

MACMILLAN LITERATURE RESOURCES

for Secondary



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A. Using literature in the classroom

An overview of models for teaching literature, staging and follow-up activities.

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Literature has been a subject of study in many countries at secondary or tertiary level, but until recently has not been given much emphasis in the English language classroom. The purpose of this article is to look at some of the issues and ways in which literature can be exploited in the classroom. There are also links to classroom activities and lessons with literature that you can download and use straight away.

• What is literature?

First of all, any method or approach towards using literature in the classroom must take as a starting point the question: What is literature? The Macmillan English Dictionary gives the following definition:

literature / noun

1. stories, poems, and plays, especially those that are considered to have value as art and not just entertainment

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Many authors, critics and linguists have puzzled over what literature is. One broader explanation of literature says that literary texts are products that reflect different aspects of society. They are cultural documents which offer a deeper understanding of a country or countries (Basnet & Mounfold 1993). Other linguists say that there is no inherent quality to a literary text that makes a literary text, rather it is the interpretation that the reader gives to the text (Eagleton 1983). This brings us back to the above definition in the sense that literature is only literature if it is considered as art.

• Why use literature?

There are many good reasons for using literature in the classroom. Here are a few:

- Literature is authentic material. It is good to expose learners to this source of unmodified language in the classroom because the skills they acquire in dealing with difficult or unknown language can be used outside the class.
- Literature encourages interaction. Literary texts are often rich in multiple layers of meaning, and can be effectively mined for discussions and sharing feelings or opinions.

- Literature expands language awareness. Asking learners to examine sophisticated or non standard examples of language (which can occur in literary texts) makes them more aware of the norms of language use (Widdowson, 1975 quoted by Lazar 1993).
- Literature educates the whole person. By examining values in literary texts, teachers encourage learners to develop attitudes towards them. These values and attitudes relate to the world outside the classroom.
- Literature is motivating. Literature holds high status in many cultures and countries. For this reason, students can feel a real sense of achievement at understanding a piece of highly respected literature.

• Different models of teaching literature in class

There have been different models suggested on the teaching of literature to students (Carter & Long, Lazar). How the teacher uses a literary text depends on the model they choose.

The cultural model views a literary text as a product. This means that it is treated as a source of information about the target culture. It is the most traditional approach, often used in university courses on literature. The cultural model will examine the social, political and historical background to a text, literary movements and genres. There is no specific language work done on a text. This approach tends to be quite teacher-centred.

The language model aims to be more learner-centred. As learners proceed through a text, they pay attention to the way language is used. They come to grips with the meaning and increase their general awareness of English. Within this model of studying literature, the teacher can choose to focus on general grammar and vocabulary (in the same way that these are presented in coursebooks for example) or use stylistic analysis. Stylistic analysis involves the close study of the linguistic features of the text to enable students to make meaningful interpretations of the text – it aims to help learners read and study literature more competently.

The personal growth model is also a process-based approach and tries to be more learner-centred. This model encourages learners to draw on their own opinions, feelings and personal experiences. It aims for interaction between the text and the reader in English, helping make the language more memorable. Learners are encouraged to “make the text their own”. This model recognises the immense power that literature can have to move people and attempts to use that in the classroom.

For Whom the Bell Tolls and *Spellbound* are two lessons which draw on a combination of language approach and personal growth approach. Both are based on short texts: either extracts or poems.

• Using literature over a longer period of time – the set novel or reader

These above lesson plans are all based on short extracts or poems and can therefore easily be used over one class period. However, there are very good reasons for encouraging learners to read books. Extensive reading is an excellent way of improving English, and it can be very motivating to finish an entire book in another language. In addition, many international exams have certain optional questions on them that pertain to set novels each year. One option that is now available to language teachers is the wide range of simplified and inexpensive versions of literary texts, called readers. Check out an extensive list at www.macmillanreaders.com. Setting up a class library of novels and readers, if you have the resources, is an excellent idea. Tim Bowen and Jonathan Marks, in their book *Inside Teaching*, recommend the following ideas for extensive reading of literature:

- Hold brief classroom discussions on what learners have been reading (progress reports).
- Ask learners to describe a book they like in such a way to make others want to read it.
- Select a short novel which has been recently made into a film or TV series with which your learners are familiar.

In addition, there is a list of general questions about novels or readers that could be given for students to answer in written form.

• DIY literature lesson plan

This sort of lesson plan works well for extracts from stories, poems or extracts from plays.

• Stage one: warmer

There are two different possible routes you can take for this stage:

- Devise a warmer that gets students thinking about the topic of the extract or poem. This could take several forms: a short discussion that students do in pairs, a whole class discussion, a guessing game between you and the class or a brainstorming of vocabulary around that topic.
- Devise a warmer that looks at the source of the literature that will be studied. Find out what the students already know about the author or the times he/she was writing in. Give the students some background information to read (be careful not to make this too long or it will detract from the rest of the lesson; avoid text overload!). Explain in what way this piece of literature is well-known (maybe it is often quoted in modern films or by politicians).

