



An insight into the Scholar English programme

Academic Philosophy

The Scholar English programme enlivens the mind with interesting and varied content for those seeking a satisfying academic experience. A challenging university-style curriculum (taught in very small groups) guides and inspires learners towards independence in the greater world of academic life.

Students who graduate from this course can face the demands of understanding and responding creatively to complex ideas and problems; they can generate astute opinions and well-crafted solutions in sophisticated English.

Curriculum

Lessons are taught in a variety of styles such as: seminars, vivas, round tables, conferences, workshops, lectures, recitals, interviews, presentations, etc to anticipate the settings and expectations that students are likely to encounter in their academic and professional lives. Ultimately, outcomes centre on the eloquent expression of ideas shared in speech and writing.

Topics and source materials are drawn from across the disciplines to broaden students' academic background; not only to expose them to terminology in the service of language acquisition, but also to engage them with learning skills in the context of specific subject areas.

Homework, known as 'preparation clubs', is to encourage responsibility and cooperation, as well as to add an element of performance pressure; each day students bring to lessons their personal preparatory work from the previous evening to use with their group.

Lessons

Peripatetics

Aristotle required his students to accompany him as he strolled around the Lyceum teaching. They became known as the Peripatetics (from ancient Greek περιπατεῖν (peripatein) 'to walk around'). Each morning and afternoon, tutors and students walk together discussing sets of higher-order thinking questions whilst benefiting from the fresh air and greenery of the local area. Everyone returns to school invigorated and ready to continue productively in the classroom.

Progress Tests

Changes to students' overall proficiency in academic English are tracked using 100-gap C-tests and summary writing at the beginning and end of each week. Students aim to acquire as much new language and knowledge as possible during the week. Throughout each week, students also complete a series of reading comprehension tests, take spelling tests, enjoy a general knowledge quiz, make presentations in various forms and submit several pieces of written work for feedback on a weekly basis.

Prescience

Prescience lessons begin with an enquiry into items of current-affairs, academic or professional interest before developing towards justifying predictions for how these areas may proceed and evolve in the future.

General Knowledge Quiz

Crystallised intelligence in the form of general knowledge is imperative not only for good decision-making but in laying the foundations for subject-specific learning and interdisciplinarity. Holding a weekly general knowledge quiz engenders light-hearted academic competition and builds respect for learning.

Learner Portfolios

A Learner Portfolio is given to each student at Induction. It contains course overviews, strategies for independent learning, academic vocabulary lists, phrases for debates and essays, guidance for note-taking, phonemic charts, welfare & ambitions coaching questions, prompts for critical thinking, etc. It is not a workbook, but a collection of language and skills resources which are drawn on throughout all lessons.

Values & Eloquence

By producing a formal, persuasive article or speech, students are encouraged firstly to learn more about a topic they or society feel is important and, far more potently, to explain why by rationally justifying their assertions.

Mindfulness

Short meditation sessions are becoming a feature of curricula around the world because of the general health benefits deliberate relaxation brings. Mindfulness practice in particular can develop a person's self-knowledge and self-discipline, and has been shown to alleviate anxiety.

Subjectivity

Subjectivity concerns the way an individual perceives and approaches the world from and through their thoughts, feelings and senses. Exploring the bases and biases of their own minds prompts students to deliberate on and articulate their ideas with greater authenticity and authority

Book Club Vivas

Each week students choose a language-levelled book, read it in its entirety overnight and defend their understanding in a viva voce the following day. Tutors and peers use demanding prompts to explore and interrogate whether the reader has properly digested the plot and considered the issues it poses. Book Club provides extensive reading practice for the consolidation of language at each student's individual level, a broadening of students' literary culture and practice in responding to the kinds of probing questions raised at a viva voce. Titles range from the works of classic authors to contemporary fiction to informational prose.

Ideation & Argumentation

Analysis of texts at paragraph, sentence and word level from a functional perspective helps students to understand and reproduce themselves the logical sequencing of ideas and components of good arguments and narratives. Such reasoning and writing abilities around formal structures, as well as proficiency in using the specific academic terminology and broad vocabulary base needed to support them, means students produce more cohesive and eloquent academic English.

Adaptive Reading

Throughout each week, students read a series of academic articles and take comprehension quizzes on a state-of-the-art adaptive platform that generates texts at the right level of challenge for each individual: giving them a new text at a higher level if they answer correctly, or at a lower level if they do not.

Insight & Innovation

An ability to identify and extract key information from complex English settings into one's own prior learning is the essence of knowledge acquisition. In class, students take notes from and engage critically with short subject-specific presentations. Having summarised and personalised the content, they reinterpret it to their peers.

Readers' Theatre

Condensed works of Shakespeare and other classics adapted for English level allow students to access an entire work in a single lesson, benefitting from both the performative aspects of language learning as well as broadening their literary culture and discussing human issues in relation to the characters, plots and ethical dilemmas, etc.

Question Club

Students prepare a mindmap of questions (a 'question map') on a variety of topics for homework. They then lead part of a seminar the following day with the specific goal of intriguing their peers as to what they have discovered. Those who elicit the most interest have met the Question Club remit.

Biography & Society

Success can be as much an emergent property of persistent problem-solving and resilience as it can be of deliberate decision-making and planning, and that is as true for societies as it is for individuals. Students are invited to consider individual and collective perspectives to understand the course of events and gain a deeper appreciation of their own potential.

Comprehension

Comprehension classes attend almost exclusively to language rather than topical content. A traditional or more contemporary dictation generally leads into an explicit focus on what it means to understand from both analytical and holistic perspectives.

Great Debates

Motions include matters of equality and diversity, welfare, civil liberties, social order, nature and nurture, wealth distribution, social contribution, cultural relativism, etc. The quality of language and ideas is paramount. Students research existing arguments to inform their opinions, while tutors help them structure and elaborate on their argumentation. Choice of debate format is outcome-oriented: sometimes open and discursive, sometimes formal.

Poetry Club

For second-language learners, the benefits of studying poetry are manifold. The right choice of poems can introduce new vocabulary, and highlight grammatical rules and how they can be broken; it can encourage creative use of language and self-expression in English; Memorisation and recital have the additional advantages of introducing study skills and performance to students' language learning.

Research projects, theses & dissertations

Students present and field questions on a research project at an end-of-week conference having researched, drafted and re-drafted, rehearsed and polished it over a series of lessons. Projects are driven by a research question formulated by the student under the supervision of their tutor to be relevant to their interests and ambitions.

Students staying for a half or full term take on the extra challenge of pursuing a more extensive thesis or dissertation, respectively, over the course of their projects, each week furthering, deepening and presenting the current state of their research to culminate in a full written and orally defended graduation work at the end of their course.