



CARSHALTON BOYS SPORTS COLLEGE

Excellence • Character • Aspiration

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Vocabulary Booklet

YEAR 8

Tier 2 & Tier 3 Vocabulary

Expected & Aspirational

Academic Year 2026 – 2027

For pupils, parents and carers

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A Note for Parents and Carers

Welcome to your son's Year 8 English vocabulary booklet. This document is one of the most important tools we will give him this year, and we are asking for your help to use it well.

Why vocabulary matters

Research is unambiguous: a pupil's vocabulary is one of the strongest predictors of academic success at GCSE and beyond. The more confidently a young person can use precise, technical language, the better they can read demanding texts, write extended answers and think carefully about complex ideas. English is a particularly word-rich subject — to explain how a writer builds tension, what a soliloquy achieves, or why a structure is circular, your son needs the right words at his fingertips.

How this booklet is organised

For each of the three units this year, we have set out two tiers of vocabulary:

- **Tier 2 vocabulary** is the academic language used across many subjects (e.g. “convey”, “imply”, “evaluate”). These words are how academic writing sounds.
- **Tier 3 vocabulary** is the specific language of a literary and linguistic critic (e.g. “soliloquy”, “allegory”, “pathetic fallacy”). These words have precise technical meanings that pupils need to use accurately.

Within each tier, words are marked as either:

- **Expected** — every pupil is expected to know, spell and use these by the end of the unit.
- **Aspirational** — stretch words for pupils aiming for top grades. We expect High Prior Attainers to deploy these in extended writing.

How vocabulary will be tested

Your son will be tested on each unit's vocabulary in three ways:

1. Weekly knowledge tests at the start of lessons (10 questions, scored out of 10).
2. Vocabulary as homework (Work Outside the Classroom) via Bedrock Learning — the majority of homework this year will be learning these words.
3. Embedded into extended-writing assessments — pupils gain marks for accurate, precise terminology.

How you can help at home

You do not need to be an English specialist to help. The metacognitive strategies on the next page give pupils — and parents — concrete tools for learning words to long-term memory. Spending fifteen minutes, three times a week, working through these words with your son will make a measurable difference. Quizzing him in the car, at the dinner table, or before bed costs nothing and works.

How to Learn Vocabulary by Heart

“Learning by heart” doesn’t mean memorising blindly. It means committing words to long-term memory so that they can be retrieved fluently when you need them — in writing, in answering a question, in understanding a text. Below are five strategies, used in this order, that will get you there.

1. Look, Cover, Write, Check

The classic for a reason. Look at the word and its definition. Cover them up. Write the word and definition from memory. Uncover and check. If you got it wrong, do it again. The act of effortful retrieval is what builds memory — copying does not work.

2. The Leitner System (Spaced Practice with Flashcards)

This is the single most effective study strategy for vocabulary. Make flashcards (paper or digital — Quizlet works) with the word on one side and the definition on the other. Sort them into three boxes:

- **Box 1 — review every day.** Words you don’t yet know.
- **Box 2 — review every three days.** Words you got right once.
- **Box 3 — review once a week.** Words you got right twice in a row.

When you get a Box 2 or Box 3 word wrong, it goes back to Box 1. This system makes you spend the most time on the words you struggle with most, and refreshes the words you know on a schedule.

3. Dual Coding — A Word, A Picture, A Sentence

For every Tier 3 word, draw a small sketch and write a sentence that uses it correctly in a literary context. The example column in this booklet gives you a starting point. The brain remembers images and stories better than abstract definitions.

4. Self-Quizzing Out Loud

Close the booklet. Try to say the definition aloud, in your own words, without looking. Then check. If you can say it correctly, in full sentences, without notes, you know it.

5. Use the Word in Writing

A word you have used in a sentence is a word you own. After learning a set of words, write a short paragraph (50–100 words) using as many as you can in correct literary context. Bring your paragraph to your teacher — they will gladly read it. The aspirational words in this booklet are unlocked through this strategy.

A Weekly Routine That Works

Try this every week (about 45 minutes total):

- **Monday — 15 mins.** Look-Cover-Write-Check on this week’s new words.
- **Wednesday — 15 mins.** Leitner-system review of all current flashcards.
- **Friday — 15 mins.** Self-quiz out loud, then write one paragraph using five of the words.

Tier Markers — Expected and Aspirational

Throughout this booklet, every word is marked with one of two letters in the right-hand column:

E — Expected Every Year 8 pupil should know, spell and use these words by the end of the unit.	A — Aspirational Stretch words for High Prior Attainers and pupils aiming for top grades. Try to use these in extended writing.
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Why these tiers?

