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English Language and Literature (BA) (three-year course) Course Information Sheet for entry in 2026

Entry requirements

Visit [Admission requirements for 2026 entry](#) to view a summary table of each undergraduate course's entry requirements.

If English is not your first language you may also need to meet our [English language requirements](#).

About the course

The English Language and Literature course at Oxford is one of the broadest in the country, giving you the chance to study writing in English from its origins in Anglo-Saxon England to the present.

As well as British literature, you can study works written in English from other parts of the world, and some originally written in other languages, allowing you to think about literature in English in multilingual and global contexts across time.

The course allows you a considerable degree of choice, both in developing your personal interests across core papers, and in choosing a topic for your dissertation and for a special option in your final year.

Options have included:

- Literature and revolution
- Postcolonial literature
- Writing lives
- Old Norse
- Tragedy
- Film criticism.

Studying literature at Oxford involves the development of sophisticated reading skills and of an ability to place literary texts in their wider intellectual and historical contexts. It also requires you to:

- consider the critical processes by which you analyse and judge
- learn about literary form and technique
- evaluate various approaches to literary criticism and theory
- study the development of the English language.

The Oxford English Faculty is the largest English department in Britain. Students are taught in tutorials by a scholar active in their research field, many of whom also give lectures to all students in the English Faculty. You will therefore have the opportunity to learn from a wide range of specialist teachers.

Library provision for English at Oxford is exceptionally good. All students have access to the Bodleian Library (with its extensive manuscript collection), the English Faculty Library, their own college libraries and a wide range of electronic resources.

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In your first year, you will be introduced to the conceptual and technical tools used in the study of language and literature, and to a wide range of different critical approaches. At the same time, you will be doing tutorial work on early medieval literature, Victorian literature and literature from 1910 to the present.

In your second and third years, you will extend your study of English literary history in four more period papers ranging from late medieval literature to Romanticism. These papers are assessed by three-hour written examinations at the end of your third year. You will also produce:

- a portfolio of three essays on Shakespeare, on topics of your choice
- an extended essay (or occasionally an examination) relating to a special options paper, chosen from a list of around 25 courses
- and an 8,000-word dissertation on a subject of your choice.

Submitted work will constitute almost half of the final assessment for most students.

Alternatively, in the second and third years, you can choose to follow our specialist course in Medieval Literature and Language, with papers covering literature in English from 650-1550 along with the history of the English language up to 1800, with a further paper either on Shakespeare or on manuscript and print culture. Students on this course also take a special options paper and submit a dissertation on a topic of their choice.

A typical week

Although details of practice vary from college to college, most students will have one or two tutorials (usually two students and a tutor) and one or two classes (in groups of around 8 to 10) each week. A tutorial usually involves discussion of an essay, which you will have produced based on your own reading and research that week. You will normally be expected to produce between eight and twelve pieces of written work each term. Most students will also attend several lectures each week.

Tutorials are usually 2-3 students and a tutor. Class sizes may vary depending on the options you choose. In college, there would usually be 6-12 students and in the department there would usually be no more than 15 students. There might be specific circumstances in which some classes contain around 20 students.

Most tutorials, classes, and lectures are delivered by staff who are tutors in their subject. Many are world-leading experts with years of experience in teaching and research. Some teaching may also be delivered by postgraduate students who are usually studying at doctoral level.

To find out more about how our teaching year is structured, visit our [Academic Year](#) page.

Significant self-study is expected of all students – for further details see [workload and independent study](#) information. Undergraduate courses at Oxford are full-time during term time. Students typically spend approximately 40 hours per week on academic work.

Course structure

YEAR 1	
COURSES	ASSESSMENT

YEAR 1

Four papers are taken:

- Introduction to English language and literature
- Early medieval literature, 650–1350
- Literature in English, 1830–1910
- Literature in English, 1910–present day

Three written papers form the First University Examination, together with a submitted portfolio of two essays for Introduction to English language and literature. All exams must be passed, but marks do not count towards the final degree.