• Stage two: before reading

This stage could be optional or it may be a part of the warmer. Preparing to read activities include:

- Pre-teaching very difficult words (note: pre-teaching vocabulary should be approached with caution. Often teachers “kill” a text by spending too much time on the pre-teaching stage. Limit the number of words you cover in this stage. If you have to teach more than seven or eight there is a good chance the text will be too difficult).
- Predicting. Give students some words from the extract and ask them to predict what happens next. If it is a play, give them a couple of lines of dialogue and ask them to make predictions about the play.
- Giving students a “taste”. Read the first part of the extract (with their books closed or papers turned over) at normal speed, even quickly. Ask students to compare what they have understood in pairs. Then ask them to report back to you. Repeat this part again. Then ask them to open the book (or turn over the page) and read it for themselves.

• Stage three: understanding the text, general comprehension

Often with extracts or poems, I like to read the whole thing to my students so that they can get more of a “feel” for the text. With very evocative pieces of literature or poetry this can be quite powerful. Then I let students read it to themselves. It is important to let students approach a piece of literature the first time without giving them any specific task other than to simply read it. One of the aims of teaching literature is to evoke interest and pleasure from the language. If students have to do a task at every stage of a literature lesson, the pleasure can be lost.

Once students have read it once, you can set comprehension questions or ask them to explain the significance of certain key words of the text. Another way of checking comprehension is to ask students to explain to each other (in pairs) what they have understood. This could be followed by more subjective questions, for example: Why do you think X said this? How do you think the woman feels? What made him do this?

• Stage four: understanding the language

At this stage get to grips with the more difficult words in the text. See how many of the unfamiliar words students can get from context. Give them clues.

You could also look at certain elements of style that the author has used. Remember that there is some use in looking at non-standard forms of language to understand the standard.



If appropriate to the text, look at the connotation of words which the author has chosen. For example, if the text says 'She had long skinny arms,' what does that say about the author's impression of the woman? Would it be different if the author had written 'She had long slender arms'?

• **Stage five: follow-up activities**

Once you have read and worked with your piece of literature it might naturally lead on to one or more follow-up activities. Here are some ideas:

• **Using poems**

- Have students read each other the poem aloud at the same time, checking for each other's pronunciation and rhythm. Do a whole class choral reading at the end.
- Ask students to rewrite the poem, changing the meaning but not the structure.
- Ask students to write or discuss the possible story behind the poem. Who was it for? What led to the writing of this poem?
- Have a discussion on issues the poem raised and how they relate to the students' lives.

• **Using extracts from stories or short stories**

- Ask students to write what they think will happen next, or what they think happened just before.
- Ask students to write a background character description of one of the characters which explains why they are the way they are.
- Ask students to imagine they are working for a big Hollywood studio who wants to make a movie from the book. They must decide the location and casting of the movie.
- Ask students to personalise the text by talking about if anything similar has happened to them.
- Ask students to improvise a role play between two characters in the book.

• **Using extracts from plays**

Most of the ideas from stories (above) could be applied here, but obviously, this medium gives plenty of opportunity for students to do some drama in the classroom. Here are some possibilities:

- Ask students to act out a part of the scene in groups.
- Ask students to make a radio play recording of the scene. They can record themselves using recording software and then listen to the different recordings in the last five minutes of future classes. Who's was the best?
- Ask students to write stage directions, including how to deliver lines e.g. angrily, breathlessly, etc. next to each character's line of dialogue. Then they read it out loud.
- Ask students to re-write the scene. They could either modernise it (this has been often done with Shakespeare), or imagine that it is set in a completely different location (in space for example). Then they read out the new version.

Potential problems

Problem 1: Where do I find material?

Of course you may have a novel or book of poetry that you have been dying to use with your students for a long time. But where can you get more material? Easy! The internet brings you instant access to many works of literature.

The following sites are excellent for book excerpts and stories:

- www.bookbrowse.com – a really great site which allows you to read an excerpt from a multitude of recently published books. You can search by author, book title or genre!
- www.readersread.com – brings you the first chapter of many recently published books.

Literature doesn't have to mean "books written by dead white English or American men or women". Look for literature from other English speaking countries (there is plenty to choose from) to give your students a richer variety of work written in the English language. Bookbrowse.com (above) for instance has a whole section on Asian and Indian writers. You can also try the following link: www.blackliterature.com

Try the following two sites for poetry:

- www.favoritepoem.org – a site collecting America's favourite poems. You can also read comments about why people like them and hear them being read aloud.
- www.emule.com/poetry – an archive of classical poetry, easy to browse through by poet. Has a top ten list of favourite poems (chosen by visitors to the site) which makes an interesting starting point.



Problem 2: How do I choose the material?

