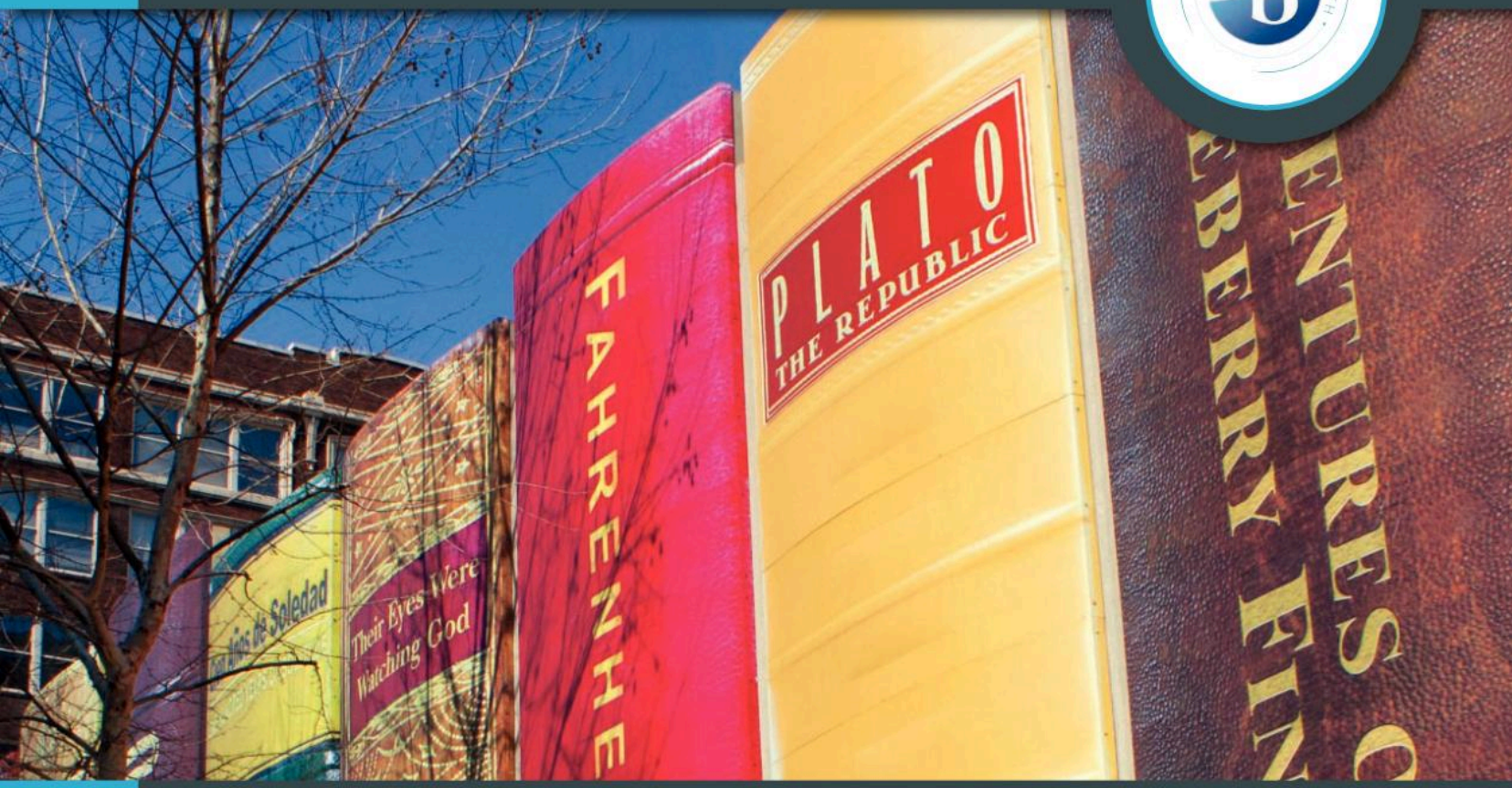
OXFORD IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME



2ND EDITION

ENGLISH A: LITERATURE

COURSE COMPANION

Anna Androulaki
Brent Whitted

OXFORD

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Course Companion definition

The IB Diploma Programme Course Companions are resource materials designed to support students throughout their two-year Diploma Programme course of study in a particular subject. They help students gain an understanding of what is expected while presenting content that fully illustrates the aims and purposes of the IB. They reflect its philosophy and approach, by encouraging a deeper understanding of each subject through connections to wider global issues, based on independent, critical thinking.

The Companions mirror the IB philosophy of whole-course approaches to the curriculum through the use of a wide range of authentic resources. These resources integrate perpectives in international-mindedness, promote learning in accord with the IB learner profile and deepen experience of the IB Diploma Programme core requirements: theory of knowledge, the extended essay, and Creativity, Action, Service (CAS).

Each Companion can be used in conjunction with other materials. Indeed, successful IB students are strongly encouraged to enhance their learning through consultation of a variety of supplementary resources. Suggestions for further reading, as well as for extending research investigations, are regularly given in a fashion that integrates this extension work within each course.

In addition, all Companions provide guidance for successfully completing all course assessment requirements and advice for respecting academic honesty protocols. They are distinctive and authoritative, without being rigidly prescriptive.

IB mission statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the IB works with schools, governments and international organisations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate, and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

The IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognising their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world. IB learners strive to be:

Inquirers They develop their natural curiosity. They acquire the skills necessary to conduct inquiry and research and show independence in learning. They actively enjoy learning and this love of learning will be sustained throughout their lives.

Knowledgeable They explore concepts, ideas, and issues that have local and global significance. In so doing, they acquire in-depth knowledge and develop understanding across a broad and balanced range of disciplines.

Thinkers They exercise initiative in applying thinking skills critically and creatively to recognise and approach complex problems, and make reasoned, ethical decisions.

Communicators They understand and express ideas and information confidently and creatively in more than one language and in a variety of modes of communication. They work effectively and willingly in collaboration with others.

Principled They act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness, justice, and respect for the dignity of the individual, groups, and communities. They take responsibility for their own actions and the consequences that accompany them.

Open-minded They understand and appreciate their own cultures and personal histories, and are open to the perspectives, values, and traditions of other individuals and communities. They are accustomed to seeking and evaluating a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.

Caring They show empathy, compassion, and respect towards the needs and feelings of others. They have a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and to the environment.

Risk-takers They approach unfamiliar situations and uncertainty with courage and forethought, and have the independence of spirit to explore new roles, ideas, and strategies. They are brave and articulate in defending their beliefs.

Balanced They understand the importance of intellectual, physical, and emotional balance to achieve personal well-being for themselves and others.

Reflective They give thoughtful consideration to their own learning and experience. They are able to assess and understand their strengths and limitations in order to support their learning and professional development.

A note on academic honesty

It is of vital importance to credit owners of information appropriately, whenever that information is re-used. Originators of ideas (intellectual property) have property rights.

You must base honest, productive work on your own individual ideas. The work of others used in developing these ideas, must be fully referenced in correct fashion.

Therefore, in all assignments for assessment, written or oral, you must always express yourself without copying from others.

Whenever other sources are used or referred to, either as direct quotation or as paraphrase, they must be appropriately recorded and listed with the relevant academic references.

How do I acknowledge the work of others?

This is done through the correct and systematic use of footnotes and bibliographies.

Footnotes (placed at the bottom of a page) or endnotes (placed at the end of a document) are required when you quote or paraphrase, translate, or closely summarise the information provided in other documents.

You do not need to provide a footnote for information that is part of a recognised 'body of knowledge'. That is, commonly accepted definitions do not always need to be footnoted, as they are part of such assumed knowledge.

Bibliographies should include a formal list of the resources used in your work.

'Formal' means that you should use one of several commonly accepted forms of presentation. This usually involves separating your resources into different categories (e.g. books, magazines, newspaper articles, Internet-based resources, CDs, works of art and translations from other languages, whether computer derived or not).

In this way, you provide full information for your readers, or viewers of your work, so that they can find the same information, if they wish. A formal, academic bibliography is compulsory for the extended essay.

What constitutes malpractice?

This is behaviour that results, or may result in you, or any student, gaining an unfair advantage in one or more assessment component.

Malpractice includes plagiarism, whether in the same language, or translated from another language. It also includes collusion.

Plagiarism is defined as the representation of the ideas or work of another person as your own. The following are some of the ways to avoid plagiarism:

- Words and ideas of another person used to support one's arguments must be acknowledged.
- Passages that are quoted verbatim must be enclosed within quotation marks and acknowledged.
- CD-ROMs, email messages, websites on the Internet, and any other electronic media must be treated in the same way as books and journals.
- The sources of all photographs, maps, illustrations, computer programs, data, graphs, audio visual, and similar material must be acknowledged if they are not your own work.
- Works of art, whether music, film, dance, theatre arts, or visual arts, and where the creative use of a part of a work takes place, must be acknowledged.

Collusion is defined as supporting malpractice by another student. This includes:

- allowing your work to be copied, or translated, and then submitted for assessment by another student
- duplicating work for different assessment components and/or diploma requirements.

Other forms of malpractice include any action that gives you an unfair advantage, or affects the results of another student. Examples include, taking unauthorised material into an examination room, misconduct during an examination, using unauthorised electronic aids of any type, and falsifying a CAS record.

Contents

Access your support website for additional content here:
www.oxfordsecondary.com/ibenglisha

1 INTRODUCTION

The structure of the English A literature course

The English A literature course (first teaching 2019) identifies three areas of exploration: "Readers, writers and texts", "Time and space" and "Intertextuality: connecting texts". These areas are to be understood as directions in lines of inquiry rather than "parts" of the course that correspond to specific works and an assessed component as an outcome. The works teachers will choose in each area are the starting point of a line of inquiry, and the subject guide offers six guiding conceptual questions to support students and teachers in their inquiry. Beyond that starting point, students will be able to connect works from other areas or lines of inquiry as they explore their conceptual understanding of combinations of works for their assessments (paper 2 and the individual oral).

The principles of variety, integration, autonomy and accountability will provide guidance for teachers when designing and delivering the course, supporting students with their learner portfolio work and advising them about assessments.

This course companion is designed as an application of the new subject guide in relation to a sample syllabus—it is written with the understanding that teachers have read the new subject guide. It also serves as a way for students taking the new course to enhance their approaches to learning in relation to specific works and assessments. This companion consolidates all aspects and components of the new subject guide in a manner that is designed to be user-friendly for students and teachers alike.

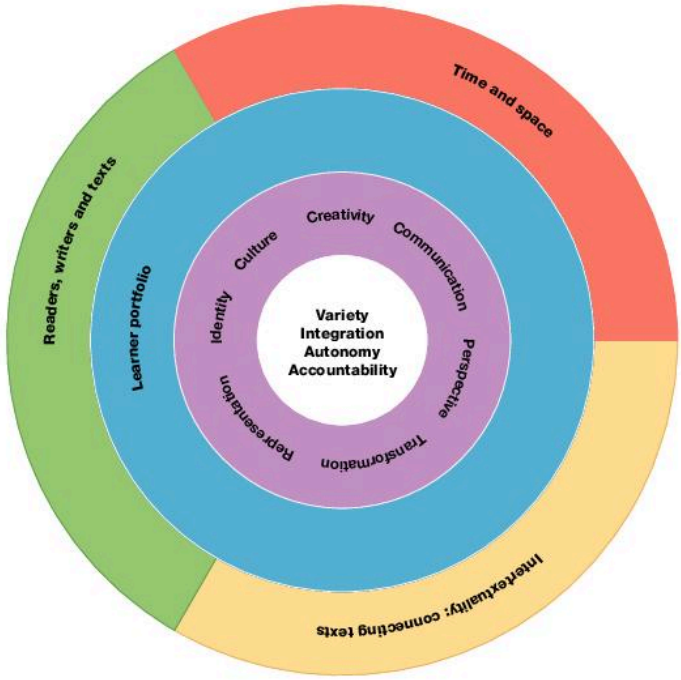
The significance of concepts

The process of inquiry, exploration, analysis, evaluation and interpretation of literary texts and the preparation for assessments are informed by the consideration of seven concepts identified in the subject guide. The concepts are identity, culture, creativity, communication, perspective, transformation and representation.

The role of the learner portfolio

The learner portfolio is a personal learning space for students where the process of learning is chronicled and documented. The learner portfolio can include notes, responses to activities, written work, reflections, brainstorming ideas, marked assignments—in short, any stage or aspect of students' learning. The significance of the learner portfolio is paramount to students' cognitive and metacognitive skills, for it reveals how they learn and how they know they have learned. The practical uses of the learner portfolio are numerous. For example, the learner portfolio:

- helps students make decisions and prepare for assessments
- offers teachers an overview of students' learning
- provides students with a safe space for reflection and writing practice
- encourages the development of a personal response to literary works
- fosters students' ownership of the learning process in the classroom and beyond.



The seven concepts in the diagram guide the design and the teaching of the course. They guide the work of the students, with the learner portfolio, in all three areas of exploration.

The aims of this course companion

One of the primary aims of this course companion is to support teachers and students through the new course and offer guidance, ideas and activities by using several popular works but also by providing readers with new options and suggestions. The companion aims to support learning and teaching of the English A literature course and is a resource of materials that can be used to enhance learning, the enjoyment of literature and students' achievement. For these reasons, the companion aims to present—through different approaches but also its format—the interconnectedness of the areas of exploration via the seven concepts of the course. It aims to offer help with several aspects of formal assessment, such as global issues and the higher level essay, as well as skills needed for paper 1 and paper 2.

By design, the English A literature course also offers teachers the option of a conceptual and thematic structure. To demonstrate this, each chapter

of this book includes a section that is thematically and/or conceptually designed within the area of exploration covered. The cross-referencing of the areas through the consideration of concepts, topics and themes is particularly significant because the assessment tasks are not outcomes of specific areas, and students can combine works (individual oral and paper 2) included in different areas of exploration.

Construction of the syllabus

The English A literature curriculum design requires a variety of texts and an integrated approach to teaching these works. To model these principles and to support teachers' understanding of the course, a syllabus is incorporated in this companion, and a group of works was chosen according to the requirements of the course. Assessment practice activities that are specific to this syllabus are also included. These can be adjusted by students and teachers for use with other examples. The works chosen for this purpose are examples that we encounter often in English A literature syllabi. These works were chosen to ensure that teachers have access to the companion and the activities without having to read a large number of new texts. More importantly, the more familiar works will allow teachers to connect their practice and experience with the approach of the new curriculum. This is not to say that all of these works are dealt with in detail from beginning to end. They are showcased with reference to the guiding conceptual questions and a variety of activities that teachers can use as springboards for teaching these works or for modelling the teaching of others. One sample teaching unit of an entire work is included for reasons of clarity and guidance: a unit based on *Antigone*. Beyond that, there is a clear focus on exploring a variety of works, and teachers can use these suggestions for their freely chosen works, for unseen commentary practice or for the sheer enjoyment of reading literature in the classroom. The syllabus below is just an example to demonstrate the connections across the areas of exploration. The works mentioned in this course companion alone make several more options possible.

	Higher level: five works in language A Four works in translation Four works chosen freely • minimum of three works in each area • works of four forms • three periods • four places (at least two continents)
	Standard level: four works in language A Three works in translation Two works chosen freely • minimum of two works in each area • works of three forms • three periods • three places (at least two continents)

Readers, writers and texts	Essays by George Orwell *The Colossus* by Sylvia Plath Short stories by Anton Chekhov Free choice: David Sedaris, Bill Bryson, Mark Twain, Pico Iyer, the graphic novel
Time and space	*Antigone* by Sophocles Sonnets by Shakespeare *The Caretaker* by Harold Pinter Free choice: *The Makioka Sisters* by Tanizaki, poetry in translation
Intertextuality: connecting texts	*Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte *Hedda Gabler* by Henrik Ibsen Free choice: *Poems on the Underground*, "Place, belonging and our search for the self"

Higher level

Paper 1—guided literary analysis: the paper consists of two passages from two literary forms, each accompanied by a question. Students write an analysis of each of the passages.

Paper 2—comparative essay: the paper consists of four questions. In response to one question students write a comparative essay based on two works studied in the course.

Essay: students submit an essay of 1200-1500 words on one work studied in the course.

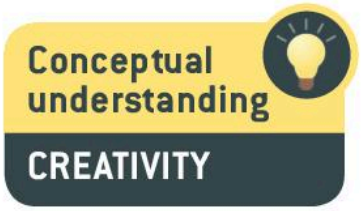
Individual oral: supported by an extract from a work originally written in English and one from a work studied in translation, students offer a response to the prompt "Examine the ways in which the global issue of your choice is presented through the content and form of two of the works that you have studied".

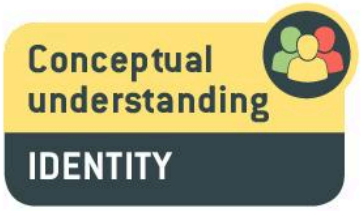
Standard level

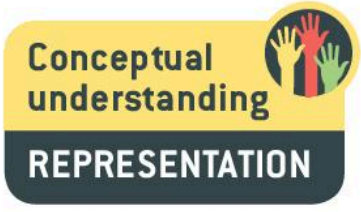
Paper 1—guided literary analysis: the paper consists of two passages from two literary forms, each accompanied by a question. Students choose one to write an analysis of it.

Paper 2—comparative essay: the paper consists of four questions. In response to one question students write a comparative essay based on two works studied in the course.

Individual oral: supported by an extract from a work originally written in English and one from a work studied in translation, students offer a response to the prompt "Examine the ways in which the global issue of your choice is presented through the content and form of two of the works that you have studied".







Sequencing of the course

The area of exploration "Readers, writers and texts" can be seen as an introductory line of inquiry for the course, but there is no design necessity to follow a strict linear sequence across the areas. In fact, intertextuality as a concept runs through the entire course as students make connections across forms, works, periods and so on. Indeed, some of the sections in the "Intertextuality: connecting texts" chapter can be used at the beginning of the course to introduce students to the way texts connect with one another, the reader and the world around us. The interconnectedness and overlap of the areas of exploration is to be expected and desired, and offers teachers freedom to explore possibilities of textual associations and relationships.

Integration of concepts and conceptual questions

Teaching in the IB Diploma Programme is based on conceptual understanding; it is inquiry-focused, informed by formative and summative assessment, and based on collaboration (approaches to teaching and learning: ATL).

The English A literature curriculum lists a number of concepts that are relevant to the literary exploration and discussion:

> "The concepts interact with the three areas of exploration in numerous ways and contribute a sense of continuity in the transition from one area to the next. They also facilitate the process of establishing connections between texts, making it easier for students to identify different ways in which the works they study relate to one another. Although they are not explicitly assessed in any component, the concepts constitute an essential part of a student's investigation and should therefore be included in the discussion of each of the works studied.
>
> The seven concepts which structure the teaching and learning of these courses have been selected because of the central position they occupy in the study of both language and literature. They foreground aspects of linguistic and literary study that have been the focus of attention and inquiry."
>
> From the IB Language A Literature subject guide, pages 25–26.

In this companion, these concepts are identified in the margin to help students and teachers make the connections that will support conceptual understanding.

The guiding conceptual questions should not be understood as questions to be answered as such but rather as provocations for investigation, debate, interpretation and perspective-taking. They are the lines of inquiry to be undertaken by students and appear throughout the text where they are pertinent and relevant. Students and teachers can use them as discussion questions, prompts for writing and ideas for activities.

Integration of assessment objectives

The assessment objectives of the English A literature course have been integrated in the companion based on several aspects: the range and diversity of works presented or discussed; the number of activities and the kinds of activities suggested; and the variety of approaches to literary texts. This companion takes into consideration the skills and aptitudes that we seek to develop in students so they can successfully meet the requirements of formal assessment. These objectives are as follows.

"Know, understand and interpret:

- a range of texts, works and/or performances, and their meanings and implications
- contexts in which texts are written and/or received
- elements of literary, stylistic, rhetorical, visual and/or performance craft
- features of particular text types and literary forms.

Analyse and evaluate:

- ways in which the use of language creates meaning
- uses and effects of literary, stylistic, rhetorical, visual or theatrical techniques
- relationships among different texts
- ways in which texts may offer perspectives on human concerns.

Communicate:

- ideas in clear, logical and persuasive ways
- in a range of styles, registers and for a variety of purposes and situations"

From the IB Language A Literature subject guide, page 14.

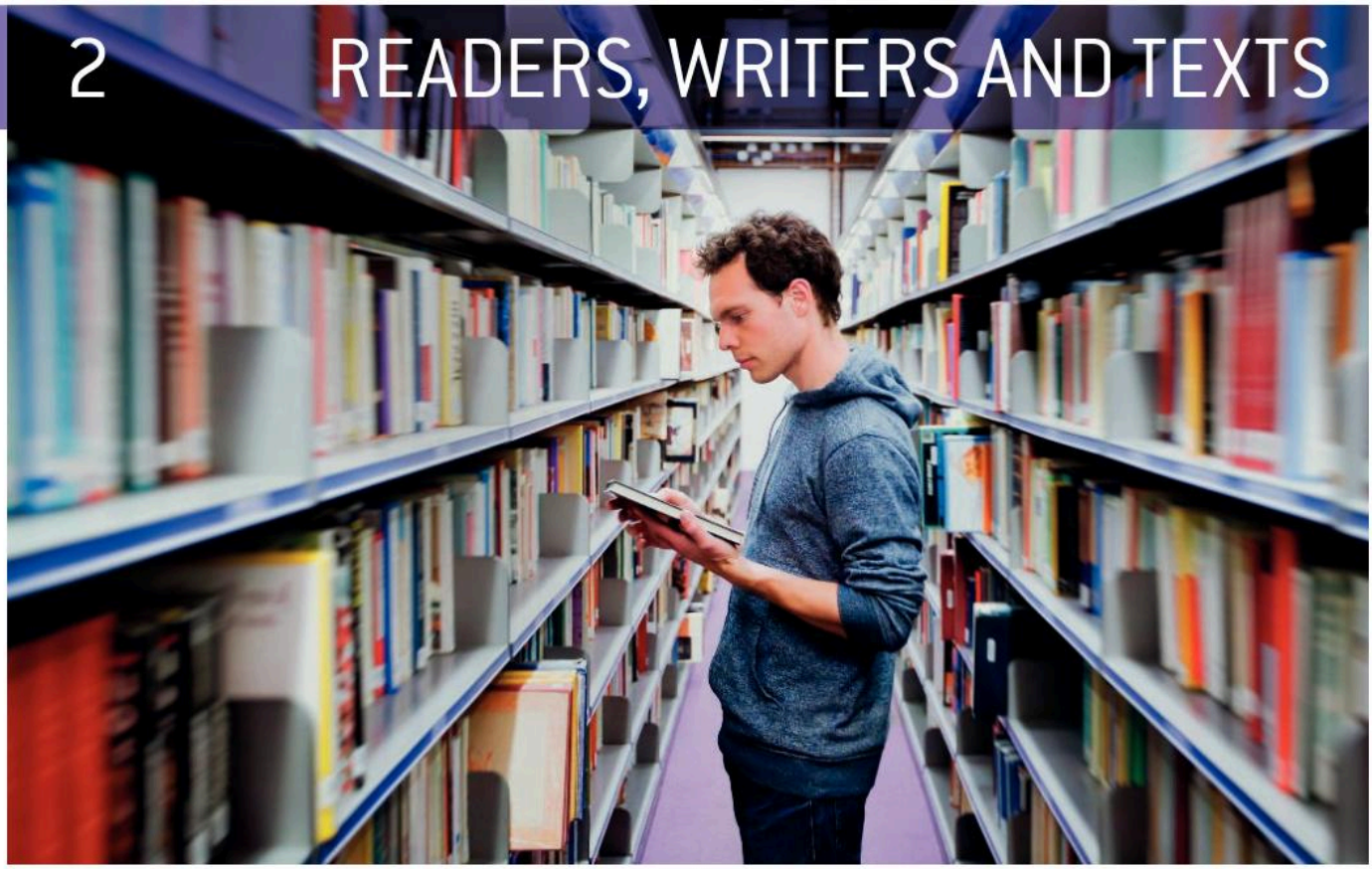
Activities: ATL

ATL skills are identified throughout the companion as reminders for teachers. Of course, the activities suggested can be adjusted and developed to integrate more skills. The intention of the ATL tags is to show the relevance of and connections between these skills and the design and approach of the English A literature course.

Features

In all sections there are boxes containing supplementary material that aims to enrich the experience of the course and to offer insight into a variety of texts and literary perspectives. Teachers and students can use these boxed features as they wish.

2 READERS, WRITERS AND TEXTS



This chapter is based on the area of exploration "Readers, writers and texts". The objectives of this chapter are to:

- **introduce** students to the skills involved in literary study
- **exemplify** the use of these skills in interpreting texts representing a variety of genres
- **investigate** the ways writers write from creative or personal and from critical or scholarly perspectives
- **guide** students toward integrating these skills and perspectives by adopting and practising them in their own writing
- **provide** constructive advice for generating students' literary aptitude, helping them appreciate literature (and also writing about literature) as a skilled art form.

The "Readers, writers and texts" area of exploration aims to introduce students to the skills and approaches required to examine literary texts closely, as well as to introduce metacognitive awareness of the work of the discipline by considering the following guiding conceptual questions.

1. Why and how do we study literature?
2. How are we affected by texts in various ways?
3. In what ways is meaning constructed, negotiated, expressed and interpreted?

4. How does language use vary among text types and among literary forms?
5. How does the structure or style of a literary text affect meaning?
6. How do literary texts offer insights and challenges?

From the IB Language A Literature subject guide, page 20.

Introduction

The value of literature

A lot has been written about the value of reading, studying and teaching literature. Considered from a very broad perspective, literature is a reflection and an exploration of the human experience in all its magnificent and mystifying range.

Literature may have a representational function but it is also relational. It implicates the writer and the reader in the reconstruction of the imaginary experience and its impact on reality, personal or collective. Imagination is, in part, the stimulus and also the impetus for the creation of literary works that will then engage the reader's imagination. According to Scarry (1995), for example, when an author is describing something, the author is giving us instructions on how to imagine or construct the described object. The mental images that are created under authorial instruction are linked to our perceptual world and constitute a kind of mimetic perception on the reader's part.

Core concept
REPRESENTATION

In other words, the mental image created by the words of the literary text leads our brain to imitate the perception linked with the image. This is just one of the ways reading literature has been shown to affect us in a powerful way.

Core concept
COMMUNICATION

Guiding conceptual question

Why and how do we study literature?

Numerous recent scientific studies also offer analyses of the impact of reading on cognitive capacity, working memory, attention span and positive brain rewiring. In fact, the survival and popularity of ancient stories—possibly even before writing systems developed—are seen by evolutionary biologists and evolutionary psychologists as evidence of our need for stories. Some of these stories we still read today, such as *The Odyssey* or *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, and scholars specializing in "literary Darwinism" are seeking to identify the elements of these stories. Viewing the question from another perspective, if literature is a reflection of human experience, then it automatically becomes a source of knowledge of other places, periods and people.

Core concept
TRANSFORMATION

Through literary texts, we learn about cultures and worldviews different from our own. Through reading about differences we also come to understand and appreciate what we all have in common, and our shared humanity is revealed through our reading.

Core concept
CULTURE

TOK

What knowledge can audiences from different times and places gain from reading a text?

Core concept
TRANSFORMATION

Literature allows us to inhabit characters, hear their voices and see the world through their eyes, enhancing our knowledge and understanding of the world and ourselves. Sontag (2001) eloquently states that if literature has engaged her as a project "first as a reader and then as a writer, it is as an extension of [her] sympathies to other selves, other domains, other dreams, other words, other territories of concern". In this sense, literature comes into contrast with information and fixed opinion as it reveals complexities, nuances and even conflicts of ideas we cherish and values we hold dear.

TOK

Does every literary work have an ideal reader? What are the challenges this presents for us as readers in our interaction with and understanding of the work?

In this way, literature engages us in reflection and rumination as readers and also citizens of the world. By extension, literature cultivates the knowledge of our self and also our feelings of empathy and compassion for others. Even when we are reading a book we don't like or we find difficult to understand, we are benefiting from the thought-provoking activity of reading with all the pleasures, challenges and emotions involved.

Core concept
CREATIVITY

In addition, what we contribute to this activity is our own imagination, the blueprint of our context as individuals with distinct experiences, wishes, inclinations and habits.

In return, reading rewards us with storytelling skills and the ability to construct our own narrative—that is, to tell our own story.

ATL

Communication and self-management skills

Activity

Reflection

1. Make a list of the literary works you have read in the last year or so, including those you study at school. What does this list reveal about you as a reader, your interests and your relationship with literature?
2. Refer to a list of bestsellers in a newspaper, and find out a local bookstore's or (if possible) a local publishing company's bestsellers. What patterns do you notice and how do you interpret them?
3. Looking at your list of local bestsellers, how does your reader profile compare to the profile of the general public buying these books?
4. What value does literature have for you on a personal level?

Uses of Literature

In her book *Uses of Literature*, published in 2008, Rita Felski seeks to build bridges between literary theory and common knowledge by re-examining the reading experience and its significance for readers in general. Her aim is to get "a better handle on how and why we read".

Felski presents a taxonomy of four of our most enduring and complex reactions to reading. They are:

- recognition: seeing ourselves in our reading
- enchantment: being in a state of fascination and suspended disbelief
- knowledge: getting to understand the world in a new way
- shock: feeling stimulated by unexpected developments.

Have you experienced these four reactions when:

- reading a literary text
- reading a newspaper
- solving a mathematical problem
- conducting a science experiment
- watching a film?

TOK

In what ways is the kind of knowledge we gain from literature different from the kind we gain through the study of other disciplines?

Guiding conceptual question

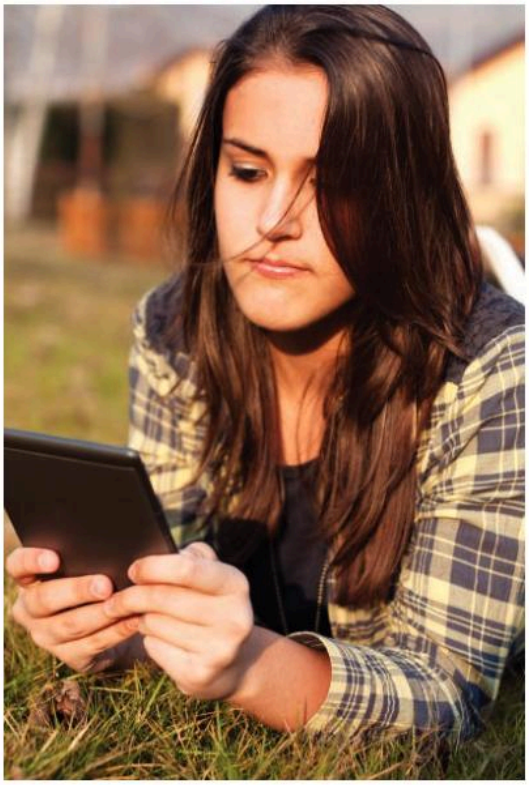
How are we affected by texts in various ways?

Reading—our starting point to learning

In the English A literature course we will engage with a large number of texts of great diversity in form and genre as well as time and place of origin. We will study the ways language is used to construct meaning in these texts. As we develop our understanding of the function and effect of textual features in different forms and genres we will consider different perspectives, our own included, and respond to texts critically, analytically and also creatively. The starting point of our learning—the fundamental principle of our journey through the course—is reading. We will reflect on what we read, discuss what we read, analyse what we read, interpret what we read, write about what we read and so on. The way we read and how we consciously shape this will be of great importance for understanding and responding to texts as well as completing the tasks required by the course. The continuum of skills we aim to develop in this course will lead us from reading to understanding to interpretation and finally to articulation—that is, our own oral or written work.

Different types of reading

A lot of the reading we do daily is information reading, such as reading road signs, package labels and street names. We also read to find information by skimming and scanning texts for what we need to find out.

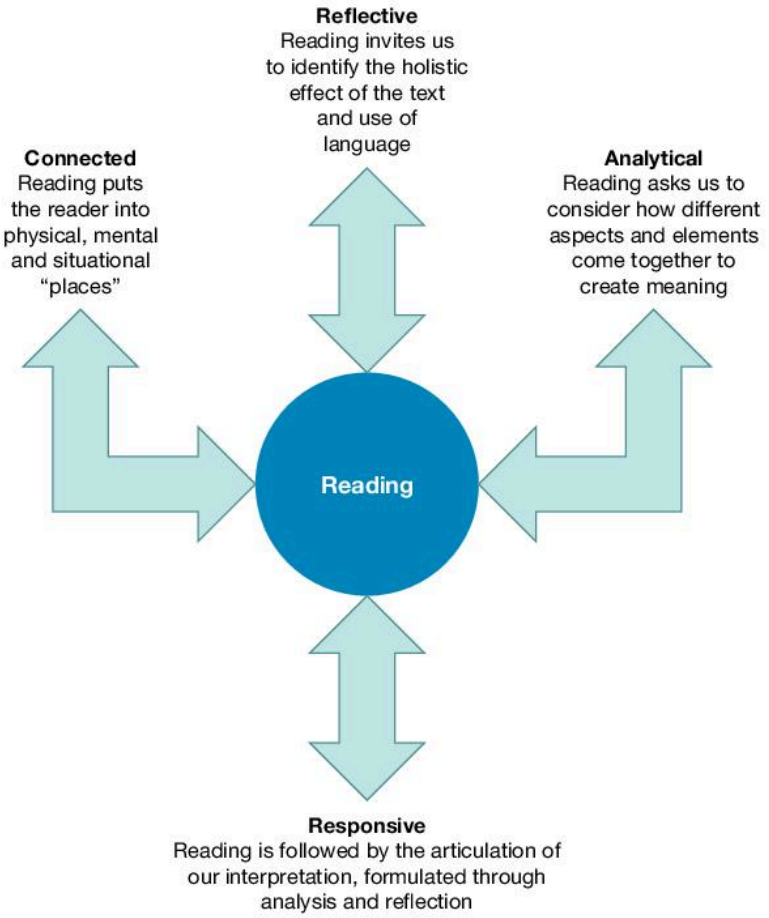


When we read an article about a news item, very often we are scanning—reading fast, focusing on key words such as names and places as we try to collect the information we need about a specific event. Very often, such reading is also guided by titles that alert us to information that may be of interest. Scanning does not require us to "understand" the text but rather to extract from it what we need to learn. Skimming, on the other hand, is a different kind of reading activity that entails going quickly through a text, looking for references to a specific item. Since a part (or most) of our reading of this kind is done online these days, search options very conveniently perform this process for us. Whatever we choose to call these types of reading (inspectional, informational, superficial) they are very different from reading literature. Literary texts take on their reality by being read and because they are read and thereby stimulate our faculties and cognitive skills on many levels.

If we are to describe, in general terms, the kind of reading we will engage in as students of English A literature we can call it **connected**, **reflective**, **analytical** and **responsive**. In the case of studying any text, we view reading as learning, and in the specific case of literary texts we construct an interpretation following analysis and reflection of the text and its features. This process will lead us to one of our purposes of the course, which is to write ably and knowledgeably about literary texts. This means that reading and writing are viewed as reciprocal acts: reading supports our writing, and our writing brings to light our reading.

TOK

Does a reader gain knowledge through literature? If so, what different kinds of knowledge does literature offer?



Performative literacy

In his article "Performative Literacy: The Habits of Mind of Highly Literate Readers" Blau (2003) revisits the issue of the complex contemporary literacies and proposes three new kinds of foundational literacies: textual, intertextual and performative literacy. Textual literacy is the knowledge that allows the reader to create an interpretation of a text and to think about it critically. Intertextual literacy refers to prior conceptual and informational knowledge that allows the reader to make connections with other texts. Performative literacy, however, is more complex because it is "knowledge that enables readers to activate and use all the other forms of knowledge that are required for the exercise of anything like a critical or disciplined literacy [which requires students to be active, responsible and responsive readers]. It also represents a set of literate practices without which readers cannot continue to grow in knowledge and literary competence through their reading experience. This enabling form of knowledge—performative literacy—is essential to functioning as a fully enfranchised reader in 21st century schools". The traits of performative literacy—Blau's "seven habits of mind"—are:

1. a capacity for sustained focused attention
2. willingness to suspend closure—to entertain problems rather than avoid them
3. willingness to take risks—to offer interpretive hypotheses, to respond honestly, to challenge texts, to challenge normative readings
4. tolerance for failure—a willingness to reread and reread again
5. tolerance for ambiguity, paradox and uncertainty
6. intellectual generosity and fallibility: willingness to change one's mind, to appreciate alternative visions and to engage in methodological believing as well as doubting
7. a capacity to monitor and direct one's own reading process: metacognitive awareness.

Consider the comments (starting opposite) of a teacher reflecting on his or her reading during the early years at university. The comments reflect the teacher's understanding of how he or she read texts then, and compares this past experience to Blau's "seven habits of mind".

From "Performative Literacy: The Habits of Mind of Highly Literate Readers" by Sheridan Blau in *Voices from the Middle* (2003)

Capacity for sustained, focused attention

I did not give careful and sustained attention to text, because I did not think I was capable of understanding the text. "... when simple lack of appropriate effort is treated—as it often is—as a symptom of cultural illiteracy or insufficient mastery of some subskill of reading, students are likely to be offered forms of instructional assistance that support inattention and confirm the students' own mistaken notion that they lack some specialized body of knowledge or reading skills that distinguish them from their teachers." (Page 211)

Willingness to suspend closure

I avoided difficult texts. Therefore, I did not engage in literary analysis in fear of being wrong. It was easier to be lazy and give up by formulating weak explanations. "Expert readers... are more willing to endure and even to embrace the disorientation of not seeing clearly, of being temporarily lost." (Page 211)

Willingness to take risks

I did not value my responses to texts in order to "talk back" to text. I did not know that I was allowed to interact with text or question it. Willingness to take risks is "... to offer interpretive hypotheses, to respond honestly, to challenge texts, to challenge normative readings. This characteristic is closely related to a willingness to entertain problems, and both of them are functions of what we might more globally identify as intellectual courage." (Page 212)

Tolerance for failure

I viewed my failure to comprehend the text the first, second, or even the third time as my own insufficiency, which prevented me from sustaining my efforts until the confusion became lucid. " ... one of the principal differences between expert readers and those who appear less skilled is that the more accomplished have a greater capacity for failure... framing their failure but as part of the difficulty that comes with the territory of reading difficult texts." (Page 213)

Tolerance for ambiguity, paradox and uncertainty

As a reader I looked for security, certainty, and the path of least resistance. "The least competent readers tend to confuse intellectual sufficiency with certainty and completed knowledge, and are inclined to equate uncertainty with ignorance, and ambiguity or paradox with confusion."

Guiding conceptual question

How do literary texts offer insights and challenges?

Intellectual generosity and fallibilism

I did not remain open to new and alternative perspectives and meanings—one of the barriers of critical thinking. "The strongest readers will generally argue persuasively for their own readings of texts and be able to demonstrate the deficiencies of arguments for alternative readings... In this process they also show themselves to be fallibilists, persons capable of changing their minds, capable of learning from their encounters with other readings to look in a new way and therefore to adopt a perspective that is more comprehensive than their own former vision." (Page 214).

Metacognitive awareness

I lacked metacognition—I was not aware of my own thinking, my own comprehension, or how to strategically correct my confusion of text. "... a major difference between strong and weak readers has to do with the way that strong readers monitor the progress of their understanding as they move through a text, self-correcting as necessary and recognizing when they need to reread or refocus their attention or take some other step to assist themselves in understanding what they are reading... they are less likely to feel defeated by difficult text." (Page 214)

Reflecting on reading

Activity

- How do the reader's comments on the previous pages compare to your experience as a reader of literature?
- How do they reflect your challenges and the setbacks you have encountered or may encounter in the future?
- Include in your learner portfolio a table like the one below. Revisit it as often as possible to document the development of your reading and to reflect on the skills you need to work on.

The table below gives an example of the kind of reflection you may find useful. Treat this reflection table as a living document, not a filling-in exercise. It will increase your awareness of your skills and will guide you in your efforts throughout the course.

Habits of mind	What are my challenges?	What can I do to address the challenges?
1. Capacity for sustained, focused attention	I easily get distracted and I am also worried that I do not fully understand the text.	a. Turn off electronic distractions. b. Set a timer for focused reading and build up gradually. c. Make a note of textual aspects that puzzle me and write questions about them. d. Use these questions in group discussions or respond to them in my learner portfolio.
[Continue the list of the seven habits of mind.]		

ATL

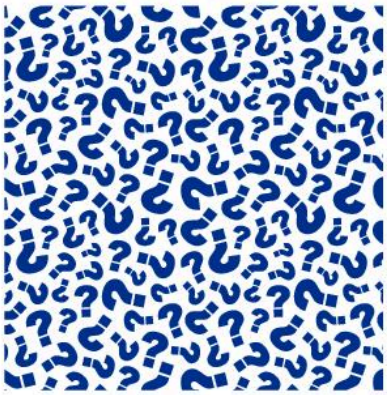
Thinking and self-management skills

Important development skills following reading

Reading actively and reflectively is the foundation of the process of understanding texts and developing the skills needed to articulate a response to the text, written or oral. Recall the continuum of skills we aim to be developing (in the sections "Reading—our starting point to learning" and "Different types of reading") that will lead us from reading and knowing the text to understanding to interpretation and, finally, to articulation—that is, our own oral or written response.

The assessment tasks for the course are:

- the guided literary analysis of unseen passages (paper 1)
- a comparative analysis of two works with a given focus (paper 2)
- the evaluation of two works in terms of a global issue (individual oral)
- a discussion of work on a broad literary focus (higher level essay).



ATL

Thinking skills

Although each of these tasks involves some skills that are unique to this component and differentiates it from the others, there are some skills of comprehension and textual response that are the same across all tasks. Two of these very important development skills are *asking questions* and *making notes.*

What kinds of questions?

Asking the right kind of questions about a text will further our understanding of it and will reveal aspects for us to focus on in discussion and assessments. Note that we are not talking about the *right* questions but the right *kind* of questions. Consider the following examples.

* What are the names of the family members of the protagonist?

** What happens in the second part of the novel?

*** What is the significance of the dialogue between the main character and his father in the third chapter and how does this affect the main character?

Note: the three-star notation is adopted from Erica McWilliam's presentation at an IB professional event for teachers: the IBAEM Regional Conference in The Hague in 2011.

The first two types of questions, marked with one star and two stars, seek answers that focus on information and summary respectively. Both of these types of questions can be of use in other contexts. For example:

- when students are revising a text and recall questions are necessary to ensure that they remember the facts of the work
- when a teacher seeks to confirm that the students have all read and understood the facts of the work
- when a teacher would like to recap the facts of the work before proceeding to an activity.

However, it is only third kind of question that really probes into the workings of the text and provokes readers to reflect on their reading and explore aspects that they found interesting, unusual, puzzling or significant. Three-star questions are open-ended and involve a link with the text in terms of effect, consequence and/or language: they question the text, not the reader.

Guiding conceptual question

How do literary texts offer insights and challenges?

Why am I asking the questions?

The kind of questions you are asking are genuine questions that result from your reading. You may know part of the answer or have some indication about how to respond, but the process of questioning is important for your learning for several reasons, a few of which are given in the following list.

- Your questioning originates from your reading and so it guides your understanding of the text and your awareness of your skills as a reader.
- Your questioning helps you and your teachers identify how your understanding of the text is developing, individually or for the group.
- Your questioning gives you confidence, empowers you and makes you responsible for your learning.
- Answering your questions helps you build up "tolerance for ambiguity, uncertainty and paradox" (Blau 2003) to become a more effective reader even beyond the completion of your English A literature course.

What if I ask the wrong questions?

There are no wrong three-star questions as such. Some questions may be less focused than others or relate to an aspect that is not as significant or pertinent as another. As you practise asking questions during your reading, in your learner portfolio and during class discussions, you will notice how your intuition about and appreciation of a very good three-star question will sharpen.

How are questions useful for my assessments?

Beyond its valuable contribution to your understanding and interpretation of texts, formulating questions is a skill that is very relevant to assessment tasks. Paper 2, for example, asks you to respond to a question using two works you have studied. As a question expert you will be able to identify and address all aspects of the examination question and ask also the right kind of questions about the texts you use for your response. For internal assessment, questions about the global issue of your choice will help you access its presentation in the two extracts you have chosen and examine this presentation in depth and in detail. For the higher level essay, questioning will be the first step of the process of reflecting on a concept and identifying an aspect to write about. Further questioning with reference to this aspect will allow you to present a response that is probing and sophisticated.

Making notes and your learner portfolio

ATL

Thinking and research skills

For the English A literature course, the learner portfolio is a place where, for example, you reflect, respond, brainstorm and draw diagrams as you read and discuss literary texts. It can contain classwork and marked assignments, ideas for assessments and drafts. Whatever its format and shape, you must think of your portfolio as the chronicle of your English A literature journey—a road map of your academic and personal experience of the course. The processes recorded in the learner portfolio will be instrumental in moving you toward success in the course. The learner portfolio is your personal learning space, a resource for self-assessment, revision, inspiration for tasks and a safe space for your deep thinking. How you manage your portfolio will depend on your own context. To some extent its usefulness will be determined by your awareness of the kind of note-making you use when reading and discussing texts, focusing on discovering the connections between

them. You may use your learner portfolio or the margins of your book to identify significant aspects of the text or you may want to write down the facts of the work that you need to remember (such as names of characters, dates and events). However, when it comes to responsive and reflective note-making you will realize that there are at least three levels to the processing of your response:

1. Structural note-making	Examples: noting the facts in a work; drawing a diagram of the events in a novel; making a list of the characters in a play; drafting a table that gives the argument in an essay
2. Conceptual and analytical level	Examples: identifying concepts, ideas, thoughts and global issues in texts; appreciating the ways language is used in different texts
3. Dialectical or cross-textual	Examples: looking at the ways concepts, ideas, thoughts and global issues are presented across texts you are studying—making connections and comparisons among these and in the different ways language is used to convey them

Adapted from Adler and Van Doren (2014)

In addition to these kinds of note-making, you may also use underlining, colour-coding and marginal notes in the text you are reading and in tasks linked to it. Just remember that your learner portfolio is there to reflect your entire learning experience during the course and to identify meaningful connections across your evolving work over the two years.

What is the practical purpose of note-making?

ATL

Self-management skills

Devising a note-making strategy for your work will also be very helpful when reading longer works. It will help you track how your expectations change as your reading progresses while giving you the opportunity to return to previous impressions and readjust your understanding of the work.

A note-making strategy will also help you with your revision before examinations, and it will make it easy for you to explore options for assignments such as the individual oral or the higher level essay. More importantly, in the English A literature course you will be studying different literary forms (four in higher level, three in standard level) and note-making helps develop the study skills that are relevant to the diversity of the texts as well as the aims and the objectives of the course.

What happens when we read a poem?

Unlike prose with its regular lines of print, poetry already creates a riddle for the reader with the way it is laid out on the page. This quality of poetry as a riddle to be solved is very often the reason students talk about "getting" or "not getting" a poem. In what follows, we will outline different approaches to reading poems that will help students abandon this false dichotomy of "getting" or "not getting" it and find ways into poems that will allow students to connect with, analyse, reflect on and respond to these texts. This section features different kinds of poetry, such as visual poetry, haiku and concrete poetry. These are not the type

of poems that you will be asked to respond to in examination papers but texts that will help you reflect on the nature and function of poetry and enhance your appreciation of literary forms. Teachers and students can use these readings for activities and discussions as appropriate and relevant.

Guiding conceptual question

How are we affected by texts in various ways?

Poems about poetry

Activity

ATL

Thinking and communication skills

The two poems below describe attitudes to poetry. The first one elaborates on the students' approach and attitude to poetry; the second one expresses the opinion of the speaker about what genuine poetry is.

1. Choose a phrase from each poem that resonates with you for some reason. You may share the speaker's opinion or you may have had a similar experience to the one described.
2. Which of these two poems is closer to your experience of poetry?
3. How does the language of this poem reflect that experience?
4. If you wrote a poem about poetry, from your own perspective, what would you choose to focus on? What image would you use to represent your experience of poetry?

"Introduction to Poetry" by Billy Collins

I ask them to take a poem
and hold it up to the light
like a color slide

or press an ear against its hive.

I say drop a mouse into a poem
and watch him probe his way out,

or walk inside the poem's room
and feel the walls for a light switch.

I want them to waterski
across the surface of a poem
waving at the author's name on the shore.

But all they want to do
is tie the poem to a chair with rope
and torture a confession out of it.

They begin beating it with a hose
to find out what it really means.

From *The Apple That Astonished Paris* by Billy Collins (2006)

"Poetry" by Marianne Moore

I, too, dislike it: there are things that are important beyond
all this fiddle.
Reading it, however, with a perfect contempt for it, one
discovers in
it after all, a place for the genuine.
Hands that can grasp, eyes
that can dilate, hair that can rise
if it must, these things are important not because a

high-sounding interpretation can be put upon them but because
they are
useful. When they become so derivative as to become
unintelligible,
the same thing may be said for all of us—that we
do not admire what
we cannot understand. The bat,
holding on upside down or in quest of something to

eat, elephants pushing, a wild horse taking a roll, a tireless
wolf under
a tree, the immovable critic twitching his skin like a horse
that feels a flea, the base-
ball fan, the statistician—
nor is it valid
to discriminate against "business documents and

school-books"; all these phenomena are important. One must make
a distinction
however: when dragged into prominence by half poets, the
result is not poetry,
nor till the poets among us can be
"literalists of
the imagination"—above
insolence and triviality and can present

for inspection, imaginary gardens with real toads in them,
shall we have
it. In the meantime, if you demand on the one hand, in defiance of their opinion—
the raw material of poetry in
all its rawness, and
that which is on the other hand,
genuine, then you are interested in poetry.

From *Others* by Marianne Moore (1920)

Misguided questions students often ask

It is useful to consider some questions often asked by students when they read poetry. Some of these questions may be based on wrong assumptions and therefore confuse us in the way we hope to explore poetry. Exploring these false assumptions can help focus on how students can construct meaning by reading and examining language use, a process that becomes accessible to students when it is viewed as a supported exploration and discovery of texts.

Guiding conceptual question

In what ways is meaning constructed, negotiated, expressed and interpreted?

Misguided question 1: "How do I know what the poem means?"

"Knowing" the meaning of the poem is very different from knowing a fact—knowing what day of the week it is or that it's raining. Knowing and understanding a poem is the result of reading that explores different aspects of the text by examination and questioning. The meaning of the poem is not "known" as such but it is constructed by the reader. Sometimes the meaning can be elusive or complex. Again, we need to examine the clues, ask the right kind of questions and put the pieces together. Uncertainty and ambiguity are part of the magic and the enjoyment of reading poetry. It is precisely these subtle qualities of poetry that you will be asked to explore in this course rather than definitively absolute statements about specific interpretations of specific works.

What is the meaning of this?

Activity

1. Read the following poem where the speaker identifies herself as a riddle. Each line also seems to be a kind of image-riddle. Do not attempt to find a meaning yet. Read the first eight lines carefully and make a note of the qualities of each image in each line. Think of the shape, size and look of things the speaker describes in each line. Start with simple questions and observations such as the one given for the first line. You can also draw these images on a separate sheet of paper if you want to.

ATL

Thinking skills

"Metaphors" by Sylvia Plath

I'm a riddle in nine syllables,	1. Why "nine" syllables?
An elephant, a ponderous house,	2.
A melon strolling on two tendrils.	3.
O red fruit, ivory, fine timbers!	4.
This loaf's big with its yeasty rising.	5.
Money's new-minted in this fat purse.	6.
I'm a means, a stage, a cow in calf.	7.
I've eaten a bag of green apples,	8.
Boarded the train there's no getting off.	9.

From *The Collected Poems* by Sylvia Plath (2015)

2. List the qualities of the images in the poem.
3. a. Why does the speaker consider the journey in terms of getting off or not getting off?
   b. Are there any clues in the text that she wants to get off?
   b. Are there any clues in the text about her feelings about getting off?
4. a. What do these images have in common?
   b. How do they fit together and how are they different?
   c. Do you see a pattern? If so, does this pattern help you solve the riddle?
5. Once you have solved the riddle, look at lines 2–8 in more detail. Does the choice of images reveal something about the experience of the speaker? Make a note of your ideas and impressions.
6. Taking into account what you have discovered about the speaker's feelings for or attitude towards the experience, reread the final line that is the concluding statement of the speaker. Consider the questions below the poem and remember that this is part of the riddle and you are still looking for clues.

Visual poetry

"Visual poetry provides a reading challenge to most readers because the methods of interpreting information vary widely. Some poems read linearly, just as a traditional poem would. Many others utilize individual words outside of any traditional syntax, requiring the reader to find connections that are suggested only spatially. Most contemporary visual poems fragment words into pieces, forcing the reader to delve ever more deeply into the text to sift meaning out of an often hectic

mise-en-page. One important notion to keep in mind while reading visual poetry is that it makes sense via more than just the text itself. Color, shape, and arrangement—including proximity to, and integration with, images—are important elements in the meaning of any visual poem" (Huth 2008).

"Joel Lipman has worked for years with rubber stamps, creating poems on yellowing acidic pages torn out of old books. This technique produces a *frisson* between the apparently unrelated base text and Lipman's overtext. As evidenced by the meter and movement of the words on the page… it is clear that Lipman is writing real poetry, but it is poetry enhanced by the distinctive appearance of the words" (Huth 2008).

Misguided question 2: "How can I find the deeper meaning of the poem?"

Students are often led to believe that every poem should have a deeper meaning. When students read a poem that is, for example, about a fish, they seek a "deeper" meaning for the fish—they want to find what the fish "stands for". However, sometimes in poetry a fish is a fish. Sometimes a fish is something more than that, not because it has to be, but because other clues in the text make it something more.

Guiding conceptual question

How does the structure or style of a literary text affect meaning?

Is the house a house? Is the soap a soap?

Activity

1. The following two poems mention a house that the speaker visits or seems to inhabit, respectively. In order to discover the meaning of a poem (and in this particular case, the significance of "a house") students need to question the text themselves rather than the teacher questioning the students. To help you get started with the process of questioning, you are given some keywords to use, as well as some prompts. Read the two poems carefully before you start formulating your questions in response to these prompts. You can use these questions as counterpoints of reflection or analysis in your learner portfolio or in discussions with your peers. During reflection or discussion you will begin to construct the meaning of the poems and start developing your understanding of the poems. Make a note of your thoughts and ideas as you engage in the questioning process, alone or with your peers.

Keywords

colour house parts memory description verbal tense feeling speaker's relationships thought soap house sound

Your **prompts** are these question openers.

- Why… ?
- How… ?
- What are the reasons for… ?
- What is the purpose of… ?
- What is the role of… ?
- What would change if… ?

"Soap Suds" by Louis MacNeice

This brand of soap has the same smell as once in the big
House he visited when he was eight: the walls of the bathroom open
To reveal a lawn where a great yellow ball rolls back through a hoop
To rest at the head of a mallet held in the hands of a child.

And these were the joys of that house: a tower with a telescope;
Two great faded globes, one of the earth, one of the stars;
A stuffed black dog in the hall; a walled garden with bees;
A rabbit warren; a rockery; a vine under glass; the sea.

To which he has now returned. The day of course is fine
And a grown-up voice cries Play! The mallet slowly swings,
Then crack, a great gong booms from the dog-dark hall and the ball
Skims forward through the hoop and then through the next and then

Through hoops where no hoops were and each dissolves in turn
And the grass has grown head-high and an angry voice cries Play!
But the ball is lost and the mallet slipped long since from the hands
Under the running tap that are not the hands of a child.

From *Collected Poems* by Louis MacNeice (2007)

"Insomnia" by Dana Gioia

Now you hear what the house has to say.
Pipes clanking, water running in the dark,
the mortgaged walls shifting in discomfort,
and voices mounting in an endless drone
of small complaints like the sounds of a family
that year by year you've learned how to ignore.

But now you must listen to the things you own,
all that you've worked for these past years,
the murmur of property, of things in disrepair,
the moving parts about to come undone,
and twisting in the sheets remember all
the faces you could not bring yourself to love.

How many voices have escaped you until now,
the venting furnace, the floorboards underfoot,
the steady accusations of the clock
numbering the minutes no one will mark.
The terrible clarity this moment brings,
the useless insight, the unbroken dark.

From *Daily Horoscopes: Poems* by Dana Gioia (1986)

2. a. What did your questioning of the poems reveal about the role of the house in each poem?
   b. What ideas, thoughts and feelings are associated with the house in each poem?
   c. How is the idea of the house used differently in each poem?
3. What did this activity show you? Respond to this question in writing and review the process from the beginning of the activity to the end. The process involves four stages and types of engagement that will help you build your skills as a student of literature and your awareness of one aspect of how we construct an interpretation of a literary text. The four stages are:
   1. reading
   2. questioning
   3. reflecting and responding
   4. reflecting on learning.

ATL

Self-management skills

Misguided question 3: "What if I get the meaning wrong?"

This is, by far, the most frequent concern of students of literature, especially poetry. There are two false assumptions behind this concern.

- Assumption 1: there is a meaning to the poem that exists outside a poem, almost like a physical object exists as separate from other objects, for example a car parked outside.
  - Working on this assumption, students ask: "Where do I find the meaning?"
  - The problem with this is that meaning is derived from words, the way they are chosen, put together and laid out on the page. We don't "find" meaning—we construct it, we form it, we shape it by looking at the ways language is used by the poet.
- Assumption 2: there is one meaning that is "right" and there are many others that are wrong and we have to somehow "match" the poem to the right one.
  - Working on this assumption, students ask: "How can I be sure to find the correct meaning and match the poem to it?"
  - Like assumption 1, this presupposes a meaning that exists outside the poem and also the reader. In addition, this idea contradicts the very nature of literary texts: they are events that become real to us when we engage in the personal activity of reading.

Both of these ways of looking at meaning seem to ignore the common ground for writers and readers that is language itself.

Guiding conceptual question

In what ways is meaning constructed, negotiated, expressed and interpreted?

TOK

Can the meaning of a text ever be ambiguity? Can there ever be one true meaning of text?

The opposite view, that a poem can mean anything the reader wants it to mean, is also based on false assumptions. The most obvious is that this view implies that language can mean anything we want it to mean. This cannot be true, as language is the agreed and shared code of communication. It constitutes the basis of our understanding as readers, and our interpretation of any text begins from this very shared and recognized knowledge of language.

To give an example, when Gioia or MacNeice mention a house in the poems above we all understand that the poet is referring to a house, not a tree or a boat or a cheeseburger. The feelings and thoughts expressed in the poems with reference to these houses can be identified when one considers the choices the poets make with regards to language and, once again, this is our shared code—the one both writers and readers use. When Gioia uses the word "useless" to

describe the insight in the last line, we understand the meaning to be something close to pointless, meaningless or maybe even worthless, and we infer that the process the speaker has engaged in has not offered him something he can use in the future or it has inspired a feeling of futility in the speaker.

Core concept

COMMUNICATION

In this way, once again, we look to the poem and its language for answers, not outside the poem. How the reading of a text resonates with us is beyond the interpretive domain of our study at this stage.
As students of English A literature you must remember that the meaning you are asked to construct is intrinsic to the work; that is, it is found inside the text and its language. Extrinsic aspects of interpretation can be relevant when contextual aspects are considered, which is something we will address in other parts of the course. For example, in terms of very personal context MacNeice's poem may make me think about my grandmother, but this does not mean that that poem is about my grandmother. Gioia's poem may affect middle-aged people differently from younger ones but this does not entail a changed meaning of the poem.

TOK

Are some interpretations of a text better than others? Can the meaning of a text ever be free from ambiguity? Can there ever be one true meaning of a text?

Whether we are looking at the intrinsic meaning of the work (how language is used to create meaning) or the extrinsic meaning of it (how context can impact meaning, how we are affected by the text)—or both—the distinction must be clear in our mind at all times.

