

O Level English Literature 2010

INTRODUCTION

One of the central aims of the course is to promote the enjoyment of literature and teaching should help students to develop a mode of reading which will equip them in the future to gain maximum enjoyment and benefit. Essentially, we should be looking to allow them to develop an honest, genuine, searching response to the works they read. They should be committed to their reading, involved in the texts, moved by what is depicted there; in short, they should learn that the words they read have the potential to alter their perspectives on life. We have to help them to learn how to express their response to literature also and, at this level, we expect them to start to understand *how* the writers they are studying have the power to affect them in this way.

Work at AS level and A level will put more emphasis on the analytical and methodological approach to literature study, but able students will find ample opportunity in this O Level course to begin this journey.

Teachers should also be aware that any codification of aims in this subject is likely to be found inadequate. Great writers are original and cannot be expected to perform to type. (Aristotle's descriptions of literary practice did not encompass Shakespeare; Beckett's work was not circumscribed by theory on what constituted the "well-made" play.) Similarly, students themselves often have fresh, even unique insights into literary texts, precisely because they are young and do not come with preconceived, conventionally received ideas. If, at any time in the study of a text, unexpectedly original insights are reached or stumbled across that do not nestle neatly into the structures suggested here, the teacher should have the confidence and the perception to accept them if they are supported from the text and to move beyond them and help students to develop their own ideas in the most fruitful way

Because of the nature of the O Level Syllabus, with its choice of set texts, it is not feasible to present a single, fixed scheme of work that will be universally applicable. Nevertheless, there are many learning outcomes which should be common to all work schemes devised. The scheme of work presented here will be related to a selected group of texts but it can be used as a guide for application to schemes of work for other texts. *NB Teachers must consult the syllabus booklet for the relevant year of the examination for details of set texts.*

The **Appendices** attached to this scheme of work are intended as **examples** of suggested teaching/learning activities. They are based on the four texts: *Great Expectations*, *Into the Wind*, *Macbeth* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. (CIE has published teacher support notes on the set poems in the *Songs of Ourselves Anthology* which also gives full suggestions for teaching/learning activities. These are available on www.cie.org.uk) They may be used if applicable, but essentially teachers should assume that they will have to devise their own learning activities for their choice of text and to take account of the varying circumstances of their students, teaching environments and teaching styles.

The aims of the exemplar tasks in these Appendices are accompanied by Roman numerals which refer to the Learning Outcomes in the left hand column of the Work Scheme grids. The Learning Outcomes should be the same whichever text is studied. The symbol (>3), (>4) or (>5) indicate that that particular activity is leading to items 3, 4 or 5 in the Suggested Teaching/Learning Activities column, that is, tackling passage-based questions, general questions and empathic questions respectively.

It is recommended that teachers familiarise themselves with the structure of the question paper, general styles of question, and overall requirements if they are new to the syllabus. For O Level, candidates are required to study three or four texts covering two of the sections Drama, Poetry and Prose. In the examination, they should

answer a total of four questions covering their three texts. There will be one passage-based question and two essay questions on every text. There will also be empathic tasks on the prose and drama texts. Full details are given in the syllabus booklet.

General Resources: Syllabus; Empathic Tasks booklet, past papers

There are some technical terms in the Learning Outcomes of the scheme of work, especially in Unit 3, the Poetry section. The advice given at the beginning of the middle column in this Section on the teaching of such terms should keep such work in proportion. A useful glossary of the meanings of most of these terms is to be found at the website: <http://www.english-teaching.co.uk/sample/criticalterms.pdf>, though candidates are not expected to know all of the terms listed.

There are many sites with advice about teaching texts to students at this level or offering revision suggestions. They are generally directed towards preparation for UK examinations, however, and the set texts for Paper 2010/01 will not necessarily be featured. These sites are not officially accredited by CIE and teachers will have to make their own minds up about the value of the advice given. Examples of such sites are: www.universalteacher.org.uk; www.sheffcol.ac.uk/links/English; www.englishbiz.co.uk; www.teachit.co.uk; www.englishresources.co.uk

Teaching order

There is a progression in the types of tasks set out within each unit, but they can be taught in any order and it is expected that teachers will move between units according to the development of the skills of their students. Poetry tends to be a minority choice in this examination, but it is hoped that teachers will include at least some study of it in the course, if only to develop the linguistic awareness of students.

Summary of units

1. Prose
2. Drama
3. Poetry