



## **AN EYE-CATCHING — AND STUDENT-CATCHING — SIXTH FORM PROSPECTUS**

Sixth Form students have choices. Many choose the safe option of carrying on where they are; but a significant number choose something new. These students are often the adventurous innovators who add value to the educational experience of other students, and who achieve more in life. They are the students who are an asset to the Academy, both while studying and in the future. But how to attract them?

Obviously, the key is to offer the courses these students want, with inspirational teaching and the freedom to develop. However, every Sixth Form college they apply to will tell them they are the ideal place to study. To stand out from the crowd, an Academy school has to offer something more.

The immediate impression of the Academy happens at the open house events, and it is important to make sure that the actual impression is the intended impression. How to make the sixth form open-house sessions a success is not dealt with here, instead we will look at the documents the student takes away from the event, the documents they will be looking at when they make their decisions.

### **THE PROSPECTUS — WORDS**

The prospectus is the key document. It will, of course, contain words describing the Academy and encouraging the student to apply. It is vital that these words convey the right tone and information. Some useful tips (in no particular order) are:

- Allow enthusiasm. If a Faculty Leader wants to wax lyrical about their subject, let them do it. It may encourage others to write better, and enthusiastic teachers attract enthusiastic students.
- Make sure the information is specific to your Academy. Don't tell the student what the qualification entails, tell them what your Academy does to get them the qualification.
- Tell the student what the course will do for them and to them, not just what they have to do for the course.
- Use "we" and "you", not "the Academy" and "the student".
- Make sure your writers always remember what the audience is expecting. Teachers can write; but prospectus-writing is not the writing they are used to. They are the ones with the enthusiasm, the knowledge, and the expertise to write about their subject: just don't let them retreat into depersonalised abstract description.
- Don't fill the prospectus with a list of expectations and rules. If a student asks, have a leaflet to give them. You can introduce the do's and don'ts at the interview stage, when they are already partially committed to the Academy.
- Avoid complex language. It is very easy to describe complexity with complexity, but the real trick of prospectus writing is to describe complexity with simplicity.

- ➔ Get someone outside the Academy, outside education, to read the words; and accept, and act upon, their honest opinion.

## **THE PROSPECTUS – PICTURES**

Making a good prospectus is not something that happens in the last half-term of the Summer (or in a rush during the first Winter half-term), it is something the Academy is preparing for all year. Are you maintaining a picture bank of Academy events – good quality pictures, not just snaps taken on a mobile phone? Who is recording your sporting events? Who photographed the Art exhibition? Did anyone take pictures of those sunny break times, or that animated discussion in the sixth form common room? Where are the lab pictures? Even Maths probably did something visual at some time during the year. Make sure that everyone at the Academy is photo-opportunity-aware.

It is, of course, possible to take a set of photos from available classrooms when the prospectus is due; or you can call in a professional photographer and stage something; but the spontaneity will be lost, and the pictures will be depersonalised. A picture with a tag of, say, “Academy sixth form trekkers in Snowdonia” is better than an untitled picture of students in countryside; a picture with the tag “Animated sixth form discussion at Careers Day” is better than a set shot of students trying to look animated. Real events always look more real than staged shots.

So make sure your prospectus pictures are ready to go. Do get the professional artists at the print shop to clean them up and present them in effective ways; but try to avoid the anonymous, anodyne shots that a photoshoot produces.

## **THE PROSPECTUS – CAPTURING THE ETHOS**

The prospectus is not just about words and pictures, it should be a reflection of the ethos of the sixth form. How do you encourage learning? How do you relate to your students? How do your students relate to you?

The ethos of your sixth form can probably be summarised in a single sentence – a mission statement or prime directive. It does not reflect the full purpose or intention of the sixth form management team, but it does encapsulate the fundamental philosophy. It is possible to design your prospectus as a physical illustration of this ethos, a signal that shows the ethos to be more than just words. The prospectus becomes a physical representation of the Academy’s philosophy, and is a reminder to the student every time they pick it up. It also helps that this different physical representation helps it to stand out from the other competitors.

If an unusual format of prospectus is offered, it is important that all of the sixth form team are made aware of why the format choice has been made, so that they can work with the format to show off their subject best. If everyone is supporting the unusual design then it can become a powerful unifying force for the whole sixth form team.

Some novel solutions to prospectus design are given below. They are not exhaustive, but they do show how the prospectus can be moved outside of the traditional book format. The designs themselves are mock-ups, and would be considerably improved by professional design.

All of the designs should be accompanied by a folder in which the student can gather the documentation needed.

