

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

Northampton School for Boys



Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back. We hope you had a restful and relaxing half-term break.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support during the first half of our spring term at Northampton School *for Boys*, and to commend your son for his focus, commitment, and ambition.

As a department, we believe that the study of English empowers and inspires students. Our curriculum centres around challenging and thought-provoking texts encompassing different times and cultures, encouraging students to make connections with a variety of voices and perspectives. Our broad study of the Literary Canon enables students to nurture their appreciation of the history and power of language; students are taught to harness the rich qualities of that language to articulate themselves in a variety of spoken and written contexts, confidently and coherently. The ability to discuss, explore and evaluate concepts and ideas with clarity is central to the academic narrative of which we are proud.

It is our goal that your son will leave us with an understanding and appreciation of the world in which he lives, a range of critical perspectives and the ability to communicate with confidence and flair. Ultimately, we hope your son's experiences in our English classrooms at Northampton School for Boys will resonate with him through the years and foster a life-long love of reading.

With these intentions in mind, we will share a newsletter with you at the start of every term with guidance on how you can best support his studies in English. We will provide details of upcoming modules; topics for discussion; reading lists to complement the texts studied in lessons; and Accelerated Reader updates.

We look forward to working with you and your son during his time at Northampton School *for Boys*.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'amorgan-scott'.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claire Morrell'.

Mrs Morgan-Scott (Learning Leader KS3)

Mrs Claire Morrell (Curriculum Team Leader)

Our Year 8 Curriculum

In Year 7, your son studied Old, Middle and Early-Modern English. This year, he will focus on texts from the 18th-21st Century. In the Autumn term, he will focus on the theme of Remembrance. He will then explore Romantic, Gothic and Victorian Literature in the Spring term and Mitch Johnson's 'Kick' in the Summer term.

The Spring Term (Jan—April)

Year 8 continue their curriculum journey through an exploration of the Romantic era, from the likes of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and enter into the subversive and dark worlds of the Gothic. Pupils will study a range of extracts from differing Gothic texts, from the first ever Gothic novel—'The Castle of Otranto' by Horace Walpole, to Bram Stoker's 'Dracula' and Mary Shelley's 'Frankenstein'. This will be extended through pupils' exploration of the Gothic development in the forever popular 'Sherlock Holmes' by Arthur Conan Doyle. Alongside an analytical appreciation of the gothic genre, pupils will also be exploring creative styles of writing, seeking to craft, shape, and re-create gothic tropes in their own creative voice.



Discussion Topics for the Spring Term

1. How is the sublime powerful to a reader, and what is the sublime?
2. In what ways does nature create a sense of awe and wonder?
3. What is compelling about a dark character, an antagonist?
4. How is Sherlock Holmes still such an engaging and loved character in modern culture?
5. How do you, when writing creatively, create a spooky and mysterious setting?

Wider Reading and Research Opportunities

If your son is interested in learning more about the Romantic era of literature, the Gothic, and into mystery and crime writing, we would recommend he reads:

1. 'The Half-Blood Prince' - JK Rowling
2. 'The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe' - CS Lewis
3. 'Crowns and Codebreakers' - Elen Caldecott

A reading list of fiction books which focus on similar themes to 'Private Peaceful' can be found on Moodle under Subjects>English>KS3>ReadingLists.

Accelerated Reader

To complement his studies and support his reading, your son will be enrolled on the Accelerated Reader programme. Mrs Rutherford will contact you with further details of this program shortly. In order to support this programme, your son will have one lesson a week in the school library. We ask that you support your son by encouraging him to read, or reading with him, for at least 20 minutes every day. Reading every day supports academic progress as well as allowing students to develop their vocabulary, concentration, empathy, creativity and wellbeing.

Star of the Week

In addition to awarding House Points, our English teachers reward positive behaviour in Years 7 and 8 by choosing a 'Star of the Week'. Our Stars are rewarded with 5 house points and a certificate. Please check in with your son to see whether he has been one of our many 'Stars of the Week'!