

Reinvigorating the KS3 English Curriculum

Andrew McCallum introduces the EMC's new KS3 Curriculum Package, reflecting on the need to re-think and refresh what we do in KS3 English.

EMC's last *Teaching English* column argued for a renewed emphasis on 'disciplinary English' as a way to combat an excessive focus on teaching to exams. *Doing English*, we suggested, is very different to *doing examination English*. And if we aren't to alienate students in our classrooms, then the focus has to be firmly on the former. There must, after all, be a way for students to experience the diverse riches of our subject *and* get their grades. If not, then what's the point?

Echoing our sentiments, Ofsted Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman's speech to launch Ofsted's annual report, released in December 2017, was critical of schools that have reduced the KS3 curriculum to two years. She talked of schools where students' entire experience is designed to do little more than 'push them through mark-scheme hoops'. This is a scenario that most of you will have fought hard to resist; but the huge pressures placed on teachers by high-stakes testing mean that even the most principled of practitioners can find themselves teaching in ways that they know in their hearts go against the version of English that they truly believe in.

Spielman's focus is on curriculum and developing a 'deep body of knowledge'. It's hard to argue against what she says. Significant exposure to the worlds of language and literature, in all their wonderful variety, should be a basic entitlement for all. We would, of course, argue that *how* students interact with this knowledge is also vitally important. Students need opportunities to work on it in multiple ways, to exercise personal choice and judgement, to respond both critically and creatively, and to draw on their own personal experiences. In other words, knowledge in English must be explored in meaningful, relevant and memorable ways.

Looking afresh at KS3

There is a definite interest in looking afresh at KS3, presumably spurred on by Spielman's words, but also stemming from a system-wide realisation that endless teaching to the test is simply not good enough. Our *Reinvigorating the KS3 Curriculum* course, running this term, quickly filled to capacity (something that would not have happened had we run it last year), and we're already receiving interest about a course we're holding in May called *Getting Your KS3 Curriculum Right*.

The genuine hunger for giving students the experience of English that they deserve at KS3 has made us decide to think big by developing what we've provisionally called the *EMC KS3 Curriculum Package*. Over the last three years, we've published a range of popular resources for different areas of the 11–14 curriculum. *Literary Shorts*,

for example, covers seminal texts from the UK and the rest of the world; *Non-Fiction Shorts* offers brilliant texts from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries to engage with this tricky area of the curriculum; and the newly-published *Diverse Shorts* places a strong emphasis on the development of critical literacy skills. We're also currently writing KS3 books for poetry and language, due out in the summer, and have plans to start work on a Sherlock Holmes publication shortly. Each of these resources has enough work to cover years 7, 8 and 9, so put them all together and you pretty much have a full curriculum. We haven't included a Shakespeare play or a contemporary novel in our planning because we think nearly all teachers are confident in teaching these already.

The EMC KS3 Curriculum Package

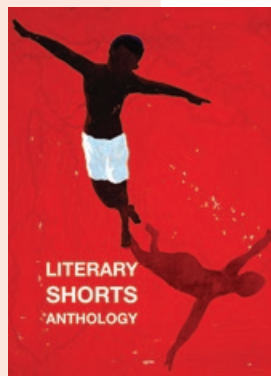
Schools that buy the *EMC KS3 Curriculum Package* will receive class sets of all of the publications listed above (with the option to buy additional copies). So, they will receive a minimum of 180 high-quality books suitable for use with all key stage three classes. In addition they will receive teacher instructions for all 36 units of work, a curriculum map suggesting ways through, rich classroom resources that match pedagogy to content, assessment tasks for all units, a bank of generic critical engagement cards, and free CPD.

The final point is a first for us. We've always drawn on our resources when running courses, and we've even linked CPD to particular publications. But we've never gone for something on quite this scale. This is a chance for teachers and departments to immerse themselves fully in EMC's award-winning approach.

One caveat: we're not, for a minute, suggesting that departments sweep aside the great units they already work with and replace them wholesale with what we're offering. You can do that if you like, but the *EMC KS3 Curriculum Package* is extremely flexible and of such great value (provisionally priced at £1450 for the lot) that it makes sense for schools to buy it even if they don't intend to use absolutely everything. It can fill in gaps where they might exist, replace units of work that no longer quite hit the mark, or provide you and your students with material above and beyond what is already covered.

Full details of the *EMC KS3 Curriculum Package* will be available shortly. If you want to discuss it further, please email info@englishandmedia.co.uk.

