English Curriculum Intent	Year 8

At New Line Learning Academy, the English Department's ethos is to deliver an ambitious, diverse and inclusive curriculum to every pupil, enabling them to become inquisitive readers who appreciate the significance of our global literary heritage. Alongside nurturing a passion for reading, the department places a strong emphasis on developing literacy, creating confident writers and effective communicators. The curriculum equips students with the literacy, communication and critical thinking skills necessary for success in school and beyond, preparing them to participate thoughtfully and confidently in an ever-changing world.

Our vision is to raise achievement and provide pupils with opportunities for both personal and academic growth, empowering them to succeed and reach their full potential in English. Throughout their five-year English journey, students engage with a rich and challenging curriculum that promotes a love of reading alongside an analytical exploration of texts and writers' craft. This is enhanced through the study of the historical, cultural and social contexts that shape the literature they encounter.

The promotion of reading for pleasure is a central feature of the curriculum. Pupils are exposed to a diverse range of high-quality texts, encouraged to read independently, and supported in accessing the school library. Teachers actively celebrate reading achievements and foster positive reading habits, helping pupils to view reading not only as an essential academic skill but also as a source of enjoyment, curiosity, and personal enrichment. Reading fluency continues to be developed through structured reading strategies, regular engagement with ambitious texts, and opportunities for sustained independent reading.

Our Year 8 curriculum is carefully sequenced through thematic collections that continue to develop the core disciplinary skills of reading, writing, and oracy. Building upon the foundations established in Year 7, pupils revisit key literary concepts through increasingly challenging texts, genres, and contexts, enabling them to deepen their understanding and apply their knowledge with greater independence and sophistication. Pupils explore a wide range of literary and non-fiction texts, refining their analytical skills by making increasingly complex connections between themes, writers' methods, and contextual influences. They continue to develop their creative and transactional writing, experimenting with narrative voice, characterisation, structure, and rhetorical techniques, while expanding their academic and creative vocabulary to communicate with greater precision and confidence.

A central thread throughout the curriculum remains the exploration of conflict. However, pupils move beyond considering how conflict affects individuals to exploring how conflict is created, sustained and challenged by wider social structures. Through texts such as *Blood Brothers*, pupils examine how class, inequality and social expectations shape people's lives and opportunities. In *Refugee Boy*, they explore conflict arising from displacement, identity, migration and belonging. Through the study of dystopian literature, pupils investigate power, control, authoritarian systems and the ways writers use fiction to challenge societal norms and expose injustice. By revisiting concepts of conflict, identity, power and morality through a broader societal lens, pupils develop an understanding of how prejudice, inequality, social structures and competing ideologies can create division and conflict within communities and societies. They explore how writers expose injustice, challenge

	societal norms and present differing perspectives, gaining a deeper appreciation of literature as a powerful tool for social commentary and change. Adaptive teaching is embedded throughout the curriculum to ensure that all pupils can access ambitious learning and achieve success. Teachers use a range of evidence-informed strategies, including explicit modelling, guided practice, targeted questioning, and carefully sequenced scaffolding, to support pupils in developing disciplinary knowledge and skills. Vocabulary is taught explicitly and revisited regularly to strengthen literacy and deepen understanding. High expectations are maintained for all learners, with appropriate support and challenge enabling pupils to make sustained progress, develop independence, and engage confidently with increasingly complex texts and ideas. We aspire to ensure that every learner: • becomes a creative and driven individual who is supported in making excellent progress in the subject. • develops an ambitious repertoire of vocabulary to support their personal development. • has a heightened cultural awareness that they can apply to non-educational environments. • can communicate effectively (both verbally and in writing) and can collaborate with a range of individuals to achieve a desired outcome. We deliver a broad and ambitious programme of study that enables all pupils to: • Develop knowledge of a range of literary and non-fiction texts from different periods, cultures, and traditions. • Build a rich and ambitious vocabulary through explicit instruction and regular application, supporting both academic success and personal development. • Analyse how writers use language, structure, and form to create meaning and influence readers. • Develop cultural awareness and an appreciation of diverse perspectives that can be applied beyond the classroom. • Write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences, using accurate and increasingly sophisticated language. • Develop confidence in oracy through discussion, debate, presentation, and collaborative learning. • Explore the social, historical, and cultural contexts that shape texts and their relevance to the modern world. • Strengthen resilience, independence, and critical thinking through engaging and challenging learning experiences. • Develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to achieve success in English and beyond. By the end of Year 8, pupils have progressed from exploring how conflict affects individuals in Year 7 to understanding how societies create, sustain, and challenge conflict. They recognise that literature can be used not only to reflect society but also to question, challenge, and influence it. Pupils understand how writers explore issues of power, equality, morality, identity, and social change, and can explain how these ideas are shaped by different historical, social, and cultural contexts. This provides a strong foundation for the more sophisticated exploration of these concepts across a broader range of genres, periods, and literary traditions in Year 9.
Term 1 Topic/Theme/Enquiry	**Conflict within Society** *How does society influence people's choices and actions?*

Big Picture
What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?

Pupils will study the theme of conflict within society and explore how writers from different literary periods have represented psychological experiences and mental states. They will focus on Victorian and Gothic literature, examining how canonical texts use themes such as fear, insanity, obsession and the supernatural to create compelling narratives. Pupils will have the opportunity to discover how the theme of conflict within society has evolved in post-war 1914 literature and will draw comparisons across texts. Through close analysis, students will consider how social attitudes and cultural anxieties have influenced the representations.

Zoom In
What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?

Key Texts Studied:
The Tell-Tale Heart, by Edgar Allan Poe

Extracts from:
- *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, by Robert Louis Stevenson
- *Oliver Twist*, by Charles Dickens
- *Finished with the War:* A Soldier's Declaration, Siegfried Sassoon
- Walk through Thornfield Hall, Jayne Eyre
- Extracts from *The Woman in Black*, Susan Hill.

