



Aylsham High School

*Part of the Aylsham Learning Federation
It takes a Whole Community to Educate a Child*

17 September 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Year 11 English

I am writing to share some important updates about the KS4 English curriculum at Aylsham High School, and to ask for your support in helping your child to achieve their very best in the English examinations in summer 2021.

English Literature Examination 2021 – Choice of units

Due to the disruption of the students' time in school this year, Ofqual have made the decision to streamline the summer 2021 literature examination for all exam boards. This means that students can 'drop' one of the five text units they have studied and focus on the remaining four.

The compulsory units that **all students must revise** are:

- Shakespeare play
- Unseen poetry
- Anthology poetry

The students have a **choice to make for their final unit**. They need to make the choice between their modern text OR their 19th century text.

Your child should know which texts they have studied but if they need a reminder, the modern texts studied across the cohort include *The Lord of the Flies*, *An Inspector Calls*, *Animal Farm* and *Blood Brothers*, while the 19th century texts studied include *The Sign of Four*, *Frankenstein*, and *A Christmas Carol*.

Students will need to make a decision on whether they continue with their 19th century text or their modern text by the 1st December at the latest so that we can organise our exam entries in a timely manner. Ideally, they would make a decision as soon as possible as this will help them to organise their revision plans. They just need to let their teacher know their decision and we will manage the rest.

Homework and independent study

As you will now be aware, your child's English class has changed. The mix of students in the year 11 class groups have been designed to fit timetabling requirements for maths and science, both of which have tiered exam entry. This change to grouping means that within each English class there will be a mixture of texts studied for literature e.g. some students will have read *Frankenstein*; others will have read *The Sign of Four*.

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Whilst we will ensure that **universal literature revision time** is timetabled in for our new classes, I think it is important to make it clear to you at this stage **that independent study is going to be essential for students to ensure success in the examinations.**

I am asking you to support us in encouraging your child to complete one hour of English literature homework each week from now until February, when we will hold a series of online mock exams to check their confidence and understanding.

We have put in place plenty of support to aid the students in their independent study:

1. Weekly homework for their literature texts in the form of a comprehensive worksheet on Google Classroom, which will be checked by their teacher each week.
2. Fortnightly Google Meets with a teacher in small groups to discuss the text and homework and answer any questions.
3. GCSE study guides freely available on our e-Lending platform.
4. GCSE texts freely available on our e-Lending platform.
5. Video guides available for essay plans, context, characters and themes on our English YouTube channel.

It is essential that students engage with this programme of independent study. The time in school with teachers will be spent largely on the requirements for the language GCSE, as this is always the focus of year 11 having studied literature in year 10. It is essential that we make every lesson count from now until the spring by maximising the students' opportunities to practise, practise, practise their language skills.

As literature was studied in year 10, students already have everything they need to move forward with this independently. They need to now maximise their time outside school and use the ample resources available to practise, practise, practise and consolidate the work they did last year.

If students engage with the homework programme, they will find that it helps their understanding of the language texts that we will be studying in school, as the same skills are tested across both exams. If they fail to engage, they could affect not just their literature outcomes, but their language outcomes too.

Important dates for your diary

Mock exams have become increasingly important; evidence of mock performance was integral to the decisions made in the awarding of grades this summer. It is important that students are prepared and do their best in their upcoming mock exams in case we are faced with a similar decision-making process in the future.

Please find below dates for each mock exam:

1. ***Monday 23rd November – English Language Paper 1 mock exam***
Monday 30th November – English Language Paper 2 mock exam

The students will be working towards these exams in school during lesson time.

2. ***Week commencing February 8th – English Literature Paper 1 mock exam***
Week commencing February 15th – English Literature Paper 2 mock exam

The students will have been working towards these **exams independently via their weekly homework**, as well as in universal literature revision lessons in school.

3. **Week commencing March 15th – English Language Paper 1 mock exam**
Week commencing March 22nd – English Language Paper 2 mock exam

The students will have been working towards these exams in school during lesson time.

I hope this information is useful and that you are satisfied that we have the best interests of all students at heart. If you would like to discuss anything in this letter, or if you have any questions, please email me at jbates@aylshamhigh.norfolk.sch.uk and I will be happy to help. At this stage face-to-face meetings are not advisable but if required we could speak via Zoom or Google Meet.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bates".

Jo Bates
Head of English