

INTERNATIONAL GCSE

English Literature (9-1)

GETTING STARTED GUIDE

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE in English Literature (4ET1)

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Introduction

This Getting Started guide provides an overview of the new International GCSE English Literature qualification, to help you get to grips with the changes to content and assessment, and to help you understand what these mean for you and your students.

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

Planning – In addition to the relevant section in this guide, we will provide a course planner and an editable scheme of work that you can adapt to suit your department.

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

Understanding the standard – Sample assessment materials will be provided.

Tracking Student progress – ResultsPlus 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. We will also offer examWizard, which is a free exam preparation tool containing a bank of past Edexcel exam questions, mark schemes and examiners' reports for a range of GCSE and GCE subjects.

Support – Our subject 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 to keep up to date with qualification updates, and product and service news.

Resources – Print and online student resource, 100% matched to the new curriculum, featuring comprehensive coverage of all topics. Specifically developed for international learners, it includes signposted skills and teacher guidance on the application of the Pearson Progression Scale, as well as online teacher support.

Key Features of the qualification

Through study of the International GCSE in English Literature students will be enabled to:

- engage with and develop the ability to read, understand and respond to a wide range of literary texts from around the world
- develop an appreciation of the ways in which authors achieve their literary effects
- develop the skills needed for literary study
- explore, through literature, the cultures of their own and other societies
- find enjoyment in reading literature and understand its influence on individuals and societies.

Our ambition has been to develop new qualifications that will not only encourage the development of essential skills in your students but also support inspirational teaching.

The International GCSE English Literature includes the following key features:

- A **choice of coursework or examination** route
- A selection of **engaging texts** that are suitable for all students and include a **diverse range of authors**
- **Poetry:** Includes both studying and comparing poems from within the *Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology* and responding to an unseen poem, which encourages reading across a range of different poems
- **Unseen poetry:** Students will answer one question exploring the meaning and effects created in an unseen poem, allowing students to display independent analytical skills and giving you the freedom to develop students' knowledge and enthusiasm of poetry through the exploration of poetry outside the *Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology*.
- Students will approach the anthology poems studied using **comparative skills**, answering one question from a choice of two, comparing two poems from the *Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology*.
- **Worldwide modern prose and drama:** Includes texts from a list of engaging and challenging material especially selected to give students an international appreciation of literature
- Strong focus on exploring literature within the context of its time period and social culture, helping students develop a stronger international perspective
- Strong focus on exploring literature within the context of its time period and social culture, helping students develop a stronger international perspective
- Enables students to engage with the nuances of world issues and gain valuable cultural understanding

- **Continued focus on the importance of literary heritage:** Includes a variety of literary heritage texts to select, including Shakespeare texts
 - Exploring works from internationally influential writers gives students an appreciation of the genealogy of literature
 - Helps students understand the historical literary context in which modern writers work
- **Assignment component (Optional Paper 3 - 40%):** If chosen, this option gives teachers the freedom to devise their own assignments around the studied texts
 - Students should be encouraged to be involved in the devising of the assignments, as well as having a choice of which texts they will study for the two assignments.
 - Students' involvement in this aspect of the course will encourage a high level of engagement and allow them an element of direction over the course of study.
- **Transferable skills:** A series of cognitive, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills have been added to the course framework
 - Alongside the regular course components, students will develop the transferable skills highly prized by higher education institutes and employers.
 - Students will be better equipped to respond to the rigours of undergraduate study and the world of work.

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 papers.

Specification overview

Students must complete Paper 1 plus either Paper 2 **or** Paper 3.

Paper 1: Poetry and Modern Prose (Compulsory) 60% 2-hour examination	Paper 2: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Texts (Optional choice) 40% 1- hour 30- mins examination	Paper 3: Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Texts (Optional choice) 40% Two coursework assignments
Section A Unseen Poetry: One 20-mark essay question	Section A-Modern Drama: One 30-mark essay question	Assignment A Modern Drama: one essay response on one text from the list
Section B <i>Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology</i> Poetry: One 30-mark essay question	Section B Literary Heritage Texts: One 30-mark essay question	Assignment B Literary Heritage Texts: one essay response on one text from the list
Section C Modern Prose: One 40-mark essay question		

Assessment Objectives

AO1	Demonstrate a close knowledge and understanding of texts, maintaining a critical style and presenting an informed personal engagement	30%
AO2	Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects	40%
AO3	Explore links and connections between texts	10%
AO4	Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written	20%

What's new?

Content

- Choice of **two routes**:
 - Route 1: Wholly assessed through externally assessed written examination (Paper 1 and Paper 2)
 - Route 2: Both externally assessed written examination (Paper 1) and internally assessed coursework which is externally moderated (Paper 3)
- Increased focus on **modern texts**: We have updated the set text list ensuring a diverse spread of backgrounds, perspectives and traditions, but we have also kept all your favourite texts, such as *Of Mice and Men* and *A View From a Bridge*.
- New **Literary Heritage** cluster of texts: Shakespeare is now studied within Literary Heritage
- **Modern Drama** and **Literary Heritage** texts can be studied either through Paper 2 or Paper 3, giving candidates and teachers the **choice** of exploring the texts either as coursework or through examination.
 - This choice makes these texts more accessible for students
 - Paper 2 is also now an **open book** examination
- **Poetry** is now externally assessed in Paper 1 alongside Modern Prose.

The duration of Paper 1 examination has been extended from 1 hour 45 minutes to **2 hours** to account for the increase content.

Assessment Objectives

Changes have been made to the Assessment Objectives with regards to their criteria and weighting.

AO1 no longer takes into consideration contextual factors, with its focus on students' understanding of the text and their informed engagement with it. The weighting of AO1 has increased from 20% to 30%, and it is now covered as an Assessment Objective within each of Papers 1, 2 and 3.

AO2 now considers the wider aspects of language, form and structure and how the writer uses them to create specific effects. Previously, AO2 had looked at the specific areas of characterisation, theme, plot and setting. The new criteria present an Assessment Objective that can be more clearly applied across literary genres. The weighting of AO2 has increased from 20% to 40%. AO2 will be assessed within Sections A and B of Paper 1, all of Paper 2 and both assignments of Paper 3.

AO3 relates specifically to the poetry comparison question in Paper 1 and how connections are made between texts. Its weighting has been reduced from 30% to 10% as it is now only applicable in Section B of Paper 1. The previous AO3 criteria are now covered in the new AO2.

AO4 is applicable to Section C of Paper 1, Section B of Paper 2 and Assignment 2 in Paper 3. It is concerned with the relationships between texts with reference to contextual factors and therefore applies in those situations where greater clarity of understanding can emerge from social, cultural and historical context. Previously concerned with students' informed personal engagement, this aspect is now covered under the new AO1. The weighting of AO4 has been reduced from 30% to 20% in accordance with its new focus.

Assessment

There is a choice of a 100% external assessment, or a 60% external examination and 40% internal coursework option. The grading scale will move to the new 9-1 scale, from the current A*-G.

Comparing the old course with the new course where alterations have been made (As an alternative to the prose option).

Feature	Old	New
Paper 1 AOs	AO1, AO2, AO4	AO1, AO2, AO3, AO4
Paper 2 AOs	AO3, AO4	AO1, AO2, AO4
Paper 3 AOs	AO3, AO4	AO1, AO2, AO4
AO1	A close knowledge and understanding of prose, poetry and drama texts and their contexts	Demonstrate a close knowledge and understanding of texts, maintaining a critical style and presenting an informed personal engagement (weighting: 30%)
AO2	Understanding and appreciation of writers' uses of the following as appropriate: characterisation, theme, plot and setting	Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects (weighting 40%)
AO3	Understanding of the writers' use of language, structure and form to create literary effects	Explore links and connections between texts (weighting 10%)
AO4	A focused, sensitive, lively and informed personal engagement with literary texts	Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written (weighting: 20%)
Grading	A*-G	9-1
Paper 1 duration	1 hour 45 minutes	2 hours
Paper 2 duration	1 hour 30 minutes	1 hour 30 minutes
Paper 3 assignments	A single 30-mark assignment around the selection of poetry.	Two assignments worth 30 marks, one on a modern drama text and one on a literary heritage text.
Texts	Poetry from the <i>Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology</i> Unseen Poetry Unseen Prose Drama (including Shakespeare) Prose	Poetry from the <i>Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology</i> Unseen Poetry Modern Prose Modern Drama Literary Heritage Texts (including Shakespeare)

Text guidance

Modern prose texts

The points in this section are set out under three headings: Context and content; Themes; Structure and form. This will help focus study on the AOs for this section. It should be noted carefully that **context** must always be studied in a way that connects it closely to the content and ideas of the text, rather than in a vacuum: students need to understand that they should not write about context in a way that is disconnected from or only loosely connected to the text: contextual points should always emerge from text-based points. For each text, a synopsis of the plot is also given: these are appended as the appendix to this document.

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck

Context and content

- Set in Salinas, California in the 1930s at the time of the Great Depression.
- The author, John Steinbeck, came from this area and took an interest in the lives of agricultural workers who were employed on the ranches; he wrote the novel in 1937.
- In the autumn of 1929, the Wall Street Crash meant that millions of dollars were wiped off the stock market and the country spiralled into a period of unemployment and runaway inflation.
- At a time of no welfare state, many ordinary people became homeless and hungry.
- George and Lennie represent many men who had to travel around the country to find work with only their bindles (sacks of possessions) containing a few basic items.
- A number of droughts meant that harvests failed and there was even less food to go round: people consequently became more desperate, living in very poor conditions.
- Steinbeck demonstrates this poverty in his descriptions of the bunkhouse and its shabby furnishings.
- There was little regular work and men could be sacked ('canned') on the whim of the ranch boss.
- The context of racial prejudice against black people is explored, especially through the character of Crooks.

Themes

- **Dreams:** and especially the '**American Dream**', are a key theme.
- **Loneliness:** shown in the example of Curley's wife, who craves any kind of companionship, and Crooks who bemoans his isolation.

- **Death:** the numerous deaths in the novel build from Lennie's crushing of a tiny mouse through to the killing of Curley's wife in the barn and Lennie's own death at the hands of his friend.
- **Friendship:** juxtaposed and contrasted with the theme of loneliness as George and Lennie's friendship stands out as unique in the bleak world of the ranch.

Structure and form

The action of the novel takes place from Thursday to Sunday and follows a circular narrative structure, ending where it began back at the clearing by the river. The story is chronological. Steinbeck uses a limited number of characters and locations to condense and focus on the events and themes. He uses foreshadowing, for example in the deaths within the novel (the death of Candy's dog foreshadows the death of Lennie) and the way in which Curley's wife blocks out the light. Scenes of description are interspersed with dialogue; Steinbeck uses the dialect of rural California to present a gritty realism.

Of Mice and Men is a novella, written in 6 parts or chapters. It ends where it begins, in a scene dominated by nature where symbolic features such as the heron and water snake are repeated to create a mirror effect. The third person narrative and use of past tense compel the reader to see the story from a detached point of view, yet the circular structure and use of foreshadowing draw sympathy.

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

Context and content

- Some aspects of *To Kill a Mockingbird* are based on aspects of Harper Lee's life: like Atticus, Lee's father was a lawyer.
- The novel was published in 1960 at a time when civil rights issues were rising to the fore in America.
- The backdrop to the novel is the ingrained racism that prevailed in the American South during the Great Depression.
- Many thousands of slaves had worked on the farms and plantations of states such as Alabama until slavery was abolished in 1865 but thereafter conditions in the southern states did not improve significantly for black people.
- It would have been unthinkable at that time in the South for a black person's word to be believed over that of a white person: vigilante justice was doled out by lynch mobs, who were free to hang and burn black men and women with no evidence that they had committed any crimes and with no due process of justice.
- In the Great Depression, prejudice and violence against black people rose as jobs and money were squeezed.
- Injustice and segregation were rife in the Deep South. Separate white and black stores were the norm and in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Calpurnia worships at a 'blacks only' church.

- In the courtroom, the white people are given preferential seating on the ground floor, while black people must sit or stand on the hotter, more cramped balcony.
- In 1931, when Harper Lee was a child, the famous Scottsboro case resulted in the conviction of nine young black men, on flimsy evidence, of having raped a white woman. The witnesses were later proved to have made up the accusations.

Themes

- **Prejudice** and **racism**: very significant, with racism referred to as 'Maycomb's usual disease'. Most of the white people in the town see black people as inferior. Mrs Dubose insults Atticus, stating that he is 'no better' than black people while Mr Cunningham is part of the lynch mob who tries to get at Tom in the town jail. Even the wider Finch family members such as Aunt Alexandra are racist. Miss Maudie, Scout, Jem and Atticus are characters who do not hold racist views. Prejudice is also significant as Boo Radley is prejudiced against because of his past and his reclusive nature and the Ewells are prejudiced against because they are poor.
- **Courage**: Atticus shows great courage in taking on the defence of Tom Robinson, even though he knows it is a hopeless case that he can never win. Jem shows courage when defending his sister from the murderous Mr Ewell and Mrs Dubose has the courage to stop taking morphine so that she can be her true self when she dies.
- **Innocence**: the story is told from the point of view of a child. Boo Radley's intentions in giving Jem and Scout gifts and protecting them from Bob Ewell are also innocent. Tom Robinson's innocence is rejected by the jury.

Structure and form

The novel is organised into chapters and is narrated by the child Scout, while at times the narrator uses an adult voice to make observations about events. The events take place between 1933 and 1945 and are in chronological order, building a picture of life in Maycomb and a sense of the characters developing. Harper Lee places some events close together to highlight a theme: for example in the death of Mrs Dubose and the shooting of the rabid dog, Tim Johnson, Harper Lee focuses on the theme of courage.

The novel is told as a first person narrative and is structured into two parts. Part one is focused on the experiences of Jem, Scout and Dill. Part two is focused on the trial of Tom Robinson. This division allows for jumps in the passage of time as seasons pass.

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe (NEW)

Context and content

- *Things Fall Apart*, an African novel written in English, was published in 1958 during a period of time when Nigerian writers were producing powerful new fiction that drew on the oral tradition of their culture.
- After studying history and theology at university, Achebe became interested in traditional Nigerian culture and customs but does not flinch from showing the negative elements of their practices as well as the positive.

- The novel reflects this with its references to the rituals and beliefs of the Igbo tribe such as the Egwuwu ceremony and the festival of the locusts.
- Achebe succeeds in presenting a realistic portrayal of Igbo life, integrating into the text the specific vocabulary of the tribe.
- The novel is set in the 1890s and Achebe uses it as a vehicle to highlight the influences of colonialism on African cultures, including the inefficiencies of colonial local government.
- Achebe's novel challenges the assumption prevalent in 1958 that native Africans were somehow inferior and uncivilised compared to white Europeans.
- White characters such as the District Commissioner, Mr Brown, and the fervent Reverend Smith are examples of characters created by Achebe to demonstrate this.
- Reverend Smith in particular represents the inflexible and dogmatic application of Christianity to the African communities. The District Commissioner sees himself as a moderniser and support to the tribespeople while in fact oversimplifying things.

Themes

- **Masculinity or what it is to be a man:** a key theme of the novel, as Okonkwo struggles to come to terms with his own actions and responsibilities as a leader, father and husband. The fact that his own father was hopeless motivates him even more to reject weakness and behave with strength. Unfortunately, Okonkwo's quest to be masculine often leads to misery as he suffers the consequences of his own violent actions, such as beating his wives and murdering Ikemefuna.
- **Tradition and religion:** significant because of Igbo rituals and ceremonies at the centre of many of the novel's concerns. Respect for native gods is set alongside newer attitudes to religion by the younger generation and the fact that Christianity had been brought in by the westerners.
- **Fate, linked to free will:** evident in Okonkwo's presentation and development. Bad luck seems to strike him, no matter what he does to try to avoid it - such as the accidental shooting of Ezeudu's 16-year-old son at the funeral.
- **Family:** Okonkwo struggles to lead his large extended family. He tries to be a good example but never quite manages to do this and his son Nwoye adopts the modern ways of society, moving away from his tribal past.
- **Clash of cultures:** African cultures and traditions come into conflict with colonialism and European influences.

Structure and form

Although written in English, *Things Fall Apart* captures the essence of life in Africa at the turn of the 19th century. Little anecdotes relating to matters of custom and tradition are spread throughout the narrative, offering windows into a past way of life. Superstitions and rituals are described in clear and poignant detail, such as the feast of the new yam and the harsh treatment of twin babies.

The novel is structured into three parts of which the first is the longest and the third the shortest. The tone of Achebe's prose is, at times sparse, but the rich blend of narrative and description provides the reader with a vivid portrayal of life in Nigeria at this time. The first part of the novel deals with tribal life through the experiences of the central character, Okonkwo. The second part deals with his tragic exile and introduces the influence of the white men, while the third part marks his return to the village and discovery that modernisation has taken place. Okonkwo's suicide is followed by the bleak irony that, in the District Commissioner's book, 'The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger', Okonkwo's story will form only one small paragraph.

The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan (NEW)

Context and content

- *The Joy Luck Club* is a semi-autobiographical novel that was published in 1989.
- It enjoyed great commercial success, opening the way for other Asian-American writers.
- Amy Tan was the daughter of Chinese immigrants and lived in a number of different American states.
- Her mother suffered a serious illness and, in 1987 when she had recovered, she and Amy visited China and met the two daughters that her mother had left behind, Amy's half-sisters.
- The trip led Tan to a new understanding of her mother's life and identity: this was her inspiration for *The Joy Luck Club*.
- The novel deals with the experience of Chinese immigrants and the tensions between them and their children born in America.
- In the novel, a young Suyuan runs away from China when the Japanese army invades Kweilin.
- This was a real historical event during the Second Sino-Japanese War in the Far East that overlapped with World War II.
- Mainland China was violently attacked in an attempt to expand the Japanese empire.
- More than 20 million Chinese people were killed or became refugees.
- When the atom bombs effectively ended the war, Japan surrendered and China regained its land in 1946.

Themes

- **Attitudes towards America:** a key theme in the novel as the older women have very specific views on their adopted country. These views are not all negative: the women value the independence that America offers them as women, but they also dislike the impolite and insincere aspects of the stereotyped American personality.
- **Friendship:** the women share not only their backgrounds but their views and criticisms in *The Joy Luck Club* where they meet. They support each other when help is needed.

- **Identity:** each character struggles to come to terms with different parts of his or her personality and past. The identity of mothers held a different meaning and status in China from those it had in America. The tension between American and Chinese-American **values** is palpable throughout.
- **Hope:** the American Dream is a key feature of the mothers' hopes for their daughters (**mother/daughter relationships**). They wish for them to live modern, successful lives but also to hold on to their Chinese heritage.

Form and structure

The novel is made up of four sections and has seven narrators. Perspective shifts between these narrators to create a complex effect, sometimes with more than one perspective on each event. Within this, there are a number of interlinked stories, each offering a sense of tension and a conclusion. Flashbacks are used to convey the plot as the narrative structure shifts between the present and the past. There are four time frames; these span the 1920s to 1930s, 1940s to 1950s, the 1960s and the 1980s.

Jing-mei's story is the one that binds the book together to make it whole. She is in a difficult position when she takes over her mother's place at The Joy Luck Club and faces the complication of fulfilling her mother's wishes and living up to her expectations by seeking out her half-sisters in China and telling her story. The climax of the story happens when she goes to China and meets her sisters; the experience helps her to understand herself. The conclusion is a happy one as Suyuan's wish is fulfilled when Jing-mei meets with her sisters in an emotional reunion.

