

TERMS TWO & THREE: JANUARY – APRIL

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

YEAR 7 NEWSLETTER



Dear parents,

Happy New Year! Welcome to 2026.

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your son back to Northampton School for Boys. We hope you had a restful Christmas break.

As a school, we believe that the study of English empowers and inspires our 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.

As such, our Key Stage 3 Curriculum is structured chronologically with Y7 focussing on Old English (Beowulf) in the Autumn term, Middle English (Arthurian Legends and Chaucer) in the Spring term and Early-Modern English (Shakespeare) in the Summer term. In Year 8, we turn our attention to 19 - 21 century literature.

Contacts:

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Every full term, we will release an English Department newsletter with information on:

- The knowledge and skills being covered in lessons
- Guidance on home learning
- Advice on complementary reading

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the relevant member of staff using the contact details provided to the left.

We wish you and your son the very best wishes for a successful Spring term at NSB.

The English Team

WHAT WILL STUDENTS BE LEARNING THIS TERM?

All students will be studying Medieval Literature, and Geoffrey Chaucer's 'The Canterbury Tales'. Moving chronologically from 'Beowulf', students will explore the contextual features of the Medieval era, and will explore morality in literature. Students will continue to develop their analytical voices, and this will be paired with further honing and enhancing of their creative voices also – continuing on from students adventure writing through 'Kraznir', students will move away from descriptive writing, and explore examples of non-fiction writing through Travel writing.



READING

- Making clear points about a text to build an argument.
- Identifying and commenting on writers' purposes and viewpoints.
- Explaining and commenting on writers' use of language and literary features.
- Identifying and commenting on the structure and organisation of texts.
- Linking texts to literary traditions and genre.
- Comparing and contrasting texts.



WRITING

- I can construct paragraphs and use cohesion within and between paragraphs.
- I can vary sentences for clarity, purpose and effect.
- I can write with technical accuracy.
- I can use correct spelling.

HOME LEARNING

In Term 3, students in Year 7 will be completing reading home learning, and comprehension quizzing, which are thematically complimentary to their study of Chaucer in lessons. All of this, as before, will be on Teams. In Term 4, students will be working through Teams quizzes for common punctuation errors to secure their own learning.



HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY CHILD AT HOME?

DISCUSSIONS

One way to support students in recalling their learning and developing their understanding is to discuss their learning with them, asking them questions or asking them to teach you about the topic. By the end of the Spring term, students should be able to discuss:

1. What are the origins of the English language?
2. How is the chivalric code relevant today?
3. What were Chaucer's main concerns in his writing?
4. How is religion depicted in Medieval Literature?
5. What was life like in Medieval England?
6. How has language changed over time?
7. What rhetorical devices are used by writers to engage a reader?
8. What is the purpose of travel writing?



ENCOURAGING AND DISCUSSING READING

Research shows that students who read frequently make the most academic progress. Whether it's a novel, an audiobook or a newspaper, we advise that students read for a minimum of 20 minutes, 3 times per week.

Our top 6 recommendations can be found on the next page.

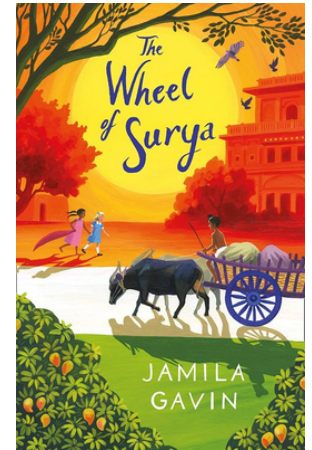
BOOKS TO COMPLIMENT STUDENTS' STUDY OF MEDIEVAL LITERATURE AND CHAUCER'S 'THE CANTERBURY TALES':



After a Second Civil War, a compromise called the "Bill of Life" allows parents to have their teens "unwound"—their body parts harvested for transplants between ages 13-18—without technically ending their life. The story follows three teens who are on the run to escape this fate, fighting for survival as they're hunted for their parts, exploring deep questions about life, choice, and humanity in a world gone mad.



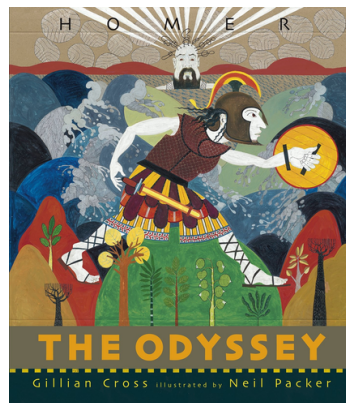
Coram Boy by Jamila Gavin is a gripping historical novel about hidden identities, dark secrets, and music in 18th-century England, following the lives of orphans at London's Coram Hospital and the evil "Coram Man" who preys on desperate mothers, burying their babies but saving one, Aaron, a musical prodigy whose true heritage connects him to the wealthy Ashbrook family and brings danger and redemption as his past catches up to him, weaving in real historical figures like Handel in a story of love, betrayal, and family reunion.



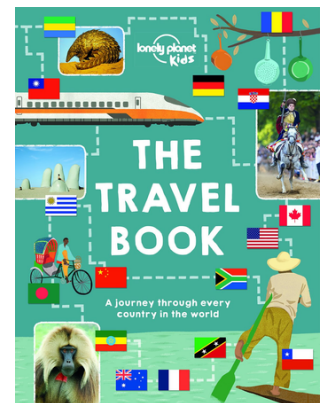
The Wheel of Surya by [Jamila Gavin](#) is a powerful story about siblings Marvinder and Jaspal, separated from their mother during India's Partition in 1947, who flee war-torn Punjab to find their unknown father in England, facing new cultural challenges while a legacy of family, faith, and identity unfolds, perfect for fans of historical fiction about struggle and belonging.



Bone Talk by Candy Gourlay is a coming-of-age story set in 1899 Philippines, following young Samkad as his world turns upside down with the arrival of mysterious "Americans," bringing both conflict and a new perspective to his remote Bontok tribe, forcing him to question his ideas of manhood, friendship, and home amidst the impacts of colonialism and cultural clashes.



The Odyssey highlights the epic journey of hero Odysseus, king of Ithaca, as he battles monsters like the Cyclops, outwits sorceresses like Circe, resists the Sirens, and navigates dangers from angry gods, all while trying to get home to his faithful wife Penelope and son Telemachus after the Trojan War, making it a tale of bravery, cunning, and a long, adventurous voyage filled with gods, monsters, and magic for young readers.



Lonely Planet Kids travel books offer thrilling global adventures, packed with fun facts, vibrant photos, and illustrations about countries, cultures, wildlife, food, and festivals, inspiring young explorers to learn about the diverse world through interactive activities, maps, and tips for family trips, serving as ultimate guides for curious minds and adventurous families.