

English – Year 8

Curriculum Intent

In Year 8, students build on the foundations of Year 7 by strengthening their ability to write with purpose, read whole texts with confidence and develop more sustained critical responses. The curriculum is carefully sequenced to develop students' understanding of voice and viewpoint, moving from the study of a modern novel into persuasive speaking and writing, then into Shakespearean drama and finally into creative non-fiction and poetry. Across the year, students become increasingly confident in using evidence, analysing methods and shaping coherent, extended writing.

What Students Will Study Across the Year

Autumn Term – Voice and Perspective: *Of Mice and Men*

Students begin with a modern novel, *Of Mice and Men*, exploring what it means to have (or lack) a voice. They learn to discuss texts effectively, explore context and themes, and develop more sustained literary analysis, including applying different “critical lenses”. This unit strengthens students' ability to write extended responses and to analyse how characters and perspectives are crafted.

Autumn Term – The Freedom to Speak: Opinion Articles and Public Speaking

Building on their understanding of viewpoint, students explore rhetoric and persuasion through opinion writing and public speaking. They learn how writers craft arguments, how language choices influence audiences, and how spoken delivery can shape meaning. This unit develops confidence in discursive writing and spoken communication, supporting students' progression towards more complex argument and evaluation.

Spring Term – Drama and Society: *Much Ado About Nothing*

Students apply their developing skills to Shakespearean comedy, exploring character, relationships and social power. They revisit the conventions of drama as performance and build confidence analysing language and structure. Alongside the play, students continue strengthening rhetorical writing and speaking, making explicit links between text, context and viewpoint.

Summer Term – Capturing the Moment: Creative Non-fiction and Poetry

Students finish the year by developing their writing craft through creative non-fiction, learning how to shape narrative voice, structure and impact. They revisit key punctuation for control and style, and build on their poetry learning through analysis of a range of poems. This unit strengthens students' ability to write with deliberate craft and to interpret texts with increasing independence.

Assessment and Progression

Students are assessed through knowledge quizzes, continuous extended writing (including essays and discursive responses), and spoken presentation practice and performance. By the end of Year 8, students are prepared for Year 9's more challenging conceptual study, including texts that explore human nature, control and social responsibility, alongside increasingly independent writing.