The Whale Rider by Witi Ihimaera (NEW)

Context and content

- Whale riding stories and traditions pervade Maori culture and many tribes have their own individual stories and legends.
- Often, stories involve a heroic ancestor arriving in New Zealand on the back of a whale. A famous whale rider of legend, Paikea, got his name from the humpbacked whale that rescued him after his brother tried to kill him. The story of Kahutia Te Rangi relates to legends such as this one. By making Kahu, a girl, the central character, Ihimaera has put a twist on the Maori tradition whereby the boys are usually the heroes.
- The Maori tribes of New Zealand – their culture, stories and traditions – form the context for *The Whale Rider*. The Maori are the native people of New Zealand who, legend says, came originally from Polynesia.
- When European settlers arrived, some Maori tribesmen learnt how to hunt whales and other marine life by accompanying them on expeditions. By the end of the 18th century, the Maori population was in decline and there was a concern that their culture would be wiped out completely.
- As reflected in *The Whale Rider*, in Rawiri's experiences in Australia and Koro's attempts to hang on to the old ways, the Maori culture was compromised again in the 20th century.

- This happened when some younger generations of Maori left the villages for big towns and cities. There has since been a renewal of interest in Maori culture and traditions.

Themes

- **Traditional identity:** a main theme, with Koro desperate to preserve the traditions of the Whangara and Rawiri's struggle to settle in the city. He is torn between the Maori way of life and the draw of modern life, eventually choosing to return to his Maori roots. He experiences racism in Papua New Guinea.
- **Gender:** Kahu struggles to gain her great-grandfather's love and respect in the face of a culture that does not value girls. Nanny Flowers is another strong female character and role model for Kahu.
- **Nature:** at the heart of the novel, with the whales and their plight taking up significant parts of the narrative. Their way of life is threatened by mankind and they are the targets of hunters. Their link with humanity and communication with Kahu reflects the importance of this relationship to the world's survival.
- **Love:** this drives Kahu to learn about Maori life as she loves and wishes to please Koro. Koro so loves his people and culture that he wants to preserve and fight for its traditions at all costs. The bull whale returns Kahu to the shore out of love for Kahutia Te Rangi.

Form and structure

The novel is divided into four parts. The action moves between the Whangara tribe and the whale herd. In line with its themes of nature and tradition, the novel follows a pattern structured by the seasons. The Prologue and Part 1 take place in Spring; Part 2 takes place in Summer; Part 3 takes place in Autumn while Part 4 takes place in Winter. An Epilogue completes the novel. The narrator begins by telling of the ancient times when nature was awakening and waiting for man to arrive. The fable style of the novel is established as the story of the first whale rider's spear being cast a thousand years into the future is told. Rawiri, Kahu's uncle, takes up the narration. Foreshadowing is used to suggest to the reader that Kahu will triumph in the future.

At the beginning of Part 1, narration moves to the old bull whale. The writer uses this anthropomorphism to engage the reader in the plight of the whale and nature as a whole. The whale's nostalgic memories of his past help to link history and modernity in the novel. Rawiri's narration includes detail of his ancestors and the history of the Maori as a whole. Part 2 begins with whales again followed by Rawiri's narration. The novel moves to Australia and then Papua New Guinea with Rawiri and the reader is exposed to his dilemma and also the racism he experiences. Part 3 sees his return to the Whangara where the three main characters continue to be developed. Part 4 begins with the bull whale's narration and description of Antarctica's beauty. The reader is drawn to empathise with the whales and humans and the two narratives are interwoven. Kahu's bravery in swimming out to the giant bull whale forms the climax of the novel's action. In the Epilogue, narrative returns to the bull whale whose decision to return Kahu to the shore meets with Rawiri's narrative as they find Kahu unconscious and she is restored to health. A happy ending is achieved as Koro is reunited with the great granddaughter that he now realises he loves.

Modern drama texts

Kindertransport by Diane Samuels (NEW)

Context and content

- When Anti-Semitism swept through Germany and Austria in the late 1930s, Jewish communities were badly affected. Their movements and ability to work for themselves was severely restricted.
- Nazi propaganda sought to demonise Jews, holding them responsible for all the social and economic ills that the country had experienced during the 1920s and early 1930s.
- Kindertransport was invented nine months before war broke out as an initiative to transport Jewish children to safety in Britain. The Nazis ensured that the journey was unpleasant and humiliating.
- Almost 10,000 children travelled to Britain from Germany or Austria. This was very difficult as families were torn apart and parents were separated from their children not knowing if they would ever see them again.
- The play seeks to consider the long-term effects of the children who were 'saved' as a result of this initiative and the possible outcomes when their parents were finally reunited with them.
- Between 20% and 40% of children were reunited with their parents according to records.

Themes

- **Fear:** particularly childhood fear: this is embodied in Der Rattenfänger (the Ratcatcher). As one of the only male characters seen in the play, the Ratcatcher is a character of myth, the Pied Piper, whose warning to the Hamlyn residents that he would steal their happiness reflects Helga's loss of her daughter and Eva's struggle to settle into a new country and family.
- **Identity:** Eva/Evelyn struggles to find her identity. Initially clashing with Lil, she eventually accepts the British, non-Jewish way of life and rejects her mother's request for her to join her relatives in America.
- **Family, particularly mothers and daughters:** Eva loses her family at the age of nine when she moves to Manchester to be brought up by strangers. She rejects her real family in the form of her mother, Helga, when Helga moves to England to meet her. Eva/Evelyn's own relationship with her daughter, Faith, is highlighted as she attempts to hide her true family origins from her.

Form and structure

The play shifts between past and present with both taking place on stage at the same time. This impresses on the audience the irrevocable links between past and present and the bond that connects families even when they are separated. An example is when Faith is looking through a box in the attic (present) and Eva is shown as a child arriving in Britain (past). The story switches from Faith to Eva. This juxtaposition highlights the changes between the generations and in Eva/Evelyn at different points.

The story of the Pied Piper forms part of the play's narrative as it is read to Eva by Helga. The actor who plays the Ratcatcher also plays the postman and other minor characters in a technique known as 'doubling'. This brings the mythical into the real world, bringing childhood fear to life and mirroring the fear brought about by the Nazis.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time by Mark Haddon (NEW)

Context and content

- Mark Haddon published his novel 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time' in 2003 to popular and critical acclaim.
- His experience of working with children with physical and mental disabilities, including one child with autism, may have helped him to portray Christopher, who has some traits often associated with autism, such as an inability to read facial expressions and rocking backwards and forwards.
- The play is based on the novel. It opened in August 2012 at The National Theatre.
- Neither the novel nor the play states that Christopher has autism or Asperger's syndrome. He is 'a mathematician with some behavioural difficulties'. During preparation for the play, the production team researched autistic spectrum disorder. Christopher displays the qualities of a 'savant' who has social and functional difficulties but possesses extraordinary intelligence in one area – maths. His behavioural difficulties are in some respects those of a difficult teenager.

Themes

- **Truth:** it is this that Christopher seeks throughout the play. It centres on his need to find out who killed Wellington, but later broadens to include the truth about what happened between his mother and father and why his mother left.
- **Communication:** this is central to Christopher's difficulties in dealing with people. His condition precludes easy social interaction and understanding, and his straight way of talking is shocking to some people, such as Mrs Shears and the policeman.
- **Growing up:** the novel has features of the **Bildungsroman** tradition (formative development and coming of age), as Christopher struggles to come to terms with the realities of the adult world. He wants independence, but his condition prevents it. Attempting to find Wellington's killer means that he has a goal of his own to work towards. Christopher's difficult journey to London encapsulates his problems with independence in the wider world.
- **Love:** not understood by Christopher in the conventional sense, but his parents do show love for him. His father, Ed, staunchly pushes for his son to do an A level in Maths, even when the teachers try to put him off. Christopher tries to understand love and strong feelings, but cannot appreciate it in the way others do. His strong feelings for the dog are expressed when he hugs its bleeding dead body.
- **Isolation:** this is experienced strongly by Christopher during his journey to London, linked to his difficulties in communicating.

Form and structure

The play is essentially a play within a play. Christopher Boone's own writing is the medium by which the action is conveyed, rather than the first person narration of the novel. It is read in sections by the teacher. It is she who encourages him to write everything down in a notebook. This layering of Christopher's experiences enables the audience to access his thoughts through a narrative filter.

The setting is in Swindon and London, where Christopher travels to find his mother. The play is organised into two parts and there is a section after the end where Christopher reappears to explain how he solved one of the maths problems. The organisation of the play reflects Christopher's mind as he works through problems and issues that arise. It is almost externalised by the form of narration, but a sense of his development is evident by the end.

An Inspector Calls by J.B. Priestley

Context and content

- The play was written in 1945 shortly after the end of World War II. Priestley sets his play in 1912, just before the World War I.
- Birling's views that war would never happen and that the Titanic would never sink provide dramatic irony as the audience is fully aware how wrong he was.
- Priestley was a radio broadcaster during the World War II and would have had direct access to news of the horror and misery wrought by war.
- At the time Priestley was writing, the rigidity of class distinctions had been reduced, but in 1912 the classes were very distinctly separated into the working class, middle class and upper class, which included members of the aristocracy.
- Women had few rights in 1912 and there were no benefits or help for pregnant single women. All they could do was to rely on the charity of organisations like that headed by Mrs Birling in the play.
- Charity work was a pastime or hobby for upper-class women with nothing to do. For women like Sheila and Mrs Birling, shopping was another way to spend their time.
- In contrast, working-class women like Eva Smith had no choice but to work for low wages in an industrial environment that was lacking in legal protection.

Themes

- **Class:** Priestley writes from a socialist perspective, using the fate of Eva Smith to convey his views about how people should treat each other. Lady Croft may disapprove of Gerald marrying Sheila because the Crofts are a class above the Birlings. Mrs Birling herself came from a higher social class than her husband. Mrs Birling is very dismissive of Eva, referring to girls 'of that class.'

- **Responsibility:** the Inspector tries to get all characters to take on board how they have contributed to Eva's death. The Birlings and Gerald do not learn the Inspector's lessons about responsibility while the younger generation, represented by Eric and Sheila, changes, showing hope for the future.
- Relationships between **parents and children:** their importance can be seen in the way that Mr and Mrs Birling have brought up Sheila and Eric. Sheila is spoilt and overprotected while Eric is feckless and directionless, addicted to alcohol. Although both of them show signs of change at the end of the play, they are products of their parents' narrow values and prejudice. Eric is treated like a young boy by his mother who cannot believe anything bad of him, while Sheila is overprotected, her parents suggesting she leave the room so she is not upset by the Inspector's questioning.
- The **supernatural:** the Inspector's identity is never revealed. He possesses omniscient knowledge of Eva Smith, claiming that he found out details from her diary. His name, 'Goole', has supernatural connotations and he disappears mysteriously just before the play ends.

Form and structure

The play consists of three acts; it is a well-made play in that it shares the Aristotelian unities of time, place and action. It takes place in the drawing room and there are no flashbacks or lapses in time. The important narrative elements take place before the play starts and are told by the characters as the Inspector's interviews reveal their involvement with Eva Smith/Daisy Renton. The play has elements of a murder mystery as the unsolved death of a girl by suicide is introduced early on and forms the basis of the Inspector's questioning.

The order in which the Inspector's interviews take place is important to the play's structure as it builds the tension and narrative. By ending with Eric Birling, the Inspector completes the mystery of the narrative set in motion at the start. Dramatic irony is an important feature of the play's structure as, by setting the play in 1912, the audience has knowledge of the events that did take place in history that Mr Birling dismissed as ridiculous in some of his speeches. Additionally, the audience can see Mrs Birling effectively digging a hole for herself by denouncing the father of Eva Smith's baby as they and Sheila know that this must be Eric. He is the only one left to be interrogated. The use of the doorbell and telephone to bring first the Inspector and news of the girl's death at the end are effective dramatic features of the play's structure.

A View from the Bridge by Arthur Miller

Context and content

- In 1947, whilst researching the disappearance of a longshoreman (a worker who loads and unloads ships) who worked on the waterfront at Red Hook, Brooklyn, Miller was told the story of another longshoreman.
- This longshoreman informed the Immigration Bureau about two of his own relatives, to prevent one of them marrying his niece. 'A View from the Bridge' is therefore based on a true story.

- Miller wrote two versions of the play, a one-act version in 1955, followed by a reworked two-act version that was first performed a year later.
- The playwright himself worked for almost two years in the Brooklyn navy yards and therefore experienced at first hand the daily lives of the Italian workers and their constant struggle to compete for jobs, always at the mercy of the hiring boss. He recognised this system as both humiliating and open to corruption, as if the usual regulations of American society did not apply there.
- The title of the play can be seen in part as a metaphor for how cosy, middle-class America is viewing the practices of an unfamiliar world from a privileged and distanced location. However, it is also more literal in referring to Brooklyn Bridge as the elevated link between Manhattan and Brooklyn, a very different district of New York.

Themes

- **Fate:** Alfieri communicates the inevitable outcome, as we are warned of Eddie's destiny from the start and reminded of it during the play: 'powerless as I...run its bloody course'.
- **Jealousy**, linked to the theme of **love**: evident in Eddie's overprotectiveness towards Catherine that appears to exceed the natural concerns of an uncle. His frequent derogatory labelling of Rodolpho is intended to undermine his status as a rival. Eddie's complaint to Catherine is redolent of a resentful lover: 'I don't see you no more', and his 'reasons' for Rodolpho's unsuitability as a potential husband are mostly unsound. Beatrice sees his jealousy.
- **Attitudes to sexuality:** Eddie fails to articulate fully what it is he dislikes about Rodolpho. It is clear he is hinting at homosexuality by referring to his singing and cooking, qualities considered effeminate in the play's context of 1950s America.
- **Masculinity:** Different versions are offered by the three main male characters, each of which is valid, despite Eddie's attempts, concerning Rodolpho, to suggest otherwise; similarly the play explores notions of **femininity** and what it means to be a woman in this society.
- **Law:** different perspectives on the law can be seen as Alfieri represents the criminal law of America, which Eddie mostly subscribes to, whilst Marco's law is based on family loyalty, believing that justice is in the hands of man, not God. Yet Eddie goes against the Italian code of honour by denouncing the cousins, then conveniently tries to take the law into his own hands in the last scene.
- **Community:** the play looks closely at life in a particular New York community, but this is set in a wider context of post-war USA society and the Italian origins of the family.

Form and structure

The play follows the structure of a Greek Tragedy with Eddie as the tragic character who falls from grace to commit acts that lead to his ultimate destruction. Alfieri takes the role of the Greek Chorus, commenting on and at times moving forward the play's action. The climax takes place when Marco stabs Eddie near the end of the play. He dies in Beatrice's arms, but secures some small redemption when his last words are: 'My BI'

As a play, the dramatic structure of the text reflects the rising tension between Eddie and other characters. Alfieri, a lawyer in his fifties who represents the community in legal matters, is there to comment on the unfolding action and he is also a part of it, offering suggestions as to how an audience may react to characters and events. There are no scene divisions, but pace is manipulated by Miller's craft, for example after the arrest of the immigrants, the other characters exit swiftly. This signals Eddie's guilt and status as an outcast now that he has broken the unspoken law of community loyalty.

Death and the King's Horseman by Wole Soyinka (NEW)

Context and content

- Wole Soyinka wrote 'Death and the King's Horseman' in 1974 while living in exile from his native Nigeria. He was imprisoned during the Nigerian Civil War for two years. Whilst there, he was continually under threat of death and both imprisonment and the shadow of death are key features in the play.
- He received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986 after using his writing to represent Africa and its culture.
- His belief that western sources and ideals distort history and African culture is clear in his portrayal of the Pilkings who interfere in the ritual without considering the outcome.
- The story of Elesin is based on true events. In 1946, the British colonial authorities prevented a royal horseman named Elesin from committing suicide in a ceremony that was important to his tribe.
- The play presents the clash of cultures between the English and the Yoruba. In common with many African cultures, the Yoruba believe that life is a continuum. The dead are very much part of society and are honoured and respected as companions and guides. The most poignant moment in this life cycle is the moment between life and death.

Themes

- **Death:** the focus on ritual suicide and the differing attitudes of the English and the Yoruba to what Elesin plans to do. While death is feared and avoided in western belief, it is something to be welcomed at the right time for the Yoruba. Elesin should have died, but Olunde's death was not natural as he was trying to atone for the fact that his father did not commit suicide.
- **Courage:** other characters such as the Praise-singer doubt Elesin's ability to go through with the ritual. He does show some fear even though he states clearly that he plans to go through with the ceremony. In putting off his suicide, he can be considered to lack courage, especially as this gave the English the time to interfere with the ritual.
- **Colonialism**, together with the **collision of cultures and traditions:** the English do not understand the Yoruba traditions, considering them savage and uncivilised. Simon Pilkings, the District Officer, embodies the ignorance of western authorities when dealing with traditional values.

- **Duty:** it is Elesin's clear duty to follow his king into the afterlife. He knows this and, although he hesitates, does try to go through with the ritual, even though he is foiled by the arrival of Pilkings and his policemen. Ironically perhaps, it is Pilkings' duty, in his eyes, to prevent the ritual taking place. It is Olunde who is most committed to fulfilling his duty as he takes the place of his father to ensure the preservation of the natural order.

Form and structure

The play is a tragedy consisting of five acts. The action switches between the marketplace and the bungalow of the British District Officer, Simon Pilkings, and his wife, Jane. These locations provide a contrast between the two cultures and the party at the bungalow is set against the spiritual ceremony about to take place in the tribe. Acts one and two take place simultaneously, establishing the backdrop for the tragedy.

The final act features Elesin in prison, chained, and visited by the Pilkings and Iyaloja. His dramatic suicide marks the climax of the play as he desperately finds a way to complete the ritual he should have concluded hours before. There is dramatic irony throughout the play, for example in Olunde's comments when he believes wrongly that his father is dead, and in Elesin's poor decision in getting married just before the ritual is to take place.

Literary heritage texts

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

Context and content

- Although written at a time of great upheaval in world affairs, the focus in Jane Austen's (1775-1817) novel, which is set during the Napoleonic Wars, is social, not military.
- Despite Great Britain's continuous military action in Europe (the Napoleonic Wars), Ireland (Irish Rebellion) and India (Mahratta wars) during the author's lifetime, she chooses instead to highlight 'three or four families in a country village' as she advised her niece Anna, who aspired to be a novelist.
- Military activity is therefore a backdrop to her novel, as any spotlight on the regiment is in terms of its effects on Meryton's social life, such as the dancing partners it provides for the Bennet sisters.
- The society that Austen depicts is one of strict class divisions, defined by family connections and wealth.
- Since female advancement was chiefly via marriage, the pursuit of a husband is seen as a major preoccupation, particularly for the mother of a large family of five daughters like Mrs Bennet.
- Throughout the novel, Austen wittily mocks the conduct of the middle and upper classes, constantly lacing her observations with humour, sarcasm and irony.