Think about the following factors when you choose a piece of literature to use with learners:

- Do you understand enough about the text to feel comfortable using it?
- Is there enough time to work on the text in class?
- Does it fit with the rest of your syllabus?
- Is it something that could be relevant to the learners?
- Will it be motivating for them?
- How much cultural or literary background do the learners need to be able to deal with the tasks?
- Is the level of language in the text too difficult ? (see below)

Problem 3: Is the text too difficult?

Obviously a teacher would not want to use a text that is completely beyond their learners. This would ultimately be frustrating for everyone involved. However, the immediate difficulty with vocabulary in a text might not be an obstacle to its comprehension. Learners can be trained to infer the meaning of difficult words from context. The selection of a text must be given careful thought, but also the treatment of the text by the teacher (this means think about the tasks you set for a reading of a piece of literature, not just the text).

Further reading:

Bowen, T & J Marks, *Inside Teaching*, Macmillan 1994

Carter, R & M Long, *Teaching Literature*, Longman 1991

Lazar, Gillian, *Literature and Language Teaching*, Cambridge 1993

Widdowson, H. *Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature*, Longman 1975

An Introduction to Key Concepts and Literary Terms

The novel

novel noun [C]: a long written story about imaginary or partly imaginary characters and events.

Novels come in all shapes and sizes but all novels contain the same basic elements.

All novels can be analysed and discussed with reference to these elements:

- 1 **plot**
- 2 **characters**
- 3 **narrator**
- 4 **themes**
- 5 **style**

The short texts below introduce the key literary terms which are used to talk about the five elements above. All the key terms are highlighted in bold and explained in the glossary at the end of the worksheet. The exercises that follow each text will help you use the terms.

1 Plot

The plot is the story of the novel. It usually follows the lives of one or more of the **main characters** and describes the **key events** that affect these characters over a period of time.

The **timeframe** of the plot can be of any length. A novelist may choose to describe a year in the lives of his characters (as in *Middlemarch*, *Pride and Prejudice* or *Sense and Sensibility*) or it may cover a number of years (as in *Oliver Twist* or *David Copperfield*, where the novels describe the boys' lives from their births to adulthood). In some novels the **action** happens over 24 hours (for example James Joyce's *Ulysses*). In others the action happens over a number of generations. A novel which tells the story of several generations of the same family is called a **saga**.

A plot may be **linear**. This means it describes events **chronologically** in the order they happened. For example, in *Moby Dick* the plot explains what happens on the *Pequod's* voyage from the time the narrator decides to go to sea until the ship's last battle with the white whale. Or it may be **complex**. It may jump from event to event, or from place to place as in *Our Mutual Friend*. It may have two (or more) story lines, moving side by side, as in *Vanity Fair*.

It may have **flashbacks** (when the writer describes an event that happened before – as in *Our Mutual Friend* when John Harmon remembers his childhood) or a **flashforward** (when the writer jumps forward to describe an event in the future). For example, in the closing chapter of *Middlemarch* Eliot moves ahead to see what happens to the main characters later in their lives.

A novel focuses on the story of one character, or one group of characters, or it may include **sub plots** which happen at the same time as the **main plot**. The sub plots follow the lives of **minor characters** and often help to explore the themes of the main plot. *Vanity Fair* is a good example of a novel which has several plots and subplots.

The **pace** of the plot can change. It may slow down at times to study a scene or event in great detail, and at others it may **race ahead**, jumping over years in its characters' lives. For example, Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* jumps 20 years between the opening scene and the rest of the action in the novel.

The action of the plot will often be connected to a **conflict** or problem and its final **resolution**. In *Our Mutual Friend*, the problem is complex. John Harmon will receive a large fortune from his dead father if he agrees to marry Bella Wilfer. But John wants to get to know Bella before he makes his decision. So he decides to spy on his future wife. This decision leads to a number of other problems and conflicts before a final resolution is achieved. In *Moby Dick*, the conflict is both **external**, the fight between Ahab and the white whale, and **internal**, the captain's fight with his own stubbornness and thirst for revenge.

The novel focuses both on the **action** itself, describing the **mechanics** in detail (the whale hunting industry in *Moby Dick*, the journey to the Count's castle in *Dracula*) and the characters' reactions and attitudes to these actions.

2 Characters

A novel will normally have a number of **characters**. These may be **main characters**, or **minor characters**. Typically the novel gives us more information about its main characters and their feelings, reactions and motivations are described in detail. The minor characters may be fairly **two-dimensional**, simple **devices** to support the plot, or to highlight some feature of the **protagonist's** personality.

The **protagonist** is the main character and there may often be an **antagonist**, someone who the protagonist must fight against or who in some way blocks the protagonist's way. In some novels it is very clear who the protagonist (or main character) is. For example in *Moby Dick* there is no doubt that the protagonist – the most interesting character in the story – is Captain Ahab and that his antagonist is Moby Dick the white whale.

