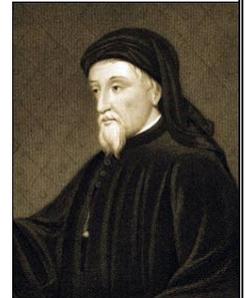




“We know what we are, but know
not what we may be.”
Shakespeare



PGCE ENGLISH 2019-20



PRE-COURSE INFORMATION



GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



WELCOME TO THE PGCE ENGLISH COURSE!

THIS DOCUMENT REALLY IS REQUIRED READING!

PLEASE CONFIRM RECEIPT OF THIS LETTER TO ANNABEL WATSON (a.m.watson@ex.ac.uk)

We are now heavily involved in preparations for your PGCE course next year and are very much looking forward to working with you. The Exeter English course has a strong reputation for excellence, and as a teaching team we are all experienced practitioners and active researchers, so we are confident that you will be introduced to the principles and practices of English teaching in a robust way. The course is lively, participatory, at times quirky and unpredictable, but always supportive. We aim to make you critical, creative and independent teachers of English: the leaders of the future!

This pack provides you with some preparatory work to do before the course starts, just to get you into the swing of things. The PGCE is, for many, a very intensive course and you'll get far more out of the sessions if you arrive with a little understanding of some of the issues and ideas in English teaching. This booklet comes with details of:

- ❑ **Required pre-course reading;**
- ❑ **Preliminary Experience assignment – How Children are Taught to Read;**
- ❑ **Guidance on developing your Subject Knowledge.**

The PGCE programme, like teaching, is one in which being well-organised plays a significant part, and it is crucial to get yourself organised before the term starts as there is little time in the first ten weeks to sort yourself out. Beware of throwing out official documentation as it often contains important information, and treat yourself to a collection of files or folders – you will need them! Very few people like paperwork, but our experience with successive groups of PGCE students is that mastering your personal organisation and time management earlier saves a huge amount of stress later. Our principle is that you should control the paperwork, rather than it controlling you. **We cannot stress this enough: begin the course in an organised manner, with all requested tasks complete, and you will have a really strong start to the course.** If you know that you are naturally disorganised, now is the time to do something about it – a new beginning!

You will also be receiving information about your two weeks' preliminary experience; information which is common to all subjects across the PGCE. Please do not see this as a separate entity but as an integrated part of the course. We will be drawing on your experiences in our Term 1 English sessions. Both the generic preliminary experience tasks and the English-specific tasks form part of the evidence for the award of the PGCE so please do take them seriously.

If you use Facebook, you might like to join our official group for current students and alumni: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/892040547505464/>, 'Exeter Secondary English PGCE'. This presents an opportunity to access current students who may be able to answer your questions about the course.

We hope this letter will whet your appetite for the course and at the same time signal our high expectations of your commitment to the course. We do ask a lot of you in terms of preparation, and the course itself is demanding, but don't be daunted by it - you will receive plenty of support, and hopefully, plenty of satisfaction. If you want more information about the course or about anything in this booklet, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us, and we'll be only too happy to talk to you. We look forward to working with you, and to seeing you develop as the future stars of English teaching!

Enjoy your summer!

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PRE-COURSE READING LIST

We are keen to encourage wide and varied reading throughout the course. Please keep a bibliography of books you have read, perhaps with a few brief lines about ones you found particularly interesting or provoking. A word of warning, however - the few books which we have identified as compulsory reading before the course are genuinely compulsory. We deliberately select these texts so that we can use them actively in University sessions. You can buy the books as used copies on Amazon.

The following books are **compulsory pre-course reading** and worth buying for yourself.

English teaching:

- Michael Fleming and David Stevens (2015) *English Teaching in the Secondary School: Linking Theory and Practice* London: Routledge, 4th edition (the most recent edition is preferable).
- David Crystal (2010) *Evolving English: One Language, Many Voices*. London: British Library Publishing.
- Teresa Cremin and Debra Myhill (2012) *Writing Voices: Creating Communities of Writers* London: Routledge.

If you know your knowledge of English grammar is not strong, then we recommend the book we have written to support primary teachers' grammar knowledge:

- Debra Myhill, Susan Jones, Annabel Watson and Helen Lines. (2016) *Essential Primary Grammar*. London: OUP.

Also highly recommended, though not compulsory, is Rex Gibson's *Teaching Shakespeare* (2016) Cambridge University Press (the older edition is fine if you find it cheaper).

Primary texts:

Below are a list of texts commonly taught in school and which we may use in workshops or seminars, in activities which will require secure academic understanding of the texts.

- Shakespeare *The Tempest, Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth*
- Robert Louis Stevenson *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*
- J.B. Priestley *An Inspector Calls*

With these primary texts, it is important that you have good literary critical knowledge; just knowing the narrative plot is not a good basis for teaching. If the texts are new to you, you might find it helpful to make critical notes for later reference. We also recommend that you audit your knowledge of texts against the current set texts for GCSE literature and **select 2 or 3 unfamiliar texts** to read:

<https://thenationalcurriculum.com/gcse-english-literature-texts/>

Teenage literature:

Understanding the fiction which is available for young people to read is critical in supporting independent reading amongst teenagers, and you can never read enough! **Please read at least three books written for teenagers** – but the more you read, the better. Visit any good bookshop and you will be spoiled for choice, or alternatively you might look to try reading some of the Carnegie nominations and awardees on the link here: <http://www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/home/>

National Curriculum:

You should also download and familiarise yourself with the national curriculum programmes of study for English at KS3 and KS4, along with the glossary and appendices. You can find all of these at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-english-programmes-of-study>

You might like also to familiarise yourself with some of the GCSE examination syllabuses.

