

Mapping a curriculum: what direction should you take?

There are a raft of buzz words and phrases that accompany discussions around mapping out curriculums in different subject areas. Should a curriculum be skills-based or content-based? What are the threshold concepts? The intent? How does this match the implementation?

In the English department at Woldgate School, our conversations have been simple: what do students already know? What do they need to know by the end of year 11? And, how do we get them from one point to another?

Given the external pressures on secondary teachers, it's natural to look at year 11 and work backwards when mapping out a curriculum. However, this has the potential to widen the gap between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. We become preoccupied with focussing on the end of their educational journey without fully appreciating where they started. For English teachers, finding out what has been taught in Key Stage 2 is a relatively simple task; we started by looking at the Key Stage 2 Programme of Study for English so that we understood what all students have been taught and, therefore, what we need to be building on and revisiting throughout their time at secondary school.

Of course, it's not so easy for other subjects. The Key Stage 2 Programme of Study for English is over sixty pages long, with a separate glossary of key terms that students should be able to use. For other subjects, though, the Programme of Study is barely a page long. It's no wonder, then, that cross-phase discussions between primary and secondary staff are often dominated by one topic. Namely, that it can feel like there is a disjoint between KS2 and KS3 in many subject areas; the curricula were planned separately and, therefore, it can often feel that transition between the two is tricky.

Colleagues at Woldgate School have been incredibly proactive in managing this transition. From meeting with primary colleagues to trawling through the primary websites, Heads of Departments and Directors of Studies have filled in the missing information themselves. As the curriculum maps are starting to take shape, the fruits of their labour are evident: from the History department's clear delineation between substantive and disciplinary knowledge in both key stages, to the Geography department's nuanced understanding of how Geography is taught within the Key Stage 2 curriculum, secondary teachers are becoming experts at managing curricular transition.

And the same level of expertise is being developed within the English department. As well as identifying commonalities, we are all taking the time to explore skills and content gaps. For example, the KS2 curriculum is full of pages of grammatical terminology that students are expected to know and to apply to short-form questions. However, the secondary curriculum places far less emphasis on identifying grammatical features and far more emphasis on exploring the effects. How do we, as teachers, align the two?

It's a difficult question, but one that we felt could be answered by understanding the link between thinking as readers and thinking as writers. In both cases, grammatical knowledge is key to helping students to improve. As writers, students understand grammar as the building blocks of effective sentence and discourse structure. As readers, grammatical knowledge gives them a shorthand that they can use when analysing texts. In this way, it becomes our job to pick up the mantle from KS2 and ensure that students have the skills and knowledge that will take them beyond merely external exams. We want our students to leave with skills and knowledge that will serve them well throughout life, not just through a key stage.

After identifying these links and gaps, and establishing our core approach, we set about building the curriculum from year 7 upwards.

We were all agreed on a few key principles:

- Students need to revisit key skills and principles regularly
- The KS3 curriculum should remain discrete from KS4, while preparing students for the rigours of GCSE examinations
- Students should be given the opportunity to study a wide range of challenging texts and topic across KS3 and KS4
- Everything we included on the map needed to have a clear link to wider learning

Of course, none of these logistical ideas detracts from student engagement. However, this is not what curriculum planning is for: student engagement is borne out of effective short-term and medium-term planning.

Where our curriculum map identified AO1 and AO2 as bedrock reading skills, the medium-term planning allows students to learn, develop and refine these skills through the exploration of a wide range of fascinating texts: from Medieval literature to speeches about climate change; from Shakespeare to Neil Gaiman; from global literature to contemporary topical issues.

We've worked hard on our curriculum mapping, and we're very pleased with the outcome: a challenging, engaging and purposeful road map through the secondary curriculum.

And how did we get there? Like all journeys: we knew our starting point and our destination.



