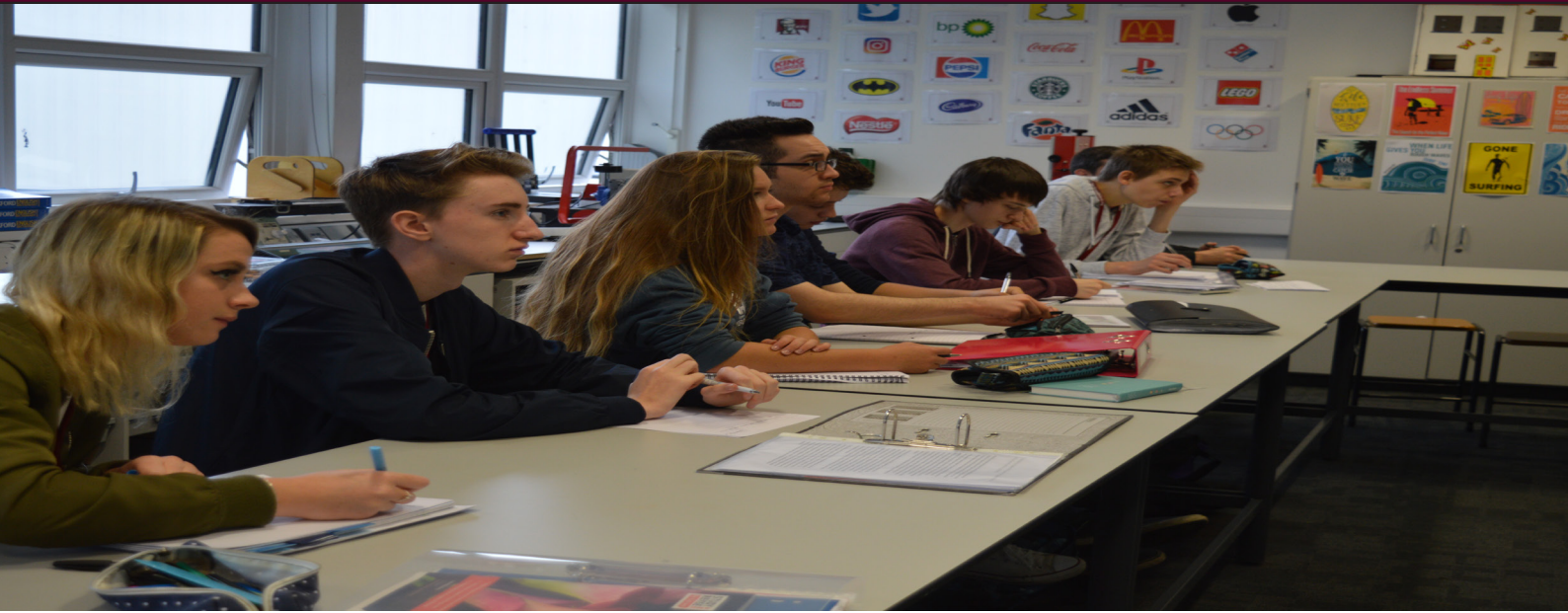




Sapere Aude



# English Language Curriculum

## Intent

### Curriculum Vision

To understand English language is to understand how language shapes the individual, society and global identity.

#### *Language and the Individual*

Students begin by examining how babies learn language when in the womb and at each stage of human development. Students study the fundamental aspects of language, including teen speak, slang and digital communication. As students analyse the use of language, they explore the relationship between language and identity, considering how our accent and vocabulary represent who we are as individuals.

#### *Language and Society*

The focus then moves beyond the individual to society. Students develop their schemata of English Language by exploring a wide range of sociolinguistic perspectives on the influence of race, gender and different forms of power. Provocative questions such as 'Is the English language inherently sexist?' or 'Can language be used to exclude social groups?' are debated throughout the course. Political, social and current affairs are central to student research.

#### *Language and Global Identity*

Students develop an understanding of the rich global history of the English language. Students consider how language can be a powerful tool of communication and consider how influential English has been throughout recent history. Students explore the future of the English language and engage in critical debates about the ever-changing landscape of English language.

