

INTERNATIONAL ADVANCED LEVEL

ENGLISH LITERATURE

GETTING STARTED GUIDE

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Subsidiary in English Literature (XET01)

Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level in English Literature (YET01)

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A Getting started for teachers

Introduction

This Getting Started guide will give you an overview of the International Advanced Level (IAL) in English Literature qualification and what it means for you and your students. This guidance is intended to help you plan the course in outline and give you further insight into the principles behind the content to help you and your students succeed.

Key principles

The specification has been developed with the following key principles:

Clear specification

Clear guidance on what students need to learn, providing clarity for planning, teaching and assessment.

Progression, not repetition

The specification allows the development of understanding while at the same time avoiding repetition, ensuring students are engaged and thereby inspired to develop their knowledge.

Reflect today's global world

Building on the strengths of the previous Edexcel Advanced Level in English Literature, this specification develops an understanding of current development in this subject.

Clear assessments

Clear and consistent use of command words across assessments and between series.

Clear mark schemes

The new mark schemes provide a consistent understanding of the skills, and connections between these skills, required for each question type. Clear wording reflects how teachers and examiners describe the qualities of student work, so the expectations are clear for teachers and markers.

Skills for progression

The variety of content that will be found in the examination allows the student to demonstrate knowledge as well as its application, which are required elements for further study or progression into employment.

Support for delivering the new specification

Our package of support to help you plan and implement the new specification includes:

Planning – In this guide we have provided a course planner and scheme of work that you can adapt to suit your department.

Teaching and learning – To support you in delivering the new specification, we will be providing suggested resource lists and suggested activities.

Understanding the standard – Sample assessment materials will be provided.

Tracking learner progress – Results Plus provides the most detailed analysis available of your students' exam performance. It can help you identify topics and skills where students could benefit from further learning.

Support – Our English Literature advisor service, and online community will ensure you receive help and guidance from us as well as enabling you to share ideas and information with each other. You can sign up to receive e-newsletters from the subject expert to keep up to date with qualification updates, and product and service news here TeachingEnglish@pearson.com

Qualification overview

This section provides an overview of the course to help you see what you will need to teach. The overview gives a general summary of each of the examined papers.

Specification overview

The chart below provides an overview of the course. The IAL English Literature is structured into 4 units with 4 externally marked examinations:

Unit 1	Unit 2
Post – 2000 Poetry and Prose	Drama
Unit 3	Unit 3
Poetry and Prose	Shakespeare and Pre-1900 Poetry

Assessment overviews

Unit 1	Unit 2
External assessment: Open Book examination Total marks: 100 Weighting: 25% of the total IAL marks Examination time: 2 hours	External assessment: Open Book examination Total marks: 100 Weighting: 25% of the total IAL marks Examination time 2 hours
Unit 3	Unit 3
External assessment: Open Book examination Total marks: 100 Weighting: 25% of the total IAL marks Examination time: 2 hours	External assessment: written examination Total marks: 100 Weighting: 25% of the total IAL marks Examination time: hours

Assessment objectives

The Assessment Objectives are the same for both AS and A level but the weightings are different.

AO1 IAS 30% IAL 30%	Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression
AO2 IAS 25% IAL 27.5	Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts
AO3 IAL 20% IAL 20%	Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received
AO4 IAS 10% IAL 10%	Explore connections across literary texts
AO5 IAS 15% IAL 12.5%	Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations

Assessment guidance

Unit 1: Post – 2000 Poetry and Prose	Unit code WET01
Externally assessed Availability: January and June First assessment: June 2016	25% of the total IAL raw marks
Content summary ■ prescribed poems from <i>Poems of the Decade: An Anthology of the Forward Books of Poetry 2002–2011</i>, ISBN 978-0571325405 – ■ one post-2000 novel chosen from the following list: ■ <i>The Kite Runner</i> – Khaled Hosseini ■ <i>Life of Pi</i> – Yann Martel ■ <i>The White Tiger</i> – Aravind Adiga ■ <i>Brooklyn</i> – Colm Toibin ■ <i>Purple Hibiscus</i> – Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie Assessment Length: 2 hours Open book examination Section A: Post-2000 Poetry Students answer one essay question from a choice of two on the studied prescribed poems. ■ Both essay questions will be comparative with one named poem plus a free choice of second poem from the ■ prescribed list of poems in the studied text ■ The list of prescribed poems will be printed in the Source Booklet. Section B: Post-2000 Prose ■ Students answer one essay question from a choice of two on their studied novel.	

Unit 2: Drama	Paper code WET02
Externally assessed Availability: January and June First assessment: June 2016	25% of the total IAL raw marks
Content summary one pre-1900 drama chosen from the following list: ■ <i>The Rover</i> – Aphra Behn ■ <i>Doctor Faustus</i> – Christopher Marlowe ■ <i>She Stoops to Conquer</i> – Oliver Goldsmith ■ <i>Othello</i> – William Shakespeare ■ <i>Twelfth Night</i> – William Shakespeare One post-1900 drama chosen from the following list: – ■ <i>Death of a Salesman</i> – Arthur Miller ■ <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> – Lorraine Hansberry ■ <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> – Tennessee Williams ■ <i>Top Girls</i> – Caryl Churchill ■ <i>Waiting for Godot</i> – Samuel Beckett	
Assessment: Length: 2 hours Open book examination Section A: Pre-1900 Drama Students answer one essay question from a choice of two on their studied pre-1900 drama text. Section B: Post-1900 Drama Students answer one essay question from a choice of two on their studied post-1900 drama text.	

Unit 3 Poetry and Prose	Paper code WET03
Externally assessed Availability: January and June First assessment: January 2017	25% of the total IAL raw marks
Content summary ■ post-1900 unseen poetry ■ prose: - one theme to be selected from a choice of four themes - two novels from one of the following four themes Section B themes and texts: Growing Up <i>What Maisie Knew</i> – Henry James <i>Great Expectations</i> – Charles Dickens <i>The Color Purple</i> – Alice Walker Colonisation and After <i>A Passage to India</i> – E. M. Forster <i>Heart of Darkness</i> – Joseph Conrad <i>The Lonely Londoners</i> – Samuel Selvon Science and Society <i>Never Let Me Go</i> – Kazuo Ishiguro <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> – Margaret Atwood <i>Frankenstein</i> – Mary Shelley Women and Society <i>Mrs Dalloway</i> – Virginia Woolf <i>Wuthering Heights</i> – Emily Brontë <i>Beloved</i> – Toni Morrison	
Assessment Length: 2 hours Open book examination Section A: Poetry Students answer one essay question on a post-1900 unseen poem. The unseen poem will be printed in the Source Booklet. Section B: Prose Students answer one comparative essay question from a choice of two, on the two studied prose texts from their chosen theme.	

Unit 4 : Shakespeare and Pre-1900 Poetry	Paper code WET04
Externally assessed Availability: January and June First assessment: June 2017	25% of the total IAL raw marks
Content summary Students will study: one Shakespeare play chosen from the following list: ■ <i>Hamlet</i> ■ <i>King Lear</i> ■ <i>Measure for Measure</i> ■ <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> one specified collection of pre-1900 poems from one literary movement, from a choice of three the prescribed literary movements are: <i>Metaphysical Poets</i>: prescribed poems from <i>Metaphysical Poetry</i>, Editor Colin Burrow, (Penguin, 2006) ISBN 9780140424447 <i>The Victorians</i>: prescribed poems from <i>The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse</i>, Editor Christopher Ricks, (OUP, 2008) ISBN 9780199556311 <i>The Romantics</i>: prescribed poems from <i>English Romantic Verse</i>, Editor David Wright, (Penguin Classics, 1973) ISBN 9780140421026	
Assessment: Length: 2 hours open book examination Section A: Shakespeare Section A: Shakespeare Students answer one essay question from a choice of two on their studied play. Section B: Pre-1900 Poetry Students answer one essay question from a choice of two on their chosen movement. The named poems will be printed in the Source Booklet.	

Planning

Planning and delivering modular IAS and IAL courses in English Literature

The IAL in English Literature qualification is modular, with examinations taken in January and June.

Delivery models

One of the first decisions that centres will have to make is whether they intend to offer a sequential or thematic approach. A modular A Level will offer a more flexible approach as topics can be selected in an order that meets the needs of the students.

Suggested resources

To support the teaching and learning of the new specification, we have provided a comprehensive suggested resources list that you may find useful on page 42.

Overview of Units

The overview gives a summary of the content of each unit so that you can organise your teaching effectively.

Unit 1: Post-2000 Poetry and Prose

Topics

- The features of the genres of poetry and prose fiction
- Writers' use of language in a variety of forms
- The connections across literary texts (in Section A only)
- The significance and influence of contexts (in Section B only)

Unit 2: Drama

Topics

- Aspects of the form of drama through the study of two plays.
- How playwrights use dramatic forms to evoke responses in audiences.
- The contexts in which texts have been produced and received and understanding of how these contexts influence meaning.
- Ways to interpret texts independently in response to interpretations by different readers.
- Ways to communicate clearly and effectively their responses to the texts studied.
- Ways to construct critical arguments.

Unit 3: Poetry and Prose

Topics

In Section A, students will use the reading skills they have developed through the course as a whole to comment on an unseen post-1900 poem.

In Section B, students have a choice of two thematically linked texts and will learn about:

- the importance of the relationship between texts, making connections between texts
- the significance of the cultural and contextual influences in which literary texts are written and received
- how to respond creatively, relevantly and in an informed way to texts using appropriate terminology and concepts as well as coherent and accurate written expression
- how to analyse texts from a critical perspective.

