English Literature
(A level)

Overview
English Literature has long been acknowledged as a highly valuable and prestigious A Level. It still ranks today as one of the top subjects to study in preparation for University and is formally listed as a Facilitating Subject for Russell Group Universities. Along with English Language, Literature is perennially popular as a subject for A Level study at The Sixth Form College, Solihull and is an excellent companion subject for History, Law and many other A Level subjects which require analysis of texts and data sources in order to create arguments and present interpretations supported by evidence. It is also a great subject to do just because you love it and love reading quality literature, of course.

Course Outline
There are two exams for which students will prepare when following the AQA B specification. They constitute 80% of the possible marks which may be awarded.

The first will be two and a half hours long and require students to answer questions on texts which illustrate 
EITHER Aspects of Comedy OR Aspects of Tragedy.
One of the three texts for examination in Paper 1 will be a Shakespeare text. In addition, there will be questions on a further drama text and 
EITHER a poetry OR prose text.

The second examination will be three hours long and for this students will study 
EITHER Elements of Crime Writing OR Elements of Political and Social Protest Writing. Again, three texts will be examined; one prose text, one poetry text and one drama text. One of these texts must have been written post-2000 and one pre-1900. This paper will also require students to respond analytically to an unseen text. Examples of 'Crime' texts likely to be studied are: The Rime of the Ancient Mariner by ST Coleridge, Hamlet by Shakespeare, Brighton Rock by Graham Green and Atonement by Ian McEwan. For Political and Social Protest, students might study: A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen, Poetry by Tony Harrison or The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini.

The coursework is worth 20% of the total A Level and is entitled ‘Theory and Independence’. There will be two tasks, each 1,250 – 1,500 words in length. Both are likely to be formal essays requiring students to respond analytically to a Prose text – perhaps a novel or series of short stories. The second piece of coursework will be a formal essay in response to poetry. Both essays will require that students evaluate their texts in the light of a specific critical theory, eg, Feminism, Marxism or Narrative theory to name just three. These theories are explained in an AQA Anthology given free of charge to each student and will be taught as part of the Non-Examined component.

Students are expected to purchase their examination texts and will be guided on whether they may annotate them. Paper 1, Aspects of Tragedy or Aspects of Comedy, is a closed book examination, so texts may be annotated but not brought into the examination. Paper 2, Elements of Crime or Elements of Political and Social Protest, is an Open Book examination, so texts must be unannotated and taken into the examination.

Assessment
Coursework (20%)
Examination (80%)
Examining Board – AQA.

Special Entry Requirements
GCSE English Literature at grade 5 or above is essential. In addition, standard A level entry requirements apply - www.solihullsfc.ac.uk/courses/entry-requirements.

Prohibited Options
Students are not normally permitted to take more than one English course. However, if you are intending to study English at university and have a grade 7 or above in both English Language and English Literature at GCSE,
you may be permitted to take both English Language and English Literature, but only as part of a four A level programme. Students wanting to do this must therefore meet the entry requirements for a four A level programme.

**Career and Progression Opportunities**

English Literature is one of the most popular courses at university and success in this subject will also allow you to access all sorts of degrees and career pathways. Those students considering English at HE will find that Literature is often required for the most competitive courses. This course is suitable for students who want to do modern or more traditional English courses at university.

**Links to External Organisations**

The department runs a Shakespeare Academy in conjunction with the University of Warwick, University of Birmingham and Keele University, which supports students in their studies, including via talks and lectures at the universities.

**Other Information**

We work together in groups and explore texts through discussion sessions as it is important that you feel confident enough to express your opinions about the texts you are studying. You will be expected to read widely, independently and critically, to work with others on research and presentation projects, to manage your time effectively and prepare texts for the lessons. We offer all students the opportunity to attend a variety of trips including study days and theatre visits.

---

**Examination Results**

In the past three years, there has been great success for students on this course, including consistently high pass rates. The full breakdown of results is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Entry</th>
<th>A*</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>A-E%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Case Study**

Among the recent successful students to have taken this course is **Jessica Shannon**.

She came to the College from Archbishop Ilsley Catholic Technology College and achieved an A* grade in English Literature, as well as A and B grades in Drama and Music.

She has progressed to the University of Warwick to study English Literature & Creative Writing.

---

**English Department Staff**

Therese Down (Curriculum Leader)
Chris Cooper (Assistant Curriculum Leader)
Zoe Bereza, Elizabeth Davies, Mike Green, Andrew Jackson, Claire Kelly, Jane McCard

---

**Contact**

Address: The Sixth Form College, Solihull
Widney Manor Road, Solihull
West Midlands B91 3WR
Tel: 0121 704 2581
Fax: 0121 711 1598
Email: admissions@solihullsfc.ac.uk
Web: www.solihullsfc.ac.uk