



Thomas Mills
High School & Sixth Form

Thomas Mills High School & Sixth Form – English Literature Curriculum (Year 9)

The Year 9 English curriculum at Thomas Mills High School prepares pupils for the demands of the AQA English Language and Literature GCSEs, while fostering a love of reading, writing and discussion. It is designed to give pupils a strong foundation in both the study of texts and the use of language, and to help them develop as thoughtful, independent communicators. The curriculum follows three key strands:

‘Substantive’ Knowledge

Substantive knowledge in English focuses on pupils' understanding of texts, genres, and the conventions of language. Across the year, pupils study:

- Modern Drama (Autumn Term): A full play, exploring character, theme, plot, and dramatic techniques.
- Power and Conflict Poetry (Spring Term): A selection of poems from the AQA anthology, focusing on key themes such as war, power, identity and inequality.
- Cultural Conflict (Summer Term): A range of fiction and non-fiction texts exploring themes of race, heritage, belonging, and differing worldviews.
- AQA English Language Preparation (Ongoing):
 - Paper 1: Reading and analysing fictional texts; descriptive and narrative writing.
 - Paper 2: Analysing non-fiction texts; writing to argue, persuade and inform.
- Reading for Pleasure (Weekly): Pupils engage with self-selected texts across a range of genres and authors to broaden their literary exposure and enjoyment.

‘Ways of Knowing’

This strand focuses on how pupils learn to interpret and use English:

- Pupils are taught how to analyse texts by identifying language and structural features, evaluating their effects, and linking them to context and purpose.



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- They practise comparing texts, both thematically and stylistically, especially in poetry and non-fiction.
- They learn how writers construct meaning and manipulate language to convey viewpoints, using this insight to craft their own writing.
- Through modelling, scaffolding and feedback, pupils refine their writing across a range of forms: descriptive, narrative, analytical and persuasive.
- Pupils develop skills of close reading, annotation, quotation selection, and evidence-based argument, preparing them for the structure and demands of GCSE assessments.

‘Personal Knowledge’

English also encourages pupils to reflect on their own values, experiences, and identities in response to what they read and write:

- Pupils consider different perspectives and cultural experiences, particularly through poetry and texts that deal with conflict, heritage and identity.
- Speech writing and discussion tasks give pupils the opportunity to develop their own voice, express their views confidently and listen respectfully to others.
- Reading for pleasure sessions allow pupils to choose texts that reflect their interests, challenge their thinking, and build empathy and curiosity about the world.
- Throughout the year, students are encouraged to draw connections between literature and their own lives, deepening their emotional and intellectual engagement.



Year 9 Term	Topic	Knowledge and Skills	Useful Links
1	Drama	Knowledge: During this unit pupils will study a complete drama text. They will read and perform sections, both as a class, in groups, pairs and individually. They will explore how dramatists convey meaning, study drama language, context and detailed passage analysis linking to the whole text Skills: • Read, understand and respond to texts, analyse language, form and structure using relevant subject terminology • Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written, use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation	https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk https://royalcourttheatre.com https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize
Assessments		• Written piece – understanding drama in context. Pupils will write an analytical essay exploring the influences and impact of context on literature • Character analysis -spoken task. Pupils will prepare a spoken task exploring a character in their drama text. This could be through an interview, hot seating, reporting etc	



2	English literature Paper 2: Modern texts and Poetry	Knowledge: During this term pupils will be developing their experience, confidence and skills in poetry analysis. They will explore the ways poets use language to convey meaning and compare poems with common themes and ideas. They will develop their critical and build an informed, personal response Skills: • Identify and interpret explicit and implicit ideas, explore how writers use language to create effects and influence readers, analyse the language, form and structure using relevant subject terminology • Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written, use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.	https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zx7cwmn Poetry Foundation https://www.poetryfoundation.org YouTube – Stacey Reay Channel https://www.youtube.com/c/StaceyReay
Assessments		• A poetry terminology test. Pupils will revisit and revise the language and techniques used in the study of poetry • Written response – poetry comparison. Pupils will write an examination style essay comparing the effects of war in two of the poems studied	



3	'Cultural Conflict' Unit	Knowledge: During this term pupils will study a range of texts from a variety of cultures. They will develop their knowledge and appreciation of cultural identity Skills: • Read, understand and respond to texts, analyse language, form and structure using relevant subject terminology • Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written, use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation	Facing History UK https://www.facinghistory.org/uk The Day – News for Schools (<i>subscription-based but some free access</i>) https://theday.co.uk
Assessments		• Pupils will complete a spoken task exploring cultural difference • Pupils will complete a written response to one or more of the texts they have studied in the 'Cultural Conflict' unit	



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CURRICULUM OVERVIEW: English literature