Unit 4 Shakespeare and Pre -1900 Poetry

Topics

In this unit, students will study a Shakespeare play and a pre-1900 poetry movement. In Section A students will study one Shakespeare play from the prescribed list. In Section B students will study a specified collection of poems from their chosen literary movement. They will learn about:

- how to respond creatively, relevantly and in an informed way to texts using appropriate terminology and concepts as well as coherent and accurate written expression
- the significance of the cultural and contextual influences in which literary texts are written and received
- how to analyse texts from a critical perspective, taking account of different possible interpretations

Course Planner

This section contains a course planner for each of the units in the Pearson Edexcel IAL in English Literature specification.

The course planner follows the specification in topic order.

This is only a suggested course planner and it does not need to be followed. However, it may be useful when working through the specification for the first time.

Timings

The following tables show the suggested timings for each topic.

Unit 1: Post – 2000 Poetry and Prose	
Topic	Time (approx hours)
The features of the genres of poetry and prose fiction Writers' use of language in a variety of forms The connections across literary texts (Section A only) The significance and influence of contexts under which literary texts are written and received (Section B only)	80
REVISION	10
Total teaching time (hours)	90

Unit 2 Drama	
Topic	Time (approx hours)
Aspects of the form of drama through the study of two plays How playwrights use dramatic forms to evoke responses in audiences The contexts in which texts have been produced and received and understanding of how these contexts influence meaning Ways to interpret texts independently in response to interpretations by different readers Ways to communicate clearly and effectively their responses to the texts studied Ways to construct critical arguments	80
REVISION	10
Total teaching time (hours)	90

Unit 3 Poetry and Prose	
Topic	Time (approx hours)
The application of reading skills to an unseen post -1900 poem The importance of the relationship between texts, making connections being texts The significance of the cultural and contextual influences under which literary texts are written and received How to respond creatively, relevantly in an informed way to texts using appropriate terminology and concepts as well as coherent and accurate written expression How to analyse texts from a critical perspective	80
REVISION TIME	10
Total teaching time (hours)	90

Unit 4 Shakespeare and Pre – 1900 Poetry	
Topic	Time (approx hours)
Reading a Shakespeare play and a movement of poetry with awareness of context (when it was written and how we receive it now) Awareness of other possible interpretations Skills that have been taught in the other places in the syllabus with regard to close critical study and analysis coming together in this final unit	60
REVISION TIME	30
Total teaching time (hours)	90

Thinking about context: A guide for teachers

The International Advanced Level in English Literature encourages the investigation of both contexts of reception and contexts of production. Each of the four units that comprise the course requires the study of plays, poems or novels in context. A significant proportion of the marks awarded are for the effective contextualisation of the literary works studied. The assessment objective AO3 requires students to investigate the world in which a text emerged, and the variety of ways in which it was, and continues to be received.

Why contextualise?

Reading in context is a key aspect of International Advanced Level study. Considering the author's intended meanings when they wrote a play or poem or novel is important and such intentions can be found by looking at the writer's diaries, letters and interviews. However, to enjoy a deeper investigation of, and a richer engagement with, a text, we must read it in context. Reading in context alerts us to the many other factors that go to shape the meaning of literary works. It also enables us to see that authors do not have sole control over the meanings of the texts they create.

The context of society

To understand a text better, we should focus on the world surrounding the authors as they wrote their text. We might consider the attitudes and values of the society in which the author lived; the key historical events that had a shaping influence on that world; the literary styles, structures and genres considered valid and acceptable in that society at the time of writing; and the state of the publishing industry and the market for books or theatre tickets. Each of these aspects of an author's society can be described as *contexts of production*, because they have a shaping influence on the creation of the text and its arrival in the world.

Attitudes, values and ideas

An author may be acutely conscious of the values of his or her society; he or she may have very strongly held opinions on those values; those opinions may serve to endorse or criticise the society; the opinions may be stable and consistent, or may develop and shift over time. But it is also possible that social values affect authors and their texts in ways they are not fully aware of. A society's attitudes, values and ideas – its *ideologies* – can seem so natural and axiomatic that they are accepted unquestioningly. Studied texts can be more meaningful to students when they are familiar with the attitudes, values and ideologies of the author and the society in which their work was written.

Different meanings, changing meanings

The making of a text's meaning is not complete at the moment it is produced, however. As well as considering how society and ideologies shape literary texts, we should also focus on the context of how a text is *received by its audiences*. This type of contextual reading accepts that meanings develop and evolve and change over time. This evolution of meaning occurs because a text will inevitably mean different things in different places at different times to different individuals and groups.

Contexts of reception

Each reader, no less than the author, of a text is shaped by the society and the ideologies of their time. So, a thorough contextualisation of a text involves paying attention to the *contexts of reception* – how a text is reviewed, how it is used, how it is edited over time, how (in the case of a play script) it is staged, how film directors adapt a printed text for the cinema, and how readers and literary critics have arrived at alternative interpretations.

Context and Interpretation

In considering this variety of interpretations, Assessment Objectives AO3 and AO5 are covered simultaneously. (AO3 is met in the using of a source outside of the text to help make sense of it; AO5 is met in using that source to demonstrate or evaluate the variety of possible interpretations.)

SCHEME OF WORK

The following is based on general guidance on Guided Learning Hours (GLH) across the whole specification: 360 hours. Therefore, a basic division between 4 units lends 90 GLH to Unit 1. This means that at average lesson duration of 1 hour, 5 hours per week can be covered using this Scheme of Work. 90 GLH in this format means 18 weeks of teaching. There is much flexibility built in however to this structure, which can be seen in the range of topics and overall coverage across individual weeks. *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is the novel selected for illustrative purposes.

Unit 1: Post-2000 Poetry and Prose

Content	
Week 1	Introduction to The Specification
Aim: Introduction to International Advanced Level English Literature: transition from GCSE/other programmes; introduction to the Specification—overall structure and key learning outcomes Suggested activities/resources: Supporting students through higher level studies - pair work on expectations, why doing the course, what they expect to learn and achieve; tackling fears/misconceptions. Feedback to group and discussion Getting to know the students—previous learning and attainment in the subject, (re)setting expectations. Resources: extracts from Specification: AOs and learning outcomes, Edexcel IGCSE past papers (lit/lang) for approaches to poetry and prose (differences in approach at AL). Reading poems from the anthology (e.g. Dunmore's <i>To My Nine-Year-Old Self</i> and Feaver's <i>The Gun</i>) as a group—discuss first impressions, meanings, use of language, etc. Teaching points to note: Different learning needs and previous attainment. Engaging personal responses and students' awareness of the learning outcomes; what they will be expected to produce in the final examinations. Homework setting and the importance of pre-reading poems (and the novel) before class.	

Week 2	Introduction to Poetry
Aim: Introduction to poetry: What is a poem? Ways of engaging with poetry and interpretation; differences/level of engagement contrasted with GCSE. Suggested activities/resources: Selected extracts from: Padel, <i>52 Ways of Looking at a Poem</i>, Baldick, <i>The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms</i> and Sansom, <i>Writing Poems</i> to support discussion on poetry and the perceptions of 'what makes a poem'. Reflections and deeper (supported) or extended deconstruction of (e.g.) Dunmore and Feaver as a comparison/contrast exercise. Recap on expectations. Use of song lyrics/extracts from well-known and less well known (English language) examples mixed with any range of extracts from poems, including from the anthology, to engage discussion and reflection on differences between song and poetry. Audio could be used to 'reveal' the 'answers'. "Why does this song lyric work as a poem, or not?" Teaching points to note: Use of song lyrics and poems should be appropriate to the class, and also be mixed with a few commonly recognisable examples to allow for accessibility as well as to engage thought on song vs. poetry and the concepts therein in our engagement with structure, rhyme, meaning, theme, symbol and so on.	
Week 3	Key Features of poetry and genre- types and form/structure
Aim: Students to understand key features of poetry and genre-types and form/structure. Suggested activities/resources: Recap intro to poetry work, e.g. songs versus poems what students know/are familiar with, in form and type, e.g. sonnets, nursery rhymes etc. Students build a glossary of poems/poetic forms and then draw on examples from the anthology. Should poems rhyme? Open discussion, individual and group work. Teaching points to note: Recap Feaver and Dunmore. First impressions, relate to form, type, structure. Contrasts with styles and form, e.g. Duffy and Burnside, Armitage and Heaney, Carson and Minninnick, O'Brian and O'Driscoll.	
Week 4	Imagery in poetry, use of metaphor etc
Aim: Students to understand Imagery in poetry, use of metaphor, simile, figurative language. (definitions of all, employment in individual poems) Suggested activities/resources: Draw out and discuss examples of themes (see below) across a selection of poems in the anthology. Group poems by themes via discussion, reflect on overlaps and treatment via use of language, e.g. metaphor, structure etc. Divide class into groups and ask to (re-)read e.g. 3 poems each, and produce poster/mind map or short presentation on how themes are developed in poems. Individuals then write commentary on theme or themes and comparisons and/or contrasts. Reflect on use of imagery/metaphor etc to reflect theme. Teaching points to note: Examples of theme: age/ageing/youth (Group 1), changing relationships (group 2), mothers/motherhood/parenthood/gender (group 3) etc, e.g. poems from Barker, Boland, Boyle, Burnside, Dunmore, Fanthorpe, Ford, Jenkins, Morrissey, Thorpe.	