In other novels this is not so clear. In *Vanity Fair*, there are two protagonists, Becky Sharp and Amelia Sedley. There is not really an antagonist, but there is **a cast** of minor characters.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennett is the main character, the protagonist, the **heroine** of the book, but her **counterpart**, and eventual husband, Darcy, is also a **key character**. He is not in fact an antagonist, though he may appear to be so at the beginning, but a **hero**, a mirror to Elizabeth's values.

• Characterisation

The author presents and describes the characters in a novel in a number of ways: through direct description, through the characters actions and reactions, through the words of others, through dialogue and through the characters' own words and thoughts.

Characters are often described briefly when they are first presented with information given about their **physical features** and **personality traits**. Dickens does this, often describing one or two **central features** which will be returned to time and again throughout the novel. For example in *Bleak House* he introduces Esther as 'a quiet girl with a calm face and smooth, dark hair, standing close to Ada.

This was Esther Sommerson.' Her smooth dark hair will be important later in the novel as a clue to the identity of her mother, and she will be seen as standing close to Ada throughout the story, offering her support and friendship.

Characters may be introduced through the words of others. In *Moby Dick* we hear people talking about the famous Captain Ahab long before he appears, so we already have an idea of the man before we actually see him. Or sometimes characters are introduced through their own words. For example, on the opening page of *Pride and Prejudice* Mrs Bennett's words show her to be a silly woman who is desperate to marry her daughters to the first rich man who comes along.

As the novel continues, the same **devices** are used to **develop** the characters. They continue to be described – and judged – through their actions, words, reactions, thoughts and feelings.

Test Yourself

1 Complete the description of the characters in *Bleak House* using words from the text above.

Think about a novel you have read recently and answer these questions. Who were the main characters? How were they first introduced? What key features were first presented? How did their characters develop? What devices did the author use to show these developments?

3 Narrator

The **narrator** is the person who tells the story and the story is told from his/her **point of view**.

Often the narrator is simply a voice that tells the story in the **third person** (someone we do not know and who takes no part in the story). This type of narrator has no personality, but has the power to know the minds and hearts of all the characters in the novel. A third person narrator like this knows everything about the characters and events in the novel. They can follow characters into their homes and into

their thoughts, and they are present to describe all the events that take place. Sometimes the narrator has the voice of the author and may comment on the action or characters. They may even speak directly to the reader.

Sometimes the third person narrator will tell the story from the **point of view** of one of the characters. For example, in *Pride and Prejudice*, the story is told from Lizzy's point of view. Any scenes where Lizzy is not present have to be described in a letter to Lizzy, or retold in a conversation. In this example the narrator cannot see into the minds and hearts of the other characters. This kind of narrator is called a **limited third person narrator**.

The narrator may also be a **minor character** in the plot, for example Lockwood in *Wuthering Heights*, who **retells** a story that has already been told to him. Or Ishmael, in *Moby Dick*, who, although a member of the crew, watches the madness and obsession of Captain Ahab from a distance. This kind of narrator acts as a bridge between the world of the story and the more 'normal' world of the reader. In this case the narrator is still a **third person narrator**, standing outside the events and looking on, but he/she is **filtering** the events through his/her personality. He/she takes no part in the story and only retells it. The narrator may narrate his/her meeting with the **story-teller** in the **first person**, but then the narrative will change to the third person. Another classic example is that of Robert Walton in *Frankenstein*, who acts as a **filter** for doctor Frankenstein's incredible story.

Sometimes the main character of the novel narrates the story in the **first person**. For example, in *Great Expectations* the young boy, Pip, tells his own story. The choice of a **first person narrator** allows the novelist to look closely at the **motivation** and **psychological development** of the main character.

With both first person and limited third person narrators, there is often a question of how **reliable** the narrator is. Can we trust the narrator to be telling us the whole truth? Or is the truth being **coloured** by the narrator's **point of view**? Are they an **unreliable narrator**?

Test Yourself

1 Match the descriptions (1 -3) with the terms (a-c)

1 The narrator can see into the minds and thought of all the characters.

2 The main character tells their own story in their own words.

3 The narrator tells the story through the eyes of the main character.

a) first person narrator

b) limited third person narrator

c) third person narrator

2 Think of a novel you have read which matches each description below.

1 A third person narrator who reports on all his main character's thoughts and feelings as well as their actions and reactions.

2 A novel which is narrated by the main character.

3 A story which is told by more than one narrator and from more than one point of view.

4 Themes

A **theme** is a topic or idea which is **explored** in a novel. The theme is usually about life, society or human nature. For example the **central themes** in *Moby Dick* are obsession, madness and revenge. In Austen's novels there is a **recurring theme** of marriage and the social position of women in Austen's eighteenth-century world. These themes **develop** throughout her novels and are also **common themes** in other novels of her time.

