



Our records show that you have indicated a wish to study English Language & Literature at Queen Mary's from September 2015. In anticipation that you will achieve the necessary grades at GCSE and that your place will be confirmed in August by the Headmaster, I write to welcome you to the English Department.

Our aim is to encourage a love of reading and writing within all students at the school, but especially within those studying English at a higher level. Many past students have gone on to study the subject at universities across the country, including Oxford and Cambridge, and we regularly hear from ex-students about their enjoyment of their A-level course and their continuing passion for reading.

It is a subject that links well with a whole range of university faculties and is regarded as suitably rigorous in its academic challenges as preparation for degree level study. It is also a subject that prepares one for life: reading analytically, writing authoritatively and creatively, discussing intelligently, and control of one's own written and spoken language are all vital skills for the successful student in any discipline and will continue to be important in many future careers.

As with all worthwhile ventures, English Language & Literature will make considerable demands upon your time. There is a great deal of essential reading to be completed for the course and even more wider reading that will enhance understanding and improve potential for success. There will be regular essays and creative writing tasks set during term-time and, of course there is the internally assessed coursework and the externally-assessed examination for which you will be preparing throughout the year.

As a Department, we also look to broaden our students' experience of Language & Literature by organising regular theatre visits and study days; by showing film adaptations of great Literature at lunchtimes and after school; and by running an extra-curricular Literature Society which we hope you will join in September.

The English Department has devised the programme of teaching according to the strengths and preferences of the individual teachers within the constraints of the exam board's list of set texts. We believe that across the two years, you will experience a broad range of literary styles and genres, so that there is hopefully something for everyone. **You will be expected to have read the set texts on the attached list by the time you arrive in September.**



The English Department will provide all students with a copy of the anthology set for the exam and another for annotation. However, you will need to buy your own copy of the exam texts. This will allow you to make detailed annotation in the texts during individual and class reading, and group discussion, which you would not be able to do in a school copy. It will also give you a sense of ownership of the text – it is our experience that students feel a sentimental attachment to the texts they have used for two years and they are often reluctant to give them up at the end. On a more practical level, some alternative editions are rather lacking in notes, editorial, or critical comments. Those editions specified on the attached sheet are more authoritative versions of the texts you are studying. The school is, of course, willing to assist any student with financial difficulties to purchase texts that are necessary to the course. Please contact the Headmaster if this is the case.

All that is left is to wish you a restorative and relaxing summer after the rigours of GCSE. I look forward to seeing you in September and discussing with you your thoughts upon the reading list included with this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Mr M. Lax
(Head of English)



English Language & Literature Set Texts Reading List

I include bibliographic details of recommended reputable and authoritative editions of the set texts. The prices stated are those listed on 'Amazon.co.uk' on 13th July 2015 and exclude postage and packing.

All of the below were available for much less (sometimes as little as a penny!) from second-hand sellers in the 'Amazon Marketplace' on the same date. Please be aware that some sellers do inflate the price of postage and packing in order to cover the very low cost of the book. You may also find second-hand copies much cheaper in local bookshops, charity shops, or on other such book selling websites as 'abebooks'.

While it is vastly preferable for you to obtain any edition of the text for reading over the summer, rather than none, **the editions below will be the ones used in class.**

Set Texts – Essential reading before September

The Great Gatsby: F. Scott Fitzgerald (Wordsworth Classics, 1992)
ISBN: 185326041X, Price: £1.99 (£0.01 second-hand + p&p)

Songs of Innocence and Experience: William Blake (Oxford, 1970)
ISBN: 0192810898. Price: £7.19 (£0.01 second-hand + p&p)

Any historical background reading would also be useful to gain an insight into the mind of the authors and the set texts. Theatre, film, television and radio performances and adaptations of any of the texts would also be beneficial and worthy of discussion at a later stage. Also, think analytically about any text that you meet over the next few months. Novels, plays, poetry, speeches, radio adverts, bus timetables, postcards, travel guides and so on, are all suitable materials for analysis and assessment in terms of their use and presentation of language in context. You must become aware of how language is used in different circumstances, for different purposes and for different audiences.