

English Curriculum Plan Year 8
Hasmonean High School for Boys

Continuing the theme of power, students in Year 8 study a range of literature and focus on developing the skills and knowledge they have established in Year 7. With a range of increasingly complex and challenging texts, students have the opportunity to further develop their analytical and creative skills at a linguistic and structural level whilst being encouraged to dig even deeper when exploring the world behind the text both in terms of context and writer's intentions as well as the possible reader responses. Furthermore, whilst still having plenty of opportunity to hone their non-fiction writing skills this year, students will have more of a fictional creative focus to their writing.



Year 8 Term 1

TOPIC: Power of the Mystical in Literature: Reading and writing short stories.

BIG QUESTION: How do writers use methods to convey their ideas within a whole short story; students will have an opportunity to apply the skills to their own writing?

CORE LEARNING:

In this unit students will read a selection of short stories particularly focusing on the genres of dystopia, horror, gothic and thriller. The short story allows the students to study the structure of a text in more detail and examine how the effects of a writer's choice of structure contributes to the meaning and message.

Key Concepts

Layers of language

- Literal / metaphorical meanings
- Interpretation

Authorial Intent

- Messages and big ideas
- Influence of context
- Reader response

Structure

- Narrative arcs
- Significant shifts
- Argument construction

Students will continue to develop their creative writing skills:

- Planning with a clear structure in mind

- creating, and crafting characters and settings.
- the importance and benefits of redrafting work.

Why this?

From studying a modern novel in Year 7 and beginning to think about the significance and impact stories can have on their readers, students now take a step further back to explore in more depth the impact of a short story. Looking at different genres of modern short stories, students learn to appreciate the importance of a clear and secure structure and carefully chosen language in order for a writer to convey their 'Big ideas' in a short text. The students will also learn to write short stories, using the skills studied when reading, particularly focusing on a strong structure, understanding the importance of crafting their writing and developing further their appreciation of writer's purposes and intentions explored in earlier units in Year 7.

Why now?

Having this unit at the beginning of Year 8 ensures that all students in the cohort have continued to build upon their creative written work from Year 7 and develop a further solid grounding in creative writing and its core concepts and skills. Many students are able to 'insert' some reasonably wide vocabulary and some language devices in their own writing, but now are beginning to plan their work with a clear thought through structure in order to support purpose and message. Stories are something that students will continue to build an appreciation of throughout their studies of English. Including this unit at such an early point in the Year 8 curriculum supports students with this foundational appreciation of the subject. Additionally, having an introductory knowledge of different genres will support student understanding of references and allusions throughout KS3 and beyond.



Year 8 Term 2

TOPIC: The power of the written voice to affect change in society - Charles Dickens author study and continuing an introduction to poetry through diversity poetry.

BIG QUESTION: How have writers used their voice to change society?

CORE LEARNING:

Students will explore ideas of poverty, gender roles and racial inequality within this unit. Through a series of extracts from various Dickens' novels and modern day poetry, the unit will develop both reading and writing skills within students and provide ample opportunity for discussion. Students will explore:

Key Concepts

Layers of language

- Literal / metaphorical meanings
- Interpretation

Authorial Intent

- Messages and big ideas Influence of context
- Reader response

Structure

- Plot development
- Narrative arcs
- Significant shifts

Why this?

Having explored themes of inequality, injustice, responsibility and relationships within various units in Years 7 and 8, students will now explore these themes and their significance in greater depth within extracts from Dickens' books and more modern poetry. Furthermore, through the inclusion of this author study in the curriculum, students will develop their understanding of writer's choices and methods within accessible key extracts. This will provide a secure foundation for their future learning and appreciation of literature and writers' craft, particularly 19th century texts. Furthermore, the poetry unit focusing on diversity celebrates the power of the poets' voice and will also reinforce and build upon their poetry knowledge from Year 7.

Why now?

The nature of this topic, following the plight of different 19th century characters and modern poets, invites a lot of empathy from readers. Understanding others and their struggles is an idea discussed at length through Years 7 and 8 such awareness will therefore support students in their approach to this unit. Furthermore, the more challenging nature of the content, language and concepts within these texts make it better placed in the middle of Year 8; it is an excellent text to support students as they move into the increasingly more challenging curriculum of term 3, Year 8 and Year 9.



Year 8 Term 3

TOPIC: Power through time- Introduction the Shakespeare and Romeo & Juliet

BIG QUESTION: How and why does Shakespeare present conflicting voices in this play and for what purposes?

CORE LEARNING:

Students will explore the play form in this unit as well as looking at the verse form of the play. They will consolidate the skills learned throughout the year in this rich and challenging text.

Key Concepts

Layers of language

- Literal / metaphorical meanings
- Interpretation

Authorial Intent

- Messages and big ideas
- Influence of context
- Reader response Structure

- Plot development
- Narrative arcs
- Significant shifts

Punctuation, vocabulary and grammar

- Tier 2 & 3 vocabulary
- Sentence development & crafting

Why this?

Romeo and Juliet is a seminal text in English literature. The teenage protagonists and relationships with parents offer an access point for all students into this challenging text: this in turn should help dispel any myths about Shakespeare texts not being accessible to a modern reader and incite a love for The Bard. While the texts explored in the earlier stages of KS3 provide students with a foundation upon which to begin exploring writers' methods and the big ideas behind their texts in more detail than they had experienced in Key Stage 2, the multi-layered nature of Shakespeare's writing offers students the opportunity to explore these aspects of literature in even greater depth. After briefly studying the world in which Shakespeare lived, the students are expected to use this knowledge to apply possible reasoning to Shakespeare's choice of character and plot and message to his audience and compare it with a modern day audience's interpretations. Additionally, the verse form of Shakespeare's play allows us to reinforce key ideas about verse and poetry studied prior to this unit and ready for the poetry study in Year 9. Finally, extracts used from *Romeo and Juliet* focus on the different genres used in his plays such as comedy, love, identity and tragedy providing a more rounded vision of the English literary canon. The particular focus of tragedy will form an important aspect of their studies later in English through their examination of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. These themes are cornerstones in English literature; understanding them not only provides a solid foundation for future studies in English but also prompts students to explore their own understanding of themselves and the world around them.

Why now?

Through including this unit at this point in the year, students will be able to develop the skills in reading and writing they have been building up since the start of the year to access a more challenging text. Throughout their time in Hasmonian Boys', students will have studied different concepts of power and its effects as well as considering different elements of power affecting relationships. This knowledge will support students in their studies of *Romeo and Juliet* where these are key themes in the play.