

Dear Parent/Guardian and Year 9 pupil,

The English department is excited to announce the beginning of a new GCSE course being taught as of September. Your son will be one of the first to go through the newly redesigned course and we felt it was important to convey some of the changes and important dates to you for this coming academic year.

We will now be offering two distinct courses; **English Language** and **Literature** will be a dual award GCSE, and **English** will be a single GCSE. The majority of the year group will be sitting English Literature and Language at either Foundation or Higher tier entry. The tier entries are decided by the beginning of year 11. If you would like more information about tier entries please ask your son's classroom teacher at your first parent's evening.

One of the other primary changes in the way the course is designed is that it will now be modular; this means that some boys will be entered into examinations at different stages throughout years 10 and 11. There has also been a very dramatic change to the way we administer and assess coursework. The boys will be sitting 'controlled assessments' which will be under exam-style conditions after several weeks of classroom preparation. These controlled assessments are equivalent to the old-style coursework, but must be completed in school time and under specific conditions. Therefore, it is vital that boys make every effort to attend school on the days that we have scheduled their controlled assessments to take place. We would like to provide you with the dates for the controlled assessments in the hopes that we can avoid absenteeism during these very important weeks. The dates are as follows:

- **October 4th - 8th**
- **October 18th - 2nd**
- **November 29th - December 3rd**
- **February 1st - 4th**

It is vital that boys make every effort to be in school for these weeks; if a boy does miss a controlled assessment he will have to make up that session in his own time after school, which is not ideal. It is our hope that by providing you with these dates we can avoid any clashes with holidays or other extra-curricular activities that may cause their absence from school.

With the new curriculum we feel that it is important to give some suggested reading for the summer in order to help prepare your son for the upcoming course. We would like to suggest the following options as a good starting off point:

1. *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens
2. *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck
3. *Animal Farm* by George Orwell
4. *1984* by George Orwell
5. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night time* by Mark Haddon
6. *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley

This list is not exhaustive and by no means do we expect each boy to have read them all, but it would be very useful in terms of their overall literacy to have exposure to a broad range of literary texts from different time periods. We would also like to encourage all boys to read a variety of text types, such as non-fiction, which will support the skills and experience they will need for their controlled assessment and examinations.

Boys will be able to access spelling lists, grammar exercises and other skills based work through SAM learning, which we would also like to encourage them to do over the summer.

If you have any questions about the new GCSE or about the controlled assessment dates please do not hesitate to contact Miss McQueen from the English department.

We look forward to the excitement and energy your son will bring to this new course; see you in September.

Sincerely,

Miss K McQueen
Key Stage Four Co-ordinator

Angela Bradshaw
Curriculum Leader

and
The English Department
Desborough School