YEAR 2

COURSES

Course I:

- Literature in English, 1350–1550
- Literature in English, 1550–1660
- Literature in English, 1660–1760
- Literature in English, 1760–1830

Course II:

- Literature in English, 650–1100
- Medieval English and related literatures 1066–1550
- Literature in English, 1350–1550
The history of the English language to c1800

YEAR 3

COURSES

Course I:

- Shakespeare (may also be studied in Year 2)

Course II:

- The material text or Shakespeare (choice of option)

ASSESSMENT

All period papers will be examined by final written examinations at the end of the third year. Most students will submit one extended essay for Special options, due in at the end of the first term; dissertation and portfolio for Shakespeare/The

YEAR 3

Both courses:

- Special options paper
- Dissertation

More information on current options is available on the [English Language and Literature website](#). (Not all options may be available every year – these are subject to change, as explained in the [Terms & Conditions](#) and for reasons of staff availability and student demand. The department may add extra options.)

material text, due during the second term.

Most Oxford courses are assessed by examinations. These are typically at the end of the first and last years but you may have assessments at other times and some courses have exams in the second year also. First year examinations are often called Prelims or Moderations, and you need to pass these exams to progress to the second year. You must pass your final year exams, or 'finals', to pass your degree. For more information on assessment for your course, please see the Course Structure.

Finals also determine the classification of your degree. For some courses you may also be assessed on your practical work, or you may be required to submit a dissertation. Please check the assessment details for your course.

The University will seek to deliver this course in accordance with the description set out above. However, there may be situations in which it is desirable or necessary for the University to make changes in course provision, either before or after registration. For further information, please see the University's [Terms and Conditions](#) and information about [potential course changes](#).

You are also referred to the [Student Handbook](#) (which is updated every September).

Fees

These annual fees in 2026/27 are for full-time students who begin this undergraduate course here in 2026. Information about how much fees and other costs usually increase each year is set out in the [University's Terms and Conditions](#).

For details of annual increases, please see our [guidance on likely increases to fees and charges](#).

Fee status	Annual Course fees in 2026/27
Home	£9,790
Overseas	£43,600

In the 2027-28 academic year course fees for Home fee status students will rise to £10,050 (in line with the government fee cap.)

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[Further details about fee status eligibility](#) can be found on the fee status webpage.

Living costs

Living costs for the academic year starting in 2026 are estimated to be between £1,405 and £2,105 for each month you are in Oxford. Students at Oxford can benefit from our [world class resources](#) and [college provision](#), which may help to keep costs down. Entitlement to certain types of support may depend on your personal financial circumstances.

Our academic year is made up of three eight-week terms, so you would not usually need to be in Oxford for much more than six months of the year but may wish to budget over a nine-month period to ensure you also have sufficient funds during the holidays to meet essential costs. For further details please visit our [living costs webpage](#).

Living costs breakdown

	Per month		Total for 9 months	
	Lower range	Upper range	Lower range	Upper range
Food	£315	£545	£2,835	£4,905
Accommodation (including utilities)	£825	£990	£7,425	£8,910
Personal items	£160	£310	£1,440	£2,790
Social activities	£50	£130	£450	£1,170
Study costs	£35	£90	£315	£810
Other	£20	£40	£180	£360
Total	£1,405	£2,105	£12,645	£18,945

In order to provide these estimated likely living costs (which are rounded to the nearest £5), the University in collaboration with the Oxford SU conducted a living costs survey in May 2025 to complement existing student expenditure data from a variety of sources, including the UK government's Student Income and Expenditure Survey and the National Union of Students (NUS).

The current economic climate and periods of high national inflation in recent years make it harder to estimate potential changes to the cost of living over the next few years. When planning your finances for any future years of study in Oxford beyond 2026-27, it is suggested that you allow for potential increases in living expenses of around 4% each year – although this rate may vary depending on the national economic situation.

Additional Fees and Charges Information for English Language and Literature

There are no compulsory costs for this course beyond the fees shown above and your living costs.

Regulation - The University of Oxford is regulated by the [Office for Students](#) and subscribes to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#) student complaints scheme.