

GCSE (9–1) English Literature

Reading School

Case Study – *Living Texts*



Reading School has been teaching *Living Texts* since 2012 and is an advocate for the benefits that the qualification offers its students. Reading uses *Living Texts* as its Year 9 English curriculum as it offers the perfect transition course between KS3 and KS4, preparing students for the rigours of GCSEs.

Robert Baldock - Head of English at Reading "The *Living Texts* course offers our Year 9 students so much. They can explore a range of genres, learn and practise a variety of skills, and enjoy meeting the challenge of an authentic examined qualification, without any pressure. It's a terrific step between the traditional Key Stage 3 curriculum and GCSE for students with high aspirations."

Students are similarly positive about *Living Texts* and enjoy the variety of work they get to study and the confidence they gain from the course.

"It's been really interesting and has meant we have covered lots of subjects we may not have done otherwise. I have really enjoyed the challenge of what we have studied too. It's been a big step up from Year 8 and has given me a lot more confidence leading into my GCSEs next year."

The flexibility of *Living Texts* means that teachers are able to choose the texts they want to teach and are most appropriate to their students. Students at Reading School study texts including prose, poetry, scripts and speeches by a range



of authors from Bill Bryson to Edgar Allan Poe and Winston Churchill. This breadth of study gives students experience of a wide range of text types and styles of writing and builds their confidence in approaching new and unseen texts.

*"Creating an exciting and varied programme of study for Year 9 is made easy by the *Living Texts* course. The structure of the units, with each one leading up to an assessed task and each one linked to different skills and text types, lends itself to building a programme of study which encourages clear progression throughout the academic year."*

The assessment tasks in *Living Texts* help to build students' critical thinking and skills of analysis giving them experience of analysing, comparing and recreating texts. These enable students to build their writing skills whilst exploring texts and writing creatively. The presentation element of the Comparing Texts unit also gives students speaking and listening experience that prepares them for the speaking and listening element of the new specification GCSE.

"I feel much more confident in my writing and my ability to read between the lines of texts. It's really helped with my skills of analysis and how to plan my essays more effectively."

The skills that students have developed whilst studying *Living Texts* have had the knock on effect at Reading School of improving results and student progress.

*"Our first cohort of Year 9 *Living Texts* students went on, as Year 11s, to help our Department make an 8% improvement in English Language A* and A grades compared to the previous year's results, and much of that was down to the excellent critical and analytical foundation provided by *Living Texts*. As a teacher, Year 9 has become a lot more fun again."*

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