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Cheltenham Ladies' College 16+ English 2026

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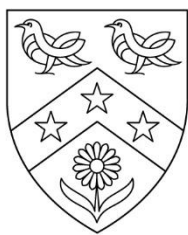
Cheltenham Ladies' College 16+ English. Work through this paper first.
Includes Paper Notes: overview, topics, revision tips, common mistakes.

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CHELTENHAM
LADIES'
COLLEGE

SIXTH FORM ENTRY IN SEPTEMBER 2026 ENGLISH LITERATURE

Candidates who wish to study this subject in the Sixth Form should enjoy reading challenging texts and examining them closely. They should be prepared to contribute generously during class discussion and use their initiative to engage in plentiful wider reading. Furthermore, we wish students to demonstrate a creative and dynamic approach to literature at this level.

We expect candidates to have already studied a wide range of challenging English literature. This should include:

- The complete text of more than one of Shakespeare's plays;
- Pre- and post-1914 prose;
- Pre- and post-1914 poetry.

Candidates should be familiar with the techniques required for close analysis of literature and be able to comment on the effectiveness of writers' methods. In particular, they should be conversant with some of the technical terms used for analysing poetry (including the terminology for exploring sound effects) and should have some understanding of different forms. Responses which demonstrate flair and originality to unseen texts will be particularly valued.

The entrance paper will test the following:

a) By responding to one unseen poem, candidates' ability to:

- interpret what they read;
- analyse closely the poet's use of language and structure and the effects created;
- show some awareness of nuance and tone.

b) By reference to challenging texts they have previously read or studied, to:

- construct a fluent and well-structured response to a question, supporting their argument with detail taken from the text/texts they choose. There will be a choice of three questions and they could use texts from their personal wider reading in their answers, rather than simply those they have studied.

The same entrance paper is set for all candidates, whether they are applying to study either A Level English Literature or, Higher/Standard Level English A Literature as a compulsory part of the IB Diploma Programme at College. We do not offer English Language A level at College.

Paper Notes: 16+ English Question Paper (16+ English Past Paper (2026))

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you get the most from this paper.

Overview

This document describes the **English Literature entrance examination** for **Sixth Form entry in September 2026** at **Cheltenham Ladies' College**. It serves both as a specification of what candidates need to have studied and as guidance for the format of the entrance paper itself. The exam is designed for candidates applying to study **A Level English Literature** or **IB Diploma English A Literature** at Higher or Standard Level.

The paper tests two main areas: close analysis of an **unseen poem**, and the ability to construct a sustained, detailed argument about **previously studied texts** chosen by the candidate. Cheltenham Ladies' College expects candidates to have already covered more than one complete Shakespeare play, pre- and post-1914 prose, and poetry from both periods. Familiarity with technical terminology for analysing poetry, including sound effects, is essential.

The paper particularly values **flair and originality** in response to unseen texts. Candidates may draw on their personal wider reading, not just texts studied in school, when answering the essay question. This makes the exam well suited to students who read independently and enjoy engaging with challenging literature in a dynamic and creative way.

How this paper is organised

The entrance paper is divided into **two main sections**. Section (a) presents candidates with **one unseen poem** and asks them to interpret the poem, analyse the poet's use of language and structure, and demonstrate awareness of nuance and tone. This tests close reading skills and the ability to respond to unfamiliar material under examination conditions.

Section (b) offers candidates a **choice of three essay questions**. Students select one question and construct a fluent, well-structured response by reference to **challenging texts they have previously read or studied**. They are explicitly encouraged to use texts from their personal wider reading rather than limiting themselves to classroom texts, which allows for a personalised and potentially more engaged response.

The same paper is set for all candidates, whether they intend to study **A Level English Literature** or **IB English A Literature**. The document does not specify a time limit or exact mark allocation, but emphasises that responses should be detailed, well-

supported with textual evidence, and demonstrate both analytical rigour and creative engagement with literature.