Students are equipped to be part of a wider academic conversation, enabling them to be at the forefront of linguistic change and exploration.

### Concepts and Skills

**Theoretical:** Academic and critical understanding of a variety of language discourses – reading, understanding and evaluating complex and critical theories and understanding how these theories have evolved and developed.

- Critical understanding of language discourses, such as discourses of conflict, decay, morality, disease and invasion.
- Critical understanding of theoretical schools of thought such as prescriptivism vs descriptivism.
- Critical evaluation of the relationship between discourses and how they influence language analysis.
- Critical analysis and evaluation of linguists who are central to developing language debates.

**Analytical:** Academic historical understanding – an understanding of how language has changed, evolved and developed from the Middle Ages to the present day.

- Analytical understanding of lexical and grammatical choices, semantics, pragmatics and language levels.
- Critical analysis of patterns created by language choice and how these influences meaning.
- Reading, analysing and understanding the impact of language change and meaning across the ages.
- Understanding how etymology changes and develops, and how this affects meaning.
- Understanding how language use changes and develops.
- Understanding vowel shifts and the changes of word usage, such as neologisms and words dying out.

**Practical:** Global capital – developing an appreciation for the people, places and unique experiences of our world through reading and writing about a wide range of texts.

- Valuing individuality and cultural diversity through the study of World Englishes and ethnolects.
- Analytical writing.
- Application of academic and subject-specific vocabulary.
- Analytical and critical academic writing for a variety of contexts, e.g. extended essay writing, analytical presentations, creative writing.
- Examining the layers of meaning behind language choices.
- Applying critical interpretations and considering multiple interpretations of one text.
- Ability to read, understand and summarise complex critical essays.

Students also analyse a range of different forms of texts: transcripts, texts, tweets, opinion articles, critical theory, online forums, historical texts and original texts (e.g. texts in Old English).

## **Disciplinary Literacy**

### **Disciplinary approach**

In English Language we support the development of disciplinary vocabulary and the students' ability to read, write and communicate at an academic level so that they master the nuances of the curriculum and are equipped with the necessary tools needed to communicate effectively as academic linguists. As students dive into the complexities of English grammar they learn to maintain a consistently perceptive and analytical approach to challenging texts. Students will encounter texts from Old English to present day, and explore the transformation of language across time.

### **Interdisciplinary approach**

In order to support the mastery of key concepts in English Language, our interdisciplinary approach unites elements of Sociology, History and Psychology.

### **Intellectual autonomy**

In order to develop intellectual autonomy and confidence, we foster the willingness and ability of students in English Language to comprehend challenging texts, assimilate key concepts and synthesise them with prior learning. Students are equipped to think critically and apply strategies independently so that they can form their own cohesive conclusions and be able to express that in writing.

This is facilitated by explicitly teaching students to develop the stamina and resilience to approach a variety of different challenging questions and problems that arise from reading linguistic criticism and provocative texts in a variety of different forms. They will develop the skills to write concisely, coherently and in a logical order.

Students are encouraged to engage in additional independent reading to deepen their understanding of linguistics and debates surrounding language change. Recommended course text books are *The AQA English Language: A Level and AS* by Dan Clayton (OUP Oxford, 2015) and *A/AS Level English Language for AQA Student Book Student Edition* by Marcello Giovanelli (Cambridge University Press, 2015). Students should aspire to achieve mastery in grammar, and a recommended reference text for this is the *Oxford A-Z of Grammar and Punctuation* by John Seely (OUP Oxford, 2020). David Crystal's *50 Questions About English Usage Pocket Edition* (Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers, 2021) is a user-friendly book that covers topics ranging from general enquiries to specific points of grammar, pronunciation, orthography, vocabulary, idiom and style. Engaging audio content on the world of words and ways in which we use them is explored by Michael Rosen in BBC Radio 4's *Word of Mouth* weekly broadcast on BBC Radio 4, with past episodes available on BBC iPlayer. We also recommend that English Language students sign up to the academic journal website JSTOR where they can access 100 free online academic articles a month.

