

Year 8 Curriculum Overview 2026- 27

Subject – English

Autumn Term	Knowledge & Understanding			Literacy Skills	Employability Skills [if any]	Assessment Opportunities
	Composites	Components [KEY concepts & subject specific vocab]	Formal Retrieval [if any]	Opportunities for developing literacy skills		
HT1- Gothic short stories	Students explore how literature reflects the relationship between society and the individual through the Gothic tradition. They study extracts and complete texts from the Victorian period to understand how writers use fear, morality and the supernatural to explore human experience, social values and cultural anxieties. Building on their understanding of literary chronology from Year 7, students continue to develop their knowledge of literary heritage, recognising how literature evolves over time whilst responding to the concerns of society and inspiring future generations of writers.	- To know that Gothic literature emerged during the late eighteenth and Victorian periods. - To know that Gothic writers create fear and suspense through setting and atmosphere. - To know that Gothic texts often explore morality, the supernatural and the unknown. - To know that Victorian society influenced Gothic literature. - To know that narrators can shape the reader's understanding of events. - To know that writers use symbolism to communicate deeper meanings. - To know that pathetic fallacy reflects or enhances mood and atmosphere. - To know that foreshadowing creates suspense and prepares readers for future events. - To know that Gothic conventions can be identified across different texts.	- Low-stakes retrieval quizzes. - Vocabulary retrieval practice. - Quotation retrieval. - Hinge questioning. - Retrieval of Gothic conventions and Victorian context. - Knowledge organisers for key vocabulary and literary concepts.	S – Speak with Confidence - To discuss interpretations of Gothic texts using evidence. - To explain how writers create suspense and atmosphere. T – Think Critically - To make inferences about characters and events. - To explore how writers use symbolism and pathetic fallacy. - To evaluate the effectiveness of Gothic conventions. A – Articulate Through Writing - To write analytical paragraphs using embedded quotations. - To explain the effects of language and	Guided reading – develops attention to detail and information processing. Annotation – develops organisation and analytical thinking. Vocabulary instruction – develops professional communication and subject literacy. Modelled analytical writing – develops written communication and logical reasoning. Inference and interpretation – develops problem-solving and critical thinking. Discussion and collaborative learning – develops teamwork, active listening and verbal communication. Responding to feedback and redrafting – develops resilience, self-reflection and a commitment to improvement.	One core vocabulary test. Weekly writing WHW paragraph opportunities with peer/ self and WCF and improvement lessons. One summative assessment with teacher written feedback and improvement lesson

		To compare how different writers create tension and suspense.		structural methods. - To use subject-specific vocabulary accurately. R – Read with Purpose - To read challenging Gothic texts fluently. - To identify evidence that supports interpretations. - To recognise Gothic conventions and literary techniques.		
CST Catholicity Across the Curriculum	Students explore how fear, morality and human choices shape society, encouraging reflection on the dignity of every person and the consequences of sin and injustice. Through Gothic literature, students consider the importance of compassion, conscience and hope in responding to darkness.					
HT2- Gothic creative writing	Students apply their understanding of Gothic literature by crafting original narratives that explore the relationship between the individual and society. Drawing inspiration from Victorian Gothic conventions studied in HT1, students develop their own writer's craft, using language and structural choices to engage readers, create atmosphere and communicate ideas.	- To know that narratives are crafted to engage a specific audience and purpose. - To know that Gothic stories often explore the conflict between the individual and society. - To know that narrative structure shapes the reader's experience. - To know that writers use characterisation to develop believable and complex characters. - To know that dialogue reveals character and advances the plot. - To know that imagery creates vivid settings and atmosphere. - To know that tension is built through carefully	- Retrieval of key vocabulary and literary techniques. - Vocabulary retrieval practice. - Low-stakes retrieval quizzes. - Hinge questioning. - Knowledge organisers for narrative techniques and subject terminology.	S – Speak with Confidence - To discuss and justify creative choices. - To give and respond to constructive peer feedback. T – Think Critically - To evaluate how writers create atmosphere and tension. - To make deliberate choices about structure, perspective and characterisation. - To reflect on how narratives present the relationship	Planning and drafting narratives – develops organisation and project-planning skills. Creative writing – develops creativity, innovation and written communication. Shared writing – develops collaboration and communication. Peer review – develops constructive feedback, teamwork and active listening. Editing and redrafting – develops resilience, self-reflection and attention to detail. Vocabulary journals – develops independent learning and professional literacy.	One core vocabulary test. Extended writing opportunities with peer/self and WCF and improvement lessons. One summative assessment with teacher written feedback and data collected and improvement lesson

