

Which VCE English Subject Is Right For You?

Your Guide to VCE English, English Language, Literature & EAL

Heading into VCE and wondering which English subject to choose? Our handy guide breaks down all four options to help you decide what's best for your studies.

It is [compulsory](#) to complete at least one English subject in Unit 3 & 4, making it a crucial component of your VCE Subject selections. There are four English subjects to choose from; English, English Language, Literature and English as an Additional Language (EAL). Each of these subjects has a distinct focus and objective, which we've outlined below for comparison. While there is no 'easy' option, choosing the subject that best aligns with your interests and learning style will give you the best outcome.

English

Objective: To extend and develop English Language skills by analysing, understanding, critiquing and writing about varied forms of English media.

Foundation English is the most commonly selected VCE English subject, often considered to be the 'default' option as it is consistent with the structure of the Year 7-10 English curriculum. This subject focuses upon reading and analysing texts such as novels, plays and films, with assessments primarily in essay format. Assessments include:

- An essay responding analytically to a given text
- A creative written or oral text that demonstrates an understanding of the authorial process, such as considering context and audience
- A comparison of the positions of two or more given texts
- An oral presentation that makes a sound and persuasive argument on an issue drawn from recent media.

Ultimately, this subject builds upon foundational English skills to allow students to become [confident, articulate and critically aware communicators](#) that can competently engage with media in everyday life.

English Language

Objective: To build an understanding of the English Language from a linguistic perspective, analysing the [structures, features and functions of spoken and written English](#).

English Language is perhaps the most unique of the VCE English subjects, with a departure from the text study and response format. This subject focuses on the conventions and codes of English as a language, such as syntax, semantics, discourse and lexicology. This metalanguage is placed in context with Areas of Study like *Formal/Informal language*, *English across time* and *Language variation in Australian society*. Assessments for English Language include:

- Analyses of the distinctive features of formal and informal language
- An investigation into the varieties of, and attitudes towards Australian English
- A discussion of the interplay between identity and language choice.

Each of these assessments may be presented as a folio of annotations, an essay, an investigative report, an analytical commentary, short-answer questions— or as a combination of multiple formats.

English Literature

Objective: To foster an appreciation of the [artistic and aesthetic merits](#) of literature, with an inclination towards classic and historical texts.

While English Literature follows the familiar text study and response format of Foundation English, it is made distinct by its pointed interest in appreciating the sentiment, resonance and beauty of creative works. This appreciation is formed through close analysis of textual detail, ideas and perspectives, social and historical contexts, and language choices.

English Literature features an intensive text selection, with six studied texts across Unit 3 & 4; one novel, one collection of poetry, one play and two further selections from the VCAA Text List, as well as one of five adaptations prescribed by VCAA in Unit 3. Assessments for this subject include:

- A written close analysis of a text, using a key passage from the work

- An analysis comparing how textual form influences meaning, such as a comparison between a written text and a dramatised or performed version
- An interpretation of the values and views of a set text and supplementary text
- A creative response in the style of an original text.

Overall, English Literature aims to provide students with the ability to confidently discuss literature with [insight and flair](#), with in-depth knowledge of historical, social and cultural contexts.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Objective: To develop the confident and effective English communications of students for whom English is not a home language. For more information on eligibility for this subject, see VCAA's guide for [Students seeking English as an Additional Language status](#).

This subject has significant structural overlap with Foundation English, with a focus on understanding and responding to English texts, like novels, films and plays. EAL shares several areas of assessment with English, such as:

- Creative and analytical responses to given texts
- Presenting an argument in oral format
- Comparing and contrasting a set of texts.

However, EAL offers some key differences in approach, as to best accommodate the learning and outcomes of students who do not speak English at home. This equips students with deeply practical skills that are essential to everyday English-speaking contexts.

An example of this is the inclusion of an additional Area of Study in Unit 3, *Listening to texts*, which aims to develop students' ability to comprehend spoken texts, like interviews and speeches, on both a [literal and inferential level](#).

Where students studying English are required to read and respond to four texts throughout Unit 3 & 4, EAL students are only required to study three texts. Additionally, EAL offers greater leniency on word counts and speaking time requirements for assessments, and modified end-of-year examination prompts.

What's next?

Choosing the VCE English subject that best suits your interests and strengths is undoubtedly important— we hope this guide helps you compare your options. At [Climb](#), our exceptional VCE tutors have the knowledge and experience to guarantee your best performance in any subject you choose. Our [process](#) pairs you with the perfect tutor for your learning style, and an evidence-based, tailored learning plan to match.