Choose an interpretation

Reflection and activity

Read the following poem and the three interpretations (a, b, c) offered below it. Choose the interpretation you think most appropriately captures the meaning of the poem.

1. Justify your choice by referring to textual clues.
2. What did the other two interpretations have—or did not have—that could be said to misrepresent the meaning of the poem?

Following this activity, take a minute to reflect on how you reached these conclusions and what textual clues you referred to.

"The Life that I Have" by Leo Marks

The life that I have
Is all that I have
And the life that I have
Is yours

The love that I have
Of the life that I have
Is yours and yours and yours

A sleep I shall have
A rest I shall have
Yet death will be but a pause

For the peace of my years
In the long green grass
Will be yours and yours and yours

"The Life That I Have" by Leo Marks (2009)

a. The speaker expresses the wish to die, to be with his loved one for whom he expresses everlasting love.

b. The speaker expresses his everlasting love by affirming that his life belongs to his loved one now while he is alive but also after his death.

c. The speaker expresses his everlasting love by affirming his feelings but also feeling regret that he is still alive and separated from his loved one.

Haiku poetry

Haiku is an ancient form of Japanese poetry often containing (in English) a total of 17 syllables shared between 3 lines that are arranged in a pattern of 5-7-5. The first line consists of 5 syllables, the second line 7 and the last line contains another 5 syllables. Original haiku poetry was measured in sounds or "breaths" rather than English syllables. The 5-7-5 approach was a rough approximation. Many traditional Japanese and English-language literary haiku are shorter than the 5-7-5 format of the west. It is very difficult to generalise about form in translation, especially when form is so closely linked to meditation, sentiment and reflection, as in the following haiku.

Three haiku by Matsuo Basho

Sight of that mountain
makes me forget
I'm getting old

[111]

Weather-beaten heart
the wind must blow
right through my body

[191]

One insect
asleep on a leaf
can save your life

[135]

From *Moon Woke Me Up Nine Times: Selected Haiku of Basho* by Matsuo Basho (2013)

Approaching a poem for the first time

One of the reasons we may find reading poetry to be difficult or frustrating at times could arise from our expectation to understand a poem the first time we read it. Of course, we do understand something about the poem or an aspect of the poem when we first read it. We also identify elements in the poem that contribute to our understanding and elements that may challenge our understanding. However, the subtleties of language in poetry and the use writers make of ambiguity require a more methodical examination of the text and a step-by-step construction of our interpretation. As we read and reread, we become familiar with the poem and develop our knowledge of it even before we begin to attempt an interpretation.

- Our **first reading** of the poem is one of acquaintance and should aim at offering us a general idea of what the poem is about. Our expectations at this stage should be for us to open the window into the poem by looking at the overall idea or the predominant idea, feeling, thought or process in the poem.
- Our **second reading** of the poem should serve to identify how this idea, feeling, thought or process is explored and it is an opportunity for us to confirm or adjust our first impressions.
- During our **third reading** we set out to look at the poem's language in more detail, trying to identify the choices the poet made to express and develop the idea, feeling, thought or process we have identified.

At every stage we keep discovering, readjusting and refining our tentative interpretation as we read again and again. Put another way, our understanding of the poem is shaped by repeated readings. Just as we do not expect to understand a person simply by being introduced to him or her, we cannot expect to understand a poem fully and be able to discuss it in depth after just one reading.

Acquaintance	First reading: holistic understanding Question: what is this poem about?
Knowledge	Second reading: looking for structure, development and/or pattern Question: how is the main idea, feeling, thought or process explored throughout the poem?
Understanding	Third reading: unpacking and analysing the language of the poem Question: how is language used to convey the idea, feeling, thought or process and its development in the poem?

Let us work through these stages with an example. After each reading, we will make a note of our response to the relevant question as our understanding of the poem develops and with that the articulation of our understanding can begin, whether this is done orally or in writing. First, read the poem once.

"Walls" by CP Cavafy

Translated from the Greek original.

With no consideration, no pity, no shame,
they have built walls around me, thick and high.
And now I sit here feeling hopeless.
I can't think of anything else: this fate gnaws my mind—
because I had so much to do outside.
When they were building the walls, how could I not have noticed!
But I never heard the builders, not a sound.
Imperceptibly they have closed me off from the outside world.

From *Collected Poems* by CP Cavafy (2009)

Our first reading of the poem reveals that:

> the speaker feels trapped, isolated and excluded from the world around.

Given this starting point, there are several questions we could ask regarding the isolation of the speaker, as we attempt to examine how this feeling of being shut off is explored by the poet. For example, how did this happen and why? More importantly, how does the speaker feel about being "closed off from the outside world"?

Reading the poem the second time, we look for clues to the process of the speaker being closed off and his or her feelings about it. Our second reading is an expansion of the first, leading us to develop our interpretation further:

> the speaker feels trapped, isolated and excluded from the world around, a state that torments the speaker and causes him or her to feel resentment for those responsible for this exclusion and to feel self-pity.

At this stage, and depending on the poem, our interpretation may be incomplete or partial. This is not important because the most significant aspect of this activity is the progression of our understanding through close reading of the text.

Moving on to the third reading, we have delineated a path of thought already and we will walk down this path observing, discovering and looking for clues to support our thinking. It is possible that we may have to deviate or stop at the side of the path and ruminate. We may have to go back a few steps or go back and forth a few times, but movement along a line of thinking and looking for textual clues is what matters. The following comments may be longer or shorter or very different from the ones you might make; in this example they are intended to model the method rather than the content.

The use of pronouns creates the opposition between the speaker and the outsiders as "them vs me".

It is very interesting that the idea explored in the poem is not the more common one of the outsider, (of an individual left out) but that of an individual selected for isolation, an idea akin to segregation.

The kind of walls the poem describes do not simply leave the speaker outside—they ensure that the speaker cannot come into contact with anyone; that is, the speaker is completely and utterly alone.

The poem begins with a very clear statement of accusatory tone and with the use of syntax that fronts the phrases "no consideration, no pity, no shame". The focus is on the lack of compassion in others rather than the building of the wall.

The choice of "thick" and "high" intensifies the feeling of exclusion as the walls are presented as impossible to penetrate or climb, and they could even be a barrier to sound. The speaker cannot be seen or heard.

"Walls" by CP Cavafy

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And now I sit here feeling hopeless.
I can't think of anything else: this fate gnaws my mind—
because I had so much to do outside.
When they were building the walls, how could I not have noticed!
But I never heard the builders, not a sound.
Imperceptibly they have closed me off from the outside world.

The admission of hopelessness by the speaker as well as the description of the speaker's fate as gnawing at his or her mind, slowly and steadily destroying it, portrays the experience as tormenting.

If we substituted "gnaws" with a near-synonym such as "corrodes" how would that change the meaning and effect of the line? What does that show about the choice of the word "gnaws"?

The speaker articulates regrets and justifies feelings with the explanation offered in this line with the use of "because".

It seems that the speaker does not resent the isolation because of what it is but because of what he or she was hoping to accomplish—an opportunity the speaker has been deprived of.

As the speaker is struggling to understand the experience, he or she continues to look back in an attempt to identify the reasons that led him or her to the current position, and the speaker appears to wonder at his or her lack of observation.

The use of "But" in this line introduces the explanation of the previous line, and it leads us to ask who the speaker is blaming for the building of the walls. Was it the outsiders who were very quiet, or was it the speaker's own shortcoming that he or she did not hear them?

What if the line was "But the builders were quiet, they did not make a sound"?

The ambiguity that the previous line introduces is resolved in the final line with the speaker finishing the poem with a definitive statement: "they have closed me off".

Are there any clues as to whether the speaker feels he or she could have prevented this, as the previous line indicates?

The use of "Imperceptibly" seems to indicate that the answer is no since imperceptibly means "in a manner that is not able to be perceived". Thus, the poem concludes in a tone of self-pity and sadness.

Following our annotation and comments on our third reading, our interpretation has taken a clearer shape and direction to include more specific claims about how language is used to create meaning:

> the speaker feels trapped, isolated and excluded from the world around, a state that torments the speaker and causes him or her to feel resentment for those responsible for this exclusion, and to feel self-pity. The poem is a retrospective reflection on how this exclusion has been accomplished. The choice of diction and the use of syntax convey the speaker's alienation and feelings of self-pity and sadness about his or her isolated fate.

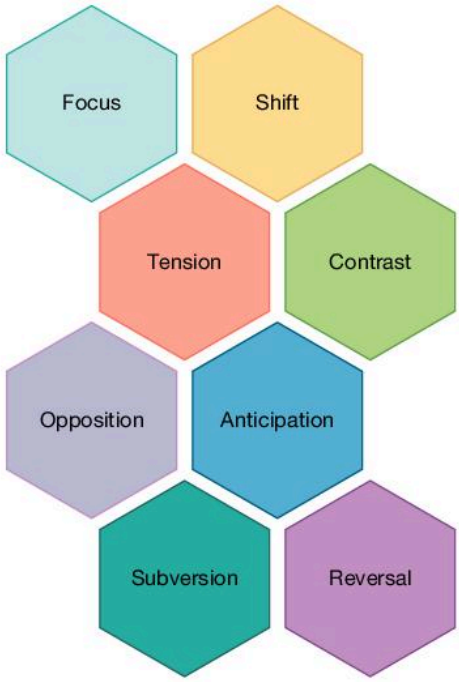
Our readings have now provided us with an overall interpretation of the text. We also have some clear direction for examining in more depth and detail, orally or in writing, the use of language in the poem in connection with the main idea.

Guiding conceptual question

How does the structure or style of a literary text affect meaning?

One more comment about structural reading

Whether one is reading a poem, a novel, a short story or a piece of prose fiction, the different threads, elements and perspectives come together in various ways to tell the story and create meaning. We can think of the text as a tapestry we observe, and we try to capture its essence before we focus on how its threads are used in different colours, stitches and combinations to create the bigger picture of the tapestry. While the tapestry is a collection of visual and tactile patterns, writers use words to create patterns in their work. These patterns contribute to the meaning of the work. Below you will see some examples of patterns in the structure and development of text. Thinking in terms of these patterns will support your understanding of how different aspects of a text conspire to create an effect. Bear in mind that this list is not exhaustive, and these patterns can be used in numerous combinations as well.



For example, when reading "Walls", we referred to the focus on the phrases "with no consideration, no pity, no shame", the opposition between "them" and the speaker, and the shifts introduced by "and", "because" and "But" in lines 3, 5 and 7. These patterns connect the pieces of our interpretation into a coherent whole.

Concrete poetry

In 1969, de Campos and Plaza wrote the following descriptions of concrete poetry and the concrete poet.

> "Writers blend often gnomic words with graphic design to create affecting formalist artworks [or shake] words out of standard verse structure and [rearrange] them in striking, enigmatic new forms."
>
> "The concrete poet does not run away from words, he does not glance at them obliquely: he goes directly to their centre."

You can find more about concrete poetry at:
www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/brief-guide-concrete-poetry
www.poetryfoundation.org/learn/glossary-terms/concrete-poetry
www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2017/apr/07/masterpieces-concrete-poetry-pictures-getty-center-ian-hamilton-finlay-augusto-campos

Guiding conceptual question

In what ways is meaning constructed, negotiated, expressed and interpreted?

The aural aspect of poetry

The English A literature course aims to develop your appreciation of different literary forms and to reflect on issues of context, culture and the nature and significance of literary texts. The appreciation of the aural aspect of poetry and the possibilities of recitation are very useful tools for your understanding and appreciation of poetry. Dana Gioia offers us four reasons why poetry is one of the most practical things you will learn at school.

- "Poetry is a powerful way of mastering language…"
- "Poetry is a way of training and developing our emotional intelligence…"
- "Poetry helps us realize that language is holistic… how something is said is an essential part of what is actually being said and the literal meaning is only part of the whole meaning…"
- "Poetry helps both to enlarge our humanity and to give us the power to express it."

From a reading for Poetry Out Loud, www.poetryoutloud.org/poems-and-performance/listen-to-poetry

Even if you do not have the opportunity or do not feel the impetus to recite poetry yourself, be aware that sound in poetry is very significant and constitutes part of the meaning of the poem and our interpretation. You can find several recordings of poem recitations by writers and actors on the internet, as well as videos of students taking part in recitation competitions at www.poetryoutloud.org.

"The Lake Isle of Innisfree" by WB Yeats

Activity

This poem was prompted by a memory of childhood that was triggered by the trickle of water in a shop-window fountain. Yeats uses his speaker to express his desire to return to Innisfree and imagine himself living a simple, quiet life in the isle's natural surroundings. In the circle overlap of a diagram like the one below, note:

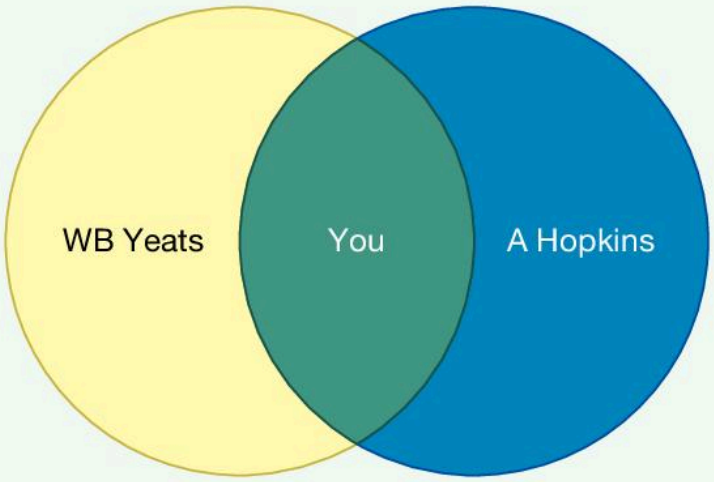
- your thoughts about the poem
- any comments you have about the way it is written
- how the way it is written impacts the meaning of the text.

"The Lake Isle of Innisfree" by WB Yeats

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.



Listen to the poem

Activity

Now listen to two recitations of "The Lake Isle of Innisfree". One is by the poet and the other by the actor Anthony Hopkins. You can find the recitations at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=QLlcvQg9i6c and www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lyz0aw4ySE8 respectively.

1. How do the two recitations reveal aspects of meaning that are new to you? Make a note of these in the relevant circle in your diagram.
2. What is the shared understanding for all three readers: you, Yeats and Hopkins?
3. How do their recitations create different perspectives or interpretations?
4. Is it significant that one of these readings comes from the poet himself? Is this a more "valid" interpretation?

Take a moment to reflect on this activity and what you have learned about the aural and performative aspect of poetry and its connection to meaning. To follow up, you may want to attempt a recitation of the poem or you may choose another poem you have studied and work on different recitations, alone or with your peers.

ATL

Thinking and communication skills

Core concept

CREATIVITY

TOK

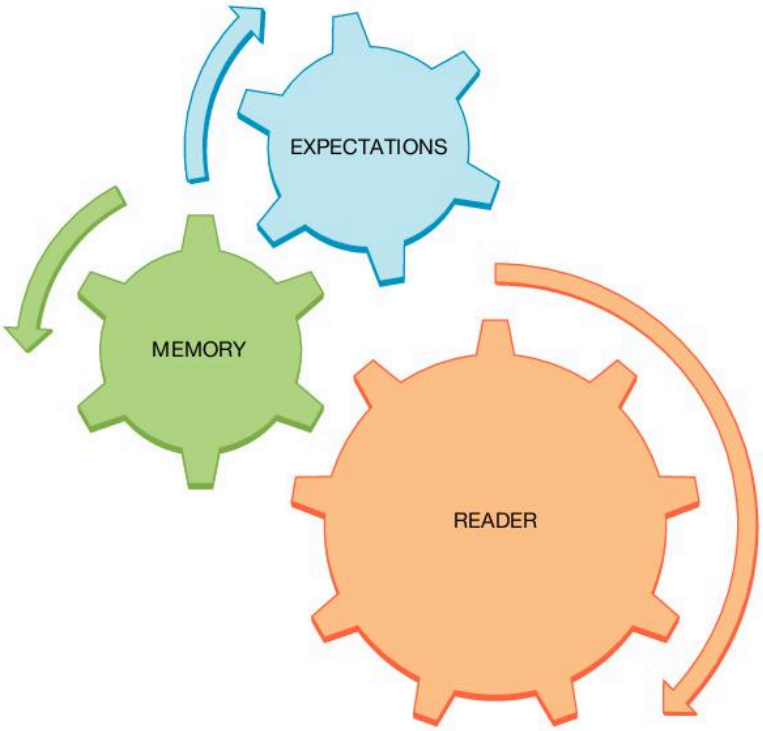
How does your response to a text differ depending on the medium through which you experience it? How is your experience of learning different when reading by yourself versus reading in a community of readers?

Reading prose fiction

Reading prose fiction involves consecutive phases of reading, as well as several perspectives, as intrinsic aspects of the narrative itself. First, the primary property of prose is its length, which impacts how we read and process the text. As readers of a prose fiction text we forge expectations that are modified as our reading progresses. The expectations we have after reading a chapter may be met or subverted or changed after the following chapter, and so on.

As a consequence of the adjustment of our expectations, what we have learned or what we remember about the text also gets transformed. In other words, our reading resembles a process of readjustment and re-evaluation as our understanding progresses.

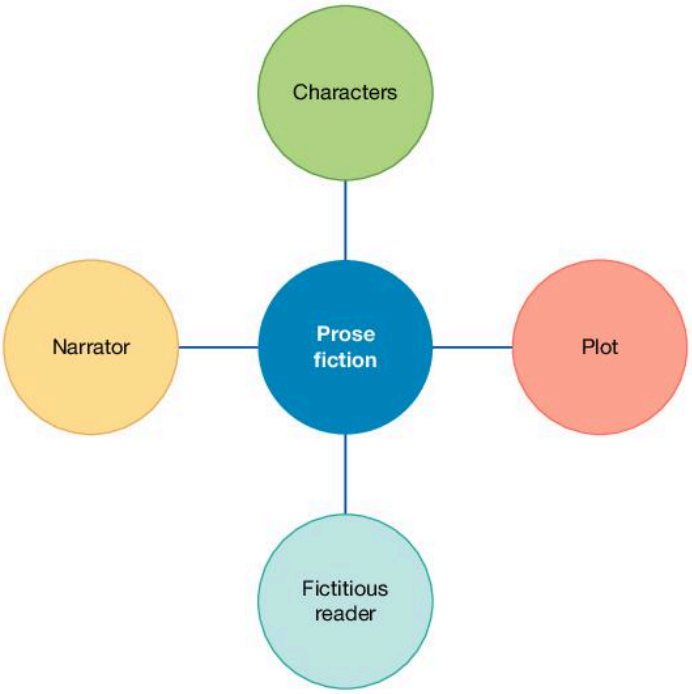
This kind of reading requires cognitive engagement at a higher level although we are not always aware of it. It is likely that this kind of mental adventure can be partly responsible for what has been called our "fiction addiction" (David Robson in the title of an article for the BBC website, 3 May 2018). Stories move us continually to new ideas and unanticipated events, leading us to reinvent and rediscover what we thought we already knew.



Second, prose involves several structural perspectives through its narrative properties, and these perspectives are factored into our understanding of the text. Combined with the reader's context and background, they also function as triggers or footholds for shaping our personal engagement with the text. These perspectives include the characters, the plot, the narrator and also the fictitious reader; that is, the reader the author imagined to be addressing and for whom authors often include signals. Our role as actual readers is to negotiate and mediate these perspectives to construct meaning through the process.

TOK

Does every literary work have an ideal reader? What are the challenges this presents for us as readers in our interaction with and understanding of the work?



In the following excerpt from William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, Ralph is hunted down by the other boys and while he is on the run he stumbles upon the pig's head. The colour-coded parts of the texts are examples of the different perspectives given in the key provided.

He jerked his head off the ground and listened. There was another noise to attend to now, a deep grumbling noise, as though the forest itself were angry with him, a sombre noise across which the ululations were scribbled excruciatingly as on slate. He knew he had heard it before somewhere, but had no time to remember.
Break the line.
A tree.
Hide, and let them pass.
A nearer cry stood him on his feet and immediately he was away again, running fast among thorns and brambles. Suddenly he blundered into the open, found himself again in that open space — and there was the fathomwide grin of the skull, no longer ridiculing a deep blue patch of sky but jeering up into a blanket of smoke.

From *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding (2005)

KEY

Plot perspective

Character perspective

Narrator perspective

Fictitious reader perspective

The noises that Ralph is running from are plot elements that lead him to coming across the pig's head, while we also get an indication of how Ralph feels in his surroundings with the mention of the forest being angry at him. The narrator also mentions that Ralph had heard this noise before, making use of his perspective to offer further insight into what Ralph is experiencing. The passage closes with an image that signals something for the fictitious reader, an image that is presented as a change for the worst, an omen of sorts. These perspectives merge and converge in the narrative and although we have tried to identify them individually, we can easily see that they overlap and can have more than one function. It is this overlap, the synergy of the perspectives and aspects in the text that our literary analysis will try to capture. This practice will be the same for any literary form we explore: our aim is to identify uses of literary language and discuss, evaluate and appreciate how they interact to create meaning.

Activity

The power of the sentence that is the heart of fiction

Read the following excerpt from *Reading Like a Writer* by Francine Prose, introducing a passage from Philip Roth's *American Pastoral*.

Exploring Philip Roth's *American Pastoral*

> "It's necessary to quote a longer passage from Philip Roth, since part of what is so extraordinary about his sentences is how energetic and varied they are, how they differ in length, in tone, in pitch, how rapidly and seamlessly they shift from the explanatory to the incantantory, from the inquisitive to the rhetorical to the reportorial. This paragraph from *American Pastoral* encapsulates the meditation that lies at the center of the book. It's the question of how a man like Seymour "Swede" Levov could do everything in his power to ensure that the American dream, the "longed-for American pastoral," would become a reality for himself and his family—and find himself in a hellish "counter-pastoral… the indigenous American berserk."
>
> From *Reading Like a Writer* by Francine Prose (2006)

"The old integenerational give-and-take of the country-that-used-to-be, when everyone knew his role and took the rules dead seriously, the acculturating back-and-forth that all of us here grew up with, the ritual postimmigrant struggle for success turning pathological in, of all places, the gentleman farmer's castle of our superordinary Swede. A guy stacked like a deck of cards for things to unfold entirely differently. In no way prepared for what is going to hit him. How could he, with all his carefully calibrated goodness, have known that the stakes of living obediently were so high? Obedience is embraced to lower the stakes. A beautiful wife. A beautiful house. Runs his business like a charm… This is how successful people live. They're good citizens. They feel lucky. They feel grateful. God is smiling down on them. There are problems, they adjust. And then everything changes and it becomes impossible. Nothing is smiling down on anybody. And who can adjust then? Here is someone not set up for life's working out poorly, let alone for the impossible. But who is set up for the impossible that is going to happen? Who is set up for tragedy and the incomprehensibility of suffering? Nobody. The tragedy of the man not set up for tragedy—that is every man's tragedy."

From *American Pastoral* by Philip Roth (1997)

As a proficient speaker of English, you know—and your teachers have undoubtedly reminded you many times—that a complete sentence in English must consist of a subject and a verb at least; for example, "The ugly man came". If one of these mandatory constituents is missing, you have what we call a "sentence fragment" and the sentence is ungrammatical. This is one of the things you have been warned against when writing essays. Yet Philip Roth seems to favour sentence fragments along with rhetorical questions and inversion.

1. How many fragments can you identify in the passage?
2. What is the length of these fragments?
3. What do you understand Prose to mean when she refers to "the incantantory, from the inquisitive to the rhetorical to the

reportorial"? Can you identify the fragments or sentences that contribute to this reading?

4. What do you notice about the structure of the last sentence? Have you come across a similar structure in your study of English literature? Have you come across a similar structure in your daily life?
5. Write a piece about a topic, theme or character of your choice using "ungrammatical" or elliptical language to create a specific effect. What is this effect and how is it relevant to the topic, theme or character you presented?

Reading practice for paper 1: prose fiction example

During the course, you will have to read four or three literary forms (for higher level and standard level, respectively): poetry, drama, prose fiction and prose non-fiction. You will be asked to respond to unseen texts of any of these forms and write two commentaries (higher level) or one commentary (standard level). An unseen text, regardless of form, will be approached with the same method we discussed for poetry in the section "Approaching a poem for the first time". When we read we will use strategies to help us build our understanding gradually and with an increasing degree of questioning of the text. The table below shows our reading and questioning process for prose passages.

Acquaintance	First reading: holistic understanding Questions: what is this passage about? What happens in this passage and who is involved?
Knowledge	Second reading: looking for structure, development and/or pattern Questions: how is the main idea, thought or feeling explored throughout the passage? How do events develop? How do the characters act or react?
Understanding	Third reading: unpacking and analysing the language of the poem Questions: how is language used to convey the idea, thought or feeling and its development in the passage? How is language used to describe events and characters' actions or reactions?

Activity

Three stages of reading: prose example

Repeat the activity of the three stages of reading using the following passage from "The Country Husband" by John Cheever. Make a note of your comments and ideas after each reading. Be mindful of the guiding question or questions (above) during each reading to avoid getting distracted or overwhelmed. It is very likely—as with reading poetry—that you will notice some of the features of the text during your first reading, but the purpose is to look at the details after getting a holistic and structural understanding of the text. This understanding must be developed in a principled way, leading you to seek the textual clues for support rather than collecting clues in an almost accidental fashion. Do not forget to consider how these clues are connected in patterns of development.

ATL

Thinking and self-management skills

"The Country Husband" by John Cheever

To begin at the beginning, the airplane from Minneapolis in which Francis Weed was travelling East ran into heavy weather. The sky has been a hazy blue, with the clouds below the plane lying so close together that nothing could be seen of the earth. Then mist began to form outside the windows, and they flew into a white cloud of such density that it reflected the exhaust fires. The color of the cloud darkened to gray, and the plane began to rock. Francis had been in heavy weather before, but he had never been shaken up so much. The man in the seat beside him pulled a flask out of his pocket and took a drink. Francis smiled at his neighbor, but the man looked away; he wasn't sharing his painkiller with anyone. The plane had begun to drop and flounder wildly. A child was crying. The air in the cabin was overheated and stale, and Francis' left foot went to sleep. He read a little from a paper book he had bought at the airport, but the violence of the storm divided his attention. It was black outside the ports. The exhaust fires blazed and shed sparks in the dark, and, inside, the shaded lights, the stuffiness, and the window curtains gave the cabin an atmosphere of intense and misplaced domesticity. Then the lights flickered and went out. "You know what I've always wanted to do?" the man beside Francis said suddenly. "I've always wanted to buy a farm in New Hampshire and raise beef cattle." The stewardess announced that they were going to make an emergency landing. All but the child saw in their minds the spreading wings of the Angel of Death. The pilot could be heard singing faintly, "I've got sixpence, jolly, jolly sixpence. I've got sixpence to last me all my life…". There was no other sound.

First published in *The New Yorker*, 20 November 1954

Reading drama

Reading drama is very different from reading poetry or fiction, considering, among other differences, the performative aspect of drama. For this reason, it is important to emphasize the distinction between drama as literature and drama as performance with reference to dramatic writing versus dramatic performance respectively. It is the perspective of dramatic writing that you will be asked to explore for this course, but the second one (that is, performance and interpretation) will often be the topic of discussion as we try to gain a deeper understanding of the text and its possibilities.

Essentially with dramatic writing, when reading a play the reader is aware that the text he or she is reading is not actually the play. When a play is read and not watched, *the reader's mind is the stage* and the dramatic elements of the text are processed by the imagination of the reader who can then visualize the characters and their action on stage. In addition to this visualization, the reader is also called to access the subtexts of the script, the subtexts that the actor—with the help of the director—is asked to bring to life. In this sense, *the reader of a dramatic work is also the director of the play* in his or her mind. While the actor adds further meaning to the spoken lines by physical action,

the reader gathers this meaning through the process of reading and the interpretation of the language of the play.

Guiding conceptual question

How does language use vary among text types and among literary forms?

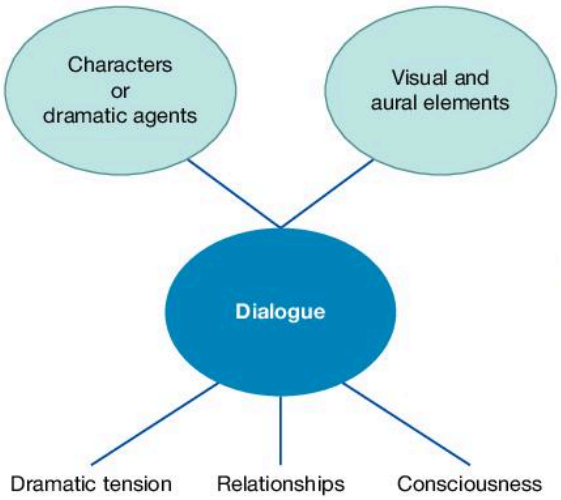
Despite the uniqueness of the experience of dramatic reading, several of the reading skills we develop when reading poetry and prose are also actively involved when we read drama, and are accessed through the language of the work.

First, the interpretation of what is not there—in other words, what the characters *do not say* is for us to try to work out or infer, just as what is not articulated in poetry constitutes part of its meaning. Second, the characters in a play are voices of the dramatic narrative. Just as the prose fiction narrator chooses how to tell a story, so do the characters of a play choose to tell a story through their speech, actions and so on. Being familiar with these similarities and differences bolsters our confidence as readers of different literary forms as we approach each text with an awareness of its unique characteristics and concerns.

TOK

Is the notion of genre a restrictive one? How far do genre conventions aid or hamper the production and reception of literature?

With drama, as with poetry and prose, our aim is to be able to examine the work holistically and then discuss and evaluate how the use of language and form-specific conventions contribute to the creation of meaning. In the diagram below you can see a simplified presentation of some fundamental aspects of drama and their relationships. Notice that we refer to characters also as dramatic agents since they take action or respond or react to events. These actions, responses and reactions are expressed through the dialogue, although not always explicitly. The visual and aural elements of theatre, such as staging, sound, lighting, set and movement, supplement the meaning of the dialogue that is the vehicle of dramatic tension, of building relationships and of expressing characters' consciousness. These elements are integrated in the structure of the dramatic writing in acts and scenes—the formal aspects of the written work. The purpose of this diagram is to try to capture the interaction and interdependence of these elements in drama.



◀ Structural framework of acts and scenes

Stage directions

Activity

Read the stage directions at the opening of Act 2 of *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw, who is famous for his extensive prefaces and stage directions.

1. Which parts of the directions are meant "to be read" and which refer to the actual setting of the stage?
2. What choices does the playwright make about the presentation of character?
3. How could the presentation of character impact the rest of the play?

Stage directions for Act 2 of *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw

Next day at 11 a.m. Higgins's laboratory in Wimpole Street. It is a room on the first floor, looking on the street, and was meant for the drawing-room. The double doors are in the middle of the back hall; and persons entering find in the corner to their right two tall file cabinets at right angles to one another against the walls. In this corner stands a flat writing-table, on which are a phonograph, a laryngoscope, a row of tiny organ pipes with a bellows, a set of lamp chimneys for singing flames with burners attached to a gas plug in the wall by an indiarubber tube, several tuning-forks of different sizes, a life-size image of half a human head, showing in section the vocal organs, and a box containing a supply of wax cylinders for the phonograph.

Further down the room, on the same side, is a fireplace, with a comfortable leather-covered easy-chair at the side of the hearth nearest the door, and a coal-scuttle. There is a clock on the mantelpiece. Between the fireplace and the phonograph table is a stand for newspapers.

On the other side of the central door, to the left of the visitor, is a cabinet of shallow drawers. On it is a telephone and the telephone directory. The corner beyond, and most of the side wall, is occupied by a grand piano, with the keyboard at the end furthest from the door, and a bench for the player extending the full length of the keyboard. On the piano is a dessert dish heaped with fruit and sweets, mostly chocolates.

The middle of the room is clear. Besides the easy chair, the piano bench, and two chairs at the phonograph table, there is one stray chair. It stands near the fireplace. On the walls, engravings; mostly Piranesis and mezzotint portraits. No paintings.

Pickering is seated at the table, putting down some cards and a tuning-fork which he has been using. Higgins is standing up near him, closing two or three file drawers which are hanging out. He appears in the morning light as a robust, vital, appetizing sort of man of forty or thereabouts, dressed in a professional-looking black frock-coat with a white linen collar and black silk tie. He is of the energetic, scientific type, heartily, even violently interested in everything that can be studied as a scientific subject, and careless about himself and other people, including their feelings. He is, in fact, but for his years and size, rather like a very impetuous baby "taking notice" eagerly and loudly, and requiring almost as much watching to keep him out of unintended mischief. His manner varies from genial bullying when he is in a good humor to stormy petulance when anything goes wrong; but he is so entirely frank and void of malice that he remains likeable even in his least reasonable moments.

▲ *Pygmalion* at The Garrick Theatre, London, 2011

Guiding conceptual question

How do literary texts offer insights and challenges?

Readers of dramatic texts have to study how the different elements of the text interact to create a dramatic effect that is not of significance for the "page" as much as it is for the "stage" in live performance. As in prose with the fictitious reader, there is a fictitious audience that the playwright is addressing for whom the action on stage creates expectations, pushes them to make inferences or arouses feelings for what transpires. In the following extract from Scene Three of Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Stella and Blanche return home after an evening out. It is poker night for Stanley and his male friends. At the same time, when Mitch is flirting with Blanche, Stanley's simmering tension escalates and finally expresses itself in violence. In this excerpt, the presentation of Blanche through her speech, Mitch's response to her, the stage directions, and even lighting and sound spotlight how separate she is from the world she has come to inhabit, that of Stanley and Stella.

◀ Tennessee Williams at the stage set of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, 1947

MITCH: You are Stella's sister, are you not?

BLANCHE: Yes, Stella is my precious little sister. I call her little in spite of the fact she's somewhat older than I. Just slightly. Less than a year. Will you do something for me?

MITCH: Sure. What?

BLANCHE: I bought this adorable little colored paper lantern at a Chinese shop on Bourbon. Put it over the light bulb! Will you, please?

MITCH: Be glad to.

BLANCHE: I can't stand a naked light bulb, any more than I can a rude remark or a vulgar action.

MITCH [*adjusting the lantern*]: I guess we strike you as being a pretty rough bunch.

BLANCHE: I'm very adaptable – to circumstances.

MITCH: Well, that's a good thing to be. You are visiting Stanley and Stella?

BLANCHE: Stella hasn't been so well lately, and I came down to help her for a while. She's very run down.

MITCH: You're not –

BLANCHE: Married? No, no. I'm an old maid schoolteacher!

MITCH: You may teach school but you're certainly not an old maid.

BLANCHE: Thank you, sir! I appreciate your gallantry!

MITCH: So you are in the teaching profession?

BLANCHE: Yes. Ah, yes...

MITCH: Grade school or high school or –

STANLEY [*bellowing*]: *Mitch!*

MITCH: *Coming!*

BLANCHE: Gracious, what lung power! ... I teach high school. In Laurel.

MITCH: What do you teach? What subject?

BLANCHE: Guess!

MITCH: I bet you teach art or music? [BLANCHE *laughs delicately*] Of course I could be wrong. You might teach arithmetic.

BLANCHE: Never arithmetic, sir. Never arithmetic! [*with a laugh*] I don't even know my multiplication tables! No, I have the misfortune of being an English instructor. I attempt to instil a bunch of bobby-soxers and drug-store Romeos with reverence for Hawthorne and Whitman and Poe!

MITCH: I guess that some of them are more interested in other things.

BLANCHE: How very right you are! Their literary heritage is not what most of them treasure above all else! But they're sweet things! And in the spring, it's touching to notice them making their first discovery of love! As if nobody had ever known it before!

[*The bathroom door opens and* STELLA *comes out.* BLANCHE *continues talking to* MITCH.]

Oh! Have you finished? Wait – I'll turn on the radio.

[*She turns the knobs on the radio and it begins to play "Wien, Wien, nur du allein". BLANCHE waltzes to the music with romantic gestures.* MITCH *is delighted and moves in awkward imitation like a dancing bear.* STANLEY *stalks fiercely through the portières into the bedroom. He crosses to the small white radio and snatches it off the table. With a shouted oath, he tosses the instrument out the window.*]

STELLA: *Drunk – drunk – animal thing, you!* [*She rushes through to the poker table*] All of you-please go home! If any of you have one spark of decency in you –

BLANCHE [*wildly*]: Stella, watch out, he's –

[STANLEY *charges after* STELLA.]

MEN [*feebly*]: Take it easy, Stanley. Easy, fellow. – Let's all –

STELLA: You lay your hands on me and I'll –

[*She backs out of sight. He advances and disappears. There is the sound of a blow,* STELLA *cries out.* BLANCHE *screams and runs into the kitchen. The men rush forward and there is grappling and cursing. Something is overturned with a crash.*]

BLANCHE [*shrilly*]: My sister is going to have a baby!

MITCH: This is terrible.

BLANCHE: Lunacy, absolute lunacy!

MITCH: Get him in here, men.

[STANLEY *is forced, pinioned by the two men, into the bedroom. He nearly throws them off. Then all at once he subsides and is limp in their grasp. They speak quietly and lovingly to him and he leans his face on one of their shoulders.*]

STELLA [*in a high, unnatural voice, out of sight*]: I want to go away. I want to go away!

MITCH: Poker shouldn't be played in a house with women.

From *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Scene 3 by Tennessee Williams (1951)

Presenting the characters

Activity

1. Identify the use of speech, stage directions and props to present Blanche as well as other characters in this extract. To what extent can you use the evidence from the text to support the following statements?
   a. The character of Blanche is "confused, unbalanced and brilliant" (Thomas W Hodgkinson in his review of John Lahr's book on Tennessee Williams *Mad Pilgrimage of the Flesh* in *The Spectator*, September 2014).
   b. The character of Blanche has almost a magical quality.
   c. The character of Blanche is a poetic creation of Williams.
2. Reflect on the three aspects of interpretation above. How would each of these impact the sympathy the audience might feel for Blanche?

From reading to understanding to articulation

Throughout this book, we will be referring to writing skills as well as assessment components with reference to the texts discussed. However, as you embark on the English A literature course be mindful of four principles and practices set out below. These are essential for your learning and for meeting the demands of the course.

The learner portfolio

Your learner portfolio is the space where you can practise your writing skills on a regular basis. Establishing the habit of responding as often as possible to your reading by writing a short paragraph, which you can later reread and edit, will go a long way toward developing your writing confidence. Your practice should be regular and incremental and should be followed by self-assessment.

Planning

Time and effort spent on planning are always well spent. When preparing for an assignment on a text, to ensure that your writing will be focused and coherent, allow time to:

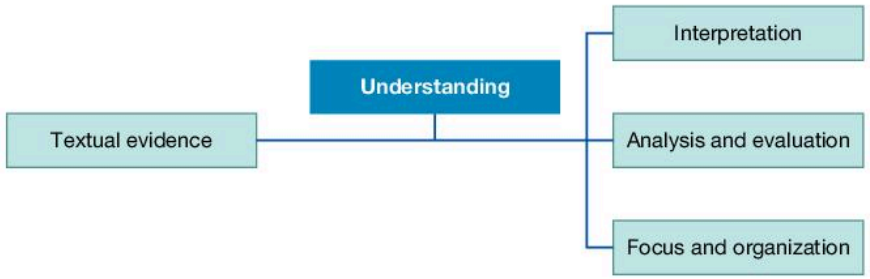
ATL

Self-management skills

- reflect on the text
- recollect and select the most pertinent arguments and references
- look at the bigger picture of the points you are making.

Focus on the evidence

When you discuss texts, orally or in writing, the text itself is the starting point of the analysis. Your reading has offered you an interpretation as you consider the author's use of language. When you articulate your understanding and interpretation of a text, the springboard of your analysis is the language of the text, and this will serve as evidence for your interpretation. When the textual evidence is the focus of your analysis, your articulation will show understanding of the text, and your interpretation will be sustained. In other words, you will write better and address the assessment criteria more effectively.



Use of the evidence

The tasks you will be asked to complete for this course will require a personal response and a high level of questioning and engagement. You can achieve this and also meet the assessment criteria by putting the evidence to use in your work. The following model of the "four Is" incorporates aspects of the assessment criteria such as the obvious analysis and evaluation of appreciation of writer's choices as well as

coherence and support of the interpretation in your writing. Working with the "four Is" in your practice work in the learner portfolio will go a long way towards preparing you for the more lengthy assignments. As a starting point, you can think of the following as the guideline for writing a paragraph and a prerequisite for a sustained textual interpretation.

Introduction of the evidence

Integration of the evidence

Interpretation of the evidence

Implications of the evidence

As an example, below is a paragraph from an essay on Henrik Ibsen's play *Hedda Gabler*, in which the student follows the "four Is" model.

Topic sentence/argument	Ibsen attaches contextual meaning to his characters, signifying their entrances and exits as presentations of societal norms that Hedda must grapple with. As they enter
Introduction of evidence	Ibsen's stage, they illustrate the goings on of the world around Hedda. Since Hedda is confined to the host for the duration of the play, the reader is unable to follow her own experiences outside, so they must instead be brought to her. Ms Elvsted, for instance,
Integration of evidence	is the perfect embodiment of the female stereotype with her "pretty soft features" (225) and her "remarkably light, almost flaxen, and unusually abundant and wavy" hair.
Interpretation of evidence	She appears to be soft and gentle, easy to manipulate—weak, as is often the stereotype associated with being feminine in this play, and why Hedda is considered to be so
Introduction of evidence	masculine. As soon as Ms Elvsted enters (onto Ibsen's stage and thereby into Hedda's world), Hedda changes her demeanour from the staunchly assertive tone she adopts
Integration of evidence	in her conversation with Mr Tesman to that of a warm, welcoming housewife. She uses phrases that are clichés of this archetype, such as "How do you do?" (225) and
Interpretation of evidence	"It's delightful to see you again" (225). She begins to concern herself with typically mundane things such as the flowers that Ms Elvsted gives her and coos over Ms Elvsted in a motherly, feminine manner. However, the moment Mr Tesman exits, she
Integration of evidence	corners Ms Elvsted, a sly fox on the hunt for juicy gossip, for a "cosy, confidential chat"
Interpretation of evidence	(229). Her manner changes completely in the absence of Mr Tesman, which suggests that she is perhaps putting on the show not for Ms Elvsted but for Mr Tesman. When
Integration of evidence	Ms Elvsted's perfect femininity enters the stage, she feels threatened by it, reflected by her remark on Ms Elvsted's "irritating hair, that she was always showing off" (224);
Interpretation of evidence	thus she must compensate for it by appearing more feminine herself. Perhaps this is because Hedda secretly yearns to be what everyone wants her to be—that she wishes
Implications of evidence	she were not different and could provide Mr Tesman with the perfect wife that he, and the rest of society, wants. This divulges a vulnerable side of Hedda that would have gone unnoticed if it had not been for Ms Elvsted's graceful entrance and Mr Tesman's convenient exit. This reflects a possible side to Hedda that is deeply rooted. She is unhappy in her own skin and feels out of place in her own life because society does not have a place for women like her.

The process of learning how to integrate textual evidence (others' words) into the grammatical structure of your own sentence—otherwise known as "embedding" quotes—can sometimes be tricky. You might need regular practice to perfect the skill of integrating quoted material. Examiners notice this skill in your written work, and it certainly helps to achieve greater mastery. If you struggle with this, the ten models with corresponding exercises below will help you. Take the time to work through them carefully. The models feature Shakespeare's play *Macbeth*. Following the model for each exercise, integrate the two sentences so that the single combined sentence contains both your claim (analysis) and textual evidence that supports it (key words and phrases from the play). Remember to cite the lines you quote as shown in each model.

ATL

Communication and self-management skills

Activity

Ten models featuring *Macbeth*

Model A

Introduction of textual evidence

Lady Macbeth questions Macbeth's masculinity in order to coerce him into killing Duncan.

Textual evidence

LADY MACBETH
When you durst do it, then you were a man.
And to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. (1.7.528-530)

Integration of textual evidence

In order to coerce him into killing Duncan, Lady Macbeth questions his masculinity by telling him he "would/Be so much more the man" if he were to commit the deed (1.7.529-530).

Model A practice

Introduction of textual evidence

Macbeth questions his own masculinity as he attempts to coerce himself into killing Duncan.

Textual evidence

MACBETH
Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? (2.1.613–614)

Model B

Introduction of textual evidence

In some ways, the witches' power is ephemeral; in other ways, it is concretely displayed.

Textual evidence

ALL [WITCHES]
The weird sisters, hand in hand,
Posters of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about,
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace, the charm's wound up.
Enter Macbeth and Banquo.

MACBETH
So foul and fair a day I have not seen. (1.3.130–137)

Integration of textual evidence

The play constantly displays the witches' power as both ephemeral and concrete; as "Posters of the sea and land," they "wound up" the charms of their words into forms that mortals like Macbeth can see (1.3.131,135).

Model B practice

Introduction of textual evidence

Lady Macbeth wishes to assume a direct role in the fulfillment of the witches' prophecy; Macbeth would rather assume an indirect role.

Textual evidence

LADY MACBETH
Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty. (1.5.391-394)

MACBETH
The eye wink at the hand—yet let that be
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see. (1.4.340–341)

Model C

Introduction of evidence

The language of *Macbeth* is riddled with incongruous statements.

Textual evidence

> **ALL [WITCHES]**
> Fair is foul and foul is fair,
> Hover through the fog and filthy air. (1.1.14–15)

Integration of textual evidence

The language of Macbeth is riddled with incongruous statements such as "Fair is foul and foul is fair" (1.1.14).

Model C practice

Introduction of evidence

Macbeth invites us into a world in which people say cryptic things.

Textual evidence

> **MACBETH**
> My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
> Shakes so my single state of man that function
> Is smothered in surmise, and nothing is
> But what is not. (1.3.250–253)

Model D

Introduction of evidence

Duncan rewards Macbeth's valour on the battlefield with the promise of magnanimous favours.

Textual evidence

> **DUNCAN**
> I have begun to plant thee, and will labor
> To make thee full of growing. (1.4.313–314)

Integration of textual evidence

Duncan rewards Macbeth's valour on the battlefield with the promise of magnanimous favours that will make him "full of growing" (1.4.314).

Model D practice

Introduction of evidence

Macbeth is respectful of Duncan's magnanimity, albeit briefly.

Textual evidence

MACBETH
We will proceed no further in this business.
He hath honored me of late and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon. (1.7.507–511)

Model E

Introduction of evidence

Macbeth is in a quandary when he is faced with the task of killing Duncan.

Textual evidence

MACBETH
He's here in double trust:
First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
Who should against the murderer shut the door,
Not bear the knife myself. (1.7.486–490)

Integration of textual evidence

As Duncan's "kinsman", "subject" and "host", Macbeth is in a quandary when he is faced with being the one to "bear the knife" as Duncan's "murderer" (1.7.487–490).

Model E practice

Introduction of textual evidence

Macbeth resolves his quandary by surrendering to the duplicity that his wife enforces upon him.

Textual evidence

MACBETH
Away, and mock the time with fairest show,
False face must hide what the false heart doth know. (1.7.565–567)

Model F

Introduction of textual evidence

After the murder of Duncan, Macbeth perceives every noise he hears as ominous.

Textual evidence

MACBETH
Whence is that knocking?
How is't with me when every noise appalls me? (2.2.718–720)

Integration of textual evidence

After the murder of Duncan, Macbeth perceives every noise he hears as ominous, cursing "that knocking" that "appalls" him (2.2.718–720).

Model F practice

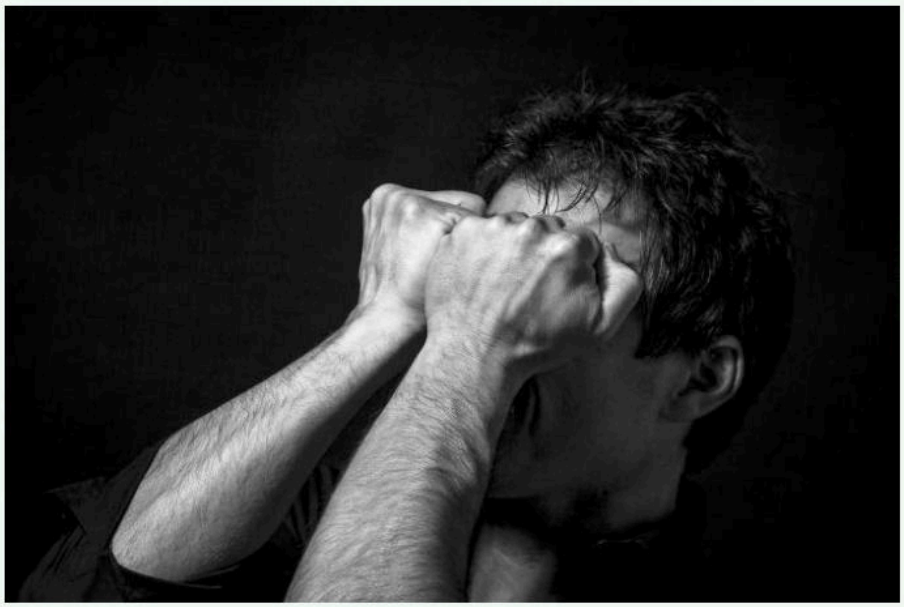
Introduction of evidence

The ominous presence in Scotland is perceptible by low- and high-status characters alike.

Textual evidence

OLD MAN
On Tuesday last,
A falcon, tow'ring in her pride of place
Was by a mousing owl hawked at and killed.

ROSS
And Duncan's horses—a thing most strange and certain—
Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,
Turned wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience as they would
Make war with mankind. (2.4.937–945)



Model G

Introduction of evidence

Lady Macbeth ridicules Macbeth's fearfulness, which is based on his piety.

Textual evidence

MACBETH
I am afraid to think what I have done,
Look on't again I dare not. (2.2.709–710)

LADY MACBETH
My hands are of your color, but I shame
To wear a heart so white. (2.2.726–727)

Integration of textual evidence

After Macbeth piously admits that he is "afraid to think" about and fearful to "Look on" what he has "done" (2.2.709-710), Lady Macbeth looks on him with "shame" for wearing a "heart so white" (2.2.726–727).

Model G practice

Introduction of evidence

Macbeth's piety, which Lady Macbeth dismisses, is manifested in his awareness that his actions will be judged by a higher force.

Textual evidence

MACBETH
But wherefore could not I pronounce "Amen"?
I had most need of blessing, and "Amen"
Stuck in my throat.

LADY MACBETH
These deeds must not be thought
After these ways: so, it will make us mad. (2.2.687–690)

Model H

Introduction of evidence

Lady Macbeth's claim that she would kill her own infant, nursing child, clearly registers her volatile character.

Textual evidence

LADY MACBETH
I have given suck and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me;
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn
As you have done to this. (1.7.533–538)

Integration of textual evidence

Lady Macbeth's volatile character is clearly evident in her claim that she "would, while it was smiling in my face," kill her own nursing infant by plucking her "nipple from his boneless gums" and dashing "the brains out" (1.7.535–537).

Model H practice

Introduction of evidence

Lady Macbeth's volatility is clearly shown in the strength she gathers from her conniving deeds.

Textual evidence

> **LADY MACBETH**
> That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold,
> What hath quenched them hath given me fire. (2.2.649–650)

Model I

Introduction of evidence

The porter is innately aware that he is somehow involved in the evil emanating from within Macbeth's castle.

Textual evidence

> **PORTER**
> But this place is too cold for hell. I'll
> devil-porter it no further. (2.3.759–760)

Integration of textual evidence

Having said that he will no longer be a "devil-porter" (2.3.760) to "this place" (2.3.759), the porter shows that he is innately aware that he is somehow involved in the evil emanating from within Macbeth's castle.

Model I practice

Introduction of textual evidence

The porter knows that the equivocal behaviours he is vicariously emanating do not lead to grace.

Textual evidence

> **PORTER**
> Faith, here's
> an equivocator that could swear in both the scales against either
> scale, who
> committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to
> heaven. (2.3.750–755)

Model J

Introduction of evidence

Lady Macbeth's fainting enhances and further contrasts her specious response to Macduff's straightforward revelation of Duncan's murder.

Textual evidence

MACDUFF
O Banquo, Banquo,
Our royal master's murdered.

LADY MACBETH
Woe, alas!
What, in our house? (2.3.845–847)

Integration of textual evidence

Lady Macbeth's fainting enhances and further contrasts her specious response—"What, in our house?" (2.3.847)—to Macduff's straightforward revelation of Duncan's murder.

Model J practice

Introduction of textual evidence

Macbeth's specious admission that he killed the king's guards is conveniently followed by Lady Macbeth's fainting episode.

Textual evidence

MACBETH
Oh, yet I do repent me of my fury
That I did kill them. (2.3.870–871)

Notice that none of the model integration sentences resort to using brackets [ ] to adjust the grammar or spelling of the quoted words; rather it is up to you, the "borrower" of the quoted words, to adjust your grammar or spelling to fit the words you quote. The quoted words should not be changed; rather it is best to change *your words* to suit the words you integrate.

Language we use to talk about language

It is not uncommon for students of literature to study lists of literary devices and their definitions and then attempt to apply them to texts. While it is very important to know and understand these terms and their definitions, this practice can mislead us to simply identify and "list" these elements in the text to justify our definitions. Unfortunately, this does not always allow us to formulate a cohesive interpretation through a more detailed and in-depth exploration of these elements. For this reason, it is more useful to think of these conventions as prompts for our questioning rather than descriptive definitions.

Stylistic devices in prose fiction

Activity

1. Consider the following list of stylistic devices and questions and how they could be matched. The list below is not exhaustive and is only intended as a tool for practising to read texts in a reflective and responsive way.

ATL

Thinking skills

If the story is not told in a linear way, but instead includes flashbacks and/or flashforwards, how does that affect our understanding?	Atmosphere
Who is telling the story and how involved is this voice with the characters and the action? Why is this important for our interpretation?	Characters
How much detail and what kind of detail is the reader given about the characters? How does this information shape their presentation?	Diction
Are there any words used in an unusual and original way and what/whom are they associated with? Does the reader notice words and phrases that seem to have a connection in meaning?	Imagery
How does the main thought, idea, feeling or topic develop in the text?	Irony
Are some ideas presented indirectly through the use of objects or functions that can represent them? In what ways is this done and how does this impact the presentation of characters or actions?	Mood
Is there an action or a situation that has the opposite effect of that intended and how does this affect the characters?	Narrative time
Does the narrator express an attitude in reference to a particular character, idea or situation and how does this affect our interpretation?	Narrator
Are there any unusual patterns in the way words are ordered and are these linked in any character, action, situation, thought or feeling, for example?	Structure
To what extent does the author make use of an appeal to our senses in the narrative? Are references to colours or light connected with a particular aspect of the narrative?	Symbol
How is the reader made to feel when reading the text and how is this accomplished?	Syntax
What is the predominant feeling of the narrative and which elements contribute to creating it?	Tone

a. Is it possible that some of these questions could relate to several of the devices listed?

b. If so, why do you think this is?

Comparing descriptions of characters

Activity

Read the following excerpts by two different authors, Jhumpa Lahiri and Edith Pearlman. Each excerpt describes a female character. Read the excerpts slowly and try to visualize the two women as they are described by Lahiri and Pearlman, respectively.

"Interpreter of Maladies" by Jhumpa Lahiri

He observed her. She wore a red-and-white-checkered skirt that stopped above her knees, slip-on shoes with a square wooden heel, and a close-fitting blouse styled like a man's undershirt. The blouse was decorated at chest-level with a calico appliqué in the shape of a strawberry. She was a short woman, with small hands like paws, her frosty pink finger-nails painted to match her lips, and was slightly plump in her figure. Her hair, shorn only a little longer than her husband's, was parted far to one side. She was wearing large dark brown sunglasses with a pinkish tint to them, and carried a big straw bag, almost as big as her torso, shaped like a bowl, with a water bottle poking out of it. She walked slowly, carrying some puffed rice tossed with peanuts and chili peppers in a large packet made from newspapers.

From "Interpreter of Maladies" in *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri (1999/2000)

"Mates" by Edith Pearlman

Mitsuko herself was not much bigger than a child. By the time the youngest began high school even he had outstripped his mother. Her little face contained a soft beige mouth, a nose of no consequence, and those mild eyes. Her short hair was clipped every month by Keith. (In return Mitsuko trimmed Keith's receding curls and rusty beard.) She wore T-shirts and jeans and sneakers except for public occasions; then she wore a plum-colored skirt and a white silk blouse. I think it was always the same skirt and blouse. The school doctor once referred to her as generic, but when I asked him to identify the genus he sighed his fat sigh. "Female parent? All I mean is that she's stripped down." I agreed. It was as if nature had given her only the essentials: flat little ears; binocular vision; teeth strong enough for buffalo steak, though they were required to deal with nothing more fibrous than apples and raw celery (Mitsuko's cuisine was vegetarian).

From "Mates" in *Binocular Vision: New and Selected Stories* by Edith Pearlman (2013)

TOK

What new knowledge can be gained by reading two works on the same topic or theme?

1. Who is offering these descriptions to the reader? Is there an opinion expressed or a special focus on the character?
2. How do different perspectives contribute to the presentation of the two women?
3. Choose a detail that you find unusual or that strikes you as interesting. Why do you find it so?
4. Think of a woman you know. What are some prominent characteristics of this individual? How would you present these in a literary way?

Guiding conceptual question

How does language use vary among text types and among literary forms?

Stylistic devices in poetry

Activity

This activity considers stylistic devices in poetry and our terminology when discussing how poets use language to create meaning and effects.

1. Make a list of the poetry stylistic devices you are familiar with. Create questions that relate to these devices.
2. Read the poem below. Consider the questions you would like to ask as you explore its language and try to construct an interpretation.

"The Thought-Fox" by Ted Hughes

I imagine this midnight moment's forest:
Something else is alive
Beside the clock's loneliness
And this blank page where my fingers move.

Through the window I see no star:
Something more near
Though deeper within darkness
Is entering the loneliness:

Cold, delicately as the dark snow,
A fox's nose touches twig, leaf;
Two eyes serve a movement, that now
And again now, and now, and now

Sets neat prints into the snow
Between trees, and warily a lame
Shadow lags by stump and in hollow
Of a body that is bold to come

Across clearings, an eye,
A widening deepening greenness,
Brilliantly, concentratedly,
Coming about its own business

Till, with a sudden sharp hot stink of fox
It enters the dark hole of the head.
The window is starless still; the clock ticks,
The page is printed.

From *Collected Poems* by Ted Hughes (2005)

Now, think about the devices your questions could be linked to. If you are not sure of the term used for a specific use of language, this is good news. It means that you are discovering poetry through reading, not through a list of definitions, starting from the text rather than description of the device. Ask your teacher for help, consult peers or look up terms you are not familiar with.

3. How can these uses of language offer you insights into the poem?
4. Read the article "'The Though-Fox' by Ted Hughes: a close reading" at www.bl.uk/20th-century-literature/articles/a-close-reading-of-the-thought-fox. Compare your responses to the questions you formulated and Neil Roberts' analysis.
   a. Which aspects of his interpretation are new to you?
   b. To what extent is there overlap between your responses and Roberts' responses?
   c. How significant are the echoes of Blake and Coleridge in Hughes' poem?

Prose poetry

Prose poetry is a hybrid form, a combination of poetry and prose. Poetry and prose have many differences. Prose uses sentences and poetry uses lines. Poetry is concerned with rhythm and musicality that is not a *central* feature for prose. Poems tend towards compression while prose is more expansive. Poems contain images (sensory, visual or literal) that are usually brief, but there is more space to expand the image in prose. Prose (unless experimental or snapshot) emphasizes narrative arc, story or plot—beginning, middle, end—while poems tend to progress through images rather than plot or story. An example of prose poetry follows.

