



Overview

At Gems Wesgreen International School, our Y8 English curriculum is academically rigorous and designed to engage students with a wide range of challenging texts. We aim to cultivate an international mindset, broadening students' understanding of diverse perspectives through literature. Our curriculum emphasises curiosity, critical thinking, analytical abilities, and communication skills, using conceptual frameworks to drive inquiry in reading. Through class discussions, presentations, writing tasks, and structured speaking activities, they learn to articulate ideas confidently and collaborate effectively. Our flexible classroom environment and inquiry-based projects enhance research and digital literacy, preparing students to thrive in a globalised world

Learning Outcomes

Our curriculum is tailored to develop both linguistic proficiency and literary appreciation. Through a structured approach to language development, students enhance their vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension skills, allowing them to access complex texts with greater confidence.

Reading Learning Outcomes

In the reading component of our English curriculum, students will develop key skills to navigate and interpret a variety of texts, including both literary and non-fiction works. The focus is on building both literal comprehension and inferential understanding, as well as employing analytical language to discuss and evaluate texts. This involves using the language of High Performance Learning (HPL) to cultivate *Values, Attitudes, and Attributes (VAAs)* such as open-mindedness, empathy, and critical thinking. By engaging with texts through this lens, students will employ *Advanced Cognitive Performance (ACP)* characteristics like meta-cognition, analysis, and critical evaluation to deepen their understanding. By the end of the course, students will be able to engage with complex literary concepts, critically assess non-fiction arguments and perspectives, and communicate their interpretations confidently.

Writing Learning Outcomes

Our writing curriculum is designed to develop students' ability to express ideas clearly and creatively across a variety of forms, including both fiction and non-fiction. Through structured lessons, students will enhance their grammatical accuracy, sentence variety, and overall coherence in writing. They will learn to adapt their style to suit different purposes, from narrative memoirs and imaginative storytelling to informative guides and persuasive articles. By employing language techniques effectively, students will engage, inform, and persuade their audience across a range of contexts. In line with HPL principles, students will employ *ACP skills* like flexible thinking and intellectual playfulness, using creativity and imagination to craft compelling texts. They will also demonstrate *VAAs* such as perseverance and resilience in the drafting and revision process,

developing confidence in their voice and style.

Oracy Learning Outcomes

In addition to reading and writing, our curriculum places a strong emphasis on oracy—developing students' speaking and listening skills. Students will engage in activities that encourage clear and articulate verbal communication, such as discussions, debates, presentations, and performances. They will learn to express their ideas confidently and listen actively to others, adapting their language and style to different audiences and purposes. Through structured speaking activities, including think-pair-share, group presentations, and guided oral responses, students will become adept at constructing and conveying arguments, exploring complex topics, and engaging in meaningful dialogue. The focus on oracy incorporates the language of HPL by fostering VAAs like collaboration and concern for society, encouraging students to communicate with empathy and respect for differing viewpoints. In developing these skills, students will also utilise ACP characteristics, such as reasoning and precision, to articulate their thoughts clearly and persuasively. This comprehensive approach not only strengthens their communication skills but also enhances their ability to collaborate, think critically, and contribute thoughtfully to discussions.

Unit Overviews

Term 1

Term 1.1 (26 Aug - 22 Oct): Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*

Theme: *Power and Conflict*

In the first half of Term 1, students will delve into the complexities of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, exploring themes of power, leadership, and betrayal. This unit offers an opportunity for students to engage deeply with character motivations and the intricacies of Shakespearean language. As they navigate the rich text, they will develop their ability to interpret and analyse nuanced themes, fostering critical thinking skills. The language of Shakespeare provides a challenging yet rewarding platform for students to enhance their comprehension and analytical abilities, learning to find literal information and make inferences while constructing strong, evidence-backed arguments in their writing.

Through this study, students will also focus on narrative structure and the portrayal of complex characters, both in their reading and writing. They will work on paragraphing and narrative techniques that allow them to express these character dynamics effectively.

Incorporating the HPL language of Values, Attitudes, and Attributes (VAA), students will develop perseverance as they grapple with the challenges of Shakespearean text, as well as empathy as they explore the moral and ethical dilemmas faced by the characters. Advanced Cognitive Performance (ACP) skills such as critical and analytical thinking will be emphasised throughout this unit, particularly as students deconstruct complex language and themes, using creativity to reinterpret the material in new forms.

