

ENGLISH

TEACHERS' RESOURCE PACK

FACULTY OF ENGLISH, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD



FACULTY OF
ENGLISH
OUTREACH



outreach@ell.ox.ac.uk
[@EngFac_Outreach](https://twitter.com/EngFac_Outreach)



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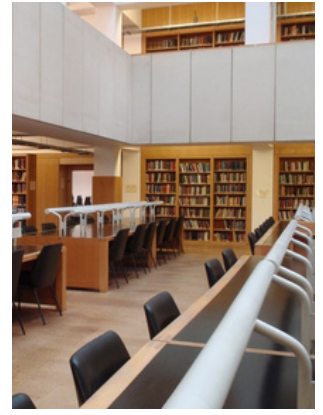
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Welcome Booklet

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Welcome to the Faculty of ENGLISH



Oxford's English Faculty is the largest in Britain and has held the #1 ranking for [The QS World University Rankings for the subject of English Language and Literature](#) for the last seven years!

Established in 1894, it has numbered among its members some of the most important critics and scholars in the field, including Julia Briggs, Terry Eagleton, Barbara Everett, Helen Gardner, Hermione Lee, C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and many others.

We are now home to nearly eighty Professors, Readers, and Lecturers, with about the same number again of Tutors and Research Fellows based in Colleges. There are roughly nearly nine hundred students studying within the Faculty at undergraduate level, and another three hundred at graduate level in the largest English graduate school in the country.

Traditionally, teaching and research in the Faculty has covered the entire history of literature in English from the Anglo-Saxon period to the present day, along with language studies. More recent growth areas include world literature and film studies. More recent growth areas include world literature and film studies. All areas of study and research are amply provided for by the English Faculty Library.

You can take a [virtual tour](#) of our Faculty's current building online.*

*Please note we will be moving into a new home for the Oxford humanities, [The Stephen A. Schwarzman Centres](#), in 2025.

TEACHERS' RESOURCE PACK

Your guide to English teaching resources at Oxford

GETTING TO KNOW WHAT OXFORD'S FACULTY OF ENGLISH HAS TO OFFER TEACHERS!

This resource pack is intended to support your valued work as English teachers and advisors to students seeking to apply to a highly-selective university such as the University of Oxford.

This pack aims to:

1. Provide information on useful resources relevant to teaching English
2. Increase levels of confidence in the abilities of teachers and advisors to explain the Oxford admissions process
3. Make teachers and advisors aware of our recurring outreach events and opportunities for their students
4. Circulate research on the value of an English degree and share career opportunities.

We have a place on our website just for you with all these resources and more: ['For Teachers and Advisors'](#)

This pack draws together resources from across the University, as well as from external academic sources. Information such as entry requirements and course options are not included in this pack and can be found on the University's website or in the University prospectus. This pack was produced by the Outreach Team at the Faculty of English, Oxford. If you have any questions please contact outreach@ell.ox.ac.uk.





OUTREACH CO-ORDINATOR **Molly Dineley**

Molly looks after the Faculty's outreach activities, including organising school visits, coordinating open days, sharing faculty resources, fostering relationships with teachers and schools, and managing a team of wonderful student ambassadors. Molly also runs the Faculty's Twitter account (@EngFac-Outreach) and monthly Teachers' newsletter.

[Meet the rest of the team.](#)



STUDENT AMBASSADORS

Hear from our current students!

Every year we work with a cohort of 20-30 student ambassadors who share their passion for English at Open Day events, through social media takeovers, and featuring on Q&A panels in-person and online through blog posts. Their personal experiences help teachers and prospective students better understand what it's like to study English at a university like Oxford.

[Read our Outreach Blog.](#)

Our People Behind Outreach in

ENGLISH



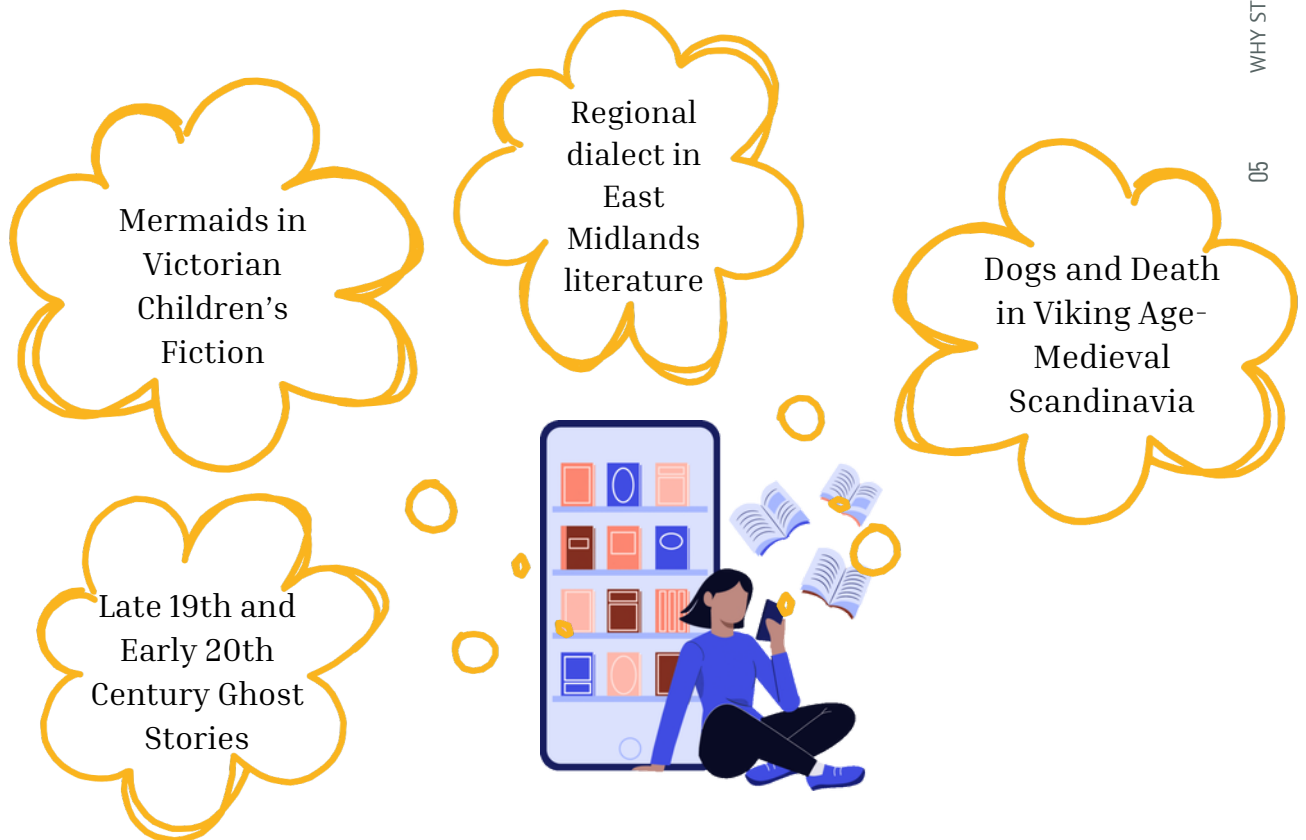
WHY STUDY ENGLISH?