Topics covered

- Close analysis of an unseen poem, including interpretation, language analysis, structural analysis, and commentary on nuance and tone
- Shakespeare: knowledge of the complete texts of more than one play, demonstrating familiarity with dramatic structure and language
- Pre-1914 prose fiction and non-fiction, with the ability to discuss writers' methods and textual detail
- Post-1914 prose, covering modern and contemporary fiction and the conventions of twentieth- and twenty-first-century narrative
- Pre-1914 poetry, including Romantic, Victorian, and earlier verse, with understanding of poetic form and historical context
- Post-1914 poetry, spanning modern and contemporary poets and movements
- Technical terminology for analysing poetry, particularly sound effects such as alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme, and rhythm
- Poetic form and structure, including sonnet, blank verse, free verse, stanzaic patterns, and other conventional and experimental forms
- Constructing sustained literary arguments supported by detailed textual evidence from chosen texts
- Awareness of tone, register, and the subtleties of meaning in literary language

How to use this paper for revision

- Revise the **technical terminology** for poetry analysis thoroughly, especially terms for sound effects like **sibilance**, **assonance**, and **enjambment**, so you can use them confidently in your unseen poem response.
- Practise analysing **unseen poems** regularly in timed conditions. Focus on identifying what the poem is about, then work systematically through language, structure, and tone to build a coherent interpretation.
- Read widely beyond your school curriculum. Keep a reading journal noting interesting passages and quotations from novels, plays, and poetry collections that you could potentially use in the essay section.
- Revisit at least **two Shakespeare plays** in full, making detailed notes on key scenes, themes, and quotations. Ensure you can discuss his use of language, imagery, and dramatic techniques with specificity.
- Prepare a range of texts from different periods and genres so you have flexibility when choosing which essay question to answer. Aim for at least one pre-1914 and one post-1914 text in each of prose and poetry.
- Practise writing **essay introductions** that establish a clear argument and direction. Cheltenham Ladies' College values fluent, well-structured responses, so plan your essay briefly before you begin writing.
- Look for examples of **nuance and tone** in everything you read. Consider how writers create subtle shifts in mood, irony, ambiguity, or voice, and practise articulating these observations precisely.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Identifying poetic techniques (such as metaphor or alliteration) without explaining their **effect** or significance. Always link technique to meaning and impact on the reader.
- Writing about the unseen poem in a superficial or overly general way. Candidates must engage closely with specific words, phrases, and structural choices to demonstrate analytical depth.
- Choosing an essay question and then struggling to remember enough detail from the text. Select texts you know well and can quote or reference precisely.
- Constructing an essay that simply narrates the plot or describes themes without building a clear **argument**. Every paragraph should develop and support your central thesis.
- Ignoring the importance of **tone and nuance**. Cheltenham Ladies' College explicitly values awareness of subtlety, so consider ambiguity, irony, and shifts in register.
- Relying exclusively on classroom texts when wider reading would allow a more original or engaged response. The paper encourages you to draw on personal reading, so use texts you genuinely care about.

Exam technique

Begin by reading the **unseen poem** carefully at least twice. On the first read, focus on understanding what the poem is about and your immediate emotional or intellectual response. On the second read, annotate the text, noting techniques, patterns, and shifts in tone or structure. Plan your answer briefly before writing, ensuring you address interpretation, language, structure, and tone in a balanced way.

For the essay section, read all **three questions** carefully before choosing. Select the question that best suits the texts you have prepared and that allows you to construct a strong, detailed argument. Spend a few minutes planning your essay structure, identifying which texts you will use and what your central argument will be. Aim for a clear introduction that establishes your thesis, well-developed body paragraphs that support your argument with close textual reference, and a concise conclusion.

Time management is crucial. Allocate your time proportionally between the two sections, leaving a few minutes at the end to check your work for clarity and accuracy. Write legibly and express your ideas in **fluent, well-structured prose**. The examiners are looking for sophistication, originality, and a genuine engagement with literature, so let your enthusiasm and critical thinking shine through.

What to revise alongside this paper

Deepen your understanding of **Shakespearean drama** by studying critical interpretations of his plays and watching live or filmed productions. Consider how different directors and actors interpret character and theme, and how performance affects meaning. This will enrich your ability to discuss his work with insight and originality.

