Vyners School

Striving for Excellence

Welcome to the English Department

A Level English Literature

Our Key Stage 5 Curriculum

What do our students study in A Level English Literature?

OCR

At A Level, students have the opportunity to study towards qualifications with the exam board OCR.
Students complete three units.
There are two exam papers:
Drama and Poetry pre-1900 (Paper One);
American Literature (Paper Two);
Students must also put together a **coursework portfolio** for their final unit.

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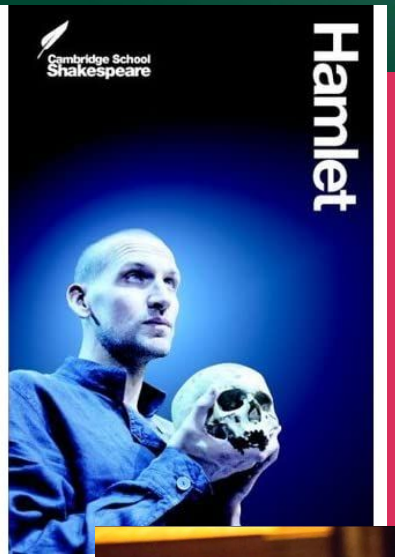
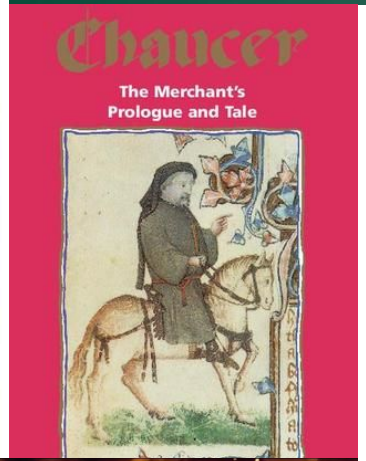
What do students study for **pre-1900 literature** (Paper One)?

★ **'Hamlet' by William Shakespeare**
Students complete *two tasks*: a *close analysis* of a passage from the play and an essay exploring key *critical arguments*.

★ **'The Merchant's Tale'** by Geoffrey Chaucer and '**The Duchess of Malfi'** by John Webster
Students write an essay *comparing* this epic poem and play.





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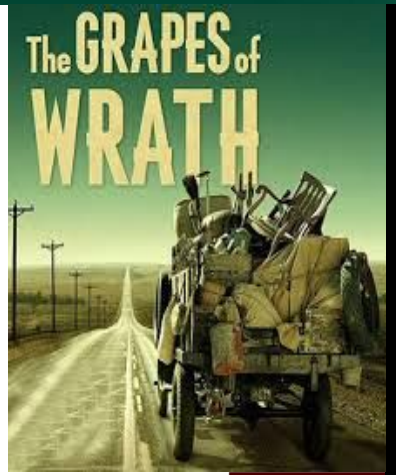
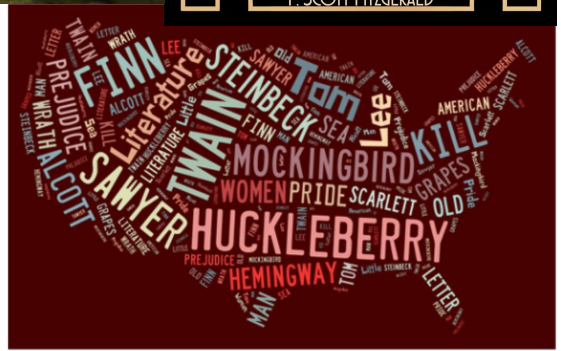
What do students study for **American Literature** (Paper Two)?





- ★ Students become experts on **American Literature written between 1880 and 1940**, reading a wide range of novels and short stories from this era. Their first exam task is to analyse an *'unseen'* piece of American *prose*.

- ★ **'The Great Gatsby'** by F Scott Fitzgerald and **'Grapes of Wrath'** by John Steinbeck Students write an essay *comparing* these novels.

