

OXFORD

INTERNATIONAL
AQA EXAMINATIONS

INTERNATIONAL GCSE ENGLISH LITERATURE

(9275)

Teaching guidance

For teaching from September 2016 onwards

For International GCSE exams in June 2018 onwards

Our specification is published on our website (www.oxfordqaexams.org.uk). We will let centres know in writing about any changes to the specification. We will also publish changes on our website. The definitive version of our specification will always be the one on our website; this may differ from printed versions.

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Introduction

Oxford AQA International GCSE in English Literature provides opportunities for students to develop knowledge and skills in reading, writing and critical thinking. Through literature, students have a chance to develop culturally, and acquire knowledge of the best that has been thought and written. This qualification offers students the opportunity to read a wide range of literature fluently, critically and with good understanding, so that they are able to discuss and explain their understanding and ideas in detail and appreciate the depth and power of literary texts. Studying international GCSE English Literature should encourage students to read widely for pleasure, and be a strong preparation for studying literature at a higher level.

Aims and Learning Outcomes

The Oxford AQA International GCSE in English Literature will encourage students to:

- read a wide range of literature fluently and with good understanding
- read in depth, critically and evaluatively, so that they are able to discuss and explain their understanding and ideas
- develop the habit of reading widely and often write accurately, effectively and analytically about their reading

Assessment Objectives (AOs)

There are three Assessment Objectives for the International GCSE in English Literature:

AO1: Understanding of, and engagement with, themes, ideas and contexts (40%)

AO2: Analysis of how writers create meanings and effects (40%)

AO3: Express informed, personal responses to literary texts, using appropriate terminology, and coherent, accurate writing (20%)

The assessment objectives reflect our 'statement of importance' of the subject of English Literature, which is:

English Literature is the study of how writers communicate their ideas about the world, and how readers might respond to these ideas. It aims to develop a critical understanding of the ways in which literary texts are a reflection of, and exploration of, the human condition, the study of which develops empathic understanding of human nature. High-quality English literature is that which displays recognisable literary qualities and, although shaped by particular contexts, transcends them and speaks about the universality of the human condition. International GCSE English Literature aims to enable students to appreciate these qualities, developing and presenting informed, critical responses to the ideas in literary texts and the ways writers present these ideas. It aims to enable students to make links between a variety of written texts and between the text and the context within which it was shaped.

The specification takes a skills-based approach to the study of English Literature that is consistent across the genres. All three AOs are assessed across all components and all follow the same weighting in each component. This coherent approach to the study of the subject means that AOs support learning rather than dominate it.

With regards to AO1 and AO2, the assessment of both in a balanced way across the taught components reflects our belief that AO1 and AO2 are intrinsically linked and that good practice when writing extended responses to English Literature requires a student to integrate the skills assessed by AO1 and AO2. In assessing the two in a balanced way we are ensuring a valid assessment of English Literature.

As far as is practicable within the constraints of the subject criteria, there will be a consistent mark scheme across the elements of assessment. This is because we believe that the way a student should approach a literature text is consistent across text types and therefore a consistent mark scheme will support good teaching and learning as well as ensuring valid and reliable assessment.

The mark scheme for coursework mirrors the mark scheme for the examined components. This is to reflect the design principles and ethos of the qualification in that teachers and students bring the same skills to the study of literary texts, as well as to enable teachers to apply the same criteria to their own assessments of their students' work as those externally-applied. This then supports good teaching and learning by encouraging clarity and transparency in terms of recognising and rewarding students' abilities and proficiencies in the subject.

Weighting of Assessment Objectives

The table below shows the approximate weighting of each of the Assessment Objectives in the International GCSE in English Literature components:

Assessment objectives (AOs)	Component weightings (approx %)					Overall weighting (approx %)
	Route one		Route two			
	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 1	Paper 2	Non-exam assessment	
AO1	16	24	16	16	8	40
AO2	16	24	16	16	8	40
AO3	8	12	8	8	4	20
Overall weighting of components	40	60	40	40	20	100

Specification at a Glance

The choice of two possible routes through the qualification offers teachers and students the opportunity to approach and develop the skills set out in the AOs via the most appropriate and pertinent course for their own particular strengths and interests.

Route A – 100% terminal examination

Paper 1 (Prose and drama) 40%

Paper 2 (Taught Poetry, Unseen Poetry, Unseen Prose) 60%

Route B – 80% terminal examination plus 20% non-exam assessment (NEA)

Paper 1 (Prose and drama) 40%

Paper 2 (Taught poetry, Unseen poetry) 40%

NEA (one extended response to a prose fiction text) 20%

The essential difference between the routes is:

- Route A requires a response to a passage of previously-unseen prose (a practical criticism component)
- Route B requires an extended essay on a full prose fiction text (the selection of which must not come from the list of set texts in the qualification).

Both of these routes have their own merits, and are designed to enable teachers to select the most appropriate route for their particular cohorts. In order to prepare for the practical criticism component of Route A, students will need to study a range of literary texts in order to develop their ability to analyse an unseen passage in examination conditions. Preparation for Route B will require the study of a full-length literary prose text in addition to those studied for Paper 1.