Poetry:
- *Dreamers*, by Siegfried Sassoon

Disciplinary knowledge: Pupils learn how to analyse texts, construct interpretations, evaluate evidence, and compare perspectives by completing the following:

Knowledge and Skill Development: Reading: (skills taught may vary depending on the group):
- Making inferences
- Word level explanation.
- Writing PEEZLE paragraph responses.
- To make links to characterisation, tone and theme.
- Analysis of literary device use

Knowledge and Skill Development: Writing and Grammar: (skills taught may vary depending on the group):
- Forms of Writing: article writing, descriptive writing
- Identifying and using the passive voice – using the passive voice for impact.

- Identifying and writing imperatives – Identifying imperatives
- Using nouns to create character – understanding the connotations of nouns

Knowledge and Skill Development: Vocabulary: (Vocabulary taught may vary depending on the group):

Keywords: instability, demeanour, insanity, volatility, isolation, monomaniac, internal and external conflict, obsession, brutality, duality, aestheticism, reputation, corruption, morality, unpredictability, macabre, tenebrous, progression, bias, ominous, conceal, malevolent, guilt.

Subject Terminology: narrative voice, unreliable narrator, hyperbole, tropes, the Gothic, motif, symbolism, chronological, synonyms, personification, metaphor, foreshadowing, pathetic fallacy, atmosphere, syntax.

Knowledge and Skill Development: Spelling
Forming plurals – (-s, -es, -ves)

Pre-Requisite Knowledge
What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?

Pupils will require an intermediate level of reading to access the key text independently, alongside the comprehension skills developed at primary school. They will continue to rehearse and strengthen reading, writing, and oracy skills built through Year 7 English and the Literacy Laboratory programme.

Pupils will draw upon their historical knowledge of the Victorian era and World War One to support deeper contextual understanding and interpretation of texts. The unit will recap and further develop reading skills acquired at Key Stage 2 and Year 7, including the ability to make comparisons within and across texts, and to explain and discuss their understanding with increasing clarity and precision.

Pupils will also build on their foundational knowledge of word classes and parts of speech, using this grammatical understanding to craft sentences for effect and impact in their own writing.

Pitch Up
How will we challenge ourselves?

Pupils will explore how literature is used to represent the complexities of the human mind and how literary texts are shaped by social, scientific, and historical contexts. Through their study of the text, pupils will examine how psychological instability can become a source of tension, mystery, and horror. They will critically consider whether the human mind can ever be fully understood and how writers present the conflict between reason and emotion, appearance and reality, and sanity and madness.

Pupils will engage with a range of ambitious vocabulary and continue to develop their understanding of increasingly sophisticated literary devices and methods. They will read texts critically, making connections between the text and relevant theories, and discussing their interpretations with peers using precise and ambitious academic language. Through exposure to challenging texts, pupils will further develop their reading fluency and comprehension skills, analyse complex syntactical choices and evaluate how language and structure shape meaning.

Wider Framework *How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?*	**Curriculum Hinterland** *What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?*
This unit will directly support pupils' future study of pre-1914 fiction for GCSE English Language and *A Christmas Carol* for GCSE English Literature. Through exploring how Gothic conventions and tropes are presented in literary texts, pupils will secure key Tier 2 vocabulary and analytical skills that will provide a strong foundation for interpreting more challenging nineteenth-century literature in later years. As pupils progress to the study of World War One literature, they will encounter themes, contexts, and literary concepts that will support their future analysis of *Journey's End* at GCSE. The unit will also develop key writing skills that are essential for success in GCSE English Language, with pupils focusing on the deliberate crafting of sentence structures and the effective use of variation to create meaning and impact. Beyond academic study, pupils will develop a deeper understanding of what it means to be human by exploring questions surrounding identity, morality, psychological conflict, and human behaviour. Through engaging with these ideas, they will be encouraged to reflect on their own values and perspectives, considering how literature can help us understand and respond to the challenges of conflict within society.	Pupils would benefit from developing an understanding of the Victorian era before beginning the unit. Independent research tasks, such as creating a presentation on life in Victorian England, can help to build this contextual knowledge. Enrichment opportunities, including visits to the Victorian classrooms at the Ragged School Museum or guided tours exploring Victorian London, would further support pupils' understanding of the social, cultural, and historical contexts that shaped nineteenth-century literature. As pupils move into the study of post-1914 literature, they need an understanding of the experiences of soldiers during the First World War. Wider reading and research, alongside enrichment opportunities such as visits to the Imperial War Museum or participation in trench-based learning experiences, can help pupils develop a deeper appreciation of the realities of war and its impact on individuals and society. Throughout the unit, pupils will engage with key ideas and figures that have shaped understandings of human nature and the mind. They will explore the theories of Sigmund Freud and the concept of the unconscious mind alongside Charles Darwin's ideas and the challenges they posed to traditional Victorian beliefs about humanity. Pupils will also examine Victorian attitudes towards mental illness, the literary motif of the 'double self', and the ways in which writers have explored psychological conflict. Modern understandings of mental health and well-being would be beneficial.

Authentic connections *How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?*
Studying this unit helps pupils develop an understanding of how writers represent human psychology, emotions, and society's attitudes towards mental health. Exploring these themes fosters empathy and the ability to consider different perspectives—valuable qualities for future careers in healthcare, counselling, education, social work, and any profession that involves supporting and working with people. Through analysing how ideas about identity, conflict, and society have changed over time, pupils will strengthen their critical thinking, communication, and evaluative skills. These transferable skills are highly valued across a wide range of careers, including law, journalism, research, politics, and the public services.

The study of narrative structure, characterisation, and the power of language also support pathways into careers in publishing, marketing, advertising, journalism, and the wider media industry. Furthermore, the historical and cultural dimensions of the unit provide links to careers in history, heritage, museums, archaeology, writing, film, television, and theatre.

By engaging with diverse experiences, viewpoints, and interpretations, pupils will develop cultural awareness and emotional intelligence, preparing them to collaborate effectively with others in both their future education and the workplace.