- Learn about a variety of periods and styles of literature
- Develop valuable skills
- Access a wide range of career paths
- Make money doing what you love
- Explore the potential for future study
- Foster independent thinking



When you study English literature, you get to...

FOLLOW YOUR PASSIONS!



These are a few examples of cool topics students have explored during their English degree.

WHAT IF YOUR STUDENT ALREADY LOVES ENGLISH? WHAT'S NEXT

You have students who love English Literature, for sure. But they are afraid to risk so much time, energy, and money on a degree they are uncertain of. Is it worth pursuing at the university level?

Let's find out!

Knowledge



Skills



Careers



KNOWLEDGE

What knowledge can you learn with a degree in English Language and Literature? What will students study? How will they study it at the University of Oxford?



SKILLS

What skills do you develop with a degree in English Language and Literature?



CAREERS

You might be surprised by just how many kinds of jobs English graduates go into!



WHAT CAN YOUR STUDENTS STUDY?

The English degree at Oxford is one of the broadest in the country, and you will have the chance to study all periods of English Literature, from 650 AD to the present day.

01

First Year (Prelims)

- Early Medieval Literature, c. 650-1350
- Victorian Literature, 1830-1910
- Modern Literature, 1910-present day

2-3

Course I

- Shakespeare
- Literature in English from 1350-1830
- Special option (Postcolonial lit., The Icelandic Saga, Feminist Writing, Afrofabulation, etc.)

2-3

Course II

- Literature in English 650-1550
- Medieval English 1066-1660
- The History of the English Language to c. 1800
- Material Text or Shakespeare
- Special option (Old Norse, Medieval Welsh, Old Irish, Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England.)

HOW WILL YOUR STUDENTS STUDY?

College teaching is the bedrock of the undergraduate experience at Oxford. In each term your tutors will arrange a combination of tutorials (one or two students with a tutor) and classes (with your college year group).

01

Tutorials

1-2 papers/term. A 'paper' is a course on a particular topic or period of literature.

02

College Classes

Classes taught in colleges on paper topics to be discussed in tutorials.

03

Faculty Seminars

Additional lecture courses and seminars organised by the Faculty of English.

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH AN ENGLISH DEGREE?

CAREERS

You might be surprised by just how many kinds of jobs English graduates go into!