Themes

- **Marriage:** Austen contrasts those marriages that are based on financial gain or security with those based on love, trust, friendship and understanding (like that of Elizabeth and Darcy). The author uses Charlotte Lucas to voice sceptical views on matrimony 'Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance'. For Charlotte, marriage is a necessity and therefore she cannot afford to be choosy. Financial insecurity for females was often the result of a lack of male heirs in their direct family, since tradition dictated the path of inheritance. Likewise, men like Wickham who lack their own fortune are equally unscrupulous in courting women with money to advance and secure their own position.
- **Love:** at times it is cynically portrayed, as relationships stemming from love are rare in the novel, suggesting that true love can only be achieved once society's superficial expectations of marriage are surpassed and difficult circumstances are overcome. Not only must Elizabeth and Darcy master their pride and prejudice, they must also rise above several obstacles, such as Lady Catherine's hostile intervention.
- **Pride and prejudice:** key themes, as the novel's title suggests. Whilst Elizabeth and Darcy are guilty of both, several other characters also display these characteristics, such as Bingley's sisters and Lady Catherine.
- **Class:** distinctions existed even *within* classes, as well as *across* them. Members of the 'true' upper classes acquired their wealth via land, title or inheritance. Those whose fortunes had been made by other means, such as trade, were viewed as inferior, such as the Bingleys, as snobbery was rife. Mrs Hurst highlights Jane's 'low connections' and Austen reminds us of Darcy's position concerning Elizabeth 'were it not for the inferiority of her connections, he should be in some danger'. The author satirises the condescending and patronising attitude of Lady Catherine de Bourgh, who is shocked by the Bennet girls' upbringing because it does not adhere to her strict interpretation of social convention. Lady Catherine sees herself as superior and is full of self-importance.

Form and structure

Although organised into chapters, the novel has three clear parts that have lent themselves well to film productions in recent times. The first part introduces the characters and establishes Darcy and Wickham as contrasts to one another. The second part includes the proposal of Mr Darcy, revelation of Wickham's true nature and the disaster of Lydia's elopement. The third part represents the plot lines coming together as Darcy saves Lydia and the Bennets from shame and marries Elizabeth while Jane marries her beloved Mr Bingley.

The narrative viewpoint is important as Elizabeth's previously unbiased view of Darcy has been clouded and misguided by Wickham; thus she lacks our objectivity. Austen provides us with subtle hints that Darcy is not as arrogant or proud as Elizabeth thinks him to be. The inclusion of letters in the first person narrative widens the narrative voice and deepens our understanding of certain characters. Darcy's lengthy letter allows us a first hand, honest insight into his character, which, whilst confirming some of Elizabeth's accusations, also contrasts with them.

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

Context and content

- Written by William Shakespeare in 1594, 'Romeo and Juliet' is based on Arthur Brooke's poem (1562) but its source is a much older love story from centuries earlier. Many of the play's details are directly taken from the poem. One of the main differences, however, is the time span – Shakespeare's play takes only four days for the tragic outcome to unfold while Brooke's poem took nine months.
- The play was written in the Elizabethan period of history when girls were able to make few choices of their own. Juliet's plight in terms of her arranged marriage is a crucial feature of the play's context.
- The Elizabethan audience would have been interested in aspects of the spiritual love of Romeo and Juliet, expressed through religious references when they first meet at the ball.
- A belief that every person had one soul that they were destined to be with was popular at the time, even though this seems at odds with the idea of arranged marriage.
- Honour was important and duelling was a way by which quarrels were solved. The brawling in the streets of Verona and the duels between Mercutio and Tybalt, Tybalt and Romeo and Romeo and Paris would have interested contemporary audiences.
- Juliet is the only child of the Capulets; indeed, Lord Capulet himself states that 'earth hath swallowed all my hopes but she'. Infant mortality was high, both in the time the play was set and in Elizabethan times, hence Juliet's importance to her family as the only child.

Themes

- **Love:** presented in different ways such as: Romeo's early perceived love for Rosaline; Paris's courtly love for Juliet; and the intense and spontaneous love shared by Romeo and Juliet. There is the classic notion of romance and it is reflected in their language and actions. Sexual love is mentioned in the jokes of Mercutio and the Nurse, but is also alluded to in Juliet's speech before her wedding night.
- **Fate:** the destiny of Romeo and Juliet is known from the start. They are 'star-cross'd lovers' who were set on a path to tragedy. Fate goes against them at every turn, be it in the failure of the Friar's message to arrive or in Romeo's killing himself before Juliet awoke from her fake death.
- **Death:** this pervades the play. Lord Capulet states 'Death is my son-in-law', after he believes Juliet to have taken her life. Mercutio jokes about his death, saying as he perishes that anyone looking for him the next day will find him 'a grave man'. Mercutio, Paris, Tybalt, Lady Montague, Romeo and Juliet all die in the play's course. Juliet feigns death in an attempt to escape her marriage to Paris.
- **Light and darkness:** contrasted throughout the play, for example Juliet is compared to the sun by Romeo who, on first meeting her, says 'she doth teach the torches to burn bright'. Juliet says that if he should die she will cut him out into stars. Romeo and Juliet meet on the balcony at night and consummate their marriage the following night.

Form and structure

'Romeo and Juliet' is a tragedy. Tragedy usually includes elements of conflict between a force and a character or number of characters. In this case, it can be said that Romeo and Juliet are both pitted against the family feud and the force of fate. The play is set in Verona, a hot Italian city where tempers were traditionally thought to be quickly lost. The play's story is given away right from the start as, in the Prologue, the Chorus outlines everything that is to take place. The action is organised into 5 acts in which the action accelerates as the lovers career towards tragedy. Act 3 Scene 1 marks a turning point as the death of Mercutio proves a catalyst to further violence and anger.

Much of the play is written in blank verse, in iambic pentameters (10 syllables a line). In addition, Shakespeare uses, on several occasions, the specific form of a sonnet, a poetic form recognisable to the reader or audience as having a strong pattern that emphasises Shakespeare's key messages of love and death. Soliloquies are used, largely by Romeo and Juliet, to convey to the audience what they are thinking and feeling. Juliet's soliloquy before taking the Friar's potion is compelling in its presentation of her fear and misgivings at taking this desperate action.

Macbeth by William Shakespeare (NEW)

Context and content

- Macbeth is Shakespeare's shortest tragedy and was probably written in 1606.
- James I of England (already James VI of Scotland) was king, having assumed the throne of England in 1603.
- James favoured Shakespeare's company of actors and it is likely that many elements of 'Macbeth' were written to please him.
- The Divine Right of Kings was the belief that a king is appointed by God and that anyone who interfered with this was going against God. When Macbeth kills Duncan, the kingdom of Scotland and nature itself are disturbed. In this manner, Shakespeare supported this belief.
- Additionally, the lineage of James was reported to have come from Banquo's line, so for his line to go on to the 'crack of doom' would certainly have flattered the king.
- James was also interested in witchcraft and wrote his own book on the subject, called 'Daemonologie'. Witches were feared at the time the play was written and the involvement of the witches in the downfall of Macbeth was timely and popular.
- James believed that his ship had once been attacked by witches who drove it off course as they were able to control the winds.
- The play is based on an original story by Holinshed, but Shakespeare changed many details of this source when writing his play.

Themes

- **Ambition:** it is this quality that drives Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. It is described in the play as 'vaulting', suggesting the strength of the feeling. Macbeth's ambitions are evident in his desire to be a good soldier, but it eventually corrupts him, leading him to murder and destruction.
- **The supernatural:** embodied not only in the role and presentation of the witches, but also in the suggestion of Banquo's ghost and the 'air-drawn dagger' that Macbeth sees before he murders the king. Lady Macbeth craves supernatural power when she begs the spirits to 'unsex' her so that she is no longer like a woman but a male warrior.
- **Violence:** Macbeth's bloody reign brings death to Banquo, his friend and also the Macduffs. The killing of Duncan is not shown on stage, but the description of the blood on their hands draws attention to this gory deed. Macbeth chooses violence as the play nears its end, choosing to fight the English and Malcolm's forces rather than give in, even though defeat is inevitable for him.
- **Power:** presented in Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's desire for the crown. Macbeth is driven to seek more and more power, crushing anyone who appears to be a threat to him. Power, at the end of the play, returns to its rightful place in the form of the legitimate King of Scotland, Malcolm.
- **Fate and free will:** central concerns examined, for example, through the question of the witches and their influence on Macbeth and the events of the play.
- **The reversal of nature:** unnatural forces are seen to be at work, as exemplified in the quotation 'fair is foul and foul is fair'.
- **Light and dark:** linked to the reversal of nature, with darkness symbolising Macbeth's tyranny.
- **Death:** a recurrent theme throughout the play – the soldiers in the early battles; the beheading of the treacherous Thane of Cawdor; Duncan; Banquo; the innocent Lady Macduff and her children; and ultimately Lady Macbeth and Macbeth himself.

Form and structure

The play consists of five acts, subdivided into scenes. As the play draws to a close, the scenes get closer and closer together, increasing the pace of the action. Events are portrayed chronologically with some events taking place off stage. An example is the killing of Duncan. Most of the play is written in blank verse with some prose, such as when Lady Macbeth is sleepwalking or when the Porter is speaking.

Many of the witches' lines are delivered in trochaic tetrameters with rhyming couplets. This serves to set them apart from the other characters in the play. Soliloquies are used to show the innermost thoughts and feelings of the characters. It is chiefly Macbeth and Lady Macbeth who deliver soliloquies. The play ends tragically with the deaths of both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

The Merchant of Venice by William Shakespeare (NEW)

Context and Content

- The Merchant of Venice was written between 1596-1598 and although it is classified as a 'comedy' in the first folio, there are a number of more dramatic elements which move it away from a more traditional comedy play.
- When the play was written, the city of Venice was an important and well known city which was well known for its affluence and trading routes.
- Given its location, and its reputation for trade, fashion and riches, Venice attracted a large number of people from all nationalities and religions
- This diversity of race and religion is one of the key themes of the play and Shakespeare uses the Venetian setting to explore and highlight the prejudice facing the Jewish community both in Venice and England
- Shakespeare builds on the largely unsympathetic and negative portrayal of Jews in works such as Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* and Chaucer's *The Prioress' Tale* and makes his, largely Christian audiences, see a more human and rounded depiction of a Jewish man.
- Shakespeare also focusses on the role of women and how even someone as rich and independent as Portia, is bound by the will of her father. This would have been commonplace at the time with many women having their husband chosen for them to help secure additional wealth for the family. The fact that Portia's father sets the 'Casket' test as part of the condition of his will shows that he can still exert his power from beyond the grave.
- Portia and Nerissa also dress up as men in the play is interesting (and commonly used by Shakespeare in his comedies) as women were not allowed on the stage therefore a male actor pretending to be a woman dressed as a man would have amusing for the 16th century audiences.

Themes

- **Prejudice:** This is a key theme in the play and comes in many forms. There is the prejudice between the Christians and the Jews and both are equally as prejudice to each other. Shylock is unrelenting in his pursuit of the collection of his debt from Antonio and we are told of the behaviour of both Antonio and Bassanio towards the Jewish community in Venice. Portia also shows her prejudice towards different races and religions in her descriptions of her suitors.
- **Mercy and Justice:** This theme is most apparent in the trial scene with Shylock demanding the payment of his debt from Antonio and Portia's memorable speech about 'the quality of mercy'. Injustice is also shown at the end of the scene as Shylock is forced to part with half of his fortune and convert to Christianity.
- **Greed:** the Venetian setting helps to underline this theme with Antonio, Bassanio and Shylock all attempting to add to their own personal wealth. Antonio, the merchant, has loses his fortune and cannot pay the debt which Bassanio has taken out in his name.

Bassanio, initially, wants the money from Antonio, so he can travel to Belmont and court the wealthy Portia. Shylock, a money lender, is also motivated by money and treasures his own personal wealth almost as much as his own daughter, Jessica. In contrast, the countryside setting of Belmont, is serene and less mercenary and mercantile. The Casket Scenes also show that love and honesty are valued more than gold and silver.

- **Duty and honour:** This theme is conveyed in a number of ways in the play. Portia is forced to honour her father and subject her suitors to choosing caskets for the right to marry her. In contrast, Jessica disobeys the wishes of her father, Shylock, and leaves him to marry Lorenzo, taking his money, and the ring which was given to him by his wife, with her. Both Portia and Nerissa test the honour and duty of their future husbands when disguised as a lawyer and his clerk.
- **Love:** There are lots of different forms of love in the play with Bassanio and Antonio showing strong male friendship. Indeed, it is this friendship which leads Antonio into debt with Shylock. There is romantic love between Bassanio and Portia, Nerissa and Gratiano and Jessica and Lorenzo – although some may question the sincerity of Bassanio's love for Portia given his original reasons for wanting to marry her. There is also love (although it is problematic) between parents and children with Lorenzo and his father and Jessica and Shylock
- **Appearance and reality:** The play has a lot of deception with the characters fooling each other through their appearances and their motives. Lancelot fools his blind father; Portia and Nerissa dress as men in the trial scene and to test their husbands.

Form and structure

The play consists of five acts. The fourth act is taken up almost entirely with the trial of Antonio with the last act ending in the weddings of Portia and Bassanio and Nerissa and Gratiano.

The play is written mainly in iambic pentameter with some scenes written in prose. A number of the characters – Shylock, Portia, Antonio and Lorenzo – address the audience through soliloquies which help the audience to hear the 'real' thoughts and feelings of the characters and understand their motivations.

The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne (NEW)

Context and content

- Hawthorne himself was a native of Massachusetts, descended from settlers to the Massachusetts Bay Colony.
- He was born in 1804 and, like the novel's narrator, he worked as a customs surveyor in Salem for five years.
- The opening preamble to the novel offers much historical insight into life in this part of America at the time. 'The Scarlet Letter' was published in 1850 after he lost this job.
- The backdrop of Puritan New England forms the most significant element of the novel's

context. The Puritans were Christian reformers who arrived in America in the early 17th century. They were well known for their strict rules on sin.

- The Puritan setting reveals the tensions created by religious dogma when it is applied to human emotion. This can be seen by the great turmoil experienced by Arthur Dimmesdale.
- The treatment of women is also evident in relation to Puritan values. Hester is shamed for having a child that is not her husband's. Adultery was considered a great shame and sin in terms of Puritan values and laws.

Themes

- **Sin** and perception of sin: central to the novel's concerns. There is no latitude for compassion in Hester's situation where the Puritans are concerned. Her sins are punished publicly and her lover, Arthur Dimmesdale, a preacher, feels such guilt and responsibility for his son that he harms and punishes himself. The scarlet 'A' is the physical representation of the sin of adultery, be this the fabric version worn by Hester or the mark that is carved into Dimmesdale's chest.
- The desire for **revenge** is closely linked to the theme of sin.
- **Isolation** from the **community**: reflected in Hester's enforced segregation from the community by the townspeople and Puritan authorities. She must live on the edge of town and her daughter Pearl is also isolated, treated differently by other children. Dimmesdale is isolated in his guilt and Chillingworth remains alone in his revenge.
- **Gender**: women are portrayed in different ways. The treatment of Hester reflects the draconian approach to women who give birth out of wedlock. The twisted, crone-like ways of Mistress Hibbins can be seen as another female stereotype.

Form and structure

The narrator of the novel, a surveyor at the custom house, is not named. He finds documents that tell of events that happened 200 years before and a patch of scarlet material shaped like an A. The plot unfolds chronologically with some flashbacks. The opening section 'The Custom-House' sets the scene for the unfolding action of the narrative. The scaffold in the market place is a recurring structural feature of the novel with key events taking place there. These include the shaming of Hester at the beginning of the story and the death of Arthur Dimmesdale after his passionate confession towards the end. Foreshadowing and symbolism are used to increase the novel's dramatic tension, for example in the use of the rosebush that grows outside the prison to symbolise purity and hope. The ending is conclusive, a happy ending for Hester and the adult Pearl.

Great Expectations by Charles Dickens (NEW)**Context and content**

- Charles Dickens was born in 1812, growing up in coastal Kent. 'Great Expectations' is the second most autobiographical of Dickens's novels; many of the events in the novel are based on his early life.
- Dickens's father was an agreeable man but got himself into terrible debt. The family moved to London when Charles was nine.
- Three years later his father went to debtors' prison and his mother and younger siblings went with him. She arranged for Charles to work in a blacking warehouse, on goods such as matches. Dickens hated this mundane and miserable work; like Pip, he thought himself too good for such menial labour.
- When his father left prison he returned to school, becoming a law clerk, reporter and finally a novelist.
- At the time the novel was written, Victorian society was dominated by the rich manufacturers who had used the opportunities presented by the Industrial Revolution to accumulate vast wealth.
- The gulf between the rich and poor was marked and London became crowded with people from the countryside arriving in search of well-paid work. Manners and conduct were very strictly observed by the upper classes.
- Pip moves from country apprentice to blacksmith to city gentleman after receiving money from his anonymous benefactor; this forces him to transform himself socially in his manners, speech, dress and outlook.
- The mysterious nature of the novel lends itself to the rise of the thriller in Victorian literature with authors like Wilkie Collins publishing their own successful crime novels.

Themes

- **Social class:** class distinctions occur from the lowly criminal, Magwitch, to poor working-class people such as Joe and Biddy to the middle class, Wemmick, and rich upper class, Miss Havisham. The theme is part of the lesson Pip learns: at first he craves riches and social position but learns by the end that kindness, warmth, family and friendship are more important.
- **Crime:** central to the novel's concerns, opening with the attempted escape of the desperate criminal, Magwitch. The powerful and charismatic criminal lawyer, Jaggers, associates with some of the most serious criminals in London, offering a view into the illicit world of crime. Compeyson's crimes ruined the lives of Magwitch and Miss Havisham but he receives justice in the end when he drowns as Pip is helping Magwitch to escape London. The images of hulks (prison ships), handcuffs and gallows emphasise the theme through Dickens's descriptive powers.
- **Family:** a key theme throughout the novel. Pip is orphaned and without a close family, but learns to appreciate the warmth of Joe and Biddy when he is older. Magwitch

provides for Pip, enabling him to become a gentleman; he can be seen as taking responsibility for Pip as a father would. Estella does not know her real family and is taken on as Miss Havisham's ward.

- **Ambition:** reflected in Pip's desire to better himself and leave the countryside to become a sophisticated gentleman in London. The Bildungsroman nature of the novel supports this theme with Pip developing as a person throughout. Pip's initial ambition to elevate himself socially leads him to ruin and he learns the importance of moral and spiritual development as more genuine forms of improvement.
- **Wealth:** Dickens explores this throughout the novel, raising questions about what wealth really is: wealth does not necessarily consist of material riches, but of the qualities that make someone truly wealthy.
- **Love:** developed through different types of love such as familial love (Pip and Joe), romantic love (Pip's feelings for Estella) and rejected love (Miss Havisham).

Form and structure

The novel is divided into 59 chapters and is narrated by Pip using first person perspective. This offers some insight into the central character that leads readers to empathise with him. The narrative style is intricate, switching between adult comment and childhood description. Dickens uses the idea of narrative layering, or stories within stories - for example Magwitch relates his own story within Pip's. The stories of Miss Havisham and Compeyson are narrated in a more drawn-out manner in order to create suspense. Dickens offers clues similar to those used in detective fiction and brings his characters to life through dramatic and descriptive devices.

Dickens wrote his novels in serial form for readers of periodicals. He had to ensure that they would keep buying the next edition - so there are cliffhanger endings to chapters and suspense-building hooks in the narrative to engage readers. The novel is basically a Bildungsroman (coming of age novel), charting Pip's personal development and growth from childhood orphan to young gentleman. This style of writing was very popular in 19th century fiction.