Wider links to other subjects:

- **History:** Victorian society, attitudes towards mental illness, impacts of the First World War on individuals and society.
- **Psychology:** Human behaviour, perception, trauma, mental health and theories of the mind.
- **Science:** Scientific discoveries and human behaviour.
- **Religious Education:** Morality, guilt, conscience, ethical questions surrounding human behaviour.
- **Art and Design:** Gothic imagery, symbolism, representation of fear.
- **PSHE:** Mental health awareness, empathy, resilience, and challenging stigma around mental health.
- **Sociology:** Social attitudes towards deviance, conformity, mental health and the influence of society on the individual.

Resources *What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?*	**Assessment** *How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?*
Home Learning Link: Sparx Reader - Home **Development of Knowledge for the Unit:** World War One - KS3 History - BBC Bitesize The Victorians - The Victorians - KS3 History - homework help for year 7, 8 and 9. - BBC Bitesize Gothic literature guide for KS3 English students - BBC Bitesize **Development of Skills at KS3:**	Assessment is cumulative and designed to evaluate both knowledge retention and application. Pupils regularly revisit previously taught vocabulary, contextual knowledge, literary concepts, and disciplinary skills through retrieval practice, low-stakes quizzing, extended writing, discussion, and comparative analysis. The end of term assessment will then focus on: • (AO1) To identify and interpret information and find evidence. • (AO5/AO6) Communication and stylistic writing.

Fiction writing - KS3 English - BBC Bitesize Grammar - KS3 English - BBC Bitesize Free KS3 SPaG Online 10-Minute Tests | CGP Books Key Stage 3 English | KS3 Revision | Education Quizzes KS3 English Language: Grammar for 11-14 year olds - BBC Teach	

Term 2 Topic/Theme/Enquiry		**Social Inequality.** *Are we shaped more by our choices or our circumstances?*

Big Picture
What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?

Pupils will explore how social class, inequality, and economic circumstance shape opportunity, identity, relationships, and life chances. Through the study of *Blood Brothers* by Willy Russell, pupils will examine how the writer critiques social division and exposes the impact of poverty, privilege, and inequality on individuals and communities. They will consider the extent to which people's lives are shaped by the circumstances into which they are born, while also exploring the role of personal choice, responsibility, and agency.

Through the themes of class, fate, family, friendship, and social responsibility, pupils will investigate how social structures can create barriers and influence aspirations, opportunities, and outcomes. They will analyse how Russell uses characterisation, dramatic methods, symbolism, and stagecraft to communicate powerful messages about inequality and social injustice.

Through critical engagement with the play, pupils will reflect on the fairness of society and consider how literature can challenge assumptions, expose injustice, and encourage audiences to question the social and economic inequalities that continue to exist in the modern world.

Zoom In
What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?

Key Texts Studied:
Blood Brothers, by Willy Russell

Disciplinary Knowledge: Pupils will develop an understanding of how playwrights use dramatic methods, language and structure to communicate ideas and influence audiences. Through studying *Blood Brothers*, pupils will learn to analyse how Willy Russell presents themes such as class, inequality, fate, family, identity and social responsibility by completing the following:

Knowledge and Skill Development: Reading: (skills covered may vary depending on the group):

- Analysis of form
- Making inferences
- Word level explanation.
- Writing PEEZLE paragraph responses
- To make links to characterisation, tone and theme
- Analysis of literary devices used by a writer

Knowledge and Skill Development: Writing and Grammar: (Skills covered may vary depending on the group):

- Forms of writing: Descriptive writing, short story writing, diary writing
- Identifying and writing imperatives –understanding imperatives and their structure
- Using verbs to create character – Identifying verbs and crafting characters.
- Using verbs to describe the senses – sensory verbs
- Identifying and using the passive voice – Understanding the passive voice structure.

Knowledge and Skill Development: Vocabulary: (vocabulary covered may vary depending on the group):
Keywords: relentless, supernatural, incredulous, disparity, poverty, internal conflict, nostalgia, betrayal, manipulation, instability, demeanour, social hierarchy, morality, oppressive, overture, envy, morality, prejudice, criminalisation, progression, empathy

Subject Terminology: personification, passive voice, speech tags, foreshadowing, foreboding, prolepsis, elision, exposition, deuteragonist, syntax, inference, dramatic irony, tension, imperatives, stage directions, narrator, playwright, motif, symbolism, allusion.

Knowledge and Skill Development: Spelling
Silent letters – h, split digraphs, w, k

Pre-Requisite Knowledge *What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?*	**Pitch Up** *How will we challenge ourselves?*
Pupils will require an intermediate level of reading to access the key text independently and comprehension skills that they have developed in primary school. Pupils will rehearse reading, writing and oracy skills that would have been developed through their experiences in Year 7 English and the Literacy Laboratory programme. Pupils should draw upon their understanding of conflicts, morality and deception from their learning in Year 7 when reading critically.	Pupils will engage with a range of ambitious vocabulary and continue to expand their understanding of increasingly complex literary devices and methods. They will read the text critically, discussing their interpretations with their peers and using precise, ambitious vocabulary to articulate their ideas. Through exposure to a challenging dramatic text, pupils will further develop their reading and analytical skills, interpreting complex language and syntactical choices. They will also consider how the form of a text influences a writer's stylistic decisions and shapes the audience's response.