Week 5	Use of language
Aim: Use of language. Language choices/employment of terms: word use, phrase use etc. Suggested activities/resources: Exercises on language choice. Effects on the reader/audience. Meaning and theme and how this links with imagery. Individual and pair work to discuss and refine, develop, then feedback to group. Teaching points to note: Pair work on meanings, use of language in specific poems, [give contexts first for e.g. Duffy and Duhig], Heaney, Minninnick, O'Driscoll, Nagra, Padel.	
Week 6	Use of voice in poetry
Aim: Use of voice in poetry. Different voices, narrative/authorial voice (links with authorial stance). Suggested activities/resources: Link with language choice work. Use of metaphor, structure and form (type). Pair and group work on individual poems: Fanthorpe, Dunmore, Carson, Thorpe, Motion, O'Driscoll, Nagra, and Turnbull. Teaching points to note: Teacher selects and directs poems, or in brief discussion with class on individual poems, perhaps link with earlier work on themes and other poems not considered with theme work. Unfamiliar words and definitions—work with class/individuals. Discuss overall context(s) of poems to support, via students' research.	
Week 7	Exploring the use of rhyme and rhythm
Aim: Exploring the use of rhyme and rhythm. Definitions of, and recap earlier work on 'what makes a poem?' Suggested activities/resources: Recap/discuss structure and form. Language choice and theme in group and pair work on key terminology and concepts in use of rhyme and rhythm, half-rhyme, internal rhyme and structure. Teaching points to note: Specific poem focus on: (for e.g.) Armitage, Morrissey, Minninnick, and Flynn. Individual comparison and contrast exercises, small group work to produce posters or poems reproduced with highlighted sections and annotations with verbal commentary. The rest of the class take notes on other group work and discuss/feedback. Questions (from the teacher) on how rhyme and rhythm contributes to our (the reader/audience) understanding of and engagement with the poem (theme/imagery/meaning and connections across texts). What do we mean if we say the poem resonates (with us/with meaning)? How does the stress on words or phrases develop our understanding of the poem? Short 'gap fill' exercises removing key words and replacing with others (of a 'similar' meaning). How does this change, or perhaps enhance the poem?	

Week 8	Tone, mood and register in poetry
Aim: Tone, mood and register (bringing weeks 4-7 together) in poetry. Suggested activities/resources Definitions and pair work on individual poems e.g. that (arguably) have similar or contrasting mood and tone. Mood and tone within poems; poems as a whole text; Key techniques to identify and explore i.e. rhythm/rhyme, use of imagery, metaphor etc. Teaching points to note Compare and contrast range of poems (e.g.) Duhig and O'Brien or Copus and Dunmore; Carson and Turnbull; Jenkins and Ford.	
Week 9	Recap on terminology
Aim: Bringing it all together - recap on key terminology and concepts. Use to deconstruct, discuss and compare and contrast. Suggested activities/resources: Select or group poems by themes—either recap on previous work with new additions, or new themes. Open discussions with students/group. Agree on a number of key themes across the collection, e.g. 5 themes, such as: gender: male/female; death and illness; violence; humans/nature; and then group poems in an anthology under these themes. Individual exercises to support the discussions under use of symbol/imagery and metaphor (for example). Use of SAMs and teacher's own adaptations of questions using SAM's question stems. Set exam conditions task - student write responses. Teaching points to note: Feedback 1-1. Group feedback on 'model answers' and less successful answers. (Students mark own or others responses against the mark scheme?)	
Week 10	Introduction to prose
Aim: Introduction to prose e.g. 'art of the narrative', focus: genre and genre conventions of the novel. Suggested activities/resources: Discussions and group work on genre conventions as displayed/found in <i>Purple Hibiscus</i>. Overview of English Lit, for example drawing on concepts of the development from 'Orature' to literature, development of the novel, differences and level of engagement from GCSE. Baldick extracts, Eagleton, 'how to read literature'; extracts from Hawthorne. Reading work on <i>Purple Hibiscus</i>: first section from '<i>Things started to fall apart ... totter like a big man with the spindly legs of a child</i>'. Teaching points to note: Group work on extracts, literary theory/criticism, what makes a good story? Posters and presentations. Read aloud first section (teacher), students follow, then pair work on any unfamiliar words, definitions, use of language and context within the extract. Short discussion on this narrative of the novel.	

Week 11	Narrative structures
Aim: Narrative structures. Use of chronology; <i>'in media res'</i>. Use of tense. Plot considerations. Key terminology and concepts (narrative). Suggested activities/resources: Plot synopsis and overall structure of the novel. Wider contexts*, colonialism/post colonialism, contemporary Nigeria. Influence of Chinua Achebe on Adichie; Nigerian/African literature in English. Teaching points to note: How far have the students got in <i>Purple Hibiscus</i>? Read up to the extract or beyond? Importance of their own reading. *See <i>Week 12 below</i>	
Week 12	Prose style
Aim: Prose style: language choice, sentence structuring, paragraph structuring, sections of the novel, and overall structure. Suggested activities/resources: Reading aloud selected passages: teachers and students for sense of voice(s) as well as prose style. Discussions of style and definitions of style/stylistics. Teacher explains 'discourse' in literary theory (and 'whole text' analysis). Small group work for discussions on these points. Pair work on 'discourse'. Organisation and non-linear, reflective style of the novel. Use of English and some exploration of literary theory that relates to types of English, (post) colonial history, e.g. 'Chapter 7: World English' in <i>Crystal</i> etc., *See resources below. Use of Igbo and how this relates to themes, character and register/tone. Teaching points to note: Background reading and/or use of literary theory/colonial/post-colonial theory. Aspects of imperialism i.e. use of English as a language of dominance but also in education and cultural considerations. Use of mixed registers Igbo/English and 'switching'. See also Week 13. *See '<i>Other resources....</i>' below	

Week 13	Understanding Contexts
Aim: Understanding texts: the significance and influence of contexts. Suggested activities/resources: Discussions and small group work on definitions of context, and the many types: Author/biographical contexts. Nigeria's history as a colony contrasts with Nigeria under change, civil war and the emerging Nigeria. Contemporary world of the novel. Settings: city, the village, the outside world. Religion: Catholicism versus "heathen practices". Religion as method of control. Religion as a mechanism of freedom and engaging with the outside; the irony of missionary work. The newly emerging modern Nigeria and the novel as a reflective account. Intertextuality e.g. Achebe and his influence. Teaching points to note: How contexts influence the novel, and our reception, understanding of it. How the author and the text itself are influenced by contexts that relate to: (e.g.) theme, character and characterization, gender, religion, politics, oppression. See AO3 and guidance notes in the specification that refer to learning outcomes and how students should be able to: 'show knowledge and understanding of the contexts in which texts have been produced and received [and] an understanding of how these contexts influence meaning'. For <i>Purple Hibiscus</i> (for example), contexts that influence the work could be the author's own life and other biographical considerations, the place and time of writing, the social/political/cultural/historical setting, time and location, geographical setting(s) of the text, Nigerian social, religious and cultural attitudes between generations and aspects of gender (especially the treatment and perceptions of women) and expectations of different cultural groups within wider Nigerian society. The literary context of the text, and literary movements, could relate to Nigeria's history and the civil upheavals in which the novel is set, as well as the emergence of a 'new' Nigeria.	
Week 14	Exploring concepts in 'narrative voice'
Aim: Exploring concepts in 'narrative voice', and other voices. Authorial stance. Suggested activities/resources: Individual and pair work on 'Who is telling the story?' Students present their thoughts on authorial stance and Adiche's voice. Open discussions on how Kambili's silence is presented versus (or in comparison with) the narrator's fluency. Individual and pair work on how this relates to structure, theme, use of speech and reported speech. Individual and pair work on close reading of extracts, for example planning in pairs and then individual commentaries on selected extracts from across the novel. Verbal feedback to group and then structured discussion. Teaching points to note: Consider autobiographical concerns, the writer's life, the reflective, non-linear structure of the novel. Special attention (perhaps guided questions) on the presentation of characters, especially key female characters and contrasts in their presentation via the narrative voices (Ifemena/Mama and Kambili/Amaka in comparisons with the male characters, (Papa/Jaja, Father Amadi/Father Benedict). 'Minor' characters and characterisations of (e.g.) Papa-Nnukwu, Obiora and Ade Coker, etc.	

Week 15	Use of speech
Aim: Use of speech. How speech (or the lack of speech) tells the story. The use of reported speech. Suggested activities/resources: Reflections on characterisation, Ifeoma's reported speech. The presentation of an internal voice, Kambili's lack of verbal communication versus the narrator's fluency, e.g. Jaja's silence used as a weapon, Papa and silence as a form of oppression versus "the noise" of Ifeoma's house. Comparisons and contrasts against the idea of narrative voices; the narrator's voice; use of dialect; Igbo words and phrases sprinkled throughout conversations. Papa and use of English against loss of control into Igbo. Teaching points to note: See Week 13's points on context and use of English. Develop points and discussions, extended work and feedback from weeks 11 and 12.	
Week 16	Use of images, imagery, symbol, motif and theme
Aim: Use of images, imagery, symbol, motif and theme. Suggested activities/resources Refer to differences with and discussions on poetry in week 4. Discuss "central" motif of PH- the use of flowers as symbols, especially the purple hibiscus and what it represents (e.g. the growth and development (movement?) of a new Nigeria. Group and individual work on the roles of Ifeoma and Jaja, and how they change, survive and develop. Exercises, discussions and pair work around the questions: 'how do themes develop through language use in the novel?', 'how does Adichie use imagery and symbolism?', 'explore the relationship between setting and place in the development of motif'. Individual and pair work using mind maps on key themes from open discussions. Restructuring these points into an essay plan (pairs and small groups). Individuals produce short essays on the use of imagery and theme, and other areas. Teaching points to note: Open and extended discussions on definitions of motif, theme, symbol. Teacher guides towards correct definitions, and explores with the students the use and application of terminology. Recap of key concepts. Supervision of structuring into essay forms.	