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology poetry – structure, form and language

“If” by Rudyard Kipling

This poem represents the advice a father would give to his son. It focuses on human qualities.

- Kipling’s guidance takes the form of a sequence of opposites, for example ‘keep...lose’ and ‘trust...doubt’. These slowly build up in the course of the poem to reveal only in the concluding line the main reward for doing so, that is, as a symbol of having reached manhood. The alternate rhyme scheme maintains the momentum of the counsel and, since this lengthy poem appears to be merely one sentence long, this implies that the spiritual and mental journey to manhood is a long, complicated and challenging one.
- By constant repetition of the second person singular ‘you’ (with implications of a plural address too, encompassing us all), the narrator achieves a direct appeal and maintains our interest. By the end of the poem we are intrigued to discover where his lengthy advice leads.
- Poetic techniques strengthen the counsel. Fulfilling every moment in an energetic and enthusiastic manner as possible is advocated in the metaphor ‘fill the...minute/With sixty seconds’ worth of distance run’. Personification is used to promote caution against ‘impostors’, such as ‘Triumph and Disaster’.
- The imperatives issued do not feel commanding, but friendly and good-natured: ‘don’t deal in lies... don’t give way to hating’. The focus is on avoiding excesses in life (notice they are largely inner qualities and values, as material excesses are only briefly mentioned: ‘winnings’). The advice is to approach all things moderately, with a degree of patience and maturity.

“Prayer Before Birth” by Louis MacNeice

This poem is in the form of a prayer from an unborn child to be protected from the threats and horrors of the world.

- The poem is in the first person, with a series of imperatives to God imploring his help. Each stanza follows a distinctive pattern of the voice stating how it is an unborn child (different aspects of this) and followed by an imperative in the form of one request (these are on the same line). The repetition of the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘Me’ may be felt to suggest the increasingly desperate pleas of the unborn child. The poem has the tone and rhythm of a prayer. The poem is written in free verse.
- Imagery is used, such as the metaphor ‘cog in a machine’, to reflect the fact that the voice does not want to be just an automaton or mindless tool of the state. The simile ‘like thistledown thither’ suggests the way that human beings can be pushed haphazardly by turns and twists of fate or the acts of others. The use of assonance in ‘black racks rack’ is emphatic in its bleak sound, representing a lack of hope for the future which may be like a form of torture.

- The use of animals and the supernatural reference to the 'ghoul' suggests the threat posed by predators and creatures of myth. The bat is described as 'bloodsucking', which has connotations of vampirism and gothic horror. Alliteration, for example in 'grass to grow' and 'trees to talk', suggests a childish innocence and a hope that the future will be kind.
- A semantic field of inhumanity is created in language such as: 'dragoon me into a lethal automaton' and 'dissipate my entirety'. The unborn child prays to salvage some humanity in a hostile world. The concluding two lines of the poem suggest that the 'voice' would rather be killed before birth than be made into 'stone'.

"Blessing" by Imtiaz Dharker (NEW)

In a dry, poor country, a water pipe bursts and the people rejoice in collecting water in whatever receptacles are to hand.

- Free verse is used to mirror the outpouring of water and emotion of the people that happens when the municipal pipe bursts. The lengths of lines vary, creating an informal rhythm. Enjambment is used to create a lyrical, magical quality while other lines are end-stopped. Combined with the use of caesura, to break up the lines into short units, the poet uses these structural techniques to capture the tension and then the rush of excitement caused by the event. The use of listing creates a sense of all of the people, with their different types of pot, all crowding in on the water: it was a scene that had a sense of universality since all were affected.
- Onomatopoeia conveys a sense of immediacy and realism that emphasises the excitement and intensity of the event. The use of 'cracks' in the opening line contrasts with 'splash' in the second stanza to demonstrate the dryness of the ground against the precious water. As the pipe bursts, the word 'crashes' captures the idea of water gushing out.
- Imagery is used to create vivid descriptions of the scene. The simile 'skin cracks like a pod' stresses the dryness of the earth, while the metaphor 'silver crashes to the ground' emphasises the preciousness and metallic colour of the water. The metaphor 'liquid sun' has connotations of water sparkling and reflecting the light. The water itself is the 'blessing', which is described as 'singing'. This mixture of the senses offers a spiritual sense, confirming that the outpouring of water is like the answer to prayers.
- The universality of the need for water is expressed in the reference to 'every man woman child for streets around', which emphasises that this is important to all parts of humanity. The alliteration in 'polished to perfection' conveys a sense of brilliance and flawlessness in this scene.

“Search for my Tongue” by Sujata Bhatt (NEW)

The poem is about cultural identity. The poet uses English now that she lives in Britain but still thinks and dreams about the Gujarati language that is her mother tongue.

- The poem is divided into three parts, reflecting the poet’s divided identity. The opening stanza is in the first person, creating an informal tone that draws the reader into the poet’s dilemma. The use of ‘you’ in the opening line suggests personal engagement. The poem starts in English, moves to Gujarati and back to English again, the third stanza being a translation of the earlier Gujarati.
- Extended metaphors are used to show the conflict between the two languages. The idea of the tongue that would ‘rot and die in your mouth’ is graphic and shocking. The repetition of ‘rot’ is horrific and emphatic. It conveys the poet’s feelings of inner conflict when trying to reconcile her new English language with her mother tongue.
- The extended tongue metaphor is used again in the third stanza, but this time it is likened to a flower: ‘the bud opens in my mouth’. This is a much more agreeable image with connotations of life; it offers a contrast to the imagery of the first stanza.
- The poet refers to ‘Gujarati’, her childhood language, as her ‘mother tongue’. This suggests she prefers it and considers it a richer, more valuable language. The use of real Gujarati words brings the language alive in the poem and emphasises its sounds and cadences for the reader. It may also suggest the idea of strangeness in language to those who are unfamiliar with it.

“Half-past two” by U A Fanthorpe

A young school child is kept behind by his teacher but cannot comprehend the time. When his teacher realises she has forgotten him, she dismisses him straight away.

- An eleven-stanza, free verse poem of equal line length written in the third (and occasionally first) person singular. These small three-lined ‘chunks’ of narrative, aided by enjambment, resemble the small boy’s tendency to compartmentalise his day into time modules, as mirrored in Fanthorpe’s presentation of his words, which lack spaces.
- The fairy tale opening ‘Once upon a’ builds our expectations of a narrative and links perfectly to a child’s experience at primary school, aptly delivered in a child-like tone. This is one technique Fanthorpe uses to encourage us to identify with the boy’s experiences and see the world through his eyes.
- Fanthorpe’s language choices match the vocabulary stereotypically heard in primary schools (‘cross...wicked’) and help locate our imaginations within that setting. The lack of spaces in the boy’s language, expressed as compound words such as ‘Gettinguptime’, communicate his interpretation of their visual representation, as this is exactly how he hears these words spoken. Stanza six marks a move away from conversational to more poetic language, with the personification in ‘little eyes...two long legs’ and the onomatopoeic ‘click’. Yet despite the elevated mood of this verse, the language still remains child-like in tone, as the vocabulary demonstrates a way of teaching the time.

- Enjambement carries the element of fantasy introduced here into the next two verses, as if we too are soaring with his imagination ‘once upon a ... time for ... escaped’. The pattern of four repetitions of ‘into’ appeals to our senses of smell, sound (with the oxymoron ‘silent noise’) and touch, retaining the dream-like quality already introduced, as if he himself is daydreaming.

“Piano” by D H Lawrence

A man reminisces about an event from his childhood when he hears a woman singing.

- The uniformity of this poem, with its rhyming couplets, equal number of lines per verse and regular syllable count, matches the sense of harmony and security the childhood memories bring. Despite the hints of negativity shown by the words ‘insidious... betrays... weeps’, the rhyme and rhythm remain upbeat, reminiscent of the many references to music and its power to uplift.
- The narrator’s description of his mother in line four, though short, speaks volumes. His relationship with her is a physically close one, ‘pressing’, and suggests a devoted bonding. Her feet are ‘poised’, implying elegance, sophistication, dignity and precision, and her mood is one of happy ‘smiles’.
- Allusions to sound are echoed throughout the poem and in the first stanza the calm of ‘Softly’ is contrasted with the powerfully, musical onomatopoeic ‘boom of the tingling strings’ (which is enhanced and prolonged by the internal rhyme), as he advances in his memory. This technique is later repeated in ‘tinkling’ in stanza two. Song is a powerful tool here (further evoked in ‘insidious mastery of song’), capable of transporting him into the happiness of his childhood ‘taking me back... vista of years’.
- The narrator recognises in the final stanza that he can no longer ‘be a man’ because of the emotions he feels: ‘my manhood is cast/Down in the flood of remembrance’. He is overwhelmed by the unstoppable waves of emotion he has experienced, emotion that is intensified by the use of the present tense throughout the poem, and is inconsolable: ‘I weep’. He is pulled away from the current musical scene he is experiencing as a man, back into childhood associations that are the more powerful.

“Hide and Seek” by Vernon Scannell

A young boy finds out that his friends have left him alone while playing hide and seek.

- The poem is written in free verse in one single stanza. This captures the anecdotal tone of the poem. The narrator is the child who is hiding and it is his inner thoughts and voice that are heard as he tries to work out what to do. The poet uses direct speech to convey a sense of immediacy in the poem: ‘I’m ready! Come and find me!’ The child narrator invites empathy in readers and may prompt thoughts about their own childhood experiences.
- Imagery is used in the form of personification: ‘the cold bites through your coat’,

presenting the discomfort of the child's hiding place. His physical comfort is shared by the reader's unease that he has in fact been abandoned by his friends. Alliteration is also used to create this effect: 'dark, damp smell of sand.'

- Assonance creates a sense of the sound that the other children make. They cannot be seen as, in the boy's hiding place, they are out of his line of sight. Use of 'stumbles', 'mutters' and 'scuffle' are examples that show the sounds as the children move around. Sibilance is used in 'seaside' and 'salty' to suggest other childhood experiences.
- At the end of the poem, the phrase 'the darkening garden watches' personifies the child's surroundings in an almost sinister way as he realises that he is alone and learns a lesson about friendship and betrayal. The question: 'But where are they who sought you?' ends the poem with a reflective and somewhat pessimistic tone.

"Sonnet 116" by William Shakespeare

This poem reflects on the nature of love as an enduring quality, considering what love is and what it is not.

- The conventional form of the Shakespearian sonnet is followed. The poem is 14 lines long – subdivided into three quatrains (four lines each) and a rhyming couplet. Each line is constructed of 10 syllables (iambic pentameter). The poem ends with a rhyming couplet. The volta, in the final couplet, is the sonnet's final turn of thought, stating that if what the poet says about love is not true: 'I never writ, nor no man ever loved'.
- Personification is used to explore the nature of true love that does not change even if the circumstances around it do, looking 'on tempests, and is never shaken'. It is also described metaphorically in: 'It is the star to every wandering bark.' ('Bark' comes from an old French word for boat, 'barque'.)
- 'Love's not Time's Fool' once again uses personification to describe love. Time is also personified here with the later reference to 'Within his bending sickle's compass come', aligning time with the figure of Death in the form of the Grim Reaper. This argues that love is not defeated or changed by death.
- Alliteration is used in 'Love is not love' and 'compass come' – this adds emphasis to the poet's message of love as an immovable, intransigent quality that cannot be altered if it is true. A semantic field of measurement is evident in references to time, height and compass. This suggests the idea that, while people may try to measure love, it is not possible to quantify it if the love is genuine.

“La Belle Dame Sans Merci” by John Keats

A knight falls in love with a mysterious young woman (or faery) who charms him but then leaves him alone and desperate to see her again.

- The poem is in the form of a ballad, a traditional or heroic story focused on a specific event. Medieval ballads often dealt with mystery and the supernatural (relevant here as the Romantics were interested in this aspect). The rhyme scheme follows the common ABCB pattern used in ballads, conveying the dramatic romance of the story effectively. It is organised into 12 quatrains with a rhythm of iambic tetrameter, but the final line in each stanza is just four syllables.
- Flower imagery is used to convey a number of aspects in the poem. In the third stanza, it is the ‘lily on thy brow’ that suggests that the knight is pale and possibly ill. The lily is a flower of death, so a suggestion of fear and mortality lingers around this metaphor. The ‘fading rose’ also suggests that he is losing all colour in his cheeks. References to ‘garlands’ and ‘bracelets’ later in the poem suggest romance and love.
- A semantic field of dreaming and sleep is evident in language such as ‘slumber’d on the moss’ and ‘The latest dream I ever dream’d’, which gives the poem a sense of illusion and unreality. It is never fully clear what the knight genuinely experiences and is open to a number of different interpretations. The warning he receives from the ‘pale Kings and princes too’ is sinister and presents a change in tone from the passion and romance of earlier stanzas.
- Alliteration is used to emphasise the gifts of nature offered by the young woman to the knight: ‘roots of relish sweet’, magical gifts offering a sensory experience of taste as well as sight. The references to ‘honey’ and ‘manna’ are related to heaven, suggesting that the knight’s experiences with this woman are close to the divine. These references link closely to the fact that she is a ‘faery’, not a ‘normal woman’: the magical/supernatural elements are central to the woman’s presentation.

“Poem at Thirty-Nine” by Alice Walker

A woman remembers her father who died and what she learnt and appreciated about him.

- Free verse matches the mood of this six-stanza poem, as Walker’s tone is quite informal and conversational (yet coupled with lively poetic phrases), flowing freely on the page as she flits from memories in the past to her subsequent actions in the present. Enjambment appears more in some verses than others, as at times her thoughts are more spontaneous, whilst at others she uses punctuation consciously to pause and reflect on her father.
- The direct opening line ‘How I miss my father’ is echoed later in the fourth stanza with the reinforcement of an exclamation mark. Both lines are the only ones in the poem to appear as full sentences, highlighting the sadness she continues to feel at his loss. This repeated euphemism for death (along with ‘before the end’) serves to comfort her as, despite the fact his death could have happened several years before, the pain of bereavement is still deeply felt.

- The word 'beating' has connotations of violence and brutality. Yet she does not judge her father and commends the advice he gave her as being honest, highlighted by the alliteration 'taught...telling the truth'. Ironically she applies the word 'grieved' to her father, not herself, as she feels guilty at her past actions and how they must have upset him during his life.
- The simile 'He cooked like a person/dancing/in a yoga meditation' reflects the joy and passion her father felt whilst preparing food, which totally absorbed him; this conveys his delight in sharing it. Assonance across the verses 'cooked...good food' links her father's past actions with her present ones 'Now I look....cook'.

"War Photographer" by Carol Ann Duffy

A world-weary war photographer processes photographs from a war zone and relives the horror of his experiences.

- The poem is written in regular sestets (six-line stanzas), reflecting the idea of a man trying to make sense of scenes of confusion and slaughter. The regular rhyme scheme – abbcdd – complements this in its predictability in the face of horror and violence of war. A third person voice lends a sense of detachment to the atrocities that may reflect what the photographer himself experiences
- Imagery is used in the sibilant metaphor 'spools of suffering', aligning the rolls of film to their contents – photographs of horror and grief. A simile, 'as though this were a church', likens the darkroom to a place of worship. The softly glowing light suggests a sombre seriousness and sense of spirituality.
- Rural England and its 'ordinary pain' are juxtaposed with the famous names of war zones: 'Belfast. Beirut. Phnom Penh.' Later, the apathy of the newspaper readers who see the photographer's images is exposed with a tone of anger and bitter irony: 'The reader's eyeballs prick with tears between the bath and pre-lunch beers.'
- The horrors of the photographer's work are reflected in imagery: 'fields which don't explode beneath the feet'. The pictures are presented in the moving abstract: 'A hundred agonies in black and white.' In the first stanza, the metaphor 'All flesh is grass' starkly presents the physical realities of war and its brutality.

"The Tyger" by William Blake

The poem deals with the forces of nature and the role of God or perhaps another creator in creating a fearsome creature like a tiger alongside other creatures.

- The poem has a strongly formal structure, written in rhyming couplets over six quatrains. The rhythm is largely trochaic, which supports a steady and powerful tone. The symmetrical structure of the poem mirrors the 'fearful symmetry' of the tiger and strongly suggests the existence of an omniscient creator of the universe. The first stanza and the last are identical, making the poem cyclical in nature.

- Alliteration reinforces the portrayal of the tiger: 'burning bright'. This metaphor uses the plosive 'b' sound to emphasise the tiger's power and vitality. The use of the question: 'What immortal hand or eye can frame thy fearful symmetry?' expresses the inability of mortals to fathom the power of beings that could create something as awe-inspiring as the tiger. The questions continue through the poem, drawing the reader into the metaphysical debate.
- The imagery of a blacksmith's workshop is extended in the fourth stanza. References to 'hammer', 'furnace' and 'anvil' create a more mythological scene of heaven with divine powers labouring in physically demanding conditions to create life such as the tiger. The tiger is contrasted with the Lamb, subject of one of Blake's 'Songs of Innocence', in the penultimate stanza. The poet questions how it is possible that a power that can make a tiger can also make a lamb as the creatures are so different.
- Personification is used in 'When the stars threw down their spears', creating the sense that the universe is aware and sentient. There is a sense that all living things are connected in some way. The alliterative 'distant deeps and skies' earlier in the poem supports this idea.

"My Last Duchess" by Robert Browning

A duke negotiates with a visitor for a new bride, showing him around his home and collection of art. He tells the visitor about his last duchess who, it is implied, he has had killed.

- The poem is in the form of a dramatic monologue. It is a long speech, structured as if it is a conversation between the duke and his visitor. We learn towards the end of the poem that he is an envoy/ambassador from a count and that the duke is discussing the dowry and a marriage to the count's daughter.
- The poem is written in iambic pentameters and uses rhyming couplets to convey a clear and steady tone. It is the cold detachment of this tone that makes the duke's words chilling for the reader. Enjambement is used to enhance the speaker's pomposity and self-importance.
- The painting of the duchess serves to personify the now-dead woman. 'The depth and passion of its earnest glance' brings her to life and invites sympathy with her. The duke's complaint that the duchess had vivacity and a love of life that was not always focused on him is expressed through the metaphor for her blushes: 'that spot of joy'. The reference to 'half-flush that dies along her throat' develops the idea of colour and life but is countered by the sinister reference to death.
- Questions are used to present the conversation between the duke and his visitor while 'I gave commands' and 'all smiles stopped together' are euphemisms for the fact that the duke had her put to death because her vivacious and outgoing nature angered and frustrated him.
- As the poem ends, the duke moves on to some of the other pieces in his collection, serving further to emphasise how the duke saw the last duchess as a possession: her picture is hidden behind curtains that the duke controls. Alliteration emphasises the duke's statue of the mythological god: 'Notice Neptune'. Ironically he is 'taming a seahorse', paralleling the relationship between the duke and his 'last Duchess'.

“Half-caste” by John Agard (NEW)

In this poem a man protests against the demeaning manner in which his racial heritage is described.