Term 1.2 (28 Oct - 19 Dec): Rhetoric - Power and Conflict

Focus: Marc Antony and Brutus Speeches

Building on their understanding of power and conflict, the second half of Term 1 shifts focus to the study of rhetoric through the famous speeches of Marc Antony and Brutus. Here, students will explore how language can be wielded as a tool of influence and manipulation. The exploration of these speeches will deepen their understanding of character and the power dynamics within *Julius Caesar*, as they analyse how rhetoric shapes perception and drives action.

Throughout this unit, students will develop their analytical language skills, reinforcing the concepts introduced earlier in the term. They will learn to identify and evaluate rhetorical devices, gaining insight into how these tools can be employed to persuade and impact an audience. This analysis will not only enhance their reading comprehension but also inform their own writing practices, as they begin to craft narratives that effectively employ rhetorical techniques.

Students will also work on developing descriptive writing skills, learning to create vivid imagery and emotional impact. By understanding how Marc Antony and Brutus use language to stir emotions and convey complex ideas, students will be equipped to employ similar techniques in their narratives, thereby enhancing their expressive capabilities.

Throughout Term 1, students will be immersed in a blend of literary and rhetorical analysis, creative expression, and performance. They will refine their ability to communicate effectively, both in writing and speech, while drawing connections between literary themes and real-world concepts of power and persuasion. The integration of the HPL framework will ensure that students are not only developing academically but also cultivating the attributes and cognitive skills necessary for high performance in their learning journey.

Term 2

Term 2.1 (6 Jan - 10 Feb): Oracy - Power and Conflict

Theme: Power and Conflict through Non-Fiction

In the first half of Term 2, the focus shifts to developing students' oracy skills, centering around the theme of "Power and Conflict." This unit provides an opportunity for students to enhance their speaking and listening abilities through a variety of engaging and creative tasks. The selected non-fiction texts serve as a foundation for exploring how power dynamics and conflicts are communicated through different forms of speech and writing.

Students will engage in activities that challenge them to articulate their ideas confidently and effectively. They will explore the power of speech by creating solo talks, group presentations, vlogs, podcasts, and news trailers. These tasks are designed to encourage students to understand the nuances of verbal expression, allowing them to experiment with tone, emphasis, and persuasive techniques to convey their messages. By delving into the rhetoric of power and conflict, they will learn to use language purposefully to inform, persuade, and engage their audience.

Reading skills continue to be developed as students analyse non-fiction texts, focusing on the language of analysis and comparison. They will learn to use comparative and contrastive connectives and phrases to draw links between different texts and ideas. This critical engagement with texts

not only enhances their comprehension but also informs their approach to oracy, as they learn to use evidence and analysis to support their spoken arguments. Writing tasks will focus on creating structured and cohesive texts for speeches, enabling students to practice embedding evidence and crafting strong arguments.

Aligned with the High Performance Learning (HPL) framework, this unit emphasises key Values, Attitudes, and Attributes (VAA) such as confidence, agility, and perseverance. Through oracy-focused tasks, students are encouraged to take intellectual risks, demonstrating resilience and flexibility in their communication styles. They will also cultivate Advanced Cognitive Performance (ACP) skills, such as critical thinking and metacognition, as they evaluate the effectiveness of their spoken language and adapt it to different audiences and purposes.

Term 2.2 (12 Feb - 20 Mar): Short Stories - Power and Conflict
Focus: Sherlock Holmes - "The Speckled Band"

In the second half of Term 2, the exploration of power and conflict continues through the lens of short stories, with a particular focus on Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Speckled Band" featuring the iconic detective Sherlock Holmes. This classic mystery allows students to delve into narrative structure, character development, and the thematic elements of power and conflict within the context of the story.

Students will analyse how Doyle constructs suspense and tension, and how characters are used to represent varying aspects of power dynamics. The reading component of this unit encourages students to find literal information, make inferences, and develop strong topic sentences that clearly convey their interpretations. They will learn to embed evidence effectively, demonstrating a nuanced understanding of the text and refining their analytical language. By comparing elements within the story and linking back to the overarching theme, students will deepen their analytical skills and their appreciation for literary structure.

