

Really raising standards in GCSE English

As you know, the new GCSE English specifications are more demanding in several ways, but some factors haven't been publicised very much:

- the DfE expects grades to fall as the new GCSEs are taken
- the higher grades will be harder to achieve because numbers are capped
- new grade 5 will be significantly harder to attain than current grade C
- progress by less able students will count strongly towards Progress 8.

So there are challenges across the whole ability-range. For evidence and further information, please see www.letsthinkinenglish.org/gcse-english-changes/ and [/news/](#)

We can help

Students will need higher-order reading skills, confidence and resilience when responding to more challenging unseen texts – prose in Language, poetry in Literature. These skills need building up over time and are best developed in Key Stage 3, though Year 10 or even Year 11 isn't too late.

Let's Think in English is based on powerful research evidence that *all* students can develop these skills. It uses the same methodology as Cognitive Acceleration in Science (CASE) which has been repeatedly proven over 20 years to raise attainment by between 1 and 2 GCSE grades. The programme works well with all students and particularly with less able, EAL and disadvantaged students who will find the new specifications particularly challenging. We offer a programme of specially-designed fortnightly lessons (30+ for KS3 and 20+ for GCSE) using fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama and film which guide teachers in working with students on developing these skills. **300+ schools are already doing this. You can join them.**

Next introductory course

Location: King's College London – 5 minutes walk from Waterloo Station

Date: Wednesday 1st February 2017 9.30am to 3.30pm.

Cost: £175 per delegate (£160 each for 2 or more) including materials, lunch and refreshments. £100 reduction for subsequent training and support. Participants receive paper and electronic versions of all the materials used on the course.

To book: email Laurie Smith at laurie.smith@kcl.ac.uk giving delegate name, school name and address, and email address for invoice.

Please turn over

About Let's Think in English

The Let's Think in English (LTE) programme provides:

- fortnightly lessons which guide students in interrogating unseen texts effectively
- deepening experience in swift, perceptive inference and deduction
- 'verbal drafting' of responses through guided group discussion and feedback
- experience in recognising higher-order features of writing such as tone, pace, irony, wit, suspense, variety of structure, unreliable narrator, etc
- enjoyable, high-interest lessons which stimulate memory.

The total cost – resources, in-school training and a year's in-school support to ensure maximum effectiveness – is less than three pupil premiums (£2470) plus trainer's fares outside London (less £100 for attending the course on 1st February).

Some comments on Let's Think in English lessons

"... pupils were challenged to discuss their ideas about a story based on very limited information. Skilful questioning probed pupils' understanding and engaged them in quite a sophisticated debate which developed their critical thinking very well."

Ofsted report on a London school judged Outstanding, June 2015

"... in a Year 7 English lesson, pupils were challenged to generate their own hypothesis about language and draw on quotes to back up their ideas. The teacher's skilful questioning motivated and challenged all pupils and their excitement in the class discussion and debate was tangible."

Ofsted report on a Kent school judged Outstanding, April 2016

"Teaching the LTE lessons and discussing the process with colleagues has given me a lot of confidence in setting higher aspirations for students. It has allowed me to reflect on students' learning and the impact of strategic questioning". – London teacher, 2015

"Let's Think has encouraged me to consider the impact of student responses to a variety of material. Because the emphasis is on individual opinion and how to express that articulately, this has had an impact on their ability to think critically. It has made me slow down in my teaching in their lessons, and others and consider that some detailed work on a smaller piece of text can have a bigger impact overall." – London teacher, 2015

"LTE has made me rethink the types of questions I ask during my lessons and plan for a wider range of questions in order to elicit more thoughtful responses. I've also noticed the students have been empowered to ask more insightful questions themselves - some of which I can respond to and others which we have to investigate further, helping the students see learning as a lifelong process." – London teacher, 2015