

ENGLISH



Our vision:

English – and especially reading – is fundamental to a child’s educational success because it provides the key skills that will help them unlock the curriculum as a whole.

However, English is so much more than a gateway to success. English it has a strong creative dimension that allows children to express themselves and find their creative ‘voice’. It allows them to become skilled speakers and develop in confidence through debate and discussion. Indeed, through studying literature, for example, pupils explore the human experience; they explore meaning and ambiguity as well as the power of language.

Everything you do in English should be worthy of great merit, character, and value.

<p>Of great merit:</p> <h2>INTELLECTUAL</h2>	<p>A key aim of English is that it allows them to be able to communicate confidently, clearly, and articulately – opening up doors to different social groups and discourses in the future. We would like all children from Woldgate to go on to be able to hold their own in debate and to make their mark in the world around them. It is equally important that their writing should be sophisticated and carefully crafted.</p> <p>At both primary and secondary education, the gap between those who are word-rich and those who are word-poor coincides with lasting socio-economic and health inequalities. Consequently, developing spoken language, including vocabulary, is essential for the academic progress of all children.</p> <p>In addition, it is important that children are engaged in deeper ideas and concepts and so, in reading complex texts, they can develop skill and flair in discussing the philosophical dimensions to the literature they discover and, combining that with being able to communicate clearly, express complex ideas with flair.</p>
<p>Of great character:</p> <h2>EMPATHETIC</h2>	<p>By learning how others write about topics, we learn the way they think and pick their experiences, views, and ideologies. Through non-fiction and fiction reading, children will encounter a range of different perspectives across time, place, and political views. In doing they will interrogate and discuss these perspectives, becoming critical thinker and, crucially, be able to empathise with others and understand how different viewpoints are derived and communicated.</p>

Of great value:

LITERATE

Literacy is essential for adult life but is also the means through which children explore and enjoy the English and wider curriculum. Children take nationally standardised reading tests throughout upper and lower school. Results of these, including specific targets for each child, are posted home to parents.

Children who are identified for intervention as a result of these tests will either receive additional small group tuition during the school week or take part in our adaptive online learning programme.

We also provide challenges for our more able readers through our morning "Athena" enrichment programme. Our numeracy co-ordinator, Ms Wellock, is happy to provide details of these schemes.

Our teaching:

Speaking, reading and writing are not only the key varieties of English that children will study, they are also the means through which the subject is learned and taught. Consequently, teaching activities to improve speaking, reading and writing will necessarily involve activities that use speaking, reading and writing.

However, for each of these aspects of language practice of skills in itself is insufficient to help children excel – instead there is a body of knowledge that children can learn to help them make progress. Knowledge of language, which includes vocabulary and grammar, as well as knowledge of the world for comprehension, is vital to progress spoken language, reading and writing. This knowledge can also be used across each of these three modes of English - for example, they can use vocabulary learned through reading when they are speaking and writing, both in school and in their lives beyond it.

Consequently, although English is often thought of as a 'skills-based' subject, identifying the important knowledge – and how it will be effectively and carefully planned and taught over the course of the years – is central to our teaching at Woldgate School. We plan our curriculum carefully to ensure this knowledge is developed in a specific, explicit and sequenced way.

We are teaching to build lasting knowledge, rather than teaching pupils to develop a good understanding of one aspect of English. We therefore use the knowledge and curriculum-related expectations to ensure that pupils can confidently analyse **all** texts they encounter, for example, not just the ones they have been taught. Therefore, when planning, we plan as a department incorporate specific connections between knowledge, concepts and vocabulary from previous lessons. Our lessons are planned to include a gradual build-up of knowledge, and the skills associated with this. Teachers clearly signal the pupil's learning journey: where knowledge is encountered for a second or third time, we make explicit links back to this and explain how this will be built upon. Newly-taught knowledge is secured before moving on to the next piece of knowledge. If this knowledge isn't secure, it should be clarified before new knowledge is introduced.

This knowledge is broad and wide-ranging.

Our curriculum

A curriculum for vocabulary

A child's expressive vocabulary (the words that they can use correctly) and receptive vocabulary (the words that they can understand) are important in determining their success in English as well as their studies as a whole. Indeed, there is strong relationship between a pupil's vocabulary size and their academic success.