Pupils will utilise their foundational knowledge of word classes and the parts of speech and use this knowledge base to craft sentences for impact. Pupils will be expected to rehearse spellings of words that they have previously seen in Key Stage Two, exercising their understanding of spelling rules. This is embedded to support and secure their spelling ability.	Throughout the unit, pupils will examine how wealth, power, and social class influence identity, opportunities, and relationships. They will explore how literature can expose social injustice, challenge dominant narratives, and encourage both readers and audiences to question fairness and inequality in the world around them. Through the study of themes such as class division and social mobility, pupils will develop a deeper understanding of the ways in which societies can privilege some groups while disadvantaging others. Pupils will also explore the concepts of fate and free will, considering whether personal choices determine people's futures or whether individuals are ultimately constrained by the circumstances into which they are born. By engaging with these ideas, they will critically evaluate how writers present responsibility, opportunity, and social inequality, while reflecting on the extent to which individuals can shape their own destinies.
Wider Framework *How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?*	**Curriculum Hinterland** *What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?*
This unit will directly relate to knowledge required for pupils' study of *Noughts & Crosses* by Malorie Blackman in Year 9, where they will build upon their understanding of equality, prejudice, discrimination, and the impact of trauma on individuals and communities. In addition, the learning developed throughout this unit will provide pupils with a foundation for exploring internal and external conflict, preparing them for the study of the Edexcel Conflict Poetry Anthology at GCSE English Literature. Pupils will also develop key writing skills that link directly to GCSE English Language, focusing on the deliberate crafting of sentence structures and the effective use of variation to create meaning, influence readers, and achieve impact. Beyond preparing pupils for future academic study, the unit will encourage them to consider how societies are organised, how power is distributed, and how factors such as wealth, social class, and privilege can influence identity, opportunity, relationships, and life chances.	Pupils would benefit from developing an understanding of theatre and performance before beginning the unit. Experiencing a live play, or watching a recorded theatrical production, will support pupils in understanding how a script is translated from page to stage and how dramatic techniques, staging, and performance choices influence meaning and audience response. Where possible, pupils should watch a performance of *Blood Brothers* to deepen their understanding of characterisation, themes, and dramatic methods. The unit would also benefit from pupils having some contextual knowledge of post-war Britain, including the impact of social reform, unemployment, and the contrasting political ideologies that shaped modern British society. Exploring these issues will help pupils to understand the social and economic inequalities that underpin the play. In addition, pupils will be introduced to the political and social context associated with figures such as Margaret Thatcher and the debates surrounding class, opportunity, and social mobility. This contextual

Pupils will develop a deeper understanding of the social world and will critically examine how inequality can shape people's experiences, opportunities, and life chances, while considering the extent to which individuals are able to overcome the circumstances into which they are born. By exploring the influence of wealth, class, and power on identity and opportunity, pupils will develop a greater awareness of the structures that shape society. This understanding will support them in becoming informed, reflective, and socially aware citizens who are able to engage thoughtfully with contemporary issues and contribute positively to their communities.	understanding will enable pupils to make informed connections between the play, its historical setting, and wider questions about fairness, inequality, and social responsibility.

Authentic connections
How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?

Studying *Blood Brothers* by Willy Russell enables pupils to develop a range of transferable skills, including critical thinking, communication, empathy, analysis, and creativity. Through exploring complex themes such as social class, inequality, family, identity, and opportunity, pupils develop a deeper understanding of how social and economic circumstances can shape people's lives, relationships, and aspirations.
The study of social inequality provides meaningful connections to careers in social work, youth work, education, counselling, healthcare, community development, politics, law, and public services, where an understanding of diverse backgrounds, lived experiences, and social challenges is essential. Pupils are encouraged to consider how societies can create both opportunities and barriers, helping them develop the empathy, social awareness, and critical thinking skills required in many people-focused professions.

The unit also supports progression into the creative industries. Through analysing dramatic techniques, characterisation, stagecraft, and audience response, pupils gain insight into careers in theatre, television, film, journalism, scriptwriting, directing, acting, and media production. They develop an understanding of how writers and performers communicate powerful messages and influence audience perspectives.
Beyond careers, the play encourages pupils to reflect on issues that remain relevant in contemporary society, including social mobility, poverty, inequality, and personal responsibility. By engaging critically with these themes, pupils become more informed, reflective, and socially aware individuals who can communicate ideas effectively and engage thoughtfully with the world around them.

Wider links to other subjects:

- **History:** Industrial Britain, post-war social change, the development of the welfare state.
- **Citizenship:** Social justice, inequality, poverty and the impact of society on the individual.
- **Drama:** Performance of character, use of stagecraft and audience impact.

- **Sociology:** Social class, life chances, cultural capital.
- **Geography:** Urban deprivation, housing inequality, regional differences in wealth.
- **Music-** Songs used to develop narratives, express emotion and reinforce themes.
- **Media Studies:** Representation of class in film, television or advertising.
- **Business Studies:** Wealth distribution, inequality, employment and the impact of economic systems on individuals.

Resources
What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?

Home Learning Link:
Sparx Reader - Home

Development of Knowledge for the Unit:
Blood Brothers - Plot summary - Plot summary - GCSE English Literature Revision - WJEC - BBC Bitesize
Blood Brothers by Willy Russell Plot Summary | LitCharts

Development of Skills at KS3:
How to respond to poetry guide for KS3 English students - BBC Bitesize
Fiction writing - KS3 English - BBC Bitesize
Grammar - KS3 English - BBC Bitesize
Free KS3 SPaG Online 10-Minute Tests | CGP Books
Key Stage 3 English | KS3 Revision | Education Quizzes
KS3 English Language: Grammar for 11-14 year olds - BBC Teach

Assessment
How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?

Assessment is cumulative and designed to evaluate both knowledge retention and application. Pupils regularly revisit previously taught vocabulary, contextual knowledge, literary concepts, and disciplinary skills through retrieval practice, low-stakes quizzing, extended writing, discussion, and comparative analysis.

The end-of-term assessment will then focus on:

- (AO1/AO2) To identify, explain and analyse the writer's use of language and structure.
- (AO5/AO6) Using interesting vocabulary and language devices.
- (AO5/AO6) Paragraphing, communication and stylistic writing.

Terms 3 and 4
Topic/Theme/Enquiry

Belonging and Childhood
How does a childhood experience shape an individual's sense of belonging?

Big Picture
What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?

Across Terms 3 and 4, pupils will complete their study of the novel *Refugee Boy* by Benjamin Zephaniah, providing an opportunity to engage with a contemporary text that explores significant social, cultural, and global issues. Pupils will further develop their ability to make informed judgements about a text, evaluating how writers use language, structure, characterisation, and narrative perspective to shape meaning and communicate ideas.