		selected language and structural choices. • To know that narrative perspective influences the reader's understanding of events. • To know that motifs can reinforce themes and ideas throughout a narrative. • To know that writers draft, edit and refine their work to improve its impact.		between the individual and society. A – Articulate Through Writing • To write extended descriptive and narrative responses. • To use ambitious vocabulary and figurative language effectively. • To organise ideas using purposeful paragraphing and narrative structure. • To edit and redraft writing for greater precision and impact. R – Read with Purpose • To read as a writer, identifying effective narrative techniques. • To retrieve vocabulary and literary methods from model texts. • To evaluate how authors engage their audience.	Presenting and discussing ideas – develops confidence and verbal communication skills.	
CST Catholicity Across the Curriculum	Students create narratives that explore the relationship between the individual and society, considering moral choices and their impact on others. They develop empathy by writing characters who encounter injustice, responsibility and redemption.					
Year 8 Curriculum Overview 2026- 27 Subject – English						
Spring	Knowledge & Understanding			Literacy Skills	Employability Skills	Assessment Opportunities

Term	Composites	Components [KEY concepts & subject specific vocab]	Formal Retrieval [if any]	Opportunities for developing literacy skills	[if any]	
HT3- Victorian Non-fiction	Students continue their chronological study of Victorian literature by exploring non-fiction texts from the nineteenth century alongside modern counterparts. Through the overarching concept of <i>Society vs Self</i> , students investigate how writers present viewpoints, challenge social issues and influence their audiences. Comparing perspectives across time enables students to recognise both continuity and change in the way literature and non-fiction respond to society.	- To know that non-fiction writers write with a clear purpose and audience. - To know that Victorian non-fiction reflects the social issues and values of its time. - To know that writers use rhetoric to persuade and influence their readers. - To know that viewpoint shapes how ideas and events are presented. - To know that tone influences the reader's response. - To know that bias can affect how information is communicated. - To know that comparing texts reveals similarities and differences in ideas and methods. - To know that writers from different time periods respond to similar social issues in different ways. - To know that evidence can be synthesised from multiple texts. - To compare how Victorian and modern writers present viewpoints on society.	- Low-stakes retrieval quizzes. - Vocabulary retrieval practice. - Hinge questioning. - Retrieval of rhetorical devices and non-fiction terminology. - Retrieval of Victorian context and key social issues. - Knowledge organisers for core vocabulary and concepts.	S – Speak with Confidence - To discuss and debate different viewpoints using evidence. - To justify opinions clearly and respectfully. T – Think Critically - To compare viewpoints across texts. - To identify bias, tone and rhetorical methods. - To evaluate how writers persuade their audience. A – Articulate Through Writing - To summarise key ideas accurately. - To write comparative analytical paragraphs. - To synthesise evidence from multiple texts. - To explain the effects of writers' methods using subject terminology. R – Read with Purpose - To read non-fiction critically. - To identify purpose,	Reciprocal reading – develops collaboration, active listening and communication. Annotation – develops organisation and analytical thinking. Comparing viewpoints – develops critical thinking and evaluation. Summarising information – develops information processing and concise communication. Transactional analysis – develops written communication and logical reasoning. Structured debate – develops confidence, persuasion and verbal communication. Synthesising evidence – develops research, decision-making and problem-solving skills.	One core vocabulary test. Weekly writing WHW paragraph opportunities with peer/ self and WCF and improvement lessons. One summative assessment with teacher written feedback and improvement lesson

				audience and viewpoint. To retrieve and compare evidence from multiple sources.		
Catholicity Across the Curriculum	Students examine how writers challenge inequality and advocate for social reform, recognising the responsibility to promote justice and uphold human dignity. Comparing viewpoints encourages respectful dialogue and the pursuit of the common good.					
HT4- Oliver Twist- Charles Dickens	Students continue their chronological exploration of Victorian literature through Dickens' <i>Oliver Twist</i> . Through the overarching concept of <i>Society vs Self</i> , students examine how Dickens uses the novel as a social critique to expose inequality, injustice and the treatment of society's most vulnerable. Building on their understanding of Victorian Gothic and non-fiction, students explore how literature can challenge social attitudes and inspire change.	- To know that the novel follows a simple narrative structure. - To know the archetypal characters within literature. - To know that <i>Oliver Twist</i> is a social critique. - To know that children were treated poorly during the Victorian era. - To know that women were often subjugated within Victorian society. - To know that there was a hierarchy of power in the Victorian era. - To compare ideas about morality and immorality. - To know that vulnerable people were exploited. - To know that Dickens uses characterisation to expose social injustice. - To know that literature can influence attitudes towards society and social reform.	- Do Now retrieval activities. - Independent learning homework. - Vocabulary retrieval practice. - Multiple-choice quizzes for key knowledge and concepts. - Retrieval of quotations, characters and contextual knowledge. - Knowledge organisers for Victorian context and literary terminology.	S – Speak with Confidence - To discuss Dickens' presentation of Victorian society. - To justify interpretations using textual evidence. T – Think Critically - To infer characters' motives and actions. - To evaluate Dickens' criticism of Victorian society. - To compare ideas of morality and justice within the novel. A – Articulate Through Writing - To write analytical paragraphs using embedded quotations. - To explain the effects of Dickens' methods. - To use contextual knowledge to strengthen analysis. R – Read with Purpose	Close reading of a nineteenth-century novel – develops resilience and information-processing skills. Multiple-choice retrieval practice – develops accuracy, recall and attention to detail. Vocabulary development – develops professional communication and literacy. Independent learning homework – develops organisation, self-management and independence. Analytical writing – develops written communication and logical reasoning. Class discussion – develops confidence, active listening and verbal communication. Evaluating social issues – develops critical thinking, empathy and ethical decision-making.	One core vocabulary test. Weekly writing WHW paragraph opportunities with peer/ self and WCF and improvement lessons. One summative assessment with teacher written feedback and improvement lesson