Strategies deployed within the department include:

1. Teach etymology of words to show how words have been created – so for example, knowing that diabolical comes from the Latin "diabolus."
2. Teaching the morphology of words to help pupils understand them. So revision, for example, uses the morpheme "re" which means again or repeat and vision means seeing – hence revision is "seeing again." This strategy, as with etymology, helps children to have the confidence to decode words by looking at patterns of words they already know.
3. Give opportunities to use new vocabulary (Research shows that four uses means a word becomes part of available everyday vocabulary)
4. Teach the multiple meanings behind words

A curriculum for writing

Knowledge is also key to writing as greater knowledge, it is hardly surprising, leads to better writing. Additionally, 'discourse knowledge' is important for children to make progress. This type of knowledge refers to the knowledge about the genre of writing, linguistic and grammatical knowledge, - as well as knowledge about how to carry out specific aspects of the writing process.

Consequently, as a department we ensure pupils write about the curriculum content they have studied – interleaving creative and non-fiction writing with the topics covered for reading, for example. We also help pupils to build discourse knowledge by making sure that they understand the characteristics of texts written for specific purposes and audiences, and by providing models of effective writing to give them ideas to draw upon for their own work.

We aim for all children at Woldgate to become increasingly aware of how writing can be used to share new interpretations of their ideas, their reader's needs and existing knowledge, and how that reader might interpret what they write. To develop this, children write frequently, work cooperatively on the writing process – with teacher modelling and with peers – and are taught explicitly the foundational writing skills such as sentence construction and control of grammar and syntax, as well as spelling.

A curriculum for spoken language

While spoken language benefits from the instruction children receive in writing and reading, they also develop the quality of their speaking work over time.

- physical skills (such as making eye contact and speaking clearly)
- linguistic skills (where children deploy the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary that they have learnt as well as rhetorical devices).

- cognitive skills (the knowledge of content, organisation of ideas, and tailoring talk to a specific purpose, such as to persuade or inform).
- social and emotional skills (helping them to consider the needs of different listeners, responding appropriately to others and developing the confidence to share ideas with different audiences)

A curriculum for reading

We aim to build a lifelong love of reading, using STARS reading tests in lower and middle school, for example, to identify a child's reading range and tutor time activities encourage reading with praise and rewards for children who make progress in and enjoy their reading.

Over time, we build pupils' 'readiness' for future encounters with texts and critical views. We introduce pupils to texts that they would not choose to read for themselves, especially from other times and places and with a range of perspectives. This might be topic knowledge provided by the teacher to help the pupil make sense of the text or – more particularly – knowledge that the pupil can supply in their answers to comprehension questions. For example, we deliver work on classical mythology alongside our literacy curriculum to help children to use and understand allusions as well as pre-teaching concepts and knowledge they will encounter when reading Shakespeare, for example.

A curriculum for Literature.