www.english.ox.ac.uk/telling-our-stories-better

CAREERS

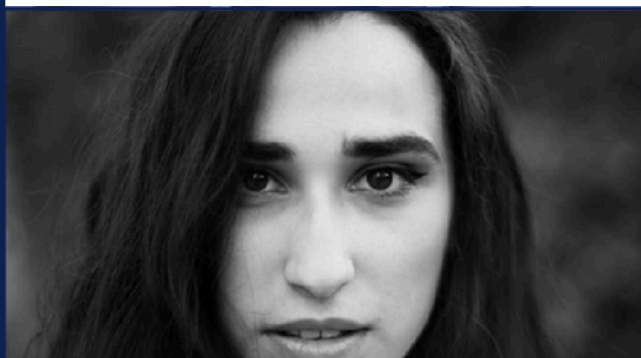
09



SIAN EJIWUNMI-LE BERRE
ACTOR, SCREENWRITER, SONGWRITER



NAYANA PRAKASH
CONSULTANT, DPHIL STUDENT, STORYTELLER



CHESCA FORRISTAL
STAGE & SCREEN WRITER, DRAG KING



MICHAEL DONKOR
NOVELIST, LITERARY CRITIC, AND TEACHER



RYAN WILSON
TEACHER, JOURNALIST, PRODUCER, AND AUTHOR

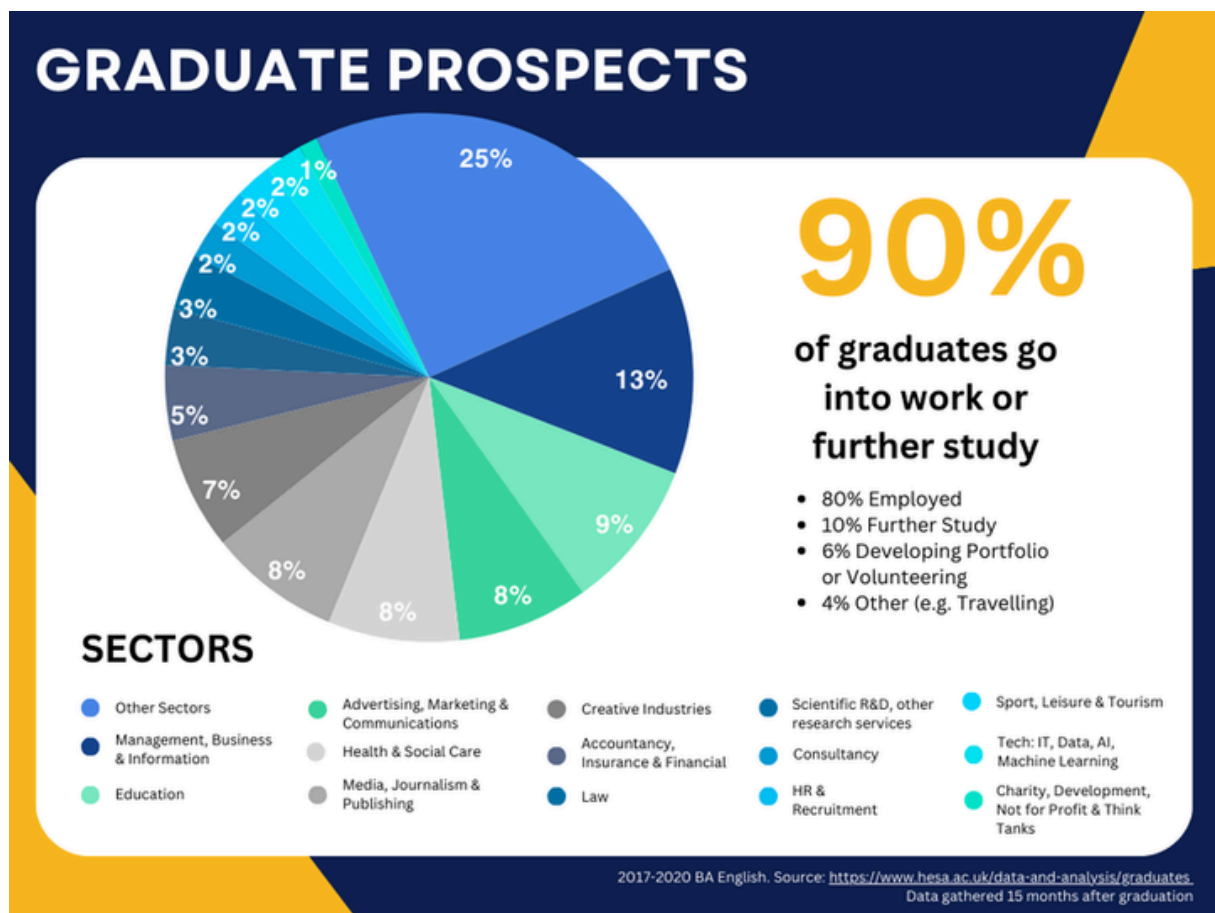


DIONNE FARRELL
DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVE, FILM

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH AN ENGLISH DEGREE?

“The skills developed by studying a humanities degree, such as communication, creativity and working in a team, are ‘highly valued and sought out by employers’.”

According to *The Value of the Humanities* report published by The Oxford University Humanities Division (October, 2023).



Curious about our alum? Here are a few examples of what they are up to now...



FLO GRAHAM-DIXON

Food Fanatic, Consultancy Co-Founder



‘If you think of books as data,’ she explained, ‘then when you do English, you’re reading hundreds and hundreds of pages and trying to find trends, just like a consultant...’

The journey from an English degree to strategy consultancy may seem unexpected, but for Flo it is one that should be taken more frequently.

Today, Flo is the co-founder of Juniper Strategy Ltd, a consultancy firm specialising in restaurants and hospitality, as well as Head of Strategy at Prepline Holdings, a restaurant group with over 70 sites across the Middle East.

RYAN WILSON

Teacher, Journalist, Producer, & Author



‘The most important thing is to be confident in your ideas and abilities. Back yourself – don’t think paths are for other people but not for you.’

Growing up in Northern Ireland, Ryan was inspired to teach by his experiences at school. After Oxford, he got his PGCE and became a teacher but – at odds with the pressures of the education system – he went into radio and journalism.

In 2017, Ryan landed at the BBC and became the producer for The Jeremy Vine Show. He also became *The Guardian’s* ‘Secret Teacher’ columnist and authored a book, *Let That Be a Lesson*, a no-holds-barred account of a decade’s experiences as an educator.

DIONNE FARRELL

Development Executive, Film



*‘There is no one route’
and that every career
move has its value.*

‘Knowledge is currency.’

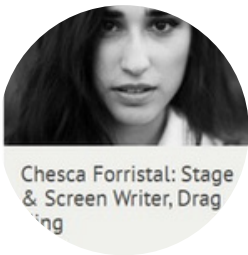
In her degree, Dionne loved the way students were encouraged to go ‘beyond the text,’ and she found herself increasingly interpreting the world through the lens of storytelling.

Today, Dionne is the Development Executive at BBC and produces her own films. her first film, *Blue Story*, she witnessed its journey from script to post-production and enjoyed the versatility of the role.

www.english.ox.ac.uk/telling-our-stories-better

TELLING OUR STORIES BETTER

Led by Dr Sophie Ratcliffe and Dr Ushashi Dasgupta, and managed by Dr Dominique Gracia, The Telling Our Stories Better project aims to challenge misconceptions about who studies English and the career paths they take. The following resources can be used in the classroom to promote and inspire careers in English.



Chesca Forristal: Stage & Screen Writer, Drag King

Visit our Online Gallery

<https://www.english.ox.ac.uk/telling-our-stories-better-online-gallery>
Browse the online gallery portraits of the Stories of alums and follow each one to read their stories. From Drag Kings and musicians, to novelists and theatre directors, discover their time at Oxford and their career paths



Search by Sectors and Industries

<https://www.english.ox.ac.uk/telling-our-stories-better-online-gallery>
We have organised the project's stories into just some of the sectors and industries where Oxford English alums work including: arts, business and tech, writers and journalists, politics and public service, medicine and healthcare, and education.



Peruse the Stories Bookshelf

<https://www.english.ox.ac.uk/telling-our-stories-better-online-gallery>
Here you can find a quick snapshot of the literature – non-fiction, fiction, and poetry – that our featured alums chose, as well as key texts from Jan Morris (1926-2020) and Naseem Khan (1939-2017), and Pamela Roberts' *Black Oxford* (2013), which tells the story of featured alum Lady Kofoworola Ademola (née Moore), as well as those of many other black scholars.



RECURRING OUTREACH EVENTS

Mark your calendars!



ENGLISH FACULTY TEACHER CONFERENCES

Annually, February

The English Faculty hosts English Teachers' Conferences every year around the Spring half-term, usually in mid-February.

- Free to attend and consists of academic mini-lectures and Q&As, presentations on Oxford-created resources to use in the classroom.
- Advice on supporting your students to make competitive applications to study English at Oxford and other higher education institutions.
- Concludes with an interactive panel discussion, focussing on particular issues we face in teaching English, where we will invite questions and comments from delegates.

STATE SCHOOL OPEN DAYS

Annually, March

The English Faculty's State School Open Day takes place annually around the beginning of March as an online Zoom event.

You can watch previous Virtual Open Day recordings on the English Faculty YouTube channel.

<https://www.english.ox.ac.uk/open-days>.

