

# ‘The Aspiring English Scholar’ KS4/5



**CHELTENHAM  
BOURNSIDE  
SCHOOL**



**Inspiring lives through learning**



# 'The Aspiring English Scholar'



Welcome to the rich and exciting world of English. Whether you dream of becoming a writer, actor, journalist, lawyer, teacher, or simply want to understand how words shape our world, studying English is a powerful first step.

Through this programme, you'll explore how stories are told, how language influences thought, and how writers use words to challenge, inspire, and entertain. You'll dive into gripping novels, powerful plays, and real-world texts—from Shakespeare to street slang, from poetry to political speeches.

You'll ask questions like: How do writers create emotion? What makes a character unforgettable? Why does the way we speak matter? And how does language reflect who we are?

English helps you see the world differently. It sharpens your thinking, deepens your empathy, and gives you the tools to express yourself with confidence and creativity. It's not just about reading books—it's about reading the world.

**Mr Burnford**  
Head of English

# Competitions



## A Level Lang/Lit:

- Cupcakes and Kalashnikovs - *Eleanor Mills*
- The Adventure of English - *Melvyn Bragg*
- The Beautiful and the Damned - *FS Fitzgerald*
- The Bloody Chamber - *Angela Carter*
- Tragedy: A Student Handbook - *Sean McEvoy*
- This is Shakespeare - *Emma Smith*

## A Level Lit:

- This is Shakespeare - *Emma Smith*
- Tragedy: A Student Handbook - *Sean McEvoy*
- The Merchant of Venice - *Shakespeare*
- Coleridge on Othello - *ST Coleridge*
- The Kite Runner - *Khaled Housseni*
- Frankenstein - *Mary Shelley*
- Jane Eyre - *Charlotte Bronte*



# Competitions



## WHO'S THE MUMMY?

### Essay Competitions

Essay competitions for Year 12 students are a great way to build up your UCAS application. They're a great example of a super-curricular activity. They show universities that you have a genuine interest in a subject, and expending your learning beyond the classroom.



TRINITY  
COLLEGE  
CAMBRIDGE

### Gould Prize for English Literature

Annual competition for Year 12 or Lower 6th students. This Essay Prize has the following aims. First, to encourage talented students with an interest in English Literature to explore their reading interests further in response to questions about the subject. Second, to encourage students with an interest in literature to apply for a University course in English. Finally, to recognise the achievements of high-calibre students from whatever background they may come, as well as the achievements of those who teach them.

### The Betty Haigh Prize

The Betty Haigh Shakespeare Prize offers an opportunity for students aged 11 – 19 in school, college, or sixth form to demonstrate their creativity and their engagement with an adaptation of one of Shakespeare's texts.



# Competitions



Cheltenham Education Partnership

## [CEP Brush Up on Shakespeare lecture series \(every other Wednesday, Cheltenham College, starting 17.09.25\)](#)

Each week we will explore one of the key speeches from the plays of William Shakespeare. Together we will decipher the text, discuss its key themes and watch a well-known performance.

## [Cheltenham Literature Festival](#)

Cheltenham Literature Festival is the world's longest-running literature Festival, leading the way in celebrating the written and spoken word.

Each year we present the best new voices in fiction and poetry alongside literary greats, high-profile speakers and inspiring thinkers.



# Listen and Watch



## Podcasts



### In Our Time

A podcast series from the BBC in which Melvyn Bragg invites expert guests to discuss various topics. Here are some episodes that may be useful.

- In Our Time: Wuthering Heights
- In Our Time: The Great Gatsby
- In Our Time: Othello
- In Our Time: The Enlightenment
- In Our Time: A Streetcar Named Desire



### Approaching Shakespeare - Emma Smith

Head of Shakespeare Studies at Oxford goes through a variety of plays from the man himself in her podcast.

## Films/YouTube/TV



### The National Theatre productions of:

- Frankenstein
- Macbeth
- Streetcar
- Othello
- King Lear
- Hamlet
- Jane Eyre
- Medea



School login details for Drama Online are needed



# Listen and Watch



## Social media

- X
- TikTok
- BBC News
- Leading newspapers and magazines, especially the opinion/feature pieces:
  - Times
  - Guardian
  - Independent
  - The New York Times

# Work Experience and Events



Work experience in a literary or English-linguistic field is a powerful way to bring classroom learning to life. For students considering a degree in English Language and Literature, it offers a chance to explore how reading, writing, and communication skills are used in the real world.

Whether you're helping in a library, shadowing a journalist, or assisting in a theatre production, work experience shows how literary analysis and language theory apply to real tasks and audiences.

Students build confidence in writing, editing, public speaking, and critical thinking—skills that are valuable in any career.

From publishing and education to media, PR, and law, English graduates have a wide range of options.

# Work Experience and Events



## [English Literature University Taster | Springpod](#)

Professor John Holmes looks at developing skills within English Literature, thinks about how you read, and explores the notion of expanding consciousness.



**[English Literature University Taster | Springpod](#)** Breaking down the barrier between reading and understanding Shakespeare's work with a fascinating activity around Hamlet's infamous "To be, or not to be..." soliloquy.



**[How to Gain Experience in English Driven Fields | Springpod Blog](#)** From journalism to publishing, and beyond, a strong command of the English language opens doors to a wide array of career opportunities.



## [Get in Taster Experiences | BBC Early Careers 'GET IN'](#)

Taster Experiences offer you the chance to explore the different career paths the BBC has to offer and to find out if our organisation is somewhere you'd like to work in the future.



**[Politics Work Experience | Springpod](#)** You'll explore the exciting world of politics - from the role of an MP to the civil service to political journalism, plus the various ways to enter each role.



## [Publishing Work Experience | Hachette UK | Springpod](#)

Want to learn about the business of publishing from an industry leader? Hachette UK is here to help you take your first steps into the publishing world...



The Careers Team at Bournside deliver regular Inspire Breakfast Lectures. Open to students in Year 10 - 13, these business-focused breakfasts invite speakers from all corners of industry to share their professional experiences and valuable insights with Bournside students over breakfast; opening our eyes to the opportunities available across many industry sectors.

[Take a look at upcoming speakers and reserve your space here.](#)



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