In *Our Mutual Friend*, Dickens explores the themes of money and happiness, and the relationship between them. He suggests that money can change a person, and that happiness is more important. However, he also admits that a little bit of material comfort is important for a happy life.

Test Yourself

1 Reorder the lines below.

- a) used to manipulate and control people, but she also shows ____
- b) money. In this novel, George Eliot explores the ____
- c) theme in her novels. She suggests that money is often ____
- d) how money can be used to good ends. ____
- e) One of the central themes of *Middlemarch* is 1
- f) influence of money on people's lives. It is a recurring ____

2 Think of the last novel you read. What was the theme? What does the author (or the novel) say about this theme?

5 Style

Different novelists use different styles. Some are more **dramatic** (Dickens or Melville), others more **realistic** (Austen or Eliot). Some narrate events in a very factual, direct way, others prefer to use long, detailed descriptions. The style of a novel will depend on both the **genre** and the **author**. And it may change during the novel, using different styles to create different effects. A change in style can often also mean a change in pace. (For a list of genres, see the end of this section.)

The style is created through the author's use of language, **symbolism** and literary devices such as **similes**, **metaphor**, **satire** and **irony**.

• Symbolism

An object or a person in a novel can act as a **symbol**, representing a quality or an idea. For example, in *Moby Dick*, the whale can **symbolise** the power of nature, and at the same time it can demonstrate evil. In *Middlemarch*, the wills of both Casaubon and Featherstone show how the power and influence of property and money can be so strong it continues after death.

In an **allegory**, both the characters and the setting represent something different than themselves. For example in *Animal Farm*, the animals are people and the farm is a political state. In *The Wizard of Oz*, the characters represent qualities (intelligence, bravery, sentimentality).

Test Yourself

1 Complete the text using the words in the box

birds cat death free obsession prison prisoner symbolic

In *Bleak House*, Mrs Flite keeps a number of (1)_____ in cages in her room. She says that they are in (2), but she refuses to set them free as she is afraid that they will get eaten by Krook's (3)_. When she hears of Richard Carstone's (4)_____ she sets them all free. This (5)_____ action shows that Mrs Flite has learnt the lesson of Carstone's (6)_____ with the Chancery. She does not want to be a (7)_____ to this obsession any longer, and in setting her birds free she shows that she is also setting herself (8)_____.

2 Think of three more symbols used in novels you've read recently. What were they symbolising? What message was the author conveying through these symbols?

6 Imagery and figures of speech

Imagery is the use of the five senses in creating a **vivid** description of a place or a moment in time. Dickens uses imagery to describe the cold, winter streets of Victorian London:

There was fog too. The fog was everywhere. It came up the river and down the river. Fog covered the boats on the river and filled the boatmen's eyes. Street lamps sent a pale, yellow light through the thick, foggy air.

Bleak House

• Metaphor

A metaphor is a direct comparison between two very different things. For example, Dickens compares Jesse Hexam to a bird: 'He had the greedy look of a cruel bird.'

He compares the strength of the desperate schoolmaster, Bradley Headstone as he pulls Riderman to the river, to the strength of iron: 'Bradley caught him round the body. Riderhood was in a grip of iron.' (*Our Mutual Friend*)

• Simile

Similes are similar to metaphors. They compare two very different things but the comparison is more direct and is made using *like* or *as*. Melville often uses similes in his description of the whaling ship and its mad captain in *Moby Dick*. For example, 'Ahab jumped up and down on the deck like an excited child' and 'Storms and strong winds started to blow the ship around like a toy on the ocean.'

Test Yourself

2 Dickens' language is rich and descriptive. He often uses metaphors, similes and imagery. Look at the five extracts below, which one shows:

a) metaphor b) a simile c) use of imagery

1 The marshes beyond the graveyard were grey. The river beyond the marshes was a darker line of grey. A bitter wind was blowing across the marshes from the sea. The graveyard was a dark and frightening place. (*Great Expectations*)

2 The schoolmaster was a young man of twenty-six, but he did everything slowly and carefully, like a much older man. He had worked hard to become a schoolmaster, learning facts like a machine. (*Our Mutual Friend*)

3 Poor people crowded into Tom-All-Alone's like rats into holes. (*Bleak House*)

4 'You never left me even when there was danger. You stayed near me when the dark clouds gathered. This has been the best part of my life.' (Magwitch in *Great Expectations*)

5 The wind moved the hair and the rain fell upon the dead, cold face. (*Our Mutual Friend*)

• Satire

Satire is the use of humour to criticise someone and make them look stupid or silly. Austen often uses satire in her novels to criticise the values of the society she's describing. She often satirises people through their speech. Here Mrs Bennet is congratulating Lizzy on her engagement to Mr Darcy, a man she had hated until that moment:

Lizzy! Mr Darcy? And is it really true? Oh, my sweetest Lizzy, how rich and great you will be! Such a delightful man – so handsome, so tall!

