

# WNAT KS3 English Curriculum Overview

**Rationale:** This conceptual curriculum is designed to develop pupils' sense of English as an academic discipline by linking its abstract frames and metaphors to concrete examples within challenging texts. Each concept is foregrounded, introduced and exemplified using extracts drawn from both fiction and non-fiction, before being explored in a longer key text, and then revisited to develop a deeper, more nuanced understanding. Concepts can't be separated from each other and taught in isolation, but we are able to foreground each one in turn so that it can be explored and exemplified thoroughly, enabling pupils to develop their own complex schema about English as a subject over time. The concepts also underpin the teaching of writing and grammar. Throughout KS3, pupils will use the range of texts and extracts they study in their reading as models of writing, which they will emulate. As they practice and become more fluent in a range of writing styles, we hope their own individual style will emerge. As research on the teaching of grammar is inconclusive, we have adopted the approach favoured by Hochmann & Wexler (*The Writing Revolution*), which focuses less on technical terminology and more on the relationship between language and thought.

## 7.1 Story & Context

This scheme develops pupils' awareness that texts are constructs and that writers are influenced by their experiences and their cultural contexts

## 7.2 Characterisation & Setting

This scheme focuses on two crucial aspects of authors' craft, connecting textual examples of people and places with the conceptual understanding of how and why they express a writer's intention. There is a link to non-fiction (travel writing) to exemplify the conceptual connections between writing about real and imagined people and places.

## 7.3 Genre & Theme

These concepts are key in developing a disciplinary schema around English as an academic subject. The work builds on the previous unit by placing characters and settings into the wider framework of genres and themes, so that pupils gain greater insight into how authors use characters and settings to convey deeper meanings. Studying genre also helps pupils begin to see how texts relate to one another.

## 8.1 Perspective & Point-of-View

Building on the schemes studied so far, particularly 7.1, *Story & Context*, this looks at how a writer's perspective is influenced by their context, and how that in turn influences the writing they produce. We also begin to explore the relationship between a **writer's perspective** and a particular **character's point-of-view**.

## 8.2 Rhetoric

This scheme will seek to avoid over-emphasis on technique-spotting by delving into the more profound notions of ethos, pathos & logos expounded by Aristotle. We also take a broad view of 'rhetoric' by including more subtle approaches to the notion of influencing via text, for example within feature articles, as well as looking at bolder approaches via speeches and forms of propaganda.

## 8.3 Connotation, Imagery & Symbolism

In this scheme, we explore metaphorical thought and language so that pupils learn about the conventions and shared meanings that underpin English. The aim is to guide them to more nuanced and insightful analytical thinking as well as developing creative flair.

## 9.1 Grammar & Meaning

Although grammar is taught throughout the KS3 curriculum, in this unit we pay particular attention to how writers use grammar to create subtle and profound meanings, which realise and reflect their overall vision. We look at fronting, creating pace and rhythm and creating pattern and contrast amongst other things.

## 9.2 Form & Structure

Pupils will have encountered these terms already but this scheme will allow for a more in-depth exploration of how different forms create different kinds of experience for audiences. We also look at how sequencing relates to meaning, and how writers make choices about what to focus on or draw attention to in a text.

## 9.3 Representation

This scheme explores how groups in society are represented in texts. It draws on all of the previous concepts to develop a more mature understanding that every text is a representation of reality, and that any representation of reality is heavily influenced by contextual factors and by a writer's own personal perspective.



**Key text:** *Sir Gawain & the Green Knight* translated by Simon Armitage.

This text allows us to explore a particular historical context and its impact on the themes and characters a writer includes in their story. Through this text, we introduce the themes of identity and belonging.

**A range of extracts includes:** creation myths from Japan, Scandinavia and Greece, which capture early human storytelling and exemplify the way stories can create shared identity and address common concerns. A broad range of examples are included to show how storytelling has unfolded. We include *Anita & Me* by Meera Syal, *Oliver Twist* and *Frankenstein* as well as Bible stories and the legend of King Arthur.

**Curriculum links:** this concept underpins all the others. Once pupils are confident in seeing texts as constructs, further aspects of a conceptual disciplinary schema can build around this core understanding.



**Key text:** *The Graveyard Book* by Neil Gaiman.

Gaiman's novel is both a fantasy and something of a bildungsroman. We can use it to analyse a writer's exploration of aspects of growing up. Gaiman uses a range of strategies to present his characters, allowing pupils to explore these approaches and use some of them in their own writing. The setting is also an important 'character' in the story and a good example of gothic writing.

**A range of extracts includes:** writing from various genres and time periods, including Roald Dahl's *The Mildenhall Treasure*, beginning to introduce ideas they will study further in 7.3.

**Curriculum links:** this concept builds on the previous one by focusing in on two key aspects. These are easier to grasp and to exemplify than some of the more abstract ideas pupils will study later. It also explores a different kind of heroic character to the one we see in *Sir Gawain* so adds a further example of a heroic protagonist. It also begins to introduce the notions of genre and theme.



**Key text:** *The Giver* by Lois Lowry.

This text allows us to explore a particular genre - dystopia - in detail. The novel incorporates all of the common features you would expect to see in a dystopian story. It's a very clear example of this genre and allows us to explore the idea of self vs society.