Every single pupil is expected to learn the Expected words. There is no opt-out. Vocabulary is the foundation of everything we do in English, and Expected words are the minimum entitlement.

Aspirational words are how High Prior Attainers, ambitious pupils and those aiming for top GCSE grades distinguish themselves. They are not “extra credit” — they are the language of confident readers and writers. Using them in extended writing reliably moves a piece of work up a grade.

How vocabulary connects to assessment

Every PATHS assessment in English credits accurate use of subject vocabulary. Pupils who use Tier 3 words precisely score higher. Pupils who use Aspirational words appropriately score higher still. The link between vocabulary and grade is direct and well-evidenced.

Unit 1 — Of Mice and Men

The vocabulary of symbolism, structure and social context. These words unlock Steinbeck's critique of the American Dream.

Tier 2 — Of Mice and Men — Academic Vocabulary

Academic vocabulary — words used across many subjects

Word	Type	Definition	Example	Tier
evaluate	verb	To assess the extent or significance of something, not just describe it.	<i>Evaluate how far Steinbeck presents the American Dream as a myth.</i>	A
consider	verb	To think carefully about different possible interpretations.	<i>Consider why Steinbeck gives Curley's Wife no name.</i>	E
argue	verb	To make a case supported by evidence.	<i>Steinbeck argues that the American Dream is unattainable for migrant workers.</i>	E
reinforce	verb	To strengthen an idea or effect already established.	<i>The foreshadowing reinforces the novel's tragic inevitability.</i>	A
reflect	verb	To show or be representative of something larger.	<i>Crooks's isolation reflects racial segregation in 1930s America.</i>	E
significant	adjective	Important in terms of meaning or effect.	<i>Candy's dog is a significant symbol of mortality.</i>	E

Tier 3 — Of Mice and Men — Subject-Specific Vocabulary

Subject-specific vocabulary — the language of a reader and writer

Word	Type	Definition	Example	Tier
semantic field	noun	A group of words related in meaning, used cumulatively for effect.	<i>The semantic field of loneliness runs throughout the novel.</i>	A
cyclical structure	noun	A narrative that ends where or how it began, creating irony or inevitability.	<i>The cyclical structure returns to the riverbank at the novel's close.</i>	A
motif	noun	A recurring image, symbol or idea that carries thematic significance.	<i>Hands are a recurring motif representing power and violence.</i>	E

Word	Type	Definition	Example	Tier
foreshadowing	<i>noun</i>	Now applied to whole-text analysis: how Steinbeck seeds inevitable tragedy from chapter one.	<i>The death of Candy's dog is foreshadowing for the novel's ending.</i>	E
register	<i>noun</i>	The level of formality in language, matching purpose and audience.	<i>Steinbeck varies register between the ranch hands' dialect and narration.</i>	A
marginalisation	<i>noun</i>	The social exclusion of individuals or groups; a key thematic concept.	<i>Crooks experiences marginalisation because of his race.</i>	E
allegory	<i>noun</i>	A narrative with a second, symbolic layer of meaning.	<i>Some critics read the ranch as an allegory for American society.</i>	A
pathos	<i>noun</i>	An appeal to the audience's emotions; created through character suffering.	<i>Curley's Wife's death is written with real pathos.</i>	E
symbolism	<i>noun</i>	The use of an object, place or character to represent a larger idea.	<i>The rabbits symbolise George and Lennie's unreachable dream.</i>	E

Unit 2 — Through My Eyes: Non-fiction, Poetry & Dystopian Fiction

The vocabulary of rhetoric, persuasion and dystopian fiction. These words help you analyse how writers argue and persuade.

Tier 2 — Through My Eyes: Non-fiction, Poetry & Dystopian Fiction — Academic Vocabulary

Academic vocabulary — words used across many subjects

Word	Type	Definition	Example	Tier
challenge	verb	To question or subvert a received idea.	<i>Angelou's poem challenges narrow definitions of beauty.</i>	E
illustrate	verb	To demonstrate something through a specific example.	<i>Malala's speech illustrates the power of education.</i>	E
emphasise	verb	To give particular weight to an idea.	<i>Repetition emphasises the speaker's determination.</i>	E
position	verb	To place a reader in a particular relationship to the text.	<i>The writer positions the reader to sympathise with the speaker.</i>	A
synthesise	verb	To combine information from more than one source.	<i>Synthesise the ideas from both non-fiction extracts.</i>	A