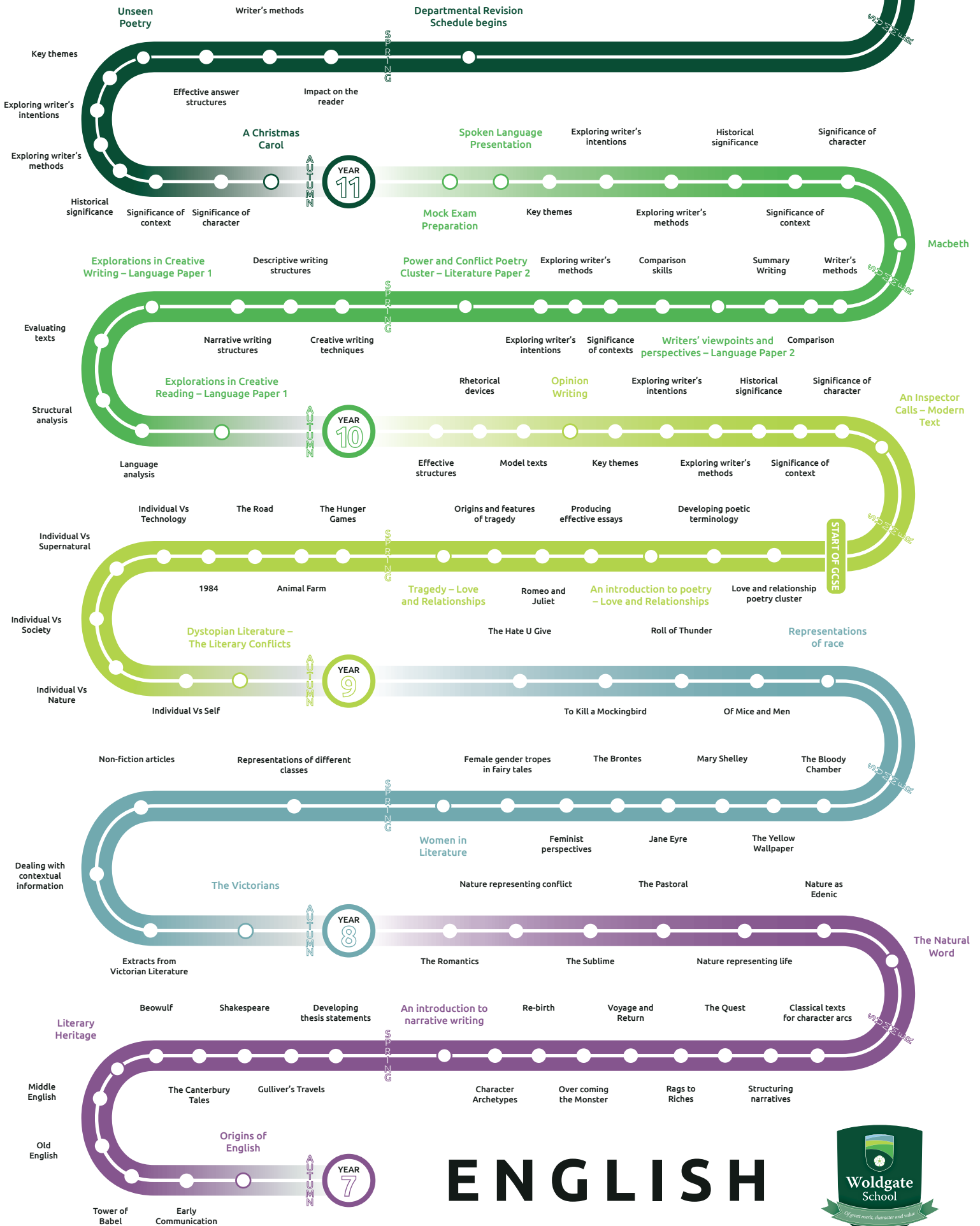
When encountering literary texts, as well as studying aspects of historical context, and aesthetics such as genre, we also develop the skills of analytical writing. These are developed systematically from Year 7. Analytical writing is, after all, a composite process that involves multiple components, some learned through studying literature and some as part of the writing curriculum. Pupils need to be able to embed evidence, use appropriate subject terminology, apply precise vocabulary and evaluate interpretations, including their own interpretations.

If pupils are to succeed at analytical writing, they need to be secure in each of these components. Our curriculum, therefore, includes a range of subject-appropriate writing activities that require the use of the components for writing that pupils have learned, culminating in them writing sophisticated, thoughtful independent essays by the time they reach Year 9.



GCSE EXAMINATIONS

Two English Language Papers Two English Literature Papers



ENGLISH



Why do we **sequence** the curriculum in this way?

The curriculum is structured in such a way that knowledge delivered further down the school looks 'forward' to knowledge learned later. So, for example, work on Christian and biblical allusions supports their reading of *Macbeth* in Years 10 and 11. In addition, key vocabulary is introduced so that children are best placed to explore new texts and to engage in written tasks.

This progressive structure is supported through schema. For example we can use key concepts – big 'umbrella' ideas that are planned into the curriculum – as a way to provide a point of connection for knowledge. In English, there are many concepts that can form the basis of the curriculum. At Wolds Learning Partnership, the key concepts we have selected are:

- Individual versus society
- Individual versus self
- Individual versus individual
- Individual versus nature

We also explore, to a lesser extent:

- Individual versus technology
- Individual versus supernatural

These have been selected as we believe they provide a lens that allows all pupils to access the powerful knowledge required to succeed in English.

