Key concepts in English. (From the student Ambition sheets)

What is a key concept? A key concept is an important element or idea that will help you to unlock the texts we look at. Key concepts in English can be about the text - like the ones below, or come from a text. The key concepts we will be looking at this term help us to read any text - it doesn't matter if it is Shakespeare, a letter from the Head Teacher or a newspaper article.

Constructs	Context	Language	Theme
The texts we read and study are constructed purposefully by their authors; they don't spring into existence out of thin air. Each line break, each comma, each word is placed carefully; each character trait, each setting, each theme intentionally chosen. Texts are constructed for a reason - authorial intent. This reason may be that the author wants to share an idea or feeling, or it may be to persuade us to see things as they see it.	All the information surrounding the text that helps us to understand it - social, historical, authorial, philosophical, political, etc. This will include not just the context of the work in the time it was produced, but our understanding of it in 2023. In addition - each individual's personal context can also affect how we each see a text.	Authors use language to convey meaning through the choices they make and the techniques they use. However, language is also personal to each of us, so how we see or interpret words and phrases will depend entirely on our contextual knowledge and understanding.	Theme in literature refers to the underlying message, idea, or insight that a writer expresses through a story. It's a central, unifying concept that shapes the narrative, characters, and settings. Themes help readers understand deeper meanings and can provoke thought, discussion, and a deeper understanding of the human condition. Identifying themes enriches the reading experience, allowing readers to connect the story to broader life lessons, societal issues, or universal truths.

Co-op Belle Vue English five year overview
The English Curriculum at Co-op Belle Vue is structured around four key concepts: Context, Construct, Language and Theme. We also teach writing explicitly across our curriculum including analytical, creative and transactional writing. Our students experience a broad range of texts in their study of English whilst developing deep knowledge and mastery of our key concepts throughout their KS3 study.

Year 7 Long Term Plan		
Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3
The Odyssey	Poetry: Identity	Shakespeare: Much Ado About Nothing
Key concepts	Key Concepts	Key Concepts
Context: Greco-Roman Tradition **Construct:** Introduction to character as construct, Booker types & shapes of stories, characters as archetypes, literary conventions. **Language:** Etymology, explicit, implicit information **Themes:** Society (hierarchy, patriarchy, morality);Identity (heroes and villains); Conflict (internal, external)	**Context:** authorial context informs text **Construct:** poetic form & structure; authorial intent vs reader response **Language:** literal, figurative, tone, metaphor **Theme:** Society (influence on our identity) Identity (linguistic, heritage, belonging) Conflict (internal, external)	Context: Shakespearean context & anti-racist approaches to Shakespeare; audience response Construct: characteristics of a play; character as a construct; conventions of a comedy Language: Shakespearean language, figurative language, metaphor, tone Theme: Society (hierarchy, patriarchy, morality); Conflict (internal/external); Identity(heroes/villians, monsters/victims); Power (powerlessness and agency)
Writing		
Analytical Writing: agreeing/disagreeing with a given statement. Thesis statements about individual characters.	Analytical writing: thesis statement (poetry)	Analytical writing: character and theme focus

Transactional writing: speech writing	Creative writing: description - symbolism	Transactional writing: letter writing
Assessment		
PK: How is Penelope presented in X extract from 'The Odyssey? PK: How is Odysseus presented in 'The Odyssey' as a whole text?' PK3: Not completed due to curriculum changes.	PK: 1+2 replaced by Diagnostic. PK 3: How is identity presented in The British? PK 4: Creative writing: symbolism	PK 1: How is Beatrice presented in extract? PK 2: How are gender roles presented in Much Ado (whole text). PK 3: The Art of Rhetoric: Speech writing.

Year 8 Long Term Plan		
Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3
The Gothic: Frankenstein (PLAY)	Poetry: Conflict	Shakespeare: The Tempest
Key concepts		
Context: The long 19th century, dichotomies (science/religion, good/bad, ignorance/enlightenment, nature/nurture) **Construct:** Characteristics of a novel, epistolary structure, frame narrative, the narrator **Language:** the language of theatre, stage directions, explicit and implicit meaning. **Themes:** Society (class, morality) Identity (heroes and villains, monsters and victims the other) Conflict (internal, external, dichotomies) Power (powerlessness and agency)	**Context:** Literary timeline, authorial context informs text **Construct:** poetic form and structure, authorial intent vs reader response **Language:** poetic form and structure, authorial intent vs reader response **Themes:** Society (conflict with) Conflict (with nature, society, war etc) Power (conflict as power - who wins, who loses)	**Context:** Literary timeline - Shakesperian context, 2023 (anti-racist approaches to Shakespeare), audience response **Construct:** characteristics of a play, character as construct, conventions of a comedy/ tragedy/ tragicomedy, post-colonial readings of Prospero/Caliban **Language:** Shakespearean + literal vs figurative/metaphorical, tone, poetic devices, effect **Themes:** Society (hierarchy, belonging, Identity (the other, hidden identities) Conflict (internal, external, dichotomies) Power (enslavement, magic, control, coercion)
Writing		
Analytical Writing: Whole text response character. Creative writing: mood and setting	Analytical Writing: Individual poem response building up to a comparative response. Transactional: Article writing	Analytical Writing: Character response and whole text theme response. Transactional: Letter Writing