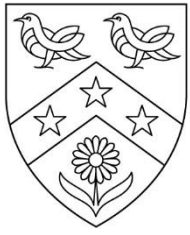
Broaden your knowledge of **poetic movements** such as Romanticism, Modernism, and contemporary British poetry. Reading widely within these traditions will help you recognise stylistic features, thematic preoccupations, and formal experiments, making it easier to analyse unseen poems confidently. Anthologies of twentieth-century poetry are particularly useful.

Practise writing **comparative essays** that explore connections and contrasts between texts from different periods or genres. While the Cheltenham entrance paper does not explicitly require comparison, the ability to see links between texts demonstrates intellectual maturity and will strengthen your essays. Consider also revising key literary criticism and theoretical approaches, such as feminist, postcolonial, or psychoanalytic readings, to add depth to your interpretations.

Key terms

Unseen poetry, Close reading, Textual analysis, Nuance, Tone, Alliteration, Assonance, Enjambment, Caesura, Imagery, Metaphor, Structure, Form, Shakespeare, Pre-1914 literature, Post-1914 literature

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CHELTENHAM
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SIXTH FORM ENTRY IN 2026

POLITICS

Many candidates will not have had the opportunity to study Politics as an academic subject before. Therefore, there is no prescribed body of content for the examination, candidates will be asked to respond to provided written material on a political topic that is highly likely to be new to them. We would expect a degree of familiarity with well-known political terms and concepts, and also some understanding of the political systems and structures in the candidate's own country but only at a level appropriate for a candidate in their mid-teens.

The second section will require students to respond to one or more unseen sources relating to a political issue of the day. This section tests candidates' comprehension and analytical skills. Students will be asked to respond to a range of questions relating to their understanding of the sources but will not be required to have any specific pre-existing knowledge.

We are looking for **potential and a sense of engagement with political issues**. Candidates should seek to show that they are genuinely interested in politics and current events. To succeed in Politics at sixth form level and beyond, candidates will need to be able to

- Think for themselves
- Analyse
- Illustrate their answers with precise, accurate examples
- Express their ideas clearly, in a structured fashion, in a mature and literate way
- Use the media regularly and in a discriminating way to research political stories and keep up to date on events

Paper Notes: 16+ English Question Paper (16+ English Past Paper (2026))

Compiled by [SATs-Papers.co.uk](https://www.SATs-Papers.co.uk) to help you get the most from this paper.

Overview

This document is a guidance sheet for the **Sixth Form Entry Politics examination at Cheltenham Ladies' College**, for candidates applying for entry in **2026**. It outlines what the examination will test and the skills candidates need to demonstrate, rather than being a question paper itself. The guidance is aimed at students in their mid-teens who may have no prior formal study of Politics as an academic subject.

The examination is designed to assess **potential and engagement with political issues** rather than memorised content. Candidates will respond to unseen written material on political topics that are new to them, demonstrating their ability to analyse, think independently, and express ideas clearly. The second section focuses on **comprehension and analytical skills** through current political issues.

This guidance is particularly useful for prospective Sixth Form students preparing their application to Cheltenham Ladies' College. It clarifies that no specific body of knowledge is required, though familiarity with basic political terms and an understanding of one's own country's political system at an age-appropriate level is expected. The emphasis throughout is on independent thought, analytical ability, and mature written expression.

How this paper is organised

The guidance describes an examination with **two distinct sections**. The first section requires candidates to respond to provided written material on a political topic that will be unfamiliar to them, testing their ability to engage with new ideas and apply general political understanding. No prescribed content is tested, allowing students from varied educational backgrounds to participate on equal footing.

The **second section** centres on one or more unseen sources relating to a current political issue. Candidates answer a range of questions testing their comprehension and analytical skills. The document emphasises that students will not need specific pre-existing knowledge, making the examination accessible to those who have not formally studied Politics.