- The poem is free verse but the use of repetition, occasional rhyme and lack of punctuation give an emphatic rhythm and fast pace. The opening and closing 3 line stanzas stand apart from the rest; this gives added impact to the initial, absurd image of the speaker ‘standing on one leg’ and his final, forceful request for the listener/reader to return and hear ‘de other half of my story’. The opening line, ‘Excuse me’, whilst sounding apologetic, conceals the caustic humour and irony that is present throughout the poem as the speaker presents his arguments that are intended to persuade the reader to be more open-minded and respectful of others.
- The title ‘Half-caste’ immediately suggests something incomplete, but Agard goes on to present mixture as an essential part of great art. He ridicules those who use the term half-caste with his references to ‘when Picasso mix red an green is a half-caste canvas’ and Tchaikovsky ‘mix a black key wid a white key is a half-caste symphony’, suggesting how combining can lead to creative masterpieces. Further satirical humour is employed in the comment about English weather but the tone becomes insistently serious as the speaker moves through the absurdities of listening with ‘half of mih ear’ and looking with ‘half of mih eye’, to the powerful and emotive image of ‘I half-caste human being cast half a shadow’, implying that he is not considered to be a whole person. The closing instruction to the listeners to return the next day ‘wid de whole of yu mind’ turns the idea of ‘incompleteness’ on to them.
- Throughout the poem the narrator addresses the audience in a confrontational way, challenging their judgements with the repeated command to ‘Explain yuself wha yu mean’. The phonetic spelling increases the awareness of the speaker’s voice and his insistence on being answered draws in the audience and lends a mocking energy to his voice.
- Much of the poem is written in Caribbean dialect (Creole) but there are also a number of lines that are written in Standard English which clearly emphasise how the narrator is of mixed heritage and illustrate his verbal dexterity.

“Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night” by Dylan Thomas

The poet grieves for his father’s decline in health and closeness to death, urging him to fight against dying rather than giving up and letting it overtake him.

- The poem is a villanelle, consisting of a rigid ABA ABA ABA ABA ABAA rhyme scheme. There are 19 lines spread over three five-line stanzas and one four-line stanza. Iambic pentameter sets the rhythm for the poem. The tight structure of the poem matches its thematic focus and overarching message about ‘raging’ against death and the dying of the light.
- The metaphors of ‘lightning’ and ‘meteors’ demonstrate the idea of strength in the face of death. Dylan Thomas wants his father to fight against the inevitable demise that awaits him and strive to fight against it. Sunrise and sunset are developed as extended

metaphors for the beginning and end of life. The repetition of 'Do not go gentle' is emphatic and drives the message home – that it is better to struggle and prevail than to give in to death. The different examples of types of men facing death provide a range of examples for the poet's father to emulate.

- 'Grave men' is a play on words to describe the seriousness of men on their death beds. The oxymoron 'blinding sight' is used to describe the state at the end of life.
- Contradiction is evident in the oxymoron 'Curse, bless me' to reflect the poet's view of the paradox of death. He advocates putting it off but, ironically, death is inevitable and inescapable. He refers to his father's 'fierce tears', the adjective describing the struggle and strength required to battle against death.

"Remember" by Christina Rossetti

The theme of grief after the imagined death of a loved one (the narrator) is explored. Initially the narrator advocates his thinking of her, but then advises that it is better for him to forget her so that he can get on with his life.

- The sonnet form is employed, with the use of an ABBA rhyme scheme twice, but then, instead of following the pattern of using CDE twice, the pattern changes to CDDECE. This is done as the meaning and message of the poem change in the sestet to the idea of forgetting and being happy, rather than instructions to remember, which is the message of the octave.
- Repetition is an important feature of this sonnet, such as 'Remember...gone...no more'. The first 'Remember me' is addressed directly to her loved one and, although it is an imperative, it does not feel in any way imposing or commanding. The personal pronouns signal this is a very personal, emotional poem. The euphemism for death, 'gone away', is sadly touching and its power is heightened by the addition of distance: 'gone far'. Rossetti's metaphor 'silent land' portrays a calm, peaceful afterlife and serves to lessen the pain of her departure for him.
- The alliteration of 'hold me by the hand' makes clear their relationship and hints at the physical contact that will be lost, coupled with the monosyllables in line three which add an air of finality. The poignant tone is increased here by the allusion to their future, with even the possibility of a wedding 'that you planned'.
- Rossetti's punctuation break of a semicolon in line seven indicates the change of meaning she advocates in the sestet, as she hints at an unselfish love, with the potentiality of forgetting her. She would rather he forget her and be happy than wallow in grief for her – 'darkness and corruption'. The ending is therefore optimistic as the poem allows for the opportunity of moving on and forgetting, in contrast to the opening that requested his remembrances of her.

Understanding assessment

This section aims to provide practical ways for students to understand the central focal points of each of the Assessment Objectives, with reference to examination-style questions.

Assessment Objective 1

AO1	Demonstrate a close knowledge and understanding of texts, maintaining a critical style and presenting an informed personal engagement	30%
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How to teach

It is important that students engage on a personal level with the text for AO1, as it is through this that they will develop the confidence and skill to construct pertinent and focused arguments. Familiarity with the text will be vital in ensuring that there is ample knowledge and understanding to respond to any question. Reading can be done in a number of ways, from personal private reading to small- group reading or even listening to audio versions of a novel or play while following the text (very good for those for whom English is not their first language). Keeping a reading journal is a good idea so that thoughts, ideas, drawings and quotations can be recorded as the text is read.

Exam question

Explore the theme of power in 'Of Mice and Men'.

You must consider the context of the novel in your answer.

(AO1) Responses may include:

- the ranch is presented as having a clear power structure. At the top are the boss and his son Curley. At the bottom are Curley's wife and those she regards as below her: Crooks, Lennie and Candy
- the boss has economic power, being able to hire and fire. He is, reports Candy, 'sore as hell' when Lennie and George are late. However, we are told that he is generous with whisky at Christmas and Candy tells us he is a 'pretty nice fella'. He only appears to abuse his power with Crooks, giving him 'hell when he's mad', but his absolute power stresses the vulnerability of itinerant workers
- his son Curley is a more direct threat to the men, always being ready to demonstrate his boxing skills against those bigger than him and showing jealousy and aggression where his wife is concerned. Carlson and Slim stand up to him, despite the threat of being 'canned', and he is humiliated by Lennie's physical power. When his wife is killed, however, the ranch hands support him and form a group to hunt Lennie down
- George has intellectual power over Lennie and tells Slim that he has abused this power in the past. Now, though, he attempts to protect Lennie. On the other hand, Lennie is cunning enough to exercise the power of emotional blackmail over George

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- the least powerful are Candy, old and disabled and on the edge of his useful life, and Crooks, a black man in a society riven by racial inequality. Crooks' attempt to assert himself is easily countered by the threats of Curley's wife who, as a woman, is also severely disadvantaged
- Slim, 'the prince of the ranch', has an almost metaphysical power and 'calm, Godlike eyes'.

This exam question will assess both AO1 and AO4. The highlighted section of the mark scheme below indicate the elements of AO1 specifically.

Level	Mark	AO1 Demonstrate a close knowledge and understanding of texts, maintaining a critical style and presenting an informed personal engagement (20 marks) AO4 Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written (20 marks)
	0	No rewardable material
Level 1	1-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The response is simple with little evidence of personal engagement or critical style ■ Limited knowledge and understanding of the text ■ There is little comment on the relationship between text and context ■ Limited use of relevant examples in support
Level 2	9-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The response may be largely narrative with some evidence of personal engagement or critical style ■ Some knowledge and understanding of the text ■ There is some comment on the relationship between text and context ■ Some use of relevant examples in support
Level 3	17-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The response shows relevant personal engagement and an appropriate critical style ■ Sound knowledge and understanding of the text ■ There is relevant comment on the relationship between text and context ■ Use of clearly relevant examples in support
Level 4	25-32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The response shows thorough personal engagement and a sustained critical style ■ Thorough knowledge and understanding of the text ■ There is a detailed awareness of the relationship between text and contexts ■ Use of fully relevant examples in support
Level 5	33-40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The response shows assured personal engagement and a perceptive critical style ■ Assured knowledge and understanding of the text ■ Understanding of the relationship between text and context is integrated convincingly into the response ■ Discriminating use of relevant examples in support

Suggested activities for teaching AO1

Activity 1: Silent debate

It can be hard for all students to contribute to class discussion, so some points go unheard or debate is led by only a few who are confident enough to express their views. The silent debate offers all students the opportunity to contribute and extend their learning. This is particularly effective in engaging personal views and developing the ability of students to defend these.

You will need sugar paper, different coloured marker pens and a range of statements about the text you are studying.

- Inform students of the protocols of silent debate: no talking at all, just writing comments and adding to the views of others while the debate is taking place.
- Put students into groups of four or five.
- Write a statement or question related to the text on each piece of sugar paper. Considering the 'Of Mice and Men' question above, examples might be: 'Curley is the most powerful man on the ranch' or 'Why is physical power important?' or 'Does the power balance shift as the novel progresses?' Spread the sheets on tables around the classroom.
- Students spend 5 minutes at each table, silently considering the statement or question and writing their responses.
- As they move from table to table, they should not only make new comments, but comment on the points made by those who have recently commented. Points may be awarded to any student who can add a relevant quotation to the discussion (so long as it is accurate). Gradually the piece of sugar paper fills up with comments.
- When all groups have visited each piece of sugar paper, silently writing comments, they take a seat at the one they have stopped at. They discuss the comments and come up with a core list of the seven or eight most useful points, which they present to the rest of the group.

Activity 2: 'Marketplace' approach

Research shows that people remember 90% of what they teach to others, so this is a good way of promoting learning about characters and themes. Knowledge and understanding of text can be conveyed in a 'marketplace' style of approach.

- Students are given a character from the text to be studied. They are to become an expert on this character. Time is given in class to research and notes from reading journals can be used to support. iPads, if available, copies of the text, websites and study guides can be used (some may like to draw on an A3 sheet the shape of the character on which to write notes). Students spend at least one lesson and a homework session working on their character. If stimulus is needed, 'who, what, when, where, how, why' questions can be used.

- In most situations, you will have three or four students in each class studying the same character. In the marketplace lesson, they will sit together to offer their information to other students in the group. The challenge is that, by the end of the lesson, every student will have a comprehensive set of notes on each character in the text being studied.
- One person from each of these groups visits each of the other groups while two remain behind to host the visiting students. Keep it sharp and allocate 5 – 10 minutes for each cycle of 'teaching'. The visitors collect information in a notebook where a page is reserved for each character.
- In each group, the students who have left, to be taught about other characters by different groups seated at different tables, return to the home group and must convey what they have learnt to those who remained behind. In this way, students take responsibility for gathering, selecting and relaying information.

Activity 3: Hexagonal learning

Using hexagons is a good way to connect ideas and draw on the varied knowledge base of students. You can write on the hexagons yourself or leave them for students to fill in. In the example of 'Of Mice and Men', students use their knowledge to demonstrate how the points on the hexagons link together. This is a means of showing and developing deeper levels of understanding.

- The hexagon cards fit together to make different links.
- Students can work independently, in pairs or small groups finding different ways of linking the hexagons. This ensures that they develop a relational understanding of what they are studying. They explain why they arranged the hexagons in particular ways.
- Consider making sets of laminated hexagons that can be wiped clean after use.
- Hexagons can also be used for key quotations to link or revise sequences of events in the text being studied.

Assessment Objective 2

AO2	Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects	40%
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How to teach

AO2 can prove challenging for students and it is helpful to approach it in a way that draws a spotlight on finer features of small amounts of text rather than looking at larger sections. Looking closely at word level and sentence level can help with language, while structure and form can be considered from a broader perspective. It is important to understand the difference between form and structure. In this instance, the form is that of a play and the structure relates to the pattern of acts and scenes, but also takes in the pace and manner in which the events unfold and characters develop. A glossary of key terminology is helpful but teaching the use of these, and how they are applied in context, is vital to avoid 'technique spotting'. Ensuring that students are familiar with parts of speech is helpful in building their

ability to respond to AO2 requirements. Sometimes students find writing about language, form and structure quite difficult and alien to their earlier experience of studying text. Use of exemplar material for modelling can help to demonstrate how this can be done.

Exam question

Explore Priestley's presentation of Gerald in the play.

You must consider language, form and structure in your answer.

(AO2) Responses may include:

- Language: as the play opens, Gerald is described as *'very much the easy well-bred man-about-town.'*
- Structure: his tendency to protect himself and his interests is apparent by Act 3 where he shows his true nature and denies his involvement in Eva's death: *'there's no more real evidence we did than there was that that chap was a police inspector'*
- Form: he takes full control of the situation: *'He looks around triumphantly at them.'* In this situation he becomes similar to Birling: *'a man has to mind his own business and look after himself'*
- Language: he dispels doubts with short, confident comments: *'That's right. You've got it. How do we know any girl killed herself today?'* Finally he convinces the family that it was a hoax: *'Gerald, you've argued this very cleverly'*
- Language/structure: his final words in the play are to Sheila, brushing his behaviour towards both Sheila and Daisy to one side: *'Everything's all right now, Sheila. (Holds up the ring.) What about the ring?'* showing that he is not unduly worried about the heartache his behaviour has caused
- Form: as the play progresses Gerald comes across as confident but lacks moral grounding because of his upper-class life.

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		??
Level 1	1-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The response is simple with little evidence of personal engagement or critical style ■ Limited knowledge and understanding of the text ■ Minimal identification of language, form and structure ■ Limited use of relevant examples in support
Level 2	7-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The response may be largely narrative with some evidence of personal engagement or critical style ■ Some knowledge and understanding of the text ■ Some comment on the language, form and structure ■ Some use of relevant examples in support
Level 3	13-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The response shows relevant personal engagement and an appropriate critical style ■ Sound knowledge and understanding of the text ■ Sound understanding of language, form and structure ■ Use of clearly relevant examples in support
Level 4	19-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The response shows thorough personal engagement and a sustained critical style ■ Thorough knowledge and understanding of the text ■ Sustained analysis of language, form and structure ■ Use of fully relevant examples in support
Level 5	25-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The response shows assured personal engagement and a perceptive critical style ■ Assured knowledge and understanding of the text ■ Cohesive evaluation language, form and structure ■ Discriminating use of relevant examples in support

Suggested activities for teaching AO2

Activity 1: Exploding language

This is a perspective activity in which students are shown or given a key word from a quotation in the text being studied. An example from the question above would be Gerald's use of the word 'business'. At the start of the play he uses it as a euphemism to describe Eva Smith's suicide: 'suicide business'. Later he mentions 'this business' ('this' being a demonstrative adjective), meaning the specific, embarrassing mess the family is caught up in.

- Students are given the word 'business' and must 'explode' it by devising as many links and ideas that they can link to this idea. This is a very good way also of teaching the term 'connotation'.

- When they have come up with as many as they can think of, put students into pairs and ask them to circle or highlight those that relate to Gerald Croft. Some quite original ideas can come from this.
- When they have a set of ideas, maybe five or six, ask them to find evidence by way of quotation and to explain how the word relates to an aspect of Gerald's character.
- They must write a sentence about how each quotation affects how the audience sees Gerald: for example 'suicide business' is a euphemism that suggests he is trying to lessen the seriousness of Eva's suicide and therefore distance himself from it. This might make an audience wonder why he is trying to brush it away. When they have several sentences, choose the best to share with the class.

Activity 2: SEED approach to writing about AO2

SEED is a development of the PEE (Point, Evidence, Explanation) approach used by many schools over the years. It helps students to structure their writing about AO2.

- Explain SEED to students

S – statement

E – evidence

E – explain

D – develop

- Select a paragraph from an exemplar essay where this approach can be seen (it is not an exact formula as the 'E' aspects can be swapped around and individual essay sentences can combine one or two parts of it.) The idea is that it offers a scaffold for students to use while their own analytical style is developing. Use a visualiser or copy the paragraph for students to highlight. Use four different coloured highlighters to show where the different parts of SEED are in the paragraph.

Example: Gerald is clearly an upper- class young man described as 'very much the easy well-bred man-about-town' early in the play. This suggests that Gerald is a cool and relaxed, upper- class individual. The use of the compound noun 'man-about-town', suggests to the audience that Gerald is a sophisticated man who enjoys a cosmopolitan life of restaurants and nightlife.

- Students practise writing their own SEED style paragraphs.

Activity 3: Tracking graphs

This approach uses a mathematical tactic to consider how structure works in different texts. It does not have to be a 'tension tracker'; it can be a 'sympathy tracker' or a 'violence tracker', for example.

- For every act or chapter of the text you are reading, allocate a rating for the aspect you are focusing on. Use the range of 10 through to 1, where 10 is the most extreme example of this feature in the text and 1 is the least. In a play with only three acts, it helps to break each act up into two halves.
- Chart these on a graph with the x axis numbered as chapters or scenes and the y axis the rating you have given that part of the play. Plot the graph and join with a line. This should reveal an interesting pattern which offers the teacher the opportunity to introduce structural terminology such as: anticlimax or dénouement.
- Students annotate the graph with specific points from the text they are studying.
- Ask them to compare their graphs to see if there are differences and similarities between interpretations. These produce excellent springboards for discussion and consideration of varying viewpoints when considering AO2.

Assessment Objective 3

AO3	Explore links and connections between texts	10%
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How to teach

Comparing, contrasting and making links can be approached in a number of ways. Visual approaches are usually effective and images can be used alongside words to encourage students to see the links between texts. Students must know the poems well before comparisons are attempted, but often these will arise as a matter of course from study of the *Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology*.

Exam question

Reread *Blessing* and *War Photographer*.

Compare the ways the writers present powerful images in *Blessing* and *War Photographer*.

You should make reference to language, form and structure.

Support your answer with examples from the poems.

(AO3) Responses may include:

- both poems explore the way events affect people caught up in them
- there is a strong contrast between the images in the two poems: in the former, excitement, rapid movement, joy; in the latter, stillness, pain, suffering
- both poems use lists to build up their images: in *Blessing*, there is the varied list of containers; in *War Photographer*, there is a list of war-torn cities from various parts of the world
- both poems use a simile in the opening lines to strengthen the visual impact: 'like a pod', 'as though this were a church'
- colour effects are found in both poems to reinforce meaning and atmosphere: 'silver', 'red'
- both poems include social comment – the effect of events on the societies concerned: unexpected water for a drought-ridden area in one poem and the apathy of people in the West towards war-torn countries far away.

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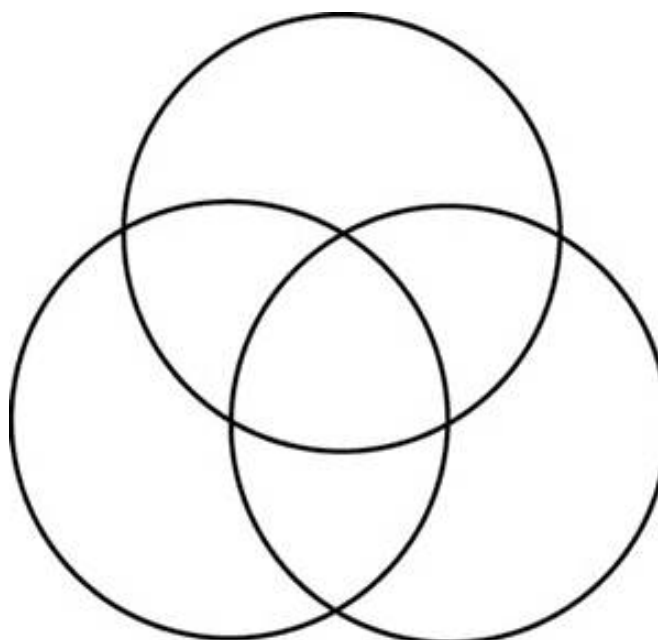
This exam question will assess both AO2 and AO3. The highlighted section of the mark scheme below indicate the elements of AO3 specifically.