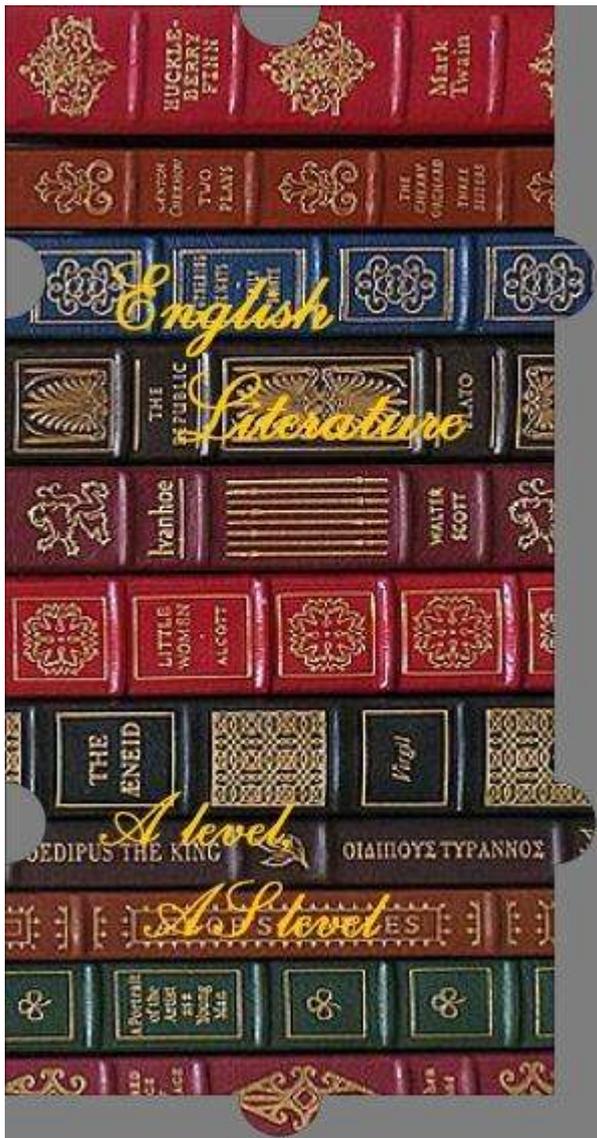
## THE PROSPECTUS – DESIGN 1: GROWING TOGETHER

The theme of this prospectus is building a jigsaw of the student's time in the sixth form. The individual fact sheets of the academy are large jigsaw pieces which can be interlocked to make a personalised prospectus. All of the fact sheets have the same jigsaw shape, meaning that they can be put together in any order. By offering a prospectus that the student can construct the Academy is giving them a physical control over their own future, a positive embodied metaphor which works at the intuitive level of cognition.

The ethos of working together, and the idea of personal growth, should both be emphasised in the prospectus.

Sample card:

Front:



Back:

**English Literature A and AS levels**  
**Exam Board AQA**  
**Syllabus Number 2745**  
**Facilities**  
The English department has its own suite of computers that are available to Sixth Formers.  
The school library is well stocked with excellent books that will enable and encourage students to read around the subject.

**Course Information**  
At the Academy, we follow the AQA English Literature B specification, which encourages students to develop interest in and enjoyment of English Literature through reading widely, critically, and independently. The course covers a range of classic and modern prose, poetic and dramatic texts. Lessons are taught in small groups to encourage lively and challenging discussions.

**Assessment**  
English Literature is assessed by examination (60%) and coursework (40%). Students will learn to express themselves with clarity and precision. They must show their ability to analyse how writers' methods enable them to express their ideas and meanings; to show understanding of different interpretations of literary texts from different critical perspectives; and to consider how historical, cultural and other contexts impact upon their reading of a literary text. There is also a creative writing option for coursework in Year 12.

**Higher Education Opportunities**  
English Literature provides a platform for degrees in English Literature or English Language, as well as Drama, Politics, Philosophy, Classical Studies and the Social Sciences.  
Many Universities offer joint degree courses, such as English with Drama, Philosophy, or a Modern Foreign Language.  
**Employment Opportunities**  
English provides key skills for a range of careers, including law, journalism, publishing, education, marketing, the media and communications.

**Links with Higher Education**  
English Language and Literature courses are offered at the vast majority of Universities in London and beyond, and remain highly valued by employers. Many of our A Level students opt to study English at University, and the skills of communication and self-expression which the A Level course develops are beneficial for all higher education courses. The nearby Globe Theatre offers a range of educational activities for local schools.

**Extra Curricular Activities**  
Students will go on an out of school visit to gain insight into the context of their set texts. In the past, this has included a residential trip to the Yorkshire moors for Wuthering Heights. Where possible, we will go to the theatre to see productions of the plays studied.