Pride and Prejudice

Here Austen is satirising Mrs Bennet's shallow, materialistic attitude to marriage.

• Irony

Irony shows the difference between appearance or intention and reality. Dickens often uses irony in his novels. For example in *Bleak House* it is ironic that the gold coin that Lady Dedlock gives poor Jo the crossing sweeper does not help him, as she had intended. Instead it gets him into trouble with the police. Again in *Bleak House* it is ironic that Mr Krook, who runs the Rag and Bottle Shop, saves mountains of papers in his shop, but he can't read them. In both these cases the object of irony leads indirectly to the deaths of both Jo and Richard Carstone.

In *Our Mutual Friend* the schoolmaster, Bradley Headstone, is in love with Lizzie Hexam and is madly jealous of her friendship with the lawyer, Eugene Wrayburn. In order to keep the two apart, the schoolmaster decides to kill Wrayburn, but he fails. Ironically, his failed murder attempt brings Lizzie and Wrayburn closer to each other and they decide to get married.

7 Genres

These are some examples of fictional genres:

- **Adventure novels**

E.g. Melville's *Moby Dick* (upper)

Dumas's *The Treasure of Monte Cristo* (pre-intermediate)

Novels that tell the story of an adventure, often a journey or a quest (a journey to find something that has been lost).

- **Autobiographical novels**

E.g. Dickens' *David Copperfield*.

Novels which are based on the author's life and experiences.

- **Coming of age novels**

E.g. Dickens' *Great Expectations* (upper).

Novels which describe how the main character changes and develops as they progress from childhood to becoming an adult.

- **Detective novels**

E.g. Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories, Dexter's *The Silent World of Anthony Quinn* (intermediate).

Novels in which a detective, a policeman or an ordinary person solves a crime.

- **Fantasy novels**

E.g. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, Baum's *The Wizard of Oz* (pre-intermediate).

Novels which are set in imaginary worlds. These characters often include non human characters.

- **Gothic novels**

E.g. Stoker's *Dracula* (intermediate), Du Maurier's *Rebecca* (upper).

Novels which describe supernatural forces and include scenes of terror. The setting is often a dark, mysterious castle which is haunted by ghosts and evil spirits. These spirits have to be overcome by the hero or heroine.

- **Historical novels**

E.g. Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*.

A novel based on real historical events. It may be a fictional story set against the background of a factual historical moment. Or it can be a fictional account of the story, where the author enters into the head of the historical character and imagines their thoughts and feelings.

- **Novel of manners**

E.g. Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (intermediate), Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (upper)

A novel which describes a particular society, or social group, and the influence it has over the novel's characters (often limiting their choices and freedom, especially those of women).

- **Science fiction novels**

E.g. Huxley's *Brave New World*

A novel where imagined scientific or technological developments are important to the action in the novel, and the world in which its characters live and interact. These novels are often set in the future.

Test Yourself

1 Read these descriptions of three classical novels. Which genre would you class them as?

- a) This novel describes how a man discovers a way to make himself invisible.
- b) It is 18th century England. A wealthy young woman is so busy arranging marriages for her friends that she does not realise that she too is falling in love.
- c) This novel describes a young boy's journey from a poor orphanage to manhood, and all the adventures he finds along the way.

2 Think of the last three novels you have read. What genre would you class them as? Why?

B. Glossary of literary terms for language learners

action	the events in the novel	dramatic	exciting and impressive
allegory	the use of events and characters as symbols i.e. to represent ideas and qualities	explore (v)	to describe and discuss
antagonist	a character who blocks the progress of the main character	external conflict	see <i>conflict</i>
author	the person who wrote the novel	figures of speech	expressions which are used to add detail to a description through comparison (see <i>simile</i> and <i>metaphor</i>)
cast	a cast is the group of people who act together in a theatre play. Cast is often used to describe the group of characters in a novel too.	filter (v)	to describe the facts from a certain point of view.
central features	(see also <i>physical features</i>) the most important details about a person's body or face	first person	using the pronouns I and me
central theme	see <i>theme</i>	first person narrator	see <i>narrator</i>
characters	the people in a novel	flashback	a device used to describe an event that happened before the main story
main/key characters	the most important people in the novel	flashforward	a device used to describe an event that will happen in the future
minor characters	characters who are not described in detail	genre	a particular style or type of novel
characterisation	how the novelist describes the characters	heroine	a woman who is the most important person in the novel
chronologically	in the order they happened	hero	a man who is the most important person in the novel
colour (v)	to influence a description	imagery	the use of the five senses in describing a scene
common themes	see <i>theme</i>	internal conflict	see <i>conflict</i>
complex	not following a simple, straight line	irony	a device that shows the contrast between reality and appearance
conflict	a problem that faces the main character/s	key events	the most important events
external conflict	a problem which involves the character and someone or something else	limited third person narrator	see <i>narrator</i>
internal conflict	a problem that is a part of the character's personality	linear	in a straight line, starting at the beginning and working through the events in sequence
counterpart	a character who has a similar and an equally important role	main plot	see <i>plot</i>
develop	used to describe progress in the plot, in the description of a character or in the exploration of a theme.	main characters	see <i>characters</i>
device	a literary technique which is used to create a certain effect	mechanics	the mechanics of the plot are the small details of the events and actions
		metaphor	an expression which describes one thing as if it was another thing (i.e. he was a hungry wolf) see also <i>simile</i>