Year	Autumn				Spring				Summer			
	Topic	Assessment	Skills tested	Links	Topic	Assessment	Skills tested	Links	Topic	Assessment	Skills tested	Links
7	Introduction to narrative writing To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring different story structures How to structure a narrative <i>Coraline</i> <i>Wilkie Collins Extracts</i> 	Reading: 'explosion' of extract (TBC - Coraline or short extract?) Writing: innovating 'overcoming the monster'. NOTE The focus of this unit is mainly on writing skills. Reading assessment to be used as a benchmark.	AO1 AO2	Links to prior learning This unit recognises that most students are able to securely demonstrate the writing skills outlined at the end of this document ¹ . The unit aims to build on these skills. Students will also begin to apply the grammatical metalanguage (outlined in the primary glossary for English PoS) to a range of fiction texts.	The Natural World To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel Writing Gerald Durrell Extracts Creative nature writing Non-fiction articles How to structure opinion writing 	Reading: How does the writer use language... (use non-fiction text). Writing: opinion writing. Use of statement about global warming.	AO1 AO2	Links to prior learning Students will develop their language analysis skills from Y7 Autumn. They will be taught how to structure an analytical paragraph. Students will build on their knowledge of non-chronological reports from KS2 to create a piece of opinion writing.	Fantasy and Myth To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> <i>Fairy tales</i> <i>Non-Fiction - Witch trials</i> <i>Changelings</i> <i>Religion and magic</i> <i>How to structure descriptive writing</i> 	Reading: extract-based analysis from <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> . Writing: use an image / prompt for descriptive writing. NOTE The key focus of this unit is developing students' essay-writing skills.	AO1 AO2	Links to prior learning Students have studied Shakespeare at KS2. Students will apply their language analysis skills from Autumn and Spring term to a challenging pre-C19 text.
			AO3 AO4 AO5 AO6				How does this prepare students for future learning? Students will learn about seven story archetypes that they will revisit whenever they study literary works. AO1 and AO2 is revisited throughout Y7. GCSE link: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Language Paper 1 English Language Paper 1 Question 5. 				AO3 AO4 AO5 AO6	
8	Childhood and Literature To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extracts from Victorian literature (Dickens) A Christmas Carol- the play Non-fiction articles that are thematically linked Opinion articles about modern childhood 	Reading: comparison between modern and C19 text Writing: opinion writing - poverty / inequality / childhood issues?	AO1 AO2 AO3	Links to prior learning Students study non-fiction texts in Y7 Spring term.	War and conflict To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Private Peaceful</i> War poetry Diary of Anne Frank <i>War reports and articles</i> <i>Conscientious objector opinion articles.</i> 	Reading: structural analysis Writing: descriptive task. NOTE: Focus on structural analysis throughout.	AO1 AO2 AO3	Links to prior learning Students are introduced to structural analysis, but will use skills developed during Y7 and Y8 Autumn term to help them analyse a range of fiction and non-fiction texts,	Dystopian Literature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Z for Zachariah Hunger Games Animal Farm 1984 Fahrenheit 451 Non fiction articles "The Social Dilemma" Facebook 	Reading: scaffolded English Language P1 Section A. Writing: narrative. NOTE : Focus on this unit is AO4 (critical evaluation).	AO1 AO2 AO3	Links to prior learning Students focussed on language analysis in every Y7 unit. Students focussed on structure analysis in Y8 Spring term.
			AO4 AO5 AO6				How does this prepare students for future learning? Students study non-fiction writing in the Y8 Spring term unit. Students will revisit AO3 in the Y9 Autumn term unit. Students will revisit opinion writing in Y9. GCSE links: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Language Paper 2 Question 4 English Language Paper 2 Question 5 English Literature Paper 1 (C19 text) 				AO4 AO5 AO6	
9	Diversity Across Time. To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Of Mice and Men</i> Extracts from Shakespeare's plays Non-fiction articles about discrimination Slave narratives 	Reading: English Language Paper 2 Section A Writing: opinion NOTE: Focus on comparison, synthesising,	AO1 AO2 AO3	Links to prior learning AO1: all Y7 units, Y8 Summer term AO2: all Y7 and 8 units, bar Y8 Autumn term AO3: Y8 Autumn term	Love and Relationships. To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Romeo and Juliet West side story Love and relationship poetry Non-fiction opinion articles - Gender/homosexuality/modern family 	Reading : Literature-style question. Writing : descriptive writing NOTE : This unit will focus teaching students how to craft an analytical response to a literary text.	AO1 AO2 AO3	Links to prior learning Students studied <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> in the Summer term of Y7. Students have focussed on AO1 and AO2 throughout KS3. In this unit, students will be assessed on their contextual knowledge for the first time. However, exploring context is integral to all KS3 units.	Summer one: <i>An Inspector Calls</i>	Essay-writing skills. Essay one: character. Essay two: theme.	AO1 AO2 AO3	Links to prior learning Students were taught how to write an GCSE-style essay in Y9 Spring term. Students have focussed on AO1 and AO2 in most KS3 units, and were introduced to AO3 in Y9 Spring term.
			AO4 AO5				AO4 AO5				AO4 AO5	



