

At The Lowry Academy the purpose of our English curriculum is to provide pupils with both the skills and the knowledge to access and interact successfully with the world around them. Taking our lead from the National Curriculum's overall aims, we focus on reading (for pleasure, understanding and fluency), the use and understanding of vocabulary and the ability to write clearly and with real purpose. A high-quality English education allows students to become confident in expressing themselves as speakers, writers and interpreters of our information dense world. Ultimately, the success of our English curriculum can be measured by its continued relevance in relation to the constantly shifting times in which we live.

The Lowry Academy English department use **four core concepts**, in which we examine how the texts we study demonstrate the evolution of society throughout history: **class, power, social justice & gender**. We introduce each core concept in Year 7 through vocabulary and overall ideas, in Year 8 we build on this through the introduction of relevant social and historical contextual knowledge and ideologies. In Year 9, this culminates in the teaching of how to examine a text through a critical lens by creating "Big Ideas" to summarise the writer's intention, which demonstrate how writers challenge or promote these established ideologies. These "Big Ideas" directly underpin the knowledge students will learn throughout the Key Stage 4 curriculum. We use these concepts as the vehicles to teach students how to read texts critically, core terminology and vocabulary, how to become effective writers and confident orators.

- **Class** is taught across all year groups -Year 7 begin to understand the concept through the characters in Aiken's *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase*. In Year 8, through Pygmalion and our Social Justice units and in Year 9 through Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes* and our poetry units. We approach this key theme through a critical lens as we teach and encourage our pupils to dissect the 'importance' of class structures. Class is also taught in regard to the local area and when we teach *An Inspector Calls* we draw on Salford's Labour history and roots. This is also considered in the links made to the Industrial Revolution again in *AIC* and *A Christmas Carol*.
 - **Power** is taught throughout both key stages. We track this theme through each year group's study of a Shakespearian play. This begins in Year 7 with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* – is continued in Year 8 with *Richard III* and then in Year 9 with *King Lear*. The extended study of *Macbeth* at KS4 concludes the journey and benefits from this culmination of knowledge. The power of an individual voice is taught through Proctor as well as in a number of social justice poems. The idea of power being localised and decentralised, is considered through the Shakespearian characters of Richard and Lear, which again is linked to the local area and the concept of Manchester's increased local power and independence.
 - **Social Justice** is taught throughout and is a building block of our English curriculum. This theme is explicitly addressed through the social justice units in Years 7, 8 and 9. These units take the form of poetry, short stories and extracts and comprehensively cover a range of key social issues concerning, gender, race and sexuality. This carries through into the study of Priestley's *An Inspector Calls* and Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* at KS4. Through social justice, we are also able to consider the notion of family; for example our short stories scheme, studied in Year 9, teaches both the importance of family as well as the innumerable forms family can take. This is also linked to our drive to 'normalise' difference and expose our cohort to the multivarious world beyond our local area.
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- **Gender** is taught at all levels of the curriculum – Year 7 begin their study of this concept through both of the full novels covered, as well as Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. In Year 8, pupils move on to more direct analysis, with non-fiction extracts and social justice poetry. In Year 9, gender is approached through the idea of identity and relationships. Gender is critically taught and pupils are asked to interpret and question outdated stereotypes in both fiction and non-fiction. In year 11, the study of AIC sees pupils applying this knowledge to the social and historical context of England during the 1900s and the plight of the suffragettes.

All students will study the content outlined in the scheme of learning which has been constructed based on the following principles.

Entitlement: All will study a wide range of high-quality texts and writing forms including plays, non-fiction, novels and poetry from Elizabethan times to the present day. We strongly believe, that all pupils are entitled to be equipped with the vocabulary needed to understand and challenge key ideas in the world around them – an example of this is the key word ‘patriarchy’ which is taught in Year 7, this can then form the basis for the pupils’ ability to frame effective critiques as speakers and writers.

Coherence: The curriculum has been carefully sequenced according to themes, ideas, and concepts whilst ensuring the introduction of a variety of literary genres and forms, including different writing forms. As evident above, we have ensured that our core themes run throughout the year groups. Pupils will gradually develop their understanding of these core concepts as they meet them in rising levels of complexity across their school career.

Mastery: We want our students to be able to link new knowledge to previously taught content and interleave previously taught knowledge through ‘Daily review’ activities at the start of lessons to achieve this. Additionally, for each of our schemes of work, we have identified the ‘core knowledge’ that we wish all of our pupils to have learnt by the end of each unit. This allows for close tracking of pupil understanding and the ability to re-teach for mastery.

Adaptability: Each lesson addresses a key question, for example: How does Shaw satirise society in *Pygmalion*? This ensures teachers can adapt lessons without losing sight of the core purpose, additionally, alongside all of our planning, we create key learning grids which clearly map out the progression of knowledge and allow teachers to plan ahead and adapt their planning specifically for their classes. In order to ensure that our curriculum offer is best tailored to our cohort, we build in elements inspired and focused on the history and literature of our local context; for example, using local poets, such as the inclusion of John Cooper Clark in our relationship poetry topic. Not only does this allow the pupils to feel an affinity towards the subject matter but it also encourages a spirit of aspiration.

Representation: All will encounter texts which offer both a mirror and a window to the rich and multi-layered experiences of the world we live in. We aim to represent all pupils and allow them to see themselves and their own situations in their learning. Additionally, as a school in a predominantly white working class area, our curriculum ensures that pupils are exposed to cultures outside of their own. We have a specific and focused social justice unit in years 7, 8 and 9, blending fiction and non-fiction in order to address inequality and encourage social mobility.

Education with character: Throughout the curriculum, students are given many opportunities to share, reflect and learn about each other's varying experiences whilst recognising our common shared experiences. Through our use of carefully curated fiction and non-fiction texts from a range of different cultures and perspectives, we are able to ensure that the moral, social and cultural development of our pupils is at the heart of our curriculum; for example, if we continue to track the idea of 'patriarchy' (as mentioned in 'Entitlement') it is further explored in year 9 through Adichie's 'We Should All Be Feminists', which allows pupils to consider both the cultural and social ramifications. Finally, in English we offer a range of co-curricular activities, such as Magazine Club, in which pupils are encouraged to be creative and express themselves using the multitude of skills and knowledge gained in lesson.