• B. Glossary of literary terms for language learners

main characters	see <i>characters</i>		told at the same time as the main plot
mechanics	the mechanics of the plot are the small details of the events and actions	point of view	the position from which a story is told, the 'eyes' through which we see and understand the story
metaphor	an expression which describes one thing as if it was another thing (i.e. he was a hungry wolf) see also <i>simile</i>	protagonist	see <i>main character</i>
minor characters	see <i>characters</i>	psychological development	the way a character's personality changes
motivation	the reason why someone does something	race ahead	move forward very quickly.
narrator	the person who tells the story	realistic	describing things as they are in real life
third person narrator	a narrator who sees the story from outside and who can see into the minds and hearts of all the characters, as well as see all the action that takes place	recurring themes	see <i>theme</i>
first person narrator	a narrator who tells the story in the first person i.e. using <i>I</i> and <i>me</i> not <i>he</i> or <i>she</i> , to talk about the main character.	reliable	someone you can trust
limited third person narrator	a narrator who uses the third person, <i>he</i> or <i>she</i> to talk about the main character, but whose view of the action and the other people involved in the plot is limited to the main character.	resolution	the end of a conflict (see <i>conflict</i>), often comes at the end of the novel retell to tell a story another person has told you
third person narrator	a narrator who speaks in the third person using <i>he</i> or <i>she</i> or <i>they</i> to talk about all the characters.	reverse chronology	starting at the end and going backwards in time
pace	the speed at which the story is told	saga	a story told about two or more generations of the same family
personality traits	details about a person's personality eg, proud, intelligent, silly, obsessed by revenge.	satire	a style which criticises a person, event or part of society by making it look funny or stupid
physical features	details about a person's body and face, for example, dark hair, blue eyes, a scar on his face or a wooden leg.	shift (n)	a change in <i>style</i> or in <i>pace</i>
plot	the story told by the novel	simile	an expression which describes someone or something by comparing it to someone or something else using <i>like</i> or <i>as</i> (eg, <i>he was as hungry as a wolf</i>)
main plot	the most important story told in the novel	story-teller	a person who tells a story
sub plots	stories in the novel that are	style	the way the novel is written
		sub plots	see <i>plot</i>
		symbol	a person or an object that represents a particular quality or idea
		symbolise	to be a symbol of something
		symbolism	the use of <i>symbols</i>
		theme	a topic that is discussed in literature
		central theme	the most important theme

2. Exploiting literary texts

The following lesson plans are based on a selection of poems, and a historical text suitable for students of different language levels.

A. Text analysis: understanding poetry 27

B. Text analysis: historical texts 39

A. Text analysis: understanding poetry

<i>Spellbound</i> by Emily Brontë.....	28
<i>Daffodils</i> by William Wordsworth.....	31
<i>The Road not Taken</i> by Robert Frost	35

Spellbound by Emily Brontë

Understanding Poetry

Read the following poem, *Spellbound* by Emily Brontë. It might help you to understand it if you read it aloud.

Spellbound (by Emily Brontë)

The night is darkening round me,
The wild winds coldly blow;
But a tyrant spell has bound me
And I cannot, cannot go.

The giant trees are bending
Their bare boughs weighed with snow.
And the storm is fast descending,
And yet I cannot go.

Clouds beyond clouds above me,
Wastes beyond wastes below;
But nothing drear can move me;
I will not, cannot go.

When you have read the poem, look at the questions below, which will help you to understand some of the language and poetic techniques.

• **Spellbound by Emily Brontë**

Understanding Poetry

1. Look at the two lists below of 'Words' and 'Meanings'. Match the words on the left with the correct meanings on the right. Use a dictionary to check your answers.