Week 17	Use of character
Aim: Recap and explore use of character and the roles they play. Suggested activities/resources: Discuss and develop ideas on symbols of Nigeria: old and new. Individual work on how these symbols are linked through place/setting and themes. Class work on how themes are linked to motifs and the use of language, contexts and connections across the text. Individual and pair work to produce posters, or spider diagrams to explore with the class. Follow up work (essays) by all on notes taken. Teaching points to note: Individual work: assessment-use of SAMS material as adapted by the teacher, for example use of question stems and amended questions to match learning points and/or ideas discussed. Students write responses under exam conditions.	
Week 18	Feedback to individuals on assessment tasks
Aim: Feedback to individuals on assessment tasks. Explore 'model' answers as a group. Consolidation of learning. Suggested activities/resources: Use of students' own work. SAMs and students' exemplar responses. Use of mark scheme and assessment objectives with marking grids. Why are some answers more successful than others? Group discussion. Teaching points to note: Use of feedback and individual discussions on assessments.	

Unit 2: Drama**Section A: Pre-1900 Drama**

Content	
Week 1	Introducing Christopher Marlowe, key themes in his plays and insights into the central issues of <i>Doctor Faustus</i>. Reading the opening scene(s).
Aims: • The setting and period of the text and relevant historical/geographical/ sociological details • Particular aspects of written style and dramatic method, as established in the opening scenes • The playwright's position in the literary canon, common thematic or literary aspects in his literary output and central aspects addressed in the set text • The nature of tragedy (to enable students to consider their set text within these conventions as they read). Suggested activities/resources: Issue pairs of students with two research questions on particular aspects of context: e.g. Elizabethan theatre (London playhouses, audiences, actors and playwrights); morality play tradition of Medieval drama; new religion of Protestantism and Calvinism vs old religion of Catholicism; Humanism and the 'Renaissance man'; education and universities; alchemy and magic; comedy and clowns; stagecraft and special effects. Students should present their findings to the rest of the class. Present Marlowe's biography and ask students to explore and debate in groups the relationship between his life and his works. Consider the opening of the morality play 'Everyman' to show how Marlowe develops and subverts that genre in <i>Doctor Faustus</i>. Compare and contrast the Prologues in both plays. Consider an extract from <i>Tamburlaine the Great</i> (text or video) which reflects some of the thematic or wider concerns addressed in <i>Doctor Faustus</i>. Conduct a class reading of the opening scene and show a video clip of it. Historical and literary context. Text and online material: 'Everyman' (Project Gutenberg), 'Tamburlaine the Great' and other works by Marlowe. Text and online biographical information about Christopher Marlowe.	

Week 2-6	Reading the drama text
	Aim: Students will understand: • The ways in which themes, characters and relationships develop as the drama progresses • The dramatic structure and impact of the text on the audience • The importance of context to inform understanding of the text. • The writer's style and language choices • Relevant literary terminology and the conventions of the literary essay • How to form and express personal response to a literary text • The Assessment Objectives against which examination responses for Unit 1 will be judged Suggested activities/resources: Students should read the entire text and consider the text as a drama. Some of the activities listed below might be useful in achieving a good understanding of the text. Keep a reading log/mindmap, completed at least at the end of every Act. This might include a summary of events and quotations about characters plus notes on use of language, thematic development, dramatic effect etc. Watch a DVD of a performance (Shakespeare's Globe production 2011) and research and discuss the corresponding critical reviews. Students could write own reviews of a production of the play seen on DVD. Discuss the relevance of the historical, social, literary and cultural background in understanding specific aspects of the text, e.g. religious changes from Catholicism to Protestantism and the anxiety over belief in free will vs predestination linked to dualistic thinking and structure of the play (e.g. Faustus' opening speech; Good and Bad Angels etc.). Consider Marlowe's own controversial religious views in light of the play. Individual or pairs of students will deliver presentations on aspects of the play, requiring seminar-style discussion from all students, key questions and consideration of contrasting viewpoints. Encourage further reading to enhance students' independent study skills and understanding of the writer and relevant contemporary literary texts e.g. works about Elizabethan theatre, biographies of Marlowe, other plays by Marlowe; plays by contemporaries (e.g. Shakespeare); later plays which reflect key themes (e.g. 'The Duchess of Malfi' - malcontent and overreacher.) (This may also begin to support work on potential coursework texts if the centre is facilitating students making independent text choices.) Critical reception of play in 17th and later centuries. Students to research and present how reviewers and critics have regarded the theological ambiguity in the play i.e. is it pro- or anti- belief in God? Evaluate the question of whether Faustus reflects Marlowe's own views and history. Set short essays at key points in their reading, with focus on relevant literary aspects of the text e.g. Marlowe's use of language: a close reading of the Prologue focusing on figurative language, classical allusions (Icarus) and how an ambivalent attitude to Faustus is established; final soliloquy- rhythm, repetition and word choice to create dramatic tension and rapid passage of time; characterisation of Faustus and how the playwright invites sympathy for and censure of him. Students could devise an interview with Faustus about his decision to sell his soul to the devil; create a facebook page of his travels, achievements and failures; write his obituary; put Faustus on trial as a way of exploring the major themes of good/evil, freewill / predestination, damnation / redemption. Lead consideration of film / theatre versions of key moments in the play and comparison of more than one interpretation e.g. how the magical effects and Faustus' antics are realised on stage; how the religious themes are portrayed for a modern, broadly secular audience. The audio version of Richard Burton could be compared to the Globe production in terms of style and delivery. Teacher to assist students' consideration of model essays / extracts on sample questions. Students complete paired writing to enable them to consider effective written style, literary analysis and personal response <i>Companion to Christopher Marlowe</i> Cambridge University Press (2004) <i>Christopher Marlowe at 450</i>, Ashgate (2015) <i>Drama: 'The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642</i>, Cambridge University Press (1992) Rose Theatre (www.rosetheatre.org) Globe Theatre (www.shakespearesglobe.com) DVD: Shakespeare's Globe production 2011; audio: Richard Burton / Oxford Dramatic Society Online video clips of other plays by Marlowe, Shakespeare, Webster Online reviews of the 2011 Globe production and previous theatre and film productions

Week 7	Examination preparation, feedback and target setting
Aim: Students will improve their competence in: • meeting the Assessment Objectives against which examination responses will be judged (AO1, AO2 and AO3 for AS and A level, plus AO5 for AS level, accessed through responding to a given perspective or opinion – see Sample Assessment Materials) • considering the play as a whole via literary essay writing: close analysis of the play alongside the wider methods and concerns of the playwright • understanding their personal strengths and weaknesses in skills and knowledge, in order to identify areas for improvement Suggested activities/resources: Students mark a model answer, then identify success criteria and targets. Students practise writing a timed response to a sample question on <i>Doctor Faustus</i>. Students engage in re-creative writing, e.g. they write an additional scene for the play, plus an analytical commentary, in order to consider the playwright's style and characterisation and enrich reading and analysis skills for essay writing. Edexcel Sample Assessment Materials.	

Unit 2: Drama

Section B: Post-1900 Drama: A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams

Content	
Week 7	'Ways into the text' • Introducing the playwright, key themes in their literary output and insights into the central issues of the set play. • Reading the opening scenes
Aim: Students will understand: • The setting and period of the text and relevant historical / geographical / sociological details, particular aspects of written style and dramatic method, as established in the opening scenes • The playwright's position in the literary canon, common thematic or literary aspects in his literary output and central aspects addressed in the set text • The nature of tragedy/comedy to enable students to consider their set text within these conventions as they read. Suggested activities/resources: Issue pairs of students with two research questions on particular aspects of context e.g. politics and history of southern USA; geographical setting of New Orleans; country vs city; attitudes to gender, sexuality, marriage (domestic violence) etc. Theatrical tradition - realism vs poetic non-realistic theatre; biography of Williams and his place in the canon of American dramatists. Students should present their findings to the rest of the class. Consider extracts of influences on Williams' writing e.g. Hart Crane, Anton Chekhov or D H Lawrence; read the opening of 'A Glass Menagerie' (1944) which illustrates Williams' approach to drama e.g. non-realism, importance of memory, a domestic, urban setting; also plot and thematic similarities Conduct a class reading of the opening scene and show the opening of the 1951 film DVD of 1951 film directed by Elia Kazan who directed first theatre production online material about the historical and literary context School Tube documentaries on Williams' life: 'Wounded Genius' (2011) DVD clips of other film versions of Williams' plays e.g. 'The Glass Menagerie', 'Cat on a Hot Tin Roof'	

Week 8-13	Reading the drama text
	Aim: Students will understand: • The ways in which themes, characters and relationships develop as the drama progresses • The dramatic structure and impact of the text on the audience • The importance of context to inform understanding of the text. • The writer's style and language choices, relevant literary terminology and the conventions of the literary essay • How to form and express personal response to literary text • The Assessment Objectives against which examination responses will be judged Suggested activities/resources: Students should read the entire text and consider the text as a drama. Some of the activities listed below might be useful in achieving a good understanding of the text. Keep a reading log /mindmap, completed at least at the end of every Act. Either might include a summary of events and quotations about characters plus notes on use of language, thematic development, dramatic effect etc. Discuss the relevance of the historical, social, literary and cultural background in understanding specific aspects of the text e.g. post-war USA (Stan and Mitch are war veterans); immigration and identity; Southern ideas of class, deference, role of women; morality, attitudes to sexuality; industrialisation, work and the cityscape. Remind the class that individual or pairs of students will deliver presentations on aspects of the play, requiring seminar-style discussion from all students, key questions and consideration of contrasting viewpoint e.g. characterisation of the main protagonists: students could conduct interviews with each main character; relationship between Stanley, Blanche and Stella; depiction of maleness and male characters; relationship between sisters. The ways in which Williams draws out major theme of truth vs illusion through characters, setting and plot. Use of language e.g. imagery of light, shade, shadow, secrets; fear, death, desire, violence etc. Language to depict class, values, education, country vs city. Setting: cityscape and domestic interior, parallelism between scenes outside and inside the apartment; inner and outer lives of the characters - dreams, memories, desires, madness etc. Violence, role of women, misogyny. Students could put main characters 'on trial' to debate their behaviour, attitudes, motivation etc. Help students consider play reviews on specific performances of the set text, e.g. Young Vic (London 2014) and Donmar Warehouse (London 2009.) Students to research and discuss the corresponding critical reviews. Students could write their own reviews of a production of the play seen on DVD or in the theatre. Lead consideration of film / theatre versions of key moments in the play and comparison of more than one interpretation, e.g. Elia Kazan film of 'Streetcar' (1951). Students could research and debate the critical reception of the play by reviewers and audiences at the time of first production and subsequently e.g. students to consider why the ending of the play was changed in the 1951 film version. Students could focus on changing attitudes to gender, sexual mores, attitudes towards women, domestic violence and homosexuality. Encourage further reading to enhance students' independent study skills and understanding of the writer and relevant contemporary literary texts. Students could research earlier 'realistic' theatre of Ibsen and Strindberg ('Miss Julie') in order to illustrate the innovations of Williams' non-naturalistic approach. Students could compare themes, plot development and characterisation in Williams' other plays to illustrate major themes in 'Streetcar' e.g. portrayal of male characters in 'Glass Menagerie' and 'Cat on a Hot Tin Roof'. Students could consider the film versions of all three plays. (This may also begin to support work on potential coursework texts if the centre is facilitating students making independent text choices.) Set short essays at key points in their reading, with focus on relevant literary aspects of the text, such as the opening of the play e.g. audience's first impressions of Blanche and her first encounter with Stanley; key scenes of the poker game and the rape. Final scene of Blanche's departure and how Williams elicits sympathy for her. Teacher to assist students' consideration of model essays/extracts on sample questions. Students complete paired writing to enable them to consider effective written style, literary analysis and personal response.

