



The Priory School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Following the culmination of the Year 11 Assessment Exams, which were completed last week, I wanted to write to you with an update from AQA with regards to English Literature exams, due to take place in Summer 2021. Given the context of the national Lockdown which took place earlier this year, it is clear that students across the country have had their education disrupted due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. AQA as an exam board have kept in touch with schools throughout this challenging period, and changes have been made to the English Literature specification, for one year only, to offer students some respite when they come to sit their exams – which AQA have achieved by asking schools to remove one text from their English Literature study list.

AQA have made clear that the study of Shakespeare will remain compulsory, and so we are very much looking forward to teaching *Macbeth* to Priory students, the process of which starts this week and continues after half-term. In addition, the 'Unseen Poetry' contingent of the exam also remains compulsory, which meant that we were faced with a decision to make as department as to which of the other texts (Anthology Poetry, *A Christmas Carol*, *Anita and Me*) to remove from study. As you might imagine, this was not an easy decision to make, but it has been agreed that we will no longer be teaching *Anita and Me* to the current Year 11 cohort for this year.

Although we very much enjoyed teaching *Anita and Me* to our students, and were pleased with their responses to the novel, we felt that we needed to embrace the gesture offered by AQA wholeheartedly – *Anita and Me* is the only part of the Literature exams that is 'closed text', meaning that no extract or source is provided for students other than an essay-style question. By removing *Anita and Me* from study, students would be under less pressure to memorise key quotations, and with the other questions providing an extract or complete poem on which to base a response, the removal of the modern text feels like an appropriate way to support ongoing revision. In addition, Anthology Poetry and *A Christmas Carol* are both served by an embarrassment of additional resources online – something that *Anita and Me* does not currently have, and both texts are shorter and easier to digest in portions, which again may help students to study effectively. To summarise, the table below outlines the new English Literature spec for Summer 2021 to be undertaken by Priory School students:

Paper 1 – choose any 2	Paper 2 - compulsory
Paper 1A Anthology of poetry – 1 item 30 marks (AO1, AO2, AO3)	Section A Shakespeare – 1 item 30 marks (AO1, AO2, AO3) + 4 marks (AO4)
Paper 1B 19th century novel – 1 item 30 marks (AO1, AO2, AO3)	Section B Part 1: unseen poem essay 24 marks (AO1, AO2) + 4 marks (AO4) Part 2: unseen poetry comparison 8 marks (AO2)

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your support for the teaching of *Macbeth* in securing copies of the text, and also for your ongoing support in encouraging any students who are absent for any reason during the unit of work to catch up on work they will miss, using the weekly resources that will be uploaded to 'Show My Homework'. I am also excited to inform you that we are in the process of overhauling our methods of revision, moving towards online, 'homemade' but 'on demand' content that we hope can support our students even further through this challenging period – I will contact you again later in the year when plans are finalised.

At the time of writing, there are no planned changes to the English Language qualification, but should you wish to get in touch to discuss the English Literature course, please do not hesitate to do so.

Kind regards,

Mr Stacey

Mr P Stacey
Head of English