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**International GCSE** 



OXFORD

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# A Introduction: Fiction What is fiction?

It is easy to say that fiction is made up: a work of the imagination. In many ways this is true. Stories about vampires, aliens and deep-sea monsters start in the imagination of their writers, as do stories about schools, detectives, adventures and extraordinary events. However, those same writers also draw on what they know to create their works of fiction. The worlds that they create and the people who inhabit these worlds, the characters, must be convincing so that the readers can identify with them and, while reading, believe in them.

### New worlds

At its best, fiction opens up new worlds and also makes us look again at the world in which we live. It challenges us to think about complex issues. It prompts us to reflect on our own personal relationships. It raises our awareness of other cultures and other ways of thinking, and informs our knowledge of historical and current events. Most of all, it engages and absorbs us with the power of its story.

There are millions of stories written over time and across the world. What makes the best stand out is the way that they are told. The best writers craft their stories skilfully, choosing words to paint pictures of people, places and events, and to engage the minds and emotions of their readers.

### New experiences

How we respond to a work of fiction will depend, in part, on our own experiences and personalities. Some people love horror stories, some love mystery and others love those set in historical times. But, whatever our current favourites, we should aim to remain open to new experiences and new worlds.

The ten fiction texts in this section have been carefully chosen. They cover a range of subject matters and demonstrate a range of writing skills. The tasks that follow them are designed to help you to develop your skills in reading and writing. We hope that you will find something to interest you and to learn from each of them.



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The Invisible Man

"In going downstairs the first time I found an unexpected difficulty because I could not see my feet; indeed I stumbled twice, and there was an unaccustomed clumsiness in gripping the bolt. By not looking down, however, I managed to walk on the level passably well.

"My mood, I say, was one of exaltation. I felt as a seeing man might do, with padded feet and noiseless clothes, in a city of the blind. I experienced a wild impulse to jest, to startle people, to clap men on the back, fling people's hats astray, and generally revel in my extraordinary advantage.

"But hardly had I emerged upon Great Portland Street, however (my lodging was close to the big draper's shop there), when I heard a clashing concussion and was hit violently from behind, and turning saw a man carrying a basket of soda-water siphons, and looking in amazement at his burden. Although the blow had really hurt me, I found something so irresistible in his astonishment that I laughed aloud. "The devil's in the basket," I said, and suddenly twisted it out of his hand. He let go incontinently, and I swung the whole weight into the air.

"But a fool of a cabman, standing outside a public house, made a sudden rush for this, and his extending fingers took me with excruciating violence under the ear. I let the whole thing down with a smash on the cabman, and then, with shouts and the clatter of feet about me, people coming out of shops, vehicles pulling up. I realised what I had done for myself, and cursing my folly, backed against a shop window and prepared to dodge out of the confusion. In a moment I should be wedged into a crowd and inevitably discovered. I pushed by a butcher's boy, who luckily did not turn to see the nothingness that shoved him aside, and dodged behind the cabman's four-wheeler. I do not know how they settled the business, I hurried straight across the road, which was happily clear, and hardly heeding which way I went, [...] plunged into the afternoon throng of Oxford Street.

"I tried to get into the stream of people, but they were too thick for me, and in a moment my heels were being trodden upon. I took to the gutter, the roughness of which I found painful to my feet, and forthwith the shaft of a crawling hansom dug me forcibly under the shoulder blade, reminding me that I was already bruised severely. I staggered out of the way of the cab, avoided a perambulator by convulsive movement, and found myself behind the hansom. A happy thought saved me, and as this drove slowly along I followed in its immediate wake, trembling and astonished at the turn of my adventure. And not only trembling, but shivering. It was a bright day in January and I was stark naked and the thin slime of mud that covered the road was freezing. Foolish as it seems to me now, I had not reckoned that, transparent or not, I was still amenable to the weather and all its consequences.

"Then suddenly a bright idea came into my head. I ran round and got into

### **B Introduction: Literary Non-fiction** *What is literary non-fiction?*

To many, the term non-fiction suggests facts: things that are known to have actually happened. The contents of an encyclopaedia can be classed as non-fiction, being an assortment of facts on a range of topics. However, the category 'literary non-fiction' contains a much broader range of texts. It includes travel and adventure writing, autobiography, biography, diaries, discursive writing, and much more. These genres are all based on fact but they are very different from an entry in an encyclopaedia.

### The voice of the writer

Unlike the imaginary worlds of fiction, the people and events are based on reality: actual people, real events. But – and this is an important 'but' to remember – they are presented to the reader through the perceptions and voice of the writer. Try asking five people to describe the same event; you will find that you have five very different descriptions. They will see, hear, think and feel different things. It is the same with literary non-fiction. It is the perceptions and voice of the writer, and his or her skills in writing, that colour and enhance the facts contained within the account and hold our interest and attention.

### **Discovering the qualities**

There are many similarities in the techniques used in fiction and in literary non-fiction. Several of the writers in this section use the narrative form, presenting their accounts as though they were telling a story. They may use the first or third person and might address the reader directly. They use language to paint pictures of real people, real places and real events and they may reflect on the events described and give an opinion on these.

Literary non-fiction is very varied. The ten texts in this section give you a sample of the range of subject matters and writing skills. The tasks that follow them are designed to help you interrogate the texts and further develop your skills in reading and writing.

### **Introduction: Journalism** С What is journalism?

Journalism is the communication of news and current events. Like literary non-fiction, its content is based on fact. However, it is designed to have an immediate effect. The journalist is writing for the reader of the following month, week, day or even hour.

## Types of journalism

**SECTION** 

There are many different types of texts which can be included under the heading of 'Journalism'. News reports are an obvious place to start. In these, the journalist's aim is to inform the reader of current events locally. nationally and internationally. They can include reports on disasters, wars, politics, business, sport and much more. Then there are feature stories; many are focused on lifestyle but there are others which include tough investigative reporting on past events or important social issues. Add editorials, social columns and reviews to this and you begin to understand the breadth of this genre.

Photographs are also a key feature of many types of journalism and can convey more in one image than a whole passage of text. People often respond strongly to visual images and many newspapers are bought for the striking heading and photograph which first draws the reader's attention.

### Changing world

The world of journalism is changing rapidly. Where once people bought a daily newspaper, they now regularly read the news online, accessing it through laptops, smart phones and tablets. For the purpose of this textbook, therefore, the term 'Journalism' has been used to incorporate anything that might appear in newspapers and magazines, either paper or online.

You will find a wide range of texts in this section in which writers seek to inform, explain, describe, entertain, argue and persuade. The texts have been chosen to give you an insight into the vast range of material that is available to you to enjoy and explore on a daily basis. The tasks that follow them are designed to help you examine and explore the texts and further develop your skills in reading and writing.