Tier 3 — Through My Eyes: Non-fiction, Poetry & Dystopian Fiction — Subject-Specific Vocabulary

Subject-specific vocabulary — the language of a reader and writer

Word	Type	Definition	Example	Tier
rhetoric	noun	Language used to persuade or influence an audience.	<i>Obama's speech uses rhetoric to inspire hope.</i>	E
ethos	noun	An appeal to the speaker's credibility or authority.	<i>Malala builds ethos by describing her own experience.</i>	E
pathos	noun	An appeal to the audience's emotions.	<i>The speech uses pathos to describe the girls denied an education.</i>	E
logos	noun	An appeal to logic or reason.	<i>Statistics are used as logos to support the argument.</i>	E

Word	Type	Definition	Example	Tier
tricolon	<i>noun</i>	A group of three parallel words, phrases or clauses for rhetorical effect.	<i>'One child, one teacher, one book' is a tricolon.</i>	A
anaphora	<i>noun</i>	Repetition of a word or phrase at the start of successive clauses.	<i>The anaphora of 'I have a dream' builds momentum.</i>	A
subjunctive mood	<i>noun</i>	A verb form expressing hypothetical or conditional situations.	<i>'If I were free' uses the subjunctive mood.</i>	A
dystopia	<i>noun</i>	An imagined society in which oppressive control prevails.	<i>1984 presents a dystopia ruled by surveillance.</i>	E
sonnet	<i>noun</i>	A 14-line poem; the volta marks a turning point.	<i>The poem is structured as a sonnet.</i>	E
volta	<i>noun</i>	The turn or shift in argument, tone or perspective.	<i>The volta shifts the poem's tone from despair to hope.</i>	A
poetic voice	<i>noun</i>	The persona speaking in a poem.	<i>The poetic voice speaks directly to the reader.</i>	E

Unit 3 — The Invisible Man

The vocabulary of Gothic atmosphere and Victorian science fiction. These words prepare you for GCSE pre-1914 prose study.

Tier 2 — The Invisible Man — Academic Vocabulary

Academic vocabulary — words used across many subjects

Word	Type	Definition	Example	Tier
juxtapose	verb	To place two contrasting things side by side for effect.	<i>Wells juxtaposes scientific ambition with moral consequence.</i>	A
contextualise	verb	To place a text within its historical or social context.	<i>Contextualise Griffin's experiments within Victorian science.</i>	A
subvert	verb	To undermine or challenge expected conventions.	<i>The novel subverts expectations of a traditional hero.</i>	A
embody	verb	To represent or be an example of a particular quality.	<i>Griffin embodies the dangers of unchecked ambition.</i>	E
critique	verb	To analyse and evaluate.	<i>Wells critiques Victorian attitudes to science and class.</i>	E

Tier 3 — The Invisible Man — Subject-Specific Vocabulary

Subject-specific vocabulary — the language of a reader and writer

Word	Type	Definition	Example	Tier
Gothic	noun	A literary mode characterised by atmosphere, dread and the uncanny.	<i>The inn's dark corridors create a Gothic atmosphere.</i>	E
atmosphere	noun	The dominant mood created by a text.	<i>Wells builds a tense, suspicious atmosphere in the village.</i>	E
diction	noun	The specific word choices a writer makes.	<i>Wells's diction creates a sense of menace.</i>	A
outsider	noun	A character excluded from or in conflict with society.	<i>Griffin is an outsider from the moment he arrives.</i>	E
unreliable narrator	noun	A narrator whose account cannot be fully trusted.	<i>The novel's shifting perspective creates an unreliable narrator effect.</i>	A

Word	Type	Definition	Example	Tier
framing narrative	<i>noun</i>	A narrative structure in which a story is told within another story.	<i>Griffin's backstory is told through a framing narrative.</i>	A
non-linear narrative	<i>noun</i>	A narrative that does not follow strict chronological order.	<i>The novel uses a non-linear narrative to reveal Griffin's past.</i>	A
science fiction	<i>noun</i>	A genre engaging with scientific possibility and its social consequences.	<i>The Invisible Man is an early example of science fiction.</i>	E
hubris	<i>noun</i>	Excessive pride or ambition leading to downfall.	<i>Griffin's hubris leads to his violent downfall.</i>	A
Victorian	<i>adjective</i>	Relating to the reign of Queen Victoria (1837–1901).	<i>The novel reflects Victorian anxieties about science.</i>	E