	<p>Narrative writing will be taught through one discrete writing lesson each week.</p> <p>Every fortnight students will write a narrative, based on a model text. Students will revisit the story archetypes, using a range of challenging models.</p>	<p>inference and writer's viewpoints.</p> <p>Where possible, look at comparisons throughout.</p>	<p>A06</p> <p>How does this prepare students for future learning?</p> <p>This unit explicitly prepares students for GCSE English Language Paper 2. They will be taught how to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write an inferential response 2. Compare two non-fiction texts 3. Analyse language in a non-fiction text 4. Compare writers' viewpoints in two non-fiction texts 5. Structure a piece of writing that presents their view on a topic 			<p>A06</p> <p>How does this prepare students for future learning?</p> <p>This unit explicitly prepares students for the English Literature GCSE. They will be taught:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How to structure an essay response 2. How to explore a text thematically 3. How to analyse writers' methods 4. How to make relevant contextual links 	<p>Summer two: English Language Paper 2 Question 5 (using themes from AIC: class and gender) Spoken language</p> <p>"Big business owners should only be allowed to make a 10% profit each year. They should donate the rest of their profits to charity." Write an opinion article expressing your views on this topic.</p>	<p>Opinion writing on a topic related to AIC.</p>	<p>A06</p> <p>How does this prepare students for future learning?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GCSE English Literature Paper 2 Section A - English Language Paper 2 Question 5
10	<p>English Language Paper 1: Reading skills Introduction to narrative and descriptive writing (YEAR 1 ONLY)</p> <p>RETRIEVAL PRACTICE: AIC - DONE</p>	<p>English Language Paper 1</p> <p>Specimen Paper 3 - Glass, Bricks and Dust</p>	<p>A01 A02 A03</p> <p>Links to prior learning</p> <p>This unit builds on the skills and content developed in: Y8 - Summer - dystopian literature. Students have completed narrative and descriptive writing tasks in Y7, 8 and 9.</p>	<p>Spring one: English Language Paper 2 (may not take full half-term)</p>	<p>English Language Paper 2</p> <p>Specimen Paper 3 - Aberfan + Earthquake</p>	<p>A01 A02 A03 A04 A05 A06</p> <p>How does this prepare students for future learning?</p>	<p>Summer one: Macbeth</p> <p>RETRIEVAL PRACTICE: ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPER 2</p>	<p>English Literature Paper 1 (Shakespeare) Specimen Paper 3 - Act 1 Scene 7 - marriage</p>	<p>A01 A02 A03 A04 A05 A06</p> <p>How does this prepare students for future learning?</p>
			<p>A04 A05 A06</p> <p>How does this prepare students for future learning?</p> <p>Students will complete an English Language Paper 1 mock in the Autumn term of Y11. Students will revisit this unit in the Summer term of Y10 as part of their retrieval practice.</p>	<p>Spring two: poetry</p> <p>RETRIEVAL PRACTICE: PAPER 2 QUESTION 4</p>	<p>English Literature Paper 2 Section B and C</p> <p>Specimen Paper 3 - Poppies + Children's Song/Lullaby</p>	<p>A01 A02 A03 A04 A05 A06</p> <p>How does this prepare students for future learning?</p> <p>Students will complete English Literature Paper 2 in their Y10 mocks. June 2017 Paper - Mr Birling/Society - Bayonet Charge - Autumn/Today</p>	<p>Summer two: AIC recap Mock preparation</p> <p>RETRIEVAL PRACTICE: POETRY</p>	<p>Mock papers: - Literature Paper 2 - Language Paper 2</p>	
11	<p>C19 text with Language Paper One recap</p> <p>RETRIEVAL PRACTICE: ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPER 1</p>		<p>A01 A02 A03 A04 A05 A06</p> <p>How does this prepare students for future learning?</p>	<p>Revision schedule</p>			<p>Revision schedule</p>		
	<p>Mock preparation</p> <p>RETRIEVAL PRACTICE: MACBETH - DONE</p>	<p>Mock papers: Language Paper 1 Literature Paper 1 A04 A05 A06</p>							

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- select appropriate grammar and vocabulary, understanding how such choices can change and enhance meaning
- describe settings, characters and atmosphere
- integrate dialogue to convey character and advance the action
- use a range of devices to build cohesion (e.g. conjunctions, adverbials of time and place, pronouns, synonyms) within and across paragraphs
- use vocabulary and structures that are appropriate for formal speech and writing, including subjunctive forms
- use passive verbs to affect the presentation of information in a sentence
- using modal verbs to suggest degrees of possibility
- use expanded noun phrases to convey complicated information concisely
- use relative clauses beginning with who, which, where, when, whose, that or with an implied (i.e. omitted) relative pronoun
- use commas to clarify meaning or avoid ambiguity in writing
- use hyphens to avoid ambiguity
- use brackets, dashes or commas to indicate parenthesis
- use semi-colons, colons or dashes to mark boundaries between independent clauses
- use a colon to introduce a list
- write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences, selecting language that shows good awareness of the reader (e.g. the use of the first person in a diary; direct address in instructions and persuasive writing)
- spell correctly most words from the year 5 / year 6 spelling list, and use a dictionary to check the spelling of uncommon or more ambitious vocabulary Students will be asked to apply these skills to a range of writing, spanning different genres.