Suggested activities/resources:

Further reading list

Cambridge Companion to Tennessee Williams, Cambridge University Press (1997)

Film versions: 'A Streetcar Named Desire' dir. Elia Kazan (1951)

Online reviews of the play in performance

Video, text or online material about the historical and literary context

Film or text interviews with the playwright (where available or relevant): E.g. 'Wounded Genius', School Tube (2011)

DVD clips from other films of Williams' plays e.g. 'The Glass Menagerie' (1950); 'Cat on a Hot Tin Roof' (1958)

Donmar Warehouse Study Guide to 'A Streetcar Named Desire' (2009)

Trip to see live performance of the play (where possible.)

Week 7+**Examination preparation, feedback and target setting****Aim:**

Students will improve their competence in:

- meeting the Assessment Objectives against which examination responses for 'Other Drama' will be judged (AO1, AO2 and AO3 for AS and A level, plus AO5 for AS level, accessed through responding to a given perspective or opinion – see Sample Assessment Materials)
- considering the play as a whole via literary essay writing: close analysis of the play alongside the wider methods and concerns of the playwright
- understanding their personal strengths and weaknesses in skills and knowledge, in order to identify areas for improvement.

Suggested activities/resources:

Students mark a model answer, then identify success criteria and targets.

Students practise writing a timed response to a sample question on 'A Streetcar Named Desire'.

Students engage in re-creative writing, e.g. they write an additional scene for the play, plus an analytical commentary, in order to consider the playwright's style and characterisation and enrich reading and analysis skills for essay writing.

Edexcel Pearson SAMs.

Unit 3: Poetry and Prose

Prose

Content		
Week 1	'Ways into the text' • Overview of the history of the novel in English (text 1, Pre- 1900, only) • Introducing the author, key themes in their literary output and insights into the central issues of the set text. • Reading other short texts/extracts by the author that illuminate the central concerns or methods of the set text • Reading the opening chapter(s)	The development of the novel in English literature The place of their set text in the author's output literary terminology related to prose style and narrative features Any further relevant texts and their relationship to the set text Particular aspects of written style as established in the opening chapters.
Aim: Introduction to ways into text: Overview of the history of the novel in English Suggested activities/resources: Issue pairs of students with two research questions on particular aspects of context: literary, historical, geographical, sociological or biographical details, as relevant. Students should present their findings to the rest of the class. Give students an overview of the history of the novel in English (e.g. Defoe; the nineteenth-century novel, serialisation and publishing; experimentation in the early twentieth century; world/Commonwealth literature; the place of the novel/book in the digital age - adapt as appropriate to the novels selected for the chosen theme) Provide biographical information on the author. Conduct a class reading of a short story, extract or poem by the author (plus other visual stimuli where appropriate) that reflects on the key themes, concerns or style of the set text. Include discussion of key aspects and comparisons with the set text to anticipate the AO4 examination requirement (Explore connections across literary texts). Teacher to establish expectations of wider and independent reading outside class teaching time, to enable completion of the novel and informed discussion of the text during class time. Lead consideration of the text's title and cover designs. Teacher to model note-taking for chapter summaries/key points. Establish a shared electronic area/conference for online discussion of the text. Conduct a class reading of the opening chapter and discussion of key aspects of characterisation, language, thematic concerns, narrative structure. Allocate one key issue (e.g. the presentation of Africans in <i>Heart of Darkness</i> or of Indians in <i>A Passage to India</i>) for debate on the text per individual/pairs, in preparation for a seminar that students will lead much later in their study of the text. Students should begin to keep notes on this issue in preparation for when they lead such a debate later in the term. Extracts from <i>The Art of Fiction</i> by David Lodge and <i>How Novels Work</i> by John Mullan. Information about the history of the novel from Ian Watt's <i>The Rise of the Novel</i>. Further reading list to include: novels contemporary to the set text, further texts by the author, other related texts. These may support students' preparation for A level coursework. Short story or poem by the author or a contemporary. Artwork, film or other visual stimuli that reflect contemporary thematic or stylistic concerns. Examples of cover designs used for the set text. Key questions/issues about the text for distribution to individuals/pairs/ small groups for ongoing consideration.		

Week 2 -7	Reading and studying prose text	The ways in which themes, characters and relationships develop as the text progresses The narrative structure of the text, prose style and its effect on mood, pace, atmosphere and tone. The importance of context to inform understanding of the text.
Content: Students should read the entire text. Some of the following activities might be useful in achieving a good understanding of the text: • keeping a reading log/mindmap/electronic log. These might include a summary of events and quotations about characters plus notes on use of language, thematic development, narrative structure, etc • teacher advice on notetaking/reading journal requirements to support ongoing independent notetaking on the text • analysis of the author's language choices and their effect, through annotation of selected key passages • analysis of patterns of the author's choice of language and how such frequencies may reflect the novel's themes, and the concerns of individual characters • analysis of textual and narrative organisation through scrutiny of the way the text is organised. Study of key passages and events, as well as the overall structure via chapters or 'books'. Consideration of the opening, changes of viewpoint, time-shifts, etc. • re-creative writing activities, for example: rewriting a chapter in script form to consider characterisation and dialogue; rewriting a section of the novel from a different perspective; adding a new chapter, character or setting. These should be accompanied by an analytical commentary to develop students' skills in AO1 and AO2 for literary essay writing. Suggested activities/resources: Teacher-created model of good quality note taking/journal writing/mindmap • Teacher selection of key passages for annotation and study as a whole class, or in groups or by individuals, prior to whole-class discussion • Still images of key moments in the text translated into film		
Week 8+		
Aim: Students will understand: • Relevant literary terminology and the conventions of the literary essay • How to form and express personal response to literary text • the Assessment Objectives against which examination responses for will be judged. Suggested activities/resources: Teacher to conduct consideration/discussion of connections and differences between the two prose texts, supported by close analysis, in terms of: language and style, narrative structure characterisation and relationships themes and concerns literary context and reception. ◦ Students write about connections and differences between the texts. ◦ Students mark a model answer, then identify success criteria and targets. ◦ Students practise writing timed responses to sample questions on their prose text.		

Unit 3 Poetry and Pose

Unseen post-1900 poetry

Content	
Week 1	Introduction to unseen post-1900 poetry
Learning outcome: Introduction to unseen post-1900 poetry Suggested activities/resources: Students review their experience of poetry, consider approaches to unseen poetry and apply their knowledge and skills to an unseen poem. Techniques for close reading introduced, including the Impact – Content – Form routine Review and list, as a class or in groups, the kinds of poetry they have read, from earliest years to the present, including for this course. Identify key poetic features and forms and provide examples from own reading. Consider what they learnt from <i>Poems of the Decade</i> for Unit 1 about the forms and methods of contemporary poetry. Practise approaches to unseen texts by reading 'Morning Song'. Students: prepare readings of the poem, individually or in pairs; hear these; discuss the effect of hearing the poem read aloud. What questions do they have about it? On own, write a short (half-page) initial response to the poem. Compare their versions. As a class, consider what was easy/difficult; what more they need to know/learn. Ensure these aspects of 'Morning Song' are explored: tone/voice; imagery. Assignment 1 (in pairs/groups, in class or in own time): using a copy of poem on A3 paper, annotate the features of 'Morning Song' in detail, with an indication of their effects on readers. Display these for comparison and discussion. Introduce the Impact – Content – Form routine –refer to student toolkit for unit 3. Assignment 2 (in own time): write a commentary on Plath's 'Bee Meeting', using the techniques learnt. Follow-up: ask students to reflect on the challenges of Assignment 2 and where they need more help; provide feedback on their commentaries. Resources: Sylvia Plath: 'Morning Song' (including copies on A3 paper for annotation)and 'Bee Meeting' Toolkit item on the Impact – Content – Form routine Teaching points to note: See also the introductory activities suggested for Unit 4 Section B (pre-1900 poetry) and consider co-ordinating approaches.	

