



English at A Level

English Language & English Literature

English is all about communication – the ways we interact through language and express ourselves through literature. If this interests you, then take A Level English Language and/or A Level English Literature.

By studying English Language, you can explore the ways men and women use language differently, find out how children acquire language and discover how English has changed over time. You'll also have the chance to produce some creative writing and investigate an area of language that interests you. We follow the AQA specification.

In English Literature, you analyse a variety of prose, poetry and drama from the Renaissance all the way to the present day. The texts studied include novels like *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The Great Gatsby*, plays ranging from *The Taming of the Shrew* to *A Streetcar Named Desire* and poetry from the likes of Carol Ann Duffy. You will take AQA Specification A.

A Level English Language (AQA)

Paper 1

2½ hours; 40% of A Level

- Analysis of how two linked texts use language to create meanings and representations
- Essay on children's language development

Paper 2

2½ hours; 40% of A Level

- Essay on language diversity or change
- Analysis of writers' attitudes to language
- Your own writing on attitudes to language

Non-Exam Assessment

20% of A Level

- Language investigation
- Piece of original writing and commentary

A Level English Literature (AQA/A)

Paper 1

3 hours; 40% of A Level

- Shakespeare play
- Unseen poetry
- Comparison of poetry and prose

Paper 2B, Option 1

2½ hours; 40% of A Level

- Poetry
- Unseen prose
- Comparison of drama and prose

Non-Exam Assessment

20% of A Level

- Comparison of two texts

Questions & Answers

Q: What sort of skills do I need to take an English A Level?

A: The key skill for both courses is the ability to analyse and consider a variety of texts in detail. You need to be able to communicate this, so good essay writing skills are vital.

Q: How interested should I be in reading?

A: For English Literature, you should be very interested in reading, particularly fiction. English Language students should also enjoy reading, though the texts tend to be shorter non-fiction.

Q: How similar are the A Levels to their GCSEs?

A: English Literature is fairly similar to its GCSE, but the texts are more challenging and studied in greater depth. English Language has more differences: it is more analytical than the GCSE and includes new areas such as theories about language; there is still a creative writing element, though.

Q: I can't decide whether to take English Language or English Literature!

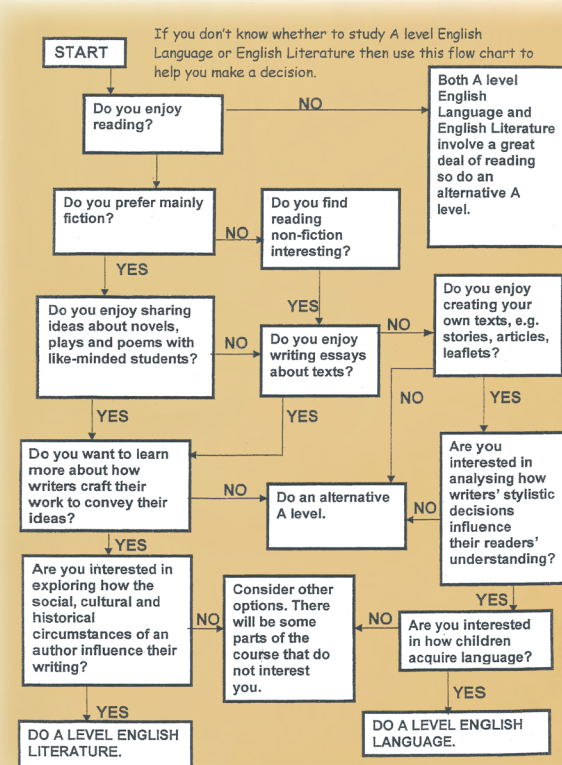
A: Use the flow chart to the right.

Q: I really like English. Can I take both A Levels?

A: Yes.

Q: Will taking an English A Level help me get into university?

A: Yes. English Literature is considered a 'facilitating subject' by the Russell Group of top universities and English Language is also highly respected.



Support for Your Studies

The Faculty of English has a wide range of resources to help sixth formers succeed, including academic books and subscriptions to websites for A Level students. We also regularly run visits to theatres, universities and conferences.

Further Information

For more details about either of the English A Levels, look in the sixth form prospectus, speak to any English teacher or visit the exam board's website:

- AQA A Level English Language: aqa.org.uk/7702
- AQA A Level English Literature A: aqa.org.uk/7712