✓ ADMISSIONS PANEL LIVESTREAM

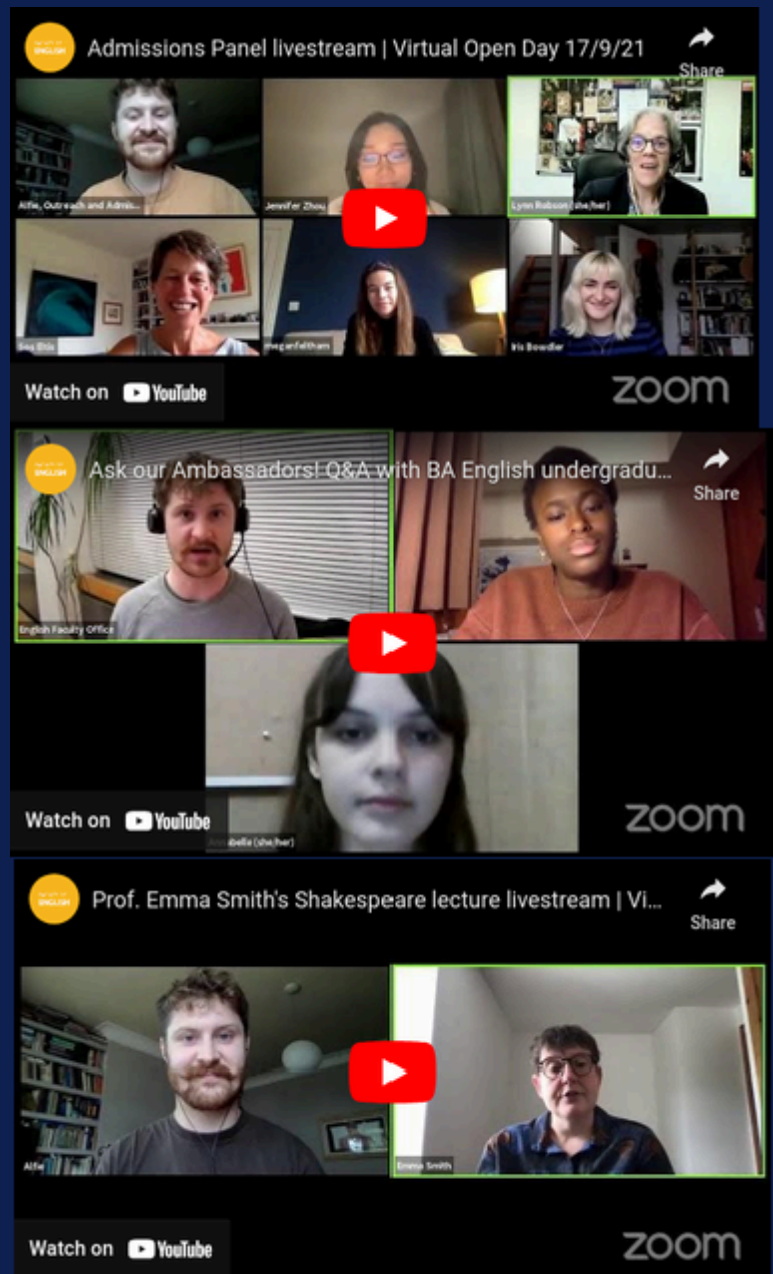
Hear what our tutors and undergraduates said the Oxford application process is looking for from applicants and how it feels to be one!

✓ AMBASSADOR Q&A SESSION

Virtual Q&A opportunity with our Oxford English undergraduates. See what questions were asked and how our ambassadors had to say!

✓ TASTER LECTURE

Professor Emma Smith gives a lecture on Shakespeare as a taster of the undergraduate experience of studying English at the University of Oxford.



UNIVERSITY OPEN DAYS

Annually, June & September



The Faculty of English opens its doors at the St Cross Building to all visitors during the annual in-person university-wide open day events. It is a great opportunity to get to know the city, colleges, and departments, though make sure students plan in advance which sessions they want to go to! We host a series of events and ensure our student ambassadors are available to answer all your questions. Please refer to our open days webpage for upcoming open day dates.

<https://www.english.ox.ac.uk/open-days>.

- Mini taster lectures give prospective students the opportunity to get a taste for the undergraduate experience of studying English at the University of Oxford. The Faculty usually hosts three of these sessions throughout the day
- The information talk 'English at Oxford' is given by a Faculty Professor accompanied by English undergraduate ambassadors in two identical sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.
- Our Joint Schools Session is the last of the day and provides further information on our joint programmes with Classics, History, and Medieval and Modern Languages

Some prospective students visit with their family or carers, others visit as a school group accompanied by a teacher.

UNIQ SUMMER SCHOOLS

Annually, June-August

We host and support the UNIQ Summer Schools organised by the University of Oxford. These are a series of free subject-specific residential programmes for Year 12 students from state schools. The dates vary year to year, but usually takes place over the course of two weeks sometime between June and August.

- ✓ Since UNIQ is an access programme, preference is given to applicants from low socio-economic status backgrounds and/or from areas with low progression to higher education. Therefore, an unsuccessful application to UNIQ does not reflect an applicant's likelihood of being successful in an application for undergraduate study at the University of Oxford.
- ✓ Applications are only open to students currently in their first year of A-Levels (or equivalent) at UK state schools/colleges/sixth forms/academies. UNIQ do not accept applications from students at private schools (including students holding scholarship places).
- ✓ For further details please contact uniq@admin.ox.ac.uk or visit the [UNIQ website](#).

English



Dates of course:

TBC

**This course is running multiple weeks. Successful applicants will be informed of which week they have been allocated.*

Course description:

Working with Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, you will attend lectures and sessions that introduce you to historical contexts, critical approaches, and film adaptations of *The Tempest*. You will be encouraged to develop your own critically informed response to the play, and in addition to the study of *The Tempest* you will have the space to reflect on your own reading interests, learn about poetry analysis, and find out how to explore texts you have not encountered before.

During the week, you will learn more about the English course at Oxford, and have the opportunity to ask questions of our academics and student ambassadors. We want you to enjoy some new literary experiences, and to extend your confidence in exploring different perspectives by building upon your school studies in order to help you make a competitive application to the University.

Course requirements:

None

SCHOOL VISITS

Ad-hoc



One of the many priorities of the English Faculty's outreach work is to aim to address the recent decline in the number of students choosing to study English at A Level. This subsequently has an impact on the numbers of students applying to pursue the subject at university.