Individual versus society

This conflict is defined by a writer, or character, who clashes with societal rules and decides to act out against them.

Pupils can explore this as both readers and writers. Examples from the curriculum are:

- Exploration of societal issues (i.e. classism, sexism, homophobia, segregation, environmental issues and racism)
- Evaluating issues in canonical texts
- Writers' viewpoints in fiction and non-fiction texts:
 - Priestley's views on social class and political ideologies
 - Blake's attitude to society in *London*
 - Texts studied as part of English Language Paper 2

To explore this conflict, pupils will need knowledge of the vocabulary associated with societal issues (for example, democracy, patriarchy) and an understanding of terms such as *microcosm* and *allegory* that allow them to connect smaller examples in a text to wider societal issues.

At a more developed level, pupils may need to know critical theories such as feminism and postcolonialism.

Individual versus self

This conflict is defined by a writer's, or character, inner conflict. Examples from the curriculum are:

- Exploration of tragedy, including *Macbeth's* inner conflict
- The speaker's response to conflict in *Remains*
- The protagonist's inner conflict in *The Story of an Hour*
- *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

To explore this conflict, pupils will need to know about the factors that cause inner conflict (and how this differs from external conflict), have a clear understanding of

character roles (in particular, the many types of hero), and identify points in stories that contribute to a person's inner conflict.

To do this, they will need to clearly understand vocabulary such as epic hero, tragic hero and anti-hero. They will need to know words and phrases such as *hamartia*, *anagnorisis* and *tragic fall*.

Individual versus individual

This conflict involves stories where characters are against each other. This is an external conflict. Examples from the curriculum are:

- The treatment of Eva Smith by the members of the Birling family

To explore this conflict, pupils need to understand that texts are conscious constructs and characters are often presented metaphorically. They also need to understand the purpose of characters: for example, why villains are placed in opposition to heroes. This requires knowledge of vocabulary such as *protagonist* and *antagonist*, as well as knowledge of character archetypes and their origins.

Individual versus nature

This conflict is an external struggle positioning the character against an animal or a force of nature, such as a storm or tornado or snow. As nature is often used as a metaphor, there is crossover between this conflict and the **individual versus society**. Examples from the curriculum are:

- The natural world unit in year 7
- The dystopian unit in year 9
- Several *Power and Conflict* poems
- Nature in *Macbeth*

To explore this conflict, pupils will need to know the main representations of nature. Over time, they will need to link these representations to the writer's central message. To do this, they will need an understanding of tier 2 words such as **Edenic**, **utopia** and **dystopia**. They will also need to understand the impact of literary methods such as pathetic fallacy.

Our assessment

In order to assess, effectively at Woldgate we:

Break learning down into component parts, which are assessed formatively. This enables teachers to identify precisely pupils' misconceptions, gaps and errors. Teachers use information from this assessment to adapt the curriculum.

Ensure feedback to pupils is specific and provides them with a 'recipe for future action'.

Use low-stakes assessment of knowledge and retrieval tasks are also used to improve pupils' retention of the content.

Plan so that lessons focus on building pupils' powerful knowledge rather than on practice for answering examination questions.

Pupils will be assessed on their reading and writing skills each term. Teachers will mark these pieces giving a feedback target in green pen. Pupils then set about improving the work using a purple pen, this is in line with the Woldgate School marking policy. Preceding this formal assessment pupils will complete a 'Prove It' assessment whereby they will be given a task similar to the formal assessment and are able to practise the required skills. This shorter task will then be peer marked with constructive comments linking to the objective of the task. This assessment for learning strategy allows pupils to maximise their progress when completing the full assessment.

How families can support:

One of the most important methods of increasing confidence and ability in English is reading a wide range of materials regularly. When we read we absorb vocabulary and grammatical aspects of language that hugely benefit our ability to write and also understand challenging aspects of the written word. Encouraging the young ones within your care to read is a vital aspect of being successful in English. Another useful method of support is through conversation and discussion. Regular reflective discussions about learning that has taken place, in English lessons, during the day is a critical way of embedding learning at a deeper level. Add to this challenging questions and pupils will begin to broaden their perspectives on the learning that they have engaged with.