



The Key Stage 3 English curriculum at Thomas Mills High School is designed to foster a love of reading, writing, and spoken language while building the foundational knowledge and skills students need for success in Key Stage 3 and beyond. The curriculum is structured around three key areas:

Substantive knowledge: Students develop knowledge of literary genres, authorial techniques, and key themes across a range of texts, including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and drama. They explore how writers craft meaning and how texts reflect and shape the world around us.

Ways of knowing: Students learn how to analyse texts critically, identify literary devices, and construct well-supported interpretations. They are taught how to plan, draft, and edit their writing for a range of purposes and audiences, and how to speak and listen effectively in discussion and performance.

Personal knowledge: Students are encouraged to reflect on their own responses to texts and to consider how their experiences and perspectives influence their interpretations. They explore moral, social, and cultural issues through literature and are supported in developing their own voice as writers and speakers.

Year 7			
Term	Topic	Knowledge and Skills	Useful Links
1	Accelerated Reader Programme (whole year)	Knowledge: Students will build knowledge about a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts through independent reading.	Accelerated Reader Renaissance Learning Explanation video for parents: Accelerated Reader



They will encounter different genres, authors, and writing styles, which helps them develop a broad understanding of how stories and texts work. They will learn about narrative elements like plot, character development, and theme, and see how these vary between books. They will also begin to recognise features of non-fiction such as headings, subheadings, and argument structure. Through regular reading and quizzes, students will develop awareness of how different authors engage readers and start to reflect on their own reading preferences and habits.

Skills:

- Students will practise key reading comprehension skills such as retrieving information, summarising content, and identifying key details. They will learn to make inferences—reading between the lines to understand characters' feelings, motives, and relationships.
- They will strengthen their ability to explain and justify their opinions about what they've read, using evidence from the text.
- Regular quizzing on completed books helps develop focus, memory, and understanding of vocabulary.
- Over time, students will become more confident, independent readers, better able to select

Suggestions of what to read next:

[Books & Quizzes Archives](#) | [Renaissance Learning](#)



	Novel study (eg The Bone Sparrow or A Long Walk to Water)	appropriate books, reflect on their reading progress, and build a lifelong reading habit. Knowledge: Students will develop knowledge about how stories are structured and what makes them effective. They will learn about key elements such as plot, characters, setting, and theme, and begin to understand how they work together to create meaning. Students will explore how authors use language, structure, and literary techniques like dialogue, description, and symbolism to shape a reader's experience. They will also begin to consider the context in which a novel was written, including any historical, cultural, or social background that helps deepen understanding. Skills: • Students will practise understanding and summarising what happens in a novel, identifying key details and main ideas. They will learn to make inferences—working out what characters are thinking or feeling, even when it is not said directly. • Students will analyse how language and structure are used for effect, and they will begin to explain how an author's choices influence the reader. As part of this, they will be encouraged	The Bone Sparrow Book Review The Bone Sparrow by Zana Fraillon Zana Fraillon on The Bone Sparrow in 2020 The Bone Sparrow's Themes A Long Walk to Water Book Review A Long Walk to Water Linda Sue Park interviews Salva Dut Salva's Story
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Myths and Legends

to think critically, express their own opinions about the story, and back up their views with evidence from the text.

- They will also continue to build their vocabulary and become more confident using literary terms.

Knowledge:

Students will build knowledge about the features and purpose of myths and legends. Myths are traditional stories that often involve gods, magical creatures, and explanations for natural events, while legends are based on historical figures whose stories have been exaggerated over time. These tales usually include brave heroes, dangerous quests, and lessons about values such as courage, loyalty, or justice. Students will also learn how these stories reflect the beliefs, traditions, and cultures of the people who first told them and how they still influence stories today.