Writing tasks will include character descriptions, where students will explore the traits and motivations of key figures in the story, applying their understanding of narrative techniques to create vivid and engaging descriptions. They will also continue to refine their grammatical skills, focusing on the use of varied sentence structures, precise vocabulary, and coherent argumentation to convey their ideas clearly and persuasively.

Non-fiction reading and writing remain an integral part of this term, with students exploring articles about inspirational people. This component is designed to enhance their understanding of real-world narratives and the concept of power in various contexts. By drawing parallels between fictional and non-fictional texts, students will gain a broader perspective on the themes of power and conflict, allowing them to synthesise ideas across different genres.

This term's focus on oracy and narrative structure is intertwined with the HPL framework, encouraging students to develop VAA such as collaboration and empathy. As they work in groups and present their ideas, they will practice active listening and constructive feedback, honing their ability to articulate their thoughts and understand others' perspectives. ACP skills like reasoning,

intellectual playfulness, and precision will be central, as students explore complex narratives and express their ideas through various forms of communication.

Throughout Term 2, students are not only learning to navigate complex texts but also enhancing their communication skills in both spoken and written forms. By integrating oracy with literary study, this term aims to cultivate articulate, confident, and reflective learners who can engage with power and conflict across different mediums.

Term 3

Term 3.1 (7 Apr - 5 Jun)

In the first half of Term 3, students will immerse themselves in poetry, exploring themes of power and conflict through the Y8 Poetry Anthology. They will examine how the structure and context of poems contribute to their meaning and impact.

Students will develop the ability to confidently infer meaning from a text and explain a writer's intention and viewpoint. They will draw upon well-chosen references to support their ideas and explain how language and structural features—such as vocabulary, sentence structures, and other language elements—are used to achieve specific effects. The analysis will extend to making developed comparisons between different texts.

This unit will also include an exploration of how one text might be influenced by another and how context plays a crucial role in understanding the relationship between text and its broader cultural or historical background.

Term 3.2 (9 Jun - 3 Jul)

The latter part of Term 3 will shift focus to Chaucer's Middle English and the study of non-fiction texts. Students will engage with "A Knight's Tale," analysing its linguistic and historical context. They will also explore diaries and letters from Chaucer's time, providing insights into life and societal conditions.

Throughout this unit, students will continue to refine their skills in inferring meaning, explaining a writer's intention, and analysing how language and structure are used to create effects. They will build on their ability to make comparisons between texts and explain how texts may be influenced by each other. Furthermore, they will develop a deeper understanding of context, commenting on the relationship between the text and its historical and cultural backdrop.

This syllabus is designed to integrate High Performance Learning (HPL) principles, promoting critical thinking and advanced cognitive skills through a thorough examination of poetry and historical literature.

Assessment

Formative: Throughout the units, students will complete end-of-chapter assessments, quizzes, and problem-solving activities, allowing the teacher to assess students' progress and inform their planning. These formative assessments foster the *High Performance Learning (HPL) Values, Attitudes, and Attributes (VAAs)* of *agility and resilience*, as students engage in regular feedback cycles that encourage growth and adaptability in their learning. Additionally, these activities promote *Advanced Cognitive Performance (ACP)* skills such as *meta-cognition* and *critical thinking*,

as students reflect on their understanding, identify areas for improvement, and apply problem-solving strategies to enhance their skills.

Folio: Each term, students independently work on a folio project that encourages creativity and deeper engagement with the texts studied. These projects nurture the VAA of *creativity and open-mindedness*, as students explore diverse ways to interpret and present their ideas. By engaging with these folio projects, students also develop ACP skills like *intellectual playfulness* and *big-picture thinking*, enabling them to experiment with different perspectives and make connections between various concepts within the curriculum.

Summative: At the end of each term, students complete internal assessments based on specific skills. They also participate in standardised tests such as the GL, allowing us to measure their attainment throughout the term and year. This summative evaluation process encourages the VAA of *hard work and practice*, motivating students to consolidate their learning and demonstrate their progress. Furthermore, these assessments cultivate ACP skills like *precision* and *strategy planning*, as students practice applying their knowledge in structured settings and strategically approach different types of assessment tasks to showcase their achievements