



ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERATURE combined

Welcome to the English Language and Literature course. Over the next couple of years you'll find this an exciting, challenging and inspiring programme of study that will give you a great foundation for any future educational route you might want to follow.

In the first few weeks of the course, you'll be exploring the different features of a broad range of non-fiction genres, and considering how writers communicate their personal voice through these different forms. There will be a LOT of technical and detailed analysis to ensure that everyone has the same set of vocabulary. You'll be expected to contribute your ideas to discussions every lesson, so come prepared!

Things you **must** do before you start the course in September:

- Buy and read *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- Read the handout (below) on what is meant by 'voice' in writing

Write a critical analysis of the article using the critical skills taught during the taster lesson. This needs to be handed in during your first lesson.

Other things you **could** do if you're feeling ambitious:

- Read lots of books from the reading list, making a record of the ones that you have enjoyed and would recommend to others
- Revise the technical vocabulary you have used so far in English, including terms used in the 'spoken word' unit
- Practise creative writing in the different non-fiction genres on the reading list
- Try to go to the theatre as often as you can- get a few people together and make an evening of it! We are spoilt for choice in the West Midlands, being so close to Stratford-upon-Avon as well as the many great theatres in Birmingham, Coventry, Malvern and others. You will be expected to have a wide range of cultural knowledge so that also means being aware of poets, novels and events in the cultural world. You will be expected to have a wide range of knowledge about newspapers and other non-fiction texts so read everything as widely as you can.

You're in good company studying English, as you can tell from all the famous names from a broad variety of professions who hold English Degrees. A few examples: actors James Franco, Vin Diesel, Matt Damon, Emma Thompson, Tommy Lee Jones, Paul Newman, Geoffrey Rush; film directors James Cameron, Steven Spielberg, Martin Scorsese; musicians Sting, Paul Simon, Mark Knopfler, Radiohead's Thom Yorke and Colin Greenwood; writers Douglas Adams, Toni Morrison, Dr Seuss, Stephen King, Joseph Heller. Add to these a wealth of journalists, publishers, producers of TV and radio, politicians and civil servants, and you can see how versatile a subject this is in its adaptability to a range of career possibilities.

What do we mean by the study of 'voice'? Val Davis, Principal Examiner for Language and Literature, offers this introduction for students:

The Roman philosopher and orator Cicero said that a voice is a picture of the mind. What we say,¹ and how we say it, enables others to identify us and to identify with us. In this part of the course you will investigate "voice" in its many forms – from spontaneous conversation and the unwritten rules that shape it to the voices that writers create in a range of both literary and non-literary texts. And you will learn that voices are not as straightforward as they might seem.

We are all "code-switchers". We change our voice according to our audience, our agenda or the context in which we speak or interact. This course will provide you with the tools you need to begin to understand what those codes are – and how a skilful writer or speaker can manipulate them (and their audience) to their own end.

Take a look at John F Kennedy's speech in Section 9 of the Edexcel Anthology and you should see the power of the spoken word and the rhetorical structures through which we are influenced and even controlled. Of course this is a transcript – to understand the real power of a speech you need to listen to it, and Kennedy is widely considered to be a great orator. People have voices; written texts do not. Written texts are silent. And yet if a text is well written we can "hear" it when we read and if a character or persona is well developed we identify them through the illusion of voice on the page. In the best texts these voices are unique "voiceprints" that communicate with us as freely and convincingly as the human voices they emulate.

Some texts, like play scripts, are written specifically to be spoken and the playwright develops character through voice, interaction and all the non-verbal elements that combine to create a three dimensional character and to make a drama work. You will encounter many distinctive dramatic voices on this course and will develop an understanding of how – and why – the playwright has developed them. You will study a complete play with a focus on the voices created by the playwright to bring character and plot to life. The choices are wide; from the raw passion of Stanley in *A Streetcar Named Desire* to the complexities of a colonised language and the voices that are shaped by this in *Translations*. In your exploration of these texts you will uncover the craft of the dramatist and the multiple dimensions of voice – verbal and non-verbal – that contribute to a dramatic persona.

Perhaps less obvious, but just as significant and powerful, are the voices created in written and multi-modal texts. Technology has enabled an interaction between writer and audience in a way that is so immediate that the voices seem authentic and the exchanges much like a spoken conversation. But such texts are rarely as spontaneous as they might seem – and many are crafted by the writer with precision to interact with and to influence their readers. The Anthology is a starting point to many such texts with extracts that range from blogs to forums. These texts are so reliant on voice that they seem to sit in a technological middle ground between speech and writing.

Prose texts (including prose fiction) contain multiple voices. There is the voice of the author – the quality that makes their writing unique and which conveys their attitudes, values and personality. The authorial voice is only one of many. It is often distinct from the narrative voice and the characteristic speech and thought patterns of, for example, a first person narrator. This course will enable you to tell the difference and provide specific evidence for your understanding of that difference. A writer can use other people's voices through direct speech, incorporating, directly, the voice of another into the text. However the text that surrounds the directly quoted speech will have been crafted by the writer to create a perspective designed to influence how you, the reader, interpret that voice. Indirect speech paraphrases what is spoken – this gives the writer much more control to filter the voices of others to suit their own perspective or agenda.

This is only a starting point. Some voices are deeply embedded in a text and into the subconscious of a writer or a character. There are the cultural and historical voices that shape our opinions and the manner in which we express them. There are ancestral and community voices that reflect our upbringing and the way that these can shape our attitudes and values. Some phrases are echoes of the voice of others and reflect their influence upon us all and serve as a reminder that much of our language – spoken and written – echoes the voices of those that have come before.

Effect of fronting the subordinate clause?

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Effect (on audience) of juxtaposing the fronted sub clause with the main clause?

How does the fronted sub clause refer to the context of production? Effect of sharp, monosyllabic noun?

As gay people celebrate, the treatment of the disabled just gets worse

With more spending cuts looming, are we content to leave one minority locked out of society as second-class citizens?

Implication of determiner "one"?

Effect of verb "looming"? Comment on its phonology?

What effect does the writer want the whole rhetorical question to have on readers?

Effect of using the comparative form of the adjective ("worse")?

Effect of figurative phrasal verb "locked out"?

What does premodifier "second class" imply about the context of reception?