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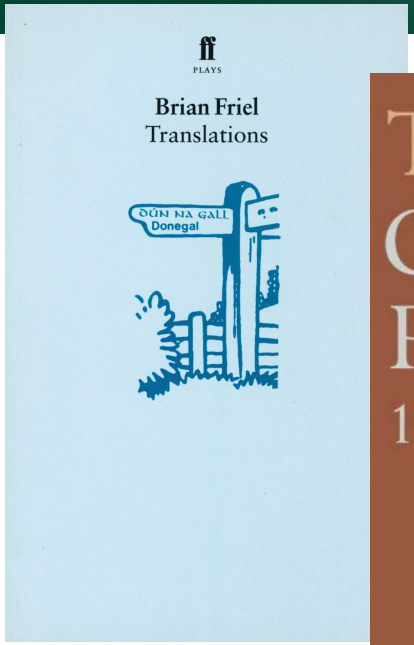
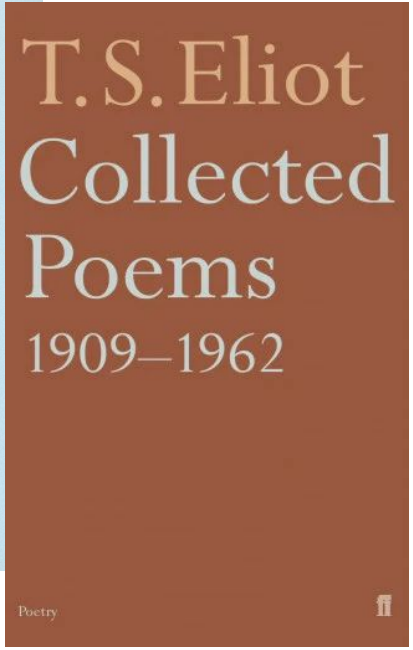
What do students study for their **coursework portfolio**?

Students complete two tasks:

★ *critical analysis* of **poetry** by **TS Eliot**;

★ an *extended essay comparing themes of conflict* in a 20th century play (‘**Translations’** by Brian Friel) and a 21st century novel (individual **student’s own choice**).





What do our students say? Our Year 13 students share their experiences of A Level English Literature:

“A Level English Literature is very different from GCSE English. It’s not just about being good at the subject at GCSE; you have to **enjoy reading**”. *Jess*

“English Lit is a blend of lots of different subjects. It covers such a **breadth of knowledge**: in lessons we have explored so many ideas from history, geography, ethics, psychology, even science.” *Emily*

“When you get to the next stage and are exploring university options, English Literature **opens up a broad range of choices** for you”. *Grace*

“You have to be willing to **get involved in class discussions**. Taking part in discussions is the main thing we do in lessons”. *Mattie*

“This is a **really diverse subject**. I have become an expert in everything from Medieval Middle English, to modern American literature. I have found this a really enjoyable challenge”. *Darshi*

“English Literature enables you to develop the **ability to consider multiple perspectives and viewpoints**. It really challenges you to think critically”. *Helen*

“In studying English Literature, you will be able to master many **transferable skills**. This is especially true of the **essay skills** you develop. This has really helped me in my other subjects, like Geography. It has even helped me to write my UCAS personal statement!” *Kathryn*

“From studying English I have developed **time management skills** and the ability to prioritise my work”. *Rozafa*

“This is a demanding A Level. You have to do a lot of reading outside of lessons: you have to be **self-disciplined and well organised**. It is very different from GCSE English in that your A Level teachers expect you to be self-reliant and motivated.” *Tara*

“There is such a **variety** of critical approaches and wider research - this is a **wealth of material** that you just don’t get a chance to explore at GCSE”. *Kathryn*

“In studying English Literature, I have developed my **own writing style**. I have enjoyed being pushed **out of my comfort zone**!” *Rinesa*

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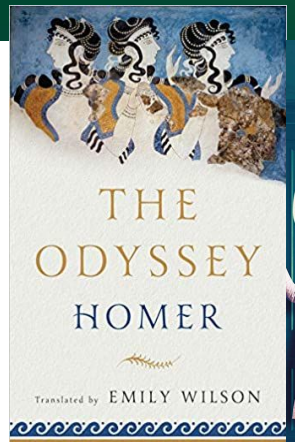
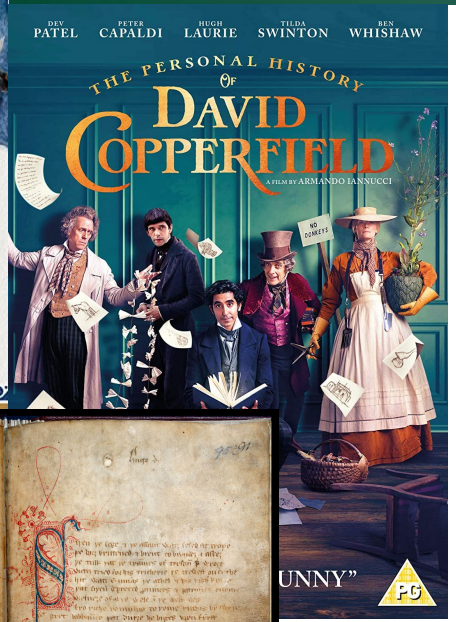
How do we challenge our students and extend their learning?

In addition to the syllabus content, we require our students to complete an **Extended Project** each term. Students work collaboratively to create podcasts, artwork, musical interpretations, write speeches and make films in response to literature. Project topics undertaken include: the classic novel, modernism and naturalism, renaissance literature and classics.





So if you enjoy reading, relish a challenge, love discussions and want a subject that will open doors, A Level English Literature is for you.