

# A Level English



## Why this subject?

English is a subject that truly allows you to explore the world around you, before you, and the world that has not yet arrived. It will enable you to explore what makes us human, how society has developed, what we have overcome, and what we still have left to face. English gives you the ability to analyse what you are given and evaluate it, or interpret it, and to arrive at your own opinion. It is a subject which allows you to be imaginative and creative, but also analytical and critical. For these reasons it is looked on favourably by all universities and can lead you down a plethora of career paths.

## Course Outline

The course is split in half and you study two genres: crime and tragedy. A different teacher will help you to navigate and understand the key literature within each genre.

### Crime

We begin with the study of the genre, exploring how criminals are presented, what settings they exist in, and the other key character types within the genre. This forms part of the unseen crime element, where you must analyse a crime text and consider how it conforms to or subverts the genre. We then study the poetry of Browning, Crabbe and Wilde, and explore how they present the criminal psyche and the justice system. Dickens' *Oliver Twist* is our core text, and we begin to consider to what extent criminality is innate (within us) or part of how we grow. This then leads us on to the modern novel *Atonement*, where we explore the repercussions of false evidence, and the devastating effects they have on a family facing the inevitability of WWII.

### Tragedy

The tragedy side of the course begins with Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, a domestic tragedy which is set against the backdrop of the Great Depression. We then explore the poetry of Keats, and apply tragic conventions to his poems, and consider to what extent we can consider them tragedies. The key text within this side of the course is Shakespeare's *Othello*, and within this we will explore the more classical conventions of the genre and how Shakespeare uses them to interest the audience. Overall we ask ourselves questions about the human condition, and how the tragedy genre helps us to explore what makes us human.



## Key Information

Exam Board	AQA
Qualification Type	A Level
Entry Requirements	Grade 7 at English Literature GCSE
Head of Department	Mrs Webb

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## Assessment Outline

### Exams – 80% of the course

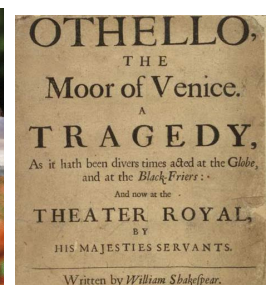
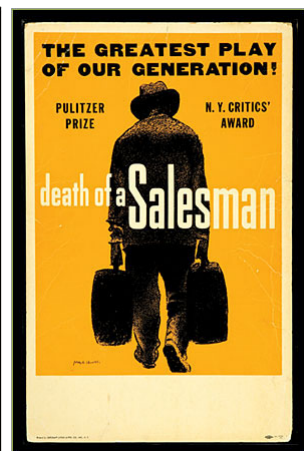
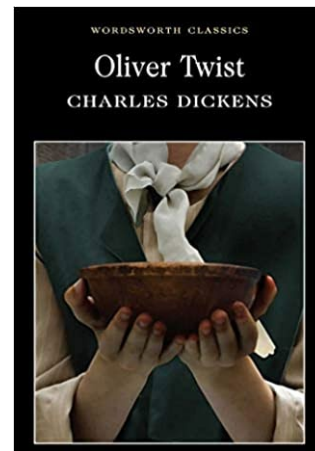
**Paper 1 (40%):** Tragedy paper. Here you are assessed on *Othello*, *Death of a Salesman*, and Keats' poetry. There are two questions on *Othello*, meaning it makes up two thirds of the paper (50/75 marks) followed by a question where you link your final two texts.

**Paper 2 (40%):** You must first respond to an unseen crime text, followed by a whole question in response to a character or theme in *Oliver Twist*. The final third of the exam will give you a more open question in relation to crime and you will have to link the final two texts, the poetry cluster and *Atonement* in your response to this final task.

### **Non examined assessment/ coursework (20%):**

You must produce two pieces of coursework which are independent – you choose the questions and have free choice over the text of one of the pieces. There is a drafting stage where your teacher can provide general feedback before you write your finished responses – each one is 1,500 words.

**Assessment objectives:** The assessment objectives remain the same for all elements of the course, and are not remarkably different from the GCSE objectives. There are five objectives which cover your level of written response, ability to analyse methods used by the writers, your understanding of context, your application of genre to the text, and finally your ability to consider various interpretations of the texts you respond to.



## Careers and next steps

English is seen as a skills-based subject, and for that reason it can support careers in any field. Ultimately English Literature teaches us how to communicate, and this is a skill which is necessary in any subject at degree level, or anyone going on to the workplace following their sixth form study. It is a subject which will serve you well in interviews, as it teaches you to respond and interpret efficiently, and is a subject favoured by employers and universities for the range of skills you develop as you study it.

Students that have studied English at Churchdown School have gone on to study courses within acting and stage management, English Literature, journalism, both primary and secondary teaching, nursing, criminology, sports development, film and media, and art foundation courses. It is clear from the students studying English at Churchdown that it is a subject that can take you anywhere, and support any path you choose to take.

