



# Year 8 – English – Term 1

## • **We are learning:**

At Key Stage 3, all topics are based around whole Literature texts. In term one of year 8, pupils study up to six short stories, all of which have been written in the 1800s by renowned writers of the period such as Charles Dickens, Edgar Allen Poe, Oscar Wilde and Robert Louis Stevenson. Through these short stories, we continue to gradually teach the skills, concepts and knowledge that will eventually be vital to successful creative writing.

## • **Key concepts:**

- Features of a range of storytelling genres – ghost stories, mystery stories, fairytales, historical narratives
- Introducing the concept of an unreliable narrator, and how it affects our reaction to characters and events
- Building on our understanding from year 7 of how gothic imagery and characters are used to affect mood and atmosphere
- Developing narrative and descriptive writing skills
- Learning how 19<sup>th</sup> Century Literature reflect society's anxieties about the Industrial Revolution, advances in scientific knowledge and rising crime in cities and towns
- Learning how to write convincing mystery stories

## • **Useful Links:**

- Knowledge organiser – available via the VLE: <https://vle.lionhearttrust.org.uk/course/view.php?id=273>
- Horrible Histories – compilation on Victorian History (very helpful for understanding the historical and social setting of the short stories): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HVGaumifWkE&list=PLRbIiRJTXx\\_KdDCND\\_U\\_d8ZVpvGQC1TI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HVGaumifWkE&list=PLRbIiRJTXx_KdDCND_U_d8ZVpvGQC1TI)
- [https://shortstoryamerica.com/pdf\\_classics/dickens\\_the\\_signal\\_man.pdf](https://shortstoryamerica.com/pdf_classics/dickens_the_signal_man.pdf)
- [https://www.btbores.org/Downloads/6\\_The%20Monkeys%20Paw%20by%20WW%20Jacobs.pdf](https://www.btbores.org/Downloads/6_The%20Monkeys%20Paw%20by%20WW%20Jacobs.pdf)
- <https://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/StaChi.shtml>
- Borrowbox is a free audiobook lending service that can be accessed using your local borrower number – go to [www.borrowbox.com](http://www.borrowbox.com)

## • **How can you support your child:**

- Ensure they are completing the homework tasks that are set
- Read 'The Signalman' by Charles Dickens, 'The Star Child' by Oscar Wilde and 'The Monkey's Paw' by W.W. Jacobs and discuss them with your child.
- Encourage them to read fiction and non-fiction (particularly broadsheet newspapers or biographies).
- Take trips to a bookshop or library each time your child finishes a book.
- Take the opportunity to listen to audiobooks together on long journeys (Audible has a paid audiobook subscription service).

## • **Try asking them:**

- I've heard that 'The Signalman' is quite sinister – what happens in it?
- I've heard that 'The Monkey's Paw' has a strong moral – what does the writer want us to learn from the White family?
- The Star Child is really arrogant, isn't he – how does he learn his lesson?
- Why do you think people were so concerned about trains and scientific discoveries in the 1800s?





# Year 8 – English – Term 2

## • **We are learning:**

At Key Stage 3, all topics are based around whole Literature texts or collections of poems/short stories that share a similar theme. In term two of year 8, pupils study a play called *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*, which has been adapted from the novel of the same name written by Mark Haddon. It tells the story of Christopher Boone, a 15-year-old autistic teenager who sets out to solve a mystery and finds out more than he thought he would. Through this text, we continue to gradually teach the skills, concepts and knowledge that will eventually be vital to success at GCSE.

## • **Key concepts:**

- Building on their knowledge of how dramatic method (the things used by directors and actors to help tell stories onstage – lighting, sound effects, props, actions and gestures, tone of voice etc) is used to build character, convey meaning and develop mood and atmosphere
- Characterisation: building on the idea that characters in stories are deliberately created by the author to serve a particular purpose
- Building knowledge of the detective fiction genre of storytelling, and how characters, situations and events that commonly feature in detective stories can be adapted and subverted to serve the writers' intentions
- Building on the common character type of the 'outsider' – a character type first introduced in term one of Year 7 – and learning about how it can be adapted to serve writers' intentions
- Further developing ideas about identity – who we are and the experiences that shape us

## • **Useful Links:**

- Knowledge organiser – available via the VLE: <https://vle.lionhearttrust.org.uk/mod/resource/view.php?id=34092>
- Borrowbox is a free audiobook lending service that can be accessed using your local borrower number – go to [www.borrowbox.com](http://www.borrowbox.com)

## • **How can you support your child:**

- Ensure they are completing the homework tasks that are set
- Read the novel version of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time* so that you can discuss characters and events with your child.
- Encourage them to read fiction and non-fiction (particularly broadsheet newspapers or biographies).
- Take trips to a bookshop or library each time your child finishes a book.
- Take the opportunity to listen to audiobooks together on long journeys (Audible has a paid audiobook subscription service).

## • **Try asking them:**

- What was the big mistake that the police officer made at the start of the play?
- I heard your English teacher say that *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time* is performed on a stage that's created to look like the inside Christopher's mind – how do they manage that?
- Why is Christopher's family situation so complicated?





# Year 8 – English – Term 3

- **We are learning:**

At Key Stage 3, all topics are based around whole Literature texts or collections of poems/short stories that share a similar theme. In term three of year 8, pupils study collection of poems drawn from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century through to the present day, and which share the theme of social and political protest. From the anger of William Blake as he witnessed horrendous poverty and suffering as he walked through London in the late 1700s, to the hope-infused resilience of Langston Hughes and Maya Angelou in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, though to the recent seismic changes of the Scottish Referendum and Brexit, pupils continue to learn about how poetry is used to address all human concerns, alongside developing the skills, concepts and knowledge that will eventually be vital to success at GCSE.

- **Key concepts:**

- Building on their knowledge of how a range of poetic techniques are used to shape meaning
- Developing an understanding of how poetry can express the ideas, concerns and desires of those who are attempting to drive social and political change
- Continuing to build skills in analytical writing – a skill which is vital all the way through school (and often beyond)
- Introducing and building the skills required to compare poems – another skill which will be vital all the way through secondary school.

- **Useful Links:**

- Knowledge organiser – available via the VLE: <https://vle.lionhearttrust.org.uk/mod/resource/view.php?id=34145>
- Social and Political Protest Poetry Anthology: <https://vle.lionhearttrust.org.uk/mod/resource/view.php?id=34144>

- **How can you support your child:**

- Ensure they are completing the homework tasks that are set
- Download the poetry anthology and read the poems.
- Encourage them to read fiction and non-fiction (particularly broadsheet newspapers or biographies).
- Take trips to a bookshop or library each time your child finishes a book.
- Take the opportunity to listen to audiobooks together on long journeys (Audible has a paid audiobook subscription service).

- **Try asking them:**

- I've heard that Maya Angelou overcame a very difficult childhood – can you tell me about that?
- What have you learned about social mobility, and what poets have you studied that have an opinion on it?
- Do you prefer Langston Hughes' hopeful and joyful poetry, or William Blake's angry and pessimistic poetry?

