

A Level English Literature at Barking Abbey School

What will I study?

We follow the Edexcel exam board.

There are three exam papers for A Level English Literature plus coursework. These are organised into the three main areas of literature.

Paper	Topic	Length of exam	% of A level
1	Drama Topic: Tragedy Texts: Shakespeare- 'Othello' Tennessee Williams-'A Streetcar Named Desire'	2hrs 15mins	30%
2	Prose Topic: Science and Society Texts: Mary Shelley- 'Frankenstein' Margaret Atwood- 'The Handmaid's Tale'	1hr 15mins	20%
3	Poetry Post-2000 poetry/unseen poetry: Text: 'Poems of the Decade' Pre-1900 Poetry Text: Chaucer 'The Wife of Bath'	2hrs 15mins	30%
NEA	Comparative coursework-two texts	2500-3000 words	20%

How will I be taught?

From Year 7 to Year 11, you have studied a range of novels, plays and poetry. You have also studied a variety of genres within these: The Gothic, Tragedy, Modern Drama and a broad selection of poetry dating from Medieval times right through to ones written in the last few years. This has set you up for A Level, providing you with the skills and knowledge that will be useful for the next 2 years.

For example, your study of 'Macbeth' at GCSE prepares you for the study of Shakespeare's great tragedy, 'Othello.'

A level lessons have some similarities to GCSE lessons you've experienced and enjoyed with lots of reading, discussion and analysis of the texts. At A Level we also look at critical theory, which helps you develop your own arguments and personal responses to the texts.

However, there is much more emphasis on independent work/reading and you will be expected to read much more regularly than at GCSE. The key to success is reading widely around the texts studied and all assessments involve extended writing so regular exam/essay planning and writing will feature in this subject.



What are the entry requirements for this course?

You will need to achieve a grade 5 in both English Language and English Literature GCSE.

Why study English?

Studying English Literature will help you to think critically and help you form strong arguments about the texts you study. You will learn about the contexts in which texts are written and how these influence some of our greatest writers. Universities like to see that you have studied English Literature as they understand how valuable the skills you learn in our subject.

What are the Job Opportunities?

English Literature equips you with the transferable skills that are highly prized by a range of employers – such as analysis and the ability to put forward your argument.

Other skills - Being able to critically analyse information and present different arguments, balanced views and reach a substantiated conclusions.

Students who have studied A Level Literature go on to careers in teaching, government, journalism, publishing, arts and media, marketing and consultancy, law, libraries, archives and museums, voluntary and social services, IT and communications and medicine.

Teaching, government,
journalism, publishing,
arts and media,
marketing
and consultancy, law,
libraries, archives and
museums, voluntary
and social services, IT
and communications
and medicine.

What if I want more information about [insert subject name]?

Speak to your English teacher or email the Head of Department or KS5 Progress and Achievement Lead for English:

howellst@barkingabbeysschool.co.uk

OR

khanl@barkingabbeysschool.co.uk

What do current or past students say about English at Barking Abbey?

"If you can appreciate reading and have strong opinions, it's a great way of exercising and honing your own critical voice. You're able to participate in intelligent discussions and it's thoroughly enjoyable. Plus, you don't have to memorise quotes!"-Sahibah Y13

"This subject contains a lot of teamwork and group discussions. It's a lot of fun and there are lots of laughs!"- Zohra Y13

Why study English at Barking Abbey?

The English Dept at Barking Abbey has continued to achieve encouraging results at A Level. You will be taught by teachers who are passionate about their subject and the texts you will be reading.

Many of our students have gone on to study English Literature at university, as well as studying other subjects that appreciate students who have studied English Literature at A Level.

	A*-A	A*-B	A*-C
2021	34.6%	80.8%	88.5%
2020	7.7%	30.8%	74.4%
2019	10.8%	32.1%	60.7

What extra-curricular opportunities are there in English?

When possible, A level students will have the opportunity to visit the theatre to watch either drama productions of texts that they are studying for their exams or, if that is not possible, productions of plays of a similar genre or era.

We also like to take our students to conferences where their texts or genres are discussed and debated. We find this is hugely beneficial and helps them develop their understanding further.



What can I do to prepare for September?

There are lots of things you can do to prepare for English A Level over the summer. You are very fortunate that you live in a city that is rich in culture! Here are some suggestions:

- Go to the theatre and watch a play (not a musical!). This will help you understand the way drama is performed and how an audience responds to it. Look at how the set is designed and how lighting, props, costume etc are used.
- If you can't make it to the theatre, there are plenty of streaming services that show theatre productions.
 - Visit The Globe Theatre. This will give you a real taste of how audiences in Shakespeare's time would have watched drama.
- Read! Either read one of the texts you will study in Y12 or read some of the books that have won the top awards (The Booker Prize is a good place to start!) in the last few years. Set up a book club with some friends and talk about what you've read. This will help you prepare for making contributions in class and help build your confidence. The English Dept can also supply you with an updated booklist later this year.
- Author or book podcasts. Listen to writers talking about the writing process. This is always fascinating!