Throughout the unit, pupils will explore themes of belonging, identity, displacement, migration, and acceptance. They will consider how conflict can arise from cultural difference, political circumstances, and experiences of exclusion, while examining how characters navigate the challenges of adapting to new environments and rebuilding their lives. Pupils will explore how experiences of migration can shape identity, relationships, and emotional wellbeing, and how friendship, empathy, and community can foster resilience and a sense of belonging.

Through critical engagement with the novel, pupils will develop a deeper understanding of the experiences faced by refugees and displaced individuals, while considering wider issues of diversity, equality, and social responsibility. The unit encourages pupils to reflect on different perspectives and recognise the power of literature to promote empathy, challenge prejudice, and deepen understanding of the modern world.

Zoom In
What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?

Key Texts Studied:
Refugee Boy, by Benjamin Zephaniah

Disciplinary knowledge: Pupils will develop an understanding of how novelists use language, structure and narrative perspective to communicate ideas and shape readers' responses. Through studying *Refugee Boy*, pupils will explore how Benjamin Zephaniah presents themes of identity, belonging, prejudice, displacement, conflict and resilience by completing the following:

Knowledge and Skill Development: Reading:

- To explain how connotations answer the question.
- To make explain characterisation, tone and theme.
- To understand what a judgement is. To use words and phrases that make a judgement.
- To explain and justify the judgements that they have made regarding a text.

Knowledge and Skill Development: Writing and Grammar:
Forms of writing: Diary writing

- Using relative clauses to create an emotive tone
- Positioning adjectives for emphasis
- Positioning adjectives for emphasis
- Using conjunctive adverbials to link ideas

Knowledge and Skill Development: Vocabulary

Keywords: hierarchy, conscience, justice, persecution, campaign, disillusioned, displacement, identity, resilience, endure, refugee, asylum, erratic, turmoil, traitor, foreign, abandoned, hostile, devastated, sympathy, consolation, impressions, intrigue, fostered, comfort, motivation, awakening, security, façade, grief, relentless, solidarity, volatility.

Subject Terminology: adverbs, subordinate clause, relative clause, dashes, hypophora, ethos, pathos, logos, rhetoric, headline, pathetic fallacy, imperatives, personification, cliff hanger, medias res, anaphora, semantic field, juxtaposition, characterisation, dialogue.

Knowledge and Skill Development: Spelling
Prefixes (unstressed vowel). – le, -el, -al, il

Pre-Requisite Knowledge
What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?

Pupils will require an intermediate level of reading to access the key text independently, alongside the comprehension skills developed in primary school. They will continue to rehearse and strengthen their reading, writing, and oracy skills developed through Year 7 English and the Literacy Laboratory programme.

Pupils should draw upon their understanding of modern conflicts and the theme of morality studied in their Year 7 curriculum. They will also build on prior learning relating to the depiction of character interactions and relationships, considering how writers present these in different contexts and for different effects.

Pupils will utilise their foundational knowledge of word classes and the parts of speech, using this grammatical understanding to craft sentences for impact and precision. In addition, they will be expected to rehearse spelling patterns previously taught at Key Stage 2, applying their knowledge of spelling rules to secure accuracy and fluency in their written work. This ongoing focus on spelling is embedded to support and strengthen pupils' overall literacy development.

Pitch Up
How will we challenge ourselves?

Pupils will engage with a range of ambitious vocabulary and continue to expand their understanding of increasingly complex literary devices. They will read the text critically, making informed judgements and discussing their interpretations with their peers. Pupils will make meaningful links across both fiction and non-fiction texts, developing their ability to compare ideas, perspectives, and representations.

Through the study of the text, pupils will explore the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers, linking this to wider themes of modern migration and human rights. They will evaluate a character's journey in depth, considering how writers present the themes of identity, belonging, and displacement. Pupils will also compare different perspectives within the text and across supplementary materials, strengthening their understanding of how viewpoint shapes meaning.

Extended writing opportunities will enable pupils to develop and refine their analytical and evaluative skills. Through this, they will build both literary understanding and a broader global awareness of themes such as migration, identity, justice, and inequality.

Wider Framework
How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?

Curriculum Hinterland
What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?

This unit will directly relate to knowledge required for pupils' study of *Noughts & Crosses* by Malorie Blackman in Year 9, where they will build upon their understanding of equality, prejudice, and inequality within society. In addition, their learning will provide a foundation for exploring internal and external conflict, preparing pupils for the Edexcel Conflict Poetry Anthology at GCSE English Literature. The inclusion of Benjamin Zephaniah's poetry within this anthology further allows pupils to develop contextual understanding and make meaningful connections between texts. Pupils will also develop key writing skills that link directly to GCSE English Language, focusing on the careful crafting of sentence structures and the purposeful variation of these for impact and effect. This unit contributes to a long-term curriculum journey in which pupils progress from secure narrative understanding towards more critical interpretation and independent argument. Through sustained reading and analysis, pupils develop the ability to make increasingly sophisticated inferences and evaluations, supporting them in becoming confident, analytical readers who can engage deeply with a range of texts and ideas.	Pupils would benefit from developing an understanding of modern conflict and its impact on individuals and communities. Independent research, including news articles and autobiographical accounts, can help pupils to engage with real-world experiences and deepen their contextual understanding of the text. They should develop an awareness of what it means to become a refugee, including the social, political, and personal factors that contribute to forced migration. Pupils will explore the realities of displacement and asylum, building an understanding of migration as a complex global issue shaped by conflict, persecution, and human rights concerns.

Authentic connections
How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?

Within the unit, pupils will consider issues of morality and the impact of conflict and war on individuals. They will explore the experiences of people who flee conflict, developing their understanding of the Fundamental British Value of tolerance and respect for different cultures, beliefs, and backgrounds.
Studying *Refugee Boy* in English alongside evaluative writing helps pupils develop a deep understanding of important global issues such as displacement, identity, and resilience. This encourages empathy and cultural awareness, which are essential skills for careers in law, social work, journalism, education, and international relations. Through evaluative writing, pupils learn to analyse texts critically, form balanced arguments, and express their ideas clearly—skills that are highly valued across professions requiring strong communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving.

