

## A Student's Guide to

# GCSE English (1204)



### What is GCSE English all about?

The GCSE English course covers a wide range of skills: writing, reading, speaking and listening.

While studying English you will improve the fluency and accuracy of your own written expression. You will read a variety of texts learning to distinguish between fact and opinion; to follow an argument; to select material appropriate to purpose and to appreciate writers' use of language. You will develop your ability in speaking and listening so you can communicate clearly for different purposes and to different audiences.

### How does it follow on from what I have learnt before?

Much of what you will do in your GCSE English course will develop from the work you have done at Key Stage 3.

### Why do I have to take GCSE English?

English is a compulsory subject for GCSE because it develops a lot of the basic skills you will need to use in a variety of ways throughout your life.

You will use many of the skills you develop in GCSE English in the other subjects you are studying – for example expressing your ideas fluently and accurately in GCSE History and Geography.

Most college and 6<sup>th</sup> form courses require GCSE English as an entry requirement as do many jobs and careers.

### What about exams?

At the end of year 11 you will take two exam papers which will contribute 60% to your final mark.

Each exam will last for two hours.

The first paper – The Craft of the Writer – will assess your response to an anthology of material that you will have studied during your course. You must take the anthology with you into the exam. You will be asked to answer one question from a choice of two on modern poetry; one

question on the collection of different cultures short stories; and to do one of two writing tasks.

The second paper assesses your response to non-fiction texts that you will not have seen before the exam. One question will test your ability to read the text effectively. There will also be two writing tasks: one to argue, persuade, advise; the other to analyse, review and comment. You will have a choice of questions in both tasks.

### Is there any coursework?

Speaking and listening coursework – during your course you will take part in a variety of activities (drama focused, group and individual) which your teacher will assess. This assessment will contribute 20% to your final mark.

Written coursework - at the end of year 11 you will hand in your folder which will also contribute 20% to your final mark.

Your coursework folder will include three units – personal and imaginative writing; response to media texts such as newspapers, adverts, film, radio and web pages; and work based on a play by Shakespeare.

### What other skills might I develop?

You will develop a wide range of spoken and written communication skills as well as improving your ability to work with others, to analyse and solve problems and to take charge of your own learning. You should also be able to develop your ICT capabilities.