Skills:

- Students will practise identifying key events, characters, and settings, and they will learn to summarise stories and explain their main themes.
- As their confidence grows, students will make inferences about character motives and the deeper meaning behind the stories.
- They will also explore how authors use language to create atmosphere and meaning and

Quizizz – Myths Worksheets for Year 7

Offers interactive quizzes and printable worksheets covering:

- Greek, Roman, and Norse myths
- Global legends

Comprehension and vocabulary tasks

[Quizizz Myths Worksheets](#)

Greek mythology videos

[Greek Mythology for Kids | What is mythology? Learn all about Greek mythology](#)

[The myth of Pegasus and the chimera - Iseult Gillespie](#)

Norse mythology

[The myth of Thor's journey to the land of giants - Scott A. Mellor](#)

[The Creation of the Universe - Norse Mythology](#)



	Reimagine - The Natural World	compare myths and legends from different cultures. Throughout, they will be encouraged to think critically, form their own opinions, and support their ideas with evidence from the text. Knowledge: Students are introduced to extracts from a wide range of texts and ideas designed to spark curiosity and develop foundational knowledge in English. They explore themes such as identity, change, and communication through a mixture of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. Students begin to understand key literary concepts including character, setting, and theme, while also learning how writers use language and structure for effect. This unit also introduces important contexts, encouraging students to consider how culture, history, and society shape the way texts are written and interpreted. Skills:	Legend of King Arthur Is there any truth to the King Arthur legends? - Alan Lupack How To Write Myths George the Poet - The Natural World (poem) 3 Examples of Haiku Poems About Nature (short poetry) poems about nature and life Daffodils – William Wordsworth (An Inspirational Poem) Great Minds: Mary Anning, "The Greatest Fossilist in the World"
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		- Students practise reading a variety of texts closely, identifying key ideas, making inferences, and exploring how language creates meaning. They begin to analyse how writers present viewpoints and emotions, and how different texts connect to each other. - In writing, students are encouraged to express their own ideas clearly and creatively, using a growing range of vocabulary and sentence structures. They also learn how to plan, edit, and improve their work.	
Assessments		Regular STAR reader tests as part of Accelerated Reader programme to assess baseline and reading progress. Spelling test baseline assessment Baseline writing assessment – letter End of novel topic assessment	
2	Poetry	Knowledge: Students will build knowledge of different types of poems and the ways poets use language to express ideas, emotions, and experiences. They will learn about poetic forms, such as sonnets, ballads, and free verse, and begin to understand features like rhyme, rhythm, stanza structure, and line breaks. Students will also explore how poetry reflects themes such as nature, identity, conflict, and relationships, and how historical or cultural context can shape a poem's meaning.	1. Oak National Academy – KS3 Poetry Unit A structured series of free video lessons, worksheets, and quizzes covering: - Figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification) - Imagery, rhyme, rhythm, and metre - Poetic structure and conventions Oak National Academy Poetry Unit 2. Key Stage Learning – Year 7 Creative Poetry



	Reimagine Child Labour	Skills: • Students will practise reading poems closely to understand both their literal meaning and the deeper messages within them. • Students will learn to identify poetic techniques such as metaphor, simile, alliteration, personification, and enjambment, and explain how these create mood, imagery, or tone. • They will be encouraged to interpret poems thoughtfully, considering different meanings and forming their own personal responses. • Throughout, they will support their ideas with evidence from the text and develop confidence in using poetry-specific vocabulary. Knowledge: Students explore the powerful and thought-provoking theme of child labour. Through a range of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and historical sources, they build knowledge about the experiences of children in different times and places, including the Industrial Revolution and modern-day contexts. Students examine how writers and speakers raise awareness of injustice and use storytelling, facts, and emotional language to influence and inform their audience.	A fun and accessible guide to writing different types of poems: • Acrostic, Haiku, Cinquain, Free Verse, and Rhyming Couplets Includes examples and writing prompts KSL Creative Poetry Guide Child Labour International Labour Organization Website with statistics on current global situation with child labour Victorian child labour: all work and no play short video The Fight Against Child Labour short video
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	Frankenstein (Philip Pullman playscript)	They also develop an understanding of the historical and social issues behind child labour, helping them connect literature and real-world events. Skills: • Students practise reading texts critically, identifying the writer's purpose, viewpoint, and techniques. They explore how language and structure are used to persuade, inform, or evoke sympathy, and they begin to compare how different texts present similar issues. • In their own writing, students learn to express their opinions clearly, support arguments with evidence, and use persuasive techniques effectively. • They are also encouraged to reflect on the impact of language and the role of storytelling in social change. This unit deepens their understanding of literature as a tool for empathy and awareness. Knowledge: Students are introduced to a dramatic retelling of Mary Shelley's famous novel. Through this adaptation, they build knowledge of key themes such as ambition, responsibility, creation, and the nature of humanity.	Frankenstein Full Plot Summary - Schooling Online Frankenstein by Mary Shelley in 2 Minutes: Books Explained
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	Students explore how Pullman reshapes the original story for the stage, using dialogue, staging, and characterisation to bring complex ideas to life in a format designed for performance. They also gain insight into the Gothic genre and consider the historical and scientific context of the original novel, including 19th-century views on science, morality, and the limits of human knowledge. Skills: • Students practise close reading of the script, identifying powerful language and exploring how emotions and themes are conveyed through performance. • Students are also encouraged to respond creatively and critically, discussing moral questions raised by the text, performing scenes, and writing analytically about characters and key moments. • This unit strengthens understanding of playscripts and deepens their appreciation of storytelling in dramatic form.	Frankenstein: Plot, Character & Themes BBC Teach Free Frankenstein Teaching Resources From The NT
Assessments	Regular STAR reader tests as part of Accelerated Reader programme to assess reading progress. Poetry Terminology and poetic devices test End of poetry topic test – How does Auden present grief at the loss of a loved one in “Funeral Blues”? Creative writing task – end of Frankenstein topic – writing using Gothic conventions	



