



Queen Mary's College

FAQs – A level English

Q: *What English courses do you do at A level?*

A: We do two completely separate A levels; English Language and English Literature. Both are 80% exam and 20% non-examined assessment.

Q: *What is the difference between English Language and English Literature at A level?*

A: See the individual course leaflets for more detail but essentially . . .

. . . **English Literature** remains the most popular course in the department and involves the study of a wide range of literary texts from different time periods; novels, poems, plays in their social context. You will be reading, discussing and writing essays about these texts, so should enjoy reading books and discussing ideas. It involves the kind of work you will have done at GCSE but taken to a higher level. If you want to study English Literature at university you must choose Literature at A level. It is also one of a number of subjects regarded as a 'facilitating' subject by the high-ranking 'Russell Group' of Universities (Oxford, Cambridge, Bristol, Durham and a number of others.) If you're likely to apply to a Russell Group University, try to ensure that two of your three A levels are 'facilitating subjects'.

. . . **English Language** is rather different from English Language at GCSE but most students like the challenge involved in a subject which is very new to them. You will study a range of topics linked to language; regional accents and dialects, the difference between speech and writing, language and gender, language and ethnicity, language change, and children's language development, as well as learning techniques which will enable you to analyse a wide range of shorter texts in different genres and from different time periods. You should be open-minded about looking at language in new ways, not be daunted by having to study language in great detail (including its grammar) and prepared to read books about language issues and research. It is NOT a creative writing course, but we have enrichment opportunities for students interested in writing. Students who study English Language at university will be applying to study courses (including at Russell Group universities, see above) entitled either 'English Language' or 'Linguistics'.

Q: *What GCSE grade will I need to have in English to study an English A level?*

A: You will need a GCSE grade 5 in English for both courses and additionally a GCSE grade 5 in English Literature to do this course.

Q: *What do these English courses at A level lead onto?*

A: No individual A level leads directly into any specific career. The majority of our students go on to do a wide variety of different courses at university (including English, journalism or creative writing courses), onto apprenticeship schemes or in some cases go directly into employment. Most people choose an English course because they are good at the subject, enjoy it and because they feel the skills they will develop will be helpful to them in the future, giving them a stepping stone to the next phase of their education.