In addition, this unit helps pupils understand how literature reflects and responds to real social systems, including immigration processes and human rights protections. By engaging with these ideas, pupils develop a broader awareness of how societies function and how institutions respond to global challenges.
These skills and understandings support a range of career pathways, including journalism, law, social work, teaching, charity and humanitarian work, organisations supporting refugees, and wider public and government sector roles.

Wider links to other subjects:

- **History:** Exploration of the causes of migration and post-colonial Africa.
- **Religious Studies:** Exploring justice, morality and compassion towards others in need.
- **Citizenship:** Links to human rights, asylum law, UK immigration system.
- **Geography:** Connects to migration patterns, push and pull factors and global inequality.

Resources *What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?*	**Assessment** *How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?*
Sparx Reader - Home **Development of Knowledge for the Unit:** Refugee Boy Summary and Study Guide | SuperSummary Refugees - KS3 Humanities Geography - BBC Bitesize **Development of Skills at KS3:** Fiction writing - KS3 English - BBC Bitesize Grammar - KS3 English - BBC Bitesize Free KS3 SPaG Online 10-Minute Tests | CGP Books Key Stage 3 English | KS3 Revision | Education Quizzes KS3 English Language: Grammar for 11-14 year olds - BBC Teach	Assessment is cumulative and designed to evaluate both knowledge retention and application. Pupils regularly revisit previously taught vocabulary, contextual knowledge, literary concepts, and disciplinary skills through retrieval practice, low-stakes quizzing, extended writing, discussion, and comparative analysis. The end-of-term assessment will then focus on: • (AO1) To identify and interpret information and find evidence. • (AO4) To evaluate texts. • (AO5/AO6) Using interesting vocabulary and language devices.

Term 5 Topic/Theme/Enquiry	**Power and Control** *How do dystopian writers use imagined societies to warn us about the dangers of control, technology, and inequality in the real world?*

Big Picture
What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?

During term 5, pupils will engage with a range of extracts from the genre of dystopian fiction. They will consider the conventions and tropes of the genre and how dystopian societies are presented by writers, making comparisons across texts. Pupils will create their own dystopian and utopian societies, developing their narrative and non-fiction writing skills through imaginative and purposeful tasks.

Through this study, pupils will explore how societies can become controlled, unequal, or dehumanised, and how writers use dystopian settings to reflect real-world fears about power, freedom, and identity. They will consider how authority and systems of control can shape individual behaviour and limit personal freedom, while also examining the ways in which resistance and hope are represented within these narratives.
By engaging with these ideas, pupils will develop a deeper understanding of how literature can reflect and critique society, encouraging them to think critically about contemporary issues and the world around them.

Zoom In
What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?

Key Extracts Studied:

- *Nineteen Eighty-Four,* by George Orwell
- *The Giver*, by Lois Lowry
- *The Machine Stops*, by E. M. Forster
- *The Handmaid's Tale*, by Margaret Atwood
- *Ready Player One*, by Ernest Cline
- *Mockingjay*, by Suzanne Collins
- *The Children of Men*, by P.D. James

Disciplinary Knowledge: Pupils will develop an understanding of how writers use fictional worlds to explore real-world issues and challenge readers' perspectives. Through studying dystopian literature, pupils will analyse how authors use language, structure and narrative conventions to present themes such as power, control, inequality, freedom, identity and resistance by completing the following:

Knowledge and Skill Development: Reading:

- To recap the skill of analysing language and structural devices.
- To identify similarities and differences in a text linked to language, structure, tone, theme, events and ideas.
- To explain how reader responses to a line are similar of different and why.
- Use PEEZLE to construct a comparative response to a text.

Knowledge and Skill Development: Writing and Grammar:
Forms of writing: story writing, guidebooks, writing to instruct, writing to persuade, advertisements

- Use sentence structures to create hooks and tension

Knowledge and Skill Development: Vocabulary
Keywords: dystopia, utopia, propaganda, disparity, hierarchy, inevitability, transpire, persistence, indoctrination, rebellion, resistance, oppression, control, dehumanisation, authoritarianism.
Subject Terminology: fragments, foreshadowing, foreboding, personification, microcosm, allegory, irony, stream of consciousness, tone, symbolism.

Knowledge and Skill Development: Spelling

- Tricky phonemes -ture, -cher, -sure
- Homophones and near homophones

Pre-Requisite Knowledge *What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?*	**Pitch Up** *How will we challenge ourselves?*
Pupils will require an intermediate level of reading to access the extracts independently, alongside the comprehension skills developed in primary school. They will continue to rehearse and strengthen their reading, writing, and oracy skills developed through Year 7 English and the Literacy Laboratory programme. Pupils should draw upon their understanding of the themes of crime, punishment, and adversity studied in their Year 7 curriculum, using this prior knowledge to support their interpretation of dystopian texts and ideas. Pupils will utilise their foundational knowledge of word classes and parts of speech, applying this understanding to craft sentences for impact, clarity, and precision. In addition, they will be expected to rehearse spelling patterns previously taught at Key Stage 2, applying spelling rules accurately and consistently. This ongoing focus on spelling is embedded to secure and strengthen pupils' overall literacy development.	Pupils will engage with a range of ambitious vocabulary and continue to expand their understanding of increasingly complex literary devices and methods. They will read texts critically, making informed judgements and discussing their interpretations with their peers. Pupils will make meaningful links to prior learning and wider reading, strengthening their ability to connect ideas across texts and contexts. This unit is designed as a high-challenge, concept-driven exploration of dystopian literature. Pupils will develop an understanding of how dystopian societies are constructed to reflect real-world anxieties surrounding power, control, and the future of society. They will examine how writers present authoritarian control, oppression, surveillance, and resistance, as well as the role of digital escapism in shaping identity and experience. Through this study, pupils will consider how dystopian fiction acts as a critique of society, encouraging readers to question systems of power and reflect on contemporary social and political issues. Through this lens, pupils will be able to position dystopian literature within modern society and consider the consequences of unchecked power, exploring how writers warn against the potential misuse of authority and control.