- English DPhil (PhD) students share their research with groups of school students aimed to engage Year 10 students in their work in an accessible, inspiring way, with the aim of raising aspirations and broadening students' understanding of the breadth and scope of an English degree.
- Sessions on information, advice and guidance for Year 11s, 12s and 13s interested in studying English at Oxford.
- These school visits may take place online. If you work in a state school and would like our outreach team to work with your students, please get in touch with our Outreach Officer by emailing outreach@ell.ox.ac.uk.

ASTROPHORIA FOUNDATION YEAR

Annually, January application deadline

RECURRING OUTREACH EVENTS

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The University of Oxford's Astrophoria Foundation Year is a one-year programme for UK state school students with significant academic potential who have experienced severe personal disadvantage or disrupted education which has resulted in them being unable to meet the academic entry requirements for an Oxford undergraduate degree programme.

- ✓ English is a participating subject in the Astrophoria Foundation Year. There are available subject pathways in English, Classics and English, and History and English.
- ✓ Students who pass their foundation year course at the required level can progress onto undergraduate study at Oxford without the need to reapply.
- ✓ Fully funded programme with tuition and accommodation fees are covered by the University and students receive a non-repayable bursary for their living costs.



For UK state school students with significant academic potential who have experienced personal disadvantage or disrupted education

Courses in Science, Humanities, Law and PPE

If your school or class would benefit from an online session with one of the Foundation Year Team where we explain more about the course and how students should apply, please get in touch via contact@foundationyear.ox.ac.uk.

RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

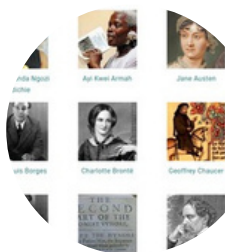
To use in the classroom!



GREAT WRITERS INSPIRE (AUTHORS)



Browse a huge range of illuminating sources on a wide variety of writers, including podcasts, academic lectures and talks, e-books and contextual material. Explore the resources by author or by theme and period.



Search by Author

<https://writersinspire.org/writers>

Learning materials are arranged into collections about individual authors whose writing is important to literary studies. These are Open Educational Resources available free for use in education worldwide under the Creative Commons license.

Emily Dickinson

Please help us improve with this [one minute survey](#) (opens in a new tab)



American poet Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) is today best known for her use of slant-rhyme, conceits, and unconventional punctuation, as well as her near-legendary reclusive habits. She was part of a prominent Amherst, Massachusetts family. As neither Emily nor her sister Lavinia ever married, they remained at home and looked after their parents. Dickinson became very reclusive with age, sometimes speaking to guests from behind a door, but she also maintained close, intellectual friendships through her correspondence with literary men Samuel Bowles and Thomas Wentworth Higginson, as well as her best friend, neighbour, and sister-in-law Susan Gilbert Dickinson. Dickinson has perhaps unfairly earned a reputation for being a rather morbid poet, focused intently on death. Death was certainly a preoccupation of Dickinson's, especially as her New England culture was permeated with evangelical Christian questions of salvation, redemption, and the afterlife. However, Dickinson also wrote powerfully about nature and questions of knowledge, faith, and love. When Dickinson did write about death, she wrote it 'slant', coming to the subject with her own distinctive twist. In the 1863...

Read the essay: [Emily Dickinson: Writing it 'Slant'](#) by Erin Nyborg

Subscribe to Emily Dickinson: via RSS



#	Title	Description	Contributor
1	Poems: Series One, by Emily Dickinson (reading)	LibriVox recording of <i>Poems: Series One</i> , by Emily Dickinson. Read by Shurtagal. ...	
2	A Discussion of Emily Dickinson's 'I started early, took my dog'.	Dr Sally Bayley presents an illuminating reading of Emily Dickinson's 'I started early...	Sally Bayley

Example Emily Dickinson Resources

- 2 audio recordings
- 2 essays
- 3 e-books
- 2 book cover and manuscript pictures

<https://writersinspire.org/writers/emily-dickinson>

GREAT WRITERS INSPIRE (THEMES)



Browse a huge range of illuminating sources on a wide variety of writers, including podcasts, academic lectures and talks, e-books and contextual material. Explore the resources by author or by theme and period.



Search by Theme

<https://writersinspire.org/themes/>

You can explore a variety of historical moments and movements in literature, as well as some key debates and 'approaches' to literature. These are Open Educational Resources available free for use in education worldwide under the Creative Commons license.

Victorian Publishing History

Please help us improve with this [one minute survey \(opens in a new tab\)](#)



During the nineteenth century, the population of England grew from 8.9 to 32.5 million. This increase was accompanied by the rapid expansion of cities, as many people left rural areas to seek employment in the developing centres of industrialisation, situated mostly to the North of the country in places such as Manchester and Sheffield.

The railway became a vital source of transport for most people, connecting smaller towns and villages to important centres of trade and commerce. Urban life meant that new pastimes and leisure activities such as tourism, visits to the theatre, museums and exhibitions, were made available to a larger section of society, and the habits of individuals consequently changed as many adopted a city lifestyle. These alterations had a great influence upon the rise of literacy rates and the history of Victorian publishing in general.

Read the essay: [Victorian Publishing History](#) by Charlotte Barrett
Image licence: Public Domain

Audio Essays eBooks Other

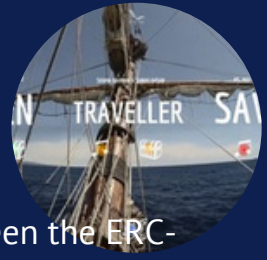
#	Essay Title	Description	Contributor
1	Victorian Publishing History	During the nineteenth century, the population of England grew from 8.9 to 32.5 million. This...	Charlotte Barrett

Example Victorian Publishing History

- 1 audio lecture by Oxford Professor Michael Whitworth
- 1 essay on Victorian publishing history
- 5 related e-Books
- 7 other related learning materials

<https://writersinspire.org/themes/victorian-publishing-history>

TIDE SALON



TIDE Salon is an interactive multimedia collaboration between the ERC-TIDE project, the award-winning novelist Preti Taneja, six extraordinary sound and spoken word artists, curator and creative producer Sweetie Kapoor, and critically-acclaimed filmmaker Ben Crowe (ERA Films).