"Hang Up Your Coat, Take Off Your Shoes"
by Linda Black

Your bag will go in the cupboard for safekeeping. What have you got in here, it weighs a ton? I expect you'll be hungry.

He takes it all in: the pantry (one tin of corned beef, 3 eggs, a jar of home-made pickled onions, half a loaf of white bread—uncut, a slab of cheddar and a dish of yellow salted butter); high ceiling (it seems to go all the way to the roof), bare light-bulb, empty vase, single high backed chair, linoleum, Formica, and in a far corner a heavy chenille curtain hiding he suspects the passage to the stairs.

Where can I leave my umbrella?

From *Inventory* by Linda Black (2008)

Talking about context

In the process of reading and evaluating literary texts, you will often have to refer to the term "context" and consider your responses to texts with reference to a particular context. The framework shown below, taken from Beard (2001), is designed to support students in shaping their own perspectives, ideas and responses to texts. As such, it is a valuable tool in the process of accessing complex texts and constructing their meaning. During the course, students should be able to identify how the questions suggested by Beard (2001) are asked, explicitly or implicitly, and where pertinent and relevant. It is important to stress that these are not listed in any sort of hierarchy. The purpose of this model for our course is not to offer a frame in which we will fit our reading but ways into questioning aspects of literary texts that contribute to their meanings.

The WRITER

- What do we know about the writer's life, values, assumptions, gender, race, class, sexual orientation and so on?
- What do we know about the values and assumptions prevalent in the culture in which the writer lived? How was the writer influenced by these values and to what extent did the writer challenge them?
- What political/economic issues were important at the time?

The TEXT

- What is its publishing history? For example: are there different versions, is it read in translation; was it originally serialized; is it part of a larger text such as a newspaper or an anthology?
- What sources contributed to it?
- What is the text's relationship to other texts; does it, for instance, echo the language of another text, the ideas of another text?
- What is the history of performance and what audience and/or readers has it had over time? What previous critical reviews has it received and how do they affect the way we view the text now?

The READER

- What is your previous reading experience?
- How do your values, assumptions, gender, race, class, age, sexual orientation and so on affect the way you read the text?
- How are your views shaped by the political and economic issues of your time?
- How are your views shaped by the values and assumptions of the culture in which you live?

The READINGS

- How do different critical schools respond to this text?
- How can different critical theories and methods be applied to the text?
- How is the text ambiguous in its meanings?
- What is left unsaid in the text?

The LANGUAGE

- What generic conventions does the text follow, and how does the reader recognize them?
- How is the text's narrative organized?
- How do various linguistic features affect the way we read the text?
- In what ways can we approach the question "How does this text work?"

Based on Beard (2001)

TOK

Does authorial intention exist? To what extent is its existence or absence important? What can a reader get to know about an author through reading that author's work?

An author's perspective

Activity

Read the closing paragraph from Tennessee Williams's introduction to *A Streetcar Named Desire*—a play discussed in the "Reading drama" section above. In his introduction, Williams (1951) discusses the process and purpose of his writing.

> "Then what is good? The obsessive interest in human affairs, plus a certain amount of compassion and moral conviction, that first made the experience of living something that must be translated into pigment or music or bodily movement or poetry or prose or anything that's dynamic and expressive—that's what's good for you if you're at all serious in your aims. William Saroyan wrote a great play on this theme, that purity of heart is the one success worth having. 'In the time of your life-live!' That time is short and it doesn't return again. It is slipping away while I write this and while you read it, and the monosyllable of the clock is Loss, Loss, Loss, unless you devote your heart to its opposition."
>
> From the author's notes to *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951)

1. To what extent is this contextual consideration significant for our understanding of the play?
2. How does the perspective of the author shape his writing of the play?
3. What do both pieces (that is, the play as well as the introductory essay) share in terms of the writing style of Tennessee Williams?

Exploring the short story

The short story is a genre of prose fiction with unique characteristics and structural effects. Naturally, all prose fiction, the novel and the short story included, share devices that authors use to create meaning. The kinship of the short story with the novel has made the definition of the short story and the understanding of its characteristics difficult. Still, due to its length or its historical development or both, the short story is acknowledged to have properties that distinguish it from the novel. It is these properties that we will discuss below, with reference to some of Anton Chekhov's short stories as well as extracts from stories by other writers.

Guiding conceptual questions

How does language use vary among text types and among literary forms?
How does the structure or style of a literary text affect meaning?

The properties that distinguish the short story from the novel are structural and by extension stylistic. Short stories, because of their length or the way the genre has developed, have a relatively narrow focus on one character, one incident, one aspect of a situation, one episode, one "slice of life". This kind of focus inevitably influences the choices authors make regarding the use of language. If one were to use an analogy, this narrow focusing could be described as a writer looking at something through a microscope and making choices about the amount and the kind of detail he or she will share, along with the way these details will be presented. Naturally, the short story being a genre of prose fiction we will still refer to the literary terminology associated with the novel, such as character, plot and setting, but with an awareness of the unique manner in which short story writers make use of these elements.

Anton Chekhov

Anton Pavlovich Chekhov (1869–1904) was a Russian dramatist and short story writer. EM Forster, V Woolf, W Gerhardie, JM Murry—who placed him above Joyce and Proust—and especially K Mansfield were among early admirers.

Analysing a story using three-star questions

Activity

ATL

Thinking skills

Read the following story by Chekhov, published in 1886, and reflect on the thoughts and feelings in the story, the structure and the style.

1. Write at least three three-star questions that you consider important for understanding and analysing the story. (To check the definition of a three-star question, refer back to the section "Important development skills following reading".)
2. Identify the parts of the text that you would refer to as evidence when you attempt to respond to your three-star questions.

***A Trifle from Life* by Anton Chekhov**

A well-fed, red-cheeked young man called Nikolay Ilyitch Belyaev, of thirty-two, who was an owner of house property in Petersburg, and a devotee of the race-course, went one evening to see Olga Ivanovna Irnin, with whom he was living, or, to use his own expression, was dragging out a long, wearisome romance. And, indeed, the first interesting and enthusiastic pages of this romance had long been perused; now the pages dragged on, and still dragged on, without presenting anything new or of interest.

Not finding Olga Ivanovna at home, my hero lay down on the lounge chair and proceeded to wait for her in the drawing-room.

"Good-evening, Nikolay Ilyitch!" he heard a child's voice. "Mother will be here directly. She has gone with Sonia to the dress-maker's."

Olga Ivanovna son's, Alyosha—a boy of eight who looked graceful and very well cared for, who was dressed like a picture, in a black velvet jacket and long black stockings—was lying on the sofa in the same room. He was lying on a satin cushion and, evidently imitating an acrobat he had recently seen at

the circus, stuck up in the air first one leg and then the other. When his elegant legs were exhausted, he brought his arms into play or jumped up impulsively and went on all fours, trying to stand with his legs in the air. All this he was doing with the utmost gravity, gasping and groaning painfully as though he regretted that god had given him such a restless body.

"Ah, good-evening, my boy," said Belyaev. It's you! I did not notice you. Is your mother well?"

Alyosha, taking hold of the tip of his left toe with his right hand and falling into the most unnatural attitude, turned over, jumped up, and peeped at Belyaev from behind the big fluffy lampshade.

"What shall I say?" he said, shrugging his shoulders. "In reality mother's never well. You see, she is a woman, and women, Nikolay Ilyitch, have always something the matter with them."

Belyaev, having nothing better to do, began watching Alyosha's face. He had never before during the whole of his intimacy with Olga Ivanovna paid any attention to the boy, and had completely ignored his existence; the boy had been before his eyes, but he had not cared to think why he was there and what part he was playing.

In the twilight of the evening, Alyosha's face, with his white forehead and black, unblinking eyes, unexpectedly reminded Belyaev of Olga Ivanovna as she had been during the first pages of their romance. And he felt disposed to be friendly to the boy.

"Come here, insect," he said; "let me have a closer look at you."

The boy jumped off the sofa and skipped up to Belyaev.

"Well," began Nikolay Ilyitch, putting a hand on the boy's thin shoulder. "How are you getting on?"

"How shall I say! We used to get on a great deal better."

"Why?"

"It's very simple. Sonia and I used only to learn music and reading, and now they give us French poetry to learn. Have you been shaved lately?"

"Yes."

"Yes, I see you have. Your beard is shorter. Let me touch it … Does that hurt?"

"No."

"Why is it that if you pull one hair it hurts, but if you pull a lot at once it doesn't hurt a bit? Ha, ha! And, you know, it's a pity you don't have whiskers. Here ought to be shaved… but here at the sides the hair ought to be left. …"

The boy nestled up to Belyaev and began playing with his watch-chain.

"When I go to the high-school," he said, "mother is going to buy me a watch. I shall ask her to buy me a watch-chain like this. … What a locket! Father's got a locket like that, only yours has little bars on it and his has letters. … There's mother's portrait in the middle of his. Father has a different sort of chain now, not made with rings, but like ribbon. …"

"How do you know? Do you see your father?"

"I? M'm… no. … I…"

Alyosha blushed, and in great confusion, feeling caught in a lie, began zealously scratching the locket with his nail. … Belyaev looked steadily into his face and asked:

"Do you see your father?"

"N-no!"

"Come, speak frankly, on your honour. … I see from your face you are telling a fib. Once you've let a thing slip out it's no good wriggling about it. Tell me, do you see him? Come, as a friend."

Alyosha hesitated.

"You won't tell mother?" he said.

"As though I should!"

"On your honour?"

"On my honour."

"Do you swear?"

"Ah, you provoking boy! What do you take me for?"

Alyosha looked round him, then with wide-open eyes, whispered to him:

"Only, for goodness' sake, don't tell mother. … Don't tell any one at all, for it is a secret. I hope to goodness mother won't find out, or we should all catch it—Sonia, and I, and Pelagea. … Well, listen. … Sonia and I see father every Tuesday and Friday. When Pelagea takes us for a walk before dinner we go to the Apfel Restaurant, and there is father waiting for us. … He is always sitting in a room apart, where you know there's a marble table and an ash-tray in the shape of a goose without a back. …"

"What do you do there?"

"Nothing! First we say how-do-you-do, then we all sit round the table, and father treats us with coffee and pies, but I can't endure meat-pies! I like the pies made of cabbage and eggs. We eat such a lot that we have to try hard to eat as much as we can at dinner, for fear mother should notice."

"What do you talk about?"

"With father? About anything. He kisses us, he hugs us, tells us all sorts of amusing jokes. Do you know, he says when we are grown up he is going to take us to live with him. Sonia does not want to go, but I agree. Of course, I should miss mother; but, then, I should write her letters! It's a queer idea, but we would come and visit her on holidays—couldn't we? Father says, too, that he will buy me a horse. He's an awfully kind man! I can't understand why mother does not ask him to come and live with us, and why she forbids us to see him. You know he loves mother very much. He is always asking us how she is and what she is doing. When she was ill he clutched his head like this, and … and kept running about. He always tells us to be obedient and respectful to her. Listen. Is it true that we are unfortunate?"

"H'm! … Why?"

"That's what father says. 'You are unhappy children,' he says. It's strange to hear him, really. 'You are unhappy,' he says, 'I am unhappy, and mother's unhappy. You must pray to God,' he says; 'for yourselves and for her.'"

Alyosha let his eyes rest on a stuffed bird and sank into thought.

"So…" growled Belyaev. "So that's how you are going on. You arrange meetings at restaurants. And mother does not know?"

"No-o. … How should she know? Pelagea would not tell her for anything, you know. The day before yesterday he gave us some pears. As sweet as jam! I ate two."

"H'm! … Well, and I say… Listen. Did father say anything about me?"

"About you? What shall I say?"

Alyosha looked searchingly into Belyaev's face and shrugged his shoulders.

"He didn't say anything in particular."

"For instance, what did he say?"

"You won't be offended?"

"What next? Why, does he abuse me?"

"He doesn't abuse you, but you know he is angry with you. He says mother is unhappy owing to you… and that you have ruined mother. You know he is so queer! I explain to him that you are kind, that you never scold mother; but he only shakes his head."

"So he says I have ruined her?"

"Yes; you mustn't be offended, Nikolay Ilyitch."

Belyaev got up, stood still for a moment, and walked up and down the drawing-room.

"That's strange and… ridiculous!" he muttered, shrugging his shoulders and smiling sarcastically. "He's entirely to blame, and I have ruined her, eh? An innocent lamb, I must say. So he told you I ruined your mother?"

"Yes, but… you said you would not be offended, you know."

"I am not offended, and… and it is not your business. Why, it's… why, it's positively ridiculous! I have been thrust into it like a chicken in the broth, and now it seems I am to blame!"

A ring was heard. The boy sprang up from his place and ran out. A minute later a lady came into the room with a little girl; this was Olga Ivanovna, Alyosha's mother. Alyosha followed them in, skipping and jumping, humming aloud and waving his hands. Belyaev nodded, and went on walking up and down.

"Of course, whose fault is it if not mine?" he muttered with a snort. "He is right! He is an injured husband."

"What are you talking about?" asked Olga Ivanovna.

"What about? … Why, just listen to the tales your lawful spouse is spreading now! It appears that I am a scoundrel and a villain, that I have ruined you and the children. All of you are unhappy, and I am the only happy one! Wonderfully, wonderfully happy!"

"I don't understand, Nikolay. What's the matter?"

"Why, listen to this young gentleman!" said Belyaev, pointing to Alyosha.

Alyosha flushed crimson, then turned pale, and his whole face began working with terror.

"Nikolay Ilyitch," he said in a loud whisper. "Sh-sh!"

Olga Ivanovna looked in surprise at Alyosha, then at Belyaev, then at Alyosha again.

"Just ask him," Belyaev went on. "Your Pelagea, like a regular fool, takes them about to restaurants and arranges meetings with their papa. But that's not the point: the point is that their dear papa is a victim, while I'm a wretch who has broken up both your lives. …"

"Nikolay Ilyitch," moaned Alyosha. "Why, you promised on your word of honour!"

"Oh, get away!" said Belyaev, waving him off. "This is more important than any word of honour. It's the hypocrisy revolts me, the lying! …"

"I don't understand it," said Olga Ivanovna, and tears glistened in her eyes. "Tell me, Alyosha," she turned to her son. "Do you see your father?"

Alyosha did not hear her; he was looking with horror at Belyaev.

"It's impossible," said his mother; "I will go and question Pelagea."

Olga Ivanovna went out.

"I say, you promised on your word of honour!" said Alyosha, trembling all over.

Belyaev dismissed him with a wave of his hand, and went on walking up and down. He was absorbed in his grievance and was oblivious of the boy's presence, as he had always been. He, a grown-up, serious person, had no thought to spare for boys. And Alyosha sat down in the corner and told Sonia with horror how he had been deceived. He was trembling, stammering, and crying. It was the first time in his life that he had been brought into such coarse contact with lying; till then he had not known that there are in the world, besides sweet pears, pies and expensive watches, a great many things for which the language of children has no expression.

Analysis of a story's elements

Activity

Having read and questioned the story, consider how Chekhov makes use of the following elements: setting, point of view, character, theme, plot, conflict, tone and mood. The following are some questions you could ask after reading the story.

1. Do any of these elements seem more significant or prominent than others?
2. Are some of these treated in an unusual way? If so, how?
3. Which of the patterns of development discussed previously can you see in the story?
4. If you were to write a definition of the short story based solely on the story you just read, what would this definition be?
5. Compare your definition to other definitions from your peers. How are they similar or different?

ATL

Thinking and social skills

Chekhov has been a major influence on the genre of the short story, and many writers have expressed admiration for his craft and looked to him for inspiration. What Chekhov often does with his stories is to "dispense with the striking incident" and free himself from the conventions of "the highly plotted and formalized story" which used to be the "norm" during his time (May 1994).

Core concept

TRANSFORMATION

As a result of this new way of approaching the form and the plot of the story, Chekhov's stories marked the beginnings of a new or modern kind of short fiction. This new kind of short fiction combined the specific detail of realism and the poetic lyricism of romanticism; that is, combining the presentation of everyday familiar things as they are with an expression of emotion in an imaginative way.

Core concept

REPRESENTATION

It is this unique style of writing that made him such an influence on the genre, opening new perspectives on the writing of short fiction. According to May (1994), two further characteristics of his stories are how minimal they are and the use he makes of "character as mood". The question then is: what are we to understand by the unusual phrase "character as mood"? If mood is understood as the feeling the writer creates in the story through his or her choice of language then what we understand is that the presentation of character, through physical description, dialogue, other characters and narrative perspective is done in a way that focuses on the creation of a certain mood rather than the actual qualities of the character. Let us read the opening of another of Chekhov's short stories, *Neighbours*, and examine how Chekhov uses language in his character presentation to create mood.

Neighbours by Anton Chekhov

Pyotr Mihalitch Ivashin was very much out of humour: his sister, a young girl, had gone away to live with Vlassitch, a married man. To shake off the despondency and depression which pursued him at home and in the fields, he called to his aid his sense of justice, his genuine and noble ideas—he had always defended free-love!—but this was of no avail, and he always came back to the same conclusion as their foolish old nurse, that his sister had acted wrongly and that Vlassitch had abducted his sister. And that was distressing.

His mother did not leave her room all day long; the old nurse kept sighing and speaking in whispers; his aunt had been on the point of taking her departure every day, and her trunks were continually being brought down to the hall and carried up again to her room. In the house, in the yard, and in the garden it was as still as though there were someone dead in the house. His aunt, the servants, and even the peasants, so it seemed to Pyotr Mihalitch, looked at him enigmatically and with perplexity, as though they wanted to say "Your sister has been seduced; why are you doing nothing?" And he reproached himself for inactivity, though he did not know precisely what action to have taken.

On the one hand, Chekhov is explicit about Pyotr's state of mind, placing it in a most prominent position in the story, the very first two lines, and thereby forging the mood in the very first sentence. Subsequently, Pyotr's feelings are presented in an escalating fashion: from being "out of humour" to feeling "despondency and depression". Pyotr experiences these feelings at home and in the fields no less; it seems that he cannot easily escape them. On the other hand, his efforts to appease his despondency and depression by "calling to his aid his sense of justice" are futile, and Pyotr has to abandon his perspective and agree with the old nurse. The choice of words to describe Pyotr's feelings, as well as the development and defeatist resolution of his inner struggle, establish a mood of anxiety and ambivalence. This mood is further enhanced by presenting the reactions of other characters by also implicating Pyotr because they are *his* mother and *his* aunt. The mood around Pyotr reaches a climactic moment in the description when Pyotr encounters "in the house, in the yard, and in the garden"—that is, everywhere—making it impossible for Pyotr to accept or even ignore. This contaminating mood becomes more specific and intense when its identification as a feeling of mourning and loss is compared to having "some one dead in the house". As for Pyotr, he feels responsible for not taking action to right the wrong committed, and he is made to feel helpless by the unarticulated accusation. The conflicted, guilt- and anxiety-ridden mood of the passage is expressed directly through the narrative voice, describing directly how Pyotr feels in the final three lines of the passage.

Analysis of different stories by Chekhov

Activity

1. Read *A Trifle from Life* and the excerpt from *Neighbours* (above) again as well as the excerpt from *Peasants* (below). Reflect on the use of minimalism, mood, realism and lyricism.
2. Write a short analysis of the extract from *Peasants* using the mood analysis of *Neighbours* as a model. This kind of task is very similar to the literary analysis you will have to do for paper 1. What are the challenges of this task for you?

ATL

Communication and self-management skills

TOK

What new knowledge can be gained by reading multiple works by the same author?

***Peasants* by Anton Chekhov**

Those who were sitting above looked round, and a terrible and extraordinary spectacle met their eyes. On the thatched roof of one of the end cottages stood a column of flame, seven feet high, which curled round and scattered sparks in all directions as though it were a fountain. And all at once the whole roof burst into bright flame, and the crackling of the fire was audible.

The light of the moon was dimmed, and the whole village was by now bathed in a red quivering glow: black shadows moved over the ground, there was a smell of burning, and those who ran up from below were all gasping and could not speak for trembling; they jostled against each other, fell down, and they could hardly see in the unaccustomed light, and did not recognize each other. It was terrible. What seemed particularly dreadful was that doves were flying over the fire in the smoke; and in the tavern, where they did not yet know of the fire, they were still singing and playing the concertina as though there were nothing the matter.

"Uncle Semyon's on fire," shouted a loud, coarse voice.

Stories about material objects

Global issue

The impact of material culture on social and personal values

Material objects (things) define us and often reflect choices we make about our lives and the presentation of our selves. In real life, others "read us" through the objects we use and associate ourselves with.

The following two excerpts—from *The Things They Carried*, Tim O'Brien's "true war story" about Vietnam and the short story *Just Things* by Danutė Kalinauskaitė—use things, material objects, to tell a story and express ideas, thoughts and feelings. Tim O'Brien's narrator is "reading" the characters and the setting with reference to the objects mentioned while Danutė Kalinauskaitė offers us a contemplation on the use of objects.

Core concept

CULTURE

Building comparative skills

Activity

For examination paper 2, you will be asked to compare texts as a response to the question. Practising comparing and contrasting texts can be of great use to you, not just for this task but for the development of your analytical skills overall. For all the tasks in the course you will need to use textual evidence of the writer's choices to support your arguments.

Look back to the three ways of reading defined in the section "Approaching a poem for the first time": acquaintance (holistic), knowledge (structural) and understanding (analytical reading). Read the following excerpts three times, focusing once on each of these three types of reading. Identify clearly the evidence that you will use to support your interpretation. Draft two comparisons according to the following instructions. Bullet points or notes will suffice for this activity.

1. Draft a comparison based on formal features of the text, starting with an argument such as the following.

   "The third-person narrator in *The Things They Carried* offers a limited and somewhat detached presentation of the characters and allows the objects to reveal something about each individual and by extension the group, while the first-person narrative in *Just Things* includes a personal opinion and focuses on the individual's experience and perspective of past and present."

2. Draft a comparison based on the textual evidence, for example the narrative attributing significance to an aspect or idea as follows.

   "The repeated references to Ted Lavender's death add further significance to this event in *The Things They Carried* by reflecting the trauma of the experience and its haunting quality. In *Just Things* the difference of perspective between the narrator and her students is made even more pronounced by the narrator quoting their "soshal" (misspelling included).

3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of these two approaches? What would a combination of the two allow you to express better in your comparison?

The Things They Carried by Tim O'Brien

The things they carried were largely determined by necessity. Among the necessities or near-necessities were P-38 can openers, pocket knives, heat tabs, wristwatches, dog tags, mosquito repellent, chewing gum, candy, cigarettes, salt tablets, packets of Kool-Aid, lighters, matches, sewing kits, Military Payment Certificates, C rations, and two or three canteens of water. Together, these items weighed between 15 and 20 pounds, depending upon a man's habits or rate of metabolism. Henry Dobbins, who was a big man, carried extra rations; he was especially fond of canned peaches in heavy syrup over pound cake. Dave Jensen, who practiced field hygiene, carried a toothbrush, dental floss, and several hotel-sized bars of soap he'd stolen on R&R in Sydney, Australia. Ted Lavender, who was scared, carried tranquilizers until he was shot in the head outside the village of Than Khe in mid-April. By necessity, and because it was SOP, they all carried steel helmets that weighed 5 pounds including the liner and camouflage cover. They carried the standard fatigue jackets and trousers. Very few carried underwear. On their feet they carried jungle boots —2.1 pounds—and Dave Jensen carried three pairs of socks and a can of Dr Scholl's foot powder as a precaution against trench foot. Until he was shot, Ted Lavender carried six or seven ounces of premium dope, which for him was a necessity. Mitchell Sanders, the RTO, carried condoms. Norman Bowker carried a diary. Rat Kiley carried comic books. Kiowa, a devout Baptist, carried an illustrated New Testament that had been presented to him by his father, who taught Sunday school in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. As a hedge against bad times, however, Kiowa also carried his grandmother's distrust of the white man, his grandfather's old hunting hatchet. Necessity dictated. Because the land was mined and booby-trapped, it was SOP for each man to carry a steel-centered, nylon-covered flak jacket, which weighed 6.7 pounds, but which on hot days seemed much heavier. Because you could die so quickly, each man carried at least one large compress bandage, usually in the helmet band for easy access. Because the nights were cold, and because the monsoons were wet, each carried a green plastic poncho that could be used as a raincoat or groundsheet or makeshift tent. With its quilted liner, the poncho weighed almost two pounds, but it was worth every ounce. In April, for instance, when Ted Lavender was shot, they used his poncho to wrap him up, then to carry him away across the paddy, then to lift him into the chopper that took him away.

From *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien (1990)

Just Things by Danutė Kalinauskaitė

I am a teacher of Lithuanian language and literature. Recently I asked my senior class to write an essay on the topic of "Things" (the idea was suggested by my son: "All the things around us seem so distant now … it's as though they no longer exist …"). I wanted them to write about the most common things—an orange, a pair of shoes, a hand towel. The idea was to write about the quiet essence of the things you use every day and surround yourself with, but which you never really pay attention to. Almost all my students, however, wrote about "soshal" inequality. About the things that they would like to own, but couldn't.

One student wrote the following: "Her daughter-in-law has a salon in the center of Vilnius while her son works at a growing company, where of course he's the director. He has a country home filled with tile and hardwood floors. And her other son has a house with a pool, a sauna, a bar, three dogs, a cat, a chinchilla, an iguana, and the *devil* knows what else. But all we have is a kitten named Raisin that we found under a bridge."

Under the Soviets, when the cultural elite talked about spiritual wealth and the state of society in general, they had much to say about this variety of possession—possession of things, possession of wealth. Back then it meant the betrayal of your spiritual values. In articles that professed to analyze the "interaction between literature and contemporary reality," critics warned of "the increasing danger of our developing a cult of material goods," noting that there was a real threat that "love of things" might "replace the love of man," quite commonly turning man into a "slave of things." "Things are impervious to human warmth," etc.

Ideologies have changed. The "cult of material goods" has been officially sanctioned, and the "greedy materialist consumer" has been entirely rehabilitated. Only the things themselves remain innocent. As the years go by, one even manages to convince oneself that they are in fact permeable—if you yourself, for whatever reason, haven't already lost all your own humanity—to human warmth and coldness, to crime and punishment, to this world and the next, to everything.

I won't pretend to be ambivalent about "material goods." I like things. I find them interesting. They are the sowers of discord, but also act as peacemakers—like fungi that, with their long microscopic threads, have managed to interweave themselves into our human interactions. Things are like fragments, which nonetheless can unspool a sense of wholeness. Or else, we feel that wholeness has managed to squeeze itself into one component part. Into some black coat that's already been reversed at least once and whose shiny lapels, cuffs, and pocket flaps are touched up with a piece of coal before you head off to an important engagement… Things: the signs of fate and all fate's prophets. Archives or depositories, hiding places or artifacts. Things in the attic unnecessary to anyone, living out their final incarnations: nobody will ever take them anywhere again. Life after life.

It's quite true that after death, people take up residence in things. When I look in the mirror with the chipped corner, which has a picture of Riga on the other side, or a jackknife (price: two rubles, ten kopeks) or at a chess piece, the white rook, or at these Peponen pumpkinseed-oil capsules available at any pharmacy, I know—without any recourse to divination—that these are my father. This rosary with finger-worn prayer beads, and a note from a neighbor who was leaving on a trip: "Dogfood in the greenhouse. Wish us luck!" My aunt died during that trip. On my desk, the thorn-apple cocoon emptied of its contents by rain and wind—that's me when I temporarily "take my leave". And my parents' house, which no longer exists. The dyed lock of hair in the jewelry box with the secret bottom is not "a keratinized epidermal cell" as the encyclopedia says, but Vilmutė.

From *Just Things* by Danutė Kalinauskaitė in *Best European Fiction* edited by Aleksander Hemon (2010)

Flash fiction

Flash fiction, unlike the short story, is defined by its word limit, which usually ranges from 300 to 1500 words. The genre has become very popular, and 16 May 2010 was the first "National Flash Fiction day" to celebrate flash fiction in the UK. In an article for UK newspaper *The Guardian* on 14 September 2012, David Gaffney suggested six rules for writing flash fiction.

"1. Start in the middle.
2. Don't use too many characters [note: characters in the story]
3. Make sure the ending isn't at the end.
4. Sweat your title.
5. Make your last line ring like a bell.
6. Write long, then go short."

The text below is microfiction, a sub-genre of flash fiction, with a word limit of 150 words.

Core concept
TRANSFORMATION

***Graham's Girl* by Emilie Cherry**

Walking through Farring Street added twenty minutes to Graham's long commute, but he still did it every day, to see her. She worked in a women's clothes shop, and she was beautiful. Her long, black hair accentuated her pale, flawless skin, flowing down to two identical pert breasts. They'd never actually spoken, but he knew she liked him, because he always caught her staring.

After watching her through the window for several minutes, he stepped into the store and tapped her shoulder. It felt smooth and hard.

He heard footsteps behind him and turned to face a large frowning man.

"You again," said the security officer. "What have I told you about touching the mannequins? Get out of here."

From "Graham's Girl" in *The Unseen* by Emilie Cherry (2017)

Exploring prose non-fiction

The form of non-fiction is very diverse, comprising the personal essay, travel writing, biography, autobiography and the memoir, and, for the purposes of the English A literature course, even the graphic novel. We can think of prose non-fiction as being about lives, places, events or ideas. The term "prose non-fiction" reminds us that the language we use to categorize literary expression can be limited or inadequate. It is a convention that allows us to group together texts so we can study them, analyse them, compare and contrast them.

TOK

How far do genre conventions aid or hinder the reader's understanding?

The terms we invent to talk about literary texts will always be questioned by the infinite possibilities of literary writing, so we will be using the terms "prose non-fiction", "creative non-fiction" and "literary non-fiction" interchangeably. While the critical differentiation between

TOK

How important is the quality of originality in our appreciation of a literary work?

fiction and non-fiction is the roots non-fiction has in a real event or experience, the language of prose non-fiction can be as literary as any other literary genre.

Having said that, creative non-fiction also gives writers permission to explore and experiment with form as well as content. In general, prose non-fiction is characterized by the dominating presence of one individual perspective, whether that of the writer (for example a personal essay, memoir or autobiography) or an objective reality outside the writer's self (for example a biography or nature essay). Steinberg and Root (2011) list the qualities of creative non-fiction as:

- "personal presence
- self-discovery and self-exploration
- flexibility of form
- veracity
- literary approaches to language".

George Orwell

Let us look at an example of prose non-fiction, an essay by George Orwell written around 1936. From 1922 to 1927, Orwell served with the Indian Imperial Police in Burma, a post he resigned from in order to escape man's dominion over man. Orwell had a profound interest in politics, and his writing style made him very popular as a journalist and a pamphleteer.

"Shooting an Elephant" by George Orwell

IN MOULMEIN, IN LOWER BURMA, I was hated by large numbers of people—the only time in my life that I have been important enough for this to happen to me. I was sub-divisional police officer of the town, and in an aimless, petty kind of way anti-European feeling was very bitter. No one had the guts to raise a riot, but if a European woman went through the bazaars alone somebody would probably spit betel juice over her dress. As a police officer I was an obvious target and was baited whenever it seemed safe to do so. When a nimble Burman tripped me upon the football field and the referee (another Burman) looked the other way, the crowd yelled with hideous laughter. This happened more than once. In the end the sneering yellow faces of young men that met me everywhere, the insults hooted after me when I was at a safe distance, got badly on my nerves. The young Buddhist priests were the worst of all. There were several thousands of them in the town and none of them seemed to have anything to do except stand on street corners and jeer at Europeans.

All this was perplexing and upsetting. For at that time I had already made up my mind that imperialism was an evil thing and the sooner I chucked up my job and got out of it the better. Theoretically – and secretly, of course – I was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British. As for the job I was

doing, I hated it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear. In a job like that you see the dirty work of Empire at close quarters. The wretched prisoners huddling in the stinking cages of the lock-ups, the grey, cowed faces of the long-term convicts, the scarred buttocks of the men who had been flogged with bamboos – all these oppressed me with an intolerable sense of guilt. But I could get nothing into perspective. I was young and ill-educated and I had had to think out my problems in the utter silence that is imposed on every Englishman in the East. I did not even know that the British Empire is dying, still less did I know that it is a great deal better than the younger empires that are going to supplant it. All I knew was that I was stuck between my hatred of the empire I served and my rage against the evil-spirited little beasts who tried to make my job impossible. With one part of my mind I thought of the British Raj as an unbreakable tyranny, as something clamped down, in saecula saeculorum, upon the will of prostrate peoples; with another part I thought that the greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts. Feelings like these are the normal by-products of imperialism; ask any Anglo-Indian official, if you can catch him off duty.

One day something happened which in a roundabout way was enlightening. It was a tiny incident in itself, but it gave me a better glimpse than I had had before of the real nature of imperialism – the real motives for which despotic governments act. Early one morning the sub-inspector at a police station the other end of the town rang me up on the phone and said that an elephant was ravaging the bazaar. Would I please come and do something about it? I did not know what I could do, but I wanted to see what was happening and I got on to a pony and started out. I took my rifle, an old .44 Winchester and much too small to kill an elephant, but I thought the noise might be useful in terrorem. Various Burmans stopped me on the way and told me about the elephant's doings. It was not, of course, a wild elephant, but a tame one which had gone 'must'. It had been chained up, as tame elephants always are when their attack of 'must' is due, but on the previous night it had broken its chain and escaped. Its mahout, the only person who could manage it when it was in that state, had set out in pursuit, but had taken the wrong direction and was now twelve hours' journey away, and in the morning the elephant had suddenly reappeared in the town. The Burmese population had no weapons and were quite helpless against it. It had already destroyed somebody's bamboo hut, killed a cow and raided some fruit-stalls and devoured the stock; also it had met the municipal rubbish van and, when the driver jumped out and took to his heels, had turned the van over and inflicted violences upon it.

The Burmese sub-inspector and some Indian constables were waiting for me in the quarter where the elephant had been seen. It was a very poor quarter, a labyrinth of squalid bamboo huts, thatched with palmleaf, winding all over a steep hillside. I remember that it was a cloudy, stuffy morning at the beginning of the rains. We began questioning the people as to where the elephant had gone and, as usual, failed to get any definite information. That is invariably the case in the East;

a story always sounds clear enough at a distance, but the nearer you get to the scene of events the vaguer it becomes. Some of the people said that the elephant had gone in one direction, some said that he had gone in another, some professed not even to have heard of any elephant. I had almost made up my mind that the whole story was a pack of lies, when we heard yells a little distance away. There was a loud, scandalized cry of 'Go away, child! Go away this instant!' and an old woman with a switch in her hand came round the corner of a hut, violently shooing away a crowd of naked children. Some more women followed, clicking their tongues and exclaiming; evidently there was something that the children ought not to have seen. I rounded the hut and saw a man's dead body sprawling in the mud. He was an Indian, a black Dravidian coolie, almost naked, and he could not have been dead many minutes. The people said that the elephant had come suddenly upon him round the corner of the hut, caught him with its trunk, put its foot on his back and ground him into the earth. This was the rainy season and the ground was soft, and his face had scored a trench a foot deep and a couple of yards long. He was lying on his belly with arms crucified and head sharply twisted to one side. His face was coated with mud, the eyes wide open, the teeth bared and grinning with an expression of unendurable agony. (Never tell me, by the way, that the dead look peaceful. Most of the corpses I have seen looked devilish.) The friction of the great beast's foot had stripped the skin from his back as neatly as one skins a rabbit. As soon as I saw the dead man I sent an orderly to a friend's house nearby to borrow an elephant rifle. I had already sent back the pony, not wanting it to go mad with fright and throw me if it smelt the elephant.

The orderly came back in a few minutes with a rifle and five cartridges, and meanwhile some Burmans had arrived and told us that the elephant was in the paddy fields below, only a few hundred yards away. As I started forward practically the whole population of the quarter flocked out of the houses and followed me. They had seen the rifle and were all shouting excitedly that I was going to shoot the elephant. They had not shown much interest in the elephant when he was merely ravaging their homes, but it was different now that he was going to be shot. It was a bit of fun to them, as it would be to an English crowd; besides they wanted the meat. It made me vaguely uneasy. I had no intention of shooting the elephant – I had merely sent for the rifle to defend myself if necessary – and it is always unnerving to have a crowd following you. I marched down the hill, looking and feeling a fool, with the rifle over my shoulder and an ever-growing army of people jostling at my heels. At the bottom, when you got away from the huts, there was a metalled road and beyond that a miry waste of paddy fields a thousand yards across, not yet ploughed but soggy from the first rains and dotted with coarse grass. The elephant was standing eight yards from the road, his left side towards us. He took not the slightest notice of the crowd's approach. He was tearing up bunches of grass, beating them against his knees to clean them and stuffing them into his mouth.

I had halted on the road. As soon as I saw the elephant I knew with perfect certainty that I ought not to shoot him. It is a serious matter to shoot a working elephant – it is comparable to destroying a huge and costly piece of machinery – and obviously one ought not to do it if it can possibly be avoided. And at that distance,

peacefully eating, the elephant looked no more dangerous than a cow. I thought then and I think now that his attack of 'must' was already passing off; in which case he would merely wander harmlessly about until the mahout came back and caught him. Moreover, I did not in the least want to shoot him. I decided that I would watch him for a little while to make sure that he did not turn savage again, and then go home.

But at that moment I glanced round at the crowd that had followed me. It was an immense crowd, two thousand at the least and growing every minute. It blocked the road for a long distance on either side. I looked at the sea of yellow faces above the garish clothes – faces all happy and excited over this bit of fun, all certain that the elephant was going to be shot. They were watching me as they would watch a conjurer about to perform a trick. They did not like me, but with the magical rifle in my hands I was momentarily worth watching. And suddenly I realized that I should have to shoot the elephant after all. The people expected it of me and I had got to do it; I could feel their two thousand wills pressing me forward, irresistibly. And it was at this moment, as I stood there with the rifle in my hands, that I first grasped the hollowness, the futility of the white man's dominion in the East. Here was I, the white man with his gun, standing in front of the unarmed native crowd – seemingly the leading actor of the piece; but in reality I was only an absurd puppet pushed to and fro by the will of those yellow faces behind. I perceived in this moment that when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys. He becomes a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalized figure of a sahib. For it is the condition of his rule that he shall spend his life in trying to impress the 'natives', and so in every crisis he has got to do what the 'natives' expect of him. He wears a mask, and his face grows to fit it. I had got to shoot the elephant. I had committed myself to doing it when I sent for the rifle. A sahib has got to act like a sahib; he has got to appear resolute, to know his own mind and do definite things. To come all that way, rifle in hand, with two thousand people marching at my heels, and then to trail feebly away, having done nothing – no, that was impossible. The crowd would laugh at me. And my whole life, every white man's life in the East, was one long struggle not to be laughed at.

But I did not want to shoot the elephant. I watched him beating his bunch of grass against his knees, with that preoccupied grandmotherly air that elephants have. It seemed to me that it would be murder to shoot him. At that age I was not squeamish about killing animals, but I had never shot an elephant and never wanted to. (Somehow it always seems worse to kill a large animal.) Besides, there was the beast's owner to be considered. Alive, the elephant was worth at least a hundred pounds; dead, he would only be worth the value of his tusks, five pounds, possibly. But I had got to act quickly. I turned to some experienced-looking Burmans who had been there when we arrived, and asked them how the elephant had been behaving. They all said the same thing: he took no notice of you if you left him alone, but he might charge if you went too close to him.

It was perfectly clear to me what I ought to do. I ought to walk up to within, say, twenty-five yards of the elephant and test his behavior. If he charged, I could shoot; if he took no notice of me, it would be safe to leave him until the mahout came back.

But also I knew that I was going to do no such thing. I was a poor shot with a rifle and the ground was soft mud into which one would sink at every step. If the elephant charged and I missed him, I should have about as much chance as a toad under a steam-roller. But even then I was not thinking particularly of my own skin, only of the watchful yellow faces behind. For at that moment, with the crowd watching me, I was not afraid in the ordinary sense, as I would have been if I had been alone. A white man mustn't be frightened in front of 'natives'; and so, in general, he isn't frightened. The sole thought in my mind was that if anything went wrong those two thousand Burmans would see me pursued, caught, trampled on and reduced to a grinning corpse like that Indian up the hill. And if that happened it was quite probable that some of them would laugh. That would never do. There was only one alternative. I shoved the cartridges into the magazine and lay down on the road to get a better aim.

The crowd grew very still, and a deep, low, happy sigh, as of people who see the theatre curtain go up at last, breathed from innumerable throats. They were going to have their bit of fun after all. The rifle was a beautiful German thing with cross-hair sights. I did not then know that in shooting an elephant one would shoot to cut an imaginary bar running from ear-hole to ear-hole. I ought, therefore, as the elephant was sideways on, to have aimed straight at his ear-hole, actually I aimed several inches in front of this, thinking the brain would be further forward.

When I pulled the trigger I did not hear the bang or feel the kick – one never does when a shot goes home – but I heard the devilish roar of glee that went up from the crowd. In that instant, in too short a time, one would have thought, even for the bullet to get there, a mysterious, terrible change had come over the elephant. He neither stirred nor fell, but every line of his body had altered. He looked suddenly stricken, shrunken, immensely old, as though the frightful impact of the bullet had paralysed him without knocking him down. At last, after what seemed a long time – it might have been five seconds, I dare say – he sagged flabbily to his knees. His mouth slobbered. An enormous senility seemed to have settled upon him. One could have imagined him thousands of years old. I fired again into the same spot. At the second shot he did not collapse but climbed with desperate slowness to his feet and stood weakly upright, with legs sagging and head drooping. I fired a third time. That was the shot that did for him. You could see the agony of it jolt his whole body and knock the last remnant of strength from his legs. But in falling he seemed for a moment to rise, for as his hind legs collapsed beneath him he seemed to tower upward like a huge rock toppling, his trunk reaching skyward like a tree. He trumpeted, for the first and only time. And then down he came, his belly towards me, with a crash that seemed to shake the ground even where I lay.

I got up. The Burmans were already racing past me across the mud. It was obvious that the elephant would never rise again, but he was not dead. He was breathing very rhythmically with long rattling gasps, his great mound of a side painfully rising and falling. His mouth was wide open – I could see far down into caverns of pale pink throat. I waited a long time for him to die, but his breathing did not weaken. Finally I fired my two remaining shots into the spot where I

thought his heart must be. The thick blood welled out of him like red velvet, but still he did not die. His body did not even jerk when the shots hit him, the tortured breathing continued without a pause. He was dying, very slowly and in great agony, but in some world remote from me where not even a bullet could damage him further. I felt that I had got to put an end to that dreadful noise. It seemed dreadful to see the great beast lying there, powerless to move and yet powerless to die, and not even to be able to finish him. I sent back for my small rifle and poured shot after shot into his heart and down his throat. They seemed to make no impression. The tortured gasps continued as steadily as the ticking of a clock.

In the end I could not stand it any longer and went away. I heard later that it took him half an hour to die. Burmans were bringing dahs and baskets even before I left, and I was told they had stripped his body almost to the bones by the afternoon.

Afterwards, of course, there were endless discussions about the shooting of the elephant. The owner was furious, but he was only an Indian and could do nothing. Besides, legally I had done the right thing, for a mad elephant has to be killed, like a mad dog, if its owner fails to control it. Among the Europeans opinion was divided. The older men said I was right, the younger men said it was a damn shame to shoot an elephant for killing a coolie, because an elephant was worth more than any damn Coringhee coolie. And afterwards I was very glad that the coolie had been killed; it put me legally in the right and it gave me a sufficient pretext for shooting the elephant. I often wondered whether any of the others grasped that I had done it solely to avoid looking a fool.

From *Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays* by George Orwell (2000)

Analysis of prose non-fiction

Activity

1. In what ways does *Shooting an Elephant* display the qualities of creative non-fiction listed above?
2. How does Orwell choose to present the facts and his personal opinion and feelings?
3. What do you notice about Orwell's use of language and its impact on the overall effect of the essay?

Orwell has left a significant legacy in the genre of the essay, but the title of the inventor of the modern "essay" is often awarded to Michel Eyquem de Montaigne (1533–1592). Montaigne transformed the medieval genre of "compilation" into a personal test of ideas and experience. The name itself, *essai* in French, means "attempt, effort", and an aspect of the original concept is still relevant for the genre even after so much time and so much diversification—even for you as an English A literature student who will be writing literary essays. In his essay "Of the Inconstancy of Our Actions", Montaigne scrutinizes Publius's verses as he examines the validity of the concept of free will in human action.

"Our ordinary practice is to follow the inclinations of our appetite, be it to the left or right, upwards or downwards, according as we are wafted by the breath of occasion. We never meditate what we would have till the instant we have a mind to have it; and change like that creature which receives its colour from what it is laid upon. What we but just now proposed to ourselves we immediately alter, and presently return again to it; 'tis nothing but shifting and inconsistency."

Guiding conceptual question

How does language use vary among text types and among literary forms?

Activity

Capturing the tone of the text

Tone refers to the attitude of the speaker in a text. Choice of diction is a very conspicuous expression of tone. If I call my room "a dump" or if I use a phrase like "it could use some rigorous vacuuming", I am referring to the same issue, but my attitude is different. We are often inclined to distinguish tone—too simply—in positive and negative tone. However, tone is more subtle and complex and can be linked to the whole range of human emotions or reactions: it can be ironic, ambiguous, bemused, mournful, indifferent, adoring, anxious, desperate, empathetic, for example. Precisely because tone can be subtle and complex in literary texts, we need to consider the subtle and complex ways in which authors create tone.

- Choose an extract of approximately 20–30 lines from Orwell's essay to compare in tone with the extract by Montaigne.
- Consider what the author is saying and how he is saying it to create a certain tone; this can be done through the choice of diction, the line of argument, the sequence of events, syntactic structure and so on.

An outsider's perspective

The following excerpts from Pico Iyer's travel writing and an essay by Rebecca Solnit address issues of belonging, their experience of culture, as well as post-colonial perspectives. Pico Iyer is a British-born American essayist and novelist who has recently chosen Japan as his home country. *The Global Soul* technically belongs in the genre of travel writing, but as Iyer travels through airports, places and events, his writing becomes a contemplation on identity, modern life and marginalized cultures.

"Jerusalem" by William Blake

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the Countenance Divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark Satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold:
Bring me my arrows of desire:
Bring me my spear: O clouds unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire.

I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

The Global Soul by Pico Iyer

When she was in her teens, my mother told me much later, she impressed my father (also in his teens, although already a professor) by reciting some lines of Tennyson to him; and on the last day of every school term, tears would run down the cheeks of the girls at Cathedral as they sang of England's "green and pleasant land" and were ushered forth into the world.

The setting of Blake's Jerusalem could never have been quite what the girls expected, if ever they took the boat to England, but the shock must have been many times greater when Britain became a suburb of the International Empire. The one thing "convent-educated" Indians were not prepared for, surely, was an England made up of Islamic fundamentalists (and of settlements like Glastonbury, where flaxen-haired kids sport names like Sita and Krishna and Ganesh); according to the British Tourist Association, the national dish of Britain now is curry (having triumphed, I assume over doner kebab and pizza), and the most popular flavor ordered from the Domino's pizza chain in the UK is 1994 was tandoori chicken. What seemed most to upset people like my Indian friend was that so many of the people in England now looked like him.

To an English-born outsider like myself, the spicing of England was all to the good—the island has grown stronger and darker, like a mug of lukewarm water left to steep in 2 million Indian (and West Indian) tea bags; the earls you meet these days in London are from Trinidad, and *The Times* will inform you, without apparent rancor, that there are more Indian restaurants in Greater London than in Bombay and Delhi combined. Insofar as Princess Diana was taken to be an avatar of the "New England," it was not just because she brought "American" values—health clubs and Prozac and McDonald's and talk-show therapeutics—into the mainstream; and not just because she upended the traditional order by allying herself increasingly with the rival, new aristocracy of the celebrity culture; but also because she was linked, romantically, to a Pakistani doctor and an Egyptian film producer, while visiting a debutante friend, Jemima Goldsmith, who'd married the captain of the Pakistani team.

Yet those who'd always looked up to a certain England (brought to them, often, by homesick Oxford men abroad) were left not knowing where to turn. Recently, a friend told me, the readers of Sri Lanka, always eager to keep up with the latest in English letters, had asked the British council to send them some voices of "Young England." Ever sensitive to the niceties of racial diplomacy, the British had sent Hanif Kureishi (half-Pakistani), and then Caryl Phillips (born in the Caribbean). No, the Sri Lankans said, clearly disappointed: send us a real British writer (in other words, someone who looks like the people who held us down).

From *The Global Soul: Jet Lag, Shopping Malls and the Search for Home* by Pico Iyer (2001)

"Postscript" by Rebecca Solnit

One evening over dinner in March 2008, I began to joke, as I often had before, about writing an essay called "Men Explain Things to Me". Every writer has a stable of ideas that never make it to the racetrack, and I'd been trotting this pony out recreationally once in a while. My houseguest, the brilliant theorist and activist Marina Sitrin, insisted that I had to write it down because people like her younger sister Sam needed to read it. Young women, she said, needed to know that being belittled wasn't the result of their own secret failings; it was boring old gender wars, and it happened to most of us who were female at some point or other.

I wrote it in one sitting early the next morning. When something assembles itself that fast, it's clear it's been composing itself somewhere in the unknowable back of the mind for a long time. It wanted to be written; it was restless for the racetrack; it galloped along once I sat down at the computer. Since Marina slept in later than me in those days, I served it for breakfast and later that day sent it to Tom Engelhardt at TomDispatch, who published it online soon after. It spread quickly, as essays put up at Tom's site do, and has never stopped going around, being reposted and shared and commented upon. It's circulated like nothing else I've done.

It struck a chord. And a nerve.

Some men explained why men explaining things to women wasn't really a gendered phenomenon. Usually, women then pointed out that, in insisting on their right to dismiss the experiences women say they have, men succeeded in explaining in just the way I said they sometimes do. (For the record, I do believe that women have explained things in patronizing ways, to men among others. But that's not indicative of the massive power differential that takes far more sinister forms as well or of the broad pattern of how gender works in our society).

Other men got it and were cool. This was, after all, written in an era when male feminists had become a more meaningful presence, and feminism was funnier than ever. Not everyone knew they were funny, however. At TomDispatch in 2008, I got an email from an older man in Indianapolis, who wrote in to tell me that he had "never personally or professionally short-changed a woman" and went on to berate me for not hanging out with "more regular guys or at least do a little homework first." He then gave me some advice about how to run my life and commented on my "feelings of inferiority." He thought that being patronized was an experience a woman chooses to have, or could choose not to have–and so the fault was all mine.

A website called "Academic Men Explain Things to Me" arose, and hundreds of university women shared their stories

of being patronized, belittled, talked over, and more. The term "mansplaining" was coined soon after the piece appeared, and I was sometimes credited with it. In fact, I had nothing to do with its actual creation, though my essay, along with all the men who embodied the idea, apparently inspired it. (I have doubts about the word and don't use it myself much; it seems to me to go a little heavy on the idea that men are inherently flawed this way, rather than that some men explain things they shouldn't and don't hear things they should. If it's not clear enough in the piece, I love it when people explain things to me they know and I'm interested in but don't yet know; it's when they explain things to me I know and they don't that the conversation goes wrong.) By 2012, the term "mansplained"—one of the *New York Times*'s words of the year 2010—was being used in mainstream political journalism.

From *Men Explain Things to Me and Other Essays* by Rebecca Solnit (2014)

▲ *"Der lästige Kavalier"* ("The Annoying Gentleman") by German artist Berthold Woltze (1874)

Assessment practice

Individual oral practice

Read the excerpts from Iyer and Solnit again and reflect on the following questions.

1. How does the use of language by Iyer and Solnit reflect the differences in genre?
2. In what ways does the inner point of view manifest itself in the two passages? What is the purpose and effect of this?
3. How would you define the tone in each extract and how is it achieved?

The individual oral assessment is based on the exploration students have carried out in their portfolio after having investigated a series of works and a variety of global issues. In the lead up to the individual oral, you will have to select two excerpts (one from a work in translation) and use them to address the following prompt:

"Examine the ways in which the global issue of your choice is presented through the content and form of the two works that you have studied."

Below you have two more excerpts to include in your individual oral practice on a global issue relating to culture, identity and community. The first one is the final scene from August Strindberg's play *Miss Julie*, written in 1888. Following the consummation of her relationship with Jean, the servant, Julie is desperately seeking a way to evade the shame that her actions will bring. Julie killed her canary at the insistence of Jean, who considered it an obstacle to her elopement. Still the elopement plan failed, and Julie is still looking for a way out. The second one is a poem by Jacques Prévert published in his collection of poems *Paroles* in 1946. In the poem a young man returns home from the war.

4. Consider possible combinations of excerpts: Iyer, Solnit, Strindberg and Prévert. The requirement is that one work must be a work in translation, but consider options beyond this requirement, if you wish, for the sake of practice.
5. What would the global issue be in each of these combinations of extracts?
6. Use an evidence-based approach to compare the extracts with reference to the prompt, and discuss the role use of language in each.

Extract from *Miss Julie* by August Strindberg

JEAN: What a spitfire! And all because of a wretched bird!

MISS JULIA [*dully*]: Never mind the bird. Can you see any way out of this? Any end to it?

JEAN: [*thinking*]: I can't.

MISS JULIA: What would you do in my place?

JEAN: In your place? Let me think … a woman of your class, who's gone wrong. … I don't know. Yes, I do, though.

MISS JULIA [*she picks up the razor, and makes a significant gesture*]: Like this?

JEAN: Yes. But *I* wouldn't do it, mind you – that's the difference between us.

MISS JULIA: Because you're a man and I'm a woman? What difference does that make?

JEAN: Just the difference that there *is* between man and woman.

MISS JULIA [*with the razor in her hand*]: I wish I could. … I can't do it, though – any more than my father could – that time when he should have done it.

JEAN: No, he shouldn't: he had to have his revenge first.

MISS JULIA: And now my mother gets *her* revenge – through me.

JEAN: Haven't you ever loved your father, Miss Julia?

MISS JULIA: Yes – very much. But I must have hated him, too; I must have been hating him without realizing it. You see he taught me to despise my own sex – to be half woman and half man. Who's to blame for all this – my father, or my mother, or myself? Myself? I haven't a self; I haven't a thought that I don't get from my father, nor an emotion that I don't get from my mother. Even this last idea that all human beings are equal – that came from my fiancé – and then I call him a beast for his pains. How can I be to blame? Am I to put all the blame on Jesus, like Kristin? No, I'm too proud to do that – and too sensible, thanks to my father's teaching. As for the rich man not going to heaven, that's a lie; Kristin, with money in her savings bank, wouldn't get in. But who's to blame? Still, what does that matter? I'm the one who has to bear the blame and take the consequences.

"The Return to the Country" by Jacques Prévert

Here's a Breton who is coming back to his native land
After having done many horrible things
He walks in front of the factories in Douarnenez
He doesn't recognize anyone
No one recognizes him
He is very sad.
He goes into a crepe shop to eat some crepes
But he can't eat any
There is something that's preventing them from passing through his lips
He pays
He leaves
He lights a cigarette
But he can't smoke it.
There is something
Something in his head
Something bad
He gets sadder and sadder
And suddenly it appears in his memory:
Someone told him when he was very little:
"You will end up on the gallows"
And through the years
He didn't dare do anything
Not even cross the street
Not even leave on the ocean
Nothing absolutely nothing.
He remembers.
The one who had predicted this was his Uncle Grésillard
Uncle Grésillard who was a jerk to everybody
The bastard!
And the Breton thinks of the war
Thinks of all the things he's seen
All the things he's done.
Sadness clenches down against him
He tries another time
To light a cigarette
But he doesn't want to smoke
So he decides to go see Uncle Grésillard.
He goes
He opens the door
His uncle doesn't recognize him
But he recognizes his uncle
And he says:
"Hello Uncle Grésillard"
And then he wrings his neck.
And he ends up on the gallows in Quimper
After having eaten two dozen crepes
And smoked a cigarette.

A different kind of autobiography

Naoki Higashida was only 13 years old when his book *The Reason I Jump* was published. Severely autistic, Naoki learned to communicate by pointing at letters on a laminated cardboard keyboard. This is perhaps the only book ever written about autism by an autistic individual, and it challenges the notion that people with autism are antisocial loners who lack empathy. It is written in a question-and-answer format.

Q29: Why do you do things the rest of us don't? Do your senses work differently in some way?

'Why won't you wear shoes?' 'Why will you only wear half-length sleeves?' 'Why do you always shave off or pluck out your body-hair? Doesn't it hurt?' Every time us people with autism do something that other people wouldn't, it must make you wonder why. Do people with autism possess different senses? Or do these actions just give us some sort of kick?

To my mind, both answers are barking up the wrong tree. The reason could be that we've got into such a state that if we *don't* do these actions, we'll go to pieces completely. If you talk about someone's 'senses working differently' it means that the person's nervous system is somehow malfunctioning. But I believe that in our case, there's nothing wrong with us at nerve level.

Instead, it's actually our emotions that trigger the abnormal reactions. It's only natural for anyone stuck in a bad place to try and get out of it, and it's my own despair that causes me to misread the messages my senses are sending me. If all of my attention gets focused on one area of the body, it's as if all of my body's energy is concentrated there too, which is when my senses all report that something in that area is going badly wrong.

If a person without autism is going through a hard time, he or she can talk it over with someone, or make a ruckus about it. But in our case, that's not an option – we can never make ourselves understood. Even when we're in the middle of a panic attack, people either don't get what's happening to us, else they just tell us to stop crying. My guess is that the despair we're feeling has nowhere to go and fills up our entire bodies, making our senses more and more confused.

From *The Reason I Jump* by Naoki Higashida, translated by David Mitchell (2013)

An approach to the higher level essay

Example: poetry by Sylvia Plath

This section aims to offer an example of an approach to the higher level essay using the work of Sylvia Plath. With a concept as a starting point of inspiration and exploration, the essay should develop a line of inquiry with a broad literary focus. The approach to the exploration and the first draft of the written work is attributed to Liz Stephan and it is used here with minor adaptations.

Background and rationale for the choice of topic

Sylvia Plath (1932–1963) published one volume of poetry, *Colossus*, while she was alive; the collections *Ariel*, *Winter Trees* and *Crossing the Water* were published posthumously. Plath's work is redolent of themes of a very personal nature; the raw material for her poetry was her own life

and her own experience. Although there are several themes that recur in her work, her "early" voice in the *Colossus* poems is still very immersed in problems of form and structure, while in *Ariel* she breaks free from the perceived restraints of form and uses her voice expertly and with confidence to channel powerful emotions. Plath was an intensely visual poet: she drew and sketched, she was very interested in visual arts and used visual imagery in her work with intensity and depth. One could say that Plath projected her feelings onto what she saw and made her emotions an integral part of the visual, which then found a place in her poetic narrative. Nature has a prominent place in Plath's poetry as it is the canvas on which she "paints" her inner world, and as such it lends itself to the practice of this task. Since the higher level essay is expected to be a broad literary investigation, this exercise will focus on several poems from *Colossus* rather than a single poem.

Defining the topic and its aspects

The generation of the topic follows the teaching of the work, so students are already familiar with pertinent issues and aspects. Very often students have a very clearly defined topic before they even begin their research. This shows understanding of the work as well as commitment. However, it is useful to remember that the final focus of the essay will be decided *after* researching the text. Our original line of inquiry and focus will guide our research, but what we discover during the research stage may lead us to tweak, refocus or even change our direction entirely. Sometimes our question may be too narrow or too broad: our research will reveal the changes and adjustments we need to make. There are two more important reasons to focus this part of the process on researching the text. The first is that by focusing on the text and not on the exact question, we are not simply looking for textual evidence to support a point but looking at the work as a whole, therefore capturing the wider effects and significance of the topic. In other words, we are not looking just for the evidence that will help us make a specific predetermined point, but we are also considering nuances, variations and exceptions. The second reason is the importance of foregrounding the evidence in our writing, and this will allow us to write better and more convincingly about our question of choice.