Week 3	Extending students' skills of analysis and response
Aim: Developing an understanding of post-1900 poetry and techniques for reading and writing about it Suggested activities/resources: Developing an understanding of post-1900 poetry and techniques for reading and writing about it In future sessions (suggested as an hour per fortnight), students read and respond to a variety of post-1900 verse, covering a range of topics, tones and forms. Students respond in writing, initially focusing on one or two aspects of the chosen poems, later developing into fuller commentaries. Each session is followed up by reviewing the skills learnt and comparing with other poems, including pre-1900, they have read. During the course: • students keep notes/log of key poetic terms; where these are exemplified in poems studied; the effects they have • students record questions they have about poems they read independently • give students opportunities for creative writing and poetry	
Week 5	Exploring form: the sonnet
Learning outcome: Exploring form: the sonnet Suggested activities/resources: Features of the traditional form and its effects Reading and exploration of a 20th century sonnet; features; effects; variants; comparisons with sonnets students have read before, such as Keats' sonnet on the sea (in <i>English Romantic Verse</i>, a text set for Unit 4) or his 'On First Looking into Chapman's Homer' Edna St Vincent Millay: 'Time does not bring relief; you have all lied'	
Week 7	Exploring structure: patterning, repetition 1
Learning outcome: Exploring structure: patterning, repetition 1 Suggested activities/resources: Recognising repetition and its effects in a mid-20th Century villanelle Read poem aloud; identify and respond to Thomas's use of patterning; ask students also to listen and comment on the voice in the poem. Dylan Thomas: 'Do not go gentle into that good night'	
Week 9	Exploring structure: patterning, repetition 2
Learning outcome: Exploring structure: patterning, repetition 2 Suggested activities/resources: Read, hear and respond to the poet's use of repetition and balance; explore use of rhyme; voice Yeats: 'An Irish Airman Foresees His Death'	

Week 11	Form: free verse
Learning outcome: Form free verses Suggested activities/resources: Read, hear and respond to the poet's use of free verse Frost: 'Out, Out -'	
Week 13	Form: ballad
Aim: Suggested activities/resources: In this and future weeks, explore the focus chosen for the suggested poem, using techniques suggested earlier and in the Toolkit, along with exploration of other features and effects appropriate to the poem used.	
Week 15	Structure: rhyme
Learning outcome: Structure: rhyme Suggested activities/resources: Rhyme and half-rhyme: forms and effects Douglas: 'Vergissmeinsicht'	
Week 17	Imagery
Learning outcome: Imagery Suggested activities/resources: Imagery and its effects; considering alternative meanings Stevens: 'Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird'	
Week 19	Form and Diction
Learning outcome: Form and Diction Suggested activities/resources: The effect of non-standard language Braithwaite: 'Calypso'	

Week 21	Voice
Learning outcome: Voice Suggested activities/resources: Identifying voice in poetry Langston Hughes: 'The Negro Speaks of Rivers'	
Week 23	Voice, point of view and structure
Learning outcome: Voice, point of view and structure Suggested activities/resources: Identifying voice, structure, language choices Duffy: 'Before You Were Mine'	
Week 25	Figurative language and ambiguity
Learning outcome: Figurative language and ambiguity Suggested activities/resources: How a poet uses variations on a theme; figurative language; the power of ambiguity Adrienne Rich: 'Song'	
Week 27	Examination preparation: strategies
Learning outcome: Examination preparation: strategies Suggested activities/resources: Review what students have learned about poetry from their reading; examination reading, planning and writing strategies Identify (perhaps in a display) the techniques, methods and other features found in post-1900 verse (including lessons from reading set text study for Units 1 and 4); reviewing their lists of poetic terms and examples. Considering the question: using sample assessment materials; choosing their own poems for potential examination use and writing on them; techniques for reading, planning and responding in the examination; drafting outline answers. Timed essay practice; mark and discuss a model answer; possibly mark each other's work. IAL sample assessment materials for unseen poetry	

Teacher Toolkit for unseen poetry

Students' prior learning

It will be helpful to establish students' experiences and understanding of poetry. All will have experienced poetry in a variety of forms, from nursery rhymes and songs to study in previous years in school.

All students will have explored post-2000 poetry for Unit 1 of this Specification and will be studying pre-1900 poetry for Unit 4 alongside this Unit. The skills they have acquired in reading poetry and the knowledge of aspects such as imagery and poetic form are important preparation for the unseen poetry question. Their work on approaches to unseen poems will in turn benefit their approaches to the poetry of their set texts. The scheme of work makes explicit some of the aspects covered, which can be enriched by reference to their prior reading.

Resources

Reading and responding: a poetry list

These suggestions include the suggestions in the accompanying scheme of work and a variety of other poems providing examples of content, form, structure and language. Since students will already have studied post-2000 poems for Unit 1, this list aims to ensure that writing from the earlier part of the 20th Century also has a hearing. There are obviously many other modern poems teachers could add to this list.

A routine for reading and responding: Impact – Content – Form

This helpful approach is outlined in greater detail in Atherton, Green and Snapper's *Teaching English Literature 16-19*, pages 52ff (see 'Reading for teachers and students,' below). The routine that aims to prevent the rush to feature-spotting and hasty judgement that can possess students writing under examination conditions.

Suggested student response format:

Impact: what effect does the poem have on you? How do you respond to features such as sounds, patterns, images, the 'story', the shape, the title?

Content: What is the poem about? What is happening? Whose voice(s) do you hear? Does the poem seem to have a meaning?

Form: How is the poem organised? What structure, form and patterns can you detect?

Reading in detail: Following these initial observations, re-read the poem carefully looking at how aspects such as diction and imagery relate to the overall impact, content and form.

Clearly, other approaches to reading are available. What students will find helpful is beginning with a template that gives structure to responses and that they can adapt to the specific demands of the poem in front of them.

Section A question asks for a 'commentary', explain that this includes:

- the poets' development of themes
- the poets' use of language and imagery
- the use of other poetic techniques.

The routine above provides detailed scaffolding to help students shape a clear and coherent answer, addressing both AO1 and AO2.

A note on context

Poems chosen for the Unit 3 examination will not require special contextual knowledge; the examination tests only AO1 and AO2. However, students may benefit from brief background information to clarify references in some of the poems in the resources list.

Poems have been chosen for this scheme of work to illustrate aspects of composition as well as the demands of the Unit 3 unseen question, in the knowledge that context is not the focus and that students can be provided with any required information in class. Teachers are best placed to know how much help their students will need – and to select alternative poems if this is likely to be an obstacle to the purpose of the activity.

Teaching and learning resources online

British Library Learning resources, especially the English Timeline: <http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/evolvingenglish/accessvers/index.html>

Crossref-it.info: <http://crossref-it.info/> As well as useful study materials and contextual information for set texts, this site has material on studying poetry and poetic form.

For additional resources from Edexcel GCE for 2015 – please visit the website

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/english-literature-2015.html>

Literary terminology guide

Unseen Poetry Preparation Anthology – although based on the Forward *Poems of the Decade* anthology studied, **in slightly different ways**, for the GCE Unit 3 and IAL Unit 1, this also includes pre-2000 poems and many valuable ideas. Chapter 2, 'How to approach an Unseen Poem: four perspectives', is particularly useful. Students may have already seen this for Unit 1, though unlike the GCE course there is no unseen in the poetry paper for IAL Unit 1.

Unit 4 Shakespeare and Pre-1900 poetry

Content	
Weeks 1 -2	Introducing Shakespeare
Learning outcomes: Introducing Shakespeare, his literary output, patronage, source texts and staging. Considering key questions about tragedy/comedy or tragedy Suggested activities/resources: Pairs of students research particular aspects of context: literary, historical, geographical, sociological or biographical details, as relevant. Students present findings to the rest of the class. Class reading of opening scene and discussion of key aspects: characterisation, language, thematic concerns, dramaturgy. Allocate one key issue for debate on the play per individual/pairs in preparation for a seminar they should lead much later in their study of the play. Students should begin to keep notes on their issue in preparation for when they lead a debate on this later in the term. Students consider a short text/series of extracts from a literary source of the set text	
Week 3-6	Reading the Shakespeare play
Reading the opening scene(s) - 'Ways into the play' Suggested activities/resources: Students should read the entire text and consider the text as a drama. Useful activities might be: A reading log/mindmap, completed at least at the end of every Act. Either might include a summary of events and quotations about characters, plus notes on use of language, thematic development, dramatic effect, etc. Consideration of film/theatre versions of key moments in the play and comparison of more than one interpretation Analysis of key moments in the play in relation to critical viewpoints as well as close analysis of Shakespeare's text in relation to critical reading Discussion of the relevance of the historical, social, literary and cultural background in understanding specific aspects of the text Presentations by individuals or pairs of students on central debates about the play, requiring seminar-style discussion from all students, key questions and consideration of contrasting viewpoints. Consideration of play reviews of specific performances. Consideration of the generic features of tragedy/comedy. Themes, and relationships between characters. Aspects of academic written style: students should write short essays at key points in their reading, with focus on relevant literary aspects of the text such as the opening of the play, development of themes, and relationships between characters. They should model essays/extracts on sample questions.	