Travel, Transculturality, and Identity in England, c. 1550-1700

Alien, stranger, foreigner, exile, citizen – these are among the many words and concepts that were shaped in crucial and lasting ways by travel, trade, and colonialism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, informing ongoing debates about belonging and identity.

TIDE Salon showcases the work of South Asian classical musicians and British Asian spoken word poets who responded to our TIDE Keywords, drawing on their own personal histories and stories to ask:

- What do those words mean to us now?
- How does knowing their meaning and migration change our social world?
- Can we communicate across form, distance and time to explore the politics of translation and its lived realities?

Teaching Resources

Matters of Belonging: Teaching Race and Identity in Tudor and Stuart England

- Introduction
- Belonging: Reading Pack 1
- Outsiders: Reading Pack 2
- Perceptions: Reading Pack 3
- Empire: Reading Pack 4

 Black Lives in Early Modern London
teaching materials

 Pocahontas **teaching materials**

 Thomas More speech **teaching materials**

 Lord Mayor's letter **teaching materials**

 Dutch migrant's letter to his wife **teaching materials**

 Europe and China: Early Modern Exchanges
teaching materials

CHALLENGING THE CANON



This unique mini-series aims to challenge the literary canon by posing the thorny question 'why should we study...?' to experts at the University of Oxford. Beginning with the overarching question 'why should we study the humanities?' and moving on to illuminating discussions about key writers such as Dickens and Shakespeare, these podcasts will introduce you to new perspectives on classic literature. A perfect study companion for prospective undergraduates, lifelong learners and literary enthusiasts everywhere.

<https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/series/challenging-canon>.

Sample of podcast episodes



Why should we study Old English Literature?

Dr Francis Leneghan of St Cross College, Oxford, discusses his current research around Beowulf and proposes why we should still study Old English Literature.



Why should we study Postcolonial Literature?

Professor Elleke Boehmer of Wolfson College, Oxford, discusses her current research and proposes why we should study Postcolonial writers such as Achebe.



Why should we study Elizabethan Theatre?

Professor Tiffany Stern of University College, Oxford, discusses her current research and proposes why we should still study Elizabethan Theatre.

APPROACHING SHAKESPEARE



Each lecture in this series focuses on a single play by Shakespeare, and employs a range of different approaches to try to understand a central critical question about it. Rather than providing overarching readings or interpretations, the series aims to show the variety of different ways we might understand Shakespeare, the kinds of evidence that might be used to strengthen our critical analysis, and, above all, the enjoyable and unavoidable fact that Shakespeare's plays tend to generate our questions rather than answer them.

<https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/series/approaching-shakespeare>.

Sample of podcast episodes



The Merchant of Venice This lecture on *The Merchant of Venice* discusses the ways the play's personal relationships are shaped by models of financial transaction, using the casket scenes as a central example.



The Tempest

That the character of Prospero is a Shakespearean self-portrait is a common reading of *The Tempest*: this tenth Approaching Shakespeare lecture asks whether that is a useful reading of the play.



Much Ado About Nothing

Emma Smith asks why the characters are so quick to believe the self-proclaimed villain Don John, drawing on gender and performance criticism to think about male bonding, the genre of comedy, and the impulses of modern performance.

EVEN MORE PODCASTS!



Traditionally teaching and research in the Faculty has covered the entire history of literature in English from the Anglo-Saxon period to the present day, along with language studies. More recent growth areas include world literature and film studies. Check out podcast series offered by the Faculty.

[https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/units/faculty-english-language-and-literature.](https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/units/faculty-english-language-and-literature)



[Poetry with A. E. Stallings](#)



[Their Finest Hour: British in WWII](#)



["British" World War One Poetry: An Introduction](#)



[Fantasy Literature](#)



[War and Representation](#)



[Modern Fairies](#)

[Explore 390 episodes over 39 podcast series!](#)

SPRINGBOARD VIDEOS

These videos are intended for school pupils in Years 11, 12 and 13. Each offers an introduction to a new topic, plus lots of activities and further resources to explore.

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/oxfordforEE/springboard>



LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

From reading ancient languages to speaking and understanding modern ones, discover how our researchers approach the world of language and literature. Undergraduate courses at Oxford include English Language & Literature, Classics, European & Middle Eastern Languages, Modern Languages, Oriental Studies and Psychology, Philosophy & Linguistics.



LITHITS



Right book, right place, right time.

LitHits gives you a brief, unabridged excerpt from a work of literature, introduced by 2-3 sentences setting the scene and allowing you to dive right in to the text. Guided by curators from the University of Oxford's Faculty of English — covering a vast range of periods and types of literature — LitHits helps users to break free from reductive algorithmic recommendations and create a new reader-footprint, driven by how reading fits into their lives, not by what everyone else is buying.

<https://lithits.web.ox.ac.uk/>.

EXPLORE LITHITS

Subscribe to our free weekly newsletter.

“I believe that reading literature is one of the best things you can do. Even five minutes of deep reading can transform you: cognitively, imaginatively, and emotionally. Reading can calm your mind, and yet reading can also create positive challenges. It is great for your mind, and more than this, reading is also social: it opens up new ideas, and it brings you together with other people both on and off the page.”

Prof. Kirsten Shepherd-Barr
Professor of English and Theatre Studies,
Faculty of English, University of Oxford

LITHITS



LitHits

Learning to Swim

Dive into Kate Chopin's feminist novella, which created controversy for the author when it was published in 1899.

The people walked in little groups toward the beach. They talked and laughed; some of them sang. There was a band playing down at Klein's hotel, and the strains reached them faintly, tempered by the distance. There were strange, rare odors abroad—a tangle of the sea smell and of weeds and damp, new-plowed earth, mingled with the heavy perfume of a field of white blossoms somewhere near. But the night sat lightly upon the sea and the land. There was no weight of darkness; there were no shadows. The white light of the moon had fallen upon the world like the mystery and the softness of sleep.



The painting featured above is Winslow Homer, *Two Figures by the Sea* (1882)

What we love about this passage...

The sea's vast, seemingly unlimited quality has long been an inspiration to writers. In Chopin's novella its formlessness offers an enticing alternative to life on land. It also serves as a symbol of Edna's independence from her society, one that allows her freedom and independence, but is cloaked in mystery and solitude. We can't help but think of the general interest in the sea in this period by scientists, explorers, and writers — all of whom were coming to terms with what could almost seem like the bizarre alien world living alongside us — or, just below the surface.