Wider Framework *How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?*	**Curriculum Hinterland** *What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?*
This unit will directly relate to knowledge required for pupils' study of *Noughts & Crosses* by Malorie Blackman in Year 9, where they will build on their understanding of dystopian fiction through engagement with a whole text from the genre. In addition, their learning will provide a foundation for exploring societal conflict, preparing pupils for the Edexcel Conflict Poetry Anthology at GCSE English Literature. Pupils will also develop key writing skills that link directly to GCSE English Language, focusing on the careful crafting of sentence structures and the deliberate variation of these for impact and effect. Throughout the unit, pupils will learn how literature can act as a powerful form of social commentary, warning readers about the consequences of control, inequality, and technological dependence. They will explore how dystopian writing reflects and critiques real-world concerns, encouraging readers to question systems of power and consider the implications of unchecked authority in modern society.	Pupils would benefit from having read a range of literature within the dystopian genre before and alongside this unit. Independent reading in the school library, including dystopian novels, would support pupils in developing familiarity with common conventions, themes, and narrative structures. Pupils could also complete research into the key ideas and concerns that shape dystopian literature. This includes exploring ideological themes such as totalitarian regimes, propaganda, surveillance, and resistance. Developing an understanding of these concepts will enable pupils to recognise how writers construct dystopian worlds to reflect and critique real-world social and political issues, deepening their interpretative and analytical skills.

Authentic connections
How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?

Pupils' study of the topic will allow for discussion and debate on the rule of law and how societies are governed. They will develop informed opinions on the structure of these societies and make comparisons to societal structures.

Through exploring dystopian themes, pupils develop critical thinking by analysing complex societies, ethical dilemmas, and the consequences of social and political decisions. This sharpens their ability to evaluate information and think creatively—qualities highly sought after in fields such as law, politics, journalism, and technology. Meanwhile, non-fiction writing strengthens pupils' research skills, communication, and clarity of expression, all of which are essential in professional contexts.

This unit also strengthens pupils' awareness of how media, technology, and information can shape perception, directly linking to their experiences of online and social environments. Pupils will consider how control of information and digital influence can impact society and individual identity in both fictional and real-world contexts.

Career pathways linked to this unit include journalism, law, media, social work, writing, authorship, and cyber-related roles, where analytical thinking, ethical awareness, and strong communication skills are highly valued.

Wider links to other subjects:

- **History:** Connects dystopian literature to real political systems and historical contexts, propaganda and modern democracies.
- **Citizenship:** Links to human rights, democracy, justice and the role of the government.
- **Geography:** Students consider global inequality, population change, migrations, and environmental collapse.
- **PSHE:** Connects to identity, mental wellbeing, peer pressure and the impact of control and conformity on the individual.
- **Computing**: Students explore surveillance, artificial intelligence, virtual reality and data privacy.

Resources *What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?*	**Assessment** *How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?*
Home Learning Link: Sparx Reader - Home **Development of Knowledge for the Unit:** Lesson: Understanding dystopias | KS3 English | Oak National Academy (thenational.academy) **Development of Skills at KS3:** Fiction writing - KS3 English - BBC Bitesize Grammar - KS3 English - BBC Bitesize Free KS3 SPaG Online 10-Minute Tests | CGP Books Key Stage 3 English | KS3 Revision | Education Quizzes KS3 English Language: Grammar for 11-14 year olds - BBC Teach	Assessment is cumulative and designed to evaluate both knowledge retention and application. Pupils regularly revisit previously taught vocabulary, contextual knowledge, literary concepts, and disciplinary skills through retrieval practice, low-stakes quizzing, extended writing, discussion, and comparative analysis. The end of term assessment will then focus on: • (AO2/AO4) To compare texts • (AO5/AO6) Using interesting vocabulary and language devices • (AO5/AO6) Paragraphing your writing. Communication and stylistic writing.

Term 6 Topic/Theme/Enquiry		**Identity** *How is identity shaped, challenged and expressed through poetry from different cultural backgrounds?*

Big Picture
What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?

During term 6, pupils will continue to develop their understanding of society by exploring how the idea of culture is represented across a range of poetry. They will consider their own cultural heritage and reflect on how ideas about identity, belonging, and experience can be expressed through poetic form before applying this understanding in their own creative writing.

Pupils will build on their previous exposure to poetry, further developing their understanding of subject terminology related to form, language, and structure. They will also strengthen their ability to make comparisons across texts, identifying similarities and differences in how poets present ideas and perspectives.
Through this unit, pupils will explore how society, identity, and culture are expressed through different poetic forms. They will consider how poets use structure, voice, and language to shape meaning and communicate cultural experiences, deepening their appreciation of poetry as a medium for personal and social expression.

Zoom In
What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?

Key Poetry Studied:

- '*We Refugees*', by Benjamin Zephaniah
- '*Half-Caste*', by John Agard
- '*Welcome to Tottenham*', by Jibril Rose
- '*London*', by William Blake
- *'Island Man*', by Grace Nichols
- '*Blessing*', Imitaz Dharker
- '*Search for my Tongue*', Sujata Bhatt
- '*Presents from my Aunts in Pakistan*', Moniza Alvi
- '*Changes*', Tupac Shakur

Disciplinary Knowledge: Pupils will develop an understanding of how poets use language, structure and form to communicate ideas, experiences and perspectives from a range of cultures and contexts. Through studying poetry from other cultures, pupils will explore how writers present themes such as identity, belonging, heritage, conflict, tradition, migration and cultural diversity by completing the following:

Knowledge and Skill Development: Reading:

- To identify similarities and differences in a text linked to language, structure, tone, theme, events and ideas.

- To explain how the purpose or intentions of the two chosen lines are similar or different and why.
- To identify how contextual facts link to moments in the text.
- Use PEEZLE to construct a comparative response to a text.

Knowledge and Skill Development: Writing and Grammar:
Forms of writing: speech writing, poetry writing

- Identifying and writing relative clauses
- Using semi-colons to list in discursive writing
- Writing and punctuating using dashes – using dashes for emphasis

Knowledge and Skill Development: Vocabulary
Keywords: pernicious, controversy, detachment, alienation, oppression, migration, multiculturalism, racism, prejudice, nostalgia.