PRELIMINARY EXPERIENCE ASSIGNMENT: HOW CHILDREN ARE TAUGHT TO READ

Secondary English teachers need to understand how children learn to read and the teaching strategies used to help them: sadly, not all children enter secondary classrooms as confident and fluent readers. This assignment is designed to equip you with an informed understanding of the ways in which children are taught to read.

It is important that you undertake some academic reading on the subject. Increasingly, the Internet is a valuable source of information – try googling ‘Teaching Reading’ - but please make sure that you are reading academic material. *Google Scholar* is a good way to access peer-reviewed articles, though you may have to hunt a little for open access ones which are not behind a paywall. Of course, once you're registered with us and have an IT account, you will have access to almost all articles that you'll find via Scholar.

You might like to explore the materials and research provided on the National Literacy Trust website: <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/>.

Write up your investigation in the form of a report, using the sub-headings below to structure your report. It is important to write fluently and articulately: in the past the academic standard of this assignment has been pleasingly high and students have gained much from it.

A Personal Reflection:

- What do you remember about learning to read yourself? Did your parents help in this process? Can you think of ways in which your home literacy experiences might have supported your learning to read?

Pre-reading skills:

- What are pre-reading skills?
- What pre-reading skills do young learners need to prepare and enable them to become readers?
- Visit shops like the Early Learning Centre and look at games and books designed to develop pre-reading skills (not games/books for teaching reading). How do they tackle this?

The role of phonics in the teaching of reading:

- What is phonics? What is the difference between synthetic and analytic phonics?
- What are the phonemes in English (and can you break words into their phonemes)?
- How do teachers develop young learners' phonological awareness and phonic knowledge?

The role of whole language approaches to the teaching of reading:

- What is a whole language approach to reading?
- What is meant by 'sight vocabulary' or whole word recognition?

The role of developing comprehension skills in the teaching of reading:

- The difference between decoding words and understanding texts
- How do readers make meaning from text using contextual clues?
- How can parents and teachers support developing comprehension?

Critical Reflection:

- What have you discovered about current controversies or debates regarding the teaching of reading?
- What is your own perspective on these debates?

Word length: 3,000 words max. Use the Harvard (APA) referencing system for this assignment.

Please bring your assignment with you at the start of the Exeter term.

During your preliminary experience, take the opportunity to investigate and observe how reading is taught in both primary and secondary schools, looking at the teaching strategies used to develop reading and the difficulties learners' face in becoming confident readers. If possible, listen to children reading, and look at schools and classrooms to see if they offer a literacy-rich environment.

You might like to see if you can do our English 'quiz' by identifying the writers/speakers in the pictures on the cover page of this document (click and hover on each to see the links for answers).

This is your chance to read those books or poems by someone you've always intended to read, but have never got round to, or to find out about an aspect of English which has always made you curious. We will have discussed subject knowledge and set targets at interview, so this guidance should supplement the decisions made at that point. Here we outline tasks you can choose to do to support your development as an English teacher. These are optional tasks, not required tasks: but you can use them as evidence of your progress towards Qualified Teacher Status so do keep notes or records of what you do.

Select an area of your subject knowledge which you feel needs further development – we will have discussed this during your interview, so think back to what we talked about then. If you are not confident with grammar, then this is a good area to prioritise as many teachers lack confidence in this area and it is an important area in the new version of the English curriculum. **We strongly recommend that anyone who does not feel confident with grammar regards developing grammar knowledge a priority before the course starts.** Don't try to do too much - work on one strand only eg finite and non-finite verbs, or subordinate clauses. Try to apply your developing knowledge by annotating texts – e.g. to identify the different verb types used. Use of the Cybergrammar website, www.cybergrammar.co.uk, is strongly recommended.

If you feel that your understanding of an area of literature needs development, your principal task is to read (the joy of being an English teacher!). Narrow your chosen area to a realistic size: for example, you cannot do justice to all Romantic poetry, but you can do a good study of Coleridge. You could:

- ❑ read in detail about your chosen area;
- ❑ make notes which will act as useful reference material in future;
- ❑ keep a bibliography of literary criticism or other reference books or websites read;
- ❑ prepare a word-processed report which presents your notes in a neat and accessible format.

In developing subject knowledge of literature, it is better to go for academic **depth**, rather than **breadth**, as when you teach a given text or concept you do need to know it well. If you are developing knowledge of an author or poet, try to read at least three books or six poems by that writer. Read some published criticism and make some critical analysis of your own.

Remember to keep a record of what you have done as you will be able to use it as evidence for the award of QTS – you'll be building your bank of evidence before you even start the course!

MEMBERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL BODIES

There are a number of useful organisations designed to support teachers, and English teachers in particular. A couple that we particularly recommend joining are:

- The Chartered College of Teaching: <https://chartered.college/>
(Free membership for trainees)
- The National Association for Teachers of English: <https://www.nate.org.uk/>
(£3.50 per month for trainee membership)

Also worth becoming familiar with are:

- The English and Media Centre <https://www.englishandmedia.co.uk>
- The Poetry Foundation <https://www.poetryfoundation.org>
- The United Kingdom Literacy Association <https://ukla.org>
- The National Literacy Trust <https://literacytrust.org.uk>
- The Royal Shakespeare Company teacher resources <https://www.rsc.org.uk/education/teacher-resources>
- The British Library teacher resources <https://www.bl.uk/teaching-resources#>

If you're on **Twitter**, as well as the usual TES / BBC Education feeds, we suggest that you follow:

- @Exeterpartner (our university-school partnership office)
- @Team_English1 (a community of English teachers sharing ideas and resources)
- @EngMediaCentre
- @poetry_station
- @TheRSC

Enjoy your preparations for the course, and please do get in touch with any questions!