**English Department**

**Strathaven Academy**

**Advanced Higher English**



**What do you need?**

* A good pass at Higher (ideally B or above)
* A passion for reading (there is a lot of reading involved!)
* Self-discipline
* The ability to work independently, to deadlines and under pressure.

**How is the course taught?**

* Classes are small and taught in an informal tutorial manner. There will lectures, group discussion, working together to answer questions, make and share notes and to prepare presentations.
* A high level of independent study is required for the course-work elements.
* Your teacher will guide your studies – but it is you who have responsibility.
* Workload is demanding and homework is regular.

**Why study Advanced Higher English?**

* It is excellent preparation for studying English (and many other subjects) at University
* The skills used and developed are valued by universities and employers as highly desirable.
* For example: skills of interpretation and criticism; problem solving; analytical skills; processing, sifting and evaluating vast amounts of information; creative thinking; communication and expression.
* Taking responsibility for your own learning will be expected of you in Higher Education.
* It is the best chance you have at school to study literature and writing in depth
* It is good fun, if English is your thing and you like discussing literature with your peers!

**What do we study?**

Assessment consists of:

a dissertation (30%),

a portfolio of writing (30%) and

a 2 part exam.

* 30% of the grade is the dissertation: a 2500 – 3500 word independent study of literature of your choice. You need to show that you can undertake independent planning, research and presentation of your understanding of your chosen text/s
* 30% of your grade is made up by your creative writing folio: you will craft and draft your 2 best pieces to send away to be marked by the SQA.
* The final exam is worth 40% and there are two papers – Textual Analysis and Literary Study
* Textual Analysis: you will choose one question on an UNSEEN literary text and write an extended critical analysis of it. You will be able to select from poetry, prose, prose non-fiction or drama.
* Literary Study: you will choose one question from a range of questions and write a critical essay response to it. This will be on something taught throughout the session but not the dissertation text/s.
* In class we will study the work of a small number of writers. This could include: Thomas Hardy, Shakespeare, Carol Ann Duffy, Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, Charles Dickens, John Keats, John Donne, Edwin Morgan, war poetry…

The most important task to undertake to prepare for the course is to decide on some reading for your dissertation and get this completed over the summer break. A comparison of 2 novels or plays or a range of poetry on a similar theme or by the same poet

**Examples of dissertation topics from recent years:**

* The American dream in 20th Century fiction
* Shakespeare’s villains
* Modern British Gothic
* Satire in non-fiction
* The Supernatural and Extraordinary in Victorian Novels
* Poetry of personal crisis
* The contemporary short story
* The thriller in history
* Drama of extremes
* The courtly lover in traditional poetry