				- To read a nineteenth-century novel with increasing fluency. - To identify key themes, characters and ideas. - To retrieve evidence to support interpretations.		
Catholicity Across the Curriculum	Students explore Dickens' criticism of poverty, inequality and the exploitation of vulnerable people, reflecting on the Church's call to protect the poor and uphold the dignity of every individual. The novel promotes compassion, justice and responsibility towards those in need.					
Year 8 Curriculum Overview 2026- 27 Subject – English						
Summer Term	Knowledge & Understanding			Literacy Skills Opportunities for developing literacy skills	Employability Skills [if any]	Assessment Opportunities
	Composites	Components [KEY concepts & subject specific vocab]	Formal Retrieval [if any]			
HT5- Continuation of Oliver Twist						
Catholicity Across the Curriculum						
HT6- Romeo and Juliet	Students conclude Year 8 by studying Shakespeare's <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , returning to the Renaissance period to explore one of literature's most enduring tragedies. Through the overarching concept of <i>Society vs Self</i> , students examine how Shakespeare presents the conflict between individual desire and societal expectations.	- To know that <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> is a Shakespearean tragedy. - To know that tragic plays follow established conventions. - To know that Shakespeare wrote during the Renaissance. - To know that social and historical context influences characters, relationships and conflict.	- Do Now retrieval activities. - Independent retrieval tasks. - Plot-line retrieval. - Character grid retrieval. - Vocabulary retrieval practice. - Multiple-choice quizzes for key knowledge and concepts.	S – Speak with Confidence - To discuss interpretations of characters, themes and events. - To justify opinions using evidence from the play. T – Think Critically - To explore how Shakespeare presents conflict and tragedy.	Comparative reading – develops analytical thinking and evaluation. Independent retrieval tasks – develops organisation, independence and self-management. Plot and character mapping – develops information processing and attention to detail. Vocabulary mastery – develops professional communication and subject literacy.	One core vocabulary test. Weekly writing WHW paragraph opportunities with peer/ self and WCF and improvement lessons. One summative assessment with teacher written feedback and improvement lesson

	Building on their understanding of tragedy, Victorian literature and social criticism, students consider how texts continue to reflect and challenge the societies in which they are written.	• To know that family loyalty and honour shape the events of the play. • To know that Shakespeare presents the conflict between individual desires and societal expectations. • To know that dramatic methods create tension and engage an audience. • To know that characters' decisions drive the tragic outcome. • To know that Shakespeare uses language and structure to communicate his ideas and intentions. • To know that literature reflects and responds to the values of society. •	• Retrieval of quotations, themes and contextual knowledge. • Knowledge organisers for Shakespearean terminology and Renaissance context.	• To evaluate characters' motivations and decisions. • To consider how context influences audience interpretations. A – Articulate Through Writing • To write analytical essays using embedded quotations. • To compare characters and ideas across the play. • To explain Shakespeare's methods using subject-specific terminology. R – Read with Purpose • To read Shakespeare's language with increasing fluency. • To identify key quotations, themes and dramatic methods. • To interpret meaning within complex Renaissance texts.	Analytical essay writing – develops written communication and logical reasoning. Class discussion and interpretation – develops confidence, active listening and verbal communication. Evaluating characters' decisions – develops critical thinking, problem-solving and ethical reasoning.	
Catholicity Across the Curriculum	Students consider how prejudice, division and conflict affect individuals and communities, reflecting on the importance of reconciliation, forgiveness and peace. Shakespeare's tragedy encourages students to recognise the value of every human life and the consequences of choices that undermine the common good.					