### **Application of Mathematics**

The curriculum recognises the need for students to be able to apply mathematics effectively. In English Language students use and develop their knowledge of statistics and data analysis to interpret data collected by linguists. Students will often have to read and interpret graphs that explore trends in language use. They will need to be able to use these data and statistics to make conclusions about the ways in which we use language.

### **Independent Study**

In English Language students undertake both directed and self-directed independent learning activities that support the strengthening of long-term memory and retrieval. Independent study helps our students achieve mastery in English Language and prepares them to work at an undergraduate level.

Directed independent learning tasks set in English Language can include background reading to build knowledge and deeper connections to the existing frame of learning, or responding to interlocking questions on a given topic across more than one text source. Self-directed independent study in English Language involves retrieval practice which is a crucial component of mastery. As students encounter challenges and learn to wrestle with demanding concepts and texts, they develop not only their knowledge and understanding but also their resilience through perseverance.

Instead of revision being perceived as something that is crammed into a few weeks, independent study supports spaced practice throughout the curriculum. By repeatedly returning to content covered, students' knowledge has time to 'rest and be refreshed'.

We recognise that not all students process material at the same rate. Students who need extra support to achieve mastery are supported by targeted intervention in English Language where a staged or 'scaffolded' process is used to enable students to move from being dependent learners to autonomous ones.

All students have access to our Academy library where a wide range of academic texts, journals and other resources are available.

## **Implementation**

### **Overview Statement**

The curriculum in English Language is sequenced coherently so that knowledge, concepts and skills are rigorously developed over time. This supports all students, including the most disadvantaged, and those with high levels of need, especially SEND. Planning is informed by Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction and Cognitive Theory which support students in building secure schemas.

Interdisciplinary links and the application of mathematics are explicitly referenced and exploited in order to deepen understanding. Vocabulary is developed in English Language using the principles outlined in the Frayer Model and students are equipped to be able to read, write and speak like a linguist. This is done by explicitly teaching vocabulary in lessons as part of students' wider historical

understanding of the changes and developments of the English language. Students will explore the intricacies of etymology and will develop an understanding of the evolving meanings of words. They will explore the rises and falls in popularity of certain words, which in turn will help them to recognise patterns and developments in vocabulary as it is happening in the present day.

Through the use of independent study resources in English Language, students learn at greater depth so that they can become masters in English Language and in the skills required to be intellectually autonomous. This is implemented by engaging students in whole-class debates, independent research projects, class presentations and extended creative and critical writing tasks.

Regular retrieval-based activities strengthen long-term memory and aid fluency, as do our cumulative mid-term and end-of-year assessments. Throughout the course, students will learn to take responsibility for their learning. As their knowledge of the constantly evolving English language develops, so too will their ability to be discerning within their own use of language.

Technology is employed via a number of methods to strengthen learning. Students will be required to create their own PowerPoint presentations as part of their project-based independent study. Students will also be required to complete independent research and we encourage them to listen to academic podcasts and watch a range of free university lectures online. An integral part of the course is also analysis and understanding of the ways in which technology has affected and influenced our use of language; students will therefore need to analyse the way we communicate via technology.

Learning character is developed through key concepts of resilience and empathy. In order to flourish in their studies, students will learn how to be masters of communication. They will approach challenging concepts that will test their moral fibre. They will learn how to challenge rigorously, listen intently and reflect meaningfully.

## **Impact**

The Key Stage 5 curriculum builds upon students' initial understanding, extending their knowledge in the areas of: Language and Diversity; Language Change; and Language, the Individual and Society. Through developing their knowledge of key theorists, language discourses and grammar, students are able to identify patterns in the way we use language today, notice historical changes in the way we communicated in the past, and predict what our language might look like in the future. Students also develop an understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of their studies and this is supported through explicit cross-curricular links in Sociology, History and Psychology.

Students use their knowledge of cognitive theory to recognise and use the most impactful methods of revision and retrieval practice.

Academic progress in English Language is recognised through the English Language A-level which acts as a benchmark of mastery; this provides students with the national currency needed for access to higher education and apprenticeship courses, and prepares them for a career in any workplace.