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EMC resources (additional copies can be purchased)	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
	Proposed units and titles: subject to change		
Literary Shorts (already available) <i>30 student anthologies + teacher resource pack</i>	i. Introduction to short stories. Choosing stories ii. Weird and Wonderful. A Matter of Fact, The Paradise Carpet, The Third-Floor Bedroom	i. Twists – One of these days; The Hitch-hiker; The Open Window ii. Children and adults. Subha, The White Trousers, Resigned	i. Awakening. The Flowers + I Used to Live Here Once ii. Twists 2. A Cup of Tea, Two Words, Happily Ever After
Non-Fiction Shorts (already available) <i>30 student work books containing full texts and activities</i>	i. Kill or cure 19th century quack cure advertisements ii. Looking for adventure 5 texts about adventure	i. My story 3 first person accounts ii. Brainwaves 3 texts about the brain	i. Sports Shorts 5 sporting shorts ii. Holding hands in the dark 5 issues based texts
Diverse Shorts (already available) <i>30 student work books containing full texts and activities</i>	i. Community. Tender Earth, My Polish Teacher's Tie, Welcome to Nowhere ii. Understanding. May Malone, Looking for JJ	i. Appearances. The Colour of Humanity, Liking What You See ii. Conflict. Terror Kid, Crongton Knights	i. Identity. Loose Change, Brownies, The Hate U Give ii. Dystopia. Alone in Berlin, 1984
KS3 Poetry Book (in development: texts may change slightly) <i>30 student work books containing full texts and activities</i>	i. Where does poetry come from? Incl. Anglo-Saxon riddles, The Seafarer, Beowulf, Kate Tempest ii. Does it have to rhyme? Incl. Emily Dickinson, Emily Bronte, John Agard	i. Playing around with poetry. Incl. Frank O'Hara, Felix Jung, George MacDonald ii. Lost in translation. Incl. Inuit poems + translations from Martial	i. Falling in + out of love. Incl. Maya Angelou, Christopher Marlowe, Ntozake Shange ii. Poetry and protest Incl. Holly McNish, Langston Hughes, Mohja Kahf iii. Contemporary African poets (currently securing copyright)
KS3 Language Book (in development: titles will change) <i>Teacher resource book, plus student version on PDF</i>	i. Exploring your own language use ii. Language and genre	i. Literary language old and new. ii. Language, grammar + meaning	i. Debating English ii. Exploring language change
19th Century: Sherlock Holmes <i>30 copies of EMC study edition</i>	Alternative title: The Detectives ... look at detective stories through the ages? Holmes The Golden Age Modern Times		
Additional resources	Curriculum map for all three years Suggested sequence of lessons for all units Assessment tasks and assessment criteria Banks of generic critical engagement cards		
Cost	£1450. Additional copies of textbooks and anthologies £6.50 each		

News from EMC

NATE Conference

Look out for the EMC team at the NATE annual conference. As usual, we'll be hosting a stall where you can come and have a chat and flick through (and buy!) our award-winning publications. We'll also be running two workshops (one about teaching language at KS3, the other about light-touch stylistics approaches for literature teaching) and a seminar focusing on using diverse literary texts to develop critical thinking.

Poems of the Decade Conference

We're delighted to be running our Poems of Decade Conference for Edexcel A Level in partnership with Forward Arts Foundation for the third year running. It will take place at Friends House, Euston, London, on Tuesday 26th June. This year's line-up includes Leontia Flynn, Ian Duhig, Tishani Doshi, Daljit Nagra and Sinead Morrissey. Places tend to book up quickly, so keep an eye out on our website, or sign up to our mailing list by contacting info@englishandmedia.co.uk

Carnegie Medal

This year the English and Media Centre is designing classroom resources for the Carnegie Medal shortlist. It's the first time we've been asked to do this by the competition's organisers, and we're delighted to be

involved with such a high-profile event. You should look out for the resources on the Carnegie Medal website once the shortlist has been announced in March.

EMC Twilight

Our free twilights, held termly in our role as a subject hub for the Chartered College of Teaching, continue to fill to capacity. This is a real tribute to the commitment of teachers to attend events after a hard day's work, and to the quality of the speakers. If you live too far away to attend, then you can still watch the events live on the EMC Facebook page.

Mike Raleigh

It was with great sadness that we received news of Mike Raleigh's unexpected death in December 2017. Mike was deputy warden of the English Centre (the original incarnation of EMC) when it was set up as part of the Inner London Education Authority to improve the quality of English teaching in London secondary schools. He played a huge role in establishing the centre's reputation and went on to have a successful, influential career in education. We are currently planning an event in memory of Mike. Details will be made available to our mailing list and on our website soon.

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