No specific time limit, mark allocation, or detailed question structure is provided in this guidance sheet. The focus is instead on the **qualities and skills** the examiners seek: independent thinking, analytical ability, use of precise examples, clear structured

expression, and evidence of engagement with current affairs through discriminating media use.

Topics covered

- Comprehension of unseen political source material on contemporary issues
- Analysis of political arguments and evaluation of evidence presented in written texts
- Understanding of well-known political terms and concepts appropriate for mid-teen candidates
- Knowledge of political systems and structures in the candidate's own country at an age-appropriate level
- Application of political understanding to unfamiliar topics and scenarios
- Independent critical thinking about political issues without reliance on memorised content
- Construction of clear, structured written arguments on political topics
- Use of precise and accurate examples to illustrate political points

How to use this paper for revision

- Read a range of **quality newspapers and political journalism** regularly to build familiarity with how political arguments are constructed and presented in written form.
- Practise analysing unseen texts on political topics, identifying the main argument, supporting evidence, and any weaknesses or biases in the reasoning presented.
- Develop your understanding of your **own country's political system**, including how government is structured, how elections work, and the roles of key institutions.
- Learn definitions of common political terms such as democracy, accountability, sovereignty, constitution, legislature, executive, and judiciary to apply them confidently in your answers.
- Follow current political stories as they develop over time, noting different perspectives and how issues evolve, to demonstrate genuine engagement with contemporary politics.
- Practise writing responses that are **clearly structured** with an introduction, developed paragraphs, and a conclusion, using formal academic tone throughout.
- Work on expressing complex ideas concisely and precisely, avoiding vague generalisations by supporting every point with specific, accurate examples from real political situations.

Common mistakes to avoid

- Attempting to memorise vast amounts of political content rather than developing analytical skills and the ability to apply concepts to new material.
- Writing about political issues in an overly emotive or biased way, rather than demonstrating balanced analysis and critical evaluation of different viewpoints.
- Failing to support arguments with **precise, specific examples**, instead making broad generalisations that lack detail or accuracy.
- Ignoring the actual content of the sources provided and writing a pre-prepared answer, rather than engaging directly with the material presented in the examination.
- Using informal language or unclear structure, when the examination requires mature, literate expression and well-organised responses with clear paragraphing.

Exam technique

Begin by reading all provided sources carefully and systematically, **annotating key points**, arguments, and evidence as you go. Take time to understand what each source is saying before attempting to analyse or evaluate it. This initial investment prevents misreading and ensures your answers directly address the material presented.

Structure each response clearly, with an opening sentence that directly answers the question, followed by paragraphs that develop your analysis with specific references to the sources. **Quotations and examples** from the texts should be integrated smoothly into your writing, not simply listed. Aim for a formal, academic tone throughout, avoiding colloquialisms or overly casual language.

Allocate time to review your answers, checking that your arguments are coherent and well-supported. Ensure you have answered all parts of each question and that your responses demonstrate the qualities the examiners seek: independent thinking, analytical skill, and mature expression. Since no specific knowledge is required, focus on showing your ability to **think critically and write clearly** about the material in front of you.

What to revise alongside this paper

Students should develop their understanding of **British political institutions**, including the roles of Parliament, the Prime Minister, the Cabinet, and the relationship between central and local government. If candidates are from outside the UK, equivalent knowledge of their own country's system is valuable, as the examination expects age-appropriate familiarity with domestic politics.

Broader study of **comparative politics** can be helpful, such as understanding different types of electoral systems, the distinction between presidential and parliamentary systems, and various approaches to constitutional arrangements. This contextual knowledge aids analysis of unfamiliar political material.

Developing **media literacy** is essential, including the ability to identify bias, evaluate the reliability of sources, and distinguish between fact and opinion in political reporting. Students should also practise extended writing skills, particularly the ability to construct logical arguments and use evidence effectively, as these underpin success in all Politics assessments at Sixth Form level.

Key terms

Democracy, Accountability, Sovereignty, Constitution, Legislature, Executive, Judiciary, Electoral system, Political ideology, Government structure, Analytical skills, Source analysis, Independent thinking, Political engagement

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