Subject Terminology: subordinate clauses, stanzas, rhyme, enjambment, caesura, free verse, meter, volta, refrain, anaphora, tone, metaphor, sibilance, simile, personification, juxtaposition, repetition, oxymoron, wordplay, multilingualism.

Knowledge and Skill Development: Spelling
Homophones and near homophones

Pre-Requisite Knowledge *What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?*	**Pitch Up** *How will we challenge ourselves?*
Pupils will require an intermediate level of reading to access the poems independently and comprehension skills that they have developed in primary school. Pupils will rehearse reading, writing and oracy skills that would have been developed through their experiences in Year 7 English lessons and the Literacy Laboratory programme. Pupils should draw upon their understanding of the themes of belonging, conflict and adversity that have been taught across the Key Stage 3 curriculum. Pupils will utilise their foundational knowledge of word classes and the parts of speech and use this knowledge base to craft sentences for impact.	Pupils will engage with a range of ambitious vocabulary and continue to expand their understanding of increasingly complex literary devices in relation to poetry. They will read texts critically, making informed judgements and discussing their interpretations with their peers. Pupils will make meaningful links to prior learning and wider reading, drawing on previously taught vocabulary to support increasingly precise analysis. This is a culturally rich and diverse exploration of identity, enabling pupils to examine how voice, language, and form are used to express complex experiences of belonging, displacement, and cultural hybridity. Pupils will consider how identity is shaped by heritage, migration, language, and lived experience, and how poets use these influences to communicate personal and collective perspectives.

Pupils will be expected to rehearse spelling patterns that they have previously seen in Key Stage Two, exercising their understanding of spelling rules.	Through this thematic comparison unit, pupils will make connections across a range of poems while developing a secure understanding of poetic terminology. They will strengthen their ability to compare ideas, methods, and meanings, building confidence in interpreting how poets present identity and culture in different ways.
Wider Framework *How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?*	**Curriculum Hinterland** *What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?*
The unit will directly relate to knowledge required for their study of the Edexcel Conflict poetry anthology that they will study for their English literature GCSE. Pupils will learn how to effectively make comparisons between poems and how to structure a comparative analysis. Pupils will also develop key writing skills that link to their English Language GCSE examinations, with pupils focusing on the careful crafting of sentence structures and variation of these for impact.	This unit will directly relate to knowledge required for pupils' study of the Edexcel Conflict Poetry Anthology at GCSE English Literature. Pupils will learn how to effectively make comparisons between poems and how to structure a sustained comparative analysis, developing their ability to organise ideas clearly and coherently. Pupils will also develop key writing skills that link directly to GCSE English Language, focusing on the careful crafting of sentence structures and the purposeful variation of these for impact and effect. Positioned within a coherent curriculum, this unit develops pupils' ability to critically engage with texts that explore identity, culture, and society. It builds a clear thematic thread of identity and voice, enabling pupils to consider how writers express personal and collective experiences through poetry. Through this, pupils learn how to interpret language and form with increasing sophistication, developing a deeper understanding of how meaning is shaped and communicated across different texts. This unit also contributes to pupils' cultural capital through exposure to a diverse range of voices and perspectives. By engaging with a variety of cultural, social, and historical contexts, pupils broaden their understanding of the world and develop an appreciation of experiences different from their own. This enriched cultural awareness supports their ability to think critically, empathise with others, and engage confidently with a wide range of texts and ideas.

Authentic connections
How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?

Studying poetry from different cultures and making comparisons helps pupils develop a deep appreciation for diversity and strengthens their analytical and communication skills—qualities that are highly valuable in many future careers. By exploring different cultural perspectives through poetry, pupils learn to understand and respect varied viewpoints, which is essential in today's globalised workplaces. Comparing themes, styles, and language in poetry also sharpens critical thinking and attention to detail, preparing pupils for careers in fields such as international business, diplomacy, education, and the creative industries.

Pupils also engage with contemporary issues such as multiculturalism, immigration, and identity in modern Britain. This helps them to understand how poetry connects with real human experiences and ongoing social debates, deepening their awareness of how literature reflects and responds to society. Through this, pupils develop cultural awareness and empathy, recognising the ways in which identity is shaped by heritage, migration, and lived experience.

Overall, this study fosters open-minded, culturally aware individuals who can connect with people from all backgrounds and adapt to diverse professional environments. Career pathways linked to this unit include marketing, advertising, writing, social work, education, immigration services, and wider public service roles, where strong communication skills and cultural understanding are highly valued.

Wider links to other subjects:

- **History:** Connects to the themes of migration, empire, post-colonial identity.
- **Religious Studies (RS) –** considering moral responsibility, compassion, justice, and human dignity.
- **Citizenship:** Links to multiculturalism, equality, human rights, and British values.
- **Geography:** Connects to migration, urbanisation, and global interconnectedness.
- **PSHE:** Links to Identity, belonging, mental wellbeing, discrimination, and self- expression.
- **Modern Foreign Languages:** Links are made through multilingualism, code-switching and the role of language in shaping identity.

Resources
What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?

Home Learning Link:
Sparx Reader - Home

Assessment
How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?

Assessment is cumulative and designed to evaluate both knowledge retention and application. Pupils regularly revisit previously taught vocabulary,

Development of Knowledge for the Unit: Reading poetry - KS3 English - BBC Bitesize **Development of Skills at KS3:** Grammar - KS3 English - BBC Bitesize Free KS3 SPaG Online 10-Minute Tests | CGP Books Key Stage 3 English | KS3 Revision | Education Quizzes KS3 English Language: Grammar for 11-14 year olds - BBC Teach	contextual knowledge, literary concepts, and disciplinary skills through retrieval practice, low-stakes quizzing, extended writing, discussion, and comparative analysis. The end of term assessment will then focus on: • (AO1) To identify and interpret information and find evidence. • (AO2) To compare texts. • (AO3) To identify and comment on the effect of social and historical context.