Assessment in closer detail

Paper 1 – Prose and drama (common to Route A and to Route B)

Students will study two texts: one from each of the list of set texts below. The range of texts offered gives teachers the opportunity to select the style and subject content that they feel will best engage their own particular students and motivate them to enjoy reading and studying literature.

Paper 1 Section A (Prose)

Charles Dickens: *Great Expectations*

Harper Lee: *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: *Purple Hibiscus*

Kazuo Ishiguro: *Never Let Me Go*

Markus Zusak: *The Book Thief*

Oxford AQA Exams Short Stories Anthology

Paper 1 Section B (Drama)

William Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*

William Shakespeare: *Macbeth*

J B Priestley: *An Inspector Calls*

Arthur Miller: *The Crucible*

Lorraine Hansberry: *A Raisin in the Sun*

Paper 1: Prose and drama
Assessed <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 hour 30 minutes• 60 marks• 40% of qualification• closed book
Questions <p>Section A - Prose fiction: students will answer one question on a set text of their choice. There will be a choice between an essay-style question and a passage-based question.</p> <p>Section B - Drama: students will answer one question on a set text of their choice. There will be a choice between an essay-style question and a passage-based question.</p>

Paper 2a Poetry and unseen Texts (Route A)

Students will study the twenty poems from the Oxford AQA Exams Poetry Anthology *People and Places*. This collection covers a range of periods and other contexts, and includes the work of poets recognised as either being established in terms of the canon, including William Wordsworth, George Elliot and Thomas Hardy, or fresh and emerging talents in the literary world, including Esther Morgan, Miroslav Holub and Imtiaz Dharker. There is also a balance between poems that are already established in the GCSE classroom and those that are new and exciting to read and study. Teachers and students can explore their own threads and connections and make vibrant and engaging links between these poems and with other texts they are studying for the qualification.

Paper 2a: Poetry and unseen texts
Assessed <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 hours 15 minutes• 90 marks• 60% of qualification• open book
Questions <p>Section A - Poetry: students will answer one question from a choice of two on the Oxford AQA Exams Poetry Anthology, <i>People and Places</i>.</p> <p>Section B – Unseen poetry: students will answer one question on a previously unseen poem.</p> <p>Section C – Unseen prose: students will answer one question on a previously unseen prose passage.</p>

Paper 2b Poetry and non-exam assessment (Route B)

Route B offers the choice of a NEA element instead of a response to unseen prose. This alternative option gives teachers freedom of choice in texts, allowing them to choose those best suited to the interests and needs of their candidates. It also gives teachers freedom to select tasks for their candidates that enable them to explore a full text in detail.

Paper 2b: Poetry
Assessed <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 hour 30 minutes• 60 marks• 40% of qualification• open book
Questions <p>Section A – Poetry: students will answer one question from a choice of two on the Oxford AQA Exams Poetry Anthology, <i>People and Places</i>.</p> <p>Section B – Unseen poetry: students will answer one question on a previously unseen poem.</p>

Non Examined Assessment
Assessed <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 30 marks• 20% of qualification
Questions <p>Students will complete one extended response to a prose fiction text of their choice. This text must not come from the prescribed list of set texts.</p>

Non-exam assessment

Candidates will study a substantial whole prose fiction text. This text must not come from any of the prescribed set texts for this qualification. The text can be selected from any literary period and can include seminal world literature. This component will be internally-assessed.

The coursework option allows a different approach to the study of literature. Some students benefit from the more open-ended possibilities of deeper research and exploration. Teachers may use this option to promote students' independent study, or they may use the option to create threads of meaning and coherence that link to the texts studied for the examined components.

When selecting a suitable text for coursework, teachers will have the freedom to choose from the literary canon of the British Isles or seminal world literature. The text selected must be similar in quality, scope and challenge to those from the prescribed list of set texts on Paper 1. Teachers will assess their students' work using the same mark scheme and assessment objective weightings as in the question papers, therefore the selected text needs to have a similar range, scope and level of challenge in order to allow students to access the full range of marks.

Course planning

The construction of this qualification is designed to encourage the application of key skills to a range of high-quality literary texts, rather than to view the study of each text as a discrete end in, and of, itself. In this, students will be encouraged to become discerning readers, who can explore and effectively communicate their responses to what they read, both within the scope of this qualification and beyond: to A-level if required, or in terms of fostering a love of reading in their future lives. Teachers have the scope to make selections of texts and routes that are the most interesting and pertinent for their particular students and to design a course that has inherent logic and threads of meaning.

The selection of texts offers wide scope for personalisation of the course as well as enabling teachers to make selections based on their own specialisms and interests. The synoptic element of Paper 2, whether this be Route A (unseen poetry and unseen prose) or Route B (unseen poetry) enables students to demonstrate their proficiency in the skills they have developed through their study of the set texts by applying these skills to previously-unseen material

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