Beginning the exploration

We begin the exploration with a broad focus and the expectation that our questioning will allow this focus to be made sharper. As we begin, the following are the two items on our exploration brief.

- How does Plath use nature imagery to reflect identity and emotions?
- How does Plath transform themes, attitudes and concepts into nature imagery?

What we notice in these two statements, however, is how broad the focus of nature is. At this point, we may select to explore a particular natural element or several. This stage of the process is exploratory in the full sense of the term, and we may have to go back and expand or refine our search terms further. In a sense, our work at this stage is also like

a science experiment where we formulate a hypothesis and design the experiment. We may assume our findings will confirm our hypothesis but we may also have to revisit and reformulate it. As the focus of "nature" is too wide, we will begin by narrowing it down and looking at imagery of trees in Plath's collection *Colossus*.

Collecting the evidence

Having established that we will explore tree imagery and its dynamic role in emotions, attitudes and themes, we return to the poems to collect the evidence. Rereading the poems carefully, we identify the tree imagery and list it in a table while on one side of the quote we add our analytical comment about its effect, meaning, impact and so on. We need to bear in mind the following.

ATL

Thinking, research and self-management skills

- This is a critical part of the process as its outcome will guide our focus and the bigger picture of our table of evidence will reveal the patterns that will be our arguments.
- This is still an exploration of the topic. To make this point clearer the sample notes below are incomplete and in draft form. They even contain question marks for ideas that need further exploration.
- Details are not as important at this stage. The bigger picture is that we must remain focused on the questions we can ask of the text.
- Some of the points we make may not even be used in our draft. The final decision about which textual evidence to use will depend on the findings and the argument that will emerge in the following stage.

We will use colour-coding to highlight the ideas and themes that Plath explores through images of trees. (The colour scheme is explained below the table.)

Quote	Comment
Tree imagery	
"A field of horses, [...], tails streaming against the green drop of sycamores." "The Eye-Mote", l.2–4	The trees are the backdrop (and more) as the speaker's vision is affected by the mote and the sight of the beautiful animals running free is lost to her: an analogy for her own life?
"The figs on the fig tree in the yard are green" "Departure", l.1	Nature as a constant in the world, an unmovable and unforgiving force ("nature compounds her bitters"); an idea enhanced by the alliteration and the rhythm of the line.
"I open my lunch on a hill of black cypress." "The Colossus", l.19	The trees are the world she inhabits; a world she has resigned herself to inhabit.

"See, how the tree boles flatten And lose their good browns If the thin people simply stand in the forest, Making the world go thin as a wasps' nest And greyer; not even moving their bones." "The Thin People", l. 43–47	The forest is the backdrop to a very stark reality that is man-made; the forest serves—by juxtaposition—to reveal something about the world we have created; this is very different from the other perspective of nature as myth in Plath's *Colossus* poems.
"Cloudrack and owl-hollowed willows slanting over The bland Granta double their white and green World under the sheer water And ride that flux at anchor, upside down." "Watercolour of Grantchester Meadows", l.8–11	Describing a scene she encountered during her walks in Cambridge, Plath expresses admiration for the unique sight of the willows but wonders at the end of the poem "How in such mild air The owl shall stoop from its turret, the rat cry out".
"The blood-berried hawthorn hides its spines with white" "Watercolour of Grantchester Meadows", l.21	The "blood-berried" follows the red clover as the speaker gradually introduces the idea of something lying under the surface, some possibility of the "mild air" being disrupted.
"The Golden Rain Tree drips its powders down." "The Beekeeper's Daughter", l.9	This is another memory from her childhood, which is now transposed as an image signifying danger and maybe even death; part of the metaphor for her search for her lost father, a search that connects her even more to the idea of death.
"Once I was ordinary: Sat by my father's bean tree Eating the fingers of wisdom." "Poem for a Birthday", 3, l. 63–65	The bean tree is another reference to her memories from her childhood and her father's garden; these lines describe herself before she turned into a "maenad", and again the tree is there as a constant and a nourishing agent.

From *The Collected Poems* by Sylvia Plath (2015); *The Colossus* by Sylvia Plath (1960)

We notice the following patterns regarding the images of trees.

- Trees are connected to her feelings of loss (highlighted in green).
- Trees have a very personal significance to Plath and they seem to be part of the world she has chosen to inhabit (highlighted in yellow).
- Trees are the natural backdrop against which Plath projects some ugly truths about life and the world we have created (highlighted in pink).

Even such a rudimentary analysis reveals specific ideas our evidence points to that could be constructed as an argument in our writing. For

example, in *Colossus*, trees function as a reference to memories from the poet's childhood, associated with her father's garden. Some tree images signify imminent or eminent danger because of these associations. However, Plath also channels her social awareness through images of trees to express her preoccupation about issues such as poverty or even the Holocaust. In general, tree imagery in her work reveals the conflicts, the tensions, the ambivalences she experiences and also witnesses in the world around her.

Pattern identification: fruit imagery

Activity

ATL

Thinking, research and self-management skills

Repeat the process of pattern identification through highlighting using imagery of fruit in *Colossus*. Even if you have not read the poems, the analytical comments will guide you.

Fruit imagery	
"The pears fatten like little buddhas." "The Manor Garden", l.3	The imagery in the poem suggests a pronounced tension with this image following a very dark one; whether the peaches could be understood to refer to Plath's fertility or not, they are an image of the re-emergence of life that, by definition, is linked to death.
"I've eaten a bag of green apples" "Metaphors", l.8	This is one of her pregnancy metaphors; maybe a biblical allusion.
"Still he hymns juice of her, hot nectarine." "Ouija", l.26	The old god is about to die but still adores her and sings her praises "the rotten queen with saffron hair"; the ouija board connects her with her father, but in the context of summoning the spirits, this image presents her father as reciprocating her fascination; does this draw her more to his memory?
"[...] Turned bitter And sallow as any lemon" "Two Sisters of Persephone", l.24–25	A fruit is also used to describe the woman who does not bear children, confirming the interpretation of fruit as an image of fertility in Plath's work.
"Grub-white mulberries redden among leaves." "Moonrise", l. 1	The increasing redness among the predominant white is another image Plath uses to present the turning point, the before and after in her life, the disturbing encounter of life and death and her conflicted experience of marriage.
"Berries redden. [...]" "Moonrise", l.13	
"[...] The berries purple And bleed.[...]" "Moonrise", l.29	

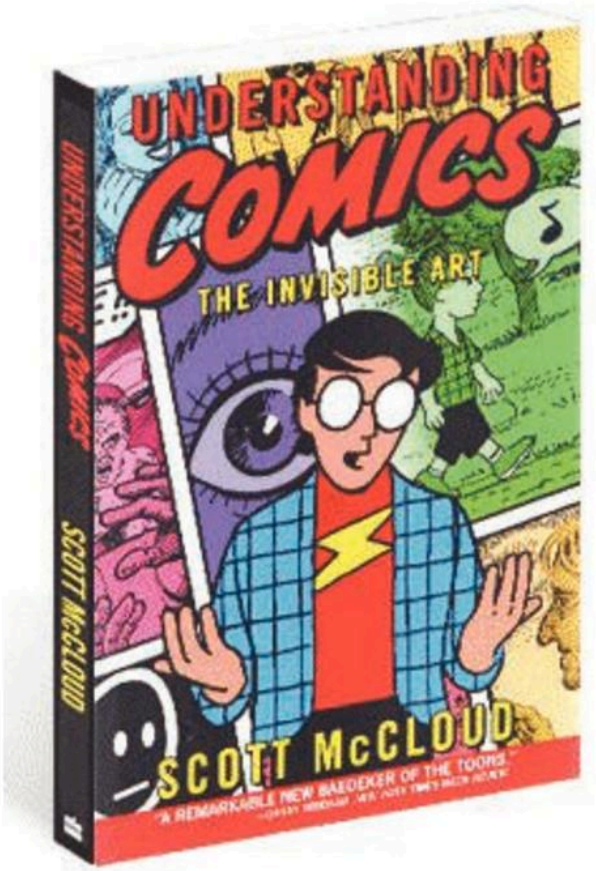
"A fruit that's death to taste: dark flesh, dark parings". "The Beekeeper's Daughter", l.14	In this standalone line the speaker makes a remark concluding the stanza; the line is interesting because the fruit is not specified and, unlike other images in her work, no colour is associated with it; with this level of abstraction she creates a minimal but unambiguous metaphor about her relationship with her father.
"The month of flowering's finished. The fruit's in, Eaten or rotten." "Poem for a Birthday", 1, l.1–2	The tone of the poem is direct and compelling, supported by the imagery, the alliteration and the short sentences; the speaker has no doubts and seems to have moved beyond ambivalence as she seems to "mourn" her birthday with a poem or chronicle of her life; interestingly, the ambivalence is reinstated at the end of the poem.
"The hoops of blackberry stems made me cry. Now they light me up like an electric bulb. For weeks I can remember nothing at all." "Poem for a Birthday", 1, l.32	This expresses a childhood memory where the stems scratched her, and a projection of the visual of the stems onto her experience of electric shock therapy.

From *The Collected Poems* by Sylvia Plath (2015); *The Colossus* by Sylvia Plath (1960)

Exploring visual literacy

The graphic novel

In the English A literature course you may have to study a graphic novel as an original text or you may refer to the graphic novel adaptation of a text. The genre of the graphic novel is gaining popularity in the classroom as the graphic novel is now recognized as a new literary form. More importantly, its usefulness and attraction for students is based on the visual skills that the genre requires. These skills are very relevant and essential to citizens of an increasingly digital world. In this kind of world, visual literacy skills are interwoven with textual ones, and the reader is called to make connections, synthesize and evaluate the interaction of visual and textual elements in the creation of meaning. It is a complex cognitive task that mixes words and images in very creative and unpredictable ways.



As a student of the graphic novel, you will not be required to discuss your visual and textual literacy skills but the way artists and writers use the tools available to them to create a reading. It is these tools and their uses you will be asked to examine if you study the graphic novel. Naturally, as the work is a novel, students can expect to examine the use of setting, characters, storyline, dialogue and so on. Most—if not all—of the formal elements of the novel are shared by the graphic novel, but several aspects are expressed in visual terms. Naturally, the genre of the graphic novel has its own unique characteristics. Consider the following qualities of sequential art (another term for comics or graphic novels) and how they bear similarities or differences to processes involved in prose fiction reading. McCloud (1994) discusses how these elements are used in graphic form.

- The *panel* is a defining formal aspect of the graphic novel. Panels are sequentially but not always linearly arranged like words on a page.
- When reading graphic novels we may observe the part but we perceive the whole: this is called *closure*. For example, we may see the torso of a woman and although we cannot see her legs we assume they are there. The process of closure plays an important role in our reading of sequential art, engaging our imagination and creativity. According to McCloud (1994: 69): "[c]losure in comics fosters an intimacy surpassed only by the written word, a silent, secret contract between creator and audience".

- The space between the panels is subject to inference and interpretation, and panel transitions can be very varied: they can be *moment-to-moment*, *action-to-action*, *subject-to-subject*, *scene-to-scene*, *aspect-to-aspect* or *non-sequitur*. There is always some link, connection, relation between panels that readers are asked to decode for themselves.
- Each panel is a moment in time and our minds fill the intervening moments between the panels, creating the illusion of *time and motion*. There is a shift and some time that passes from one panel to the next. The gap between panels is called the *gutter*.
- Sequential art can move freely from the *representational* to the *iconic* engaging in a varying degree of abstraction, and this impacts the effect of the work and the interpretation of the reader. For example, an artist has the option to choose from the drawing of someone we know and recognize as "famous actor John Travolta" (representational) to the drawing of a simple smiley face that means "human".
- Sequential art uses lines and colour to tell a story and to add effects to that story. For example, lines are often used to present sound effects.
- Sequential art makes use of speech bubbles for its characters. Text captions are used in a variety of ways, such as narrative voice and characters' thoughts.

Activity

Conventions of the graphic form

In the witty story of the presentation of Paul Crystal, his two cats, Ted and Sylvia, are undoing the shabby chic persona of the sophistication Crystal is trying to project for his photoshoot. While Crystal is trying to make an anti-fashion statement, his cats are reading the paper and commenting on anything from recipes to culture and art.

- Read the graphic short story at http://jimmedway.com/paul-crystal/. Comment on how Jim Medway uses the conventions mentioned above and to what effect.

INTERIORS

PAUL CRYSTAL, GRAPHIC DESIGNER

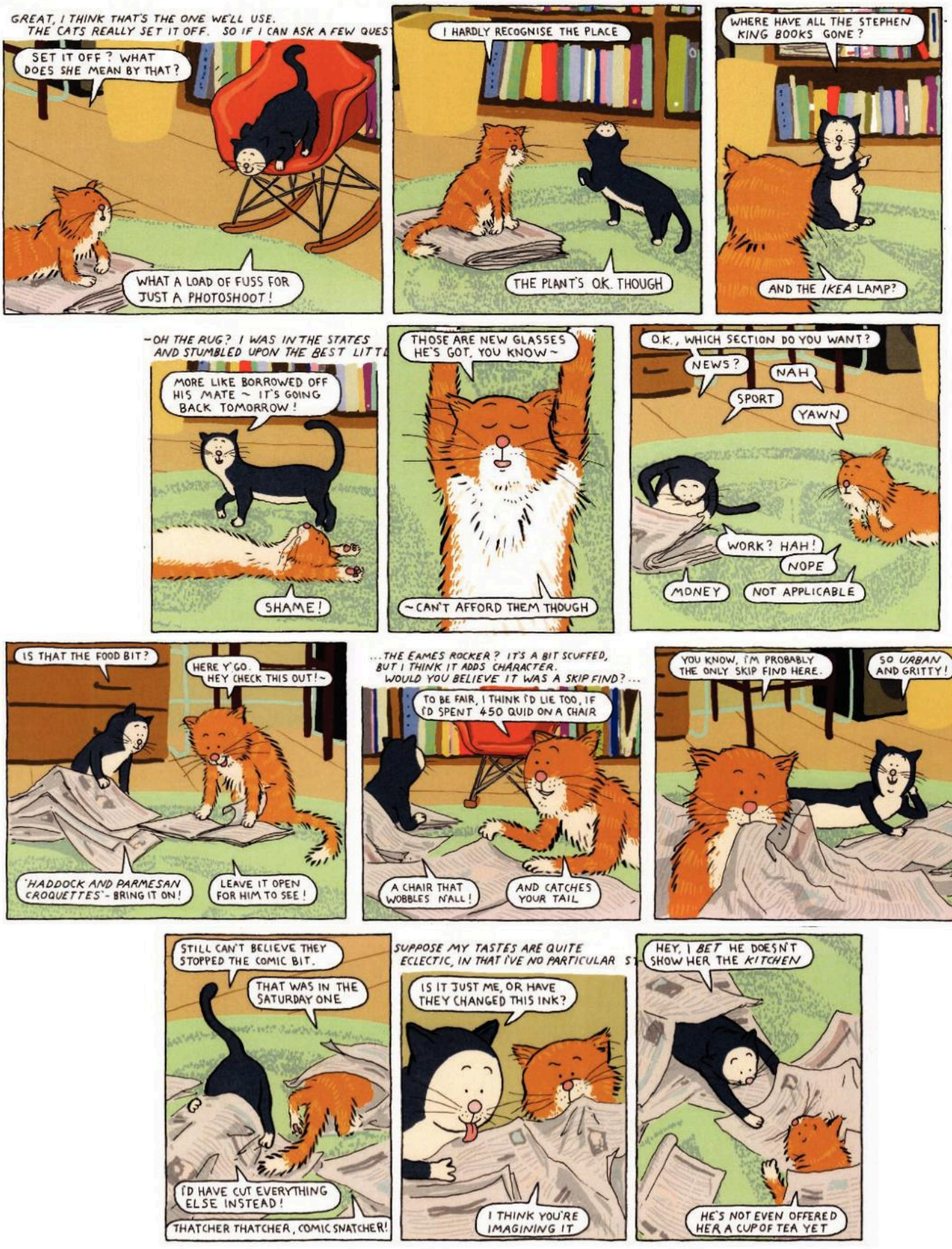
Photographs **Jessie Meadows**

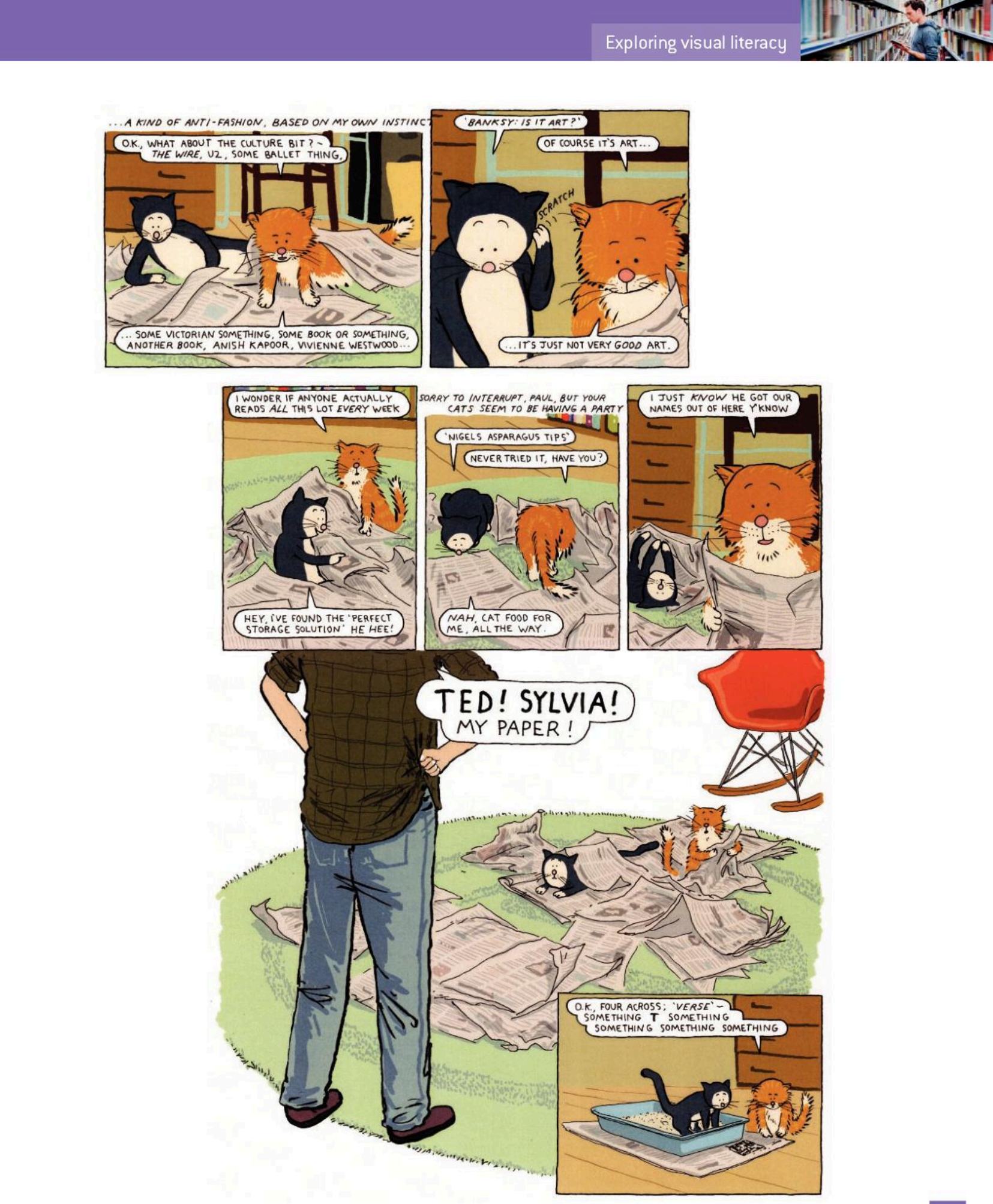
A peek into this small but airy East London live/work studio reveals much about the working methods of Crystal, 31. His 1960's drawing board has been the source of many contemporary images, including the iconic sleeve for Cutter's first epic album.

"I pull inspiration from all around me, whether browsing fine art or flea markets. I like to avoid fashion but seek out style". Crystal's antique rug, a Massachusetts yard-sale bargain, sits surprisingly well alongside his lucky skip-find Eames rocker, just as his well-known designs favour the eclectic over the obvious.

Expressing a revulsion to the overused and sterile techniques seen throughout design - "The Mac I use as little as possible, treating it just like any other tool".

"The fig plant was a gift from grateful client Maisie Shortbread for website concept", and the clock is from the set of Mister Ralph, which Paul also worked on. Having developed a keen eye for the discarded and dated, from this unique working environment Crystal creates an eccentric shabby chic.


GREAT, I THINK THAT'S THE ONE WE'LL USE. THE CATS REALLY SET IT OFF. SO IF I CAN ASK A FEW QUES
SET IT OFF ? WHAT DOES SHE MEAN BY THAT?
WHAT A LOAD OF FUSS FOR JUST A PHOTOSHOOT!
I HARDLY RECOGNISE THE PLACE
THE PLANT'S O.K. THOUGH
WHERE HAVE ALL THE STEPHEN KING BOOKS GONE ?
AND THE IKEA LAMP?
~OH THE RUG? I WAS IN THE STATES AND STUMBLED UPON THE BEST LITT
MORE LIKE BORROWED OFF HIS MATE ~ IT'S GOING BACK TOMORROW!
SHAME!
THOSE ARE NEW GLASSES HE'S GOT, YOU KNOW ~
~CAN'T AFFORD THEM THOUGH
O.K., WHICH SECTION DO YOU WANT?
NEWS?
NAH
SPORT
YAWN
WORK? HAH!
NOPE
MONEY
NOT APPLICABLE
IS THAT THE FOOD BIT?
HERE Y'GO. HEY CHECK THIS OUT!~
'HADDOCK AND PARMESAN CROQUETTES'- BRING IT ON!
LEAVE IT OPEN FOR HIM TO SEE!
...THE EAMES ROCKER ? IT'S A BIT SCUFFED, BUT I THINK IT ADDS CHARACTER. WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT WAS A SKIP FIND?...
TO BE FAIR, I THINK I'D LIE TOO, IF I'D SPENT 450 QUID ON A CHAIR
A CHAIR THAT WOBBLES N'ALL!
AND CATCHES YOUR TAIL
YOU KNOW, I'M PROBABLY THE ONLY SKIP FIND HERE.
SO URBAN AND GRITTY!
STILL CAN'T BELIEVE THEY STOPPED THE COMIC BIT.
THAT WAS IN THE SATURDAY ONE
I'D HAVE CUT EVERYTHING ELSE INSTEAD!
THATCHER THATCHER, COMIC SNATCHER!
SUPPOSE MY TASTES ARE QUITE ECLECTIC, IN THAT I'VE NO PARTICULAR S
IS IT JUST ME, OR HAVE THEY CHANGED THIS INK?
I THINK YOU'RE IMAGINING IT
HEY, I BET HE DOESN'T SHOW HER THE KITCHEN
HE'S NOT EVEN OFFERED HER A CUP OF TEA YET


...A KIND OF ANTI-FASHION, BASED ON MY OWN INSTINCT
O.K., WHAT ABOUT THE CULTURE BIT? - THE WIRE, U2, SOME BALLET THING,
... SOME VICTORIAN SOMETHING, SOME BOOK OR SOMETHING, ANOTHER BOOK, ANISH KAPOOR, VIVIENNE WESTWOOD...
'BANKSY: IS IT ART?'
OF COURSE IT'S ART...
SCRATCH
...IT'S JUST NOT VERY GOOD ART.
I WONDER IF ANYONE ACTUALLY READS ALL THIS LOT EVERY WEEK
HEY, I'VE FOUND THE 'PERFECT STORAGE SOLUTION' HE HEE!
SORRY TO INTERRUPT, PAUL, BUT YOUR CATS SEEM TO BE HAVING A PARTY
'NIGELS ASPARAGUS TIPS'
NEVER TRIED IT, HAVE YOU?
NAH, CAT FOOD FOR ME, ALL THE WAY.
I JUST KNOW HE GOT OUR NAMES OUT OF HERE Y'KNOW
TED! SYLVIA! MY PAPER!
O.K., FOUR ACROSS; 'VERSE' - SOMETHING T SOMETHING SOMETHING SOMETHING SOMETHING

Graphic art and the real

Musings and the city

"All Over Coffee" by Paul Madonna, launched as a strip in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *SFGate* in 2004. The strips are done with ink and inkwash and they depict sites Madonna visits. The text that accompanies the sketches of these scenes are thoughts, reflections or fragments of imagined conversations. For Madonna, the text generally comes before a strip. Once he selects a thought from his notebook, he scouts the city, taking walks and looking until he finds the site, where he begins to draw.

The graphic biography of a Nobel prize winner

Richard Feynman was a American physicist known for his work in quantum physics. He received the Nobel prize in Physics in 1965. When his mother heard that her son had been awarded a Nobel prize, she said, "If that's the world's smartest man, God help us". Her quote appears on the cover of Ottaviani and Myrick's graphic novel *Feynman*.

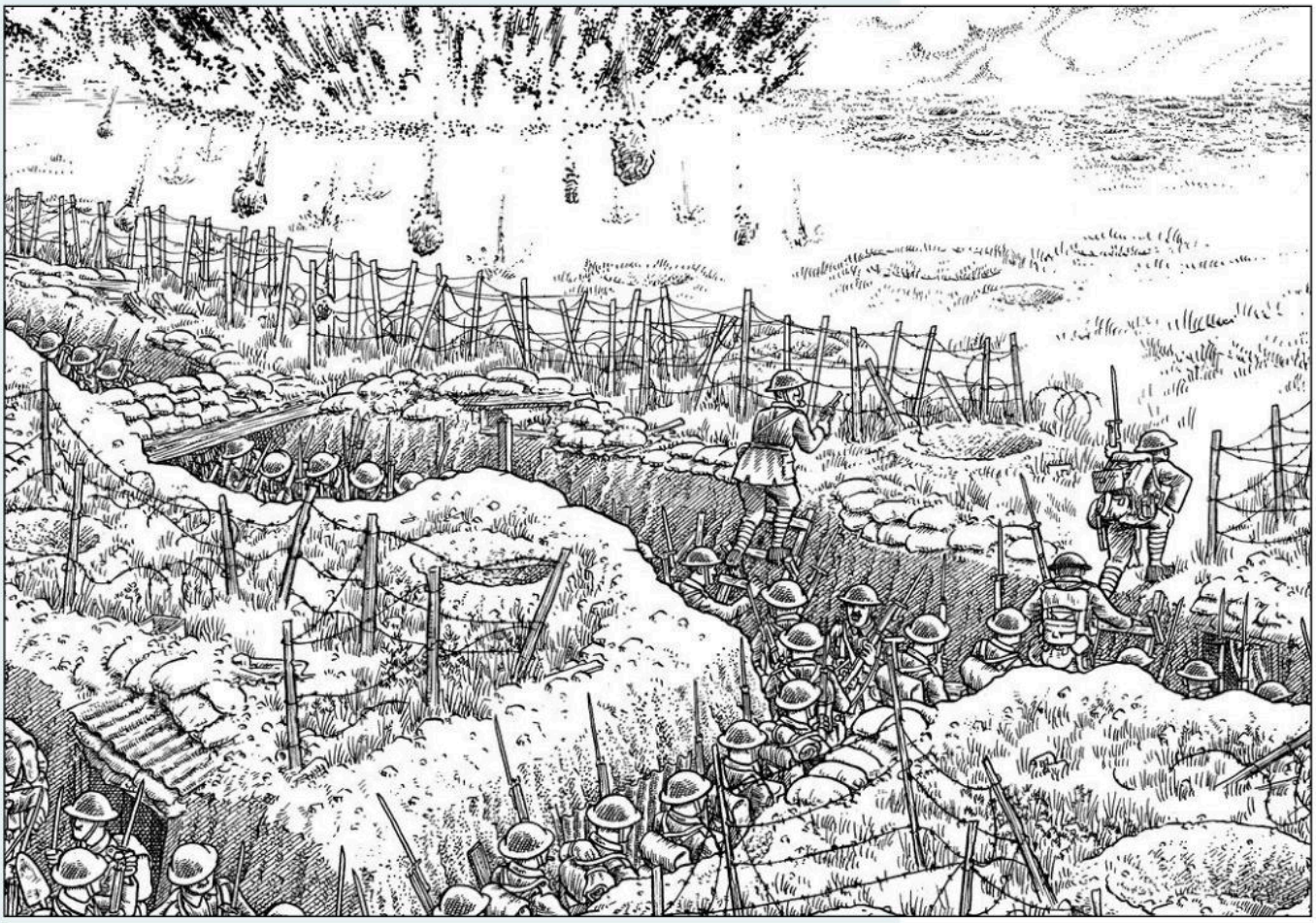
▲ A public mural called "The Motion of the Planets Around the Sun" was created in honour of Richard Feynman in Pasadena, USA

Graphic journalism

Joe Sacco is a Maltese-American cartoonist and journalist known for his graphic journalism. While his work presents facts and figures, the genre that Sacco uses as a vehicle for his reporting also manages to convey his argument, opinion and attitude about his topics.

Sacco is invested in conflict and ambiguity, which is reflected in his work—the way he uses prose to reach beyond the specific historical moment and his ink-on-wood drawings.

His work "The Great War" is a 24-foot long panorama depicting the five-month battle of the Somme, the bloodiest battle of the First World War.



Having a sense of humour

Core concept
CULTURE

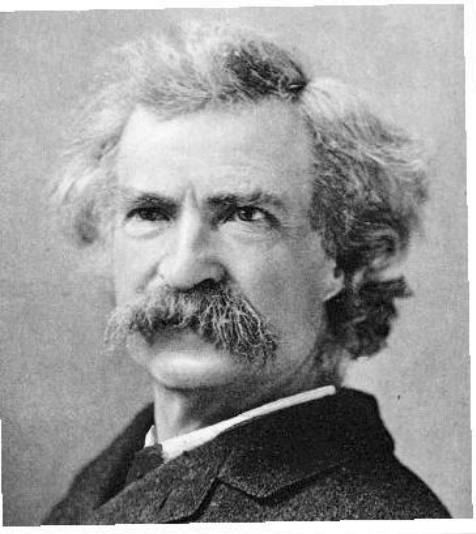
Humour is very often under-represented in high school syllabi with a preference given to "serious" or tragic works. In terms of literary production, we probably have far more non-humorous works than humorous ones, and that is a determining factor in the reading choices we make. It is also the case that humorous writing was not always considered of high literary value and therefore worthy of academic study. One further argument was that the purpose of studying literary texts is to learn something about life or literary traditions, and non-humorous writing was better suited for this purpose. Attitudes, opinions and past perceptions aside, humour is also very difficult to approach in classrooms that are culturally and educationally diverse. Our sense of humour is shaped by our beliefs, our systems, our families—in short, our cultural and personal blueprint.

In addition to this challenge, humour has a very wide range with varying degrees of subtlety and explicitness. It ranges from the hilarious and the comical, to the witty and the amusing—and this is without counting emoticons or texting abbreviations that we use, such as "LOL". Studying humorous writing of any genre is a great lesson in discussing tone and the extraordinary ways writers use language to create a comic effect. Considering questions such as "Why do we still find Shakespeare's comedies amusing?" and "Why do we differ in what we consider funny?" is very useful in any educational context. In this section, however, we will not be asking these "big" questions. Instead we can read excerpts of humorous writing from three different genres, each followed by a prompting question to guide our exploration of their comic effect.

The novel

Activity

Mark Twain (born Samuel Langhorne Clemens, 1835–1910) was an American writer, humourist and lecturer. He began his career writing humorous verse, journalism and travelogues, but his writing talents were very diverse; his novels *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* are acknowledged as some of the greatest American novels.



***Innocents Abroad* by Mark Twain**

A very handsome young lady in the store offered me a pair of blue gloves. I did not want blue, but she said they would look very pretty on a hand like mine. The remark touched me tenderly. I glanced furtively at my hand, and somehow it did seem rather a comely member. I tried a glove on my left, and blushed a little. Manifestly the size was too small for me. But I felt gratified when she said:

"Oh, it is just right!" yet I knew it was no such thing.

I tugged at it diligently, but it was discouraging work. She said:

"Ah! I see you are accustomed to wearing kid gloves while some gentlemen are so awkward about putting them on."

It was the last compliment I had expected. I only understand about putting on the buckskin article perfectly. I made another effort, and tore the glove from the base of the thumb into the palm of the hand, and tried to hide the tear. She kept up her compliments, and I kept up my determination to deserve them or die.

"Ah, you have had experience!" (Yes, a rip down the back of the hand) "They are just right for you—your hand is very small—if they tear, you need not pay for them." (There was a rent across the middle.) "I can always tell when a gentleman understands putting on kid gloves. There is a grace about it that only comes with long patience." (Meanwhile, my efforts caused the whole afterguard of the glove to "fetch away," as the sailors say, and then the fabric parted across the knuckles, and nothing was left but a melancholy ruin.)

I was too much flattered to make an exposure and throw the merchandise on the angel's hands. I was hot, vexed, confused, yet still happy, but I hated the other boys for taking such an absorbing interest in the proceedings. I wished they were in Jericho. I felt exquisitely mean when I said cheerfully:

"This one does very well; it fits elegantly. I like a glove that fits. No, never mind, ma'am, never mind; I'll put the other on in the street. It is warm here."

It was warm. It was the warmest place I ever was in. I paid the bill, and, as I passed out with a fascinating bow, I thought I detected a light in the woman's eye that was gently ironical, and when I looked back from the street, and she was laughing to herself about something or other, I said to myself, with withering sarcasm: "Oh, certainly; you know how to put on kid gloves, don't you?—a self-complacent ass, ready to be flattered out of your senses by every petticoat that chooses to take the trouble to do it!"

From *Collected Works* by Mark Twain (2018)

How does Twain use self-ridicule and hyperbole to create a humorous effect in the narrative of this incident?

Travel writing

Activity

Bill Bryson (b.1951) is an Anglo-American non-fiction writer. His works are mostly about travel, but he has also written on the English language, Shakespeare and science, among other topics.

Notes from a Small Island

I reached Abingdon by way of a back lane from Sunningwell. Abingdon had one of the best-kept council estates I think I've ever seen – huge sweeps of lawn and neat houses – and a handsome town hall built on stilts as if somebody was expecting a forty-day flood, but that's as much as I'm prepared to say for Abingdon. It has the most appalling shopping precinct, which I later learned had been created by sweeping away a raft of medieval houses, and a kind of dogged commitment to ugliness around its fringes.

Sutton Courtenay seemed considerably further on than I recalled it from the map, but it was a pleasant walk with frequent views of the Thames. It is a charming place, with some fine homes, three agreeable-looking pubs, and a little green with a war memorial, beside which stands the churchyard where not only George Orwell lies, but also H.H. Asquith. Call me a perennial Iowa farmboy, but I never fail to be impressed by how densely packed with worthies is this little island. How remarkable it is that in a single village churchyard you find the graves of two men of global stature. We in Iowa would be proud of either one of them – indeed we would be proud of Trigger the Wonder Horse or the guy who invented traffic cones or pretty much anyone at all.

I walked into the graveyard and found Orwell's grave. It had three straggly rose bushes growing out of it and some artificial flowers in a glass jar, before a simple stone with a curiously terse inscription:

Here Lies Eric Arthur Blair
Born June 25th 1903
Died January 21st 1950

Not much sentiment there, what? Nearby was the grave of Herbert Henry Asquith. It was one of those teacaddy tombs, and it was sinking into the ground in an alarming manner. His inscription too was mysteriously to the point. It said simply:

Earl of Oxford and Asquith
Prime Minister of England
April 1908 to December 1916
Born 12 September 1852
Died 15 February 1928

Notice anything odd there? I bet you did if you are Scottish or Welsh. The whole place was a bit strange. I mean to say, here was a cemetery containing the grave of a famous author that was made as anonymous as if he had been buried a pauper, and another of a man whose descendants had apparently forgotten exactly what he was Prime Minister of and which looked seriously in danger of being swallowed by the earth. Next to Asquith lay one Ruben Loveridge 'who fell asleep 29th April 1950' and nearby was a grave shared by two men: 'Samuel Lewis 1881–1930' and 'Alan Slater 1924–1993'. What an intriguing little community this was – a place where men are entombed together and they bury you if you fall asleep.

On second thought, I think we Iowans would be content to let you keep Orwell and Asquith as long as we could have the guy who was buried alive.

From *Notes from a Small Island* by Bill Bryson (1995)

How does Bryson use description and sarcasm to create a humorous effect in this excerpt?

The essay

Activity

David Sedaris (b. 1956) is an American humourist writer and comedian. Sedaris's writing focuses mostly on short stories and essays.

"Today's Special"

It is his birthday, and Hugh and I are seated in a New York restaurant, awaiting the arrival of our fifteen-word entrées. He looks very nice, dressed in the suit and sweater that have always belonged to him. As for me, I own only my shoes, pants, shirt and tie. My jacket belongs to the restaurant and was offered as a loan by the maître d', who apparently thought I would feel more comfortable dressed to lead a highschool marching band.

I'm worrying the thick gold braids decorating my sleeves when the waiter presents us with what he calls 'a little something to amuse the palette'. Roughly the size and color of a Band-Aid, the amusement floats on a shallow, muddy puddle of sauce and is topped with a sprig of greenery.

'And this would be … what, exactly?' Hugh asks.

'This,' the waiter announces, 'is our raw Atlantic swordfish served in a dark chocolate gravy and garnished with fresh mint.'

'Not again,' I say. 'Can't you guys come up with something a little less conventional?'

'Love your jacket,' the waiter whispers.

As a rule, I'm no great fan of eating out in New York restaurants. It's hard to love a place that's outlawed smoking but finds it perfectly acceptable to serve raw fish in a bath of chocolate. There are no normal restaurants left, at least in our neighborhood. The diners have all been taken over by precious little bistros boasting a menu of indigenous American cuisine. They call these meals 'traditional', yet they're rarely the American dishes I remember. The club sandwich has been pushed aside in favor of the herb-encrusted medallions of baby artichoke hearts, which never leave me thinking, Oh, right, those! I wonder if they're as good as the ones my mom used to make.

Part of the problem is that we live in the wrong part of town. SoHo is not a macaroni salad kind of place. This is where the world's brightest young talents come to braise caramelized racks of corn-fed songbirds or offer up their famous knuckle of flash-seared crapple served with a collar of chided ginger and cornered by a tribe of kiln-roasted Chilean toadstools, teased with a warm spray of clarified musk oil. Even when they promise something simple, they've got to tart it up — the meatloaf has been poached in sea water, or there are figs in the tuna salad. If cooking is an art, I think we're in our Dada phase.

I've never thought of myself as a particularly finicky eater, but it's hard to be a good sport when each dish seems to include no fewer than a dozen ingredients, one of which I'm bound to dislike. I'd order the steak with a medley of suffocated peaches, but I'm put off by the aspirin sauce. The sea scallops look good until I'm told they're served in a broth of malt liquor and mummified litchi nuts. What I really want is a cigarette, and I'm always searching the menu in the hope that some courageous young chef has finally recognized tobacco as a vegetable. Bake it, steam it, grill it or stuff it into littleneck clams, I just need something familiar that I can hold on to.

When the waiter brings our entrées, I have no idea which plate might be mine. In yesterday's restaurants it was possible both to visualize and to recognize your meal. There were always subtle differences, but for the most part, a lamb chop tended to maintain its basic shape. That is to say that it looked choplike. It had a handle made of bone and a teardrop of meat hugged by a thin rind of fat. Apparently, though, that was too predictable. Order the modern lamb chop, and it's likely to look no different than your companion's order of shackled pompano. The current

food is always arranged into a senseless, vertical tower. No longer content to recline, it now reaches for the sky, much like the high-rise buildings lining our city streets. It's as if the plates were valuable parcels of land and the chef had purchased one small lot and unlimited air rights. Hugh's saffron linguini resembles a miniature turban, topped with architectural spires of shrimp. It stands there in the center while the rest of the vast, empty plate looks as though it's been leased out as a possible parking lot. I had ordered the steak, which, bowing to the same minimalist fashion, is served without the bone, the thin slices of beef stacked to resemble a funeral pyre. The potatoes I'd been expecting have apparently either been clarified to an essence or were used to stoke the grill.

'Maybe,' Hugh says, 'they're inside your tower of meat.'

This is what we have been reduced to. Hugh blows the yucca pollen off his blackened shrimp while I push back the sleeves of my borrowed sport coat and search the meat tower for my promised potatoes.

'There they are, right there.' Hugh uses his fork to point out what could easily be mistaken for five cavity-ridden molars. The dark spots must be my vegetable.

Because I am both a glutton and a masochist, my standard complaint, 'That was so bad,' is always followed by 'And there was so little of it!'

Our plates are cleared, and we are presented with dessert menus. I learn that spiced ham is no longer considered just a luncheon meat and that even back issues of *Smithsonian* can be turned into sorbets.

'I just couldn't,' I say to the waiter when he recommends the white chocolate and wild loganberry couscous.

'If we're counting calories, I could have the chef serve it without the crème fraîche.'

'No,' I say. 'Really, I just couldn't.'

We ask for the check, explaining that we have a movie to catch. It's only a ten-minute walk to the theater, but I'm antsy because I'd like to get something to eat before the show. They'll have loads of food at the concession stand, but I don't believe in mixing meat with my movies. Luckily there's a hot dog stand not too far out of our way.

Friends always say, 'How can you eat those? I read in the paper that they're made from hog's lips.'

'And ...?'

'And hearts and eyelids.'

That, to my mind, is only three ingredients and constitutes a refreshing change of pace. I order mine with nothing but mustard,

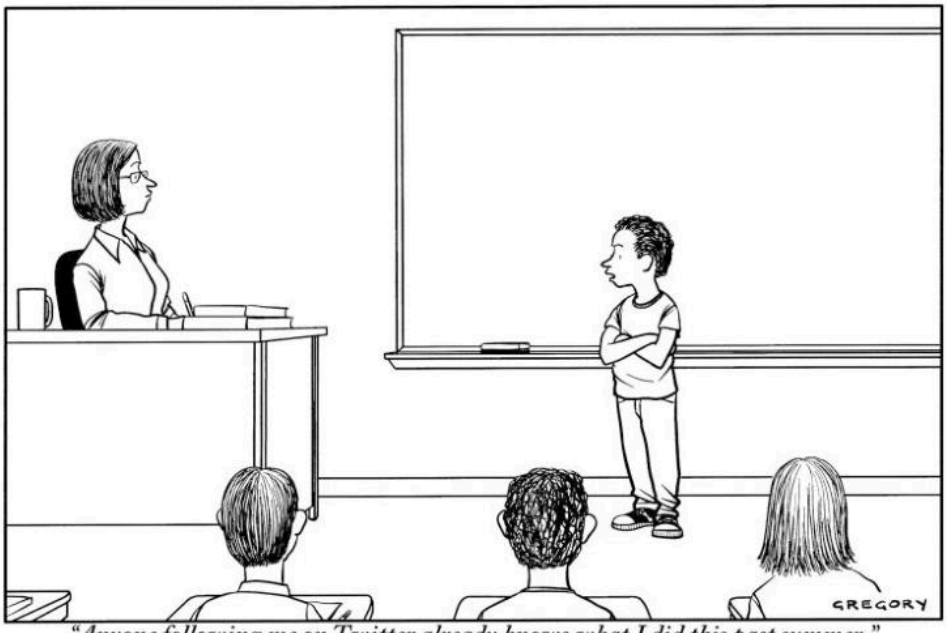
and am thrilled to watch the vendor present my hot dog in a
105 horizontal position. So simple and timeless that I can recognize it, immediately, as food.

From "Today's Special" in *Me Talk Pretty One Day* by David Sedaris (2000)

How does Sedaris use self-deprecation and word choice to create a humorous effect in his essay?

Activity

1. From the three excerpts you read, which one appealed to you the most?
2. Reread the excerpt and underline the phrases you consider funny, humorous, amusing, witty and so on.
3. Using the style of the author that most appealed to you, write your own story about an incident, experience or encounter you have had. You can choose a funny episode or one that you can try to present as funny through your writing.



"Anyone following me on Twitter already knows what I did this past summer."

UNFUNNY | SOMEWHAT FUNNY | FUNNY

▲ Created in collaboration with computer scientists from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, a new crowdsourcing algorithm helps determine the best caption for an image.

3 TIME AND SPACE

Introduction

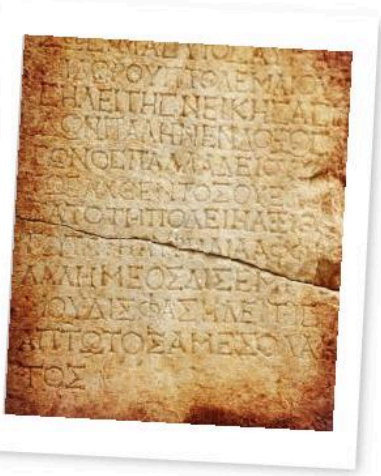
This chapter is based on the area of exploration "Time and space". The objectives of this chapter are to:

- **introduce** students to ways of perceiving texts as products of and contributors to cultures
- **exemplify** the skills of reading literature through the lens of reception history by considering how writers and readers from different times and places may encounter a text differently
- **investigate** specific examples of textual and contextual relationships
- **guide** students toward making their own discoveries about the intersection of texts and their contexts (the writer's, reader's and readers')
- **provide** constructive advice for imaginatively correlating aesthetic and historical lines of inquiry.

Study and work selection in this area should allow students to explore texts and issues from a variety of places, cultures and/or times. Time and space aims to broaden students' understanding of the open, plural or cosmopolitan nature of literary texts by considering the following guiding conceptual questions.

1. How important is cultural or historical context to the production and reception of a literary text?
2. How do we approach literary texts from different times and cultures to our own?
3. To what extent do literary texts offer insight into another culture?
4. How does the meaning and impact of a literary text change over time?
5. How do literary texts reflect, represent or form a part of cultural practices?
6. How does language represent social distinctions and identities?

From the IB Language A literature subject guide, page 21.



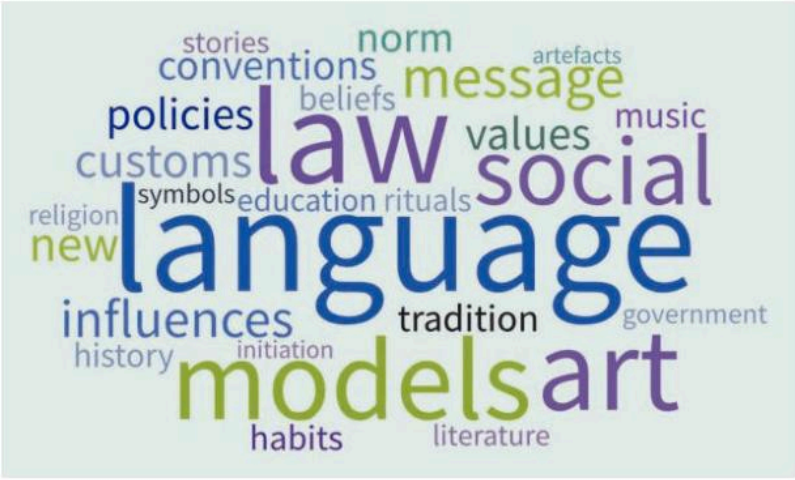
In this part of the course, we consider the study of texts through cultural, temporal, literary and personal lenses, or a combination of these. To be able to examine a text from these perspectives, it is important to remember that a work of literature is viewed as an event that happens in a particular cultural context. The writing of the work may involve a very private and intimate process for the writer, but a literary work is not produced in a vacuum. The literary work is seen as an event that has been made possible through the convergence of ideas, decisions, conditions, circumstances, incidents, influences, attitudes, ideologies and so on at a given point in time at a specific place. A work is shaped, to a greater or lesser extent, by the environment (the culture in which it is conceived, produced and received), as well as the historical circumstances surrounding it, with or without the author's deliberate choices. The historical and geographical coordinates of a work, however, do not offer us an explanation of the text as such, but they give us insight into aspects of the work and indications for interpretation and explication. While the study of these circumstances may help us understand better how a text was conceived and produced, the task and challenge for a reader is to explore the text in depth to discover the ways and the means with which the text interacts with historical, political and social circumstances. In other words, from this perspective, the role of the reader is to discover the culture and the context of the work through its language and the ways the author uses language to create meaning.

In addition to this perspective, our own experience plays a role in the way we understand and interpret a text. A careful consideration of our own context and culture is necessary in order to heighten our awareness of how literary texts may endure the test of time; and how their meaning can be adjusted or appropriated, or reimagined or reconstructed in a different time period.

As we begin to look at issues of culture and context, literary analysis and personal response, you will use your learner portfolio to document

reflections, thoughts and responses to the suggested activities and questions that will relate to various skills required in the course. These activities are designed to engage students in discussions about literary texts, to practise literary analysis skills and to prepare for the assessment tasks for the English A literature course. The activities will include close reading and textual analysis (paper 1), comparison and contrast (paper 2) and identification and discussion of global matters in the texts studied (internal assessment: individual oral) as well as inquiry-based tasks for particular works (the higher level essay).

Talking about culture



Take a few minutes to reflect on what you understand culture to be or to stand for. Your response can be a list of things or a fully worded definition. Then consider the following definitions and underline key words in each one.

"Culture… is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tyler, a British anthropologist, 1870: 1; cited by Avruch 1998: 6).

"Culture consists of the derivatives of experience, more or less organized, learned or created by the individuals of a population, including those images or encodements and their interpretations (meanings) transmitted from past generations, from contemporaries, or formed by individuals themselves" (Schwartz 1992; cited by Avruch 1998: 17).

"Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour" (Spencer-Oatey 2008: 3).

ATL

Thinking skills—visible thinking routine: think–pair–share

TOK

What do the definitions of culture reveal about this knowledge? For example, can scientific knowledge offer us a definition of culture that could be more reliable than the definitions quoted above? In your TOK course you have also discussed the difference between shared and personal knowledge. How do shared and personal knowledge contribute to the concept of culture?

Observations on culture

Reflection and activity

Reflect on and respond to the questions below, using your own experience and also any experience of other cultures that is available to you. You can also use drawing, colours or any means you prefer to represent concepts and ideas in your portfolio.

- Do you notice any patterns in the observations about culture?
- Does reflecting on observations about culture reveal *something about you that is new* to you?
- How could these observations relate to your reading and your habits of mind as a reader?

Consider these questions about definitions of culture.

1. Identify similarities and differences in the three quoted definitions.
2. What could be the reasons for the differences among them?
3. How is your list or definition similar to or different from the definitions above?
4. If you were to list the key elements of your list or definition of culture, how would you rank them and why?
5. Compare your notes with those of a peer. What differences do you notice and what do these differences say about you as individuals or about your culture or cultures?

Exploring classical Greek drama

This section will explore the genre of Greek tragedy against the backdrop of classical Greek culture and consider:

- the impact of the work
- the ways in which the work offers us insight into the culture of the time.

The challenge in defining culture is that it is a construct based on all aspects of human life. In other words, culture is defined on the basis of experience and the study of human activity. When studying culture, classical Greek culture is a very interesting example as it has given us dramatic works that we study to this day and these have profoundly influenced our literary traditions in many ways. In this section we will consider this influence and impact, and the meaning of the original, drawing on a close analysis of the text.

ATL

Research skills

ATL

Thinking skills

Classical Greek culture

Activity

Before we begin looking at the text more closely, choose one of the definitions above, research classical Greek culture and make notes on aspects of culture that seem significant to you, for example because they seem unusual or very similar to your culture. Consider the depth our knowledge of such a culture can attain and which cultural expressions, rituals, beliefs and so on cannot be documented.

◀ The ancient theatre of Epidaurus where plays were performed alongside athletic events and the worship of god Dionysus

Theatre space and audience experience

Theatre space and artistic experience influence each other and work together to create an experience for the audience. Theatre spaces reflect the culture that contains them and are very revealing of attitudes towards the theatre as an art form. In the same way, theatre space at the time a play is written is a very important aspect of a play as the space that hosts a performance is part of its context of production as well as reception. The Globe Theatre in London in the picture below (shown below, left) has a yard open to the sky. The stage is covered with a roof and it sticks out into the yard. The audience stand in the yard or sit in the three covered galleries that surround it. The recently renovated Alice Tilly Hall at the Lincoln Center in New York (below, right) has a multi-purpose performance stage with sound fittings in wood veneer and a special acoustic design that allows sound to bounce, among other features. Looking at the picture of the ancient theatre of Epidaurus (above) and the two pictures below, what conclusions can you draw about the tradition of the theatre in ancient Greece, during Shakespeare's time and in contemporary America? Make a note of the pertinent features of these spaces and how they could impact the audience's understanding of the play.

▲ The Globe Theatre, London, UK

▲ Lincoln's Center Alice Tully Hall, New York, USA

The cultural context of *Antigone* by Sophocles

The following is a summary of the story of Antigone.

▲ *Antigone au chevet de Polynice* by Benjamin Constant (1868)

Antigone is the daughter of Oedipus and Jocasta. Oedipus' tragic fate was that unknowingly he married his mother and this curse follows all the members of his family. After Oedipus' death, Antigone and her sister Ismene return to their native Thebes where a civil war is raging between their two brothers, Eteocles and Polyneices, who had agreed to take turns ruling the city. While Eteocles defends his rule beyond the agreed term, Polyneices attacks Thebes and his brother. The result of the conflict is the demise of both brothers, and their uncle Creon becoming king of the city. Creon's first edict is to forbid the burial of Polyneices whom he considers a traitor, responsible for the civil war. Antigone defies Creon and buries her brother under threat of execution by Creon. She hangs herself in the cave where she was held prisoner and her beloved, Haemon, Creon's son, also kills himself.

Core concept

IDENTITY

"This play, it is generally agreed, was produced before and fairly close to the year 441 BC. Sophocles, as we know from a reliable contemporary source, was one of the nine generals elected, with Pericles, for a campaign against the revolt of Samos in that year.

The ancient introduction to the play, found in most of the manuscripts, records a tradition that Sophocles owed his election to office to the popularity of *Antigone*. True or false, this story could only have been based on a widely accepted belief that the play was produced before the year 441.

The story also, by setting *Antigone* in a political context, draws attention to the political content of the play, its concern with the problems of the *polis*, the city-state. *Antigone* resurfaces in a highly political context once again in the fourth century, some sixty years after Sophocles' death; it had by that time already become a classic. The orator and statesman Demosthenes had the clerk of the court read out Creon's speech on the proper loyalties of a citizen (lines 194–214 of the translation) as a lesson in patriotism to his political opponent Aeschines (who had once been a professional actor and had played the part of Creon). And in that same century Aristotle quoted the play repeatedly in his treatise the *Politics*" (Knox 1982: 35).

There are several cultural and contextual aspects to examine when studying *Antigone*. The first is the specific historical event where Pericles, the leader of Athens, was part of a campaign to put an end to the revolt of the island of Samos. In this respect, the play is written almost as a response or a reflection on events at the time. The second aspect is the political nature of the play as acknowledged by Sophocles, Aristotle and also Knox, the author of the introductory text above. The third aspect, implicitly mentioned, is the fact that the individual challenging Creon's decree that Polyneices not be buried is a woman. These issues are explored and elaborated on in the play through various literary aspects, such as the structure of the work, the role and commentary of the chorus, the characters' development and the dialogue.

TOK

For our understanding of the play, how significant is the information that Sophocles was one of generals elected for a campaign against the revolt of Samos? How does Sophocles represent his personal perspective through character development and the action in the play?

Core concept

PERSPECTIVE

Critical theory

We have chosen to explore texts as events that come about within a specific context and culture, yet critical theorists occasionally take a different stance.

As students of literature, the mere consideration of different perspectives offers us further insight into a work and how we respond to it. In this vein, consider two very different critical perspectives.

- One perspective is known as new criticism. It calls for an interpretation of a literary text without any consideration of the text's context. Using this approach, the language of the text is the sole vehicle of meaning that the reader can access for interpretation.
- The other perspective is known as historicism. It claims that no interpretation of a literary text can be valid without a detailed examination of the culture and context of the text. Historicism "insists on the prime importance of historical context to the interpretation of texts of all kinds" (Hamilton 2003).

New criticism and historicism are just two examples of analytic theories of literature that are also themselves outcomes of cultural and contextual factors. You may want to research these theories further. However, for the purposes of this course these theories are considered perspectives to reflect on rather than topics of study.

Approaching a text in the distant past

Activity

Make a list of the advantages of the two approaches of new criticism and historicism when considering a text from a period of the distant past such as *Antigone*. How would these perspectives lead us to approach the text and reach an interpretation? How would these two interpretations differ? What does one approach capture that the other may find a challenge to analyse or evaluate?

ATL

Communication skills

▲ Seven analytic theories

The structure of *Antigone*

Prologue:
Antigone asks for her sister Ismene's help in burying their brother Polyneices. Ismene refuses, and Antigone rejects her sister.

Parodos:
The chorus enters, rejoicing and thanking the gods that the attack of Polyneices has been defeated and Thebes is safe.

First Episode:
Creon enters, and reveals his plan to bury Eteocles but leave Polyneices unburied. A sentry enters, and reports that someone has tried to bury Polyneices. Creon is angered, and threatens the sentry.

First Stasimon:
The chorus dances and sings its Ode to Man ("Many are the wonders, none is more wonderful than what is man".)

Second Episode:
Antigone is brought before Creon, and confesses that she buried her brother. She and Creon argue, and Creon decrees she will die. Ismene is led in, and claims she helped her sister. Antigone rejects her help.

Second Stasimon:
The chorus reflects on the destiny of Antigone's house, fate, and the nature of a divine curse.

Third Episode:
Haemon argues with his father Creon, and leaves. Creon decrees that Antigone be entombed alive in a cave.

Third Stasimon:
The chorus sings a song about the power of the god Eros.

Fourth Episode:
Antigone, lamenting her fate to the chorus, is led to the cave.

Fourth Stasimon:
The chorus compares Antigone's fate and imprisonment to that of three others: Danae, Lycurgus, and Cleopatra.

Fifth Episode:
Teiresias enters, and tells Creon he has made a grave mistake. Creon realizes his mistake, and rushes to bury Polyneices and release Antigone.

Fifth Choral Ode:
The chorus invokes Dionysus, the god who protects Thebes.

Exodus:
A messenger reports the deaths of Antigone and Haemon. Eurydice, Creon's wife, commits suicide. Creon laments his losses.

Glossary

Prologue: opening expository dialogue

Parodos: song by chorus following the prologue

Episode: character interaction and dialogue takes place

Stasimon: a choral ode in which the chorus reacts to the last episode

Exodus: the conclusion of the play and the final choral ode

Structure of Greek classical tragedy

Activity

Here are some preliminary questions about the structure of the play as outlined above. Make a note of your thoughts about these questions and try to identify your expectations as a reader before you read the play.

1. Classical Greek tragedy is not structured in acts and scenes. Could the episodic structure of tragedy reveal something about the role and function of tragedy in the culture of the time?
2. Given that the chorus is a group of citizens, usually women or old men who do not participate in the action as such, but are helplessly watching the drama unfold, how does the structure of the play highlight their role?

