
ENGLISH*(HEAD OF DEPARTMENT – Mr Julian Mott)*

Rationale of Course/Overview

There are four basic practical skills in English. They are Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening. The skills are grouped on the basis of whether the student is himself communicating (Writing and Speaking) or receiving communication (Reading and Listening). Students will use and develop these practical skills in each of the four areas listed below:

1. About Literature (the experience of others): students will write and speak about the literature that they read and listen to. The literature is, in part, prescribed as set texts and is, in part, a matter of the student's guided choice.
2. Expressive (the experience of self): literature is "the imaginative re-creation" of the experience of other minds. It is equally important that students learn to write and speak their own minds. In this second section students will write and speak their own minds and will write and speak expressively from their own experience.
3. Comprehension of Literature (the experience of others): in the third section of the English course teachers will aim to develop students' power of comprehension to deepen their level of understanding of the literature which is read or listened to.
4. Study of Language (the usage of others and ourselves): the fourth section of the course is the study of written and spoken English as used by others and the development of a student's own language.

The new senior English syllabus which has been fully implemented into Years 11 and 12 in 2005 retains all the elements of the previous syllabus but also requires students to be more critical readers. It explores the impact of both cultural and social contexts on texts and requires students to be aware of the need to discover worlds beyond their own in terms of creative and critical engagement. Knowledge of the relationship between language and culture is now a key component in this course. Students through critical appreciation and analysis will recognize other positions and opinions and study elements which influence these. More emphasis on independent learning and research is an important feature of the senior English course.

Generally the subject is divided into two major components:

1. Contextual Factors which influence the language used. These include:
 - a) purposeful cultural activities involving genre
 - b) what activity is the language being used in
 - c) the social impact on language
 - d) the choice of spoken or written channel and of print, sound, stage or screen media
 - e) composing and comprehending with appropriateness and effectiveness
 - f) understanding ideas and feelings being referred to in the subject matter.

2. Textual Features. These include:

- a) selection and sequencing of subject matter (genre structure)
- b) linking words and phrases to establish cohesion
- c) use of appropriate words (vocabulary)
- d) organising and ordering of words
- e) indication of important ideas through intonation, paragraphing and presentation
- f) other methods of conveying meaning, e.g. gestures, expressions, spatial arrangements etc.
- g) development of critical appreciation.

Through Years 11 and 12, the course concentrates on language development, effective genre study, media development and comprehension, oral and written expression. A Wide Reading Program throughout the senior school aims at the development of ideas, originality, presentation and appreciation.

In Years 11 and 12 an extension English class exists. Though this class consists of students who are classified as able in the subject, task requirements are the same as for the rest of the year groups. Some texts relate better to students who enjoy studying material which is more challenging and because of the nature of these extension groups, text reading can be covered rapidly enabling students to look more deeply at the broader issues arising from the stimulus material. The Year 11 extension group studies a component based on international literature - in this case South American texts - which also promote the study of literature from a less familiar cultural perspective.

Assessment Program

This consists of essay work under exam/classroom conditions, Research Projects in which students develop bibliographies, listening and viewing tasks as well as written comprehension, Wide Reading and Review work, Oral Expression and Role Play, etc. Electives have been introduced in Year 11 to enable students to concentrate on specific areas.

Assessment Criteria

This is contained in each assessment task. It covers the areas of 1 and 2 mentioned above in order to enable the student to understand the full procedure of evaluation. By Year 12 students have a detailed subject assessment profile to indicate their progress and level of achievement. In all years, students sit for two exam questions at the end of each semester.

Media work has been given a higher priority over the last few years and the analytical approach to texts is still retained. Language is also studied in terms of its context and use.