

English: Poetry, but not as we know it

This is one of a multi-part series on changes that teachers would like to see in their Key Stage 4 curriculum! Over time, one short post for each subject will be released, and you can see all of the currently-released subjects over on the main page [here](#).

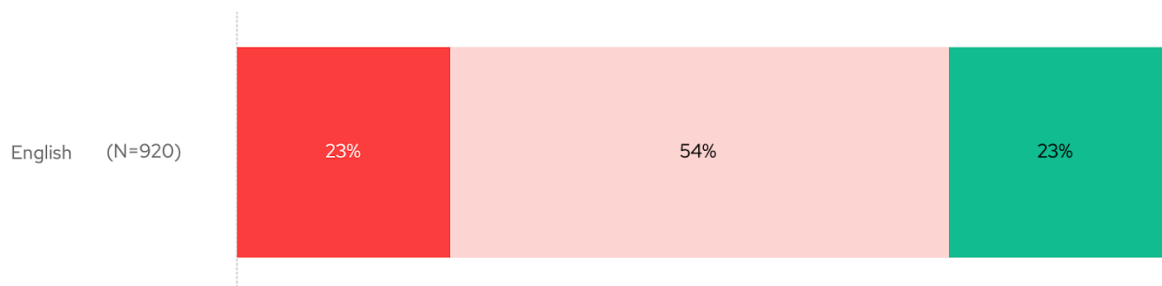
So, what are the changes?

Out: The number of poems
In: Modernising the curriculum

By and large, English teachers are not clamouring for big reductions in their curriculum. About a quarter would like to see such a reduction, but most would just like to see a small reduction in the amount of content they have to teach.

Most English teachers would like to see a small reduction in the amount of content they need to teach

Question asked: "Would you like to see a reduction in the amount of content that you are expected to cover in the KS4 curriculum in your main subject?"



Question answered by 920 teachers on 07/10/2022 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

- Yes, a significant reduction
- Yes, a slight reduction
- No, I would keep the same amount of content at KS4

This didn't necessarily come across in English teachers' responses to what they would add and remove from their curriculum though! Of all of the core subjects, English teachers were the ones who wrote most about the structure of the English curriculum. So while a greater structural change might be on the cards, a reduction in content may not be.

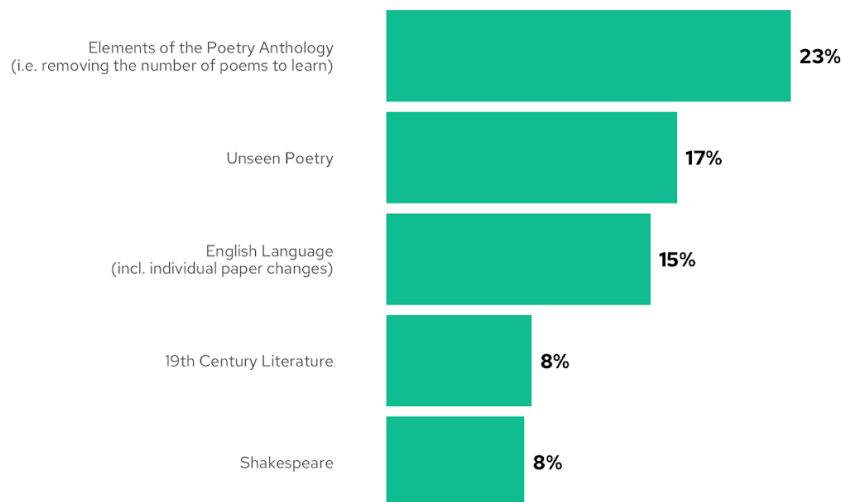
Removing Topics

Poetry got a real kicking when we asked what English teachers would like to see removed from their curriculum, although I will admit I did use a bit of poetic licence of my own in my initial pass at this analysis.

23% of teachers said that the Poetry Anthology needed a rethink – but not all of them wanted to remove it entirely! In fact, many just wanted to reduce the number of poems that students had to learn.

Top five topic areas that English teachers would like to remove from their KS4 curriculum

Question asked: "If you could *remove* one topic area from the KS4 curriculum of your main subject, what would it be?"



Question answered by 568 English teachers on 17/12/2022

That said, 17% of English teachers did say they would remove the unseen poetry element of the curriculum – feeling like it didn't make sense given that students were already comparing poems from the anthology itself.

The English language paper also came in for a fair amount of criticism, with many users wanting to remove either it all, or specific elements (Paper 2 came up a lot!). Many weren't exactly complimentary about it:

"It's not really removing one thing but GCSE English Language is a mess. It needs a complete overhaul."

Adding Topics

English teachers had a wide variety of options and ideas of what they would add to their curriculum. It was more appropriate to group these into the five main themes that teachers suggested:

1. Study of language, specifically English Language at A-level level, including linguistics and history of English language.
2. Modern literature, including contemporary and 21st century texts from diverse authors.

3. Media studies, including media literacy, critical reading, and analysis of media, media bias, and language in the media.
4. Real-world skills such as CV writing, personal finance and budgeting, and effective communication in various forms.
5. Independent study of texts or genres, and presentation skills, including speaking and listening.

The real aim of these five points is to seemingly modernise both the English Language and Literature curricula. Many teachers criticised the current spoken element of the English Language curriculum and wanted more emphasis placed on it. Similarly, many wanted to reflect the diverse range of texts that exist.

What would you like to see changed about the English curriculum? Be sure to let us know via email hello@teachertapp.co.uk or on Twitter [@TeacherTapp](https://twitter.com/TeacherTapp)