The grey areas should be cut away. The printer should be able to do this as part of the production process. The cards can then be slotted together, either in a grid pattern or with a vertical offset. The card stock will need to be at least 200gsm.

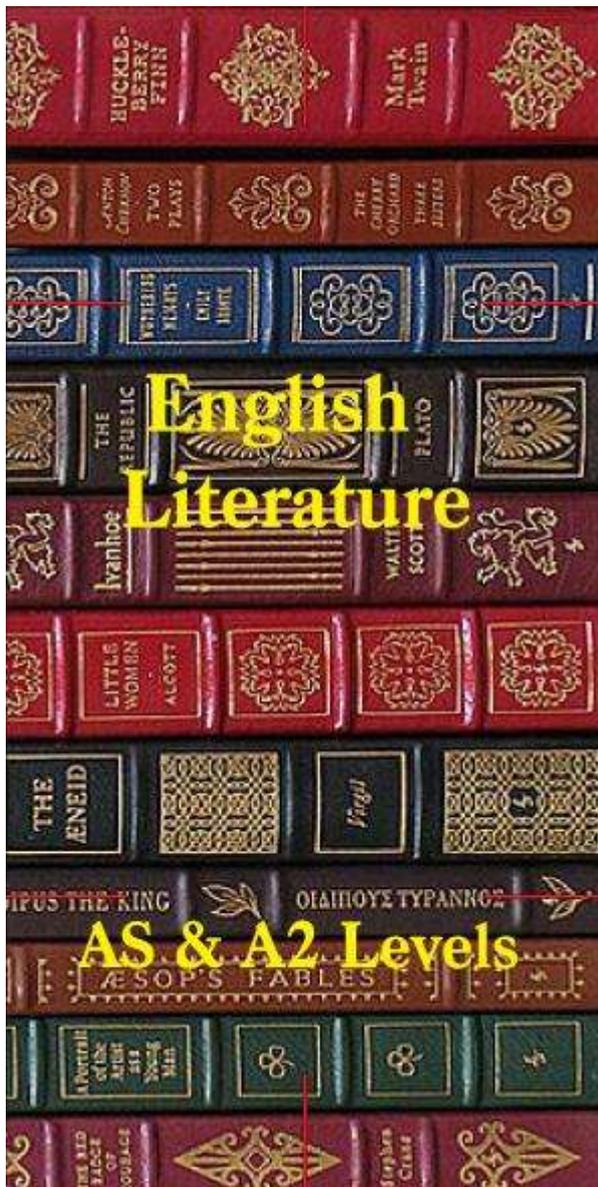
## THE PROSPECTUS – DESIGN 2: BUILDING THE FUTURE

The theme of this prospectus is building an edifice to represent the student's time in the sixth form. The individual fact sheets of the academy are large cards which can be slotted together to make a range of shapes. All of the fact sheets have the same shape and slots, meaning that they can be put together in any order. The dimensions of the shapes (1 unit x 2 units) is integral to the building system and cannot be varied. By offering a prospectus that the student can build the Academy is once again giving them a physical embodied metaphor which works at the intuitive level of cognition.

The ethos of building knowledge, and the idea of the planning the future, should both be emphasised in the prospectus.

Sample card:

Front:



Back:

<b>English Literature</b> <b>Exam Board AQA</b> <b>Syllabus Number 2745</b>	<b>A and AS levels</b>
<b>Facilities</b> The English department has its own suite of computers that are available to Sixth Formers. The school library is well stocked with excellent books that will enable and encourage students to read around the subject.	
<b>Course Information</b> At the Academy, we follow the AQA English Literature B specification, which encourages students to develop interest in and enjoyment of English Literature through reading widely, critically, and independently. The course covers a range of classic and modern prose, poetic and dramatic texts. Lessons are taught in small groups to encourage lively and challenging discussions.	
<b>Assessment</b> English Literature is assessed by examination (60%) and coursework (40%). Students will learn to express themselves with clarity and precision. They must show their ability to analyse how writers' methods enable them to express their ideas and meanings; to show understanding of different interpretations of literary texts from different critical perspectives; and to consider how historical, cultural and other contexts impact upon their reading of a literary text. There is also a creative writing option for coursework in Year 12.	
<b>Higher Education Opportunities</b> English Literature provides a platform for degrees in English Literature or English Language, as well as Drama, Politics, Philosophy, Classical Studies and the Social Sciences. Many Universities offer joint degree courses, such as English with Drama, Philosophy, or a Modern Foreign Language. Employment Opportunities English provides key skills for a range of careers, including law, journalism, publishing, education, marketing, the media and communications.	
<b>Links with Higher Education</b> English Language and Literature courses are offered at the vast majority of Universities in London and beyond, and remain highly valued by employers. Many of our A Level students opt to study English at University, and the skills of communication and self-expression which the A Level course develops are beneficial for all higher education courses. The nearby Globe Theatre offers a range of educational activities for local schools.	
<b>Extra Curricular Activities</b> Students will go on an out of school visit to gain insight into the context of their set texts. In the past, this has included a residential trip to the Yorkshire moors for Wuthering Heights. Where possible, we will go to the theatre to see productions of the plays studied.	