Tragedy in classical times was understood as education—rather than entertainment, as might be the case today. During the festivals, citizens went to the theatre as part of a pilgrimage for Dionysus. In this sense, the act of going to the theatre had a religious significance as well as a

Core concept

CULTURE

Core concept
CREATIVITY

Core concept
PERSPECTIVE

Core concept
REPRESENTATION

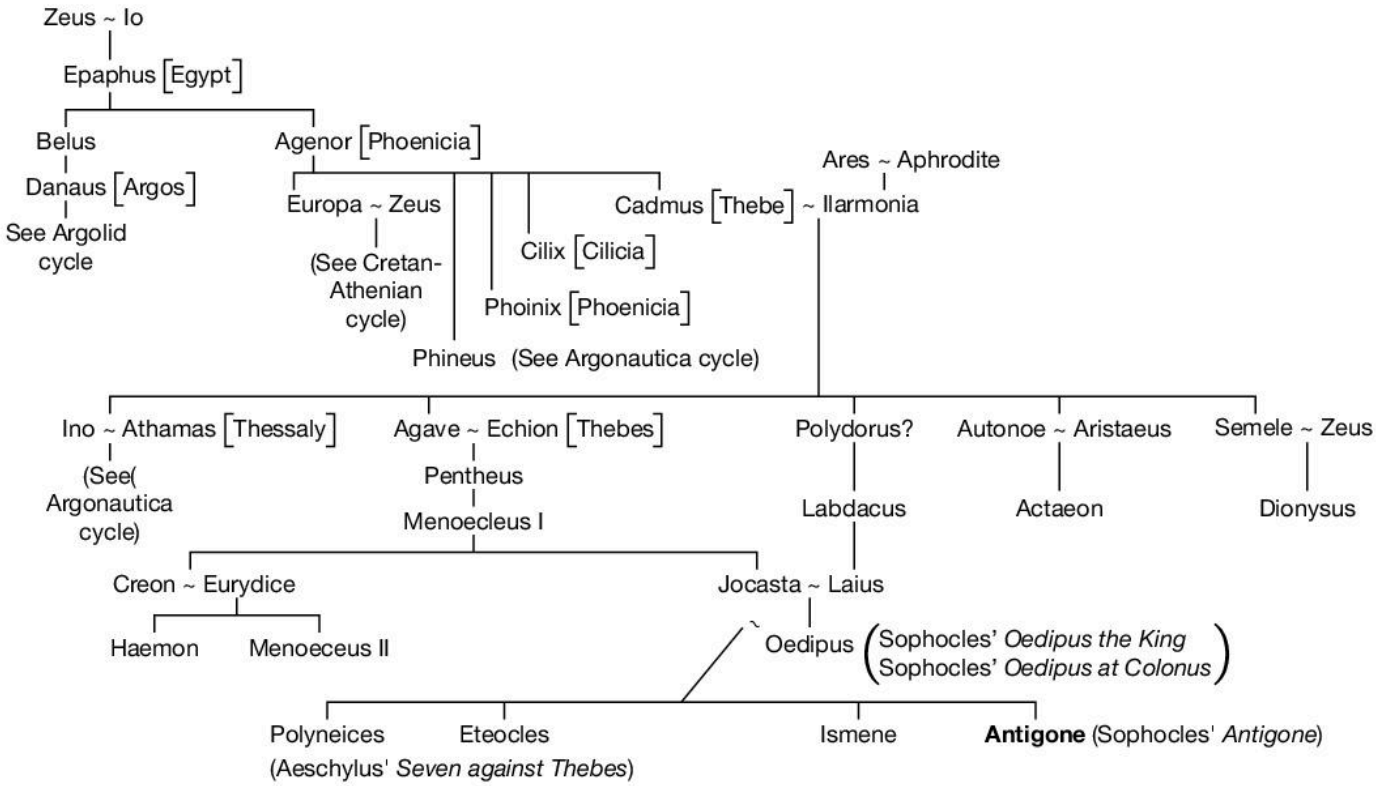
political one. The stories of the plays performed were myths that the citizens were familiar with. Therefore, the purpose of the theatre was not to create a novel experience but rather to serve as food for thought and a prompt for reflection on issues relating to human affairs.

Action is never portrayed on the stage and the episodic nature of tragedy focuses on the interaction and the dialogue between characters, the ideas that the playwright wants to bring to the audience's attention and the impact of these ideas on people.

Just from looking at the outlined structure (see the previous pages), we notice the presence of the chorus framing each episode. The chorus may not be involved in the action, but they represent the citizens, the members of the *polis*, and express their feelings and opinions about what happens. It is obvious then that their point of view (that is, the perspective of the citizens about the conflict between Antigone and Creon) is very important and so it can have an influence on the understanding and the perspective of the audience.

The characters in *Antigone*

The curse of the house of Laios begins with the king of Thebes, Laios, who ordered the shepherd to kill his son, Oedipus. As we know, however, the shepherd disobeyed him and instead gave the baby to another shepherd who, in turn, gave him to the King and Queen of



▲ The genealogical tree of Antigone

Corinth who were childless and very happily adopted him. The myth of the house of Laios and Oedipus is very interesting in the complex issues it raises. While Oedipus is guilty of killing his father, so is Laios guilty of ordering the murder of his son in an attempt to defy the oracle.

The characters in the play reference the values and issues presented through their speech and their actions. The following exchange between Antigone and Ismene is from the prologue, which serves to give information about the predicament of Antigone and Ismene as well as the divergent inclinations and opinions about the burial of Polyneices. The characters of Antigone and Ismene are introduced as is the action that Antigone is planning to take. The prologue in Greek theatre always has the purpose of exposition; that is, of setting the scene for the audience regarding the conflict and what could follow. The dialogue has already established the opposition between "friend" and "foe" and the idea of opposition and conflict is also mirrored by the two sisters as they discuss Antigone's resolution and the justification of her defiance of Creon and the state law.

Antigone–Ismene
Antigone informs Ismene, her sister of the plan to bury Polyneices. Ismene has strong objections to her sister's plan, but Antigone is determined to proceed.

ISMENE:
Oh my sister, think—
think how our own father died, hated,
his reputation in ruins, driven on
by the crimes he brought to light himself
to gouge out his eyes with his own hands—
then mother… his mother and wife, both in one,
mutilating her life in the twisted noose—
and last, our two brothers dead in a single day,
both shedding their own blood, poor suffering boys,
battling out their common destiny hand-to-hand.

Now look at the two of us, left so alone…
think what a death we'll die, the worst of all
if we violate the laws and override
the fixed decree of the throne, its power—
we must be sensible. Remember we are women,
we're not born to contend with men. Then too,
we're underlings, ruled by much stronger hands,
so we must submit in this, and things still worse.

The reference to the tragic life of Oedipus and Jocasta, their parents, serves as a reminder of what, at the time, was considered the outcome of the gods' actions and desires. At the same time, Oedipus is responsible for discovering his true identity and also assuming responsibility for his punishment by gouging out his eyes. The question of fate versus free will does not seem to have an unequivocal answer despite the Greeks' deference to the gods.

Core concept
IDENTITY

I, for one, I'll beg the dead to forgive me—
I'm forced, I have no choice—I must obey
the ones who stand in power. Why rush to extremes?
It's madness, madness.

ANTIGONE:
I won't insist,
no, even if you should have a change of heart,
I'd never welcome you in the labor, not with me.
So, do as you like, whatever suits you best—
I will bury him myself.
And even if I die in the act, that death will be a glory.
I will lie with the one I love and loved by him—
to please the dead than please the living here:
in the kingdom down below I'll lie forever.
Do as you like, dishonor the laws
the gods hold in honor.

ISMENE:
I'd do them no dishonor…
but defy the city? I have no strength for that.

ANTIGONE:
You have your excuses, I am on my way,
I will raise a mound for him, for my dear brother.

ISMENE:
Oh Antigone, you're so rash—I'm so afraid for you!

ANTIGONE:
Don't fear for me. Set your life in order.

ISMENE:
Then don't, at least, blurt this out to anyone.
Keep it a secret. I'll join you in that, I promise.

ANTIGONE:
Dear god, shout it from the rooftops, I'll hate you
all the more for silence—tell the world!

ISMENE:
So fiery—and it ought to chill your heart.

ANTIGONE:
I know I please where I must please the most.

The moderate Ismene is making an argument against Antigone's decision by urging her not to violate the law and, as she continues to plead with her sister, the argument shifts towards the necessity of forbearance and compliance rather than conviction. A feeling of weakness and fear is also documented by her acceptance of women as individuals not born to contend with men.

The idea of glory is a recurring theme in Antigone's speech and it is often associated with her sacrifice (her death). In this short speech, Antigone makes a case for what she considers a glorious death and states her case very explicitly by claiming that she is obeying the laws of the gods, which supercede those of the state.

Antigone's motivation for burying her brother now seems to have another side to it as she seems very keen on making her defiance known to the world. Until this point, the assumption for the audience is that the reasons Antigone wants to offer her brother a burial are purely religious or spiritual.

As the pace of the exchange between the sisters quickens, the tension between them is revealed. The questions are: why would it be so significant for the gods to bury Polyneices? What would the consequences be for the two sisters if he remained unburied? Was burial of the dead an act of reverence to the gods or a way to honour the individual being buried?

TOK

How are funeral rituals expressed and represented in different religious systems? How do funeral rituals shape the way we view life and death, or the other way around?

ISMENE:
Yes, if you can, but you're in love with impossibility.

ANTIGONE:
Very well then, once my strength gives out
I will be done at last.

ISMENE:
You're wrong from the start,
you're off on a hopeless quest.

ANTIGONE:
If you say so, you will make me hate you,
and the hatred of the dead, by all rights,
will haunt you night and day.
But leave me to my own absurdity, leave me
to suffer this—dreadful thing. I will suffer
nothing as great as death without glory.
Exit to the side.

ISMENE:
Then go if you must, but rest assured,
wild, irrational as you are, my sister,
you are truly dear to the ones who love you.

From *Antigone* by Sophocles in *The Three Theban Plays* translated by Robert Fagles (1982)

Issues in *Antigone*

Activity

ATL
Thinking skills

There is no explicit mention anywhere in the play that the burial—or not—of Polyneices will affect the welfare of his soul. In fact, all references to his burial only mention the mangling of the body, although Antigone repeatedly refers to the laws above state laws.

1. Given the exchange between the sisters and what your research about classical Greece has revealed, what would you consider the controversial issues in the play? Begin by identifying the issues and then formulate questions as they arise from your reading and understanding of the play.
2. Is there a subtext (a hidden meaning or intention not articulated) in Antigone's speech? Present these issues in a diagram by positioning the most pertinent issue, in your opinion, at the centre and connecting this issue to characters, consequences and possible outcomes.

Global issue

Conflict and loyalty in the family as cultural and personal values

A global issue in Antigone *and* The Makioka Sisters

The Makioka Sisters is a novel by Junichiro Tanizaki set in Japan in the 1930s. It is the story of four sisters, Tsuruko, Sachiko, Yukiko and Taeko, and the fortunes of a traditional Japanese middle-class family of the time. With their father gone, the head of the family is the husband of the eldest sister, Tatsuo. He is responsible for managing the finances of the family and also for selecting and approving appropriate spouses for the unmarried sisters, Yukiko and Taeko. Tradition requires Yukiko and Taeko to live under the roof of the head of the house in Tokyo, but they both prefer to live with their sister Sachiko in Osaka and have found different reasons and excuses to stay with Sachiko and her family. In the following extract, Sachiko and her husband, Teinosuke, are discussing the liaison between Taeko (also referred to as Koi-san) and Okubata (also referred to as Kei-boy). This relationship is considered highly inappropriate by Sachiko, Yukiko and Teinosuke and they believe it will bring shame to the family since Okubata was accused of stealing and was disinherited by his family.

The Makioka Sisters by Junichiro Tanizaki

Teinosuke had taken up golf, and it embarrassed him to meet Kei-boy's brother on the links.

"You really think Tatsuo would pretend not to notice?"

"Hardly."

"And so?"

"We will have her stop seeing Kei-boy."

"It would be very fine if she would. But what if they go on meeting in secret?"

"If she were my daughter or sister, I think I would throw her out of the house."

There had been tears in Sachiko's eyes for some time. It was true that by turning Taeko out they would have satisfied the public and the Okubata family, but would they not be inviting the possibility Teinosuke found most distasteful? Taeko was twenty-eight and quite capable of taking care of herself, he said, and it would be a mistake to try to control her. They might best turn her out for a time and see what happened. If she went to live with Kei-boy—she went to live with Kei-boy. Once they began worrying about such eventualities there would be no end to their worries. But Sachiko could not bear to think of sending her sister away labeled an outcast. Could she, who had consistently protected Koi-san from the fury of the main house, really throw her out at so late a date for reasons so trivial? Teinosuke was being ungenerous. Whatever you said of her, Koi-san was the sheltered daughter of a well-to-do family, and at heart she was weak and a little too good-natured. And she had never had a mother. Sachiko had hoped in her inadequate way to serve as a substitute and now, just as they were thinking of memorial rites for their mother, could Sachiko even consider turning her sister out?

From *The Makioka Sisters* by Junichiro Tanizaki, translated by Edward G Seidensticker (2000)

Assessment practice

Antigone and *The Makioka Sisters*

Antigone and *The Makioka Sisters* could not be any more different, culturally and contextually, yet there are aspects of the cultural experience that are shared by the characters, such as the role and duty of women, and also the issues of choice and self-determination.

More importantly, compliance to societal expectations and a sense of duty to loved ones is an issue for debate for all characters in the two works. For both Ismene and Sachiko, ties with their siblings could be severed albeit for very different reasons. The importance of these ties also determines how these characters make decisions and develop further. The conflict for the characters in both works challenges their loyalty. As a concept, loyalty is associated with lawfulness, trust and faithfulness. What are the conditions that challenge an individual's loyalty and can an individual live a life completely free of betrayal?

The issue of conflict lends itself to a cultural, contextual and literary exploration.

Here are some questions to think about when considering the works in terms of the global issue.

1. In what ways do the two writers explore issues of family ties as well as duty and loyalty towards the values of the family?
2. What is the impact and the significance of this issue for the works as a whole?
3. How does the intense dialogue between Antigone and Ismene or the narrative voice reflecting Sachiko's thoughts and feelings reveal the conflict characters are facing?
4. How do family ties and relationships influence the characters' development because of, or in spite of, the conflict?

Core concept

CULTURE

TOK

To what extent is this conflict an ethical one? How can one determine what is right and wrong/good or bad in this kind of conflict?

Antigone–Creon

Creon has discovered that Antigone has buried her brother and she has been apprehended. Creon is irate that she has not only gone against his edict but she glories in it. He asks his attendants to bring her in.

ANTIGONE:

555 Creon, what more do you want
than my arrest and execution?

CREON:
Nothing. Then I have it all.

ANTIGONE:
Then why delay? Your moralising repels me,
every word you say—pray god it always will.
So naturally all I say repels you too.
Enough.
Give me glory! what greater glory could I win
than to give my own brother decent burial?
These citizens here would all agree,
To the CHORUS.
they would praise me too
if their lips weren't locked in fear.
Pointing to CREON.
Lucky tyrants—the prerequisites of power!
Ruthless power to do and say whatever pleases *them*.

CREON:
You alone, of all the people in Thebes,
see things that way.

ANTIGONE:
They see it just that way
but defer to you and keep their tongues in leash.

CREON:
And you, aren't you ashamed to differ so from them?
So disloyal!

ANTIGONE:
Not ashamed for a moment,
not to honor my brother, my own flesh and blood.

CREON:
Wasn't Eteocles a brother too—cut down, facing him?

ANTIGONE:
Brother, yes, by the same mother, the same father.

CREON:
Then how can you render his enemy such honors,
such impieties in his eyes?

While arguing for the burial of her brother, Antigone has already repeatedly referenced glory in death, reconstructing her argument with a focus on her own sense of worth and dignity. As the confrontation with Creon unfolds, she contributes yet another perspective to the interpretation; that is, of Creon being a tyrant, thus ascribing to the conflict a more political reasoning.

There are two ways to interpret this characterization of Creon: first, as a tyrant for being in the position of the ruler of Thebes and second, as a tyrant for denying Antigone the right to bury her brother.

ANTIGONE:
He will never testify to that,
Eteocles dead and buried.

CREON:
He will—
if you honor the traitor just as much as him.

ANTIGONE:
But it was his brother, not some slave that died—

CREON:
Ravaging our country!—
but Eteocles died fighting in our behalf.

ANTIGONE:
No matter—Death longs for the same rites for all.

CREON:
Never use the same for the patriot and the traitor.

ANTIGONE:
Who, Creon, who on earth can say the ones below
don't find this pure and uncorrupt?

CREON:
Never. Once an enemy, never a friend,
not even after death.

ANTIGONE:
I was born to join in love, not hate—
that is my nature.

CREON:
Go down below and love,
if love you must—love the dead! While I'm alive,
no woman is going to lord it over me.

From *Antigone* by Sophocles in *The Three Theban Plays* translated by Robert Fagles (1982)

Global issue

Conflict and tension between human rights and state power

Antigone's conclusive and clear stance, following her characterization of Creon as a tyrant, redefines her position as that of rebellion, with the reverence for the gods and for the burial rituals serving as her argument with which to defy Creon.

Creon is making a political statement about dissent that reflects a clear binary opposition of friend versus foe.

TOK

The formulation of binary oppositions can be found in the heart of many issues that are relevant to the way we live and think, even today. What other such oppositions have you encountered in the literary works you have studied?

Once again, the gender of the individual defying Creon's edict seems to be at issue, contributing to the political argument since women in classical Greece had no political influence and could not hold any political office. However, Pericles' wife, Aspasia, is known for acquiring a certain influence by hosting writers and thinkers of the time, creating in this way an intellectual hub that possibly included the philosopher Socrates.

Activity

Antigone at the National Theatre, London, UK, 2012

Watch actors and the director at the National Theatre in London discuss their adaptation of *Antigone* in 2012, with Jodie Whittaker in the role of Antigone: www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9-W66xB-fM

1. What new information and perspective do they offer to you?
2. How have they attempted to keep their reimagining of *Antigone* relevant to their culture and context?

▲ *Antigone* at the Barbican Theatre, London, UK, 2015

▲ *Antigone* at the National Theatre, London, UK, 2012

Activity

Antigone in the cinema and Japanese *Antigone* in France

Watch the 1961 film version, or parts of it, by Tzavellas and read the review of Miyage's *Antigone* given on the next page.

1. How do these two directors reinterpret the myth and to what effect?
2. Which cultural and contextual elements seem particularly significant in the reinterpretations of the play?
3. To what extent has the meaning of the original play changed or remained the same?

▲ *Antigone* directed by G Tzavellas, 1961

The movie is an adaptation of a classic play and it aims to maintain the integrity of the original while enhancing it with the director's vision for the film and with the aspects that will make it legible, accessible and enjoyable for a modern audience. One significant change during the adaptation of the play involves a different ending, in which Creon relinquishes his throne and punishes himself with self-exile. Overall, the adaptation of the play seems to conform with the expectations of the time period of production, the audience and, more importantly, the genre. Having said that, with the exception of the ending, Sophocles' ideas, the conflicts between characters and the defeat that both Creon and Antigone experience remain unchanged.

Core concept
PERSPECTIVE

Core concept
TRANSFORMATION

▲ *Antigone* directed by Satoshi Miyagi at the Avignon Festival, France, 2017

"The government's Cool Japan initiative may be focused on spreading anime around the world, but Japanese culture scored a significant victory in France earlier this month in the world of theater. […]"

"Though Miyagi's *Antigone* was still the one audiences knew, the Buddhist way of treating the dead as equal souls toward whom no bitterness remains was a fresh and exciting reading they'd not experienced before — just as Miyagi, like Ninagawa used to, astonished them with his strikingly Japanese aesthetics. […]

As the French-Swiss daily newspaper Le Temps put it, commenting on Miyagi's 'unique Japanese approach' to *Antigone*: 'They come from the land of tea (Miyagi's SPAC festival is based in a famous tea-growing area) and their brew is hallucinogenic'.

If done right, local interpretations of stories from other countries are a surefire way for Japanese artists to wow people overseas. Cool Japan should take note."

From "Satoshi Miyagi makes history on a stage in France" by Nobuko Tanaka in the *Japan Times*, 20 July 2017

Core concept

CULTURE

TOK

How does this reinterpretation of Antigone succeed in creating a performance that is Japanese, yet it references the Greek play? Is it the case that the elements of Greek culture are underemphasized or even removed from the play?

The Chorus

The following choral ode is given after the sentry informs Creon that someone buried Polyneices.

The chorus (usually a group of women or older men) is cast in the role of witness and commentator, with no involvement in the action or interaction

with the characters. As they can be seen to represent the perspective and opinion of the polis (the citizens) they are an integral part of the audience's interpretation of the audience rather than an entity with agency. In this sense, the choral odes are structural elements where meaning is negotiated for the audience—current or otherwise—in the name of the polis.

Core concept

REPRESENTATION

Numberless wonders
terrible wonders walk the world but none match for man—
that great wonder crossing the heaving gray sea,
driven on by the blasts of winter
on through breakers crashing left and right,
holds his steady course
and the oldest of the gods he wears away—
the Earth, the immortal, the inexhaustible—
as his plows go back and forth, year in, year out
with the breed of stallions turning up the furrows.

And the blithe, lighthearted race of birds he snares,
the tribes of savage beasts, the life that swarms the depths—
with one fling of his nets
woven and coiled tight, he takes them all,
man the skilled, the brilliant!
He conquers all, taming with his techniques
the prey that roams the cliffs and wild lairs,
training the stallion, clamping the yoke across
his shaggy neck, and the tireless mountain bull.

And speech and thought, quick as the wind
and the mood and mind for law that rules the city—
all these he has taught himself
and shelter from the arrows of the frost
when there's rough lodging under the cold clear sky
and the shafts of lashing rain—
ready, resourceful man!
Never without resources
never an impasse as he marches on the future—
only Death, from Death alone he will find no rescue
but from desperate plagues he has plotted his escapes.

This choral ode begins with a tone of awe and admiration for the abilities and the resourcefulness of man and an image of man reigning over the land. Man is measured against the elements and the powerful force and movement while his course remains steady, and with his rhythmical ploughing he journeys and survives through time.

The contrast of the motion between nature and man is explicit with the use of words such as "heaving", "blasts" and "crashing" as opposed to man's "steady course".

More significantly, another contrast is implied by the use of the adjectives "immortal" and "inexhaustible" to describe Earth, while man is undoubtedly limited and mortal.

The commentary of the chorus offers the audience the mental space for reflection beyond the action of the dialogue. As non-participatory characters on stage, they can practise detachment from the active characters but also express sympathy, which the audience can choose to share with them.

The praise of man by the chorus extends to include the taming of animals. The chorus shows admiration for man's accomplishments through the diversity of the imagery, which justifies these feelings by the chorus, and also the attributes of "skilled" and "brilliant".

The admiration for man's accomplishments climaxes with the use of the absolute "never", only to be challenged by the acknowledgement of the one force man can never win against—death.

TOK

Socrates, a contemporary of Sophocles, quotes Protagoras in Plato's *Theaetetus* as claiming that "man is the measure of all things". What is the relationship of man to the natural world and to what extent is man responsible for the construction of the world around him? Such questions were very much a preoccupation of thinkers and writers in classical Greece and the topic of debate that possibly is still very much alive.

Man the master, ingenious past all measure
past all dreams, the skills within his grasp—
he forges on, now to destruction
now again to greatness. When he weaves in
the laws of the land, and the justice of the gods
that binds his oaths together
he and his city rise high—
but the city casts out
that man who weds himself to inhumanity
thanks to reckless daring. Never share my hearth
never think my thoughts, whoever does such things.

From *Antigone* by Sophocles in *The Three Theban Plays* translated by Robert Fagles (1982)

After listing the remarkable feats of man and his ability for greatness, the chorus asserts that man is equally capable of destruction.

The final part of the choral ode is an expression of the opinion of the chorus on the stage action with reference to the nature and accomplishments of man, but also contextualized in a political framework.

When the laws of the land and the justice of the gods are woven together by man's oaths then the city rises high. If Creon is the defender of the laws of the land and Antigone the advocate for the justice of the gods, the chorus acknowledges the essential dilemma and conflict in the burial of an enemy of the city.

Their conclusion about the fate of the "man who weds himself to inhumanity thanks to reckless daring" seems to be directed more at Creon than Antigone, with an added element of foreshadowing.

In closing, the members of the chorus again use the absolute "never", this time twice and thus showing conviction, to distance themselves from that man who forges on to destruction.

The following choral ode is presented after Creon's decision that Antigone must die.

Blest, they are truly blest who all their lives
have never tasted devastation. For others, once
the gods have rocked the house to its foundations
the ruin will never cease, cresting on and on
from one generation on throughout the race—
like a great mounting tide
driven on by savage northern gales,
surging over the dead black depths
roiling up from the bottom dark heaves of sand
and the headlands, taking the storm's onslaught full-force,
roar, and the low moaning
echoes on and on
and now
as in ancient times I see the sorrows of the house,
the living heirs of the old ancestral kings,
piling on the sorrows of the dead
and one generation cannot free the next—
some god will bring them crashing down,
the race finds no release.
And now the light, the hope
springing up from the late last root
in the house of Oedipus, that hope's cut down in turn
by the long, bloody knife swung by the gods of death
by a senseless word
by fury at the heart

Very characteristically for the chorus in classical Greek tragedy, the assignation of blame for the imminent catastrophe (the death of Antigone and more) is not explicit, but the implication that the children of Oedipus cannot escape their fate is made very clearly. At the same time, "a senseless word" and "fury at the heart" are acts and feelings attributed to humans.

Zeus,
yours is the power, Zeus, what man on earth
can override it, who can hold it back?
Power that neither Sleep, the all-ensnaring
no, nor the tireless months of heaven
can ever overmaster—young through all time,
mighty lord of power, you hold fast
the dazzling crystal mansions of Olympus.
And throughout the future, late and soon
as through the past, your law prevails:
no towering form of greatness
enters into the lives of mortals
free and clear of ruin.
True,
our dreams, our high hopes voyaging far and wide
bring sheer delight to many, to many others
delusion, blithe, mindless lusts
and the fraud steals on one slowly … unaware
till he trips and puts his foot into the fire.
He was a wise old man who coined
the famous saying "Sooner or later
foul is fair, fair is foul
to the man the gods will ruin"—
He goes his way for a moment only
free of blinding ruin.

The supplication to Zeus is a reflection of the belief system of classical Greece, but also invokes the idea of the gods' direct and responsive involvement in human affairs. It is also a recognition of Antigone's position by the members of the chorus who are convinced that Creon will punish Antigone, but the gods in turn will punish Creon.

Unlike other tragedies where the gods seem to direct the action from outside, in Antigone the gods are inside the action. In fact, it is most likely that the scene where Haemon tries to kill Creon and then kills himself would have been interpreted by the audience as a direct intervention by Aphrodite.

The Chorus
End of the play

Wisdom is by far the greatest part of joy,
and reverence towards the gods must be safeguarded.
The mighty words of the proud are paid in full
with mighty blows of fate, and at long last
those blows will teach us wisdom.

From *Antigone* by Sophocles in *The Three Theban Plays* translated by Robert Fagles (1982)

From the very beginning of the play, it becomes obvious that Antigone's role is to suffer. Her eloquence and firm beliefs add an aspect of rebelliousness and self-sacrifice to her suffering.

As the play unfolds, the events and the actions and reactions of other characters, including the chorus, make it abundantly clear that Creon is the one that will be undone and the one that seems to be Sophocles' interest. As the ending reveals, the conflict was not between Antigone and Creon, but between political power and inalienable truths such as gods or death.

Ideas expressed by the chorus

Activity

1. Create an outline of the ideas and thoughts expressed by the chorus in the excerpts. How do these ideas develop? What is the significance of these to the play? How is language used to convey these thoughts and ideas?
2. Choose 20–30 lines of chorus speech that capture, in your opinion, an issue relevant to your own context and culture. How does this issue manifest itself in the literary text and in your experience? What language does Sophocles use to present this issue?

ATL

Social and communication skills

3. Choose a current leader to stage a debate between that leader and Creon while the rest of the group play the role of the chorus. The characters should prepare independently for the debate. The members of the chorus will have to discuss and determine in advance what the values of the community are in relation to the issue. A leader for the chorus should be chosen and be tasked with responding to both the contemporary leader's position and Creon's.

ATL

Research, thinking and communication skills

Different contexts

Activity

For this activity, you are asked to consider your directorial vision, individually or in groups, to produce *Antigone* in three different contexts. Research the three conflicts below and then use the questions to guide you in imagining the three different productions.

- The Siege of Sarajevo: 1992–1996
- The Chilean Civil War of 1891
- The Vietnam War: 1955–1975

1. How would you use the stage and costumes to reflect each context?
2. What choices would you make about the chorus?
3. How would you direct the actors playing Antigone, Creon and Ismene?

◀ The Sarajevo Tunnel, an underground tunnel built by the Bosnian Army in 1993, during the Siege of Sarajevo, in the midst of the Bosnian War

◀ Monument to President José Manuel Emiliano Balmaceda, the 11th president of Chile (1886–1891), in Balmaceda Park, Chile

▲ Well-wishers at the Veteran's Day Parade in Austin, Texas, 11 November 2014

1. Watch the National Theatre video on modern interpretations of Greek chorus where directors, actors and academics discuss the role of the chorus in performances with contemporary audiences. You can find the video at:

   www.youtube.com/watch?v=MlXi8LfKv-0&t=2s

   Search terms: National Theatre, Modern interpretations of Greek Chorus.

   a. How would you visualize the chorus in a production at your school?

   b. What and how would the chorus contribute to the overall effect of this production at your school?

2. Research how modern playwrights have adopted and adapted the chorus in their plays. One well-known example involves the character of Alfieri in Arthur Miller's *A View from the Bridge*.

Core concept

CREATIVITY

ATL

Research skills

TOK

To the extent that human laws are written by humans, how would it be possible for these laws to overcome human limitations, bias, prejudice injustice?

Global issue

The interaction of fate and free will in human behaviour

More on global issues in *Antigone*

As can be seen from our discussion so far, *Antigone* raises significant issues about culture, identity and community as well as politics, power and justice. These issues can be seen as quintessentially transnational issues that can be found in all human societies. For example, the responsibility of the individual is to a very large extent determined and defined by the laws and norms of a culture and yet the same laws and norms can subvert individuality and accountability. This can create a significant dilemma for the individual and the decisions one needs to make. Moral obligation and duty are often conflicted when one considers religion and/or the organized state. In the same vein, for a citizen of today, democracy has a very different meaning than it did in classical Greece. The same of course could be true of religion and most of our institutions in general.

Assessment practice

Individual oral practice

Examine the ways in which the global issue of your choice is presented through the content and form of two of the works you have studied.

Antigone and *Macbeth*: fate, belief and free will

In both *Antigone* and *Macbeth*, the paradox of "fair is foul and foul is fair" is used to reflect man's interpretation of the events around him against the backdrop of his beliefs and ambitions. Interestingly, in both plays the idea is introduced by characters who are not involved in the action although the witches in *Macbeth* appear to have a calculated plan to mislead and confuse Macbeth when in the opening scene they are preparing to meet him returning from battle to deliver an equivocal prophecy about his future:

"Fair is foul, and foul is fair,/Hover through the fog and filthy air" (1.2, 12–13).

The intention of the witches and the subsequent prophecy they deliver serve to influence and confuse Macbeth. Contributing further to his confusion and rising ambition, Lady Macbeth challenges him further to take action in order to fulfill the prophecy. Thus, the paradox for Macbeth is that he takes action in order to prove the prophecy, and this invalidates the proper nature of the prophecy as a course of events that has been pre-determined without man's intervention.

The murderous actions Macbeth commits can be attributed to his decisions and he is held responsible for them. In Macbeth's case, his vulnerability, whether it is attributed to his belief in the prophecy or his relationship with his wife, is the starting point of his plans and the beginning of his downfall.

This development is different in *Antigone* where the members of the chorus acknowledge the paradox of "fair and foul" in human affairs but they do not contaminate Creon with self-doubt or ambivalence about his decisions. In fact, Creon seems to be very far removed from the nuanced ideas this paradox gives rise to and we could even claim that it is precisely his binary perception of the issue that brings on his downfall.

Neither character seems to believe in fate as a force that governs his life, and his actions serve to prove this. Macbeth does not embrace the prophecy immediately, in fact he remains a bit sceptical. In contrast, Creon's belief in the gods is a given that he never questions or doubts. On some level, however, the gods' law clashes with his rule and what he understands the citizens' welfare to be with regards to the burial of a traitor, and Creon is unable to reconcile the two. In this sense, Creon's downfall originates in the disrespect of the gods' laws and his unyielding rule that subsequently mandates Antigone's death, while Macbeth's catastrophe follows the dark spiral he enters by interpreting the prophecy as a series of facts that he could simply confirm by his actions.

The extent to which an individual, such as Macbeth or Creon, is free to take action and can be said to have true agency is often limited by religious beliefs and self-perception, but occasionally also forces that could be beyond his control.

At the end, Creon shows some clarity of thought and an acceptance of his errors as he laments the deaths of his wife and son in his last speech: "Take me away, I beg you, out of sight/A rash, indiscriminate fool!/I murdered you my son, against my will-/you too, my wife.../Wailing wreck of a man,/whom to look to? where to lean for support?" (1459–1464). In the case of Macbeth, his warrior nature drives him to keep fighting despite realizing that the prophecy was not a prophecy as such and he was misled in thinking he would remain king not to be slain by man of woman born.

Both Creon and Macbeth acted on free will; Creon's judgement was impaired by his understanding of the exercise of political power and Macbeth's decisions were guided by his ambition, which was fuelled by the witches and Lady Macbeth.

Activity

Different presentations of Antigone

The story of Antigone has been reimagined, re-enacted and reinterpreted by many authors and in many different contexts. Compare Antigone's last speech as it appears in the original, in the play by Seamus Heaney and the play by Bertolt Brecht.

Seamus Heaney received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1995. His play *The Burial at Thebes: Sophocles' Antigone* was commissioned to celebrate the centenary anniversary of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, Republic of Ireland in 2004.

Bertolt Brecht wrote his play *Sophocles' Antigone* in 1947 and it was first produced in 1948. His reworking of the play sets it in Berlin in 1945.

Research the context of the productions of Heaney's and Brecht's works as well as the reception of the plays at the time.

You can find a discussion of the performance of Heaney's play at:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/newsnight/review/3601529.stm

Search terms: Burial at Thebes, Abbey Theatre, Tom Paulin, 2004

Considering the contextual and cultural variances compare the texts and discuss:

- the context of the text and its production
- what means the authors use to adapt the story to the context.

Land of Thebes, city of all my fathers—
O you gods, the first gods of the race!
They drag me away, now, no more delay.
Look on me, you noble sons of Thebes-
the last of a great line of kings,
I alone, see what I suffer now
at the hands of what breed of men—
all for reverence, my reverence for the gods!

She leaves under guard: the CHORUS *gathers.*

From *The Three Theban Plays* by Sophocles translated by Robert Fagles (1982)

Now gods of Thebes, look down.
Through my native streets and fields
I'm being marched away.
And never, you men of Thebes,
Forget what you saw today:
Oedipus's daughter,
The last of his royal house
Condemned. And condemned for what?
For practising devotion,
For a reverence that was right.

ANTIGONE *is led out.*

From *The Burial at Thebes* by Seamus Heaney (2004)

Do not, I beg you, speak of fate.
I know it. Speak of him
Who lays me out, innocent, for death. Knit him
A fate! For do not think
Unhappy souls, you will be saved.
Other bodies, hacked
Will lie in heaps buried around
That one unburied. You having dragged the war
For Creon over zones beyond our homeland
However many battles he is lucky in, the last
Will swallow you up. Calling for spoils
It won't be chariots full you see coming but
Empty. I weep for you, the living
what you will see
When my eyes are already filled with dust. Sweet Thebes
My native city! And oh, you springs of Dirce
And all around Thebes, where the chariots
Parade, oh you groves of trees! It tightens my throat
To think what will happen to you. Inhuman
Human beings have come forth from you and so
You must come to dust. Tell
Whoever asks for Antigone we
Saw her flee to the grave.

Exit Antigone with the guard and the maids.

From *The Antigone of Sophocles* by Bertolt Brecht,
translated from *Die Antigone des Sophocles* by David Constantine,
in *Brecht Collected Plays 8* by Bertolt Brecht (2004)

The relevance of *Antigone*

In his exploration of the history of the play and why it has remained relevant so many centuries later, Steiner wrote "*Antigone* belongs, hauntingly, but safely, to the idiom of the ideal" (Steiner 1984). By the term "ideal", Steiner refers to the philosophical, poetic and political narrative threads in *Antigone* where private conscience and public welfare come into conflict beyond historical truth. It is not clear whether the story of Antigone can be attributed to a myth, a legend, a fable or a saga and yet the re-mediations and re-experiencings of the play across time and across cultures are impossible to count.

ATL

Thinking and self-management skills

Core concept

CULTURE

Core concept

IDENTITY

Antigone: issues investigated

Reflection

Now that you have studied the play, reflect on the issues that *Antigone* investigates and think about how you view and interpret these through your personal cultural lenses.

Consider how your cultural background and also the context of our modern world play a role in how these issues are significant, relevant or controversial in our life today.

Here are some questions you may wish to reflect on.

- How does your personal experience and knowledge of the world affect your understanding of *Antigone* and the conflict it portrays?
- Has the understanding of the play changed in any way the manner or the perspective through which you perceive the world around you?

The following ideas are central to the play and they create a conflict that is central and integral to classical Greek tragedy.

Gods' laws are above human laws.	It is the ultimate duty of a citizen to obey the laws of the state.
An individual has a duty to honour his or her family.	Fate determines our actions.

Write notes giving your responses to these ideas. Now compare notes with a peer.

- How is your viewpoint different from that of the characters in the play or from your peer's?
- What are the essential similarities or differences in the way you and your peer identify and evaluate these viewpoints?

ATL

Social and communication skills

Exploring the sonnet

Shakespeare and more

When pondering these questions, we need to consider that writing can serve as a means of impacting the writer's culture—locally and globally, personally and collectively. The writer may not even be aware how or to what extent his or her work might have an impact (if any). At the same time, writing can be seen as the product of the writer's culture, whether the writer goes about this process deliberately or not.

Guiding conceptual question

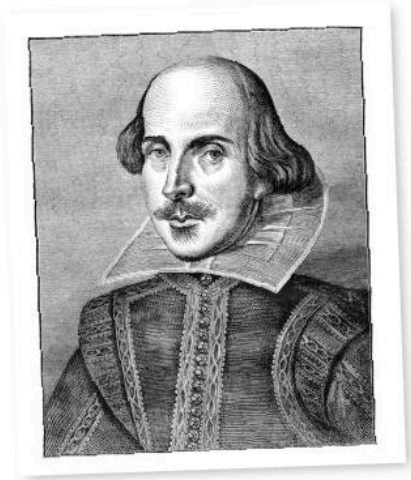
How do literary texts reflect, represent or form a part of cultural practices?

It is also important to consider that the writer's choices (diction, syntax, figurative language, symbolism, allusions and so on) often encode, explicitly or implicitly, different forms of identity based on how the language is crafted and also how its audiences differently receive, perceive and interpret its language over time. This relationship is of course highly affected when the text is translated into different languages. Based on these variables, the language of any text may invite its audiences to affirm, question, reject, include or exclude the characters and voices it represents. This relationship can change from reader to reader and generation to generation. These are the kinds of concerns prompted by the guiding conceptual question above. Before we consider sample texts in relation to these concerns, let us think again about what we mean by "space" and "time" when we are examining literature in this contextual way.

"Space" refers to the network of social relationships and hierarchies in the worlds in which texts and written and read (or experienced, as in a play performance). These relationships can include—from the writer's perspective—friends, family, patrons; sponsors; publishers or editors; critics; governments or censoring agencies; readers; and institutions such as churches, schools or universities and newspapers. All of these agents create a social and political environment that can greatly impact the practices of the writer's culture (and so the writer's work itself). Conversely, the writer's work can represent part or all of this "space" perhaps as a way to change it or to raise awareness of problems or injustices within it. In this context, "time" refers to the ways this network changes over time as the relationships described above respond to shifts in attitude. These shifts can be caused by anything from technology, revolution, foreign influences and the media to the norms accepted by younger generations as they grow older and eventually take the place of their elders.

For example, think of films that carry on a tradition of prior works and adapt them to a new audience's expectations—such as how Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet* with Claire Danes and Leonardo DiCaprio makes Shakespeare's play accessible to today's younger audiences.

Adapting others' work for new audiences was a practice familiar to Shakespeare and his literary contemporaries. The Bard (Shakespeare's popular eponym) is well known for taking famous stories of his day and tales of dead celebrities (such as prior Kings of England) and shaping them into plays that addressed the immediate concerns and fascinations of London's playgoers in Elizabethan England. The same can be said of his non-dramatic works such as his sonnets. Shakespeare's 154 sonnets represent his contribution to and continuation of a long cultural practice of writing "sonnet sequences"—essentially a set of sequentially numbered sonnets that, when read in order, form a kind of narrative or story. The story arc of sonnet sequences generally adheres to the conventions of love and relationships, nature and the seasons, the passing of time and the looming presence of death.



▲ William Shakespeare

By writing a sonnet sequence, Shakespeare is decidedly and simultaneously reflecting and representing a cultural practice that was well known in his time. It was begun in Italy in the 1200s and evolved over the centuries; the poet Petrarch (or Petrarca) was the most famous of the early sonneteers in the Renaissance. Subsequently, English Renaissance writers such as Sir Thomas Wyatt, Henry Howard (Earl of Surrey) and Sir Philip Sidney took up the form and mimicked its strict rhyme scheme and structured content in their attempts to replicate this originally Italian verse form in the English language of the time. This history involves the transformation of a textual form (the sonnet) from one culture and language to another.

Core concept

TRANSFORMATION

Consider how and why this happens in today's culture. For example, consider the evolution of rock and roll from its roots in

African-American musical styles in the 1940s and 1950s to Elvis, to the Beatles and so on—each incarnation expanding the scope of the basic chord structures and rhythms. Can you think of other such examples of transformations, adaptations or appropriations over time in your own culture?

The form of the sonnet

Activity

Research the form of the sonnet and consider how this particular form was relevant to the culture of the time.

1. What does this reveal about the cultural practices of that period?
2. What does the form of the sonnet today reveal about contemporary practices, cultural and literary?
3. To what extent might these transformations trigger issues of power, identity politics and even justice (such as intellectual property laws)?

As a cultural practice, writing and reading sonnets (whether as stand-alone poems or as a sequence), had associations with literary coteries—small societies that defined themselves based on the cultural capital of literature. As a writer, one's status in such societies or networks was a function of the ability to follow the strict rules of the sonnet form without appearing to be limited by these rules. This seemingly effortless quality was a gift of wit and written economy—the transparency of the rules in the creation of a sonnet was the mark of a gifted writer. To be able to say so much in such few words was a cultural practice associated with the competitive marketplace of writing plays that people wanted to hear and selling books that people wanted to buy.

Context

The context of writing sonnets invites us to consider various questions, all of which involve issues of identity, community, values, education and even technology.

- What roles can literature fulfill?
- What are the various purposes of literature?
- To what extent is knowledge of the socio-historical context of a work important for understanding and interpreting the work?
- What knowledge of different times and places do readers gain from reading a text (in this case a sonnet)?

People in many places around the world can access Shakespeare's sonnets, and other works, for free online—even electronic copies of the original printed versions. However, the readers of the sonnets when they were originally published in 1609 would have had

Global issue

Power and privilege

TOK

Do you think reading and discussing literature is an elite activity or one that can or should include anyone? Who should have the authority and responsibility to influence access to literature and how can the ethics of such a practice be determined?

difficulty accessing them, because the books that contained them were a rare and expensive commodity. In other words, whereas access to Shakespeare's texts today is generally inclusive, in Shakespeare's time it was generally exclusive. This knowledge can impact our encounter with and experience of these poems—not so much as literary artefacts from a distinct and distant space and time but as "living" texts that have been read and reread in different forms and for different reasons. Being able to afford a copy of Shakespeare's sonnets in 1609 would have been an elite privilege.

Texts can also form or impact cultural practices. Each sonnet writer is not only participating in an already established cultural practice but also shaping and "rebranding" it—much like a remix of your favourite pop song. The writer adds a new dimension to a popular cultural practice and discovers new possibilities by reworking its rhythms and idioms. Shakespeare is unique in this respect because he recognized that the Italian form his predecessors had inherited did not exactly suit the peculiarities of the English of his day. So he altered its metrical structure (to iambic pentameter, five sets of an unstressed/stressed pairs of syllables) and rhyme scheme (abab cdcd efef gg). This enabled him to accommodate natural English cadence and the fact that English is not as replete with words containing masculine and feminine endings as Italian and other Romance languages.

Sonnet 18

Shakespeare's Sonnet 18 exemplifies the idea of a writer as a "shaper" of a cultural practice in the way the speaker explicitly and knowingly refers to his or her own craft as part of an extended literary tradition. It also addresses how language represents social distinctions and identities.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed,
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed:
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st,
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

The rhyming couplet that concludes the sonnet (lines 13–14) presents the speaker of the poem as both shaped by and shaping the cultural practice of sonnet writing. The poet's hyperbolic treatment of love (by exaggerating the beautiful and eternal qualities of his lover) is the product of its rich poetic inheritance—it is fulfilling the expectations of sonnet writing in its treatment of the thematic conventions of this sub-genre. At the same time, the "eternal lines" of this particular poem—that will "breathe" as long as "eyes can see" them—set the speaker (cast as the writer of the same words) apart from other writers who have preceded him. Thus the social identity of the speaker or writer, that of his beloved and that of the lines of the poem combine to create a unified and distinct identity. All three of these identities become the same referent to the pronoun "this", which "gives life to thee". The final word "thee" includes us, the readers, in this constellation of identities. "Thee" refers both to the speaker's object of affection and us (anyone who reads the poem), therefore we become part of the poem's rich and layered history—encompassing everyone who has ever read it since it was first written.

Core concept
REPRESENTATION

Core concept
PERSPECTIVE

TOK

Does every literary work have an "ideal reader"—a readership for whom a work is ideally suited based on the space and time in which it was written? Consider the "mimetic" interpretation of the sonnet's representation of literature and reality—using the pronoun "this" and its multiple referents to collapse divisions of perspective among readers, writers and the communities of which they are a part. Does this challenge the notion of an "ideal reader"?

Ten sonnet activities

Activities

It is important now to consider some ideas for learner portfolio entries based on interpretations of Sonnet 18. Here are some sample prompts for your written work.

1. How does your inclusion in Sonnet 18's history of readers' ideas impact your notions of literature? Have your notions changed in any way?
2. How do the sound patterns among rhyming words affect the meaning you construct?

ATL

Communication skills, research and thinking skills

3. Sonnet 18 makes heavy use of personification. Which uses of personification seem more or less contrived and predictable? Which uses seem provocative and unexpected?
4. Look at the New York Sonnet Project website: http://sonnetprojectnyc.com. How do you respond to the scenario projected onto Sonnet 18? What scenarios would you have chosen from your own cultural background or where you are currently pursuing the IB programme?

   As a class project, you might try to create your own film version of this sonnet (or other sonnets) in which you ascribe to it your own time and place. What new meanings and nuances has your new context given to the poem?
5. Create and film your own site-specific video in which you or a friend recite Sonnet 18 or any other sonnet in the sequence with careful consideration of why and how the speaker is saying these words in the space and time you have chosen (and to whom, if anyone). Include this video and a written reflection of your creative process in your learner portfolio.
6. Have a look at the Shakespeare Editions website based at University of Victoria in Canada: http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca. Here you will find old-spelling and modern editions of all of Shakespeare's works, as well as facsimiles (graphic images) of the originally published versions in print. How does seeing Sonnet 18 in these different forms affect your understanding of the poem's history?
7. See if you can track down an online translation of Sonnet 18 in a language other than English that you can read fluently. Based on your reading of the English version in this course companion (and perhaps also the original spelling versions you can access on http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca), how well do you think the translator communicates the ideas in the version Shakespeare wrote? To what extent has the translator tried to maintain, if at all, the form (the iambic pentameter, rhyme scheme and quarto or couplet structure)?
8. Moving to more abstract considerations, you may consider whether the translator of the version you found has become a new author of the sonnet—where does Shakespeare's authorship end and the translator's begin? Can you devise other ways of thinking about this? You may also consider how the translator's space and time might have affected the translation—when was the poem translated?

TOK

Encountering the sonnet online might also invite you to consider the extent to which literary texts can be considered historical documents. What does the appearance of the facsimile version suggest to you about the way the first readers of the sonnet encountered the text? What knowledge about Shakespeare's London can be gained by accessing these digitized facsimiles? If you had the hard copy text in your hand, rather than encountering the digitized version on your computer screen, would this change your knowledge or experience?

TOK

Does the timing of a translation impact the language style and vocabulary available to the translator?

9. Listen to Harriet Walter recite the sonnet at:

   www.youtube.com/watch?v=qUV7kE4A8hc

   Search terms: Harriet Walter, Sonnet 18, Southbank Centre

   How does the effect of the sound of the poem impact your understanding? Do the sound patterns remind you of other literary works? Do they remind you of songs you listen to?

10. Try writing an original sonnet of your own. Having done so, reflect on the challenges and successes you experienced.

Each of these prompts (plus any others that teachers may provide) will help you engage with poetry in ways that relate to space and time; they will also help you develop some of the skills necessary for paper 1. These of course are not the only ways of approaching poetry; you can access alternative approaches in other parts of the course.

Using the sonnet form to register a perspective

"Florida Doll Sonnet" by Denise Duhamel

I love Fresh Market but always feel underdressed
squeezing overpriced limes. Louis Vuitton,
Gucci, Fiorucci, and all the ancient East Coast girls
with their scarecrow limbs and Joker grins.
Their silver fox husbands, rosy from tanning beds,
steady their ladies who shuffle along in Miu Miu's
(not muumuus) and make me hide behind towers
of handmade soaps and white pistachios. Who
knew I'd still feel like the high school fat girl
some thirty-odd years later? My Birkenstocks
and my propensity for fig newtons? Still, whenever
I'm face to face with a face that is no more real
than a doll's, I try to love my crinkles, my saggy
chin skin. My body organic, with no preservatives.

"Florida Doll Sonnet" by Denise Duhamel from *Caprice: Collected, Uncollected, & New Collaborations* (2015)

Guiding conceptual questions

To what extent do literary texts offer insight into another culture?
How does the meaning and impact of a literary text change over time?

As a pair, these guiding conceptual questions offer different perspectives of the legacy of a text. The first question invites us to consider how readers of today and in different places over time might have used a literary text as a "window" onto the culture in which it was written. This consideration works hand in hand with the next question, which challenges us to see that this knowledge (of both the text's context and the text as a reflection of the readers' context) changes over time. This is because the values expressed in a text (as a function of the world in which it was written) will resonate differently from one readership to the next; so its meaning will alter over time. A text's meaning is never stable—readers over time and place will read varied meanings and see different significances in a text based on: social mores; generational biases; experiences and perspectives based on race, gender and sexual orientation; and other identities and affinities they bring to their experience of reading or hearing it.

One example of how meaning changes over time is provided by satire and parody. These are very popular methods texts use to offer glimpses of the culture in which they are written. Gauging what a society finds funny provides tremendous insight into its broader concerns, habits, systems, structures and daily life. Think about the television shows and movies you enjoy that lampoon or mock a certain facet of society. In the UK, the "Little Britain" television series ridicule British society and its taboos. In the USA, "South Park" and "Saturday Night Live" ridicule American society, values, celebrities and politicians with popular appeal. In Greece, the television show "Radio Arvyla" satirizes politicians, celebrities and public figures, but does not shy away from issues that are also critical of cultural attitudes and tropes. In Italy in the late 1970s, the "Fantozzi" film series (created by Paolo Villaggio and directed by Luciano Salce) ridicules middle-class working Italians who aspire to success but are faced with insurmountable setbacks at every turn. The Russian poet, literature professor, journalist and celebrity television presenter Dmitry Bykov began a recorded-for-broadcast poetry series, titled "Citizen Poet" and narrated by Mikhail Yefremov. It satirized Russian culture by parodying famous poets such as Pushkin; in this and his other work, Bykov consistently discovers and explores connections between real-life situations in Russia (and abroad) and literature. It is relevant to consider here that the Russian government discontinued Bykov's "Citizen Poet" project because it was too explicitly critical of the regime in power at the time.

The TOK questions in this section also encompass a wide range of global issues such as the relationship of education and values (Bykov taught in secondary schools), politics and power (censorship), and art and imagination (finding connections between real life and fiction).

TOK

Can a work be immoral or dangerous in the effect it has on its audience? Can the censorship of a text ever be valid or justified?

Global issue

Politics and freedom of speech

Satire

Activity

Identify a real-life situation—past or present—in the country with which you most closely identify. Find a line or stanza of poetry or an episode from a play or novel (in its original language or in translation) that you think speaks in some way to that situation in a satirical way. Then write your own version of the same in response to a different real-life situation, adapting some of the stylistic features of the writer you have chosen.

Core concept

CREATIVITY

Here are just a few examples of literary works used for satirical purposes.

- Jane Austen mocks the Gothic tradition in her novel *Northanger Abbey* by exaggerating its style and conventions.
- Jonathan Swift's essay "A Modest Proposal" parodies Enlightenment philosophy and the Royal Society by using its logical principles to advocate a heinous solution to over-population.
- Carol Ann Duffy's wonderfully dark poem "Havisham" adopts the style of a dramatic monologue to give a new voice to Miss Havisham as she fantasizes what violent things she would do to the man who left her at the wedding altar.

Each of these works offers a portal onto the world that shaped it into being—allowing us to see that a work of literature (rather than existing in a vacuum) contributes to a lasting conversation over which it has no control. Isn't it amazing to imagine what a writer would think about the impact his or her work might have on future writers and readers?

TOK

Does authorial intention exist? To what extent is its existence or absence important? What can a reader get to know about an author through reading the author's work? What knowledge can audiences from different times and places gain from reading a text? How valid is it to apply a critical lens (such as new historicism, Marxism, feminism or psychoanalysis) to a text from the past?

Sonnet 130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

TOK

If a writer is clearly appealing to a specific market or patron, how important is the quality of originality in our appreciation of a literary work? Also, to what extent can literary texts be considered historical documents?

TOK

How far do genre conventions aid or hinder the readers' understanding of a particular work? In the case of Sonnet 130, do you think knowledge of the *blazon* tradition Shakespeare is manipulating is needed in order to understand the poem?

In light of this background knowledge, let us turn our attention back to Shakespeare's sonnet sequence and what insights it might offer about the conditions in which Shakespeare lived and worked as a poet and playwright. Writing sonnets (and other poetic forms) became a means of competition for social and cultural status for any writers, based on the cleverness with which they could satirize the literary work of other writers living and dead. Frequently, the end goal for such writers was to secure the financial patronage of an aristocrat (whose name would in turn be praised by the writer in the preface of the published collection he or she sponsored).

One such mode of gaining socio-artistic status was the deft use of the *blazon* tradition, which is a style of poetry that uses excessive flattery—often focusing on hyperbolic praise of the female body—as a means of seduction. Elizabethan poets were enamoured of this tradition, which they adopted from Petrarch, because of its courtliness and propensity for grandiloquence. However, Shakespeare cleverly manipulates the conventions of the *blazon* tradition from excessive praise to what turns out to become "negative praise".

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground:
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

Activity

Features of the sonnet

1. Read the sonnet again and make a list of features that seem unusual to you. These features might be literary, structural or grammatical.
   a. How do these features work together to create the effect of Sonnet 130?
   b. Which of these features can be found in other types of texts?

2. Listen to Ian Midlane recite Sonnet 130:
   www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5aWWPATT74

Search terms: Ian Midlane, Sonnet 130, BBC

and Allison Strong recite the same for a "Poetry Out Loud" competition:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=l5aArwwfAKg

Search terms: Allison Strong, Sonnet 130, poetryoutloudvideos

a. How do the two recitations differ?
b. To what extent can they be considered different interpretations of the same work?

When read today, Sonnet 130 can provoke contemporary trends regarding the way women are presented and even objectified. In other words, it speaks to modern feminist critiques of works that represent female identities based on a "privileged" male perspective of women's bodies. Just as Shakespeare manipulates this trope in Sonnet 130, Wendy Cope, a contemporary English poet, takes the subversion further in her poem "Faint Praise".

TOK

Beyond considering the validity of applying a current critical or theoretical lens to a text from the past, we can question what knowledge audiences from different times and places can gain from reading a text from the past.

"Faint Praise" by Wendy Cope

Size isn't everything. It's what you do
That matters, darling, and you do quite well
In some respects. Credit where credit's due—
You work, you're literate, you rarely smell.
Small men can be aggressive, people say,
But you are often genial and kind,
As long as you can have things all your way
And I comply, and do not speak my mind.
You look all right. I've never been disgusted
By paunchiness. Who wants some skinny youth?
My friends have warned me that you can't be trusted
But I protest I've heard you tell the truth.
Nobody's perfect. Now and then, my pet,
You're almost human. You could make it yet.

From *Serious Concerns* by Wendy Cope (1992)

Global issue

Gender identity and gender politics

TOK

What new knowledge can be gained by reading two works on the same topic or theme?

TOK

How does our response to a text differ depending on the medium through which we experience it?

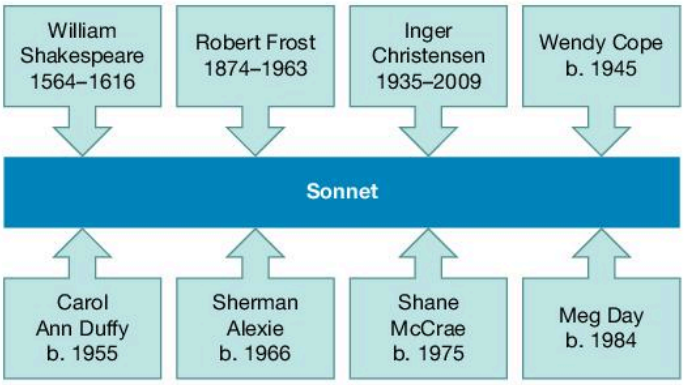
Activity

Changing the tradition

Looking back at the previous activity, consider how Wendy Cope makes choices that subvert the tradition of the sonnet. In Cope's poem the meaning and register have shifted in order to empower a previously silenced or disenfranchised voice. The voices and perspectives that are represented in every aspect of our life, from politics to advertising and from art and literature to popular culture, are indicative of how we see our world or how we would like to see our world. Whether referring to minorities, marginalized identities, gender identity, otherness or other issues, authors choose voices they can use to speak through and/or for other people.

1. Which aspects of the sonnet form does Cope maintain?
2. Which elements does she change and how do these contribute to a feminist reading of her poem?
3. If you were to use the sonnet form to create a particular effect regarding an issue relevant to your background, age group or generation, what issue would that be?
4. Popular song lyrics are often poetic in design and structure. Pick a contemporary song you enjoy that echoes the message, tone and "attitude" of Cope's and Shakespeare's sonnets. Read the lyrics alongside the other two poems—what does the new voice in this triptych add to the conversation? Write down your reflection on this. Also consider how specific recorded performances of the song you have chosen give life and energy to the lyrics.

Modern uses and adaptations of the sonnet



It is worth considering at this point how writers after Shakespeare have adopted and adapted the sonnet form (not only the form Shakespeare used) to encompass a broader range of perspectives, voices, themes, audiences and artistic purposes. The poets we will draw work from appear in the diagram. As you can see, several time periods are represented in the discussion and the poets' contexts are very different.

Robert Frost, in "Design", uses rhyming couplets as a structuring device that lends weight to words that conjure a graphic portrait of death in a moment of life, or vice versa. This poem functions rather like a still-life painting in the way it invites the reader into a frozen life-like scene—making the reader wonder if grand design can be found in something so seemingly insignificant as a spider manipulating its moth prey. Whereas the structure of Shakespeare's sonnets divides arguments into four parts (three quatrains and a couplet), Frost divides this poem's argument into

a "showing" stanza and a "questioning" stanza that forces the reader to consider the implications of the first without imposing a conclusive interpretation of what he has just shown us.