3	A Midsummer Night's Dream	Knowledge: Students will gain knowledge of Shakespeare's language, characters, and the world of Elizabethan theatre. They will learn about the play's key themes—such as love, magic, identity, and transformation—and how these are explored through the plot and characters. Students will also be introduced to the structure of a Shakespearean comedy, including mistaken identity, conflict and resolution, and multiple storylines that interweave. They will begin to understand the historical and cultural context in which the play was written, including beliefs about magic, class, and gender roles in Elizabethan England. Skills: - Students will develop skills in reading and interpreting Shakespearean language. They will practise summarising scenes, understanding character relationships, and identifying dramatic devices such as soliloquies, stage directions, and comic misunderstanding. - Students will learn how to analyse the impact of language and structure, and explore how Shakespeare creates humour, tension, and emotion.	BBC Bitesize – KS3 English: A Midsummer Night's Dream Offers summaries, character guides, themes, and quizzes in a student-friendly format. A Midsummer Night's Dream - KS3 English - BBC Bitesize Oak National Academy – Year 7 English Lessons A full sequence of lessons covering the play, including video explanations and comprehension tasks. Oak National Academy [1] SparkNotes – A Midsummer Night's Dream Study Guide While more advanced, it's useful for summaries and understanding key scenes. A Midsummer Night's Dream: Study Guide SparkNotes
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	Reimagine Journeys and Explorations	- They will be encouraged to form personal responses to the play, explain their ideas with evidence from the text, and consider how performance choices can shape meaning. This will help build their confidence in engaging with older texts and rich, dramatic language. Knowledge: Students explore the theme of Journeys and Explorations, both physical and emotional. Through a wide selection of texts—including extracts from novels, poetry, travel writing, and personal accounts—they build knowledge about how different kinds of journeys shape people and their understanding of the world. Students encounter stories of discovery, adventure, migration, and self-reflection, and consider how writers portray different landscapes, cultures, and challenges. Skills: - Students practise analysing how writers describe places, create atmosphere, and explore complex emotions through language and structure. They learn to identify imagery, narrative voice, and descriptive techniques, and	Interesting website: A World Ocean Map shows what our 'Blue Planet' really looks like Short videos: Top 10 Most Famous Explorers in History Discovering the World's Greatest Adventurers The Incredible History of Famous Explorers and Adventurers Polar Explorer: Jade Hameister Best Job Ever Nat Geo Kids
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		begin to reflect on how journeys are used as metaphors for change. • In writing, students are encouraged to produce their own creative and reflective texts, using figurative language, sensory detail, and varied sentence structures. They also improve their ability to express ideas clearly, edit their work thoughtfully, and consider the reader's experience. • This unit helps students understand how exploration—whether of the world or the self—can be powerfully expressed through literature.	
Assessment		Regular STAR reader tests as part of Accelerated Reader programme to assess reading progress. The context of A Midsummer Night's Dream – quiz The context of A Midsummer Night's Dream – poster (creative task) End of Topic Test – A Midsummer Night's Dream Spelling Test repeated from Term 1 to review progress	