About the Author

Kate Chopin (1850-1904) was born Kate O'Flaherty in St Louis, Missouri. After her marriage to Oscar Chopin, she settled in turn-of-the-century New Orleans: a permissive, cosmopolitan, and diverse enclave that left a deep impression on her life. She was left near bankruptcy after the death of her husband due to his unpaid debts, and turned to writing in order to make an income. Alongside *The Awakening*, she is best known for her shorter works, such as 'The Story of an Hour' and 'An Egyptian Cigarette' — both of which were originally published in the then up and coming *Vogue* magazine.

To read alongside...

The sea, the sea—it's hard not to think of an ocean of references to what covers over 70% of our planet. For another work that makes us think of feminism and the sea, there's Henrik Ibsen's *The Lady From the Sea* (1888): a play about a woman who is obsessed with what we would now call 'wild swimming,' and who believes that human beings were originally sea creatures who have somehow evolved to become land dwellers, but are ill adapted to it. She is visited by a long lost lover, The Stranger, who is—you guessed it—a sailor, and has to choose between him and her husband.

Today's guest curator...

Dr [Daniel Abdalla](#), core member of LitHits and an expert in nineteenth and twentieth-century literature, particularly its relationship to science.

32 RESOURCES FOR LIT HITS

**Example
Learning to
Swim**

10 MINUTE BOOK CLUB



The Ten-Minute Book Club presents a new way to enjoy literature that is designed to spark rich conversations about reading informed by and directed towards teaching. The project was born out of the LitHits initiative.

Each season features a range of literary excerpts that you can read in just ten minutes. The extracts have been chosen by Oxford academics, and are paired with free resources and introductions by experts suggesting themes or contexts to think about as you read, by yourself or in discussion with family, friends, colleagues, or anyone else you'd like to connect with.

<https://www.english.ox.ac.uk/ten-minute-book-club>.

Season 4



The Complaint by Thomas Hoccleve



The Man in the Moon, an anonymous Medieval lyric



The Widow Ranter by Aphra Behn



'Bavarian Gentians' by D.H. Lawrence



African Nationalism by Ndabaningi Sithole



'Afterwards' by Thomas Hardy



Beautiful Joe: The Autobiography of a Dog by Margaret Marshall Saunders

TEENAGE WRITINGS



Jane Austen's Teenage Writings are short, funny, a bit wild and madly inventive. Read, learn and play with our new online resources, including an interactive writing game and six short films, inspired by Jane Austen as you've never seen her before....

[https://janeaustens.house/teenage-writings/.](https://janeaustens.house/teenage-writings/)



Read a Story

We have five of Jane Austen's teenage stories for you to enjoy, courtesy of Oxford University Press.



Watch Theatrical Shorts

We commissioned Palma Studio to create some new works, inspired by Jane Austen's funny, subversive and madly inventive teenage writings. They worked with a group of young actors to devise six short, theatrical films which respond to the themes, characters and plots that Jane Austen created nearly 250 years ago.



Play an Interactive Writing Game

Imagine this: it's 1789 and you're visiting your friend Jane Austen. You are two bored teenagers, her older sister and brothers are away, and it's raining... Options for real adventure are limited, so you decide to write a story together (bonus: it will annoy Jane's sister Cassandra). What's it about? Ghosts, kidnappings, dance-offs? You get to decide in this creative writing game inspired by 'The Beautifull Cassandra', Jane's cheeky mini-novel in 12 parts.

PRISMATIC JANE EYRE

Close-Reading a World Novel Across Languages. Resources for Schools.

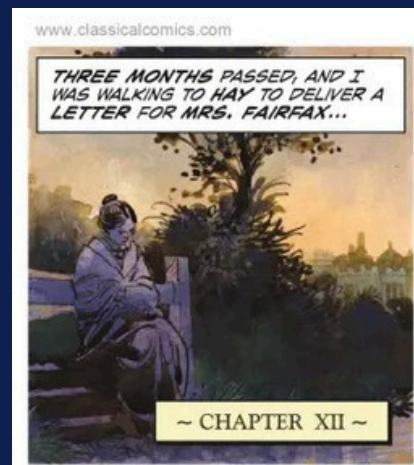
<https://prismaticjaneeyre.org/resources/>.

✓ WHAT IS JANE EYRE?

Summary of Jane Eyre provided by University of Oxford Professor Matthew Reynolds.

✓ JANE EYRE RE-MADE

Commentary in an extract from a comic-book version of *Jane Eyre* (the words have been adapted by Amy Corzine, and the artwork made by John M. Burns).



✓ GLOBAL JANE EYRE

More recently, the novel has become hugely popular in many different cultures. There have been 38 different translations into Persian, in Iran; and as many as 130 into Chinese. If you're interested, you can explore the spread of Jane Eyre using our interactive maps



WILLPLAY



WillPlay is an interactive, AI-powered reimagining of Shakespeare's plays for school students, created by researchers in the Faculty of English in collaboration with local tech company Charisma.ai.

<https://english.web.ox.ac.uk/willplay>

WHAT IS IT?

WillPlay takes the form of a social-media chat-app, with accompanying images, emojis and "stories".

WillPlay is an active experience allowing students individually to engage and interact creatively with Shakespeare's stories, language and characters via a familiar, accessible medium.

Through these in-scene chats, students can understand character and motivation, debate choices and interpretation, clarify language, explore contemporary context and even suggest alternative responses.



Have a go!

**Play your way through the
Romeo & Juliet Prototype**



VIRTUAL CHAUCER



A new project using AI technology to explore Chaucer.

The Virtual Chaucer project is a pilot collaboration between researchers at the English Faculty, Charisma.ai, and Creation Theatre aimed at anyone over about eleven years old. The experience allows you to enter the Tabard Inn, watch the pilgrims as they gather, and then to interact with them through AI technology as you fulfil your task. Choose to find out more about the Knight, Miller, or Wife of Bath, and try to get an invitation onto the pilgrimage yourself...

<https://www.english.ox.ac.uk/article/virtual-chaucer-a-new-project-using-ai-technology-to-explore-chaucer>.

Try the game out with your students!

Virtual Canterbury Tales

The Tabard Inn

Meet Chaucer's colourful characters

10-15 minutes

Play...