Week 7-8	Examination preparation, feedback and target setting
‘Ways into the play’ Considering key questions about tragedy/comedy or tragedy Suggested activities/resources: Students mark a model answer, then identify success criteria and targets. Students practise writing a timed response to a sample question on their Shakespeare text.	
Week 9-10	Poet and period’
Learning outcome: • Introducing the poet and/or period • Initial reading, including poetry of the period or other literary forms. Suggested activities/resources: Teacher to introduce students to the key concerns of the poet/period, using a range of materials and media. Provide a brief overview for students of the expectations of A level examination for period poetry response. Help students study of the history and development of poetry. Remind students of the guidance already considered in Unit 2 regarding how to approach unseen poetry. Students to make an appropriate summary of the key points of advice, e.g. in a flow diagram, mind map or list. Teacher to suggest students keep notes/log of key poetic terms and where these are exemplified in poems studied during the course, together with any questions they have about poems they read independently. Give students opportunities for creative writing and poetry: considering poetry and its craft. Support students’ comparison of two poems from the period and consideration of whether or not they are written by the same poet – to facilitate close analysis of language, form, style, concerns and tone. Resources: Introduction to poetry: Extracts from a range of texts to consider the definition and purpose of poetry, e.g. comparing it with rhetoric, song, advertising slogans, prose, poetry within drama Teacher-selected range of poems/extracts from which to discuss the history and development of poetry. Introduction to approaching and writing about poetry: List of poetic terms and definitions, e.g. list from Peter Sansom’s <i>Writing Poetry</i> (Bloodaxe Poetry Handbooks, 1993) Introduction to the period/poet: Range of materials to introduce the period/poet and key Political/artistic/philosophical concerns, e.g. essays, short story, images Audio recordings of the poet/poets, if available, or audio recordings of the poems being read Teacher-selected pair of poems from one or more than one poet – students to consider whether or not the poems are written by the same poet, and why Further reading list linked to the period/poet.	

Weeks 11-15	Reading and studying the set period/poet selection
Learning outcomes:	
Students will understand the:	
• themes, language and poetic techniques of their selected period/poet • place of poet/period within the literary canon and its influence on subsequent poetry • concepts and terminology required for analysing poetry • structure and content of a skilfully written response to poetry.	
Suggested activities/resources:	
Students should study the set poems, as outlined in Appendix 5 of the Specification (Prescribed Texts), as well as models of writing about poetry. Some of the following activities may be useful.	
Keep a poetry log. This might include: key terminology and examples of their use, a reading journey to reflect students' reading of poetry independently, copies of poems that they have particularly enjoyed, key questions about poems they have read.	
Show students how to annotate a poem.	
Show them how to consider ambiguity and more than one reading in analysing poetry.	
Students to analyse the poet's language choices, including any poem title, and its effect, through annotation of selected poems	
They analyse patterns in the poet's choice of language and how such frequencies may reflect the poet's concerns across a number of poems.	
Students analyse poetic form and its relationship to the poet's intentions.	
Students carry out re-creative writing activities, for example:	
using a 'collapsed poem' and drawing on the word bank to create their own writing	
using the poem as a starter for prose writing	
Consideration of pairs of poems	
Individuals or pairs of students deliver a presentation on a chosen poem or pair of poems, requiring seminar-style discussion from all students, key questions from the leading student(s) and consideration of contrasting viewpoints	
Readings of poetry – student/readings of poems.	

Week 16-17	Learning about Context
Students will understand: • The importance of context to inform understanding of the poetry • How to draw upon evidence from two poems in support of their analysis. Suggested activities/resources: Lead a class discussion of the relevance of the historical, social, literary and cultural background in understanding specific aspects of the poems. Students carry out paired/shared writing to consider how to embed comment on the significance of context in a literary essay. Students identify points of connection between poems within the studied selection, to support selection of second poem for analysis. Students carry out discussion, planning and written work considering poet's presentation of themes across two (or more) poems Complete essays on key aspects of the studied poetry selecting two illustrative poems. Resources: Use of non-fiction and visual resources that develop students' knowledge of the historical social and literary context of the poems Models of how to write about the significance and influence of context in a literature essay. Shared writing activities where pairs of students share the writing process of an analytical essay. Teachers can also use this method at front of class, inviting students to join in and edit.	
Week 18-19	Exam preparation
Learning outcomes: Planning and Writing an analytical poetry essay in timed conditions Feedback and target setting Suggested activities/resources: Short essays at key points in their reading, with focus on relevant aspects of poetry such as language, meaning, thematic concerns, form, and structure. Consideration of model essays/extracts on sample questions, including paired work for students to consider effective written style, literary analysis and personal response. Students mark a model answer, then identify success criteria and targets. Students practise writing timed responses to sample questions on their prescribed poetry. Resources: Bank of teacher-generated exam practice questions that are based on a named poem, plus discussion of one other poem. Sample model essays and/or annotated poems on the above List of AOs for student use Edexcel Sample Assessment Materials for Unit 4: Shakespeare and Pre-1900 Poet	

Suggested resources for teaching and learning:

Important resources include:

- IAL English Literature Specification
- Sample Assessment Materials
- Mark schemes
- Getting Started Guide

The resources below are suggestions only:

Teacher resource books:

Baldick, C (2001) The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Eagleton, T (2013) How to Read Literature. Yale.

Hawthorn, J (2010) Studying the Novel, 6th edition. Bloomsbury.

Lodge, D (2011) The Art of Fiction. Vintage.

Mullan, J (2008) How Novels Work. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Padel, R (2004) 52 Ways of Looking at a Poem. Vintage.

Sansom, P (1993) Writing Poems. Bloodaxe.

Online resources for teachers and students (poetry/literary terms etc):

<https://www.youngwriters.co.uk/index>

<http://poetrysociety.org.uk/>

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teaching-adults/resources>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qp7q/clips> (BBC Radio 4 'Poetry Please' series)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006tnsf> R3 (BBC Radio 3: 'The Verb' series and podcasts)

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdfs/talking_poetry_notes.pdf (Teaching notes and full programmes on BBC 'School Radio')

<http://www.slideshare.net/BCALevels/alevel-english-glossary>

<http://www.irevise.com/GCSE-Blog/ArtMID/788/ArticleID/60/-GCSE-and-A-Level-Poetry-Terms-A-Quick-Guide->

<https://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/glossary-of-poetic-devices-post-16-poetry-6001429>

Other resources for teachers and students:

Selections from David Crystal's work might include, Chapter 7: 'World English' from *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of The English Language*, Crystal, D. (1995) CUP.

Selections from Chapters V & VI: 'End of Empire' & 'New Writings in English' (Said, Fanon, Achebe, Ashcroft et al.) from *Literature in the Modern World: Critical Essays and Documents*, ed. Walder, D. (1990) OUP.

Selections from *Contemporary Post Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed Mongia, P (1997) Hodder/Arnold, e.g. Said, Bhabha, Appiah, Spivak, etc

Online resources for teachers and students (Purple Hibiscus, etc):

<http://sodiqyusuf.blogspot.co.uk/2014/04/textual-analysis-of-purple-hibiscus.html>

(Selections from): 'Language and Ideology in Chimamanda Adichie's Purple Hibiscus.' Lawal M. Olusola, L.M. Lawal, F.A. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science* (2013): <http://iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol13-issue1/B01310816.pdf>

<https://prezi.com/guaa2re84gue/literary-analysis-of-purple-hibiscus/> (slide share)

<https://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/ALAN/v40n1/pdf/peters.pdf> 'Issues of Personal and National Identity in Adichie's Purple Hibiscus, Peters, A. *The Allen Review*(2012)

An Ambiguous "Freedom Song": Mind-Style in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, Tuca, D *Postcolonial Text*, Vole 5, No 1 (2009) <http://postcolonial.org/index.php/pct/index>

General resources, e.g. background on Chinua Achebe:

<http://www.postcolonialweb.org/achebe/achebeov.html>

Poetry list – Please read in conjunction with toolkit

These suggestions include the suggestions in the accompanying scheme of work and a variety of other poems providing examples of content, form, structure and language. Since students will already have studied post-2000 poems for Unit 1, this list aims to ensure that writing from the earlier part of the 20th Century also has a hearing. There are obviously many other modern poems teachers could add to this list.

- Plath: 'Morning Song'
- Plath: 'Bee Meeting'
- Edna St Vincent Millay: 'Time does not bring relief; you have all lied' - see also:
- Billy Collins: 'Sonnet' (and lesson material on this poem on the Poetry Archive)
- Dylan Thomas: 'Do not go gentle into that good night'
- Yeats: 'An Irish Airman Foresees His Death'
- Frost: 'Out, Out -'
- Auden: 'Stop All the Clocks'
- Douglas: 'Vergissmeinnicht'
- Eliot: 'Journey of the Magi'
- Eliot: 'The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock'

- Eliot: 'Preludes'
- Stevens: 'Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird'
- Rosenberg: 'Break of Day in the Trenches'
- Braithwaite: 'Calypso'
- Langston Hughes: 'The Negro Speaks of Rivers'
- Langston Hughes: 'Theme for English B'
- Carol Ann Duffy: 'Before You Were Mine' and other poems from *Mean Time* and *The World's Wife*
- Adrienne Rich: 'Song'
- Thom Gunn: 'Considering the Snail' (see also lesson suggestion on the Poetry Archive)
- Larkin: 'Ambulances' and other poems from *The Whitsun Weddings*
- Reed: 'Naming of Parts'
- MacLeish: 'Ars Poetica'
- Jackie Kay: 'The Seed' and other poems from *The Adoption Papers*

Other sources for poems

Readily available anthologies of modern poetry such as:

- *Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse*, edited by Larkin
- *The Great Modern Poets*, edited by Schmidt (Quercus)
- *The Rattle Bag*, edited Heaney and Hughes (Faber)

Students should be encouraged to read widely in collections of modern verse, and using websites such as the ones below, to find further examples and to develop their own personal tastes – for example, to read other work by poets studied in this scheme.

Online resources

As well as copies of modern poems, some with recordings, these websites have additional materials on poetry appreciation and study:

The Poetry Archive: www.poetryarchive.org – some very helpful lesson plans for 16-19 year-olds

Academy of American Poets: www.poetry.org

Poetry Foundation: www.poetryfoundation.org

Poetry Station: www.poetrystation.org.uk

Poetry by Heart: www.poetrybyheart.org.uk

B Getting started for students

Student Guide

Why study the Pearson Edexcel IAL in English Literature?

This course will try to give you the skills and understanding to:

- Read widely and independently set texts and others
- Engage critically and creatively with a substantial body of texts and ways of responding to them
- Develop and effectively apply knowledge of literary analysis and evaluation
- Explore the contexts of the texts and interpretations of them undertake independent and sustained studies to deepen appreciation and
- Understanding of English literature, including its changing traditions.

