



The Henrietta Barnett School

English



Authenticity - Kindness - Curiosity
Connection - Endeavour

www.hbschool.org.uk

Year 7

In English, we aim to nurture creativity and to introduce students to a range of challenging and stimulating texts across a variety of genres. We foster confidence in responding to texts sensitively and analytically both orally and in writing.

The year begins with an exploration of poetry on the theme of 'Identity'. Students are given the chance to write their own poems expressing their sense of self, and to perform a poem as a class. In studying 'Animal Farm', they develop an understanding of the importance of contextual factors and authorial intent, character development, and how to select and embed quotations. The year continues with an exploration of how the English language has evolved over time. Students experiment with speaking formally in a KS3 Solo Speaking competition. They also explore Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' in terms of genre, plot, language, and theatrical devices. The year ends with students learning to write in different forms and for different purposes, through reading and writing non-fiction on the theme of 'food'.

Students enjoy regular library lessons, in which they are given the opportunity to discuss their independent reading with their friends and teachers. We also offer a range of super-curricular opportunities which include debating club, creative writing competitions and World Book Day celebrations.

Year 8

In Year 8, students begin to think more conceptually about texts, developing their critical vocabulary so that they can analyse the language with greater precision. By this stage, students are writing formal literature essays, and learn to select and use quotations effectively to support their arguments.

They begin the year with an in-depth exploration of the novel 'Of Mice and Men' by John Steinbeck, learning to articulate how the characters' behaviour is shaped by the historical context. Students are introduced to a broad range of authors through the Gothic Literature unit and learn to develop the sophistication of their own creative writing. Through their study of Shakespeare's 'Macbeth', students learn to comment precisely on the effects of language and to make connections across a text. Pupils read a range of poems on the theme of nature, using this as a model for their own poetry writing which is inspired by a trip into our nearby woodland. The year ends in a fun exploration of 'The Importance of Being Earnest' by Oscar Wilde which encourages students to gain confidence in reading and performing a classic text.

Students' public speaking skills are also further developed both in lessons and through competitions with other schools.

Year 9

In Year 9, students are given the challenge of reading texts of increasing length and complexity, both in terms of the ideas and the language used.

They begin the year by reading the classic play 'The Crucible' which provides them with an opportunity to learn about seventeenth century history, as well as modern American politics. When reading 'Pride and Prejudice' by Jane Austen, students grow more attuned to tone and irony, as well as humour. Students also explore a range of contemporary non-fiction and are given the chance to write in a range of forms and registers. The Conflict Poetry unit encourages students to compare texts, integrating their comparisons. Students end the year with an independent project exploring the genre of dystopian literature; they are encouraged to develop their understanding of the genre through independent reading.

By the end of KS3, students have acquired the skills to feel confident in the transition to GCSE, both in English Language and English Literature.

Key Stage 4

Having acquired the vital analytical skills necessary for academic study in Key Stage 3, students at Henrietta Barnett find that the transition to GCSE goes smoothly. We combine opportunities for independence and discussion with a rigorous approach to the demands of the examination. The students are encouraged to develop thoughtful and individual approaches; this gives them the confidence to be self-reliant when faced with new challenges, such as the unseen examination texts.

We follow the AQA exam board for both the Literature and Language GCSE. For the Literature paper, students study 'Lord of the Flies', 'Romeo and Juliet', 'Love and Relationships' poetry, and either the novel 'Frankenstein' or 'Jane Eyre'.

We aim to bring the subject alive through participation in theatre and conferences.

Key Stage 5

A large number of students continue to A level English Literature and beyond. We place real emphasis on students engaging in seminar-style lessons, which is excellent preparation for university. There is a strong focus on rigorous debate and academic research, and students must be prepared to immerse themselves in the world of literature. We approach the coursework in a unique way by offering each individual student the opportunity to choose her own authors and themes. This encourages independence, a sense of discovery and self-sufficiency.

We follow the EdExcel exam board. Students study 'Othello', 'A Streetcar Named Desire', 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles', either 'Wuthering Heights' or 'Mrs Dalloway', Romantic Poetry, and the 'Poems of the Decade' anthology.

Students take part in a broad range of super-curricular opportunities, including a visit to Keats House, a poetry conference, a weekly English Extension club and a two-day seminar in partnership with Queen Elizabeth's School.