Level	Mark	AO2 Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects (15 marks) AO3 Explore links and connections between texts (15 marks)
	0	No rewardable material
Level 1	1-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There is little or no comparison of the two poems with limited use of relevant examples to support the response ■ The response is simple and the identification of language, form and structure used by the writer is minimal ■ Limited use of relevant examples to support the response
Level 2	7-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are some underdeveloped comparisons and contrasts presented, with obvious similarities and/or differences between the poems and some use of relevant examples to support the response ■ The response is largely descriptive, with some comment on the language, form and structure used by the writer ■ Some use of relevant examples to support the response <p>NB: the mark awarded cannot progress beyond the top of Level 2 if only ONE poem has been considered</p>
Level 3	13-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The response compares and contrasts a range of points and considers some similarities and/or differences between the poems, using clearly relevant examples ■ The response shows an understanding of the range of language, form and structure used by the writer and links these to their effect on the reader ■ Use of clearly relevant examples to support the response
Level 4	19-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The response compares and contrasts the poems effectively, considering a wide range of similarities and/or differences between the poems, using fully relevant examples ■ The response is focused and detailed, and the analysis of the language, form and structure used by the writer and their effect on the reader is sustained ■ Use of fully relevant examples to support the response
Level 5	25-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The response compares and contrasts the poems perceptively with a varied and comprehensive range of similarities and/or differences between the poems, using discriminating, relevant examples ■ The response is a cohesive evaluation of the interrelationship of the language, form and structure used by the writer and their effect on the reader ■ Discriminating use of relevant examples to support the response

Suggested activities for teaching

Activity 1: Use of the Venn diagram

- The Venn diagram (see the example of one given below, with overlapping circles) can be very helpful in drawing connections – you can start simple and then branch into more complex areas of theme, tone and technique. For example put metaphors, similes and personification in the outer sections. Quotations can be linked using arrows that attach to the bubbles. Various names are used for the Venn diagram – the ‘Double Bubble’ for example- but the strategy remains the same. Basically, students need to draw or be given a template of three overlapping spheres.
- Where they overlap is where the comparisons appear while the contrasting points are in the outlying sections.



- Larger versions on A3 paper can form classroom displays and can make use of images and symbols as well as words. To save money, A3 templates can be copied on A3 and laminated to wipe clean and reuse. This is good for growth and challenge as students can experiment with different ideas and formats.

Activity 2: ‘STYLIST’ grids

- Write the acronym STYLIST down the left- hand side of a 7-box table, either on computer or drawn by hand.
- S = subject, T = title, Y = your response, L = language, I = imagery, S = structure, T = technique
- Create a further two or three columns (depending on the focus) and a comparison grid is ready for students to complete and refer back .

Example

Subject	Powerful images	Powerful images	Compare/Contrast
Title	Blessing	War Photographer	
Your response	Uplifted and happy for the children who are enjoying the water. A sense of relief as the drought has in effect been broken by the water pipe bursting. The images create a powerful sense of celebration.	Disturbed and troubled by the images of horror developed in pictures and remembered by the war photographer. Angered by the lack of interest shown by the western readers of colour supplements	Very different response but both take the reader on a journey – one brief, the other panoramic, but both universal.
Language	The colour 'silver' has connotations of wealth and precious metals, even though the people are poor.	Use of colour such as the red glow of the darkroom and the fact that the pictures are in black and white.	Colour used in both poems but with different effects on reader. In 'Blessing' colour reflects wealth and well-being, while in 'War Photographer' it is disturbing.
Imagery	Simile used in opening line 'like a pod' emphasises the dryness of the place.	Simile used 'as though they were in a church' offers connotations of spirituality and reverence.	Use of imagery intensifies sensory response to the poems.
Structure	One stanza, free verse. The poem builds up in a crescendo of euphoria.	Organised into 4 stanzas of 6 lines – sestets. These support the powerful images in the dark, claustrophobic opening to a wide view from the aircraft at the end.	Very different structures but both take the reader on a journey - in 'Blessing' briefer than in 'War Photographer', reflected in the single-stanza structure.
Technique	Use of listing to build up a powerful image of the excitement about the water coming.	Use of listing war-torn cities to build up the sense that war is universal.	The listing is a similarity but it has different effects – in 'Blessing', it is used to build excitement while in 'War Photographer', it creates a sense that war is global.

Activity 3: Poem partners

This is an activity that is intended to engage students in an active and dynamic way with how two poems are similar and different.

- Each student takes one *Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology* poem as their 'home poem'. They write the title of their poem on a piece of paper and hold it up, wear the title on a sticky label or write it on a mini whiteboard.
- The teacher then reads out a statement – 'Find a poem that...' , with possible endings: explores the theme of love; uses personification; is organised into stanzas; gives hope for the future; uses alliteration; has an unusual voice, etc.
- Students must then find a partner in two minutes to match with. If there are odd poems left at the end, the students representing these poems must join with another odd one out and then work out a connection between them.
- After time is up, the teacher asks each pair to justify their matching. At early stages of studying the poetry, it may be good for students to carry the poems with them to check details before they match.
- The activity can become a game where students are able to switch once with a 'chance' card to see if they can find a more compatible poem for the statements.
- Afterwards, students may start again with a different statement and a different partner.

Assessment Objective 4

AO4	Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.	20%
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How to teach

The historical, social and cultural contexts in which the literary heritage texts were written are crucial to students' understanding of the characters and themes therein. It is important that students do not see context as an 'add on' that stands separate to their analysis. Literary context enables students to reach a deeper understanding of the text they are studying and to fully understand the motivation of characters.

Exam question

The Scarlet Letter

How does Hawthorne present Pearl in the novel?

You must consider language, form and structure and refer to the context of the play in your answer.

(AO4) Responses may include:

- to be born out of wedlock in the 17th century represented a great shame and sin. Women who gave birth to children out of wedlock were castigated by society, particularly among these strongly religious colonists who settled in Massachusetts after their arrival in America in 1620
- Puritan values and society were of great importance to Hawthorne because of his ancestors. He uses *The Scarlet Letter* to both criticise and praise their beliefs and ideas
- biblical allusions and imagery prevail in the novel with references to original sin, the garden of Eden and the *Parable of the Pearl* amongst others
- witchcraft and the belief in witches during the 17th century are key elements throughout the novel – Governor Bellingham's sister, Mistress Hibbins, was suspected of being a witch (Anne Hibbins was an actual person.) Both Hester and Pearl are persecuted for sin and related to the idea of witchcraft.

This exam question will assess both AO1, AO2 and AO4. The highlighted section of the mark scheme below indicate the elements of AO4 specifically.

Level	Mark	AO1 Demonstrate a close knowledge and understanding of texts, maintaining a critical style and presenting an informed personal engagement (10 marks) AO2 Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects (10 marks) AO4 Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written (10 marks)
	0	No rewardable material
Level 1	1-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The response is simple with little evidence of personal engagement or critical style ■ Limited knowledge and understanding of the text ■ Minimal identification of language, form and structure ■ There is little comment on the relationship between text and context ■ Limited use of relevant examples in support
Level 2	7-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The response may be largely narrative with some evidence of personal engagement or critical style ■ Some knowledge and understanding of the text ■ Some comment on the language, form and structure ■ There is some comment on the relationship between text and context ■ Some use of relevant examples in support
Level 3	13-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The response shows relevant personal engagement and an appropriate critical style ■ Sound knowledge and understanding of the text ■ Sound understanding of language, form and structure ■ There is relevant comment on the relationship between text and context ■ Use of clearly relevant examples in support
Level 4	19-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The response shows thorough personal engagement and a sustained critical style ■ Thorough knowledge and understanding of the text ■ Sustained analysis of language, form and structure ■ There is a detailed awareness of the relationship between text and contexts ■ Use of fully relevant examples in support
Level 5	25-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The response shows assured personal engagement and a perceptive critical style ■ Assured knowledge and understanding of the text ■ Cohesive evaluation language, form and structure ■ Understanding of the relationship between text and context is integrated convincingly into the response ■ Discriminating use of relevant examples in support

Suggested activities for teaching

Activity 1: Layers of impact

- This strategy involves using a stimulus to build up a layered picture of the context behind a text. An example is below, using a pearl that relates to the name of the child in 'The Scarlet Letter'

What questions would you like to ask?

What can you infer?

What does this source tell you for certain?

- The stimulus could be a photograph, a statistic, a year, an object, a quotation or a set of statistics.
- Students build their response through the layers; for example the source tells you for certain a pearl is perfectly formed and gleams in the light. It is small and precious. You can infer that the character of Pearl is precious even though she is deemed unclean and against God by the Puritan community. Possible questions to ask include: why does Hester call her daughter by this name? How does the parable of the pearl, which is told by Jesus in the Biblical gospels (the 'pearl of great price'), relate to the story?

Activity 2: Context and quotations

- This activity asks students to relate aspects of context to quotations and references from the text.
- Fold a piece of paper in half and half again to make a grid of eight squares. Divide the class in half and ask half the class to write a context detail in each of the eight boxes. An example from 'The Scarlet Letter' is below.

Puritans	New England	Witchcraft	marriage
pearls	The Bible	punishment	sin

- Students find a quotation to go with each one of the context points.

Activity 3: Out of context

- This activity develops the ability of students to think laterally about how characters are affected and motivated by context.
- Students are given an 'Imagine if...' scenario for example. Imagine if the Massachusetts Bay colonists were not Puritans. Students need to think about how the lives of Hester and Pearl would have been different. Students use consequence arrows to map the alternative outcomes and compare notes in pairs.

Unseen poetry guidance

It is recommended that students spend roughly 35 minutes on Section A of Paper 1, using approximately five minutes to read and annotate the given poem. The poem will be contemporary, dated post 1945. Students should be prepared for the unseen component by:

- knowing how to analyse the effectiveness of the poet's use of **descriptive skills, choice of language** and **use of structure and form**, giving supporting examples
- having a comprehensive understanding of poetic techniques
- being able to identify poetic features quickly and easily and evaluate how effective these are.

We suggest that written analysis should consider elements of form and structure, as well as the implied meaning behind the use of figurative language. Some consideration should be given to the themes and the implied message of the poem, with any comments fully supported with evidence from the text.

Students should work through the poem methodically focusing first on any observations regarding the ideas and themes and then considering which literary features support these observations. Comments regarding form and structure should continue to support the ideas and themes identified. Appropriate terminology should be used throughout.

Teachers may choose to source practice material from any genre or time period. However, we recommend that any poems selected are not excessive in length (no longer than one page in length, so that the length is similar to that of the unseen poems that will be set in the actual examination) and take into account the amount of time suggested for reading and annotation. Teachers may choose to use Edexcel poetry anthologies from previous years to source practice poems for students. When reviewing exam technique, we recommend that students practise under timed conditions and become accustomed to identifying themes, ideas and poetic techniques at speed. They should also relate their approach to the three bullet points that are standard in every unseen poetry question.

Delivery of the qualification - transferable skills

Why transferable skills?

Ensuring that International GCSE qualifications will help improve student outcomes through the acquisition of transferable skills, as well as subject content and skills, is a key aim for Pearson.

In recent years, higher education institutions and employers have consistently flagged the need for students to develop a range of transferable skills to enable them to respond with confidence to the demands of undergraduate study and the world of work.

Through our teaching materials and support offered we want to:

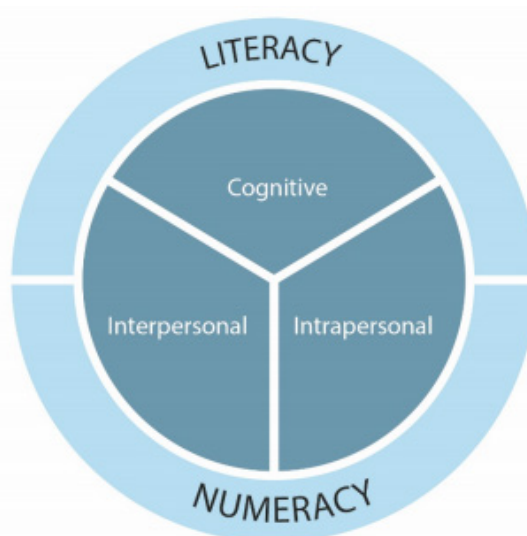
1. increase awareness of transferable skills that are already being assessed (for both students and teachers)
2. indicate where, for teachers, there are opportunities to teach additional skills that won't be formally assessed, but that would be of benefit to students.

What are transferable skills?

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines skills, or competencies, as 'the bundle of knowledge, attributes and capacities that can be learned and that enable individuals to successfully and consistently perform an activity or task and can be built upon and extended through learning.'^[1]

To support the design of our qualifications, the Pearson Research Team selected and evaluated seven global 21st-century skills frameworks. Following on from this process, we identified the National Research Council's (NRC) framework ^[2] as the most evidence-based and robust skills framework, and have used this as a basis for our adapted skills framework.

The framework includes cognitive, intrapersonal skills and interpersonal skills.



[1] (OECD (2012), Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives (2012):<http://skills.oecd.org/documents/OECDskillsStrategyFINALENG.pdf>)

[2] Koenig, J. A. (2011) Assessing 21st Century Skills: Summary of a Workshop, National Research Council)

What can I do if I want to see improved student outcomes through the development of transferable skills?

For each of our International GCSE subjects we will provide a subject-specific interpretation of each of the identified skills and a comprehensive mapping as to how these elements can be developed and where they link to assessment.

The skills have been interpreted for this qualification to ensure they are appropriate for the subject. All the skills identified are evident or accessible in the teaching, learning and/or assessment of the qualification. Some skills are directly assessed. Pearson materials will support you in identifying these skills and developing these skills in students.

Our editable scheme of work indicates, for each lesson, which skills could be acquired either through explicit assessment or through teaching and delivery.

Please refer to the Teaching and Learning section of the qualification web page for Pearson materials to support you.

Course planner

International GCSE English Literature

Two- year course planner

Planner at a glance: English Literature

Term	Year of study	Topic/Paper	Guided Learning Hours
1	Year 1	Modern drama	27
2	Year 1	Literary Heritage text	27
3	Year 1	Poetry Anthology	27
1	Year 2	Poetry Anthology and Modern Prose	27
2	Year 2	Poetry Anthology and Modern Prose	27
3	Year 2	Revision	-

Detailed Planner: English Literature

Term	Year of study	Topic/Paper	Guided Learning Hours	Notes
1	Year 1	<p>Modern Drama</p> <p>Understand the social, historical and cultural context of the piece of modern drama they are exploring</p> <p>(3-8) First section* of play</p> <p>(* NB: this division is a suggestion for a 3-act play. The most sensible division into sections will need to be adopted for the text chosen and the lessons adjusted. Topics to be dealt with would remain the same.)</p> <p>(3-4) Read through first section</p> <p>(5) Think about plot</p> <p>(6) Explore characters and their relationships</p> <p>(7) Identify key themes and consider the intentions of the writer in the use of these</p> <p>(8) Understand the nature and effect of form and structure in a drama text</p> <p>(9-14) Second section* of play</p> <p>(9-10) Read through second section</p> <p>(11) Think about plot development</p> <p>(12) Explore characters and their relationships</p> <p>(13) Identify key themes and consider the intentions of the writer in the use of these</p> <p>(14) Understand the nature and effect of form and structure in a drama text</p>	14	<p>Centres may use a DVD of a production (where available) to enrich students' understanding and visualisation but this must support the close study of the written text.</p> <p>It is also possible to make links between language analysis across International GCSE English Language and International GCSE English Literature and to develop oral skills through dramatisation or discussion.</p>

Term	Year of study	Topic/Paper	Guided Learning Hours	Notes
1	Year 1	Modern Drama (1-6) Third (final) section* of play (1-2) Read through third section (3) Think about plot development and dénouement (4) Explore characters and their relationships (5) Identify key themes and consider the intentions of the writer in the use of these (6) Understand the nature and effect of form and text (7-13) Considering response to play as a whole ■ Study the impact of key scenes ■ Consider the effect of the drama on the audience ■ Practise essay planning (Paper 2 or Paper 3). Practise exam skills and complete a practice exam question under timed conditions (Paper 2) ■ Decide coursework titles and discuss coursework assignment schedule (Paper 3)	13	
2	Year 1	Literary Heritage Text (1-2) Understand the social, historical and cultural context of the literary heritage text they are studying (3-8) First section* of Text (*as above, regarding most sensible divisions) (3-4) Read through first section (5) Think about plot (6) Explore characters and their relationships (7) Identify key themes and consider the intentions of the writer in the use of these (8) Understand the nature and effect of form and structure in a literary heritage text (9-14) Second section* of text (9-10) Read through second section (11) Think about plot development (12) Explore characters and their relationships (13) Identify key themes and consider the intentions of the writer in the use of these (14) Understand the nature and effect of form and structure in a literary heritage text	14	Centres may use a DVD of an adaptation of the literary heritage text (where available) to enrich students' understanding and visualisation but this must support the close study of the written text. It is also possible to make links between language analysis across International GCSE English Language and GCSE English Literature and to develop oral skills through presentations or discussion.

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Term	Year of study	Topic/Paper	Guided Learning Hours	Notes
2	Year 1	<p>Literary Heritage Text</p> <p>(1-6) Third (final) section* of text</p> <p>(1-2) Read through third section</p> <p>(3) Think about plot development and dénouement</p> <p>(4) Explore characters and their relationships</p> <p>(5) Identify key themes and consider the intentions of the writer in the use of these</p> <p>(6) Understand the nature and effect of form and structure in a literary heritage text</p> <p>(7-13) Considering response to text as a whole</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Study the impact of key scenes ■ Consider the effect of the text on the reader/audience ■ Practise exam skills and complete a practice exam question under timed conditions (Paper 2, Section B – open book) ■ Develop their grasp of the author’s language, including any archaic features less familiar to them ■ Recall and revise key sections ■ Develop exam confidence through practice questions from Paper 2, Section B <p>OR</p> <p>(For Paper 3 coursework option)</p> <p>Draft and discussion of literary heritage text assignment – completion by start of Summer Term</p>	13	
3	Year 1	<p>Poetry from the <i>Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology</i></p> <p>(1-3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Introduce AOs ■ Recap knowledge of poetry. Be sure to cover both poetic techniques and elements of form and structure <p>(4-13) Explore and annotate any 5 poems from Part 3 of the <i>Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology</i></p>	13	Unseen poetry skills can be developed when reading the <i>Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology</i> poems for the first time.

Term	Year of study	Topic/Paper	Guided Learning Hours	Notes
3	Year 1	<p>Poetry from the Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology</p> <p>Explore and annotate a further 4 poems from Part 3 of the Anthology, establishing links and connections</p> <p>Unseen Poetry (9-14)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop poetry reading skills through exploring a variety of poems ■ Introduce timed annotations and response to poetry <p>Internal examination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Introduce exam paper format with reference to a particular section ■ Timed exercises to develop exam confidence 	8 6	Exam confidence should be developed throughout the course through the introduction of exam style questions. Students will be provided with the <i>Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology</i> poems in the examination (in an Insert).
1	Year 2	<p>Poetry from the Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology (complete)</p> <p>Explore and annotate the remaining poems from Part 3 of the Anthology, establishing links and connections</p>	14	It is also possible to make links to develop oral skills through presentations of individual or paired poems and through discussion.
1	Year 2	<p>Modern Prose (1-2) Understand the social, historical and cultural context of the modern novel they are studying</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Introduce and outline context of modern prose text ■ Explore context to ensure competency in AO4 (and return to this throughout study of the text) <p>(3-8) First section of novel</p> <p>(3-4) Read through first section (class and homework)</p> <p>(5) Think about plot</p> <p>(6) Explore characters and their relationships</p> <p>(7) Identify key themes and consider the intentions of the writer in the use of these</p> <p>(8) Understand the nature and effect of form and structure in a novel</p> <p>(9-14) Second section of novel</p> <p>(9-10) Read through second section</p> <p>(11) Think about plot development</p> <p>(12) Explore characters and their relationships</p> <p>(13) Identify key themes and consider the intentions of the writer in the use of these</p> <p>(14) Understand the nature and effect of form and structure in a novel</p>	14	Centres may use a DVD of an adaptation (where available) to enrich students' understanding and visualisation but this must support the close study of the written text.

