

Year 8 Programme of Study 2020-21

The rationale for content choices and curriculum sequencing

Content

Non-fiction and related poetry: 'Relationships'

- To allow students to study a range of poems and related non-fiction texts which are linked by the theme of relationships;
- To develop students' inferential skills/language analysis/comparison of writer's points of view and methods/techniques, especially in light of missed time developing these skills in Year 7;
- To challenge students by providing opportunities to explore different poems about a variety of important topics from a range of time periods;
- To provide an opportunity to foster an interest in and appreciation of poetry;
- To allow students the opportunity to write their own poetry inspired by other poets and their choices of language/form/subject.

Shakespeare: 'Romeo and Juliet'

- To introduce the 16th/17th century historical context to students in order to support their understanding of other texts from this era, particularly Shakespearean drama, paying particular attention to gaps in learning as a result of Shakespeare being studied during lockdown;
- To provide an opportunity to read a text that will foster an interest in and appreciation of students' British literary heritage;
- To encourage students to explore issues such as arranged and forced marriages, gangs/knife crime, ideas about parenting, honour and feuds as a way of helping students develop a critical understanding of the world and cultural environment in which they live.

The Author's Craft: 'Of Mice and Men'

- To foster interest in discussions on how different forms of discrimination (race, gender, social class/ economic status) affects people and the significant lessons that can be learnt from various cultural experiences;
- To discuss the history and impact of racial and sexist language;
- To allow students the opportunity to study a piece of seminal world literature in depth alongside relevant non-fiction texts to expand their understanding of the historical context.

Sequencing

Schemes are sequenced to allow students to build on skills developed in year 7 and prepare for KS4.

The theme of relationships connects all three schemes, which enables teachers to demonstrate links. For example, the theme of parent/ child relationships is discussed during lessons on 'Praise Song for my Mother' and 'Nettles' as well as 'Romeo and Juliet'.

'Of Mice and Men' is taught at the end of the year due to the level of maturity required of students.

Assessments may/will move due to the current situation and the lack of library facilities. For each KS3 year group, the library is unavailable and so 'reading' lessons have been introduced. Instead of asking students to read for the whole period, as would be facilitated by being in the library environment, (changing books, perusing books, taking AR quizzes etc), students are given a class reader and staff will read with, and to, them for some part (possibly all) of that lesson, leaving some time for them to read their own book (or indeed the class reader).