"Design" by Robert Frost

I found a dimpled spider, fat and white,
On a white heal-all, holding up a moth
Like a white piece of rigid satin cloth—
Assorted characters of death and blight
Mixed ready to begin the morning right,
Like the ingredients of a witches' broth—
A snow-drop spider, a flower like a froth,
And dead wings carried like a paper kite.

What had that flower to do with being white,
The wayside blue and innocent heal-all?
What brought the kindred spider to that height,
Then steered the white moth thither in the night?
What but design of darkness to appall?—
If design govern in a thing so small.

From *The Poetry of Robert Frost* by Robert Frost (1971)

Frost maintains the rhetorical impulse of Shakespeare's sonnets, but his questions to the reader are more direct and perhaps leading, whereas the voice of Shakespeare's sequence is less explicitly interrogative and more inwardly reflective.

Inger Christensen's sequence of 15 sonnets titled *Butterfly Valley: A Requiem* (translated from Danish into English by Susanna Nied) takes the form of the *sonnet redoublé*. The last line of each of the first 14 sonnets becomes the first line of the next one; the 15th and final sonnet contains the first line of each of the prior 14 in sequential order, creating a feeling of gradual, cyclic accumulation and concordance. The continuous juxtaposition of imagery of metamorphosis such as butterfly wing dust, human perceptions and yearnings, and planetary or cosmic cycles invites the reader to reflect on the irrelevance or relevance of a human life and its past.

"Butterfly Valley: Sonnet XV" by Inger Christensen

Up they soar, the planet's butterflies
in Brajcino Valley's noon-hot air,
up from acrid caverns underground
concealed by the perfume of mountain brush

as admirals, as blues, as mourning cloaks
as peacock butterflies are fluttering
delusion for the universe's fool:
a life that does not die like anything.

And who has conjured this encounter forth
with peace of mind and fragments of sweet lies
and summer visions of the vanished dead?

My ear gives answer with its deafened ringing:
This is a death that looks through its own eyes
regarding you from wings of butterflies.

From *Butterfly Valley: A Requiem* by Inger Christensen (2004)

TOK

Can an author reliably represent a culture that the author is not a part of or a perspective different from his or her own?

Carol Ann Duffy is well known for her dramatic monologues—poems that voice in first person a character in a specific time and place as if he or she were in a play. In poems of this sub-genre, readers must infer the "scene" based on context clues and through this gauge any dramatic irony that distinguishes the speaker's knowledge and that of readers past and present.

Duffy is particularly interested in giving voice to otherwise silent, marginalized or stigmatized characters. For example, we know very little about Anne Hathaway, Shakespeare's wife. There is documented evidence that her husband left only the best bed to her in his will (the best bed reserved for household guests and the only reference to his wife in his will). In the following poem Duffy imagines how Hathaway may have imagined the times she shared a bed with him.

▲ An image said to be of Anne Hathaway

"Anne Hathaway" by Carol Ann Duffy

The bed we loved in was a spinning world
of forests, castles, torchlight, cliff-tops, seas
where he would dive for pearls. My lover's words
were shooting stars which fell to earth as kisses
on these lips; my body now a softer rhyme
to his, now echo, assonance; his touch
a verb dancing in the centre of a noun.
Some nights I dreamed he'd written me, the bed
a page beneath his writer's hands. Romance
and drama played by touch, by scent, by taste.
In the other bed, the best, our guests dozed on,
dribbling their prose. My living laughing love –
I hold him in the casket of my widow's head
as he held me upon that next best bed.

From *New Selected Poems 1984–2004* by Carol Ann Duffy (2004)

In "Batter My Heart, Transgender'd God" poet Meg Day is, like Duffy, bridging past and present, but her point of reference is the early modern poet and theologian John Donne and one of his *Holy Sonnets* titled "Batter my heart, three person'd God". While Donne is invoking and imploring God (envisioned in terms of the Holy Trinity) to make him spiritually new using emboldened and vivid imagery, Day provocatively transforms the trinitarian God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—into a transgendered god invoked to interact dynamically with the speaker's consciousness.

Core concept

IDENTITY

"Batter My Heart, Transgender'd God" by Meg Day

Batter my heart, transgender'd god, for yours
is the only ear that hears: place fear in my heart
where faith has grown my senses dull & reassures
my blood that it will never spill. Show every part
to every stranger's anger, surprise them with my drawers
full up of maps that lead to vacancies & chart
the distance from my pride, my core. Terror, do not depart
but nest in the hollows of my loins & keep me on all fours.
My knees, bring me to them; force my head to bow again.
Replay the murders of my kin until my mind's made new;
let Adam's bite obstruct my breath 'til I respire men
& press his rib against my throat until my lips turn blue.
You, O duo, O twin, whose likeness is kind: unwind my confidence
& noose it round your fist so I might know you in vivid impermanence.

From *Last Psalm at Sea Level* by Meg Day (2014)

By departing from Donne's sonnet in this way, Day seeks to inspire those who have suffered at the hands of intolerance, encouraging them to seek continued strength.

In the following poem Shane McCrae follows some of Shakespeare's techniques though he imposes gaps in some lines.

"America Gives Its Blackness Back To Me" by Shane McCrae

The shadow I had carried lightly has
Been forced upon me now and heavy since
Bulky since now and since unwieldy as
A corpse the shadow I was born from in

And to I should have known I couldn't being
As how it wasn't me who lifted it
Not all the way from me in the first place being
As how its lightness after was a gift
Its near- bodilessness a gift from those

▼ Shane McCrae

Who bind it to me now I should have known
I couldn't while they watched me set it loose

They bind it to my back they make it strange
That I knew in my arms they weigh it down
With the shadow they had kept the bindings in

From the Academy of American Poets publication *Poem-A-Day* (2017)

ATL

Thinking skills

Consider closely the title of the poem, its repetition of "bind" and "being", the alliteration created by words such as "back", "bodilessness", "bulky" and "born", and its departure from Shakespeare's sonnet form. How can you develop these concrete details into a holistic interpretation of the poem?

Finally, have a look at Craig Morgan Teicher's sonnet below and notice how it maintains some features of the Shakespearean sonnet but not the iambic pentameter.

"New Jersey" by Craig Morgan Teicher

I was afraid the past would catch up with me,
would find this new house too like the scarred
old childhood home. But it hasn't yet. A tree
casts soft and gentle shade over our green yard.
I feel forgiven all the sins I didn't commit
for long minutes at a time. What were they?
I can't now think of anything wrong with me—I fit
in these rooms, can mostly agree to each day.
For long minutes I don't even blame my mother
for dying, my father for spending years in bed.
My little traumas are just souvenirs of other
lives, of places I might have once visited.
I'm mostly a father here, a husband, barely a son.
The big sun rises early here, as I do, with everyone.

From the Academy of American Poets publication *Poem-A-Day* (2016)

Activity

Pairing poems

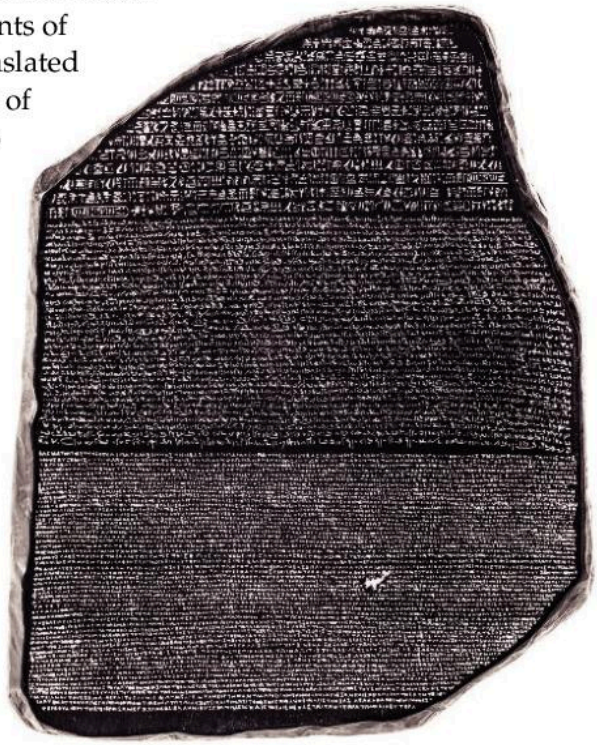
1. Refer to the poems presented above in this section. Consider how many possible pairs of these poems you can create in order to compare them. You can pair poems on the basis of theme, content, idea, topic, thought, feeling or form.
2. As you create these pairs think about what makes an interesting comparison and how you can use your understanding of the sonnet form to support your ideas.
3. Choose one pair and prepare a short commentary, as written work or a presentation. Identify specific literary features that are different or used for different effect in the two poems.

Exploring translation

Core concept
TRANSFORMATION

In this area of exploration, the broad concepts of time and space have led us to examine texts from different times and different cultures. Our questioning has focused on how we approach texts from such different times and places and how texts offer insights into other cultures. One issue we have not discussed so far is that of texts in translation. Although these can be found in any area of exploration, they are of particular interest to the line of questioning we have been pursuing here. Our investigation has concentrated on the concepts of culture and perspective and so it should include works from cultures other than our own. Within the category of works from other cultures, we find works written in languages other than English that have been negotiated and transformed by translators. This process is not an object of study for the English A literature course but as thinkers, inquirers and communicators we cannot help but wonder and marvel at the accomplishments of translations and ask questions such as the following. Is a translated text a new text with its own footprint? Is a translator a writer of a text about a text? How does a translator work with a text to capture in the target language all the effects, subtleties and and nuances of the original?

Poetry, in particular, presents a distinct challenge for translators due to formal and sound effects so inextricably linked to meaning. A translator is tasked with creating a world that resembles the original world of the poem with the same—or similar—effect in a way that will allow the new reader to appreciate it. In this section we will read four poems along with notes about the translation of these poems detailing an aspect of the approach or a way the text makes a demand on the translator. The aim is to reflect on the poems and the perspectives of the translations. Students are not required to read and understand the original. The original poems are included in case students do have access to the language and wish to contribute their understanding from two linguistic perspectives.



▲ The Rosetta Stone

Paul Celan (1920–1970)

"Beneath that evergreen energy we have for perfecting our English versions of Baudelaire, Rilke, Garcia Lorca and others, there runs a counter-notion, a reluctance to translate authentic verse at all. Let me *not* translate, not render the precarious adequacy of poetic language even more precarious. And when a writer must remake his native tongue to speak what he has to, as Paul Celan did with German, and when he builds into his speech a drastic questioning of language and poetry themselves, then I feel the translator's reluctance all the more keenly, almost as a matter of principle" (Felstiner 1986).

	"Psalm"	"Psalm"
	Niemand knetet uns wieder aus Erde und Lehm, niemand bespricht unseren Staub. Niemand.	No one moulds us again out of earth and clay, no one conjures our dust. No one.
	Gelobt seist du, Niemand.	Praised be your name, no one.
5	Dir zulieb wollen wir blühn. Dir entgegen.	For your sake we shall flower. Towards you.
	Ein Nichts	A nothing
10	waren wir, sind wir, werden wir bleiben, blühend: die Nichts-, die Niemandsrose.	we were, are, shall remain, flowering: the nothing-, the no one's rose
	Mit	With
15	dem Griffel seelenhell, dem Staubfaden himmelswüst, der Krone rot vom Purpurwort, das wir sangen über, o über	our pistil soul-bright, with our stamen heaven-ravaged, our corolla red with the crimson word which we sang over, O over
20	dem Dorn.	the thorn.

From *Selected Poems* by Paul Celan, translated by Michael Hamburger (1990)

Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867)

"Baudelaire's style at its most characteristic is a striking blend of tradition and innovation. On the traditional side we have Baudelaire's adherence to classical forms and metrics such as sonnets and stanzaic poetry in the twelve-syllable French alexandrine, his love for allegory and personification and his exploitation of a wide-range of time-honoured rhetorical devices which, he argued [...], have never hindered originality, but on the contrary have favoured its emergence" (Mortimer 2016).

	"Abel et Caïn"	"Abel and Cain"
	I	I
	Race d'Abel, dors, bois et mange; Dieu te sourit complaisamment.	Race of Abel, sleep, eat, drink, Enjoy the indulgent smile of God,
	Race de Caïn, dans la fange	Race of Cain, lie down and die
5	Rampe et meurs misérablement.	Where you stay crawling in the mud.
	Race d'Abel, ton sacrifice Flatte le nez du Séraphin!	Race of Abel, for a sniff Of your burnt offerings angels bend.

Race de Caïn, ton supplice Aura-t-il jamais une fin?	Race of Cain, this life of torture, Will it ever have an end?
Race d'Abel, vois tes semailles Et ton bétail venir à bien;	Race of Abel, see your cattle Multiply and crops abound;
Race de Caïn, tes entrailles Hurlent la faim comme un vieux chien.	Race of Cain, your guts howl out With hunger pangs like some old hound.
Race d'Abel, chauffe ton ventre À ton foyer patriarcal;	Race of Able, warm your belly At the patriarchal hearth;
Race de Caïn, dans ton antre Tremble de froid, pauvre chacal!	Race of Cain, poor jackal, shiver In the den that gave you birth.
Race d'Abel, aime et pullule! Ton or fait aussi des petits.	Race of Abel, love and breed! And watch the breeding of your gold;
Race de Caïn, coeur qui brûle, Prends garde à ces grands appétits.	Race of Cain, with burning heart, Let not such appetites take hold.
Race d'Abel, tu croîs et broutes Comme les punaises des bois!	Race of Abel, how you grow And munch like lice in rotten wood!
Race de Caïn, sur les routes Traîne ta famille aux abois.	Race of Cain, trudge with your folk Forlorn along the open road.
II Ah! race d'Abel, ta charogne Engraissera le sol fumant!	II Race of Abel, your foul carcass Will manure the streaming soil;
Race de Caïn, ta besogne N'est pas faite suffisamment;	Race of Cain, the task before you Is one demanding still more toil;
Race d'Abel, voici ta honte: Le fer est vaincu par l'épieu!	Race of Abel, shame! Your plough's Sharp blade is conquered by the spear.
Race de Caïn, au ciel monte, Et sur la terre jette Dieu!	Race of Cain, storm Heaven and throw God to the earth down here!

From *The Flowers of Evil* by Charles Baudelaire, translated by Anthony Mortimer (2016)

Anna Akhmatova (1889–1966)

"[...] I have tried to keep as closely to her sense as is compatible with making a poem in English; and the directness of her art encourages this approach. The geniuses of the Russian language and the English language often walk together, like the two 'friendly voices' Akhmatova overhears in There are Four of Us; but they also sometimes clash, and there are times when it is a deeper betrayal of the original poem to keep close to the literal sense than it would be to seek an English equivalent—one that preserves, maybe, more of her music, her 'blessedness of repetition'. Striving to be true to Akhmatova implies, with equal passion, striving to be true to poetry. When I have found it necessary to depart from a close translation, I have sought never to betray the tone and spirit of her poem [...]" (Thomas 2009).

	"Муза"	**"Muse"**
	Когда я ночью жду ее прихода,	When at night I wait for her to come,
	Жизнь, кажется, висит на волоске.	Life, it seems, hangs by a single strand.
	Что почести, что юность, что свобода	What are glory, youth, freedom, in comparison
	Пред милой гостьей с дудочкой в руке.	With the dear welcome guest, a flute in hand?
5	И вот вошла. Откинув покрывало,	She enters now. Pushing her veil aside,
	Внимательно взглянула на меня.	She stares through me with her attentiveness.
	Ей говорю: «Ты ль Данту диктовала	I question her: 'And were you Dante's guide,
	Страницы Ада?» Отвечает: «Я».	Dictating the Inferno?' She answers: 'Yes.'

From *Anna Akhmatova: Selected Poems* by Anna Akhmatova, translated by DM Thomas (2009)

Olav H Hauge (1908–1994)

"Olav H Hauge's flavor is persistent, like the taste of persimmons that we can never forget. His poems are as nourishing as an old apple that a goat has found in the orchard. He has much to give, and he gives it in small spoonfuls, as nurses give medicine. Everywhere in the daylight of his work, you see tiny experiences being valued" (Bly, Hedin 2008).

	"Det er den draumen"	**"This is the Dream"**
	Det er den draumen me ber på	This is the dream we carry through the world
	at noko vedunderleg skal skje,	that something fantastic will happen
	at det må skje —	that it has to happen
	at tidi skal opna seg	that time will open by itself
5	at hjarta skal opna seg	that doors shall open by themselves
	at dører skal opna skeg	that the heart will find itself open
	at berget skal opna skeg	that mountain springs will jump up
	at kjeldor skal springa —	that the dream will open by itself
	at draumen skal opna skeg.	that we one early morning
10	at me ei morgonstund skal glida inn	will slip into a harbor
	på ein våg me ikkje har visst um.	that we have never known.

From *The Dream We Carry: Selected and Last Poems of Olav H Hauge* by Olav Hauge, translated by Robert Bly and Robert Hedin (2008)

Maria Wisława Anna Szymborska (1923–2012)

"For Cavanagh and the rest of Szymborska's international cadre of translators, translating her poetry is a constant challenge. Discussing *Map*'s title poem, Cavanagh relates how she and other translators struggled with Szymborska's technique of twisting Polish idioms: "It's 'Quiet as if someone'—or he, it's not clear—'had sewn poppy seeds.' Now, what the hell is that? You can think of quiet idioms, but then in the next line the poppy seeds fall down on the map and become population centers. It's the little black dots,' Cavanagh says. The poem stumped her so completely that she 'just went around asking people' what they thought might be an equivalent expression. After six months of letting the poem breathe with the idiom trapped in her head, Cavanagh finally got it. The translation reads, 'quiet like pins dropping,/ and in every black pinprick/ people keep on living.' It was a moment of inspired improvisation" (Victorine 2015).

"Mapa"	**"Map"**
Płaska jak stół, na którym położona. Nic się pod nią nie rusza i ujścia sobie nie szuka. Nad nią – mój ludzki oddech nie tworzy wirów powietrza i całą jej powierzchnię zostawia w spokoju.	Flat as the table it's placed on. Nothings moves beneath it and it seeks no outlet. Above – my human breath creates no stirring air and leaves its total surface undisturbed.
Jej niziny, doliny zawsze są zielone, wyżyny, góry żółte i brązowe, a morza, oceany to przyjazny błękit przy rozdzieranych brzegach.	Its plains, valleys are always green, uplands, mountains are yellow and brown, while seas, oceans remain a kindly blue beside the tattered shores.
Wszystko tu małe, dostępne i bliskie. Mogę końcem paznokcia przyciskać wulkany, bieguny głaskać bez grubych rękawic, mogę jednym spojrzeniem ogarnąć każdą pustynię razem z obecną tuż tuż obok rzeką.	Everything here is small, near, accessible. I can press volcanoes with my fingertip, stroke the poles without thick mittens, I can with a single glance encompass every desert with the river lying just beside it.
Puszcze są oznaczone kilkoma drzewkami, między którymi trudno by zabłądzić. Na wschodzie i zachodzie, nad i pod równikiem – cisza, jak makiem zasiał, a w każdym czarnym ziarnku żyją sobie ludzie. Groby masowe i nagłe ruiny to nie na tym obrazku.	A few trees stand for ancient forests, you couldn't lose your way among them. In the east and west, above and below the equator – quiet like pins dropping, and in every black pinprick people keep on living. Mass graves and sudden ruins are out of the picture.

Granice krajów są ledwie widoczne, jakby wahały się – czy być czy nie być.	Nations' borders are barely visible as if they wavered – to be or not.
Lubię mapy, bo kłamią. Bo nie dają dostępu napastliwej prawdzie. Bo wielkodusznie, z poczciwym humorem rozpościerają mi na stole świat nie z tego świata.	I like maps, because they lie. Because they give no access to the vicious truth. Because great-heartedly, good naturedly they spread before me a world not of this world.

From *Wystarczy/Enough—Wisława Szymborska's Last Collection of Poems* by Maria Wisława Anna Szymborska, bilingual edition with translations by Clare Cavanagh (2012)

Activity

Translations

1. How did the comments about the process of translation offer you insight into the poems?
2. These four poems are appreciated and admired by readers who do not have access to the original. What are the qualities that make them exceptional?
3. If you speak a language other than English, find a poem that resonates with you and its translation and read both out loud. Does the sound of language in each have a particular effect?
4. Do you know of any words (in any language) that cannot be translated in English or the other way round like, for example, "kitsch"? Why do you think that is?

Exploring the concept of silence in literature

A familiar way of thinking about language in general concerns the various spaces words occupy on the page, on a digital screen, on a projected screen, in our headphones and even in our minds. However, it is just as important to think of what makes words exist in these different spaces—the gaps or spaces between and around them. We can think of these gaps in a variety of ways: visual gaps on the material page, pixelated gaps on a digital page, moments of time elapsed between when one word is spoken and the next, and even more complexly the silence of a character who is not speaking in a text but is clearly encountering an inner monologue that is not voiced.

When we extend this consideration of silence from the material and aural aspects of texts to the characters that are created when a reader encounters them, an interesting phenomenon occurs—something that helps us understand better what is actually expressed in the work. The gaps or spaces between or around words in whatever medium we encounter them might have some relationship to the gaps in time with which we as readers (or media consumers) decide to experience them. For instance, you can choose when to press play or pause on your smartphone to stop and return to the experience of your choice at a time you desire.

Readers of novels in the 18th century found this autonomy to be equally "novel" in the sense that they could control the absorption of the fiction they were reading into their imagination through the technology of the book that became (more affordably) associated with "pleasure" rather than exclusively ecclesiastical or academic study.

Guiding conceptual question

How do we approach literary texts from different times and cultures to our own?

This section invites you to consider as much the content of literature as the media and actual physical and mental environments in which you and others read or encounter it. Consider the power you possess when becoming engrossed in your favourite work of fiction, movie or song and then putting the text down or turning the digital device off to return to it later—only to enable the space that media has carved in your mind to create an imaginary world to which you long to return. It becomes a reciprocal relationship of control (only you can pick up the book or switch the work back "on" with your device) and dependence (the work can continue to conjure or seduce your anticipation).

Another crucial element of this way of looking at silence is the community of readers beyond you who also have access to this same media. They are creating their own imaginary worlds—the "silence" among our different imaginary worlds is often seemingly broken by the ease with which we can today connect with others via blogs, tweets and other media.

Guiding conceptual question

How do literary texts reflect, represent or form a part of cultural practices?

It seems then that silence to some extent plays a role in many aspects of literary and cultural pursuit—the creative process, the reading or consuming process and even the critical process. There are many ways that artistic communities offset this silence: writing workshops, reading clubs, classrooms, study or examination revision groups and academic conferences. Nevertheless, a significant portion of each stage of this continuum is often conducted in silence, so it is important to consider, as students of literature, different ways that silence is embedded in the spaces of writing (as authors and their characters) and reception (as readers and auditors or visual witnesses of texts in performance).

The concept of silence in literary texts

This section explores the different functions of silence in the times and spaces of different literary forms. What unites all of the examples is that they use written and spoken or sung words, silence or caesura (a pause) to invoke an emotional response, invoke a thought or provoke a mood. The moments of silence, speechlessness, stillness or quiet that the literary texts in this section refer to occur in varied contexts and have different meanings and interpretations. The works in this section invite you to study the way language is used to invoke silence and encourage your reflection on silence and how eloquent it can be at times.

As an introduction to this meditation, opposite are the lyrics to Paul Simon's "Sound of Silence". As you read these lyrics, you might wish to watch the reunion version by Simon and Garfunkel:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-JQ1q-13Ek,

Search terms: Simon & Garfunkel, The Sound of Silence, Madison Square Garden (2009) or just listen to the song by downloading the original soundtrack from their *Sounds of Silence* album.

Hello darkness, my old friend
I've come to talk with you again
Because a vision softly creeping
Left its seeds while I was sleeping
And the vision that was planted in my brain
Still remains
Within the sound of silence

In restless dreams I walked alone
Narrow streets of cobblestone
'Neath the halo of a street lamp
I turn my collar to the cold and damp
When my eyes were stabbed by the flash of a neon light
That split the night
And touched the sound of silence

And in the naked light I saw
Ten thousand people maybe more
People talking without speaking
People hearing without listening
People writing songs that voices never shared
No one dared
Disturb the sound of silence

Fools, said I, you do not know
Silence like a cancer grows
Hear my words that I might teach you
Take my arms that I might reach you
But my words like silent raindrops fell
And echoed in the wells of silence

And the people bowed and prayed
To the neon god they made
And the sign flashed out its warning
In the words that it was forming
And the sign said the words of the prophets are written on the subway walls
And tenement halls
And whispered in the sound of silence

"The Sound of Silence" by Paul Simon (1964)

"The Sound of Silence" is one of the most famous of Simon and Garfunkel's songs. It instils in listeners a profound sense of the reverential power of ancient silence over the empty noise of those who (falsely) presume to profess and/or possess the authority of their words and impose it on others.

Notice how the lyrics identify the speaker and his or her understanding within a silent dreamscape marked by urban features such as "narrow streets of cobblestone", a "street lamp", a "neon light", "subway walls" and "tenement halls".

Is this a commentary on the hubris of modernity—our collective unconscious warning us that it has ultimate hold over the modern scaffolding or technology that deludes us into thinking we have control over our destiny? The speaker is aware of this internal warning and actively seeks the old friendship with this powerful silence as a check against the intrusive effects of the modern world.

Silence in literary texts becomes a language in itself as the silence of characters works in tandem with the narrative to create meaning. Different kinds of silence become signifiers in a new language that the reader is called to interpret. In the novel, in particular, silence can have varied significance and lend itself to rich interpretations depending on how our knowledge and understanding of the characters' consciousness as well as the context of the work contribute to our reading of silence.

TOK

What is the relationship between language and thought? To what extent and by what means could we determine if one is a prerequisite for the other?

As students of literature we can use terms such as "motif" and "symbol" to refer to the use of silence in a work but these terms alone do not always capture the dynamic relationship between aspects and features of the literary text, especially in the case of silence, a relatively complex concept when its reasons, consequences and effects are considered. In addition, by one definition, silence is the absence of speech but people—and literary characters—continue to think and they do so with language.

Many questions arise when we consider silence as defined by the absence of language or as a response to a stimulus provided by the environment or another character. Sometimes a person's silence says more than any words can. Can someone's silence mean one thing and not another? Is speech, in a language we do not understand, similar to silence?

Reflection

How do we feel about silence?

Authors of literary works have a significant array of techniques at their disposal to create an effect relevant to silence. They can use silence in different roles and contexts and, of course, they can offer it the literal and the metaphorical dimensions they choose. Before we consider further the use of silence in some texts, let us reflect on the attitudes to silence shaped by culture, by context and also by choice.

1. The following are English idiomatic expressions that you may have used or heard other people use. What attitudes do these expressions reveal? What are the cultural values that the language about silence reveals?

No comment	*At a loss for words*
Speechless	*Children should be seen and not heard*
Heavy silence	*A conspiracy of silence*
Silence is golden	

2. Reflect on what forms silence takes for you and how you perceive silence for yourself or people around you. What could make silence soothing, threatening, irritating or comforting, for example?

In *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie the adolescent narrator, Kambili, is living under the autocratic rule of her father, a very strict Catholic and a parent with the highest of expectations from his children, but also an individual who can become violent when he feels he is not obeyed. Between the tensions within the family, the political turmoil in Nigeria at the time affecting her father, as well as Kambili's nature and age, the narrative presents us with a paradox: Kambili informs us of events, encounters, people's actions, thoughts and reactions as well as some of her feelings and apprehensions but all the while she is struggling to break her silence as a family member. That is, as a narrator Kambili shoulders the responsibility of drawing the narrative trajectories of the novel, but as a character she is often silent. Her narrative, however, helps the reader infer the reasons behind it as well as the feelings experienced by Kambili and the other characters as Kambili is searching for words and trying to find her voice, literally and metaphorically. The search for articulation and self-expression becomes one of the narrative threads of the work, an internal process that develops in a silent interaction with events.

Activity

In Kambili's words

The following two excerpts, excerpt 1 from early in the novel and excerpt 2 from the middle, are examples of Kambili's struggle to express herself. After reading the extracts discuss the following questions.

1. How are Kambili's feelings revealed in these two extracts?
2. What is the response of the other characters to Kambili's voice?
3. The official language in Nigeria is English, the colonial language of the former British Nigeria. Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo are three of the major native languages. How does the author explore the use of language or languages to assign an additional meaning to the conversations below and to Kambili's silence?

Purple Hibiscus by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Excerpt 1

"Do you always eat rice with a fork and a knife and napkins?" she asked, turning to watch me.

I nodded, keeping my eyes on my jollof rice. I wished Amaka would keep her voice low. I was not used to this kind of conversation at table.

"Eugene, you must let the children come and visit us in Nsukka," Aunty Ifeoma said. "We don't have a mansion, but at least they can get to know their cousins."

"The children don't like to be away from home," Papa said.

"That's because they have never been away from home. I'm sure they would like to see Nsukka. Jaja and Kambili, won't you?"

I mumbled to my plate, then started to cough as if real, sensible words would have come out of my mouth but for the coughing.

"If Papa says it is all right," Jaja said. Papa smiled at Jaja, and I wished I had said that.

"Maybe the next time they are on holiday," Papa said, firmly. He expected Aunty Ifeoma to let it go.

"Eugene, *biko*, let the children come and spend one week with us. They do not resume school until late January. Let your driver bring them to Nsukka."

"*Ngwanu*, we will see," Papa said. He spoke Igbo for the first time, his brows almost meeting in a quick frown.

Excerpt 2

"Amaka will do it, then," Aunty Ifeoma said. She unfolded and refolded the wrapper around her waist, knotting it at her side.

"Why?" Amaka burst out. "Because rich people do not prepare *orah* in their houses? Won't she participate in eating the *orah* soup?

Aunty Ifeoma's eyes hardened—she was not looking at Amaka, she was looking at me. "O *ginidi*, Kambili, have you no mouth? Talk back to her!"

I watched a wilted African lily fall from its stalk in the garden. The crotons rustled in the late morning breeze. "You don't have to shout, Amaka," I said, finally. "I don't know how to do the *orah* leaves, but you can show me." I did not know where the calm words had come from. I did not want to look at Amaka, did not want to see her scowl, did not want to prompt her to say something else to me, because I knew I could not keep up. I thought I was imagining it when I heard the cackling, but then I looked at Amaka—and sure enough, she was laughing.

"So your voice can be this loud, Kambili," she said.

She showed me how to prepare the orah leaves.

From *The Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche (2004)

The treatment of silence

Activity

1. In the different texts in the section above, it appears that "silence" is a requirement for spiritual experiences.
   a. How does silence and its treatment change across time and space?
   b. How is silence different in a popular song and a religious hymn?
   c. How is silence represented as a property of the text and its qualities?
2. Having explored these very different aspects of time and space, now is a good opportunity to reflect on the time and space in which you live and how you choose to control sound and silence—whether through headphones or by seeking out quiet spots to let your mind wander. Think about the songs and lyrics that serve as the "soundtrack" to your daily routines.
   a. Where might these words and music have greater or less resonance based on your location or the time of day?
   b. To what extent do time and space affect the choices you make, consciously or unconsciously?
   c. How much do these choices impact your sense of time passing and colour your perceptions of your environment?

Silence and character: the power of stillness

It is naturally typical to think of a character's power or agency in a narrative in terms of his or her physical or vocal presence and action. We are used to characters having voices and doing things in literary works—but should also consider characters defined more by stillness and quietness. What is the impact of these characters and their sphere of influence on others or on the work as a whole? In this section we will consider stillness and silence as a concept and examine two poems from different cultural and contextual backgrounds. The second part of the section will discuss silence as an invented dramatic convention with particular reference to the work of Harold Pinter.

"Keeping Still" by Pablo Neruda

In his strikingly simple, yet very poignant, poem "Keeping Still" (also translated as "Ode to Silence" with the original title: "A callarse") Pablo Neruda invokes stillness and silence as the means to a more peaceful existence and deep reflection about the world and our life. The speech-like tone and structure of the poem are a call to contemplation and compassion. Neruda, a popular Chilean poet, was a member of the diplomatic and political scene of his country and received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1971. This poem was written by Neruda in 1958 and is part of the collection *Extravagaria*.

"A callarse"

Ahora contaremos doce
y nos quedamos todos quietos.

Por una vez sobre la tierra
no hablemos en ningún idioma,
por un segundo detengámonos,
no movamos tanto los brazos.

Sería un minuto fragante,
sin prisa, sin locomotoras,
todos estaríamos juntos
en una inquietud instantánea.

Los pescadores del mar frió
no harían daño a las ballenas
y el trabajador de la sal
miraría sus manos rotas.

Los que preparan guerras verdes,
guerras de gas, guerras de fuego,
victorias sin sobrevivientes,
se pondrían un traje puro
y andarían son sus hermanos
por la sombra, sin hacer nada.

No se confunda lo quiero
con la inacción definitiva:
la vida es solo lo que se hace,
no quiero nada con la muerte.

Si no pudimos ser unánimes
moviendo tanto nuestras vidas
tal vez no hacer nada una vez,
tal vez un gran silencio pueda
interrumpir esta tristeza,
este no entendernos jamás
y amenazarnos con la muerte,
tal vez la tierra nos enseñe
cuando todo parece muerto
y luego todo estaba vivo.

Ahora contare hasta doce
y tú te callas y me voy.

"Keeping Still"

Now we will count to twelve
and we will all keep still.

For once on the face of the earth
let's not speak in any language;
let's stop for one second,
and not move our arms so much.

It would be an exotic moment
without rush, without engines;
we would all be together
in a sudden strangeness.

Fisherman in the cold sea
would not harm whales
and the man gathering salt
would not look at his hurt hands.

Those who prepare green wars,
wars with gas, wars with fire,
victories with no survivors,
would put on clean clothes
and walk about with their brothers
in the shade, doing nothing.

What I want should not be confused
with total inactivity.
Life is what it is about;
I want no truck with death.

If we were not so single-minded
about keeping our lives moving,
and for once could do nothing,
perhaps a huge silence
might interrupt this sadness
of never understanding ourselves
and of threatening ourselves with death.
Perhaps the earth can teach us
as when everything seems dead
and later proves to be alive.

Now I'll count up to twelve,
and you keep quiet and I will go.

From *Extravagaria*, a bilingual edition, by Pablo Neruda (2001)

Assessment practice

Paper 1 practice

Guided literary analysis

What thoughts and feelings does the speaker develop through the idea of stillness?

The speaker in the poem introduces an idea in the first line with assertiveness and determination: "Now we will count to twelve", and proceeds to elaborate on this idea of the purpose and effect of silence. The silence, the quiet the speaker is wishing for, is in contrast to the many languages we speak and this juxtaposition highlights the distance and division that linguistic diversity creates. Ironically, language, as a cognition and ability is shared by all, but its variances serve to distinguish and separate us. The quiet that the speaker is referring to in the first stanza will encompass the silence that quintessentially transcends language; a quiet moment like the one the speaker envisions would bring us all together in shared contemplation.

The state of quiet and silence that the speaker is inviting us to embrace is inextricably linked with absence of activity and action, which will allow the "sweet" moment to take place. In stanzas four and five, the speaker lists a number of activities that he or she wishes to cease and this offers us a better understanding of the reasons the speaker feels this silence is necessary. In the following two stanzas, the speaker provides a more detailed explanation of this quiet state as a renewed focus on life itself, not inaction, a state of quiet that is life-affirming and should not be confused with death. Our preoccupation with "keeping our lives moving" has not allowed us to learn from the world around us, has not provided us scope for listening and it has not offered us scope for understanding ourselves. In a paradoxical way, our sadness will be interrupted by a "huge silence", that is by the absence of noise and voice, and "everything would seem dead/and then alive again".

There are two interesting conceptual paradoxes that the speaker engages in throughout this poem. The first is the concept of quiet or silence, defined as absence of activity and language but having agency and intent. This paradox is one of definition but it is contextualized by the speaker as a choice of activity, an opportunity for reflection and a means to connect with one another. The second paradoxical idea is the speaker writing about silence but simultaneously engaging in linguistic communication through writing.

However, the speaker concludes with a statement that pledges his or her own silence, the silence that also naturally follows the end of the poem. While the poem began with the collective "we", it finds closure in the end with the separation of "you" (the audience or readers) and "I" (the speaker), who can only be silent once the writing has stopped. From a slightly different perspective, the speaker can also be seen to be making a comment about his or her own voice as a poet, with the work referencing the bigger issues, challenging our viewpoint and urging us to take action by silence, while acknowledging that his or her voice is one more transient voice in the "huge silence".

Analysing "Silence" by Billy Collins

Activity

Read the poem "Silence" by Billy Collins.

1. How many kinds of silence can you identify in the poem?
2. How are the silences associated with different emotions?
3. Which of these silences have you experienced?
4. Is the silence as conceived by Neruda in "Keeping Still" comparable to the silences in Collins' poem?
5. How does Collins use structure and language to create meaning?
6. Which kind of silence in either poem could be seen as relevant to culture or context?
7. Is Neruda's poem still relevant today and if so, why?
8. Billy Collins is a contemporary poet. Could this poem be relevant to future generations and, if so, why?

"Silence" by Billy Collins

There is the sudden silence of the crowd
above a player not moving on the field,
and the silence of the orchid.

The silence of the falling vase
before it strikes the floor,
the silence of the belt when it is not striking the child.

The stillness of the cup and the water in it,
the silence of the moon
and the quiet of the day far from the roar of the sun.

The silence when I hold you to my chest,
the silence of the window above us,
and the silence when you rise and turn away.

And there is the silence of this morning
which I have broken with my pen,
a silence that had piled up all night

like snow falling in the darkness of the house—
the silence before I wrote a word
and the poorer silence now.

Pinter's use of silence

In the two poems above, Neruda and Collins write about silence, urging us to keep still, observing silence, measuring it and reflecting on its effect. When reading poetry, silence is also part of the process of internalizing and contemplating while considering the relationship between words and their auditory and visual clues, among other things. Silence has a very different nature, role and effect in drama where speech is the central element wherein the action takes place to a large extent. During the performance of the play, silence creates a space for the audience to wonder, draw inferences, construct interpretations, attempt conjectures and so on. In other words, silence is an affective and effective convention that bears significance for the characters of the play, the meaning of the work and the audience's understanding of it. Harold Pinter, the British playwright who received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2005, explored the concept of silence extensively in his plays and applied it in different ways and in different contexts within his body of work with silences even representing the climax in a work.

Pinter establishes silence as a dramatic convention in itself when he claims that:

> "[t]here are two silences. One when no word is spoken. The other when perhaps a torrent of language is being employed. This speech is speaking of a language locked beneath it. That is its continual reference. The speech we hear is an indication of that which we don't hear. It is a necessary avoidance, a violent, sly, anguished or mocking smoke screen which keeps the other in its place. When true silence falls we are still left with echo but are nearer nakedness. One way of looking at speech is to say that it is a constant stratagem to cover nakedness" (Pinter 1991)

Core concept
REPRESENTATION

When Pinter first offered this perspective on silence and language in 1962, he was making a statement not only about aspects of the logic and the purpose that govern everyday language but also stage dialogue that seemed to have been crafted very differently from everyday language. Stage dialogue was—and possibly still is—very direct and clear to its purpose, much unlike everyday language. This rhetorical tradition in drama was so strong that carefully constructed speeches can be found even in naturalistic drama. While Pinter's purpose was not to imitate life as such, he sought to explore the characters, relationships and the nakedness within through the way people actually use language. Pinter's use of different kinds of silences broke away from theatrical tradition, confounded critics and made audiences feel menaced by the action—or inaction—on stage.

In *The Caretaker*, written in 1960, the long silence at the end of the play signifies the loss of hope for Davies who entered Aston's house at the beginning of the play as an alleged caretaker and stayed on,

gradually carving out a "space" for himself in it. The long silence can be understood to mean that Aston has not forgiven Davies and he has decided to finally turn Davies out. For Davies, the space he claimed as home in Aston's house will be lost so Davies will be lost again and this, for Davies, could mean his end.

***The Caretaker* by Harold Pinter**

ASTON. No.
DAVIES. Why… not?

ASTON *turns to look at him.*

ASTON. You make too much noise.
DAVIES. But… but… look… listen… listen here… I mean…
ASTON *turns back to the window.*
What am I going to do?
Pause.
What shall I do?
Pause.
Where am I going to go?
Pause.
If you want me to go… I'll go. You just say the word.
Pause.
I'll tell you what though… them shoes… them shoes you give me… they're working out all right… they're all right. Maybe I could… get down…
ASTON *remains still, his back to him, at the window.*
Listen… if I… got down… if I was to… get my papers… would you… would you let… would you… if I got down… and got my…
Long silence.

Curtain.

From *The Caretaker* in *Plays 2* by Harold Pinter (1996)

While we have outlined one interpretation of the long silence—that Aston has not forgiven Davies for the intrusion and he has decided to finally turn him out—the curtain falls before Davies actually leaves. For the audience, this marks the ambiguity of the long silence. Since Davies is still on stage when the curtain falls, it is possible to interpret Aston's silence in the opposite way; that is, as forgiveness and acceptance of Davies' request, which means that Davies stayed after all. The long silence holds a lot of power and it is precisely this power that Pinter seeks to explore in his work. The power lies between the two characters and also with the playwright who uses language and silence to destroy or build relationships.

Guiding conceptual question

To what extent do literary texts offer insight into another culture?

The closing scene above is also typical of Pinter's use of another kind of silence; that is, the pause. The difference between pause and silence is that when there is a pause the character is still processing cognitively and engaging in some way with the speech that has preceded or the speech that he or she intends to articulate. We see that Davies is struggling to process the prospect of being turned out, first questioning his future, then trying to negotiate and even distract Aston by talking about the shoes being all right in the hope that Aston will let him stay. Davies' pauses mid-phrase, mid-sentence and between sentences reveal his helplessness and his anguish. In this way, Pinter's pauses and silences have a dramatic effect and acquire meaning because they are carefully constructed in a way that allows the audience to consider possible alternatives—and this becomes the essence of the Pinter experience for the audience.

Activity

Research into Pinter's plays

1. Research reviews of Pinter's early plays and discuss the importance of the historical and cultural context to the production and reception of his work.

Read the review on the website "The Stage" by Nick Smurthwaite with the title The Birthday Party: How Harold Pinter's early work confounded the critics":

www.thestage.co.uk/features/2018/the-birthday-party-harold-pinters-menacing-early-work-confounded-critics/

Search terms: Smurthwaite, Pinter, Birthday Party, critics, 2018

2. Why does Pinter's work continue to receive recognition and even earned him the Nobel Prize?
3. How does his work reveal the culture and context of his time, especially when you consider his preoccupation with language?

Pinter explores further the concept of silence as an aspect of communication, a dramatic convention and also a feature of memory in his play *Silence* written in 1969. The three characters, a woman and two men that she was romantically involved in the past, are physically separated except when they engage in flashback dialogues, which they do in pairs. The play consists of cross-cut monologues and it is heavily punctuated by silences, even more so towards the end, which consists of fragments of the speech we have already heard that become shorter and shorter until they fade into a long silence immediately before the lights fade.

***Silence* by Harold Pinter**

BATES
I didn't hear you, she said.

RUMSEY
But I am looking at you. It's your head that's bent.
Silence

BATES
In the morning they wake up, snort a bit, canter, sometimes, and eat.
Silence

ELLEN
There aren't any.

RUMSEY
Don't be stupid.

ELLEN
I don't like them.

RUMSEY
You're stupid.
Silence

BATES
For instance, I said, those shapes in the trees.

ELLEN
I walk in this wind to collide with them waiting.
Silence

BATES
Sleep? Tender love? It's of no importance.

ELLEN
I kiss them there and say
Silence

RUMSEY
I walk
Silence

BATES
Caught a bus
Silence

ELLEN
Certainly. I can remember the wedding.
Silence

RUMSEY
I walk with my girl who wears a grey blouse

BATES
Caught a bus to the town. Crowds. Lights round the market
Long silence
Fade lights

From *Silence* in *Plays 3* by Harold Pinter (1996)

Core concept
TRANSFORMATION

The cross-cut monologues and the separate spaces give the play a cinematic quality, an influence on Pinter from his work in film and television that helped him discover the possibilities and the perspectives that can be explored with the camera. Pinter employs these techniques and the silences to tell a story about memory from three different perspectives and from three different points in time with the use of flashback. The story is simple but the pattern with its disrupted chronology is intricate as the characters try to recollect and remember past events, relationships and feelings. The complexity of what we remember and how we remember it, as well as the significance of recollection, is revealed through the synergy of these techniques. As it happens with real memory, these recollections and the intensity of feelings eventually fade and become silent, just as in the closing of the final scene.

TOK

To what extent is memory a reliable way of accessing our knowledge of the past? Is it possible to reconstruct a remembered experience or simply our experience of it? If so, in what ways can this affect how we learn about and understand our world?

Pinter and Greek classical tragedy

Discussion

Following this brief introduction to the work of Harold Pinter, discuss with a peer what you understand Pinter's aims to be, compared to the aims of classical Greek tragedy. Here are some discussion prompts.

- How do playwrights express objectives and intents through their choice of form and language?
- What is the cultural relevance of these ideas?
- In your opinion, which of these ideas can be appreciated by a variety of cultures and in different time periods and why?

Core concept
CREATIVITY

Writing Pinteresque

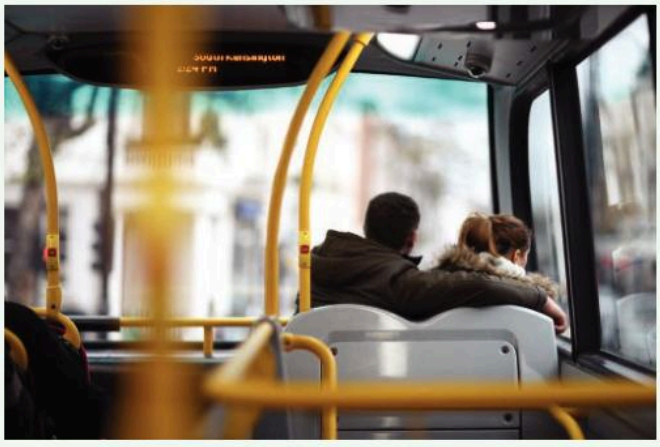
Activity

Pinter (1991) maintained that he had "never started a play from any kind of abstract idea or theory and never envisaged [his] own characters as messengers of death, doom, heaven or the milky way or, in other words, as allegorical representations of any particular force, whatever that may mean". Very simply, he usually found a couple of characters in a particular context, put them together and listened to what they had to say. In this sense, both characters and context are concrete. The starting point for a play was often a scene that Pinter himself had witnessed. For example, Pinter came across a long-term lodger at a seaside town inn and he turned him into Stanley, the focal character in *The Birthday Party*.

Using one of the snapshots opposite as a starting point, write 20–30 lines of stage dialogue, trying to emulate Pinter's use of pause, silence and repetition.

1. An elderly couple walking down the street. The woman says to the man: "I thought you were going to be nicer. I am nice, aren't I? I think you can try to be nice. Be nice."

2. A couple on the bus. The man says to the woman: "Did you really think I would not mind? I mind. I do mind. Why would I not mind?"



3. Two men sitting on a bench. One says: "It looks like it's going to rain." The other says: "It looks like rain."

4 INTERTEXTUALITY: CONNECTING TEXTS

This chapter is based on the area of exploration "Intertextuality: connecting texts". The objectives of this chapter are to:

- **introduce** students to ways of approaching texts from relational points of view
- **exemplify** the mindful juxtaposition of texts that converge, diverge, and "speak" to each other in terms of style, topic and genre
- **investigate** ways of making judicious, insightful and comparative claims based on these juxtapositions
- **guide** students toward following their own interpretive pathways in the spirit of personal discovery, helping them to see their own ideas as contributors to the text's transformative legacy
- **provide** constructive advice for synthesising these approaches and skills for the production of effective student analyses.

This area of exploration will look at ways texts connect with one another and with the world around us. The concept of intertextuality is closely linked to the concepts of relationality, interconnectedness and interdependence. This chapter will include small independent units of study in order to outline what we understand by these terms and how we examine these contextual connections.

Introduction

This area of exploration aims to give students a sense of the ways in which literary texts exist in a system of relationships with other literary texts past and present. Students will further engage with literary traditions and new directions by considering the following guiding conceptual questions.

1. How do literary texts adhere to and deviate from conventions associated with literary forms?
2. How do conventions and systems of reference evolve over time?
3. In what ways can diverse literary texts share points of similarity?
4. How valid is the notion of a classic literary text?
5. How can literary texts offer multiple perspectives of a single issue, topic or theme?
6. In what ways can comparison and interpretation be transformative?"

From the IB Language A literature subject guide, page 22.

Exploring poetry

Context, perspective and motion

As we explored in "2 Readers, writers and text", reading poetry and "making meaning" of it can be a daunting task at first—it takes a good deal of inference, which entails drawing conclusions about the significance of evidence based on multiple ways of knowing. When interpreting literature, this is as much a logical process as one dependent on your instinctive feeling and the personal background (or context) that leads you to draw individual connotations of words. As your eyes navigate the words on the page, you begin to see patterns

that shape your inferences about what the text might mean—to you and perhaps also to others. This is where perspective comes in: the many possible interpretations of a given text result from the fact that readers bring to the text a set of assumptions defined by the cultures they inhabit and have inherited.

These cultures are defined by literary traditions of course but also religion, intellectual traditions, social status, sex and gender identifications, and many other demographic identity markers. As you read a text you are effectively reading yourself in a way, moving through the layers of your identity that make you think and feel in certain ways about the texts you encounter. This is where motion plays its role—the outward movement of your eyes across the page and its matrix of words and meanings triggers a range of internal, psychological, intellectual and emotional responses to one extent or another based on the common ground between the contexts of the work and your own personal and societal contexts.

Core concept

PERSPECTIVE

To make this rather abstract idea more concrete, let us consider an analogy between the metaphorical "motion" considered above and the physical motion of moving through an urban transportation system. Just as there are often many possible ways of getting from point A to point B in a large city (using Uber or Lyft, taxis, private cars, public buses, trains or trolleys, subways and perhaps walking), there are many possible routes to interpreting a text.

TOK

Does an interpretation of a work become a new work? What role does creativity play when reading?

Poems on the Underground

Imagining and discussing experiences

This section invites us into the UK's London Underground (more commonly known as "the Tube")—a migratory space of commuters in which silence is effectively a code of conduct most of the time. Travellers are trapped in their own media or soundscapes and minds, despite often being very close to each other physically. Their trance-like inwardness creates a space in which people are often forced to pay attention to things they would normally overlook above ground (even though many pretend not to be paying attention to anything at all). Such an interstitial state becomes an apt environment for the kind of reflective contemplation conducive to reading poetry, which shares (psychologically) many of the same qualities of the environment of travelling underground at sometimes high speeds. The physical phenomenon of reading texts underground is a handy metaphor for the imaginary subconscious worlds created when we allow texts to contain and transport us.

Core concept
TRANSFORMATION

We will imagine the diverse international backgrounds and experiences of varied reader-commuters in this urban, subterranean context, using selections from the anthology *Poems on the Underground*. Through this, we will explore the techniques of connecting readers, writers and texts through close reading—and how the intersection among these leads us to consider global issues such as politics and justice, identity and community, the natural world and creativity.

ATL

Thinking and self-management skills

Core concept

IDENTITY

Core concept

PERSPECTIVE

What follows is a series of eight vignettes, each of which is based on a poem that was displayed alongside commercial advertisements posted on Tube trains. After experiencing each poem yourself as a reader, you then have an opportunity to determine the extent to which aspects of the writer's background are relevant to your knowledge and understanding of the poem. We will then explore the text itself more closely by interpreting the writer's choices and their effects on your developing interpretation of the poem as a whole (using relevant poetic devices). Finally, we will return to the reader by introducing a hypothetical commuter on the Tube—we will envision and fashion the person's backstory and speculate how this imaginary reader might identify with the poem that caught his or her attention during a busy day in the city. This fictional consideration will provide a template for you to reflect on how your own personal background contributes differently or distinctively to your encounters with poetry. It will prompt you to consider specifically how your background impacts your interpretations of specific poems.

In the following poem Gavin Ewart uses the approaching death of a beloved cat as a way for the reader to consider how we humanize our pets to such a degree that we impose or project our own emotions onto them.

"A 14-Year-Old Convalescent Cat in the Winter" by Gavin Ewart

I want him to have another living summer,
to lie in the sun and enjoy the *douceur de vivre* –
because the sun, like golden rum in a rummer,
is what makes an idle cat *un tout petit peu ivre* –

I want him to lie stretched out, contented,
revelling in the heat, his fur all dry and warm,
an Old Age Pensioner, retired, resented
by no one, and happinesses in a beelike swarm
to settle on him – postponed for another season
that last fated hateful journey to the vet
from which there is no return (and age the reason),
which must soon come – as I cannot forget.

From *Collected Poems 1980–1990* by Gavin Ewart (1991)

Gavin Ewart (1916–1995) began his career as a poet at the early age of 17, but his involvement in the Second World War as an officer and eventually captain in the British Royal Artillery prevented him from continuing his writing until many years after the war ended. His poetry is known for its witty and lighthearted manner of satirizing the odd ways that people (including himself) conduct themselves—but the themes of his poems also frequently address sex and death. He had an upper-class upbringing and elite educational background (attending school at Wellington College in England and completing two degrees at Cambridge University). When considering his privileged upbringing and also his extended involvement in the military, we can see that the backgrounds and experiences he brought to his writing were wide-ranging.

As a text, "A 14-Year-Old Convalescent Cat in the Winter" seems to incorporate aspects of Ewart's life experience. The poem's concern about death is obvious, but notice in particular the two uses of French phrases in italics—"*douceur de vivre*" (the sweetness of life or living) and "*un tout petit peu ivre*" (a little drunk). How does the inclusion of these phrases, especially if you do not read or speak French, affect your encounter with the poem? What assumptions might be implicit in the poem based on the inclusions of these phrases? Notice also that the poem's subject of death is conveyed in an "abab" rhyme scheme that links "summer" and "rummer". The whimsical tone, pace and sound of the poem contrasts with its impending pain—almost as if the poem itself is serving to push ("postpone") the knowledge of death as far away as possible while paradoxically still acknowledging its inevitable approach. Given the atrocities of human suffering that military endeavours often involve, Ewart's own experience in the Second World War may well have given him a sympathetic perspective of aging veterans that may not have been as poignant personally without this experience. What is the effect of channelling this perspective of death through the image of a dying, beloved pet cat?

Imagine Nicola—an immigrant from Jamaica, now a doctor specializing in geriatric psychiatry. She lives with her husband in Bayswater. She is commuting to work on the District Line when she

reads Ewart's poem. Imagine how her work with elderly patients and their mental health would impact her encounter with the poem. As a medical professional, Nicola would have to balance her professional distance with her patients and her emotional connection with them as people she cares about. She might find herself in situations in which she must mask her personal feelings in order to protect herself and her patients. Might the openness and honesty of the speaker of Ewart's poem give voice to the feelings Nicola must censor in her professional role, echoing desires and frustrations she might only be able to share in private with the people closest to her? Imagine how this poem might offer her some consolation about the emotionally challenging aspects of her job as she heads to work—the feeling that she is not alone in facing such challenges. To what extent do you identify personally with Ewart's poem based your own experiences with the elderly or with the process of grieving for a beloved person or animal who is suffering?

The poem includes beliefs and values that individuals in a society, culture or civilization might share regarding the sanctity and preciousness of life. Factors contributing to this are global issues underpinning connections between readers of Ewart's poem, Ewart's own background as a writer and the voice of the poem itself. The poem also expresses how our personal wishes and desires regarding the sanctity of life might sometimes conflict with our rational understanding of death's inevitability. Real-life situations relating to these issues include current debates on euthanasia and its ethical dimensions relating to humans versus animals; such "right-to-die" debates encompass national and international differences in politics, power and justice.

Global issue

Ethical and scientific controversies

In the poem below, Grace Nichols assembles a pastiche of specific images—sun, ocean, stars, stones, comets and forest—and connects them in a series of fragments without clear grammatical subjects (perhaps because the earth itself is the subject—the agent of power—the subject *and* its own predicate).

"For the Life of This Planet" by Grace Nichols

The way the red sun surrenders
its wholeness to curving ocean
bit by bit. The way curving ocean
gives birth to the birth of stars
in the growing darkness,
wearing everything in its path
to cosmic smoothness.
The impulse of stones rolling
towards their own roundness.
The unexpected comets of flying fish.
And Forest, Great-Breathing-Spirit,
rooting to the very end
for the life of this planet.

From *I Have Crossed the Ocean: Selected Poems* by Grace Nichols (2010)

The synergy of connectedness is the theme that drives Nichols's poem: the same ocean that forces the sun's surrender contains the force that wears "everything in its path/to cosmic smoothness", channelling the "impulse of stones… towards their own roundness." This earthly harnessing of cosmic and terrestrial forces is consolidated in the powerful line, which serves almost like an aphorism or pithy fragment, "The unexpected comets of flying fish". The alliteration of "flying fish" and "Forest" connects this line to the final one, which gives all of these individual elements a unifying, eternal purpose—to root (for example, to strongly encourage or advance) "to the very end/for the life of this planet." Notice also the five words ending in "-ing" that alternate between gerunds (in this case, verbs acting as adjectives) and present-progressive verb conjugations. These give the poem a sense of urgency and immediacy as if this "very end" may indeed happen soon if we do not act in the interests of our planet. The elements of sky, land and sea advance their own cause—but the poem invites us to question whether we as inhabitants of the earth are doing the same.

Grace Nichols is a Guyanese-British poet who immigrated to the UK when she was 27. The Guyanese influences in her writing are the rhythms and musicality of Caribbean folklore and storytelling as well as Guyanese Creole, which has been described as a creole that is English-based with Africa or East Indian syntax. These influences are strong because Nichols spent many of her early years in the countryside of her native country.

Imagine Szymon, who recently immigrated from Poland to London to pursue an undergraduate degree course in biology. He is reading Nichols's poem. He is travelling home on the Metropolitan line from a long day in the laboratory studying bees and pollination. He lives with three housemates in Uxbridge. How might Nichols's words catch Szymon's attention? As a biology student, Szymon's focus is on close observation and scientific analysis of plants and insects. Consider, though, how the poem's global perspective might offer him a broader sense of purpose and affirmation—that the difficulties in a challenging subject are contributing to a common purpose that will one day better the components of a delicate ecosystem under threat. Also, like Nichols, Szymon is an immigrant to the UK; consider the challenges he faces as he adapts to a foreign culture and the parallels between his life experience and that of Nichols. To what extent do you identify personally with Nichols's poem based on your own observations of the natural world and any experiences you may have had as a newcomer to an unfamiliar culture?

Global issues underpinning connections between readers of Nichols's poem, Nichols's own background as a writer, and the voice of the poem itself include individual culture or identity on one hand, and being part of a global community and the natural world on the other. It is amazing that one poem can trigger such a broad expanse of global issues at once.

Global issue

Our relationship with the natural world

In the following poem Choman Hardi voices the honest grievance and worry of a Kurdish mother whose family has immigrated to the UK (as indicated by use of the word "mum" for mother).

"My Children" by Choman Hardi

I can hear them talking, my children
fluent English and broken Kurdish.

And whenever I disagree with them
they will comfort each other by saying:
Don't worry about mum, she's Kurdish.

Will I be a foreigner in my own home?