Term	Year of study	Topic/Paper	Guided Learning Hours	Notes
2	Year 2	<p>Modern Prose</p> <p>(1-6) Third (final) section of text</p> <p>(1-2) Read through third section</p> <p>(3) Think about plot development and dénouement</p> <p>(4) Explore characters and their relationships</p> <p>(5) Identify key themes and consider the intentions of the writer in the use of these</p> <p>(6) Understand the nature and effect of form and structure in a modern novel</p> <p>(7-13) Considering response to text as a whole</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Study the impact of key episodes/chapters/passages ■ Consider the effect of the text on the reader ■ Practise exam skills and complete a practice exam question under timed conditions (closed book) ■ Develop their grasp of the author's language ■ Recall and revise key sections ■ Develop exam confidence through practice questions from Paper 2, Section C <p>OR</p> <p>(For Paper 3 coursework option)</p> <p>Draft and discussion of modern novel assignment – completion by end of Spring Term</p>	13	
2	Year 2	<p>Poetry from the <i>Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology</i></p> <p>(1-6) Explore links and comparisons between poems</p> <p>(7-8) Plan responses in preparation for examination questions</p> <p>Unseen Poetry</p> <p>(9-12) Practise the skills of a response to an unseen poem</p> <p>(13-14) Mock Exam Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Plan responses in preparation for examination questions ■ Respond to exam style questions from Paper 1 	14	

Term	Year of study	Topic/Paper	Guided Learning Hours	Notes
3	Year 2	<p>Revision – focus on timings and exam paper(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Work on timed questions/papers ■ Reflect on marked assessments and improve responses ■ Improve their understanding of what constitutes a high quality response ■ Develop their checking and proofreading skills <p>Knowledge gaps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Complete ‘Pupil Learning Checklists’ (PLCs) with students to establish gaps in knowledge ■ Address gaps in knowledge through targeted, personalised lessons <p>Writing skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop proofreading skills ■ Reference to text and use of quotations and key words ■ Structure of answer ■ Reference to question ■ Analytical paragraph structure (SEED) 	12	

Planner at a glance: English Literature & English Language A Combined delivery

Term	Year of Study	Language	Literature	Spoken Language
1	Year 1	Intro AOs Writing Skills: Transactional Writing (Paper 1)	Intro AOs Modern Drama	Work on literature texts could be used as a means of building confidence in presentations and introducing Spoken Language AOs. Students could research/ present on one era or literary genre, or prepare presentations on poetry or on characters from their texts.
1	Year 1	Reading Skills – AO1 and AO2	Modern Drama	
2	Year 1	Reading Skills – AO3	Literary Heritage Text	
2	Year 1	Timed practice – Paper 1 and Mock Examination	Literary Heritage Text	
3	Year 1	Reading Skills – poetry and prose fiction extracts (Papers 2 and 3)	Poetry Anthology	
3	Year 1	Writing skills – imaginative writing (Papers 2 and 3) Introduction to Prose Anthology pieces Internal examination (if required)	Poetry Anthology Unseen Poetry Internal examination (if required)	
	Year of study	Language	Literature	Spoken Language
1	Year 2	Reading Skills – non-fiction with AO3 focus Writing skills - AO4 and AO5	Poetry Anthology	Continue to use spoken language as a means of developing independent study skills and presentation skills. Final assessments for Spoken Language certification, if not already covered.
1	Year 2	Introduction to Anthology poetry	Modern Prose	
2	Year 2	Language Papers 2 and 3 timed practice or Paper 3 task and critique	Modern Prose	
2	Year 2	Language Paper 1 practice Mock examination	Poetry Anthology Unseen Poetry Mock examination	
3	Year 2	Revision – focus on timings and exam paper	Revision – focus on timings and exam paper	

Planner at a glance: English Literature & English Language B Combined delivery

Term	Year of study	Language	Literature	Spoken Language
1	Year 1	Reading – AO1, AO2 Wide range of fiction and non-fiction extracts	Intro AOs Modern Drama	Work on literature texts could be used as a means of building confidence in presentations and introducing Spoken Language AOs. Students could research/present on one era or literary genre, or prepare presentations on poetry or on characters from their texts.
1	Year 1	Reading – AO1, AO2 (continued)	Modern Drama	
2	Year 1	Reading – AO3 Writing – AO5	Literary Heritage Text	
2	Year 1	Reading – AO3 Writing – AO5	Literary Heritage Text	
3	Year 1	Writing – AO4: descriptive writing	Poetry Anthology	
3	Year 1	Writing – AO4 (cont.) Reading Section A practice and timed work Internal examination focusing on Section A and Section C: descriptive writing	Poetry Anthology Unseen Poetry Internal examination (if required)	
Term	Year of study	Language	Literature	Spoken Language
1	Year 2	Reading and writing – AO1, AO4 and AO5 focusing on Section B	Poetry Anthology	Continue to use spoken language as a means of developing independent study skills and presentation skills. Final assessments for Spoken Language certification, if not already covered.
1	Year 2	Reading and writing – AO1, AO4 and AO5 focusing on Section B	Modern Prose	
2	Year 2	Writing – AO4 – Section C – narrative/imaginative writing	Modern Prose	
2	Year 2	Writing – AO4 – Section C – argumentative/discursive writing	Poetry Anthology Unseen Poetry Mock examination	
3	Year 2	Revision – focus on timings and examination paper	Revision – focus on timings and examination paper	

Suggested resources

Name of resource	Link and notes
Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology	http://www.edexcel-centre-materials.org/shop
<i>York Notes for GCSE</i> materials to build confidence with Modern Prose, Modern Drama and Literary Heritage Texts	<p>This material may provide additional support for teaching or to support students' independent study. http://www.pearsonschoolsandfecolleges.co.uk/Secondary/Literature/14-16/YorkNotesforGCSE/YorkNotesforGCSE.aspx</p> <p>There are Study Guides for:</p> <p>A View from the Bridge, An Inspector Calls, To Kill a Mockingbird, Of Mice and Men, Pride and Prejudice, Great Expectations, Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth and Merchant of Venice</p>
Sample assessment material and specimen papers	http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-international-gcses-and-edexcel-certificates/international-gcse-english-literature-2016.html
Dedicated English Subject Advisor	The english team are on hand for you to ask questions about the content or teaching of the specification. Email teachingenglish@pearson.com
KS3 assessment to help learners with the transition to GCSE	<p>As there is parity with the new English Language GCSE these skills are replicated in both specifications</p> <p>http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/english-literature-2015.coursematerials.html#filterQuery=category:Pearson-UK:Category%2FTeaching-and-learning-materials</p>
examWizard	<p>examWizard is a free online resource for teachers containing a huge bank of past paper questions and support materials to help you create your own mock exams and tests.</p> <p>http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/Services/examwizard.html</p>
ResultsPlus	<p>ResultsPlus is a free online results analysis tool for teachers that gives you a detailed breakdown of your students' performance in Edexcel exams.</p> <p>http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/Services/ResultsPlus.html</p>

Student guide

Why study the Pearson Edexcel International GCSE in English Literature?

This course will enable you to:

- develop skills to analyse how writers use linguistic and structural devices to achieve their effects
- explore links and connections between writers' ideas and perspectives
- develop transactional writing skills for a variety of purposes and audiences
- use spelling, punctuation and grammar accurately
- develop imaginative writing skills to engage the reader.

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

We recommend that students are able to read and write in English at Level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages; otherwise, there are no prior learning requirements for this qualification.

Is this the right subject for me?

Have a look at our qualification overview to get an idea of what's included in this qualification. Then, why not get in touch with our student services, students@pearson.com, to discuss any outstanding questions you might have?

You could also have a look at

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/campaigns/pearson-qualifications-around-the-world.html#tab-Edexcel> to find out what students and education experts around the world think about our qualifications.

How will I be assessed?

You can decide between 100% examination or a mixed exam and coursework route.

What can I do after I've completed the course?

You can progress on to further study of English Literature and other subjects at AS and A Levels, or International A Level, and then continue to higher education.

What next?

Talk to your subject teacher at school or college for further guidance, or if you are a private candidate you should visit

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-for-you/students.html>

Appendix 1

Plot Summaries

Prose texts

Of Mice and Men

The novella opens with a description of the setting of the pool at Salinas. The two main characters are introduced into the natural setting: George Milton and Lennie Small, two migrant workers. They are due to start work on a ranch but the bus driver has let them off too early, a 'bum steer'. While George is small, Lennie towers above him. It is clear that George looks after Lennie when the two stop by a pool and George stops his friend gulping back stagnant water. It is clear that Lennie has learning difficulties. George prevents Lennie from handling a dead mouse and bemoans the fact that he is burdened by the troublesome Lennie. Lennie and George's friendship, however, is confirmed when they talk about their dream – a place of their own – 'Tell me how it's gonna be, George'. The following day, the two men arrive at the ranch with their work papers and meet Candy, the old, one-handed swamper who introduces them to the ranch boss and his elderly sheepdog. George tells the boss that Lennie is his cousin, which is not true. George tries to do all the talking for Lennie. The two meet Curley, Curley's wife and Slim, the 'jerkline skinner' who is the most respected man on the ranch. By contrast, Curley is an ill-tempered little man who treats his wife poorly and is always spoiling for a fight. He hates Lennie because he is a 'big guy'. George sees that Curley's wife could bring trouble to him and Lennie.

The next day, George explains the nature of his friendship with Lennie to Slim and explains that when they were working in Weed, Lennie inadvertently frightened a woman in a red dress by grabbing hold of the material that he liked to touch. He was accused of attacking her and the men were run out of town. Slim understands the friendship between George and Lennie and accepts that Lennie is not a threat. He gives one of his puppies to Lennie. In the bunkhouse, Carlson, a ranch worker, complains that Candy's dog 'stinks' and offers to shoot it to put it out of its misery. Slim confirms the sense in this, even though Candy is very resistant to his old dog being shot. Slim offers him a puppy and Carlson takes the dog outside and a shot is heard.

Candy overhears George and Lennie talking about their dream plan to buy a place of their own and offers his savings if he can be part of it. He realises that there is no life for him after he becomes too old to work. Curley picks a fight with Lennie in the bunkhouse, accusing him of laughing at him. Curley starts beating Lennie up, but George tells Lennie to fight back and Lennie crushes Curley's hand. Slim persuades Curley to say that his hand was caught in a machine so the men don't get 'cann'd'.

The next night, most of the men go into town to visit the brothel. Lennie is left with Crooks, the black stable buck and Candy. Curley's wife tries to join them but is unwelcome. The next day, Lennie accidentally kills his puppy. Curley's wife comes into the barn and

comforts him, confiding in him about her unhappy life with Curley and her dream of being an actress. Lennie strokes her hair, but gripping too tightly, she panics and screams. He tries to silence her but breaks her neck. Lennie runs away to the agreed meeting-place by the pool. Meanwhile, Curley is told of the death of his wife by Candy who raises the alarm and puts together a lynch mob to get Lennie. George joins Lennie at the pool and shoots him in the back of the head, an act of friendship to protect him. Slim realises that George has killed Lennie out of pity and comforts him but none of the other men understand what is wrong with him.

To Kill a Mockingbird

The novel is set in Maycomb, Alabama. It is narrated by Scout, the six-year-old (at the start) daughter of town lawyer, Atticus Finch. Scout has an older brother, Jem. Their mother died some years earlier and they have a black housekeeper called Calpurnia. Every summer Scout and Jem are joined by Dill (Charles Baker Harris) who visits for the holiday and joins in with their games. The much feared 'Radley Place' where the notorious recluse, Boo Radley lives, is a focus for their fun and excitement.

In the autumn, Dill leaves Maycomb and Scout starts school. She and Jem discover little gifts such as carved figures and chewing gum in the knot hole of a tree near the Radley Place. This is stopped when Boo's older brother seals up the knot hole. Atticus has started defending a black man, Tom Robinson, accused of raping a white woman, Mayella Ewell. Scout is teased at school for this and both Jem and Scout begin to learn about the realities of racism in their home town and the injustices suffered by black people.

Jem and Scout are impressed when Atticus shoots the rabid dog, but Atticus teaches them that 'courage is not a man with a gun in his hand.' After attempts by a lynch mob to get to him in prison, Tom Robinson's trial commences and the children slip into the courtroom to watch. Atticus argues strongly with some convincing details that prove Mayella is lying. Her father, Bob, is a violent alcoholic and all the evidence points to the view that it is he who is abusing Mayella. In spite of the evidence, which showed that, because of his damaged left arm and hand, Tom could not have done what he was accused of, Tom is convicted. He is later shot dead trying to escape prison.

Scout and Jem are walking home in the dark from Halloween pageant when they are attacked by someone. Scout cannot see who it is because she is dressed as a ham. She is aware of Jem struggling with a man and another person intervening. This turns out to be Boo Radley who has protected the children from Bob's murderous intentions. He carries the injured Jem back to the Finch house. Later it is revealed that Bob Ewell has been killed by Boo, but Heck Tate, the sheriff, decides to protect Boo by telling everyone that Bob fell on his knife.

Things Fall Apart

The story's central character, Okonkwo, is leader of the Igbo tribe in Nigeria, a respected warrior renowned for his feats of strength and bravery, such as defeating Amalinze the Cat in a wrestling competition. He has a 12-year-old son called Nwoye and is preoccupied by the poor example set by his father who was lazy and weighed down by debt. He is determined to be a better person and a good example for his son. In reimbursement for a dispute with another tribe, the Igbo are given a young boy, Ikemefuna, who is brought up by Okonkwo alongside his own son. Nwoye and Ikemefuna become friends and Okonkwo grows to love him like his own son but shows him no affection or warmth. Okonkwo breaks the Week of Peace by beating his young wife, Ojiugo, because she forgets to feed the family. In another incident that shows his increasingly unpredictable moods, he attacks another wife, Ekwefi, because she took some banana plant leaves to wrap food. The community is shocked by his outbursts.

After Ikemefuna has been with the Igbo for three years, a message from the Oracle via a village elder tells Okonkwo that Ikemefuna must be killed. Okonkwo does not want to kill Ikemefuna but, believing that not to do so would show weakness, kills him with a machete. He initially lies to Nwoye about what has happened to his stepbrother but Nwoye learns the truth. This upsets Nwoye who distances himself from his father. Okonkwo becomes very sad after killing Ikemefuna and falls into a depressed state, neither eating nor sleeping. He visits a friend, Obierika, and receives some comfort. Okonkwo's daughter becomes ill and he gathers leaves and bark to prepare medicine for her. A trial is held in which leaders of the tribe represent the long dead spirits of their ancestors. The nine leaders or *egwuwu* pass judgement on a dispute between a husband and wife. Okonkwo feels guilty when he finds out that Ogbuefi Ezeudi has died and there is a disaster at the funeral when Okonkwo's gun goes off and Ezeudi's teenage son is accidentally killed.

It is a sin against the earth goddess to kill a clansman and Okonkwo and his family must be sent into exile for seven years to make amends for their transgression. He moves to the village of his mother, Mbanta. After they leave the village, some village men kill his animals and burn his buildings as part of a cleansing ritual. Because killing a clansman is a crime against the earth goddess, Okonkwo must take his family into exile for seven years in order to atone. He gathers his most valuable belongings and takes his family back to his mother's natal village, Mbanta, where he is made welcome. The men from Ogbuefi Ezeudi's quarter burn Okonkwo's buildings and kill his animals to cleanse the village of his sin.

When the District Commissioner arrives at Okonkwo's compound, he finds that Okonkwo has hanged himself. Obierika and his friends lead the Commissioner to the body. Obierika explains that suicide is a grave sin; thus, according to custom, none of Okonkwo's clansmen may touch his body. The Commissioner, who is writing a book about Africa, believes that the story of Okonkwo's rebellion and death will make for an interesting paragraph or two. He has already chosen the book's title: *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger*.

The Joy Luck Club

The novel consists of 16 interwoven stories featuring the tensions between Chinese immigrant women and their westernised daughters. Daughter of Chinese mother, Suyuan, American born Jing-mei travels to China to meet her half-sisters, Chun Hwa and Chun Yu. Suyuan had to leave her two older daughters behind when she fled China during World War 2. She had hoped to find her daughters before she died but was unsuccessful. Jing-mei plays mah-jong with Lindo, Ying-ying and An-mei, old friends of her mother, in the Joy Luck Club in San Francisco. They want Jing-mei to go to China to find her sisters and tell them of Suyuan's life. Jing-mei does not feel she can do this and the older women believe that their own daughters will be unable to tell of their lives.

Waverly, Jing-mei, Lena and Rose tell the stories of their childhoods with their mothers very clearly and in the third section of stories, the four adult daughters tell of their adult problems in their relationships and their jobs. In the final set of stories, the mothers try to help their daughters as they come to terms with their lives and identities. Each pair learns more about themselves in the process. Jing-mei speaks for her mother, Suyuan, in the 'mother's section' of the novel, telling her story. She visits China and tells her half-sisters about Suyuan, thereby bonding them with their forgotten mother too. Jing-mei is able to come to terms with her own story as well as her mother's and bridge the gaps between generations and cultures.

The Whale Rider

Set in New Zealand, the story focuses on an eight-year-old girl, Kahu, who is a member of the Whangara tribe. They are descendants of the ancient 'whale riders' who reputedly forged interdependent relationships with giant whales. Khatui Te Rhangi was the first of these whale riders and a male heir has traditionally inherited the role. This time there is a dilemma in that the great chief Koro's only great-grandchild, Kahu, is a girl and therefore not considered suitable for the title in Maori culture. Koro rejects the girl, showing her no affection or love for her and refusing to participate in the traditional burial of the umbilical cord when she is born. Nanny Flowers, her great-grandmother, must perform the ritual with the help of an uncle, Rawiri.

The first part focuses on the herd of whales, with the male 'bull' whale leading his herd away from their old enemy, man. This old whale remembers when whales and people shared a link, an understanding, but these days are long gone. He wishes to return to the place of his birth. The story returns to Kahu who, after the death of her mother when she is a baby, is raised in a small town away from Whangara. When Kahu visits Whangara, she loves her great-grandfather, but he does not return this. He continues to seek a male successor, desperate to preserve traditional Maori culture for generations to come.

The second part of the novel returns briefly to focus on the herd of whales who discover that a sea trench that had been a good place to spend time is now poisoned with radiation. They have to find other areas where food and shelter are available. The novel returns to Kahu's tale. The Narrator, Rawiri, visits family in Australia and finds that they have turned

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away from Maori ways and become part of the modern world. He makes friends with Jeff and moves to Papua New Guinea, but faces racism from Jeff's friends and family. This leads him to return to Whangara.