**A range of extracts includes:** other dystopian fiction, including *1984*, as well as examples from other genres. For instance, *The Raven* is used to help exemplify the gothic genre.

**Curriculum links:** Dystopian writing makes particularly rich use of settings in conveying meaning so this scheme will build on the previous one, 7.2. By the end of year 7, pupils will have a good conceptual grounding in all of the most fundamental aspects of English. They will understand texts as constructs, used deliberately to convey meanings through a range of approaches.



**Key text:** *Journey's End* by RC Sherriff.

This text allows us to explore a work written by someone with a particularly keen perspective - Sherriff was a war veteran writing a play based on his own experiences. He was also frustrated by the way those who were not at the frontline struggled to comprehend what it was really like. He creates an authentic view of life in the trenches in order to put forward a more realistic perspective of WWI. This makes it a particularly good text for exemplifying the concept of perspective. We also introduce the trauma as a theme.

**A range of extracts includes:** other perspectives on the war, including the way in which Rudyard Kipling's work is altered by the death of his son at the Battle of Loos. Excerpts from *The Long Song* by Andrea Levy allow pupils to experience another important period in our history - before and after the abolition of slavery, and see how Levy compares and contrasts the perspectives of two different generations.

**Curriculum links:** this is the first play that pupils will have studied at KS3. It allows pupils to see how the conventions they have already studied are reflected in a playtext. It also further develops their understanding of the complex and challenging notions of heroes and heroism.



**Key text:** *Animal Farm* by George Orwell.

This text exemplifies the significance of rhetoric in relation to political oppression, which is an important theme for pupils to study. We will also look at ideas within this, such as the relationship between emotion and reason in the human psyche.

**A range of extracts includes:** Henry V, allowing pupils to explore Shakespeare's use of language in the St Crispin's Day speech, and a range of political speeches from across the political spectrum. Articles from the 19th century will immerse pupils in Victorian writing and sensibilities to build contextual knowledge as well as conceptual understanding. Propaganda posters from WWI will also be briefly revisited.

**Curriculum links:** this concept builds on the idea that writers have a perspective by exploring *how* a perspective might be developed and expressed in both written and spoken language, in order to influence an audience.



**Key text:** *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding.

This text is allegorical and Golding draws on many symbols to create meanings. Those meanings can be tied to a clear overarching core idea about the duality of humanity, which can be tracked across the text in order to explore how it develops.

**A range of extracts includes:** some of the extracts and longer texts already studied, to deepen understanding and build stronger essay writing skills. Pupils will revisit *The Raven* by Edgar Allan Poe, and go on to study *Blessing* by Imtiaz Dharker and *They Tried to Lock up Freedom* by Beverley Naidoo.

**Curriculum links:** this fundamental concept will ripple through every single scheme but is foregrounded here at a time when pupils will have a secure understanding of texts as deliberate and purposeful constructs that convey complex meanings. We will build on this by exploring how language underpins the meaning-making and ensure that pupils' language analysis is always rooted in meanings and authorial intentions.



**Key text:** *Sherlock Holmes & The Adventure of the Speckled Band* by Sir Arthur Conan-Doyle.

This text allows us to explore a popular genre more deeply and to notice how the structure of the language contributes to meaning and contributes to characterisation.

**A range of extracts includes:** other examples of the detective genre as well as a broad range of fiction and non-fiction texts designed to show how grammar relates to themes and characterisation

**Curriculum links:** The unit will deepen their understanding of language as a tool for creating meaning, something they have already explored in previous units. It will also begin to build their knowledge of structure by looking at the structure of small units within text - clauses and sentences.



**Key text:** *Heroes* by Robert Cormier.

The manipulation of time makes this an interesting text through which to explore structure. It also allows us to reflect on the notion of a 'hero', an idea pupils will have come across before, and deepen pupils' understanding of this idea as well as introducing guilt as a theme. Exploring other themes, such as manipulation and jealousy, also provide a good basis for studying *Othello* later in the year.

**A range of extracts includes:** examples which use dual narrative, such as *Abomination*, to show how interweaving characters' points-of-view can create a particular perception of an unfolding narrative. And examples where juxtaposition intensifies the emotional resonance of an unfolding story. For example, in *Friedrich*, where emotional intensity comes from moving from a happy memory immediately into a tragic event. A range of poetry will introduce pupils to the idea of meter, and blank and free verse. Pupils will study *Birches* by Robert Frost, *From Blossoms* by Li Young-Lee and *Valentine* by Carol Ann Duffy, as well as extracts from *Hamlet* and *Dr Faustus*.

**Curriculum links:** this scheme builds pupils' sense of *how* writers create meanings. Having explored imagery and subtle grammatical choices, pupils will be ready to move on to learning about broader structural devices and gain deeper insight into how narratives are constructed.



**Key text:** *Othello* by William Shakespeare.

This text allows us to explore representation using a range of examples as well as building pupils' understanding of and confidence with Shakespearean texts. We also explore jealousy and betrayal through this text.

**A range of extracts includes:** historical examples of how have been presented over time and how literature has reflected and helped to drive forward social change.

**Curriculum links:** this concept builds on the previous ones by drawing together ideas about how writers, responding to their context and their characterisation on that context, might convey messages about society through characterisation, language and structure.

