



## English A Levels at The College of Richard Collyer

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### 1. What's the difference between English Literature and English Language and Literature?

There are several ways to answer this question, but here are some key differences laid out plainly:

	<b>English Literature</b>	<b>English Language &amp; Literature</b>
Most difficult requirement	Read and re-read texts, including Shakespeare	Combine reading with learning and applying Linguistics
How many books in Year 1?	2 plays (one Shakespeare) and 2 poems (1 long), 1 novel (for cwk)	1 novel, 14 poems, 1 non-fiction Anthology
Reading style	Analysing whole stories (in Year 1, tragedies)	Analysing and comparing the style of short pieces
What can I do to get started?	Read <i>Death of a Salesman</i> , by Arthur Miller	Read <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> , by Margaret Atwood

#### 2. What are the class sizes like?

The smallest classes are about 15 students and the largest are 25. You should expect class sizes to be a little larger in the first year.

#### 3. How often will I be asked to write essays?

At least once a month; more towards the end of each academic year, as the end-of-year assessments approach.

#### 4. What books would I be studying?

See the table below:

	<b>English Literature</b>	<b>English Language &amp; Literature</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	<i>Othello</i> , by William Shakespeare <i>Death of a Salesman</i> , by Arthur Miller 'La Belle Dame sans Merci' & 'Isabella', by John Keats (For cwk) a novel your teacher chooses	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> , by Margaret Atwood <i>Meantime</i> , by Carol Ann Duffy AQA Non-Fiction Anthology
<b>Year 2</b>	(For cwk) poetry your teacher chooses <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> , by Margaret Atwood <i>Songs of Innocence and of Experience</i> , by William Blake <i>Harvest</i> , by Jim Crace	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> , by Tennessee Williams <i>Into the Wild</i> , by Jon Krakauer (for cwk) A play or poetry collection of your teacher's choosing

#### 5. How does English feel different from GCSE?

There are a few points to make here:

- You'll have two teachers, not just one; we like to get to know as many of our students as possible, and we like you to see clearly that the subject can be delivered in different ways.
- You'll be expected to read and re-read the texts **outside** of the classroom, and we don't expect to have to give you more than the occasional reminder to do so.
- The classroom atmosphere is friendlier – for two reasons. First, everyone has chosen to be there and has an independent interest in the subject, but also, second, English requires a sense of humour – it's often important to realise how laughable people and situations can be.



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- d) You'll occasionally be asked to read short essays, watch online lectures and understand theories or research by professional linguists or literary critics.

**6. What is an English A-Level good for in terms of job opportunities later in life?**

I recently asked some ex-students to update me on what they're doing, and just look at the range of careers that emerged:

- freelance copy-editor,
- speech and language therapist,
- trainee accountant, actor in a Virgin Media TV series,
- lecturer in Linguistics,
- trainee nurse,
- audit and account manager,
- undergraduate student of Classics.

That's leaving out the many who go on to study English as undergraduates. The thing I'd want you to recognise is that, although obviously the career paths are exceptionally diverse, what unites them is that they're all prestigious and professional (as well as profitable) careers. These young people have a clear vision of their futures, the doors are swinging open for them, and they're making a real contribution to the country and the world. That's what English does for you. Why? Because it teaches you how to convince people – like a successful **salesman**. At root, that's how English will earn you a future – it teaches you how to persuade people. What that involves is in part learning to argue a case – like a **barrister** or **lawyer** in court – but also learning to anticipate other people's objections, inhabit other people's perspectives and empathise with them – like a good **counsellor** – while also channelling your own drive and passion into controlled but also heartfelt logic. In English, you aren't just rewarded for evidence, although that's important, but also for the qualities, like wit, charm, sincerity and feeling, that we associate with performers - **a stand-up comedian** or **actor** – or, for that matter, a good **teacher**. Of all the subjects you could choose, English is the subject that asks you, on the page and in the classroom, to be most fully human. And those qualities – wit, charm, sincerity and feeling - will carry you a long way. Consider a doctor's skill set. A doctor obviously needs to have acute maths and scientific knowledge. But what good is a doctor who struggles to give bad news without compassion, sincerity and warmth? That's where studying English can help a future **doctor**. You'll notice at least two of the career paths mentioned above are in medical pathways. In English, we study the soul. Understanding that is something few other subjects address, and the fluent emotional intelligence we strive to develop is one of the rarest and most marketable skills there is.

**I'd like to meet staff and students!**

Okay! We can do that... Follow the links :-)

English Language & Literature Head of Subject Video

<https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/2abd0a2b-d5b8-4204-9e27-c788e708582c>

English Literature Head of Subject Video

<https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/a04be23d-cc34-4372-b3e8-f89857524272>

English Language & Literature Student Video

<https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/7df9a4a7-49c8-41c5-afcf-9603f9995a4d>

English Literature Student Video

<https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/c91bcf42-9c5a-4bb0-9eac-22b80eca5009>

