reflecting the connection between moral disorder and the natural world.
- **The Great Gatsby:** George Wilson's honest labour contrasts with the careless privilege of the wealthy, highlighting the dignity of work despite social inequality.

Advent 1	King Lear The Great Gatsby	Advent 2	King Lear The Great Gatsby
Description	Students learn that: • Tragedy explores human suffering and the causes and consequences of that suffering. • Tragic protagonists often possess flaws, limitations or misconceptions that contribute to their downfall. • Tragedy examines the relationship between individual choices and external forces such as fate, society or power. • Writers use tragic events to provoke emotional responses such as pity, fear and sympathy. • Tragedy raises questions about justice, responsibility and whether suffering can be justified. • Tragic narratives often involve a movement from order to disorder and loss. • The downfall of individuals can reflect wider social, political or moral failures. • Tragedy frequently exposes the destructive effects of pride, ambition, greed, obsession and selfishness. • Relationships between characters are often central to tragic conflict and suffering. • Tragic endings encourage audiences to reflect on human nature and society.		

- Different periods and genres shape how tragedy is presented and understood.
- Tragedy can be both personal and social, showing how individual suffering is connected to wider cultural issues.
- Readers can debate whether tragic characters are victims of their own actions or of forces beyond their control.
- Tragedy often presents moments of recognition, where characters gain insight too late to prevent disaster.

Applied to *King Lear* and *The Great Gatsby*

- Shakespeare presents Lear as a tragic hero whose pride, misjudgement and desire for flattery contribute to his downfall.
- Fitzgerald presents Gatsby as a modern tragic figure whose idealism and obsession with the past lead to his destruction.
- Both texts explore how flawed individuals are damaged by the worlds they inhabit.
- Lear's suffering exposes failures in political leadership, family relationships and social responsibility.
- Gatsby's death exposes the corruption, carelessness and inequality of 1920s American society.
- Both protagonists experience moments of recognition, but these come too late to avoid tragedy.
- Both texts show how selfishness and moral failings create suffering for others as well as the tragic hero.
- The tragic deaths of Cordelia and Gatsby suggest that innocence and hope are often vulnerable in unjust societies.
- Shakespeare presents tragedy on a national and cosmic scale, while Fitzgerald presents tragedy through social class and the failure of the American Dream.
- Both texts encourage audiences to question whether tragedy arises from personal flaws, social forces, or a combination of both.
- Both texts suggest that human beings struggle to achieve happiness, justice and lasting fulfilment in an imperfect world.

In preparation for their Advent assessments, students will learn how to write analytical paragraphs and use quotations to justify their ideas.

Lent 1	King Lear Richard II	Lent 2	King Lear Richard II
Description	Students begin by developing a secure knowledge of the plot, characters, themes, dramatic structure and historical context of <i>King Lear and Richard II</i>. Through close reading, they explore Shakespeare's presentation of power, family, justice, suffering and tragedy, while becoming familiar with key scenes and quotations. This knowledge is then developed through a range of analytical and evaluative skills: • Close analysis of extracts helps students understand Shakespeare's use of language, imagery, symbolism and dramatic techniques. • Paragraph writing develops the ability to construct clear analytical responses using textual evidence and subject terminology. • Developing arguments encourages students to move beyond description, creating conceptual and thematic interpretations of the play. • Comparative thinking allows students to connect extracts to the wider text and to the conventions of tragedy. • Critical debate introduces different interpretations of characters, themes and Shakespeare's tragic vision. • Exam-style responses help students apply their knowledge under timed conditions, selecting relevant evidence and constructing coherent lines of argument. As students' progress, they move from understanding <i>what</i> happens in the play to exploring <i>how</i> and <i>why</i> Shakespeare presents tragedy in particular ways. By the end of the course, they are able to write sophisticated essays that integrate close textual analysis, contextual understanding and critical interpretations to support a developed argument.		