What do I need to know, or be able to do, before taking this course?

There is no prior learning required or other requirements for this qualification.

How will I be assessed?

Unit 1:

Two hour Open book examination Section A: Post-2000 Poetry - answer one essay question from a choice of two on the prescribed poems. Both essay questions will be comparative with one named poem plus a free choice of second poem from the prescribed list of poems in the studied text'.

The list of prescribed poems will be printed in the Source Booklet. Section B: Post-2000 Prose, answer one essay question from a choice of two on their studied prose text.

Unit 2:

Two hour Open book examination Section A: Pre-1900 Drama answer one essay question from a choice of two on their studied pre-1900 drama text. Section B: Post-1900 Drama, answer one essay question from a choice of two on their studied drama text

Unit 3:

Two Open book examination Section A: Poetry answer one essay question on a post-1900 unseen poem. The unseen poem will be printed in the Source Booklet. Section B: Prose, answer one comparative essay question from a choice of two, on the two prose texts that they have studied from their chosen theme

Unit 4:

Two hours Open book examination Section A: Shakespeare answer one essay question from a choice of two on their studied play. Section B: Pre-1900 Poetry, answer one essay question from a choice of two on their selected movement.

Student toolkit for context in novels, plays and poems

How to contextualize

When writing about context we need to look at when a text was actually written and what was going on at that time. There may have been significant political events taking place, for example, or changes in religious beliefs. What were current attitudes with regard to gender, class or ethnicity? But another part of context lies in considering ourselves as modern readers. How are we influenced by the world we happen to be living in today?

Here are some examples from texts across the specification.

The author's biography

We have to be careful here because we mustn't assume that writers are simply writing about themselves. Khaled Hosseini creates a character called Amir in *The Kite Runner* (a Unit 1 text) whose background is remarkably similar to the writer's own – he experienced a middle class, comfortable life in Afghanistan interrupted by the invasion of Soviet forces, leading to his family seeking asylum abroad. But in writing about the novel we can see that, even though the writer is producing fiction, not autobiography, the descriptions are authentic: the author has not simply done research but has actually lived through some of the things he describes. A particular example would be the descriptions his own country when Amir returns there to find it policed by the Taliban.

Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* is a Unit 4 text. This is a disturbing play that presents us with a happy ending – but not a conventional one. Situations are resolved, but there are some disturbing moral issues. As a result the play is often called one of Shakespeare's problem plays. Understanding something about when the play was written (at around the time of some other problem plays) might show us that this play represents a point in Shakespeare's career where he has moved away from straightforward happy comedies to addressing more complex moral and psychological issues. It might even be suggested that Shakespeare himself was experiencing moral and psychological problems, but beware the point made at the start – writers are not just writing about themselves!

Suggested research: Google Khaled Hosseini interviews and the internet will give you some useful material from the author himself.

Suggested research: the term "problem play" was first coined by the critic F S Boas in his 1896 book "Shakespeare and his Predecessors", but you needn't go back that far to learn more. E M W Tillyard wrote "Shakespeare's Problem Plays" in 1949. Rather more recently (in 2005) the New Casebook series has a title "Shakespeare's Problem Plays".

Relevant issues in society at the time the text was written

Othello is a set text in Unit 2. In 1597 and 1601 history tells us that Queen Elizabeth 1 issued proclamations complaining about the increasing number of people from Africa in England. Although *Othello* is set in Venice, Shakespeare can't help but reflect things happening at that time in England? A good site, with respectable credentials, on the Royal Proclamations is:

http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/blackhistory/early_times/elizabeth.htm

We can start to understand the way *Othello* might have been seen by Shakespeare's audiences in the light of this. There are issues of race here - Othello, a black man, marries Desdemona, a white woman. It would be a mistake to think that Shakespeare, whatever his own views were, was writing for the multi-racial open minded and tolerant people of today. Germaine Greer, in her book *Shakespeare*, is not so positive about attitudes in today's Britain however. She argues that "Iago is still alive and kicking and filling migrants' letterboxes with excrement".

Another England, or to be more precise, the Bloomsbury area of London, is created in a Unit 3 text – Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*. Virginia Woolf was a member of the Bloomsbury group of writers.

Suggested research: read Germaine Greer, a feminist critic and author of a number of books on Shakespeare's plays

The introductions to scholarly editions of Shakespeare, such as the Arden edition or the Cambridge University Press edition, contain valuable critical overviews of the plays.

Suggested research: "Living in Squares, Loving in Triangles: The Lives and Loves of Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Group" by Amy Licence (2015) is a well-reviewed and lively description of the life and times of Virginia Woolf and her circle of friends.

Genre conventions at the time the text was written

Genre simply means type, but with genre come generic conventions – the recognised features of that particular type of writing. We can recognise that Unit 3's *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro is a dystopia, just as *The Hunger Games*, or *1984* are dystopias. Sometimes it gets more complicated to identify a genre – there are texts which are experimental and transcend traditional classification. For example, what exactly is Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*, a book in Unit 1 which asks questions about the nature of storytelling itself? Sometimes the very act of classifying literature as a certain type can make for problems – nowadays we call a group of very dissimilar poets of the seventeenth century "metaphysical" (a unit 4 text, *The Metaphysical Poets*).

Some background reading is the way forward here. We can only really appreciate a text when we see what else was being written around the same time. Sometimes texts break through the conventions of their period.

*Suggested research: See what Yann Martel might be doing with his *Life of Pi* as a post modern text – a story which asks the question what, exactly, is a story? Find out what is meant by the term “post modern”.*

Suggested research: Look up what John Dryden wittily wrote about John Donne (“he affects the metaphysics and perplexes the minds of the fair sex...”)

Conventions at the time the text was written

Dickens wrote *Great Expectations* (a unit 3 text) originally for serialisation. Knowing this helps us to understand the structure of the book – and think about where different instalments may have ended. It accounts for the fact that for many readers the novel comes across as a series of separate stories. The sheer length of the novel (and what to some people is Dickens’ long windedness) can also be accounted for by the fact that writers were paid more the more they wrote. Dickens was also looked on as a commentator on the times he was living in and we can see this in the novel – it has something to say about society, how money can sometimes change people: authors of the time were not just a story writers but commentators on the age they lived in.

A similar act of commentating happens with Tennyson’s *In Memoriam* in Unit 4, which was published in 1850, the year that Tennyson became Poet Laureate, a public figure, speaking to the nation. So *In Memoriam* is not just a personal account of his bereavement, it sends out a message of hope: that love lives on, transcending mortality.

Suggested research: It’s a huge book but quite fascinating: Peter Ackroyd: “Dickens” (1990)

Suggested research: In 1897, Tennyson’s son, Hallam, published a two volume memoir of his father. It is available as a free download on the internet. Look at bits of it to get the idea of how Tennyson was regarded by people who still remembered him.

How did context affect the way the text was received by its first readers or audiences?

“Is it right or advisable to create beings like Heathcliff?” Emily Bronte’s sister, Charlotte, asked in her 1850 Preface to *Wuthering Heights* (a Unit 3 set text) after its author had died. She was worried, amongst other things, about the references to oaths or swear words – “the practice of hinting by single letters those expletives with which profane and violent persons are wont to garnish their discourse.” We need to realise how sensibilities have changed over time, and that Emily Bronte’s writing would have shocked people because of its portrayal of a violent and passionate man like Heathcliff.

Dr Faustus is a unit 2 text, written by Marlowe. At first sight some of the comic subplot scenes seem irrelevant or just silly – but the scene where Faustus goes to Rome, makes himself invisible and annoys the Pope by snatching his food away makes a lot more sense when we realise the play made its first appearance around 1604 when there was some anti catholic feeling (the Pope had blessed the Spanish Armada in 1588 and the Gunpowder plot was revealed in 1605).

Suggested research: read Charlotte Bronte’s 1850 Preface to Emily Bronte’s “Wuthering Heights”.

Suggested research: read David Riggs, “The World of Christopher Marlowe” (2004)

Has the changing context affected different readers over time?

“She is all states, and all princes I” wrote John Donne in his poem “The Sun Rising” (Unit 4, *Metaphysical Poetry*). It was a declaration of love, but to modern ears, more accustomed to feminist principles, it sounds rather like an assertion of male dominance. There are many ways we can interpret metaphysical poetry. We might also discuss ways in which other poems of the period might seem to silence the woman’s voice, for example in Marvell’s *To His Coy Mistress* where we hear only the male point of view.

In Unit 2 *Top Girls*, first performed in 1982, is clearly a play reacting against Britain’s Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Does that seem dated now, or has it still some relevance, not just to people in the UK but as a comment on capitalism and feminism across the world? For an answer it is worth reading some reviews of a more recent revival – Michael Billington in *The Guardian* wrote the 2011 production had “vivid timeliness, in a world where isolated female success still obscures the plight of the majority.”

Suggested research: In October 2009 The Guardian newspaper featured Donne’s “The Sun Rising” as its Poem of the Week, with a fascinating commentary on it by modern day poet Carol Rumens.

Read Michael Billington’s review dated July 2011 in The Guardian reviewing a production of “Top Girls” at the Minerva Theatre, Chichester, UK

(Both of these extracts from the UK newspaper The Guardian are readily available on the internet.)

Your own personal context and how it influences your reading

Remember that you, as a student in the twenty first century, reading these books and plays wherever you happen to be in the world, are entitled to your own interpretations and need to express them, justifying them with close reference to the text. But be aware that these will not necessarily be the same as those of other people, who may have lived at other times in the past, or may be living in other places today, with different backgrounds, beliefs and ways of thinking. All this influences interpretation, and that is why significant credit is given for this awareness when it comes to marking your work.

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