Koro is disappointed when another female great-grandchild is born in the family and fails to attend a cultural event at Kahu's school, even though she has saved a place for him to sit. Kahu dances and recites a speech in Maori about how much she wants to please her great-grandfather; she is devastated that Koro is not there. Later, in a trip out to sea, Kahu dives in to collect a stone; she appears able to communicate with the sea life, which Nanny and Rawiri find incredible.

The third part returns to the whales who are travelling through Antarctica. The bull is moved by the collapsing ice to return to the waters where he grew up, even though the older females think this is not a good decision. In Whangara, a group of whales becomes stranded and will die if they do not get back to the ocean. Rawiri and his friends work with the authorities to prevent whale butchers from getting to the whales and even the navy arrives to get the whales back to the sea. All efforts fail and the whales die. The following evening a sacred bull whale with an ancient Maori tattoo drags itself onto the beach and strands itself, waiting to die. Koro sees that this is a warning to his tribe and they must return the whale to the sea. He galvanises the community and efforts are made to move the bull whale. All of these fail. As a last resort, Kahu swims to the whale and climbs onto its back. The whale understands her but mistakes her for her ancestor, Kahutia Te Rangi. It returns to the sea and happily dives down with the rest of the herd. Kahu goes with the whales to save them and her family. She believes that she will never see her family again. Koro finally realises that Kahu is a leader of the people and regrets his poor treatment of her.

In the epilogue, the reader is told that Kahu is returned to the Whangara when an old female whale realises that she is not Kahutia but his descendant. Kahu is found and taken to hospital. When she regains consciousness, Koro tells her he loves her and she tells him that she can still hear the whales singing.

Drama texts

Kindertransport

The programme called Kindertransport (children's transport) was introduced in 1938 by the British government to give Jewish children in Austria and Germany safe passage to Britain. These children were separated from their parents and taken to a foreign land where, although spared death and violence, had to adapt to another culture alone. Eva Schlesinger, daughter of Ernest and Helga, is sent to Manchester until her parents are able to find work in England themselves. She lives with single mother, Lil, who allows her to smoke when she meets her. Eva and Lil argue and Eva spends her time going to wealthy areas to see if she can find work for her parents.

Eva and Lil are reconciled. Eva begins to move away from her Jewish background and when Helga comes to England, Eva tells her that she is now English and named Evelyn. Helga is upset and unhappy when her daughter refuses to go to New York to stay with family. Helga tells her that her father is dead. After an argument, Helga leaves and there is an imaginary vicious argument between them during which Evelyn calls her mother Der Rattenfänger (the Ratcatcher).

In the present, Evelyn's daughter, Faith, argues with her mother after finding out about her past. Evelyn completely rejects her background and Jewish heritage, yet holds on to old letters and papers.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time

Fifteen-year-old Christopher Boone is on the autistic spectrum and a brilliant mathematician. The curious incident named in the title relates to his investigation into the death of his neighbour's (Mrs Shears) dog, Wellington, which has been discovered dead, stabbed by a garden fork. At first he suspects Mr Shears as most victims know their killer. As he investigates the dog's murder he faces opposition from the neighbours and in particular his own father, Ed, who accuses him of 'poking around.' Ed insists that the school arranges for his son to do A Level Maths early as he is so good at it.

Christopher writes his notes down in a notebook. One day Ed finds and reads the book. In his anger he shakes Christopher, who hits him. He hits him back but later apologises. Christopher finds that 43 letters from his mother had been kept from him by his father and reads them. In them she tells him about her unhappy marriage and how she fell in love with Mr Shears. Ed finds Christopher reading the letters and confesses that he killed the dog, but claims it was in self-defence. Christopher sets off for London to live with his mother, facing many problems on his journey. After a short stay, he decides to return to Swindon as he wants to do his A Level in Maths. He sits the exam, but is very anxious. Eventually he attempts the questions and when he gets the result it is an A* grade. Christopher is reconciled with his father and looks to the future more securely.

An Inspector Calls

The play opens with the Birling family hosting a dinner party to celebrate the engagement of Sheila Birling to Gerald Croft. Mr Birling is very keen to impress Gerald whose parents are aristocratic and own a similar business to his own. Although on the surface all appears to be well, there are some signs of cracks in the family. Eric is on edge and Sheila refers to Gerald's inattentiveness during the summer. The men drink port while the women retire to another room. Mr Birling takes the opportunity to talk to Gerald and Eric about his political views – that a man needs to look after himself and his own family and not worry about anyone else. Suddenly the doorbell rings. Inspector Goole, a serious man with a strong presence, enters. Inspector Goole announces that he has come to investigate the suicide of a young woman named Eva Smith.

One by one, Inspector Goole interrogates the Birlings and Gerald Croft, gradually drawing out their involvement in her death. He shows a photograph to each of them, but never at the same time. Mr Birling had Eva sacked from her job for asking for higher wages; Sheila's spoilt affectation and immaturity led to Eva's losing her next job at Milwards, a department store, and Gerald (who rescued her from the unwanted attentions of Alderman Heggarty in the Palace bar, and who knew her as Daisy Renton) took her as his mistress, giving her hope of a future but dashing this when he ended the affair after a few months. Sheila is glad that Gerald has told the truth, but breaks off the engagement. Gerald leaves to go for a walk and Mrs Birling is now questioned. She turned Eva/Daisy away from her charity for impertinence, even after she found out that the girl was pregnant. She complains loudly that the father of the baby should take responsibility. Eric enters the room and it transpires that he drunkenly coerced Eva/Daisy to sleep with him and then continued the affair until he discovered she was pregnant. He stole money from Mr Birling's firm to support her after Mr Birling declined his request for a pay rise. The Inspector tells the family that they have committed terrible acts and leaves. Gerald returns with the news he has discovered that there is no Inspector Goole on the police force. The family believes they have been conned, but Eric and Sheila maintain that the Inspector is right and nothing they have done has changed. The telephone rings. Mr Birling answers, listens and hangs up. He passes on the message that the police are on their way to investigate the death of a girl.

A View from a Bridge

The play is set in America in the area of Redhook in Brooklyn, New York. Beatrice and Eddie are an American/Italian couple. The arrival of Beatrice's two Italian cousins (illegal immigrants) causes problems in the Carbone household, which is observed closely by the lawyer Alfieri, who comments on the action in the manner of a Greek chorus. Eddie is jealous of the developing relationship between his 17-year-old niece Catherine, in whom he has an unnatural interest, and Rodolpho, the younger cousin. Eddie grows to dislike Rodolpho for several reasons, mainly because in his view he acts in an effeminate manner, and therefore hints at his possible homosexual inclinations, partly because he is keen to prevent their marriage.

Despite earlier registering his disgust at the story of a man who 'snitched' on his own uncle to the immigration authorities, Eddie nevertheless informs them about his two relatives, who are later picked up, along with two other recently arrived immigrants. Beatrice and Catherine are convinced of Eddie's guilt. Marco, the elder cousin, also accuses him and spits in Eddie's face during his arrest. But Eddie's denunciation has been in vain, since Catherine's marriage can still go ahead, and Rodolpho's resulting American citizenship will ensure he remains there. Marco, however, must return to Italy. Whilst on bail, Marco seeks revenge and stabs Eddie with Eddie's own knife. Beatrice holds Eddie as he is dying.

Death and the King's Horseman

When the Yoruba king dies, tradition states that his horseman must take his life to travel with him to the afterlife otherwise the whole universe will be disrupted. Elesin Oba is the horseman who must take his life to follow his master. When he enters the market he is ready to fulfil the tradition and the women begin to prepare him. Elesin seeks union with a beautiful girl before his death and fixes on a girl who is already engaged to the son of Iyalaja. In the meantime, Simon and Jane Pilkings, the British District Officer and his wife, are getting ready for a party when a policeman, Amusa, informs them that Elesin is about to fulfil the ritual and commit suicide. Amusa is told to arrest Elesin, which he is prevented from doing by the local women. Elesin appears to be entering a trance.

The Pilkings are told that Amusa failed to stop the ritual, so Simon himself goes out to deal with it. Elesin's son, Olunde, arrives and talks with Jane. He has been in England studying to be a doctor, which distanced him from his father. Even though he has been living in England, he returns to the tribe on hearing of the death of the Yoruba king. He assumes that his father is dead in line with tradition. When he discovers that his father is not dead and has instead been put in prison, Olunde takes his life to complete the ritual. Elesin believes that he delayed the ceremony by sleeping with the beautiful girl and that the English prevented him after this. When he finds out that his son is dead because of his own failure, he strangles himself.

Literary heritage texts

Pride and Prejudice

The arrival of a rich, upper-class male tenant at Netherfield Park causes great excitement in the Meryton neighbourhood and is particularly good news for Mrs Bennet, who immediately begins planning the introduction to Mr Bingley of Jane (the eldest of her five daughters), with a view to securing her marriage. At the next ball, Jane does indeed dance with Mr Bingley, whilst her sister Elizabeth is slighted by his friend, Mr Darcy, who is generally regarded to be a proud and arrogant man. The attachment Jane forms with Mr Bingley is deliberately broken by Darcy, which he later reveals was motivated by his desire to protect his friend from an unsuitable match (largely because of Jane's middle-class roots and family 'defects').

Elizabeth's growing prejudice towards Darcy is further fuelled by his supposed misconduct towards Mr Wickham. Darcy, however, overcomes his earlier prejudice towards Elizabeth to the extent that he proposes to her at Rosings– albeit in an unromantic manner. Her refusal and explanation for her reasons prompt him to re-evaluate his general behaviour. His letter to Elizabeth, explaining his recent conduct concerning her sister Jane and giving details about Mr Wickham, sets in motion the transformation of her own feelings towards him, particularly when she learns that he had arranged her younger sister Lydia's marriage to Mr Wickham after their elopement brought shame on their family. The novel therefore witnesses Elizabeth and Darcy stripped of their pride and prejudice to form a happy marriage, matched by the nuptials of Jane and Mr Bingley.

Romeo and Juliet

The play is set in Verona, Italy, and centres on the feud between the Capulet and Montague families. When Romeo, a Montague and Juliet, a Capulet, fall in love at a ball hosted by the Capulets, a chain of events is set in place that results in tragedy. Although they have only known each other for a few hours, that very night Romeo and Juliet pledge their love, while on a balcony at the Capulet mansion, and decide to marry. Both know that this will be out of the question for their parents and wider families. Juliet's father has been approached by the wealthy and eligible Paris for her hand in marriage. Romeo and Juliet use Juliet's Nurse and Romeo's old friend and confessor, Friar Lawrence, to act as go-betweens as they arrange their wedding.

Romeo and Juliet marry in secret. Directly after this, Romeo comes on his close friend, Mercutio, engaged in a confrontation with Juliet's cousin, Tybalt, a Capulet. The men are sworn enemies and neither can understand why Romeo is unwilling to join the fray. Mercutio is mortally wounded under Romeo's arm and Romeo is so angered by the death of his friend that he kills Tybalt in an act of vengeance. Romeo goes that night to Juliet for their wedding night but must flee the next morning to Mantua where the Prince has stated he must go in exile for the crime of killing Tybalt. To return to Verona will be certain death for him. Juliet's parents tell her that she must marry Paris, not knowing that she is married to Romeo. Although she refuses, they tell her there is no choice. Juliet forms a desperate

plan with the Friar to reunite her with Romeo. She takes a potion that makes it seem as if she is dead. The plan is that she will be taken to the Capulet tomb for burial where Romeo will meet her and they will then leave the city in secret. Romeo fails to get the Friar's message and believes that Juliet is really dead. He rushes to the tomb after collecting a deadly poison from the apothecary. Finding Paris at the tomb, Romeo kills him and then takes the poison by Juliet's side. He dies. Juliet awakes from her feigned death and, finding Romeo dead, takes her own life with Romeo's dagger. An uneasy peace between the two families is reached when the truth of these events is revealed.

Macbeth

Macbeth and Banquo, Scottish thanes (nobles) and generals, have just defeated the Norwegians in battle, a victory for which their king, Duncan, is very grateful. On their way home, they are greeted by three witches who refer to Macbeth as Thane of Glamis (his current title), Thane of Cawdor and king hereafter. They tell Banquo that his sons will be kings. Macbeth and Banquo learn a little later that Macbeth has indeed been granted the title Thane of Cawdor, since the previous incumbent has been executed as a traitor. This makes Macbeth think that perhaps he could be king. He tells his wife, Lady Macbeth, who persuades him to take matters into his own hands when the king visits them overnight. Macbeth changes his mind about killing King Duncan, but Lady Macbeth persuades him forcefully to do it. Before the murder he sees a dagger that seems to lead him to the act. After killing Duncan, Macbeth is horrified and can no longer sleep or pray. Lady Macbeth admonishes him for his distress and makes it seem as if Duncan's servants killed him. Macduff, another general, discovers the body of Duncan. Duncan's sons (Malcolm and Donalbain) flee in fear and are assumed to be the killers.

Macbeth is crowned king but he is still not happy, remembering the prophecy relating to Banquo's heirs who will become kings. He has no children. He sends murderers to kill Banquo and his son, Fleance. Banquo is murdered but Fleance gets away. At Macbeth's banquet that night, the ghost of Banquo, or Macbeth's hallucinations of it, haunt him and he creates a scene in front of the court. He goes back to the witches, where he is told that he will not be killed by any man born of woman; he must be wary of Macduff and he will not be defeated until Birnam Wood comes to Dunsinane Castle. He believes that he is invincible but sends murderers to Macduff's castle. Macduff is not there but his whole family are slaughtered. Macduff learns of the death of his family while he is discussing the situation in Scotland with Malcolm, who is in hiding in England. Malcolm tells him to use his anger and distress as reasons to destroy Macbeth. Meanwhile, Lady Macbeth has descended into madness and sleepwalks, talking openly about the deeds she has committed with her husband. Macbeth receives news that the English are approaching disguised by tree branches (Birnam Wood). Lady Macbeth kills herself. Macbeth pledges to fight on. At first he is confident, slaying the first attacker, Young Siward. He then faces Macduff, who informs him that he was born by Caesarean section (and not 'of woman' in the conventional sense). Macbeth is slain by Macduff and Malcolm takes the throne that is rightfully his.

The Merchant of Venice

Bassanio is a young Venetian, who is in desperate need of a loan so that he can woo Portia, a wealthy Venetian heiress. He asks his friend Antonio, a Venetian merchant, for a loan, but Antonio is short of money because his money is invested in his fleet of ships which are still at sea. Bassanio instead goes to a Jewish money lender, Shylock, naming Antonio as the loan's guarantor. Shylock hates Antonio, because of Antonio's anti-Semitism, but agrees to make the loan anyway, making a condition that he must be repaid within 3 months or Shylock will be owed a pound of flesh from Antonio.

Meanwhile, Portia expresses sadness over the terms of her father's will, which states that all suiters must choose correctly from among three caskets (one contains a portrait of her). Both the Princes of Arragon and Morocco fail the test. Bassanio's friend Lorenzo elopes with Shylock's daughter, Jessica, as Bassanio prepares to travel to take the test and win Portia's hand in marriage. Bassanio picks the correct casket, and Portia happily agrees to marry him.

Antonio's ships have been wrecked and Shylock is demanding repayment. Bassanio hears of Antonio's troubles and hurries back to Venice. Portia follows with her maid Nerissa. The date for repayment has passed, and even though Bassanio offers much more money than is owed, Shylock refuses- infuriated by the loss of his daughter, he wants revenge.

Portia arrives to defend Antonio, disguised as a lawyer. On the authority of judgment by the Duke, Portia decides that Shylock can have his pound of flesh on the condition that he doesn't draw blood, as this would be breaking the law. As this is impossible, Shylock is unable to win his pound of flesh. Moreover, Portia orders that Shylock forfeit his wealth- half is to be given to Antonio, half to Venice.

Antonio gives his money back to Shylock with a condition that the money is bequeathed to Jessica, and that Shylock convert to Christianity. Shylock agrees. Antonio's ships return safely, and all celebrate a happy ending, with the exception of Shylock.

The Scarlet Letter

It is the 17th century in the Massachusetts Bay Colony near Boston. A young woman, Hester Prynne, is punished for committing the sin of adultery. She has a baby daughter, Pearl, who cannot be her husband's as he failed to join her in America and is presumed lost at sea. Hester is shamed publicly but will not reveal who Pearl's father is. In fact, her husband is in the crowd, disguised and going by the name of Roger Chillingworth. He wants revenge and tells only Hester of his true identity. The community tries to take Pearl from Hester but a young preacher, Arthur Dimmesdale, intervenes and they are allowed to stay together. Hester works as a seamstress to support herself and her daughter in a cottage on the outskirts of town.

Dimmesdale is in fragile health and seems to be anxious; Chillingworth suspects that he is Pearl's father. A mark on Dimmesdale's chest confirms his suspicions further. One evening, Hester and Pearl encounter Dimmesdale attempting to punish himself for his sins at the scaffold in the marketplace. They join him and link hands. Pearl wants him to publicly acknowledge her the next day but he refuses. Hester is concerned by Dimmesdale's health and asks Chillingworth to leave him alone, but he rejects her pleas. Hester and Dimmesdale forge a plan to run away to Europe. Chillingworth finds out about it and books a ticket on the same ship. The day before the ship is set to sail, Dimmesdale preaches a sermon and, on seeing Hester and Pearl standing by the scaffold, climbs up and confesses that Hester was his lover and Pearl is his daughter. He shows the crowd a red A burnt into his chest. Chillingworth dies the following year. Hester and Pearl leave but Hester returns many years later, still wearing the scarlet letter. Pearl has married and set up her own family. When Hester dies, she is buried next to Dimmesdale.

Great Expectations

Pip is an orphan who is brought up by his sister and her husband, Joe. One day Pip is visiting the graves of his parents when he is approached by an escaped convict who threatens him and makes him bring food and a file the following day. The convict is captured and returned to the prison ship. An arrangement is made by Mr Pumblechook for Pip to visit Miss Havisham at her home. Miss Havisham is an eccentric recluse, jilted on her wedding day, who wears a wedding dress and is surrounded by the decaying remains of her wedding banquet. Pip plays there and meets Estella, Miss Havisham's ward, with whom he falls in love. Miss Havisham pays for Pip to be apprenticed to Joe to become a blacksmith. Pip wants to become a gentleman and one day he is told that he has been left a large sum of money by a mysterious benefactor (he thinks this is Miss Havisham). He goes to London to become a gentleman and hopefully he can then be with Estella. In London, Pip becomes friends with Herbert Pocket and Mr Wemmick whom he visits at his home which looks like a castle.

Pip learns about Miss Havisham's wedding day when she was stood up by her husband-to-be and also discovers that he has been receiving money from the convict, Magwitch, the same man he had encountered as a child many years before. Joe visits him and at first Pip is embarrassed to see him, but finding out the truth about his wealth leads him to become humble and think about his home and family. Pip learns that another convict, Compeyson, was Magwitch's enemy and it is later revealed that Compeyson was the man who betrayed Miss Havisham on her wedding day. Compeyson drowns as Pip is trying to get Magwitch out of the city. Pip finds out that Estella's mother and father are Molly, Mr Jaggers' housekeeper and Magwitch. Magwitch dies in prison and Pip works as a clerk in Cairo. Years later he returns to London and finds Estella near the ruins of Satis House. It is suggested that they stayed together.

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