A STAGE IN TIME



A smartphone app designed by Dr David Taylor in collaboration with [Arcade Ltd](#) transports users to the spectacular world of 18th-century theatre at the touch of a button.

"A Stage in Time" uses augmented reality technology to allow users to step on to the stage of Covent Garden Theatre in 1785 and to experience the spectacular sets of smash-hit pantomime *Omai, or A Trip Around the World*. The app has been funded by a TORCH Knowledge Exchange Innovation Grant.

<https://www.english.ox.ac.uk/article/a-stage-in-time-recreates-the-spectacular-18th-century-stage>

[Read more about the project and how to download the app!](#)

Reconstructing Spectacular Theatre of the 18th Century

THEATRE ROYAL

For the Benefit of All Students
& Time Travellers

A STAGE IN TIME

RECOVERING SPECTACULAR
THEATRE OF THE 18TH CENTURY

1st Performance these 200 years

Watch on YouTube

TORCH The Oxford Research Centre In The Humanities

Share

DISEASES OF MODERN LIFE RESOURCES

To help teachers, Diseases and Modern Life and members of the English Faculty have developed a range of sample texts from primary sources. The extracts they offer are formatted (as far as possible) as they would appear in an AQA exam script: in 11pt Arial font, with a brief introduction to the source and a glossary of vocabulary students couldn't be expected to know.

<https://english.web.ox.ac.uk/diseases-modern-life-resources>

THEY AIM SPECIFICALLY TO HELP THE FOLLOWING:

- To increase students' reading speed when reading 19th century non-fiction: the whole Paper 2 exam lasts 1 hour 45 minutes, with only 15 minutes of that time recommended for reading the sources. Therefore, the quicker students can read and understand 19th century non-fiction, the more time they can spend formulating strong answers.
- To allow students to practise the skills tested by Assessment Objective 2, which can fall by the wayside when students are busy just trying to understand the gist of the text.

Resources available to download:

- [American Nervousness](#)
- [An Apology for Idlers](#)
- [Anxiety](#)
- [Death and Disease - Shop Assistants](#)
- [Dressing Young Children](#)
- [Fatigue](#)
- [Female Education](#)
- [Hygiene for Girls](#)
- [Letter on Corpulence](#)
- [London Air and London Streets](#)
- [Preservation of Health](#)
- [Ruskin Letters](#)
- [Saint George and the Dragon - Hospital](#)
- [Stimulants for Fine Ladies](#)
- [The Health of the Labourer](#)
- [The Uses of Fiction](#)
- [Time Thrift](#)
- [Train Travel](#)
- [Wear and Tear](#)

CLASP

A Consolidated Library of Anglo Saxon Poetry

<https://clasp.ell.ox.ac.uk/>



This project is ground-breaking because it brings together for the first time the most complete collection of Anglo-Saxon poetry in both Old English and Latin – and provides a Modern English translation for a wider audience to enjoy. The database includes:

- Complete Modern English translation
- New system of phonetic markers to make (probable) pronunciation and rhythm easier to follow
- Unique Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon Poetry - with click-through from the words in the verses to their meanings and where they appear
- Cross-reference system of word and phrase use to infer chronology by tracking influence and language development
- Audio files from guest readers to bring the fantastic works to life for new audiences

[Explore the database!](#)



ms Words Handlists Pattern Search Concordances Transcriptions Abbreviations

Welcome to the CLASP database: A Consolidated Library of Anglo Saxon Poetry.
For more information see the [CLASP project homepage](#).

Poem of the Day:
ABBO.Comput.Vers
[Full poem](#)

Word Form of the Day: platan
Number of occurrences in corpus: 1
• [Andreas.1651b](#): remægene / þurh apostolhad
|| **platan** nemned / þeodum on þearfe ||
[Full entry](#)

Metre of
[The Husband](#)
Bliss
Scansio
Type: 3
Sievrs
Scansio
Type: B

CREATIVE POETRY

The exercises explored in the below videos aim to help inspire and encourage creative poetry writing in schools. They work particularly well in multicultural schools where pupils speak many different languages and help to demonstrate how languages can be used as a tool for creativity.

<https://www.creativeml.ox.ac.uk/creative-poetry-activities-schools/>

Activities for Schools



The Surrealist Game

In this film, writer Kate Clanchy demonstrates an activity you can do to with both younger and older pupils to encourage them to write creative and original poems.



The Table

This activity uses Edip Cansever's poem 'The Table', translated by Richard Tillinghast, to inspire pupils to create their own poems.



Burnt Kabob

This activity uses Rumi's poem 'Burnt Kabob', translated by Coleman Barks, to inspire pupils to create their own poems



I Cannot Remember My Mother

In this film, writer Kate Clanchy uses a poem by Rabindranath Tagore to inspire pupils to create their own original works.

Explore [more resources](#) to help teach languages creatively and to celebrate multilingualism in your school, including 'How languages can help in your career'.

HOME OF BIG QUESTIONS



Explore Teach

Teach

Explore Challenges

- Explore Challenge materials are “Explore sessions in a box” – 45-minute or 10-minute sessions made for learners of all prior attainment levels, designed to be run with minimal preparation time and materials. Each Challenge encourages learners to think like a university researcher, and practice at least three of the Key Explore Skills.

Explore Teach CPDL

- Our CPDL materials are a set of free e-learning modules for teachers and other educators (including teaching assistants, tutors and activity leaders). Each module summarises key published research papers giving details on what works to support learners to stay on their attainment trajectories throughout secondary school.

www.explore.ox.ac.uk

Explore - The Home of Big Questions

- Explore is an engaging digital resource from the University of Oxford. As the ‘Home of Big Questions’, it aims to challenge those from 11 to 18 years with debates and ideas that go beyond what is covered in the classroom. Big questions tackle complex ideas across a wide range of subjects and reflect the kind of critical thinking students undertake at university. Our goal is to raise aspirations, promote broader thinking and encourage intellectual curiosity, so everything you see is underpinned by the latest discoveries and research from the University of Oxford.

Teachers' Newsletter

Sign up to receive our English Faculty Outreach newsletter for news about events and opportunities for teachers and schools:

<https://www.english.ox.ac.uk/teachers-and-advisors>



We strive to provide diverse and accessible teaching resources on the subject of English language and literature.

Your feedback is very important to us and helps us respond better to your needs in the future. If you have any questions, comments, suggestions or concerns please do get in touch with our Outreach Officer.

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