The red slots should be cut away. The printer should be able to do this as part of the production process. The cards can then be slotted together to make three-dimensional models. The card stock will need to be at least 300gsm.

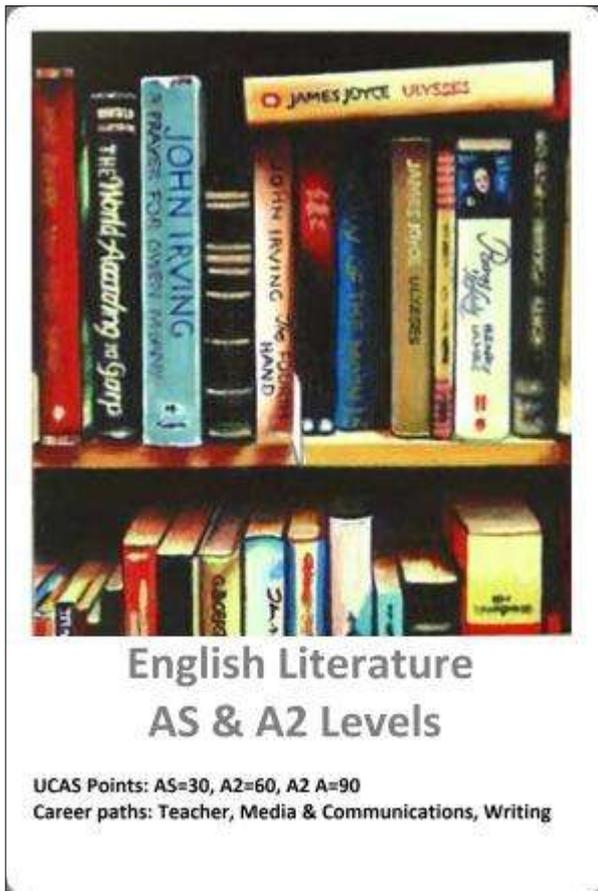
## THE PROSPECTUS – DESIGN 3: WINNING THE GAME

The theme of this prospectus is gathering the right information for the student's time in the sixth form. The individual fact sheets of the academy are large cards, rather like playing cards. By offering a prospectus that the student can assemble simply by gathering, the Academy is giving them a physically embodied metaphor for the knowledge acquisition process involved in studying.

The ethos of gathering knowledge, and the idea that knowledge is power, should both be emphasised in the prospectus.

Sample card:

Front



Back

**English Literature**  
Exam Board AQA

**AS and A2 levels**  
Syllabus Number 2745

### Facilities

The English department has its own suite of computers available to Sixth Formers. The school library is well stocked with excellent books that will enable and encourage students to read around the subject.

### Course Information

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### Assessment

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Many Universities offer joint degree courses, such as English with Drama, Philosophy, or a Modern Foreign Language.

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English provides key skills for a range of careers, including law, journalism, publishing, education, marketing, the media and communications.

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English Language and Literature courses are offered at the vast majority of Universities in London and beyond, and remain highly valued by employers. Many of our A Level students opt to study English at University, and the skills of communication and self-expression which the A Level course develops are beneficial for all higher education courses. The nearby Globe Theatre offers a range of educational activities for local schools.

### Extra Curricular Activities

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The grey curved corners should be cut away to create a playing card effect.

The card stock will need to be at least 300gsm.

## A FEW WORDS ON FORMS

The application form is an important document for impressing the student, and its design is a passive symbol of how much the Academy cares. For instance, which is better:

Name	
Address	
Date of Birth	

or

Name

Address

Date of Birth

or

Name

Address

Date of Birth

Remember:

- Forms design is more than just collecting the right data.
- Always keep the form simple to complete – only ask for the information you need for the first cut. Use the interview to get any additional information needed.
- If possible, make the form computer-friendly.
- Decide on a sizes and presentations for all documents not included in the prospectus. Would some information be better in a gatefold leaflet? Should the application form be an A5 booklet? Don't just settle for standard A4.
- Make sure you have something about your support for special needs.