

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

Northampton School for Boys



Dear Parents and Carers,

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your son to Northampton School *for Boys*.

As a department, we believe that the study of English empowers and inspires students. Our curriculum centres around challenging and thought-provoking texts encompassing different times and cultures, encouraging students to make connections with a variety of voices and perspectives. Our broad study of the Literary Canon enables students to nurture their appreciation of the history and power of language; students are taught to harness the rich qualities of that language to articulate themselves in a variety of spoken and written contexts, confidently and coherently. The ability to discuss, explore and evaluate concepts and ideas with clarity is central to the academic narrative of which we are proud.

It is our goal that your son will leave us with an understanding and appreciation of the world in which he lives, a range of critical perspectives and the ability to communicate with confidence and flair. Ultimately, we hope your son's experiences in our English classrooms at Northampton School for Boys will resonate with him through the years and foster a life-long love of reading.

With these intentions in mind, we will share a newsletter with you at the start of every term with guidance on how you can best support his studies in English. We will provide details of upcoming modules; topics for discussion; reading lists to complement the texts studied in lessons; and Accelerated Reader updates.

We look forward to working with you and your son during his time at Northampton School for Boys.

Yours faithfully,

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Our Year 7 Curriculum

Our Key Stage 3 Curriculum is structured chronologically with Y7 focussing on Old in the Autumn term, Middle English in the Spring term and Early-Modern English in the Summer term.

The Autumn Term (Sept—Oct)

Year 7 begin their curriculum journey with Norse myths and a modern-English translation of an Old English text: 'Beowulf'. Old English (often referred to as Anglo-Saxon) is the earliest recorded form of the English Language. It was brought to England by Anglo-Saxon settlers in the 5th century and the first literary works written in Old English date from the 7th century. 'Beowulf' is one of the most often translated texts from this period and we hope that, in studying this text and its historical context, your son will be able to appreciate the history and development of the English Language.

Discussion Topics for the Autumn Term

1. What is Old English and how is it different to the way we speak and write today?
2. What is a myth and what are the features of an Anglo-Saxon story or legend?
4. What are the characteristics of a traditional legendary hero?
5. Why was Beowulf such a popular legend?

Wider Reading and Research Opportunities

If your son is interested in learning more about the history of the English language or this time period, we recommend the 'Languages' section of the Children's University of Manchester website and the following books from the Horrible Histories series:

1. 'Cut-Throat Celts'
2. 'Smashing Saxons'

We have also provided you and your son with an extensive reading list which supports and enhances study of the English Language—this includes texts we have in the school library, and beyond. This is available to you on our school website in the English Department section: [Northampton School for Boys - English \(nsb.northants.sch.uk\)](http://Northampton School for Boys - English (nsb.northants.sch.uk))

Accelerated Reader

To complement his studies and support his reading, your son will be enrolled on the Accelerated Reader programme. Mrs Rutherford will contact you with further details of this programme shortly. In order to support this programme, your son will have one lesson a week in the school library. We ask that you support your son by encouraging him to read, or reading with him, for at least 20 minutes every day. Reading every day supports academic progress as well as allowing students to develop their vocabulary, concentration, empathy, creativity and wellbeing.

Star of the Week ★

Our English teachers reward positive behaviour in Years 7 and 8 by choosing a 'Star of the Week'. Our Stars are rewarded with a certificate, a class book sticker, contact home, and entry into a grand draw for a Commendation at the end of each term. We look forward to celebrating with your son!