Assessment		
PK 1: How is Frankenstein presented in Frankenstein? PK2: How is the Monster presented in Frankenstein? PK3: Creative writing: descriptive.	PK: 1+2 replaced by Diagnostic. PK 3: How is war presented in two poems? (one named) PK 4: Article Writing - A Letter to the editor: "Just as Victor Frankenstein in Shelley's novel recklessly pursued scientific advancement without considering the moral implications, we are now on the brink of an AI explosion, potentially unleashing forces we neither understand nor can control."	PK 1: How does The Tempest fit with the literary conventions of the genre? PK 2: How is Prospero presented? (Extract) PK 3: How is power presented (whole text) PK 4: Letter writing: "Shakespeare is as relevant today as he ever was."

Year 9 Long Term Plan		
Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3
Shakespeare: The Tempest	Post-1914 text: The Empress	Seminal World Text: Things Fall Apart
Key concepts		
Context: Literary timeline - Shakesperian context, 2023 (anti-racist approaches to Shakespeare), audience response **Construct:** characteristics of a play, character as construct, conventions of a comedy/ tragedy/ tragicomedy, post-colonial readings of Prospero/Caliban **Language:** Shakespearean + literal vs figurative/metaphorical, tone, poetic devices, effect **Themes:** Society (hierarchy, belonging, Identity (the other, hidden identities) Conflict (internal, external, dichotomies) Power (enslavement, magic, control, coercion)	**Context:** Neo-Victorian London, 19th century London, colony and empire, the British Raj **Construct:** the play as a play text, fiction/non-fiction/fictionalisation, neo-Victorian settings, juxtaposition **Language:** language to study a play script, stage directions, social class and caste differences, language as colonial device **Themes:** Society (internal and external prejudice, hierarchy, belonging) Identity (the other, hidden identities) Conflict (internal, external, dichotomies) Power (colony and empire, power and powerlessness, gender and power imbalances)	**Context:** Africa: pre-Colonial - modern day (w/History), responses to colonialism: post-colonial literature, satire etc. **Construct:** Narrative types, historical narratives **Language:** "Non-standard" English, the oral tradition in written texts, **Themes:** Society (pre/post colonial) Identity (as a construct by others / rejected by others) Conflict (internal, external, colony and empire) Power (colony and empire)
Writing		
Analytical Writing: Whole text response character and theme.	Analytical Writing: Transactional: S+L	Analytical Writing: theme, whole text Transactional: Article

Assessment		
PK 1: How does The Tempest fit with the literary conventions of the genre? PK 2: How is Prospero presented? (Extract) PK 3: How is power presented (whole text) PK 4: Not completed due to curriculum changes.	PK: 1+2 replaced by Diagnostic. PK 3: How is prejudice presented in The Empress? PK 4: S+L exam.	

Year 10 Long Term Plan		
Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3
Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet	19th Century Novel: A Christmas Carol	Post-1914 text: An Inspector Calls
Key concepts		
Context: Shakespearean comedy, tragedy, tragicomedy. Late 1500s vs 2025, **Construct:** text as performance, archetypal Shakespearean characters, conventions of the genre, characters as construct, **Language:** Shakespearean linguistic conventions, prose, blank verse etc. **Themes:** Society (hierarchy, belonging, gender roles and expectations) Identity (belonging, rejection,) Conflict (internal, external, familial, social) Power (control, coercion, manipulation, powerlessness)	**Context:** mid-19th century England, the poor laws, workhouses, Malthusian economics. **Construct:** change, foreshadowing, contrast and juxtaposition, motifs and symbols. **Language:** conventions of 19th century writing, linguistic choices to construct meaning **Themes:** Society (hierarchy, belonging, isolation, social responsibility) Identity (belonging, rejection,) Conflict (internal, external, familial, social) Power (control, manipulation, powerlessness)	**Context:** Edwardian and post-ww2 England, social expectations, capitalism/socialism, labour laws **Construct:** text as performance, characters as constructs, authorial intent, dramatic irony **Language:** linguistic choices to construct meaning, stage directions, implied and stated meaning **Themes:** Society (hierarchy, belonging, isolation, social responsibility) Identity (belonging, rejection, social class identity, prejudice) Conflict (internal, external, familial, social) Power (control, manipulation, powerlessness)

Year 11 Long Term Plan		
Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3
Poetry: Worlds and Lives and Unseen	Language Paper 1 + Language Paper 2.	Revision and GCSE examinations begin.
Key concepts		
Context: poetic timeline Construct: poetic form and structure, authorial intent vs reader response Language: poetic form and structure, authorial intent vs reader response Themes: Society (people, place, social expectations, diversity of experience) Identity (belonging, rejection, diversity of identity,) Conflict (internal, external, familial, social, place) Power (control, change, powerlessness)	Context: 19th-21st Century non-fiction Construct: Viewpoints and perspectives, Language: conventions of writing, linguistic choices to construct meaning Themes: TBC	