From *Life For Us* by Choman Hardi (2004)

Core concept
CULTURE

Hardi's poem dramatizes a situation in which a Kurdish mother feels ostracized or disconnected from her own children (even "in her own home") because they have assimilated to British culture—and its language with their "fluent English"—and are using this acculturation and identification as a source of empowering leverage over her status. Her grievance is that her children have disassociated themselves from their Kurdish heritage by saying, "she's Kurdish", thereby falsely inferring that they are not. This disassociation has become an excuse for disrespecting her authority "whenever I disagree with them". Her worry is twofold—that her children have lost the core of their identity, which is now "broken", and that her own family is now thereby irrevocably broken. This sense of fracture is boldly represented in the final line, which is also its own stanza: "Will I be a foreigner in my own home?". The mother is already a foreigner in the UK, and it pains her to acknowledge that her children's choice to use their acculturation as a means of comforting "each other" is at her emotional expense.

Core concept
IDENTITY

Choman Hardi is an Assistant Professor of English at the American University of Iraq in Sulaimani (in Iraqi Kurdistan). She arrived in the UK in 1993 as an Iraqi refugee and achieved the following qualifications at UK universities: BA (Oxford), MA (University College, London) and a PhD from the University of Kent. When she returned to Iraq to continue her academic career at AUIS, Hardi founded the Center for Gender and Development Studies. Four years before, her book *Gendered Experiences of Genocide: Anfal Survivors in Kurdistan-Iraq* was published. Consider how Hardi's personal life experience has directly impacted not only her academic journey but also her creative work as poet. Her father is the famous Kurdish poet Ahmad Hardi (1922–2006), whose detailed knowledge of Kurdish,

Arabic and Persian poetry must have inspired his daughter to develop her own poetic voice within this strong tradition she and her family inherited. When considering this cultural inheritance—and the fact that her family was also exiled to the UK—it is clear to see the origins of the poem "My Children" in her life experience.

Imagine another reader of this poem: Demetrios—a Greek national who has lived in London for 10 years and is now an investment banker. He is travelling to Waterloo Station from work on the Waterloo and City Line to catch a train home to Guildford where he lives with his French girlfriend Francoise, who is an estate agent. Demetrios and Francoise are considering marriage and family, but there are many things to think about before they move ahead with their plans. Will they live in Greece, France, the UK or perhaps elsewhere? Hardi's poem might resonate with Demetrios as he considers the implications of their decision for the future lives of their children in terms of the language (or languages) they will speak, the cultural identities they will gain and the cultural identities they might lose in the process. Global issues underpinning "My Children" include culture, identity, community, beliefs, values and education. To what extent do you identify personally with Hardi's poem based your own experiences of such issues?

Global issue

Otherness, identity and a sense of community

This poem represents the experience of learning British English and culture from the perspective of a foreign visitor to London who is walking through St James's Park.

"Immigrant" by Fleur Adcock

November '63: eight months in London.
I pause on the low bridge to watch the pelicans:
they float swanlike, arching their white necks
over only slightly ruffled bundles of wings,
burying awkward beaks in the lake's water.

I clench cold fists in my Marks and Spencer's jacket
and secretly test my accent once again:
St James's Park; St James's Park; St James's Park.

From *Poems 1960–2000* by Fleur Adcock (2000)

Adcock is a prolific and award-winning writer from New Zealand who has spent a lot of time in the UK both as a child, during the Second World War, and an adult. As evident in "Immigrant", her poetry conveys "a sense of geographical and emotional displacement" with "a consequent search for identity". "Having a sense of wonder" is what Adcock describes as a driving force of her poetic voice, which at times she uses to imagine the lives of her

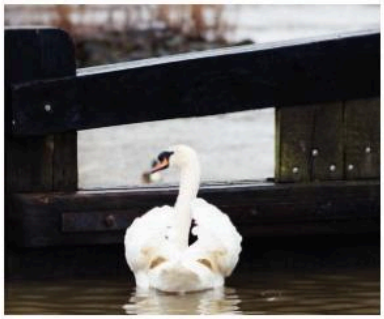
British ancestors—"giving voice to them" and thereby making logical inferences in "her own search for identity" (Dr Jules Smith, Fleur Adcock Critical Perspective, British Council website, 2009).

Like the pelicans in St James's Park observed by the speaker in "Immigrant"—which are thousands of miles from their usual habitats of Russia and South America—Adcock and (presumably also) the poem's speaker are geographically displaced from their homes. The image of the pelicans "burying awkward beaks in the lake's water" in the first stanza unites with that of the speaker's need to "clench cold fists in my Marks and Spencer's jacket" in the second stanza. (Marks and Spencer is a well-known British department store established in 1884.) Both images convey a sense of insecurity and slight anxiety with being out of place. At the same time, however, the speaker resolves to advance through the uncomfortable situation of being a foreigner by moving from her comfort zone and accepting the challenge to "secretly test my accent once again" just as the pelicans "float swanlike, arching their white necks".

Imagine another reader of "Immigrant": Clara, a 20-year-old Spanish tourist from Bilbao who is taking a summer ESL immersion course and living with a host family in Ealing. She is travelling to the West End on the Central Line to see *Les Misérables* with her new friends on the course. Imagine the sense of comfort she might feel by reading Adcock's poem as she approaches Tottenham Court Road station where she will meet the new friends she has made. Much has changed in London since 1963 when the speaker of Adcock's poem walked through St James's Park and was surprised to see pelicans; nevertheless, just as the pelicans are still there today, so is the feeling of anxiety when adjusting to a new culture and language and, moreover, the ability of friendship to help you share in overcoming these challenges. To what extent do you identify personally with Adcock's poem based your own experiences of travelling to new places? Global issues intersecting all of these levels of awareness include the natural world, imagination (the speaker takes time to "pause on the low bridge to watch the pelicans"), culture, identity and community.

Global issue

The identity and role of a global citizen



Continuing this urban bird theme, we switch our attention to this short poem.

"Industrial" by Frances Leviston

From a bridge, the inverted *vanitas*
Of a swan drifting down a black canal
Between two corrugated warehouses.

From *Public Dream* by Frances Leviston (2007)

Leviston appears here to evoke the writing style of the imagist movement made famous by modernist poets such as William Carlos Williams (see the section "Writing a poem in response to another poem"), Marianne Moore and Elizabeth Bishop. What unites these poets is their close focus on truthful, precise depictions of physical objects and their inherent natures. "Industrial" presents a somewhat jarring juxtaposition of grace ("a swan drifting") and grit ("two corrugated warehouses"). These conflated images constitute, according to the first line of the poem, an "inverted *vanitas*".
A definition of a vanitas is a "still life artwork which includes various symbolic objects designed to remind the viewer of their mortality and of the worthlessness of worldly goods and pleasures"; specifically, images such as "skulls and extinguished candles" evoke the "shortness and fragility of life", whereas "musical instruments, wine and books … remind us explicitly of the vanity (in the sense of worthlessness) of worldly pleasures and goods" (www.tate.org.uk).

Core concept
REPRESENTATION

The still life below by Collier (1696) is an example of a vanitas.

▲ Edward Collier's "Still Life with a Volume of Wither's *Emblemes*" (1696)

The masterful phrase "inverted *vanitas*" suggests that the swan gliding through the canal between the warehouses captures and absorbs the speaker's perspective of this scene "from a bridge" (involving, by extension, us as readers of the poem. This invites the speaker and us to reflect on the transience, ephemerality and fleetingness of our own lives and its pleasures as we travel toward death on life's journey. Death is represented by the "black canal" bordered on both sides by the impersonal and industrial imagery

TOK

How do implicit or explicit literary allusions (and allusions to other art forms) affect our understanding of the works involved?

of "corrugated warehouses". The replacement of inanimate objects with the living creature of a swan adds nuance to the genre of vanitas still lifes that Leviston inherits and transforms (or "cross-dresses") into poetic form. This shifts the pejorative sentiments of mortality and worthlessness toward a kind of noble grace and dignity.

Imagine another reader, Rupert, travelling to work on the Northern Line. He is a British-born 35-year-old lecturer of economics at a prestigious university in London. Originally from Cornwall, Rupert moved to London from the countryside for this job two years ago; he lives alone in Camden Town. As an economist, Rupert spends his professional life immersed in studying the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services, so the title "Industrial" might catch his eye. However, as we know already, a poem's title can sometimes deceive our preconceived notions. What might he make of the swan, which seems out of place in this environment? Having studied art history at school in Cornwall, he is aware of the genre of vanitas still life paintings, but what can he make of "inverted" vanitas? Intrigued, he looks up the phrase "inverted vanitas" on his smartphone and comes upon www.joannamanousis.com/inverted-vanitas/.

Rupert then has an epiphany—is he himself a version of this swan? New to the big city, he sometimes feels overwhelmingly alone within its frenetic pace and anonymity, so he identifies with the starkness of this harrowing image—the conflation of beauty (the country life he recently left) and the impersonal, industrial nature of his new human habitat. Will his epiphany be a source of comfort or a combination of other complex feelings? Given that the "inverted" nature of the poem's inherited themes is meant to outwardly encompass all those who witness what the speaker sees from the bridge, to what extent do you identify with the swan yourself? In reflecting on Leviston's poem, you might consider the relevance of global issues such as technology (and its effects on identity and community), as well as art, creativity and our imagination's amazing ability to intersect a multiplicity of seemingly separate frames of reference in a wide variety of ways.

Global issue

Mutability and change in our world

As the title suggests, DJ Enright's "Poem on the Underground" takes us directly into the Tube itself, knowingly aware of its participation in this poetic exposé.

"Poem on the Underground" by DJ Enright

Proud readers
Hide behind tall newspapers.

The young are all arms and legs
Knackered by youth.

Tourists sit bolt upright
Trusting in nothing.

Only the drunk and the crazy
Aspire to converse.

Only the poet
Peruses his poem among the adverts.

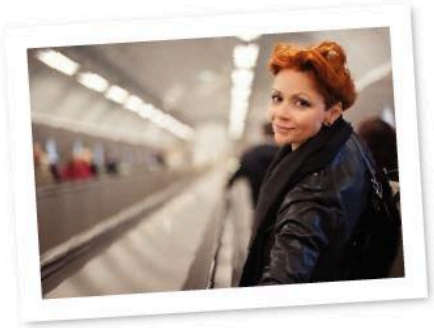
Only the elderly person
Observes the request that the seat be offered to an elderly person.

From *Collected Poems 1948–1998* by DJ Enright (1999)

Enright offers a shrewd, perceptive portrait of the wide demographic among travellers on the Tube on a typical day. He divides these commuters into two categories.

- One category is people who are in different ways and for different (or indifferent) reasons ensconced in their own worlds—businesspeople (presumably), the young and tourists.
- The other category is people trying to reach beyond themselves: drunks and the crazy (who "aspire to converse"); the poet (who by perusing "his poem among the adverts" offers a visual model for sharing his voice, albeit vicariously); and the elderly (who understand the daily struggles of others like them).

Despite uniting these identities in a single poem, Enright separates each into its own stanza, visually demarcating this co-presence of connection and disconnection. This paradox is a ubiquitous phenomenon in parodies of mass transit. One example is a video (from Thailand) on the dangers of bus travel in Bangkok https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u06GqlNiJUY.



What connections might there be between Enright as a poet and our imaginary commuter on the Tube Meg, who is travelling to a client's office on the Jubilee Line? She is a 30-year-old American businesswoman who is on a trip representing her architectural firm based in Dallas, Texas, whereas Enright was a British academic who worked at different times in Egypt, Japan, Thailand and notably in Singapore. Is there common ground between them in terms of how they might identify with a culture that is simultaneously familiar and foreign?

To what extent do you identify personally with Enright's poem based on your own experiences with mass transit? There are global issues underpinning connections between readers of Enright's poem, Enright's own background as a writer, and the identities represented in the poem. These issues include power and justice (how we relate to what might be vulnerable people such as foreigners, children and the elderly) as they relate to a nation's or city's culture, identity, and community.

The poet Zhang Ji, who lived approximately from 712–715 AD to 779 during the Tang Dynasty, wrote a popular poem: "Maple Bridge Night Mooring". It captures the environment of Maple Bridge in the town of Fengqiao, near the Buddhist Hanshan Temple monastery and its historic bell. You can hear the bell played here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_ON-G7qp3o.

"Maple Bridge Night Mooring" by Zhang Ji

月落乌啼霜满天，江枫渔火对愁眠。
姑苏城外寒山寺，夜半钟声到客船。

TOK

To what extent can literary texts be considered historical documents?

How do a translator's time and place affect his or her translation of a text?

Here is a translation by Gary Snyder.

Moon set, a crow caws,
        frost fills the sky
River, maple, fishing-fires
        cross my troubled sleep.
Beyond the walls of Su-Chou
        from Cold Mountain temple
The midnight bell sounds
        reach my boat.

From "Two poems written at Maple Bridge near Su-Chou" in *The Gary Snyder Reader* by Gary Snyder (1999)

Ji's poem presents the somewhat austere dream-like imaginings of a person, presumably a fisherman, alone in his boat moored near Maple Bridge on a frosty midnight. The "troubled sleep" suggests that the speaker is in a liminal state between being awake and asleep and so hyper-attuned to every sound. The combination of natural sounds ("crow caws") close by and the sounds made by humans ("midnight bell") in the distance "Beyond the walls" evokes the possibility that the fisherman feels somewhat cut off in the boat (and in life?) from human companionship and its traditions. He seems to exist *within* their peripheral orbit but not entirely *of* them.

Imagine another reader of this poem: Xuehua, travelling back home from work at the Chinese Embassy on the Bakerloo Line. She has a diplomatic visa and is away from her home and family in Shanghai for three years. Like many of her peers in China and at work in London, she read Ji's poem in school. Seeing it printed in English on the tube takes her by surprise. It triggers in her a sudden feeling of nostalgia and homesickness, for she identifies with the poem's sense of existing between one world and another. It occurs to Xuehua that she never understood or appreciated the poem when she was a child, but reading it now as an adult gives her a new appreciation for its possible meanings. When she returns home, Xuehua accesses the version she read in Chinese characters, and it occurs to her that reading literature is a recursive journey—she can create new experiences and insights by rereading literature as she matures and gains new experiences.

To what extent do you identify personally with the experience of rereading works of literature or listening to songs from when you were younger? What insights have you gleaned about the ways you have grown, based on how you remember previous encounters of a familiar work?

TOK

Does the translation of a text become a new text? What knowledge can be gained by comparing a text in its original language and its translation—or two translations of the same work?

Core concept

TRANSFORMATION

Global issue

Religion and spirituality

The fact that Zhang Ji's ancient poem still evokes powerful resonances today in many Asian countries suggests a wide range of global issues, including:

- culture, identity and community (states and degrees of belonging)
- beliefs and values (religious knowledge systems, their traditions and institutions, and their impacts on belonging)
- power (being contained by one's profession)
- art and imagination (perceiving a world beyond this containment)
- the natural world (whether nature has ultimate control over our fate).

Our eighth and final vignette takes us into the horizon with a Stephen Crane poem that sets a powerful scene.

"I Saw a Man Pursuing the Horizon" by Stephen Crane

I saw a man pursuing the horizon;
Round and round they sped.
I was disturbed at this;
I accosted the man.
'It is futile,' I said,
'You can never—'

'You lie,' he cried,
And ran on.

Crane presents us with an evocative scenario that elicits multiple "ways of knowing". We, like the speaker, know from our reason that pursuing the horizon is indeed futile, but the man who interrupts the speaker with "You lie" is apparently "pursuing" it not as a destination but as a emotional journey ("he cried"). Perhaps he is driven by faith or some other transcendent purpose. The poem is not about the destination but the journey itself—a state of mind driven by something intangible. There are two different worldviews in conflict here: one defined by pragmatism and the other by passion. The fact that the poem abruptly stops after the man "ran on" leaves the conundrum at the reader's imaginary doorstep, asking us to resolve the quandary ourselves and articulate our own convictions.

Now imagine Theo—a young secondary school exchange student from Nice, France. He is living in student accommodation provided by his host boarding school in Highbury and plays football with a

sports club league team outside school. He reads the poem while travelling on the Victoria Line by himself to a game. He has been in London for only two months, and his English is improving rapidly. He wants to be a professional football player, but several of his friends are quick to dispel his dream for various reasons. Undaunted, Theo, like the running man in Crane's poem, is determined to succeed, and his bravery in taking up his exciting opportunity in London is a clear sign of this determination. As he stands among businesspeople, reading Crane's poem, his resolve to attain his dream (as lofty as it may be) is emboldened.

Guiding conceptual question

In what ways can comparison and interpretation be transformative?

Stephen Crane died in 1900 aged 28. Born in Newark, New Jersey, USA, he died in Badenweiler, Germany of tuberculosis. At the age of 25, he left the USA as a reporter and writer; his international travels took him to Greece, England and Cuba. When he was 24, he travelled to the American west and Mexico. His life was full of legal, financial and romantic entanglements, yet he continued to write through his final days. Crane's adventurous life explains the reckless zeal that seems to motivate the speaker of this poem, and we might envision a similar sense of *carpe diem* in Theo. To what extent do you identify personally with Crane's poem based on your own aspirations, especially when others tell you, "You can't do that"? Global issues underpinning connections between readers of Crane's poem, Crane's background as a writer and the voices of the poem include imagination (envisioning your dreams) and beliefs (pursuing these dreams against the odds).

Global issue

Agency and the power of the individual

ATL

Thinking skills

Assessment practice

Guided approach to close reading

Having studied the eight vignettes above, we are now prepared to devote more detailed attention to the mechanics of expressing our knowledge and understanding of what we see and interpret in poetry in clear, specific writing. Practising these skills on a regular basis throughout the two-year course will help you considerably on all of the assessments (written and oral) because doing so will instill a habit of linking **content** (*what* idea a writer is expressing and what *you* are expressing about this idea) and **form** (*how* a writer is expressing an idea and how *you* are expressing your interpretation of this). We will also take a close look at ways of developing thoughtful conclusions to your written and spoken analyses of literary works. Essentially, we will do this by making reflective **connections** between the artful expression of ideas in the text and any specific issues you think they trigger in real-life situations (your own and those of others).

We will use the poem below, by Li-Young Lee, to guide us on this interpretive journey.

"The Gift" by Li-Young Lee

To pull the metal splinter from my palm
my father recited a story in a low voice.
I watched his lovely face and not the blade.
Before the story ended, he'd removed
the iron sliver I thought I'd die from.

I can't remember the tale,
but hear his voice still, a well
of dark water, a prayer.
And I recall his hands,
two measures of tenderness
he laid against my face,
the flames of discipline
he raised above my head.

Had you entered that afternoon
you would have thought you saw a man
planting something in a boy's palm,
a silver tear, a tiny flame.
Had you followed that boy
you would have arrived here,
where I bend over my wife's right hand.

Look how I have her thumbnail down
so carefully she feels no pain.
Watch as I lift the splinter out.
I was seven when my father
took my hand like this,
and I did not hold that shard
between my fingers and think,
Metal that will bury me,
christen it Little Assassin,
Ore Going Deep for My Heart.
And I did not lift up my wound and cry,
Death visited here!
I did what a child does
when he's given something to keep.
I kissed my father.

From *Rose* by Li-Young Lee (1986)

We have divided this guided approach to analysis into four, cumulative stages:

1. tracing connotative and stylistic patterns
2. investigating where, how and why these patterns change
3. appreciating the writer's choices
4. putting it all together in writing.

After reading the poem several times, using the rereading techniques and strategies previously outlined, you will need to trace the correlations among the different patterns you recognize in the passage. This is a list of many of the patterns that you might see (not all of them will be equally relevant in all poems).

1 Tracing connotative and stylistic patterns

- sound patterns
- rhythmic/metrical patterns
- image patterns
- visual/spatial patterns
- white/black space vertical/horizontal
- syntactical patterns
- patterns of denotation/connotation
- patterns of punctuation
- patterns of sentence/stanza structure
- patterns of conflict

Based on just the first two stanzas of the poem, we can see visually how Lee moves from the speaker's retrospective memory of his father's calming approach to removing a splinter from his palm when he was very young—to his present adult self-reflecting on this poignant memory. The shifts in verb tense are one pattern change, but what is even more pronounced is the way the second stanza is truncated with shorter lines than those in the first stanza, as you can see in the next chart.

2 Where/how/why do these patterns change?

Pattern	→	**Change**	→	**Impact**
What are the patterns?		Where do they change?		How is this relevant?

To express precisely and clearly the impact of these parallel changes in patterns of content and form that we have traced, we need to develop a vocabulary for specifying and qualifying the relationship between the writer's choices and their varied effects on the speaker, character, writer and reader. The following chart models this practice by identifying a variety of literary devices (column X) in relation to the possible effects they have (column Y). What is most important in making these associations sharp and perspicacious is:

- the use of well-chosen adjectives to describe the kind of device you have identified
- the use of well-chosen verbs to describe the kind of impact the device has on the speaker, character, writer and reader.

One key trick to avoiding banal observations is to choose verbs that animate and colour the effect—in other words, try to steer away from "shows" or "emphasizes" in favour of verbs that characterize the exact nature of this showing or emphasis.

The lists that appear in the chart are not meant to be interpreted as exhaustive—they are just a few examples of adjectives, devices and verbs that you might find useful when discussing and explicating literary works, both in writing and orally. You might find it helpful to make several charts like this of your own as an individual or class activity then display them around the room. They can serve as triggers or reminders of ways to articulate your insights if you feel at a loss for words when you observe something but do not quite know how to express your ideas. Developing this skill early on in the course will quickly advance your critical aptitude as your prepare for the assessments.

3 Appreciating writer's choices

adjective	**X**	→	**verb**	→	**Y**
bold	image(ry)		emphasizes		the speaker's…
inconsistent	perspective		diminishes		the character's…
menacing	tone		highlights		the writer's…
looming	symbol		enhances		the reader's…
bucolic	setting		contradicts		
formal	phrasing		reverses		
inverted	syntax		informs		
simple	sentence structure(s)		ambiguates		
fastidious	characterization		clarifies		
childlike	diction		reiterates		
contorted	personification		underpins		
redundant	repetition		exaggerates		
chaotic	punctuation		juxtaposes		
unexpected	paradox		negates		
suggestive	allusion		amplifies		

The following text visualizes a way of applying this method to the first two stanzas of Lee's poem from above: moving from an initial identification of the patterns or evidence, to an interpretation of the changes in these patterns, and finally to an account of the implications of these changes on meaning. Look back to the section "From reading to understanding to articulation" in "2 Readers, writers and texts" to remind yourself of the "Four Is" model of using evidence in analyses of literary works. This is a detailed application of the model at sentence level.

4 Putting it all together in writing

Pattern

The first stanza begins with an intense reflection of the speaker's childhood experience with his father. "Splinter" and "sliver" bookend five lines, each line comprising around 10 syllables. There is an alternation between enjambed and end-stopped lines.

Change

The second stanza brings us into the present moment. Each line is shorter—six or seven syllables per line, increasing the pace and intensity of the narration—as if the speaker is becoming more urgent. This contrasts with the sombre tones evoked by the words "dark", "prayer" and "tenderness".

Impact

The fact that the alternating enjambed lines continue suggests a strong connection between past and present, evoked by the double meaning of "voice still"—his father's "still" voice that is "still" haunting him like "flames".

Notice how the "Impact" section of this text connects the pattern and its change to a wider, holistic interpretation of the poem (the haunting co-presence of past and present memories). Your own interpretations should make regular associations between your "microscopic" analysis and your wider "macro" interpretation of the work as a whole: how do your localized interpretations of pattern → change → impact contribute to your global sense of what the work is doing as a whole? Taking these multi-tiered levels of concomitant insight one step further entails reflecting on the ways your holistic interpretation of the work connects to any one or more of the global issues that underpin the course: culture, identity, community, beliefs, values, education, politics, power, justice, art, creativity, imagination, science, technology and the natural world. The sooner you make a habit of intersecting these layers of awareness—from the very local to the very global—the better you will be at preparing yourself for the course assessments.

Poetry analysis

Activity

Write an analysis based on close reading of the following poem—Grace Chua's "Love Song, with Two Goldfish"—applying the skills you have learned from all of the examples above.

ATL

Self-management

In your learner portfolio, write one of these analyses every few weeks during the course. Your analyses should represent a variety of literary genres. Make sure you track your improvement—specifically what aspects of your thinking and writing have improved, how they have improved, and why.

"Love Song, with Two Goldfish" by Grace Chua

(He's a drifter, always
floating around her, has
nowhere else to go. He wishes
she would sing, not much, just the scales;
or take some notice,
give him the fish eye.)

(Bounded by round walls
she makes fish eyes
and kissy lips at him, darts
behind pebbles, swallows
his charms hook, line and sinker)

(He's bowled over. He would
take her to the ocean, they could
count the waves. There,
in the submarine silence, they would share
their deepest secrets. Dive for pearls
like stars.)

(But her love's since
gone belly-up. His heart sinks
like a fish. He drinks
like a stone. Drowns those sorrows,
stares emptily through glass.)

(the reason, she said
she wanted)
(and he could not give)
a life
beyond the
(bowl)

From *The Quarterly Literary Review*, Vol 2, number 2 (January 2003)

Core concept
REPRESENTATION

Interpreting visual "white" space in poetry

Emily Dickinson and Simon Ortiz

This section models the integrated application of the close reading skills outlined in the section above but adds a comparative dimension to literary analysis.

The most important quality or convention of poetry that makes it distinct from prose is that the poet decides how each word should appear on the page. Whereas in prose the placement of lines on the page is largely determined by margins determined by the book designer or typesetter, poets have much more control over the precise placement of words. This means that we as readers of poetry have the opportunity and challenge not only to interpret meanings based on the denotations and connotations of words but on meanings associated with where words *don't* appear (e.g. indented lines, gaps within lines and line breaks).

This section looks at the correlation between the words on the page or canvas, the empty "white" space surrounding these words, and the meanings we can attribute to these gaps or voids. Many poets conceive of their words on the page in much the same way a painter, for instance, regards the shades of light and dark on his or her canvas. A poet carves textual space in relief of a neutral medium, creating visual patterns on the page that can help a reader make meaning of other patterns triggered by the words themselves in terms of sound, connotation, meter, syntax and other common poetic devices. These "white spaces" create space on the page; given that poetry is an aural medium, these spatial gaps are also indicative of the role time plays in speaking the poem aloud. Together this interplay of space and time in terms of the reader's experience (or readers' experiences) gives voice to the internal, more abstract contexts within the poem—the space and time of the speaker's experience (or speakers' experiences).

Below are two poems by well known American poets—Emily Dickinson and Simon Ortiz—each of whom are deeply but differently attuned to American voices and experiences. What unites them is their use of "white spaces" and economy of language; these poetic tools enable them to use specific spaces and times of nature as metaphoric representations of more abstract powerful forces against which humanity measures its own self-understanding and significance.

▲ The Sand Creek Battle Ground marker

In "258", Dickinson adopts an authoritative voice that enlightens the poem's readers about nature in and the nature of death. In his 1981 work *From Sand Creek*, the Native American poet Simon Ortiz traces two parallel, intertwined memories expressed simultaneously in prose and verse: the speaker's individual experience as a US Army Veteran and a collective memory of the massacre of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Native American women and children at Sand Creek, Colorado, in 1864 at the hands of American soldiers. The frame narrative is autobiographical and thus the conflated memories present a conflicted portrait: an alienated speaker is struggling to understand what it means to be both an American citizen and Native American in terms of the tortured past of Native American tribes in the context of American manifest destiny.

"258"

There's a certain Slant of light,
Winter Afternoons—
That oppresses, like the Heft
Of Cathedral Tunes—

Heavenly Hurt, it gives us—
We can find no scar,
But internal difference,
Where the Meanings, are—

None may teach it—Any—
'Tis the Seal Despair—
An imperial affliction
Sent us of the Air—

When it comes, the Landscape listens—
Shadows—hold their breath—
When it goes 'tis like the Distance
On the look of Death—

From *The Poems of Emily Dickinson* by Emily Dickinson (1998)

Summer cheats
leaves —
you think like that
unwelcomed
inappropriate — season
feels like
it's up for grabs.
Discontinuance.

Winter sun
abrupts,
though on course,
clouds broken
like bad asphalt,
clumsy curbs.

Cold,
it is,
the wind lurches
blunt and sad.
Below freezing in Colorado.

Ghosts Indian-like
still driven
towards Oklahoma.

From the collection entitled *From Sand Creek* by Simon Ortiz (2000)

TOK

What new knowledge can be gained by reading two works on the same topic or theme?

ATL

Thinking skills

When comparing any two works such as these, it is helpful to begin with a holistic comparative argument, which of course may likely change as you delve into the analysis. Such an argument makes a debatable claim about the central purpose of each work and offers a few observations about how you propose the writers achieve their respective purposes. To fulfill this objective, it is a good idea to ask yourself why you are juxtaposing these two works in the first place—what was your initial impulse that led you to this premise? In other words, how and why do these particular works "speak" to each other?

Assessment practice

An analysis of "258" and the "From Sand Creek" excerpt

We can begin by contending that Dickinson and Ortiz use aspects of time and space—in terms of content and structural form—to communicate a main idea. What might this idea be? The most obvious clue is that both poets explicitly evoke "Winter" and light effects as a personified entity.

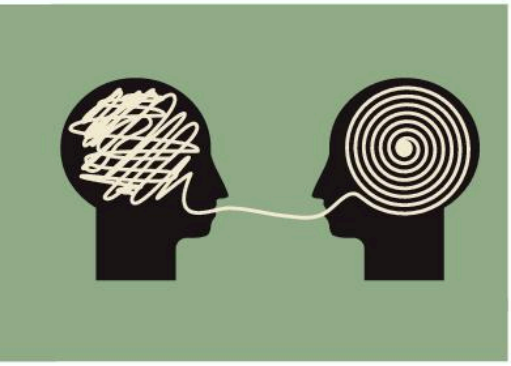
Dickinson's "Winter Afternoons" are associated with "a certain Slant of light... That *oppresses*", whereas Ortiz's "Winter sun/*abrupts*" (italics added here for emphasis). Repetition is always a clue about the surface patterns of any artistic work, so we know ostensibly that this season has a powerful effect on each poem's subject. To determine the subjects we need to look at other patterns such as the way sound patterns and punctuation force the reader to connect images and ideas based on where they are placed on the page.

Dickinson uses alliteration to connect "Heft" and "Heavenly Hurt"; this powerful, supernatural force has the impact of "internal difference" on "us—". The oddly placed comma between "Meanings" and "are—" (breaking the grammar like a "Slant of light" breaks winter darkness) makes a profound impact as perpetually present in our souls (time) as the elements of nature that contain and bestow on its own silent terms this knowledge of "Death" (space): "Air—", "Landscape *listens*—", and "Shadows—*hold their breath*—" (italics added for emphasis). Notice how the last stanza synthesizes the alliterative sound patterns and dash patterns while in the previous three stanzas they function more discreetly, suggesting that time and space gradually converge into one entity, collapsing the "Distance/On the look of Death" between our souls and the "Seal Despair—". We could argue that the way Dickinson combines patterns of sound and dashes creates the effect of an expansion and contraction of time and space as a metaphor for the human recognition of death's approach.

Ortiz only uses two dashes, but their strategic placement adds seasonal nuance to the subject of his poem, made explicitly clear in the final stanza depicting the forced exodus of Native Americans "towards Oklahoma". Note that the passive voice of the verb "driven" is preceded by the adjective "still", indicating that this exodus of "Ghosts" in the past is still occuring in the space of the poem—a desolate, cold, and dilapidated place that time ("Winter sun") continually abandons "on course" ("Summer *cheats*", italics added for emphasis), exposing "bad asphalt" and "clumsy curbs". It is the telling placement of the dash after "leaves" that gives this external, atmospheric pattern a deeply painful and personal resonance, connecting directly the personified effects of winter on the leaves of trees (being cheated by the summer) and the speaker's feeling of being likewise "unwelcomed/inappropriate" as a person—left behind. The placement of the dash between "inappropriate" and "season" has a similarly disruptive effect as Dickinson's jarring placement of the comma between "Meanings" and "are". This placement boldly clarifies the relationship between what the speaker sees in, or projects onto, his environment and the feelings of helpless and hopeless abandonment in a brutal landscape that he shares with the ghosts of his ancestors. Notice also how Ortiz imposes indented gaps before "Winter sun" and "Cold". The glaring exposure of these words in the white space of the poem mimics the feelings of isolation felt by the speaker; the changing sound patterns (the sibilant "**s**ea**s**on", "fee**ls**", "it'**s**", "grab**s**", "Di**s**continuan**ce**", and "abrupt**s**" transforming into the more jarring consonance of "**c**ourse", "**c**louds", "**c**lumsy", "**c**urbs", and "**C**old", then synthesising with "**C**olorado" harshly punctuating "i**s**", "lurche**s**", and "**s**ad"). These patterns echo across the cavernous spaces of the page between the sun and its paradoxically chilling effect on the natural and human landscape.

Borrowing from our interpretation of "258", we can propose the following. Dickinson combines patterns of sound and dashes to create the effect of cyclical expansion and contraction of seasonal time and natural space as an abstract metaphor for the human understanding of death. Ortiz similarly conflates these techniques to convey a more synecdochic connection between his own occupation of time and space and that of a specific community with which he identifies. Pushing this idea further and connecting this comparative argument to silence, we could argue that Dickinson creates a metaphysical conceit from the knowing silence of nature while Ortiz's poem functions as a more personal, intimate testimony on behalf of Native American legacy, giving voice to the silent or silenced ghosts of the past.

The intention is that the analysis above showcases a clear way of developing and expressing comparative arguments about literature in relation to a theme, aspect, feature or topic. The following section "Topic sentences", developed by Chris Brinsley, offers some handy templates for developing effective, debatable arguments about literature. These will help you launch immediately into a critical register and path of inquiry scaffolded by the close analysis of textual evidence. Signposting clear transition words or phrases in these templates will help give your arguments a comparative dimension.



Topic sentences

The following formats or models are useful for creating effective topic sentences for analytical paragraphs. To create a topic sentence, choose the question you are trying to answer (substituting "x" and "y" with relevant information), then use your response to this question as your prompt.

1. How does the narrator/character treat x [even though y]? Why? What is the consequence of that? Why is that the consequence?
2. How does the narrator/character react to x ([even though y)]? Why? What is the consequence of that? Why is that the consequence?
3. What does the narrator/character feel or think about x [even though y]? Why? What is the consequence of that? Why is that the consequence?
4. What does it show (about the narrator/character, x, y or something else) that the character does x because/even though/by y? ("Does x" means acts, says, feels or thinks x.)
5. Why does the narrator/character do x [because, even though, in order to or by y]? What is the consequence of that? Why is that the consequence? ("Do x" means act, say, feel or think x.)
6. What is the narrator/character trying to accomplish by doing/saying x? Why does he or she want to accomplish that? Why does he or she try to accomplish that by doing/saying x?
7. How does the narrator/character try to accomplish x? Why? What is the consequence of that? Why is that the consequence?
8. How/Why is the narrator/character (not) able to accomplish x [even though y]? What is the consequence of that? Why is that the consequence?
9. Why does the narrator/character need [to do] x in order to/for y? What is the consequence of that? Why is that the consequence?
10. What makes x possible? Why? What is the consequence of that? Why is that the consequence?
11. How does x affect y [even though z]? Why? What is the consequence of that? Why is that the consequence?
12. What might the narrator/character be denying about x [even though y]? Why? What is the consequence of that? Why is that the consequence?

13. How does the narrator affect x [even though y]? Why? What is the consequence of that? Why is that the consequence?

Tip: For any point you make about literature, evidence helps to answer the question: "What makes you think so?"

Poems by Simon Ortiz and Nazim Hikmet

Activity

ATL

Thinking and communication skills

Simon Ortiz was in high school when he first encountered the poetry of the Beat Generation, particularly that of Allen Ginsberg, whose work inspired in him the "revelation" of "writing from and about experience, and writing as experience" (Ortiz 1992). Whereas Ortiz has experienced and expresses his alienation within the country that has marginalized his people, the Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet experienced and expressed his "otherness" or alterity first as a political prisoner in Turkey and subsequently in exile. What unites Ortiz and Hikmet is their clear, detailed depictions of time and space as the canvas onto which they paint their respective portraits of human suffering with words that speak powerfully and simply. What also connects these poets is their use of "white space" on the page that gives breathing room for their respective expressions of grief.

In "Vision Shadows" Ortiz represents this pain through the conflict between human and animal endeavours. In the excerpt below from "The Story of the Walnut Tree and Lame Yunus" Hikmet uses this conflict to narrate a more individual experience (not necessarily his own).

Using the paired analyses of Dickinson and Ortiz above as your guide, compare and contrast the effects of Ortiz's and Hikmet's use of space and time—both as the speaker's experience (remembering and revoicing from the silence of the past) and as your own experience of seeing the poem on the page and reading it (either silently or aloud).

"Vision Shadows"

Wind visions are honest.
Eagle clearly soars
into the craggy peaks
of the mind.
The mind is full of Sunprayer
and Childlaughter.

"The Story of the Walnut Tree and Lame Yunus"

We have a friend here,
from the Circassian
village of Kavak.
Like great books he holds secrets.
He's interested
in intelligent men
news
puzzles of the mind.

Mountain dreams
about Pine brother and friends,
the mystic realm of boulders
which shelter
Rabbit, Squirrel, and Wren.
They believe in the power.
They also believe in quick Eagle death.

Eagle loops
into the wind power.
He can see a million miles
and more because of it.

All believe things
of origin and solitude.

But what has happened
(I hear strange news from Wyoming
of thallium sulphate. Ranchers
bearing arms in helicopters.)
to these visions?

I hear foreign tremors.
Breath comes thin and shredded.
I hear the scabs of strange deaths
falling off.

Snake hurries through the grass.
Coyote is befuddled by his own tricks.
And Bear whimpers pain into the wind.

Poisonous fumes cross our sacred paths.
The wind is still.
O Blue Sky, O Mountain, O Spirit,
O what has stopped?

Eagle tumbles dumbly into shadow
that swallows him with dull thud.
The sage can't breathe.
Jackrabbit is lonely and alone
with Eagle gone.

It is painful, aiiee, without visions
to soothe dry whimpers
or repair the flight of Eagle, our own
brother.

From *Woven Stone* by Simon Ortiz (1992)

His name is Yunus.
He lights our fires
gives us water.
We talk about
trees and days.

Probably the best
days of our life
are still to come.
Now
there was grief in our conversation:
of a walnut tree
cut down
and sold.
We know it well:
inside the courtyard
it was on the left near the gate.
When he was six
Yunus fell from one of its branches,
that's why he's lame.

Oxen love the lame,
for the lame walk heavily.
Oxen love the lame,
walnut trees don't love the lame,
for the lame cannot jump for walnuts,
for they cannot clamber up and
shake the branches.
Walnut trees don't love the lame…

Our chats had a strange subject:
not all the unloved throw themselves
in the river.
We all have a lot of skills:
we can understand
loving without being loved.

Our chats had a strange subject,
a strange one:
the story of the walnut tree
and lame Yunus.

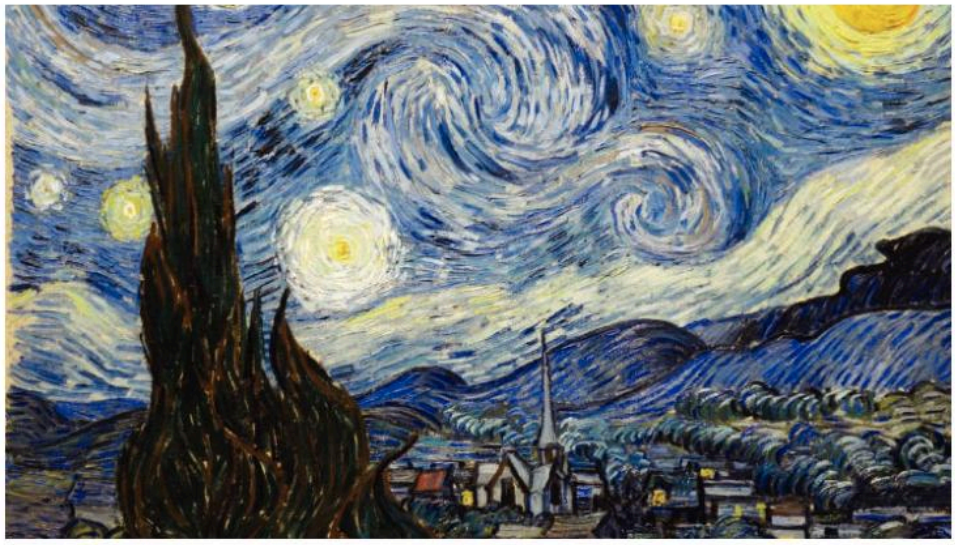
From *Beyond the Walls: Selected Poems* of by Nazim Hikmet, translated by Richard McKane, Ruth Christie and Talat Sait Halman (2004)

Exploring intertextual relationships: poetry

In this section we will continue to explore the concept of intertextuality using examples from poetry. At the very beginning of this chapter, we defined intertextuality as the number of ways texts can connect with one another, and throughout the course intertextuality has made several appearances in the texts we have discussed. The purpose of this section is to take a closer look at how texts link and interconnect and give you the opportunity to hone your "intertextual" skills. Naturally, issues of culture and context will become relevant to such an exercise as well as the dual perspective of an author as a reader and a writer. The pairs of poems in this section can be used for close textual analysis or for a broader discussion of the significance of intertextuality. Some of these questions are articulated in the activities, but there are many more that you could be asking when reading the poems.

Responding to a work of art

Robert Fagles (1933–2008) and Anne Sexton (1928–1974) were inspired by Vincent Van Gogh's famous painting "The Starry Night".



Activity

ATL

Thinking skills

Two poems: "The Starry Night"

Read the following two poems. Both were inspired by Van Gogh's painting but they are very different pieces of writing.

1. a. What are the differences in the poems' structure, imagery and development?
   b. How do these differences contribute to the overall effect of each poem?
2. What is the significance of the title for each poem and its interpretation?
3. a. Why are van Gogh and his painting of interest to Fagles and Sexton?
   b. How does the writing reveal this interest in each case?

"The Starry Night" by Robert Fagles

Long as I paint
I feel myself
less mad
the brush in my hand
a lightning rod to madness

But never ground that madness
execute it ride the lightning up
from these benighted streets and steeple up
with the cypress look its black is burning green

I am that I am it cries
it lifts me up the nightfall up
the cloudrack coiling like a dragon's flanks
a third of the stars of heaven wheeling in its wake
wheels in wheels around the moon that cradles round the sun

and if I can only trail these whirling eternal stars
with one sweep of the brush like Michael's sword if I can cut
the life out of the beast—safeguard the mother and the son
all heaven will hymn in conflagration blazing down
the night the mountain ranges down
the claustrophobic valleys of the mad

Madness
is what I have instead of heaven
God deliver me—help me now deliver
all this frenzy back into your hands
our brushstrokes burning clearer into dawn

From *Vincent: Poems from the Pictures of Van Gogh* by Robert Fagles (1978)

"The Starry Night" by Anne Sexton

That does not keep me from having a terrible need of—
shall I say the word—religion.
Then I go out at night to paint the stars.
VINCENT VAN GOGH in a letter to his brother

The town does not exist
except where one black-haired tree slips
up like a drowned woman into the hot sky.
The town is silent. The night boils with eleven stars
Oh starry starry night! This is how
I want to die.

It moves. They are all alive.
Even the moon bulges in its orange irons
to push children, like a god, from its eye.
The old unseen serpent swallows up the stars.
Oh starry starry night! This is how
I want to die:

into that rushing beast of the night,
sucked up by that great dragon, to split
from my life with no flag,
no belly,
no cry.

From *All My Pretty Ones* by Anne Sexton (1962)

▲ John Donne

Repeating the title of a well-known poem

John Donne (1572–1631) was a celebrated preacher and metaphysical poet. He wrote the love poem "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning" around 1610–11 as he was preparing to embark on a continental journey.

Adrienne Rich (1929–2012) was a poet and essayist. As an activist and an intellectual, her feminist ideas and political opinions have a central place in her work. Rich wrote her valediction in 1971, and she is taking leave of a man, but her concerns seem to be very different from Donne's.

"A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" by John Donne

As virtuous men pass mildly away,
And whisper to their souls to go,
Whilst some of their sad friends do say
The breath goes now, and some say, No:

So let us melt, and make no noise,
No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;
'Twere profanation of our joys
To tell the laity our love.

Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears,
Men reckon what it did, and meant;
But trepidation of the spheres,
Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love
(Whose soul is sense) cannot admit
Absence, because it doth remove
Those things which elemented it.

But we by a love so much refined,
That our selves know not what it is,
Inter-assured of the mind,
Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss.

Our two souls therefore, which are one,
Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if the other do.

And though it in the center sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans and hearkens after it,
And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,
Like th' other foot, obliquely run;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And makes me end where I begun.

▲ Adrienne Rich

"A Valediction Forbidding Mourning" by Adrienne Rich

My swirling wants. Your frozen lips.
The grammar turned and attacked me.
Themes, written under duress.
Emptiness of the nations.

They gave me a drug that slowed the healing of the wounds.

I want you to see this before I leave:
the experience of repetition as death
the failure of criticism to locate the pain
the poster in the bus that said:
my bleeding is under control.

A red plant in a cemetery of plastic wreaths.

A last attempt: the language is a dialect called metaphor.
These images go unglossed: hair, glacier, flashlight.
When I think of a landscape I am thinking of a time.
When I talk of taking a trip I mean forever.
I could say: those mountains have a meaning
but further than that I could not say.

To do so something very common, in my own way.

From *Collected Poems* by Adrienne Rich (2016)

ATL

Thinking and self-management skills

TOK

How do implicit or explicit literary allusions affect our understanding of the works involved?

Two poems: "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning"

Activity

Rich makes a deliberate choice when choosing the title of her poem to make reference to Donne.

1. What does her choice reveal when one considers the original poem and her commitment to politics and gender issues?
2. Compare the endings of the two poems: the final stanza in Donne's and the last, standalone line in Rich's.
   a. What concluding thought and sentiment do the endings express?
   b. How does style contribute to this purpose?

Writing the sequel to a poem

Ted Hughes wrote "The Jaguar" in 1957 (it appeared in the collection *The Hawk in the Rain*) and "Second Glance at a Jaguar" in 1967 (it appeared in *Wodwo*). The years that between the two poems were fraught with marital issues, the suicide of his wife—Sylvia Plath, and the continuation of his tumultuous relationship with Assia Wevill.

Guiding conceptual question

How do literary texts adhere to and deviate from conventions associated with literary forms?

"The Jaguar" by Ted Hughes

The apes yawn and adore their fleas in the sun.
The parrots shriek as if they were on fire, or strut
Like cheap tarts to attract the stroller with the nut.
Fatigued with indolence, tiger and lion

Lie still as the sun. The boa-constrictor's coil
Is a fossil. Cage after cage seems empty, or
Stinks of sleepers from the breathing straw.
It might be painted on a nursery wall.

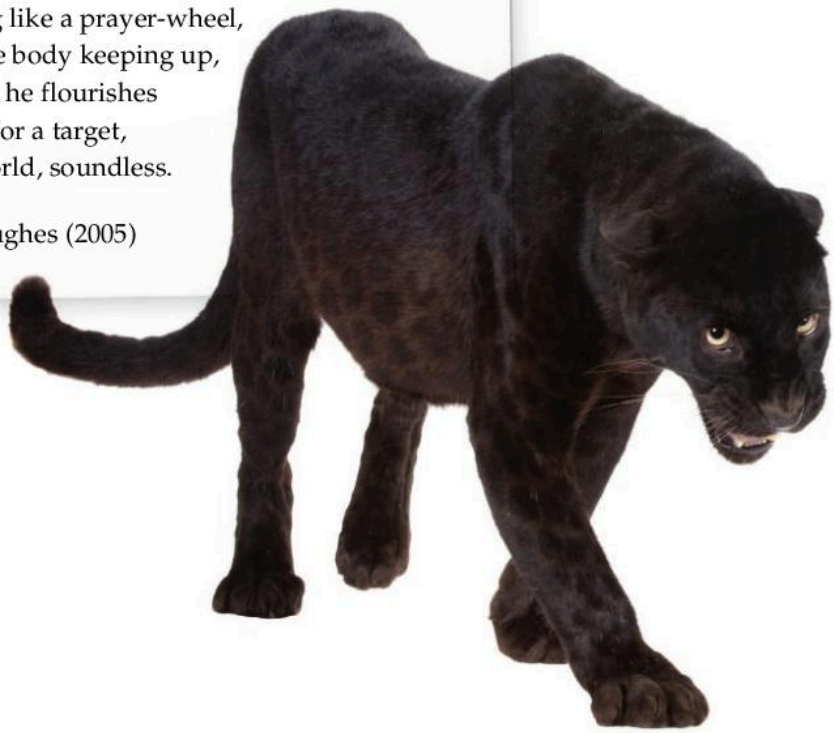
But who runs like the rest past these arrives
At a cage where the crowd stands, mesmerized,
As a child at a dream, at a jaguar hurrying enraged
Through prison darkness after the drills of his eyes
[...]

From *Collected Poems* by Ted Hughes (2005)

"Second Glance at a Jaguar" by Ted Hughes

Skinful of bowl, he bowls them,
The hip going in and out of joint, dropping the spine
With the urgency of his hurry
Like a cat going along under thrown stones, under cover,
Glancing sideways, running
Under his spine. A terrible, stump-legged waddle
Like a thick Aztec disemboweller,
Club-swinging, trying to grind some square
Socket between his hind legs round,
Carrying his head like a brazier of spilling embers,
And the black bit of his mouth, he takes it
Between his back teeth, he has to wear his skin out,
He swipes a lap at the water-trough as he turns,
Swivelling the ball of his heel on the polished spot,
Showing his belly like a butterfly
At every stride he has to turn a corner
In himself and correct it. His head
Is like the worn down stump of another whole jaguar,
His body is just the engine shoving it forward,
Lifting the air up and shoving on under,
The weight of his fangs hanging the mouth open,
Bottom jaw combing the ground. A gorged look,
Gangster, club-tail lumped along behind gracelessly,
He's wearing himself to heavy ovals,
Muttering some mantrah, some drum-song of murder
To keep his rage brightening, making his skin
Intolerable, spurred by the rosettes, the cain-brands,
Wearing the spots from the inside,
Rounding some revenge. Going like a prayer-wheel,
The head dragging forward, the body keeping up,
The hind legs lagging. He coils, he flourishes
The blackjack tail as if looking for a target,
Hurrying through the underworld, soundless.

From *Collected Poems* by Ted Hughes (2005)



Writing a poem in response to another poem

William Carlos Williams (1883—1963) was a physician and poet. He wrote "This is Just to Say" in 1934. It is considered an example of imagism, the characteristics of which are a tendency for short poems, a preference for musical cadence rather than rhyme, the avoidance of abstraction, and the treatment of "the image with a hard, clear precision rather than with overt symbolic intent" (Drabble 1985: 492). In 1962, Kenneth Koch (1925–2002) wrote a parody of Williams' poem with the title "Variations on a Theme by William Carlos Williams".

"This is Just to Say" by William Carlos Williams

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold

From *Collected Poems Volume 1, 1909–1939* by William Carlos Williams (1986/2018)

"Variations on a Theme by William Carlos Williams" by Kenneth Koch

1

I chopped down the house that you had been saving to live in next summer.
I am sorry, but it was morning, and I had nothing to do
and its wooden beams were so inviting.

2

We laughed at the hollyhocks together
and then I sprayed them with lye.
Forgive me. I simply do not know what I am doing.

3

I gave away the money that you had been saving to live on for the next ten years.
The man who asked for it was shabby
and the firm March wind on the porch was so juicy and cold.

4

Last evening we went dancing and I broke your leg.
Forgive me. I was clumsy, and
I wanted you here in the wards, where I am the doctor!

From *Collected Poems of Kenneth Koch* by Kenneth Koch (2005)

Response to "This is Just to Say"

Activity

Kenneth Koch respected and admired Williams and his poetry. However, his response shows that he is in serious disagreement with what Williams wrote or how he wrote it.

1. What is Koch trying to say about the speaker and his or her actions?
2. Koch offers variations on Williams' theme that are explicit and clear as opposed to Williams' minimal style. How does this minimal style play a role in the interpretation Koch is responding to?
3. "This is Just to Say" is probably the most "spoofed" poem in American literature. You can listen to some of these spoofs at www.thisamericanlife.org/354/mistakes-were-made/act-two. What do these spoofs have in common and can this shared understanding be attributed to Williams' original?

Core concept

CREATIVITY

▲ Wall poem in The Hague

"This is Just to Pay"

The text below appeared in *The Atlantic* magazine with the title "This is Just to Pay", a direct reference to Williams' poem and the perpetual conversation about how to write poetry and what good poetry is.

"How to Make a Killing from Poetry: A Six Point Plan of Attack" by Michael Lewis

1) *Think Positive.* Nobody likes a whiner. And poets always seem to be harping on the negative. The other day someone pointed out to me a perfect example of the problem, by a poet named William Carlos Williams:

It is difficult
to get the news from poems,
yet men die miserably every day
for lack
of what is found there.

I don't want to be too hard on William Williams. At least he gets the big picture: Americans need a reason to read. But once they have one, they're great! No nation of readers has ever worked so hard to find useful stuff inside of books. And there's no denying it, they do like to read the news. But there are two big marketing errors here: 1) going in, they don't want to be told how hard it's going to be; and 2) death isn't a big seller. Trust me on this one. Americans don't want to know how to die. They want to know how to lose weight. How to get rich. How to sustain that erection! Be the poet of erectile dysfunction, and you might just be the poet who can afford to pick up the check. You'll start living so well that you won't care how you die. Which brings us to the next action item:

2) *Take Your New Positive Attitude and Direct It Towards the Paying Customer.* The customer is your friend. Your typical poem really doesn't seem to pay much attention to the living retail customer. This is just my opinion but, like our current president, many poets seem outright hostile to anyone except their most abject fans and the unborn. They seem to be banking on the support of theoretical future humans. They seem to think that they can safely disregard the opinions of actual living people.

Well, as they say on the bumper stickers, DENIAL ISN'T A RIVER IN EGYPT. (Think about that one.) It's a symptom of a declining industry. Coal miners, steel workers, the guys who designed the Ford Explorer: they all spent a lot of time sitting around the canteen bitching and moaning about how the world's going to hell. If you want to be a poet-entrepreneur, you can't blame the messenger. It's not the fault of any living human being that he doesn't want to read your poems. The time you spend trying to figure out what's wrong with the people who don't buy your poems is time you could spend fixing the poems. To wit:

3) *Think About Your Core Message.* Your average reader might like a bit of fancy writing, but at the end of the day he will always ask himself: what's my takeaway? My executive summary. And no matter how much you hope and pray that he won't do this, he will inevitably ask himself: is this poet making sense? Of course, poets can dodge questions about what they mean by making a fuss about the complicated way they say it. But eventually your shrewder customer is going to see through the packaging to the product. And so it's worth at least asking yourself: am I full of it?

I don't mean that you have to be always on the playing field of the great game called Truth. But you need at least a bleacher seat. Not to single out Mr. William Williams, but he gives a handy illustration of the problem. Even if it's true, which I doubt, that the people who bother to "get the news from poems" die better deaths than, say, their local Cadillac dealers, no one will believe it. Not with poets everywhere hanging themselves, sticking their heads in gas ovens, drinking themselves to

death. At this point most people take a miserable death as the mark of the poet. Which brings us to another obvious tip:

4) *Strive To Be Relevant.* Once you start making sense you can turn your attention to making sense on a topic that concerns lots of people. This won't come naturally. Success is hard work. But look around! Getting the news out of poems may be difficult, but it should be a cinch to put a bit of the news into them. Here's an example (I'm just throwing this out there; take it for what it's worth): a lady finds a human finger in her Wendy's chili. The story plays for days. Everyone's talking about it. The company's stock is collapsing. In America's fast food lines, stomachs are churning. And you sit down and write a poem:

Finger Food, by (Fill In Your Name Here)

Trust me, if you have the courage to write it, people will read it.

5) *Overcome Your Fear.* Right now, I'm guessing, you're thinking: *OK, I see how I can reach a mass market, but what will other poets say about me?* You are right to be afraid. There will be some jealousy. Some envy. But take comfort, you're not alone. Flipping though a stack of poetry books published in the past couple of years I found a lady poet named Ai. (No last name!) Ai wrote a poem called "Delusion." It starts:

I watched the Trade Center Towers
burning, then collapse
repeatedly on television
until I could see them clearly
when I shut my eyes.
The blackened skies even blotted out my vision,
until I screamed and threw myself on the floor

See! It can be done! This we can build on. Here we have proof that a prize-winning poet (and from what I can see from all these book jackets there isn't any other kind) can grab something off the front page, stuff it in a poem, and still hold her head high. But—and keep in mind I'm only trying to help here—I sense there's some evil little demon sitting on Ai's shoulder. Our old pal: fear of success. *OK!* the reader says, *now we're finally getting somewhere. Sure, I already know what it was like to watch the World Trade Center collapse on TV, and I might have liked some inside dope, but maybe I'll pick up a new twist.* But then what does Ai do? She forgets about the World Trade Center and goes off on some depressing story about her sister. Ai!

6) This brings me to my final point: *Think Bigger!* Everything about you guys is small time. I'll give you an example. For the past few months California has been looking for a new poet laureate. The guy only gets paid ten grand a year, but we'll leave that embarrassing fact to one side for a moment. The reason California needs a new poet laureate is that the old one, Quincy Troupe, got run out of office when the press found he'd lied on his resume about having a degree from Grambling. Contrary to what you might think, scandals like this can be good for poetry. At this point, any publicity is better than none. And the public's takeaway from Troupe-Gate is that being a poet laureate is such a big deal that it's worth lying on your resume to become one.

But Jesus Christ, guys, if you are going to re-invent yourself, why re-invent yourself as a graduate of Grambling? Why not Harvard? Why not, so long as we're at it, throw in a war record, a career in sports, or anything else that might offset the image of poets as wussies?

A lot of what I've just said here is visionary, pie-in-the-sky sort of stuff. So let me end with an easy tip. There's an obvious glitch in the poetry business that any enterprising poet could fix right now: a total failure of personal hygiene. I've seen some poets. Not a pretty sight. Every time I meet one of you guys I always ask: "Is there some new law that says a poet can't have sex appeal?" You've had some hotties in the past, and they were great for business, but they're all dead. Go and find some live ones. Encourage them. Trust me, they won't just make news. They'll make the kind of news people get.

From *Poetry,* Vol 6, number 4, "The Humor Issue" (30 October 2005)

Activity

"This is Just to Pay"

1. What thoughts and ideas do you take away from the article?
2. Comparing this piece of writing to the ones in the section "Having a sense of humour" in "2 Readers, writers and texts", how does the article achieve its humorous or witty effect?

Exploring intertextuality: the novel

Wuthering Heights

Enter Heathcliff

▶ Anne, Emily and Charlotte Brontë, painted by their brother Branwell

TOK

What is the impact of a work being considered a classic on its reception?

"When *Wuthering Heights* was published in 1848 one reviewer wrote: 'the reader is shocked, disgusted, almost sickened by details of cruelty, inhumanity, and the most diabolical hate and vengeance, and anon come passages of powerful testimony to the supreme power of love—even over demons in the human form.'

It was one of the most astonishing reviews in English literary history. Nothing like it had ever been published before. Nothing has been published since.

How did three sisters, daughters of a country clergyman, grow up to produce some of the most powerful and dramatic novels in the English language?"

www.bronte.org.uk

Reading a novel resembles walking into a dark room. We start fumbling around feeling the pieces of furniture, touching different surfaces as we discover slowly where things are, and making guesses about what else we could expect to find. Each step, each little discovery and inference brings us closer to an image of the room that we can only imagine until

we finally find the switch—and the light reveals the colours, shades and all the details of the objects we touched and imagined. As discussed in the section "Reading prose fiction" in "2 Readers, writers and text", the consecutive phases of reading a novel require a continuous readjustment of our understanding as well as our expectations. Let us enter the dark world of *Wuthering Heights* and explore the initial impressions and clues that the opening of the novel offers the reader.

Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte

Excerpt 1

1801. – I have just returned from a visit to my landlord – the solitary neighbour that I shall be troubled with. This is certainly, a beautiful country! In all England, I do not believe that I could have fixed on a situation so completely removed from the stir of society. A perfect misanthropist's Heaven – and Mr Heathcliff and I are such a suitable pair to divide the desolation between us. A capital fellow! He little imagined how my heart warmed towards him when I beheld his black eyes withdraw so suspiciously under their brows, as I rode up, and when his fingers sheltered themselves, with a jealous resolution, still further in his waistcoat, as I announced my name.

'Mr Heathcliff?' I said.

A nod was the answer.

'Mr Lockwood, your new tenant, sir. I do myself the honour of calling as soon as possible, after my arrival, to express the hope that I have not inconvenienced you by my perseverance in soliciting the occupation of Thrushcross Grange: I heard, yesterday, you had had some thoughts —'

"Thrushcross Grange is my own, sir,' he interrupted wincing, "I should not allow any one to inconvenience me, if I could hinder it - walk in!'

The 'walk in' was uttered with closed teeth, and expressed the sentiment, 'Go to the Deuce'; even the gate over which he leant manifested no sympathizing movement to the words; and I think that circumstances determined me to accept the invitation: I felt interested in a man who seemed more exaggeratedly reserved than myself.

When he saw my horse's breast fairly pushing the barrier, he did pull out his hand to unchain it, and then sullenly preceded me up the causeway, calling, as we entered the court:

'Joseph, take Mr Lockwood's horse; and bring up some wine.'

'Here we have the whole establishment of domestics, I suppose,' was the reflection, suggested by this compound order, 'No wonder that grass grows up between the flags, and cattle are the only hedge-cutters.'

Joseph was an elderly, nay, an old man, very old, perhaps, though hale and sinewy.

'The Lord help us!' he soliloquised in an undertone of peevish displeasure, while relieving me of my horse: looking, meantime, in my face so sourly that I charitably conjectured he must have need of divine aid to digest his dinner, and pious ejaculation had no reference to my unexpected advent.

Wuthering Heights is the name of Mr Heathcliff's dwelling. 'Wuthering' being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather. Pure, bracing ventilation they must have up there at all times, indeed: one may guess the power of the north wind, blowing over the edge, by the excessive slant of a few stunted firs at the end of the house; and by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun. Happily, the architect had foresight to build it strong: the narrow windows are deeply set in the wall, and the corners defended with large jutting stones.

Introduction to *Wuthering Heights*

Activity

Having read the start of the novel, make notes on the following.

1. What are the first impressions of the setting and the characters?
2. How are these impressions created through the use of language?
3. What expectations does the reader have after reading the opening of the novel?
4. In what ways is a certain atmosphere created in this extract?

Writers at the Bronte Society summarize the novel's plot as follows.

"The structure of *Wuthering Heights* is complex: the narrator is Lockwood, Heathcliff's shadowy tenant at Thrushcross Grange. He learns the history of the Earnshaws and the Lintons from Ellen ("Nellie") Dean, who has been a servant at both Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, and whose account fills most of the book. Within that story, the characters come to life and speak with their own individual voices.

Ellen's account begins with the father of Catherine and Hindley Earnshaw returning home with an orphan child, whom he names Heathcliff and who becomes his favourite. Heathcliff and Catherine develop a passionate love, while mutual hatred grows between Heathcliff and Hindley. After Mr Earnshaw's death, Hindley humiliates Heathcliff, who endures everything on account of his love, until he overhears Catherine tell Ellen that it would degrade her to marry him. Catherine has met Edgar and Isabella, the children of the Linton family at Thrushcross Grange, and Edgar has proposed to her. She accepts, and Heathcliff vanishes.

Three years later, Heathcliff returns as abruptly as he left. The petulant adolescent has changed into a master schemer whose twin passions, love and desire for revenge, are thinly masked by wealth and an air of gentility. He lodges with Hindley, who is now widowed with a young son, Hareton. He encourages Hindley's drunkenness and gambling, and wins from him the deeds to Wuthering Heights. He renews his association with Catherine, to the dismay of her effete husband Edgar, but then elopes with Isabella, whom he maltreats. Catherine becomes pregnant, and a sudden irruption by Heathcliff induces her labour: she dies giving birth to Cathy. Isabella escapes to London, where she has a son, giving him her maiden name of Linton.

Step by step, Heathcliff takes control of the younger generation. After Hindley's death, he brutalises Hareton in revenge for his own treatment. Isabella, too, dies, and he seizes their son, Linton, whom Edgar had sought to care for. Finally, he decoys Cathy to Wuthering Heights where he forces her to marry Linton. In this way, he gains control of both houses, and obliterates both family names. Edgar and Linton die in turn. Cathy develops an affection for Hareton, and the possibility emerges of eventual happiness and redemption. The fulfilment of Heathcliff's plan should have been the destruction of them both, but his vindictiveness has worn him out, and his only desire is to be reunited with Catherine beyond the grave. He wastes away, and the novel ends with village gossip of their ghosts being seen together on the moors.

Two crucial features of the book are its Gothic qualities, and the lack of moral comment from its author. The presence of ghosts and visions, the prevalence of storms and darkness (echoing the characters' turbulent emotions) and - at the core - Heathcliff's diabolical nature, combine with the melodramatic plot to create a violent nightmare into which the reader is sucked. The wild, stormy landscape, and Wuthering Heights itself, with its air of faded grandeur and atmosphere of spiritual gloom owe much to the Gothic novels of the late eighteenth century. What is exceptional for the period is the absence of explicit condemnation by Emily of Heathcliff's conduct, or any suggestion that evil might bring its own punishment. The novel is morally ambiguous, the author leaving us to draw our own conclusions. This led to criticism by many early readers, but is an important aspect of its contemporary appeal."

www.bronte.org.uk

Catherine's passing

The second narrator, Nellie Dean, is an eyewitness to the last encounter of Heathcliff and Catherine. Lockwood provides the framing narrative and he is also a reader of the story as this is narrated to him by Nellie Dean. In the extract below we are given the details of Heathcliff and Catherine's relationship through her eyes, while we also understand that Nellie seems to be in awe of Heathcliff's dark energies.

Wuthering Heights

Excerpt 2

In her eagerness she rose, and supported herself on the arm of the chair. At that earnest appeal, he turned to her, looking absolutely desperate. His eyes wide, and wet, at last, flashed fiercely on her; his breast heaved convulsively. An instant they held asunder; and then how they met I hardly saw, but Catherine made a spring, and he caught her, and they were locked in an embrace from which I thought my mistress would never be released alive. In fact, to my eyes, she seemed directly insensible. He flung himself into the nearest seat, and on my approaching hurriedly to ascertain if she had fainted, he gnashed at me, and foamed like a mad dog, and gathered her to him with greedy jealousy. I did not feel as if I were in the company of a creature of my own species; it appeared that he would not understand, though I spoke to him; so, I stood off, and held my tongue, in great perplexity.

A movement of Catherine's relieved me a little presently: she put up her hand to clasp his neck, and bring her cheek to his, as he held her:

while he, in return, covering her with frantic caresses, said wildly -

'You teach me how cruel you've been - cruel and false. *Why* did you despise me? *Why* did you betray your own heart, Cathy? I have not one word of comfort - you deserve this. You have killed yourself. Yes, you may kiss me, and cry; and wring out my kisses and tears. They'll blight you - they'll damn you. You loved me - then what *right* had you to leave me? What right - answer me - for the poor fancy you felt for Linton? Because misery, and degradation, and death, and nothing that God or satan could inflict would have parted us, *you*, of your own will, did it. I have not broken your heart - *you* have broken it - and in breaking it, you have broken mine. So much the worse for me, that I am strong. Do I want to live? What kind of living will it be when you - oh, God! would *you* like to live with your soul in the grave?'

'Let me alone. Let me alone,' sobbed Catherine. 'If I've done wrong, I'm dying for it. It is enough! You left me too; but I won't upbraid you! I forgive you. Forgive me!'

'It's hard to forgive, and to look at those eyes, and feel those wasted hands,' he answered. 'Kiss me again; and don't let me see your eyes! I forgive what you have done to me. I love *my* murderer - but *yours*! How can I?'

They were silent - their faces hid against each other, and washed by each other's tears. At least, I suppose the weeping was on both sides; as it seemed Heathcliff *could* weep on a great occasion like this."

Following Catherine's death, Heathcliff is haunted by her ghost, and locals claim they see them walking together in the moors. Lockwood's narrative, early on in the novel, also reports hearing tapping on the window and a voice saying, "I'm Catherine, let me in."

Activity

The theme of passion

The tragedy of passion that is all-consuming is one of the most celebrated themes of *Wuthering Heights*.

1. Can you think of any literary works you have studied where passion and romantic love are central to the story?
2. How do these works feature these themes and to what effect?
3. If you were to write a novel about passion and romantic love, how would you describe the ideal character for your work?
4. Choose a couple from literature or popular culture to compare to Catherine and Heathcliff.

Core concept

CREATIVITY

"I am Heathcliff"

Nellie Dean seems to be careful to stay on relatively neutral moral ground when describing Heathcliff, focusing on the accuracy of her narrative with an occasional light touch of sympathy for Heathcliff in the first part of the novel. While Emily Bronte was criticized for her lack of moral judgment by contemporary writers, Heathcliff has lived on and has been embraced as an enduring character who was not wholly and entirely evil and repugnant. He has gained a place in the pantheon of literary heroes, and *Wuthering Heights* has had an appeal that continues today and is still referenced in literary texts and popular culture. According to Joyce Carol Oates:

> "Heathcliff's enduring appeal is approximately that of Edmund, Iago, Richard III, the intermittent Macbeth: the villain who impresses by way of his energy, his cleverness, his peculiar sort of courage: and by his asides, inviting, as they do, the audience's or reader's collaboration in wickedness. Bronte is perfectly accurate in having her villain tell us, by way of Mrs Dean and Lockwood, that brutality does not always disgust; and that there are those persons – often of weak, cringing , undeveloped character – who 'innately admire' it, provided they themselves are not injured" (Oates 1983).

Activity

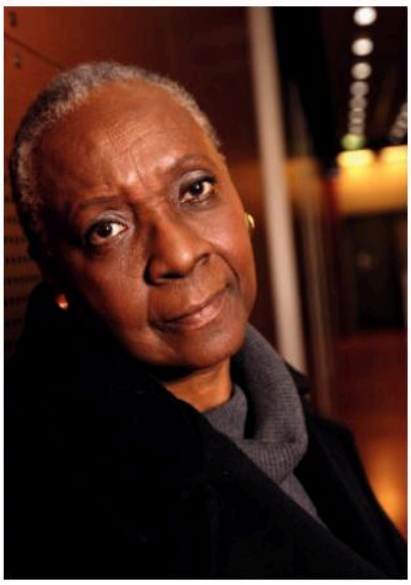
Qualities of a hero

1. Looking at Oates' quote above, which qualities would you identify as most enduring and why?
2. How is the role of the reader significant in the making of an enduring hero?
3. What are the aspects of human experience across time that enduring heroes appeal to?

Wuthering Heights in literature

The enduring impact and influence of the novel can be seen in the numerous works that relate to *Wuthering Heights* in one way or another. In this section we present briefly three novels that reference Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* in different ways. The first one, *Windward Heights*, sets a very similar story in the Caribbean; the second one, *Here on Earth*, is set in the USA in the 1990s; and in the third one, *The Inheritance of Loss*, the characters read *Wuthering Heights* several times during the insurgency in India.

Review of Windward Heights *by Maryse Condé*



"One might very well wonder what makes a writer of the quality of Maryse Condé from the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe want to rewrite a classic such as *Wuthering Heights*. Obviously there is the fact of updating a feminist classic. Then it seems the extreme romanticism of Emily Brontë's work challenged Condé, who perhaps judged the emotional intensity better suited to the strong colors of the Caribbean, where the new Heathcliff, renamed Razyé after the groundcover on the high wind-swept cliff overlooking the Atlantic, might have recourse to *kinbwazé* (voodoo) in his tormented quest to capture Cathy's soul. But Condé may have only wanted to free herself from inventing a new plot so she could devote herself to pure writing, to concentrate on style in a tour de force of virtuoso writing in which she could develop vignettes of forgotten corners of Antillean history.

Condé likes to explore the evolution of Creole culture in multigenerational novels to show how individuals and personality change to reflect the social dynamics of race, class, economics, and culture. Another of the author's concerns is once again present in this novel, which lends itself particularly well to the examination of "parental politics," the tensions and disharmonies between parents and their offspring. And of course, Eros plays a very central role, heating up the class and status differences alienating the black Razyé with the addition of the racial factor."

From a review by Hal Wylie in *World Literature Today*, Vol 74, number 1 (Winter 2000)

Windward Heights

Activity

What aspects of *Wuthering Heights* seem to fit the postcolonial context of *Windward Heights*?

Core concept

CULTURE

Review of Here on Earth *by Alice Hoffman*

Wuthering depths

"YOU DON'T NEED TO KNOW Wuthering Heights to read *Here on Earth* – in fact it took me, a *Wuthering Heights* maven, several chapters to see all the parallels. However, *Wuthering Heights* sets into plain relief what's wrong with this version.

In the original, Heathcliff is no good guy, but he's powerfully attractive: one of the original dark heroes. Here, we're told that every woman in town wants to sleep with Hollis, that when March first set eyes on him she decided, "From now on, he's mine," that "the air around him seems charged" but I, for one, don't get it. The guy seems completely unpleasant and March a fool to fall for him, not once, but over and over.

March herself is a pale shade of her original. Catherine Eamshaw is one of the more resistant heroines of Victorian literature: spoiled, willful and passionate. She speaks her mind, perhaps too easily, and she goes all out to get what she wants, namely, Heathcliff. March, on the other hand, is the embodiment of passivity, particularly when it comes to Hollis. She drifts into staying on in Jenkintown after Judith's funeral. She is "completely possessed" by "some demon" when she twice phones Hollis and hangs up. The first time she sees him again, she "is drawn to the Lyon Café," where he hangs out. She likes that she "doesn't have to think when she's with him, or make a decision, or state a preference." Without Catherine's desire, control and voice, March is simply an abused woman in love with a domineering jerk.

Despite its temporal and physical trans-mutations, this novel ultimately, like the other *Wuthering Heights* remakes, seeks to fill in the gaps, here to answer the question of what might have happened if Catherine and Heathcliff had reunited. Again, the gap seems better left unfilled, if only because so much gets lost in the process. I'm not arguing that great novels rely on their ambiguities, or that the revision is an impossible genre."

From a review by Rebecca Steinitz in *The Women's Review of Books*, Vol 15, number 6 (March 1998)

Core concept

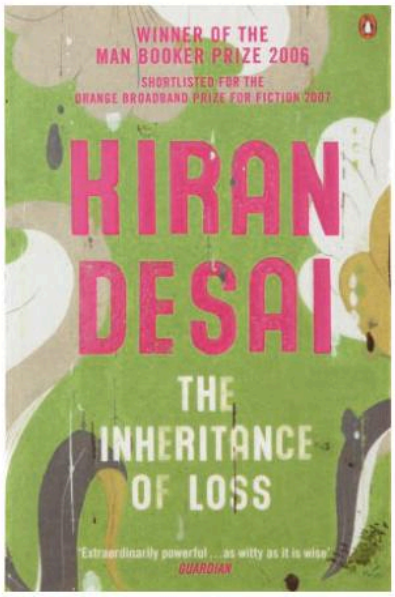
REPRESENTATION

Activity

Activity

1. According to the reviewer, how does *Here on Earth* fall short on telling a convincing story?
2. What are the factors that make a modern *Wuthering Heights* plausible or implausible?

Review of The Inheritance of Loss *by Kiran Desai*



"One major strand in this beautifully composed novel follows the New York City adventures of Biju, an immigrant worker from northeastern India. The second narrative strand takes us to Biju's home territory, the district of Kalimpong, where his father works as a cook for a retired British-educated Indian magistrate and the judge's inquisitive granddaughter Sai. The judge is a bit of a prissy old fellow, immersed in his love for his pet dog. But granddaughter Sai is a glorious teenager, in love with the world around her and in love with reading, reading faster and faster until, as Desai tells us, 'She was inside the narrative and the narrative inside her, the pages going by so fast, her heart in her chest, she couldn't stop'.

While Sai immerses herself in her books, we get a look at the world around her, where indigenous Nepalese exiles, the cheap labor of the region, rise up to call for an independent state within a state. One of these young rebels is a handsome young fellow named Gyan who happens to be the science tutor of young Sai and the first great love of her life, though he abandons her rather rudely for the burgeoning political movement.

Fortunately for us, Kiran Desai is wildly in love with the vital landscape and all the characters who inhabit it. Even when immigrant worker Biju calls home from New York City, we can smell the humid air over the telephone line; we can picture the green-black lushness, the plumage of banana, as Desai writes, 'the stark spear of the cactus, the delicate gestures of ferns. He could hear the croak, terr-wonk, wi-wi-butuk-butuk(ph) of frogs in the spinach, the rising note welding imperceptibly with the evening'.

This story of exiles at home and abroad, of families broken and fixed, of love both bitter and bittersweet—you can read it almost as Sai read her Bronte, with your heart in your chest, inside the narrative and the narrative inside you."

From a review by Alan Cheuse, broadcast on National Public Radio in "All Things Considered" (3 January 2006)

Excerpts from *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai

Excerpt 1

Angry at Lola's insolence, his face still awake from the soda spray, he gave orders for the book to be placed in the police jeep.

"You can't take it," she said, "it's a library book, you foolish little man.

I'll get into trouble at the Gymkhana. You're not going to pay them to replace it."

"And this?" The guard examined another book.

Noni had picked a sad account of police brutality during the Naxalite movement by Mahashveta Devi, translated by Spivak who, she had recently read with interest in the Indian Express, was made cutting edge by a sari and combat boots wardrobe. She had also selected a book by Amit Chaudhuri that contained a description of electricity failure in Calcutta that caused people across India to soften with communal nostalgia for power shortage. She had read it before but returned every now and then to half drink, half drown in those beautiful images. Father Booty had a treatise on Buddhist esotericism, written by a scholar from one of the legendary monastic universities of Lhasa, and Agatha Christie's *Five Little Pigs*. And Sai had *Wuthering Heights* in her bag.

"We have to take these to the station for inspection."

"Why? Please sir," said Noni, trying to persuade him, "we've especially gone… What will we read… Stuck at home… All those hours of curfew…"

"But officer, you only have to look at us to know we're hardly the people to waste your time on," said Father Booty. "So many goondas around. […]"

Excerpt 2

Marooned during curfew, sick about Gyan, and sick with the desire to be desired, she still hoped for his return. She was bereft of her former skill at solitude.

She waited, read *Wuthering Heights* twice over, each time the potency of the writing imparting a wild animal feeling to her gut—and twice she read the last pages—still Gyan didn't come.

From *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai (2005)

Characters in *The Inheritance of Loss*

Activity

ATL

Thinking, self-management and communication skills

1. What is the significance of the characters reading *Wuthering Heights* during the time of profound political uncertainty and unrest in Kalimpong?
2. How does this choice by the author impact the meaning of the novel and the presentation of the characters?

Assessment practice

Paper 2 practice

Preparing for the comparative essay

In paper 2 students write a comparative essay using two of the works they have studied. Throughout the course, you will be making connections between texts and across areas of exploration. Comparing and contrasting are skills to develop from the very beginning and, in terms of formal assessment, they apply directly to paper 2. In this section we would like to present the model developed by Stephan (2014) to help you prepare for the paper 2 exam. The challenge for this component is that you will need to respond to the question from memory. This presupposes good knowledge and understanding of the works as well as accurate recollection of the facts of the works. For paper 2, as for every assessment in the course, it is important to remember that the investigation always starts with the evidence.

As you prepare to respond to the question in paper 2, the following steps are essential.

1. Consider the aspects and keywords of the question and ensure that your response addresses these.
2. Consider possible combinations of works that would offer adequate evidence for the question and would also provide for interesting perspectives and contrasts. The argument for "interesting" evidence is not relevant to the reader but to constructing arguments that can explore aspects of the works in depth and detail.
3. Re-collect evidence that is appropriate and relevant.

Consider the following question and decide what its demands are.

> "Texts frequently present two (or more) worlds, which are often *very different*. Referring to at least two of the works you have studied, show *to what extent* and *in what ways* writers have made use of the *interest and tension* this creates."

Adapted from English A1 higher level TZ1, May 2011

- What is the question asking for?
  The question is asking for differences in reality within two works.
- Is there an effect or impact that the question is asking you to focus on?
  The question seeks a response focused on the interest and the tension the differences create.
- Does the question identify a particular aspect the response should consider?
  The response should consider the extent but also the ways in which these differences create interest and tension. In other words, the interest and tension must be identified and justified by these differences. In addition, the ways language is used to present these differences and create interest and tension must also be a focus of the response.

Comparative essay grid

We will use Liz Stephan's comparative essay grid to structure our response to the question. Using *Antigone* and *Wuthering Heights* as the two works we will draw from, the first step in organizing the response will be to collect the evidence from each text. We will work with a table like the one that follows, based on a four-step process.

1. We list the evidence from each work first in the first and third columns of the table.

2. Once we have looked over the evidence from each work, we consider it from an analytical point of view, thinking about how the writers have made use of the differences in the two worlds to create tension, and noting these comments in the second and fourth columns.
3. The argument in the response will be constructed by the overall consideration of the analytical comments. This will help us formulate at this stage a thesis that captures the analysis of the issue in each work.
4. Once a clear perspective on each work has been established, we return to the evidence to consider similarities, differences and contrasts between the two works. These will serve as the points of our argument while integrating the evidence for support.

Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
Evidence *Antigone*	Analytical comment	Evidence *Wuthering Heights*	Analytical comment
The two realities are the law of Gods and the law of the State.	The differences in two worlds are established from the very beginning as the issue of the anticipated conflict creating a clear focus for the audience.	Heathcliff's reality clashes with that of the Earnshaws.	The introduction of Heathcliff into the Earnshaw household and his description signal an element of a different world entering the world of Wuthering Heights, one that is perceived as an unwanted presence because of Heathcliff's differences.
The two realities are presented through two main characters.	Antigone and Creon seem to stand as representatives of these two worlds but they are also burdened by their own human weaknesses and faults.	Issues of social standing are part of the world and the way of life in the novel.	The presentation of life in *Wuthering Heights* in the narrative focuses on the social standing of the family, and traditions and expectations are clear while Heathcliff is "tolerated" in the early years. He is tolerated because of Mr Earnshaw's presence and the kindness of this individual, a fact which confirms the differences between the two worlds.
The dialogue of the two main characters reveals the tension.	The argument between the two characters reveals the complexity of the differences and, possibly, the irreconcilable nature of the two perspectives. As they are both articulate in their defense, the interest and tension are further enhanced.	The double narratives	Lockwood's story is a testimony to Heathcliff's world while Nellie's serves as a validation of it. Her narrative mirrors the two worlds and their differences in as much detail as possible

There is an imbalance of power between Antigone and Creon and this creates suspense and ambivalence.	The issue of power regarding the two worlds the characters defend is relevant for the outcome and the final consideration of who will win the argument.	Heathcliff's psychological reality and the reader's sympathy	Nellie offers us indirect insight into Heathcliff's world and is responsible for some of the sympathy one may feel for him. The descriptions and the commentary offered by Nellie highlight the differences in the two worlds, social and personal, and the pain this is causing.
The chorus provides a reflective backdrop to the issue and thus contributes to the interest and the tension.	The chorus invites further depth into the differences of these two worlds that conflict on stage, indirectly appealing to sympathy for one or the other character, or humanity in general.	The landscape is a backdrop for the two worlds.	Heathcliff's unwelcome presence is set against a landscape with which he seems to be at one, given his wild nature and this creates a subtle contradiction: he is welcome in the moors where he seems to feel at home, but not at the home in the moors.
The impact of the two realities and their conflict on Haemon	The response and reaction of a character who is caught in the middle of the conflict and attempts to reconcile the differences extends the tension beyond the individuals to attain tragic proportions.	The supernatural as a space for redemption	The concept of eternal life allows the two worlds to meet in the afterlife Judging from Catherine and Heathcliff's decisions, one might say that they could only meet in the afterlife.
The role of Ismene	Assigning herself the role of neutrality or non-involvement, the sense of danger in her sister's decision is emphasized.	The world one is trapped in.	The two worlds that conflict in *Wuthering Heights* are constructed by individuals as much as social conventions and prejudice. To some extent, they exist outside individuals but only Heathcliff has an impact on this reality, albeit a destructive one.

Step 3

The law of the Gods and the law of the State differ dramatically with regards to the issue of Polyneices' burial. The differences of these two worlds are explored by the main characters, their presentation and dialogue to create interest and tension. The role of the chorus and the reaction of other characters serve to heighten the tension as the conflict	An individual, Heathcliff, carries the weight of the differences of two worlds in Wuthering Heights. Interest and tension is created by the "acceptance" of Heathcliff in the early years and the subsequent reversals of fortune. The qualities of the narrative by Lockwood and Nellie enhance the tension with their insights into Heathcliff and life at Wuthering

develops and reaches a climax of appearing to be philosophically irreconcilable.	Heights and Thrushcross Grange, as he lays claim on the world he does not belong to. However, this does not prove to resolve the differences between the two worlds. The only place where these can meet is through the union of the two lovers in the afterlife.

Step 4

Similarities, differences and contrasts

- Defining and defending the boundaries of the two very different worlds in the works is a shared theme. The place and responsibility of individuals as parts of one of these worlds is also a focus and tension is created as the audience or reader witnesses those individuals' road to destruction.
- The clash of the two worlds in *Antigone* is made to seem irreconcilable because of fundamental philosophical differences but the differences of the two worlds in *Wuthering Heights* are revealed through the individuals' actions and responses.
- On the one hand, the presentation of the differences between the two worlds is explicit and argumentative in the debate between Creon and Antigone, and the tension rises as we follow their reasoning. On the other hand, the narrative in *Wuthering Heights* contributes to the tension and the interest as it also kindles our sympathy for one character or another.

Sample paragraph

The clash of the two worlds in *Antigone* is made to seem irreconcilable because of fundamental philosophical differences, but the differences of the two worlds in *Wuthering Heights* are revealed through the individuals' actions and responses. Creon and Antigone have an intense debate about the issue of the burial of Polyneices. It is made clear that the concepts of treason as opposed to sisterly love are at play in this debate, but it also very clear that the issue is much greater than the individuals debating it. The audience is invited to engage in reflection: what is the role and responsibility of the state when confronted with citizens who are guilty of treason and how can the law of the gods supersede that and render the state incapable of enforcing the laws? The chorus also plays an ambiguous role alternately expressing sympathy in very subtle ways with the characters. No resolution is evident, and the individuals are also implicated by their reactions, heightening the interest and the tension. Antigone, who insists on a glorious death, and Creon, who appears tyrannical in his speech, complicate the issue further. A similar effect is evident in *Wuthering Heights* with the difference that the individuals are responsible for precipitating the conflict of two very different worlds. The existence of these two worlds is acknowledged by all but it is profoundly resented by Heathcliff. The differences of the two worlds in *Wuthering Heights* is portrayed more in the characters and their actions than an objectively extrinsic reality, like the Greek gods in *Antigone*. If Antigone can be seen as revolting against the authority of Creon on principle, Heathcliff can be seen as revolting against the injustices and the cruelty he has suffered to claim his humanity and his place in the world.

Watch the Ted Talk video with Akala on Shakespeare and hip hop: www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSbtkLA3GrY.

In the section "Exploring the sonnet" in "3 Time and space" we explored two of Shakespeare's sonnets and discussed the use of the form of the sonnet by several poets. This was another example of intertextuality through the adaptation and recontextualization of the form.

In the video by Akala, we encounter another instance of texts connecting—those of Shakespeare and the modern phenomenon of hip hop. In the sonnet case, the connection is very obvious: the form of the sonnet. In the case presented by Akala, the connection is different.

- How does Akala establish the connection between Shakespeare and hip hop? Make a list of the aspects, techniques, contextual considerations and so on, that he refers to.
- In what ways is Akala's perspective significant to you as:
  - a student of English A literature
  - a reader
  - a global citizen?
- If you were to write a popular song, hip hop or of another genre, how would you connect it to one of the works you have studied?

▲ Akala

Core concept
TRANSFORMATION

Core concept
PERSPECTIVE

Core concept
CREATIVITY

Exploring intertextuality: drama

Hedda Gabler and the new heroine

Global issue
Social connectedness and inclusion

In Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* the heroine has just returned from her honeymoon. Soon after the opening of the play it becomes evident to the audience that her marriage to George Tesman is not what she was hoping for herself, and she appears restless and discontent. She seems nostalgic for her days before she got married as she plays with the guns her father, General Gabler, bequeathed her. When an old flame, Ejlert Lövborg, comes again into Hedda's life, this time an accomplished writer, her sense of entrapment heightens. At the conclusion of the play, Hedda commits suicide, an act that does not resolve anything in the play but ends Hedda's suffering and self-loathing.

In the following scene, Hedda and Lövborg have the opportunity to be alone in Hedda's home, where the play exclusively takes place, and Ejlert seems eager to discuss their relationship and her marriage to Tesman. Ejlert is trying to probe into the past and also Hedda's choice of

husband and lifestyle, and the audience is able to discover something of Hedda's inner world. The playwright reveals as much through the stage directions, body movement, the use of props and what is left unsaid as he does with the dialogue. What is particularly interesting in this scene is the "backstage" presence of two characters who are instrumental in Hedda's choice of marriage and of self-destruction—and also the fact that Hedda seems to be in the presence of three men who are in no position to offer her happiness or fulfillment yet have control over her life and future.

▲ Ingrid Bergman as Hedda Gabler, 1963

▲ Cate Blanchett as Hedda Gabler, 2006

***Hedda Gabler* by Henrik Ibsen**

ACT TWO

LÖVBORG. Isn't it love, then?

HEDDA. There isn't going to be any kind of disloyalty, anyhow. I won't have that sort of thing.

LÖVBORG. Hedda, answer me just one thing –

HEDDA. Hush!

[*Tesman, with a tray, comes from the inner room.*]

TESMAN. Look at the good things we've got here. [*He puts the tray on the table.*]

HEDDA. Why are you bringing it yourself?

TESMAN [*filling the glasses*]. Why, because I think it's so jolly waiting on you, Hedda.

HEDDA. Oh, but you've filled both glasses now. And Mr Lövborg won't have any.

TESMAN. No, but Mrs Elvsted will be here soon.

HEDDA. Oh, of course; Mrs Elvsted –

TESMAN. Had you forgotten her? Eh?

HEDDA. We've got so absorbed in this. [*Showing him a picture.*] Do you remember that little village?

TESMAN. Ah, that's the one below the Brenner Pass! It was there we stayed the night –

HEDDA. – And met all those jolly tourists.

TESMAN. That's it. It was there. Just think, if we could have had *you* with us, Ejlert! Well, well!

[*He goes in again and sits down with Brack.*]

LÖVBORG. Answer me just this one thing, Hedda.

HEDDA. Well?

LÖVBORG. Was there no love in your feeling for me either? Not a touch – not a flicker of love in that either?

HEDDA. I wonder if there actually was? To me it seems as if we were two good comrades. Two real, close friends. [*Smiling.*] You, especially, were absolutely frank.

LÖVBORG. It was you who wanted that.

HEDDA. When I look back at it, there really was something fine, something enthralling. There was a kind of courage about it, about this hidden intimacy, this comradeship that not a living soul so much as guessed at.

LÖVBORG. Yes, there was, Hedda! Wasn't there? When I came up to see your father in the afternoons. … And the General used to sit right over by the window reading the papers, with his back to us …

HEDDA. And we used to sit on the corner sofa.

LÖVBORG. Always with the same illustrated paper in front of us.

HEDDA. Yes, for lack of an album.

LÖVBORG. Yes, Hedda; and when I used to confess to you! Told you thinks about myself that no one else knew in those days. Sat there and owned up to going about whole days and nights blind drunk. Days and nights on end. Oh, Hedda, what sort of power in you was it – that forced me to confess things like that?

HEDDA. Do you think it was some power in me?

LÖVBORG. Yes, how else can I account for it? And all these – these questions you used to put to me … indirectly.

HEDDA. And that you understood so perfectly well.
LÖVBORG. To think you could sit and ask questions like that! Quite frankly.
HEDDA. Indirectly, mind you.
LÖVBORG. Yes, but frankly, all the same. Cross-question me about … about all that kind of thing.
HEDDA. And to think that you could answer, Mr Lövborg.
LÖVBORG. Yes, that's just what I can't understand, looking back. But tell me now, Hedda, wasn't it love that was a the bottom of that relationship? Wasn't it, on your side, as though you wanted to purify and absolve me, when I made you my confessor? Wasn't it that?
HEDDA. No, not quite.
LÖVBORG. What made you do it, then?
HEDDA. Do you find it so impossible to understand, that a young girl, when there's an opportunity … in secret …
LÖVBORG. Well?
HEDDA. That one should want to have a glimpse of a world that …
LÖVBORG. That … ?
HEDDA. That one isn't allowed to know about?
LÖVBORG. So that was it, then?
HEDDA. That … that as well, I rather think.
LÖVBORG. The bond of our common hunger for life. But why couldn't that have gone on, in any case?
HEDDA. That was your own fault.
LÖVBORG. It was you who broke it off.
HEDDA. Yes, when there was imminent danger of our relationship becoming serious. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Ejlert Lövborg. How could you take advantage of – your unsuspecting comrade!
LÖVBORG [*clenching his hands*]. Oh, why didn't you make a job of it! Why didn't you shoot me down when you threatened to!
HEDDA. Yes … I'm as terrified of scandal as all that.
LÖVBORG. Yes, Hedda; you are a coward at bottom.
HEDDA. An awful coward. [*Changing her tone.*] But it was lucky enough for you. And now you have consoled yourself so delightfully up at the Elvsteds'.
LÖVBORG. I know what Thea has told you.
HEDDA. And you have told her something about us two?
LÖVBORG. Not a word. She's too stupid to understand a thing like that.
HEDDA. Stupid?
LÖVBORG. She is stupid about that sort of thing.
HEDDA. And I'm a coward. [*She leans nearer to him, without meeting his eyes, and says more softly.*] But now *I* will confess something to *you*.
LÖVBORG [*eagerly*]. Well?
HEDDA. That, my not daring to shoot you down –
LÖVBORG. Yes?
HEDDA. That wasn't my worst piece of cowardice … that night.
LÖVBORG [*looks at her a moment, understands and whispers passionately*]. Ah, Hedda! Hedda Gabler! Now I see a glimpse of the hidden foundation of our

comradeship. You and I! Then it *was* your passion for life –

HEDDA [*quietly, with a sharp, angry glance*]. Take care! Don't assume anything like that.

[*It has begun to get dark. The hall door is opened from outside by Berte.*]

HEDDA [*shutting the album with a snap and calling out with a smile*]. There you are at last, Thea darling! Come along in!

[*Mrs Elvsted comes in from the hall, dressed for the evening. The door is closed behind her.*]

HEDDA [*on the sofa, stretching her arms towards her*]. My precious Thea – you can't think how I've been longing for you to come!

[*Mrs Elvsted, in the meanwhile, exchanges slight greetings with the men in the inner room and then comes across to the table holding her hand out to Hedda. Ejlert Lövborg has got up. He and Mrs Elvsted greet each other with a silent nod.*]

MRS ELVSTED. Oughtn't I to go in and say a word or two to your husband?

HEDDA. Not a bit of it! Let them be. They're going out directly.

MRS ELVSTED. Are they going out?

HEDDA. Yes, they're going to make a night of it.

MRS ELVSTED [*quickly, to Lövborg*]. You're not, are you?

LÖVBORG. No.

HEDDA. Mr Lövborg – is staying here with us.

From "Hedda Gabler" in *Hedda Gabler and Other Plays* translated by Una Ellis-Fermor (1961)

In the final scene of the play, it is Hedda who is in the inner room while her husband, Judge Brack, and Mrs Elvsted (Lövborg's associate) are planning to salvage the manuscript of the deceased Ejlert Lövborg. The way Lövborg died, and the scandal that Judge Brack is blackmailing Hedda, will signify the absolute entrapment for Hedda, who shoots herself with one of her pistols. Everyone is shocked.

ACT FOUR

Would you be so kind as to keep Hedda company for the time being, Judge Brack?

BRACK [*with a glance at Hedda*]. It will give me the very greatest pleasure.

HEDDA. Thanks. But I'm tired tonight. I will lie down for a little while on the sofa in there.

TESMAN. Yes do, my dear. Eh?

[*Hedda goes into the inner room and draws the curtains after her. There is a short pause. Suddenly she is heard playing a wild dance tune on the piano.*]

MRS ELVSTED [*jumping up from her chair*]. Oh! What is that?

TESMAN [*running to the doorway*]. But Hedda, my dearest – don't play dance music this evening. Think of Aunt Rina! And of Ejlert, too!

HEDDA [*putting out her head between the hangings*]. And of Aunt Julle. And of all the rest of them. I will be quiet in future. [*She pulls the curtains to again after her.*]

TESMAN [*at the writing-table*]. It upsets her to see us at this sad task, of course. I tell you what, Mrs Elvsted. You shall move into Aunt Julle's and I'll come over in the evenings. And then we can sit and work there. Eh?

MRS ELVSTED. Yes, perhaps that would be the best plan –
HEDDA [*in the inner room*]. I can hear perfectly well what you are saying. But how am I going to get through the evenings out here?
TESMAN [*turning over the papers*]. Oh, I'm sure Judge Brack will be kind enough to come out and see you.
BRACK [*in the easy-chair, calling gaily*]. Willingly! Every single evening, Mrs Tesman. We shall have a very pleasant time together here, you and I.
HEDDA [*clearly and distinctly*]. Yes, that is what you are looking forward to, isn't it, Mr Brack? You, as the only cock in the yard.
[*A shot is heard within. Tesman, Mrs Elvsted and Brack jump up.*]
TESMAN. Ah! Now she's playing with the pistols again.
[*He pulls the curtains aside and runs in. So does Mrs Elvsted. Hedda is lying lifeless, stretched out on the sofa. Confusion and cries. Berte comes in distractedly from the right.*]
TESMAN [*shrieking to Brack*]. Shot herself! Shot herself in the temple! Think of it!
BRACK [*half-collapsed in the easy-chair*]. But, merciful God! One doesn't *do* that kind of thing!

CURTAIN

From "Hedda Gabler" in *Hedda Gabler and Other Plays* by Henrik Ibsen, translated by Una Ellis-Fermor (1961)

▶ Katharina Schüttler in a scene from "Hedda Gabler" directed by Thomas Ostermeier, Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz, Berlin (2005)

TOK

What knowledge can audiences from different times and places gain from reading a text?

The remarkable influence of *Hedda Gabler* and Ibsen's work as a whole ranges from its contemporary audiences to Ibsen's impact on playwrights of his time and beyond. They inform our sensitivities as audience members—including actors and directors of the play. Ibsen's heroines have become, in a sense, a collective cast of our literary imagination that writers refer to directly or indirectly. This is because of who they were or are and because of the way Ibsen gives them presence, speech and action on stage.

In *Hedda Gabler* different ideas and different writing come together in such a way as to become a reference for future texts and performances because they have become an inextricable part of our textual knowledge. The comments opposite reflect that influence and impact at the time *Hedda Gabler* was performed in New York and London. They also point out the impact of Ibsen's art on the theatrical tradition as a whole.

"Nazimova conversely understood Hedda as a nightmarish New Woman who turns to destructive manipulation of those around her because society offers no other outlet for her energies; her performances as Nora in *A Doll's House* and Hilda Wangel in *The Master Builder* were equally contemporary. After receiving ecstatic reviews and playing to sold-out houses on Broadway, she spent three years touring with all three plays across the country, making Ibsen's dissections of stultifying marriages, dreary conformity, and unbridled egotism part of the national discussion.

Ibsen's ideas on those subjects shocked some theatergoers; the notion that a play could *have* ideas thrilled others. *Hedda Gabler* 'discovered an entire new world of the drama for me,' said Eugene O'Neill, who saw it 10 times in 1907. 'It gave me my first conception of a theater where truth might live.' And so a Russian-born actress in a Norwegian play galvanized America's first great playwright with a vision of drama vibrantly engaged with modern life. O'Neill wasn't alone; the example of Ibsen and the European playwrights who followed in his wake inspired a generation of American writers to bring the conflicts of contemporary men and women onstage. Maxwell Anderson, Elmer Rice, Sidney Howard, and John Howard Lawson were only a few of those who joined O'Neill to make Broadway in the 1920s a very different place than it had been before Alla Nazimova landed in New York and started taking English lessons. American drama has been more daring and challenging ever since"

(Smith 2009)

▲ Alla Nazimova in 1920

"Partly, it was the 'fourth wall' realism of Ibsen's plays that elicited such involvement. Gone were the soliloquies, asides, and formal tableaux. In their place, Ibsen provided aggressively ordinary dialogue (his characters don't make speeches, they utter terse, prosaic bits of conversation) and unusually frank discussions of personal—often sexual—matters. And while Ibsen's dramatic structure owed much to the well-made play of French theater, he steadfastly refused to provide his audience with a satisfying sense of closure. Eleanor Marx, one of Ibsen's early translators, praised his non-endings for their fidelity to 'real life':

> How odd it is that people complain that his plays 'have no end' but just leave you where you were, that he gives no solutions to the problem he has set you! As if in life things 'ended' off either comfortably or uncomfortably. We play our little dramas and comedies and tragedies and farces and then begin it all over again…"

(Barstow 2001)

ATL

Thinking skills

TOK

How important is the quality of originality in our appreciation of a literary work?

Core concept

TRANSFORMATION

Characters and ideas

Activity

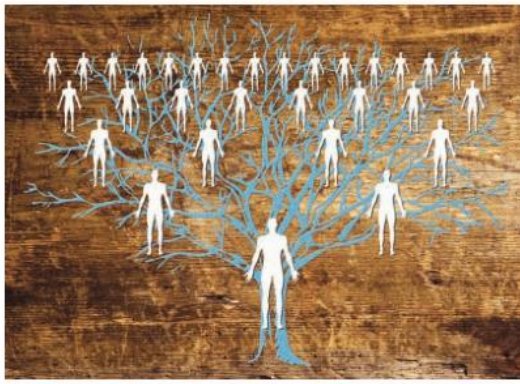
1. Reflect on characters in the works you have studied.
   a. Which characters have had the kind of influence Hedda had?
   b. Why do you think that is the case?
2. What do you understand by the statement "Ibsen wrote plays that have ideas"?
3. As a reader or member of the audience, how do you respond to works that have ideas? How do you relate to the characters?
4. What other types of work are there apart from works that have ideas, and how is the popularity of these other works affected?
5. Ibsen is quoted today as being an innovator. Which of the works you have read could be considered innovative even after a long time? What are the circumstances and the qualities of a work that can make it as influential as Ibsen's?

"How Gabriel García Márquez created a world in a sentence" (Fassler 2018)

Intertextuality can also be interpreted as a point of connection between two texts, where one text is an inspiration for another text by a different author. Sometimes these connections are not explicit or even fully conscious by writers, but Mary Morris (2018) offers us a very clear understanding of how a sentence by Gabriel García Márquez opened up a new world for her first as a reader and then as a writer.

"Like *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Mary Morris' novel *Gateway to the Moon* begins with a *dramatis personae* that lays out a family tree. The book moves through continents and five centuries of history as a troubled teenager of Spanish descent, living in modern-day New Mexico, slowly begins to piece together the mystery of his heritage. As we follow his ancestor, a Jewish man fleeing the Spanish Inquisition, on his harrowing journey to the New World, Morris wrestles with questions about history and identity, including how the traditions that define us survive and transform across time ."

From the article "How Gabriel García Márquez Created a World in a Sentence" by Joe Fassler for TheAtlantic.com (24 April 2018)



"This must have been the first book I ever read with a genealogy chart in the beginning. I remember being struck by the realization that you really *could* encompass multiple generations, years of lineage and ancestry, in a single book. It was Márquez who gave me the permission to try that, in novels I'd attempt much later. When I started to write *Gateway to the Moon*, I felt daunted by the challenge of writing about people who lived 500 years ago, people who lived through the Inquisition. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* reminded me that I could attempt such a story—it would just require imaging these characters in all their struggle and disappointment and feeling. And one way to capture that humanity, I think, was by looking for moments like the ones that open the book, the archetypal moments a character returns to, again and again, throughout their life.

When my dad turned 80, I called to wish him a happy birthday and was surprised that he started crying. He told me that he'd had a dream the night before about something that had happened when he was 4 years old, something he hadn't remembered until he'd dreamt it last night. He was stunned by the way he could recover a memory that had long been lost, and do it so completely. 'My whole life lives inside of me,' he said. Reading the opening of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* reminds me to believe in that feeling, that your whole life remains inside of you always, waiting for you to find a way to tap into it.

The afternoon I discovered this sentence—the way Colonel Aureliano Buendía recalled his discovery of ice—is one of those moments for me, the kind that comes back when you're facing the firing squad. I *did* feel like I was facing a kind of firing squad, at the time, even if the stakes were not literally life or death, and even if some of my troubles were of my own making. But it has become a kind of refrain for me, the moment I lay in bed alone on a gray day years ago, totally unsure where I was going with my life. I return to how it felt to open a book and be transported. How it felt as a world of new possibilities opened up, alive and in full color."

From an article by Joe Fassler, where Mary Morris is quoted on her writing and the influence of Gabriel García Márquez, in *The Atlantic* (2018)

Core concept
IDENTITY

Core concept
COMMUNICATION

Core concept
PERSPECTIVE

Place, belonging and our search for the self

Literary texts are often concerned with where we are, where we have been, where we wish to go, and where we find ourselves in relation to our loved ones, our friends and the ones we fear. These are preoccupations that have a literal and a metaphorical meaning for humans and, inevitably, they have claimed a place in literature. In the other two areas of exploration, the concept of space was discussed in relation to the perspective of an author (such as Iyer) or the context of the work (such as *Antigone*). In this section we will present some texts that reference place as part of their thematic focus. The aim of this section is to look at the concept of space and our identity and the different ways it can be presented by writers and in different forms. The activities after each text are designed to encourage discussion of these topics.

"What is the Distance Between Two People?" by Chris Ames

If **TRAIN A** leaves the station going 60 miles per hour and **TRAIN B** leaves one hour later going 85 miles per hour, how long will it take **TRAIN B** to catch up with **TRAIN A**?

This example is just one of several word problems you will encounter in your life. Most word problems do not immediately identify themselves as such—rather you stumble into them on accident, perhaps over drinks with your significant other or in the backseat of a taxicab.

Let's begin. Distance equals the rate times the time. In knowing that our distances are the same, we must first learn to set them equal to one another.

D = RT

D = 60T for **TRAIN A**

D = 85(T—1) for **TRAIN B**

But you say wait no, not quite, our distances were never exactly the same. You were always slightly further away at all times, regardless of the reference point.

During parties or dinner … you made a series of small calculations to appear far off, not here, somewhere else. Whether or not you were actually deep in thought, you consistently had the look of someone attempting to hold a lot of numbers together, like doing long division in your head. This absence must be factored, you say. This nothing must be accounted for.

Yeah, okay, but that's hypothetical distance, an imaginary number that while being complex and valid in its own way, is completely useless here, I say. For instance, let's say we are walking through what some might call a shitty part of town. The kind of place where rock bottom rises to the surface, and nervous commuters quickly pass by the lowest point of someone else's life. Isn't it awful, you say. Let's cross the street. I say no. That's worse. It would be rude not to walk right through them. How is that helping? you say. By marching past a dying body, you don't suddenly get to lay claim to their experience.

Because I believe other people's tragedy is a thing you must learn to intake, like those trace elements in the air no one mentions—you know it's there, you breathe it in, but it's still just air. There's no lingering feeling. You're never thinking, this argon tastes strange.

That's stupid, unproductive, doesn't change anything. In putting yourself through a bad experience, you're creating just enough tension to feel as though you've sacrificed something without actually doing anything. Their pain is your table stakes.

I swallow my tongue and check the time. I've never been good with words so I've learned to hide behind numbers. Oh look, we're late.

$60T = 85(T-1)$

$60T = 85T—85$

$60T—85T = -85$

Some word problems present themselves clearly. For instance, in an argument over a weekend camping trip, someone might say something like, it's not about the tent, it's about what the tent represents. This is tricky, because at first it appears as though you are solving for tent, but you are in fact solving for x—tent. That is, everything else besides the collapsed tent in your hands—limp, formless, and looking nothing like a home. You decide to do what idiots do: ignore the instructions and work towards what you know to be true. Namely, tent. As you slip the silver poles through their tiny folds, maneuver the deflated casing around, and attempt to stake your claim, your partner continues to pursue the real heart of the problem: infinite universes that contain neither tents nor you.

It doesn't stop there. Real word problems are more dynamic than textbook ones. Often, they mutate and compound even as they are being written. From tent and tent representation, we can easily phase to semantics and value deconstruction. It's not what you said, but how, why, and when you said it.

Now, of all times.

Here, of all places.

You, of all people.

And even after it becomes clear we are no longer solving for tent, there is still the dull fact of needing to sleep somewhere. One way or another, a solution is found.

You knew all along, they say. You only wanted to watch me struggle. You wanted to be proven right. How can you say that, you say. Where's your proof?

-25T = -85

T = -85 / -25

T = 3.4

Three-point-four hours (204 min.) after **TRAIN A** leaves, **TRAIN B** will catch up to it. We know this because:

60*3.4 = 85(3.4–1)

204 = 85*2.4

204 = 204

Meanwhile, the real world contains hardly any proof whatsoever. It only takes a small amount of pressure on any known fact before it unspools into a mess of numbers. Just yesterday, you tried to receive a refund for a train ticket when, after waiting for 22 minutes, it had still not arrived. Exiting the turnstile, you got in line, waited your turn, and when signaled, spoke into a circular grid of holes drilled into a panel of plastic.

Hello I would like my money back, you say. I can't do that, they explain. Why? Buying a train ticket has nothing to do with riding on a train, they say. We make no guarantees for trains, arrivals, departures, coming or going of any kind. So what am I buying? you say. You're buying time—and the ability to stand over there versus over here. Solving for time, you exit the station understanding that whatever the operator gained was just lost by you.

No one ever explains what happens after **TRAIN B** catches up to **TRAIN A**, what that would look like, or why they are pursuing each other in the first place. This is what's sometimes called a given—which is basically when someone doesn't give you anything and hopes that's okay. If these trains are on the same track, this is a word problem about other people's tragedy. If they're parallel, it could be about what the trains represent. If the trains are not even aware they are racing, it's a case of over there versus over here.

Setting your distance, you call your partner from the platform. Both inbound and outbound trains arrive at the same time, making it difficult to hear one another. If you get home first, do you mind cleaning up? they ask. Make sure you wipe the residual spit off the toothbrushes, I have people coming over. If you get home first, can you start dinner? you say. I haven't eaten all day and my mouth tastes like stomach acid.

Math is elastic, which is why even though there are an infinite number of word problems, there is really only one. It's the reason—in order to make dinner the kitchen must be cleaned, but making dinner dirties the kitchen.

— can also be expressed as: I can't relax until the house is clean, but I just want to relax before cleaning the house.

— or even: I don't hate you, I just hate who I am when I'm with you.

Two-hundred-and-four minutes later, you take turns approaching zero to see who can get closest without actually touching. It's entirely possible you've won but you have no proof.

From *"Word Problems"* by Chris Ames, www.electricliterature.com

Prose analysis and comparison

Activity

1. In "What is the Distance Between Two People?" how does Ames merge our knowledge of the world with subjective experience and feelings?
2. Select a passage of approximately 30 lines and evaluate the use of language and its effects.
3. Choose a passage from one of the prose writers you have studied to compare with your extract.

▲ After the tree was cut down for study and its rings were found to total 4862, scientists realized that they had unwittingly felled what was then the oldest tree known. Britslecone Pines, California

▲ Newton's Apple Tree. Lincolnshire, England. A storm felled the original "gravity" tree around 1820, but it remained rooted and regrew into the tree pictured here

"Sharing Breath: Some Links Between Land, Plants, and People" by Enrique Salmón

The Earth speaks in many languages, but only in one voice. It is a voice of compassion, and of pain. It is a voice of trust, and of the unknown. It is a voice of life, and of natural death. It is a voice of our ancestors, and of those who will inherit our legacies. But it is also a voice that emanates in unison from every living thing on Earth. It binds our breaths, and nourishes our integration. The loss of only the tiniest member of the union weakens the voice, which may soon become a whisper unless we begin to speak for those whose languages are not heard. The unheard includes not only plants and animals, places or open spaces, streamsides or oceanscapes: they include people. More specifically, the cultures of people who maintain a sustainable and enhancing relationship with their land are at risk.

Relationships with the land are generated from and enhanced through cultural histories, stories and songs. Through my family, I encountered and gathered my Rarámuri cultural history through morals, ecological lessons, and observations. Cultural history is more than a story; it's a way of perceiving ourselves as part of an extended ecological family of all species with whom we share ancestry, origins, and breath; a way of acknowledging that life in our environment is viable only when we view the life surrounding us as family. This family, or kin, includes all the natural elements of the ecosystem. My people, the Rarámuri are affected by, and affect, the life around us in the Sierra Madres of Chihuahua, Mexico.

Cultural history and family-centered ecological lessons are woven into the fabric of our daily lives. Sitting in the sun with my grandfather in his small cornfield, I learned how corn and chiles were our parents and protectors. He told me about the beginning of the world as he whittled. He taught me to respect the trees as relatives when he caught my cousins and me swinging from the rubbery limbs of his huge fig tree. I remember the pungent and savory smells of grandma's plant arbor. I would sit and watch her grinding chiles and herbs in her old metates and mortars while she talked about our origins and about our plant relatives.

The cultural history of the Rarámuri expresses how the world began, how the animals emerged, and how the first Rarámuri found their way to their homeland. The history explains also how plants are direct relatives to people. For me, as an indigenous ethnobotanist, cultural history serves as a conduit through which I can explain my culture's perceptions of and experience in the natural world. It also provides metaphors and models through which I can interpret actions and interactions between people and plants.

From *The Colors of Nature: Culture, Identity and the Natural World* edited by Alison Hawthorne Deming and Lauret E Savoy (2012)

Global issue

Our identity and the natural world

Activity

Analysing "Sharing Breath"

1. How does Salmon merge factual knowledge and literary language to talk about our relationship with the environment?
2. a. What is the tone of the passage by Salmon?
   b. How does he use language to create this tone?

"Postcard" by Margaret Atwood

I'm thinking about you. What else can I say?
The palm trees on the reverse
are a delusion; so is the pink sand.
What we have are the usual
fractured coke bottles and the smell
of backed-up drains, too sweet,
like a mango on the verge
of rot, which we have also.
The air clear sweat, mosquitoes
& their tracks; birds & elusive.

Time comes in waves here, a sickness, one
day after the other rolling on;
I move up, it's called
awake, then down into the uneasy
nights but never
forward. The roosters crow
for hours before dawn, and a prodded
child howls & howls
on the pocked road to school.
In the hold with the baggage
there are two prisoners,
their heads shaved by bayonets, & ten crates
of queasy chicks. Each spring
there's race of cripples, from the store
to the church. This is the sort of junk
I carry with me; and a clipping
about democracy from the local paper.

Outside the window
they're building the damn hotel,
nail by nail, someone's
crumbling dream. A universe that includes you
can't be all bad, but
does it? At this distance
you're a mirage, a glossy image
fixed in the posture
of the last time I saw you.
Turn you over, there's the place
for the address. Wish you were
here. Love comes
in waves like the ocean, a sickness which goes on
& on, a hollow cave
in the head, filling & pounding, a kicked ear.

From *Selected Poems II: Poems Selected and New 1976–1986* by Margaret Atwood (1987)

Place, space and identity

Activity

1. Which of the three extracts above resonates the most with you and why?
2. Write a short reflection on how this text had such an effect on you and why.
3. How could you use two of the extracts from this section to talk about a global issue and what would that issue be?

Writing a postcard

Activity

Select a photograph you have taken or an image you have found of a place you have visited. You are going to send the picture to someone as a postcard. Write your postcard with that someone in mind and with a sense of the place pictured on your postcard. These two aspects should come together in the process of writing.

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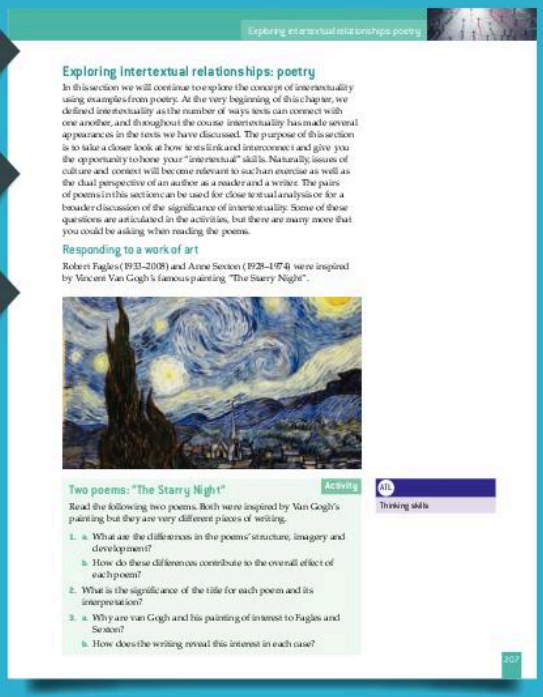

Exploring intertextual relationships: poetry

In this section we will continue to explore the concept of intertextuality using examples from poetry. At the very beginning of this chapter, we defined intertextuality as the number of ways texts can connect with one another, and throughout the course intertextuality has made several appearances in the texts we have discussed. The purpose of this section is to take a closer look at how texts link and interconnect and give you the opportunity to hone your "intertextual" skills. Naturally, issues of culture and context will become relevant to such an exercise as well as the dual perspective of an author as a reader and a writer. The pairs of poems in this section can be used for close textual analysis or for a broader discussion of the significance of intertextuality. Some of these questions are articulated in the activities, but there are many more that you could be asking when reading the poems.

Responding to a work of art

Robert Fagles (1933–2008) and Anne Sexton (1928–1974) were inspired by Vincent Van Gogh's famous painting "The Starry Night".

Two poems: "The Starry Night" — Activity

ATL Thinking skills

Read the following two poems. Both were inspired by Van Gogh's painting but they are very different pieces of writing.

1. a. What are the differences in the poems' structure, imagery and development?
   b. How do these differences contribute to the overall effect of each poem?
2. What is the significance of the title for each poem and its interpretation?
3. a. Why are van Gogh and his painting of interest to Fagles and Sexton?
   b. How does the writing reveal this interest in each case?

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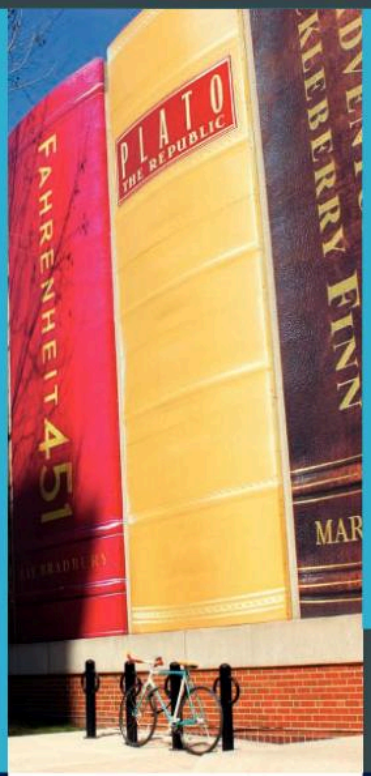

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