Pentecost 1	King Lear NEA introduction	Pentecost 2	Paper 1 exam preparation NEA preparation
Description	Students develop their understanding of <i>King Lear</i> and <i>Richard II</i> through the completion of written work, planning essay responses, and engaging with exemplar answers. They consolidate their knowledge of plot, characters, themes, dramatic structure and context while learning how to construct effective literary arguments. Through planning activities and the study of model responses, students develop their ability to select relevant evidence, organise ideas coherently, and apply critical and contextual understanding. As the course progresses, they refine their analytical writing, gaining confidence in producing well-structured and sophisticated essays that meet the demands of examination questions.	Description	The NEA gives students the opportunity to pursue their own literary interests through two independently chosen texts: one novel (prose) and one poetry collection. Students produce two essays of approximately 1,500 words each, applying a critical theory (such as Feminism, Marxism, Postcolonialism, Eco-criticism, Narrative Theory, Literary Value) to their chosen texts. Students learn to: • Apply a critical theory to literary texts. • Develop an independent, sustained literary argument. • Engage with secondary critical material and theoretical ideas. • Conduct independent reading and research. • Analyse how meanings are shaped through different theoretical perspectives. • Write in an academic style, using appropriate literary terminology and textual evidence. A key strength of the NEA is student choice. Students select their own poetry collection and novel, enabling them to explore literature that interests them while developing the independent research and critical thinking skills expected at university level.

A Level English Literature

Year 13

Curriculum Outline

Link to Catholic Social Teaching:

- Human Dignity: **The Kite Runner**: Hassan is denied dignity through ethnic discrimination and abuse because he is a Hazara. Hosseini shows how prejudice strips people of respect and highlights the importance of recognising every person's humanity.
- Solidarity: **A Doll's House**: Nora lacks genuine support within her marriage, where relationships are based on control rather than equality. Ibsen suggests that true solidarity requires honesty, respect, and mutual understanding.
- The Common Good: **Songs of Innocence and Experience**: Blake criticises institutions such as the Church, monarchy, and government when they fail to protect ordinary people. His poetry suggests that the common good is achieved through freedom, justice, and care for society's most vulnerable members

Advent 1	The Kite Runner A Doll's House NEA planning and preparation	Advent 2	The Kite Runner A Doll's House NEA writing
Description	Students learn that: • Literary texts are shaped by the social, political and historical contexts in which they are written. • Writers use literature to criticise injustice, inequality and abuses of power. • Characters are literary constructions that embody ideas, values and social concerns. • Writers present both individuals and groups as victims or agents of social and political systems. • Relationships between characters reveal tensions involving power, class, gender, wealth and authority. • Authors use setting as a way of reflecting social divisions and moral values. • Literary texts challenge readers to question accepted beliefs and social structures. • Different forms (tragedy and novel) shape how political and social protest is presented. • Writers use symbolism, imagery and motifs to communicate criticism of society.		

	• The presentation of wealth, poverty and privilege can expose social inequality. • Family relationships can be used to explore wider political and social conflicts. • Individuals who challenge social expectations often reveal flaws within society. • Authors present different perspectives on justice, responsibility and moral behaviour. • Readers' interpretations are influenced by their own context and values. • Comparing texts reveals both similarities and differences in the ways writers protest against social and political issues.		
Lent 1	Unseen social and political protest writing The Kite Runner Blake's poetry	Lent 2	Unseen social and political protest writing The Kite Runner Blake's poetry
Description	Students develop their understanding of Blake's <i>Songs of Innocence and of Experience</i> and Hosseini's <i>The Kite Runner</i> through written work, essay planning and engagement with exemplar responses. They explore how both writers use literature as social and political protest, analysing the relationship between form, structure and meaning. Students examine how Blake's paired collections, poetic forms and symbolism expose injustice and inequality, while Hosseini's narrative structure and first-person perspective critique political oppression, social division and conflict. Through analytical writing and response planning, students learn to construct coherent arguments, integrate contextual understanding and evaluate how writers use literary methods to shape meaning. By the end of the course, they are able to produce sophisticated essays that combine close textual analysis with conceptual and contextual interpretation.		
Pentecost 1	Revision Exam practice	Pentecost 2	Exams Begin
Description	In the final term, the focus shifts towards examination preparation. Students analyse exemplar responses, plan and write essays, and regularly retrieve key knowledge, quotations, contextual understanding and critical ideas linked to social and political protest writing. Frequent homework essays provide opportunities to refine analytical writing, strengthen argument development and build confidence in meeting the demands of the examination.		