Words	Meanings
wild •	• a powerful influence on someone
a tyrant •	• to limit what someone is allowed to do by making them obey a rule or agreement
a spell •	• when trees or areas of land have nothing growing on them
to bind (bound) •	• a big branch on a tree
giant •	• stormy, with strong winds
bare •	• past a place or outside an area
a bough •	• large areas of empty land
to descend •	• extremely large
beyond •	• making you feel bored or unhappy
wastes •	• someone who rules a country in a cruel and unfair way
drear •	• to become lower/come nearer to the ground

2. Can you find examples of these poetic techniques in the poem? Underline them.

- alliteration (using words that start with the same sound, e.g. *silver sky*)
- assonance (using words that have the same vowel sound, e.g. *white night*)
- repetition (using the same word more than once)

3. We can describe the rhyming patterns in a poem by using the letters A, B and C. The rhyming pattern for the following 4-line verse can be shown as AABA. The first two and the last lines all rhyme and so are all described as 'A':

He stood there softly at the door, (A)
I saw the smile he wore. (A)
He called my name, I turned to go, (B)
I could not stay for more. (A)

Look back at the poem **Spellbound** and choose which of the rhyming patterns below is used:

- a. ABAB b. ABCB c. ABBA

• *Spellbound* by Emily Brontë

Understanding Poetry

4. Answer the following questions:

- a. Describe the mood, or tone, of the poem *Spellbound*, using words from the box if you wish.

sad happy thoughtful brave strong-minded
threatening angry frightening

.....

.....

.....

.....

- b. Do you like the poem?

.....

.....

.....

- c. Why do you think the person in the poem 'cannot go'?

.....

.....

.....

- d. Who or what do you think has cast a 'tyrant spell' on the person in the poem?

.....

.....

.....

Daffodils by William Wordsworth

Understanding Poetry

Read the following poem, *Daffodils* by William Wordsworth. It might help you to understand it better if you read it aloud.

Daffodils (by William Wordsworth)

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed – and gazed – but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Key:

o'er = over
vale = valley
oft = often

When you have read the poem, look at the questions below, which will help you to understand some of the language and poetic techniques.

• *Daffodils* by William Wordsworth

Understanding Poetry

1. Match the words on the left with the correct meanings on the right. Use a dictionary to check your answers.

Words	Meanings
to wander •	• a light wind
to flutter •	• the edge of a place or thing • the state of being completely alone
a breeze •	• done with a lot of energy
the Milky Way •	• to look at someone or something for a long time • seeming to be thinking carefully about something
the margin •	• to travel from place to place without a particular direction or purpose
a glance •	• a long, low, comfortable seat
sprightly vacant •	• to move up and down or from side to side with short, quick, light movements • a quick look at someone or something
to gaze a couch •	• looking as if you do not understand or are not paying attention
pensive solitude •	• a group of planets and stars that the Earth belongs to

2. Write the words below in the correct column to show their meaning. We've done the first one to help you.

~~somber~~ glee gay sorrow misery jocund bliss melancholy

happy	happiness	sad	sadness
		<i>somber</i>	

• **Daffodils by William Wordsworth**

Understanding Poetry

3. Write each poetic technique from the list below next to the correct meaning in the table. Then find an example of each technique in the poem.

personification simile alliteration assonance metaphor

Poetic technique	Meaning	Example from poem
	using words that start with the same sound, e.g. <i>silver sky</i>	<i>somber</i>
	comparing two things and saying that they are the same, e.g. <i>the house was a prison</i>	
	using words that have the same vowel sound, e.g. <i>white night</i>	
	comparing two things, using as or like, e.g. as <i>white as snow</i>	
	comparing something to a human being, e.g. <i>the wind sighed sadly</i>	

4. The rhyming pattern for the following 4-line verse can be shown as ABAB:

Water, water, every where (A)
 And all the boards did shrink; (B)
 Water, water, every where, (A)
 Nor any drop to drink. (B)

(Verse taken from *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*, by Samuel Coleridge)

Use the letters A, B, C to show the rhyming pattern for *Daffodils*.

.....

.....

.....

.....

- ***Daffodils* by William Wordsworth**
Understanding Poetry

5. Answer the following questions about Daffodils:

a. How would you describe the mood or tone of this poem?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

b. How does the poem make you feel?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

c. Do you like the poem?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost

Understanding Poetry

Choices and decisions

What kind of choices do you have to make? Write down four choices that you have made in the last week (example: go to class or stay at home).

Now put the four choices in order from most important to least important. Compare with a partner. Did you have the same choices?

Before You Read

You are going to read a famous American poem about a choice that somebody had to make. It is called "*The Road Not Taken*". Here are some words from the poem. Check that you understand what they mean. What do you think the poem will be about?

Wood

Undergrowth

Trodden

Grassy Worn

Read the poem to check.

The Road Not Taken

Robert Frost (1874-1963)

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as
I could To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I --
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

• *The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost

Understanding Poetry

Comprehension

Read the poem and answer the questions.

- What are the differences between the two roads?
- Is the author happy with his choice?
- Do you think it was a difficult decision?
- What does the poem mean?

Language work

- What words does the author use to avoid repeating “the road” (for example “it”?)
- The author has made several sentences much shorter and has also changed the word order in some cases. Can you rewrite the following in Standard English?
e.g. *The Road Not Taken* = *The Road Which Wasn't Taken*

And sorry I could not take both

And be one traveler, long I stood

Then took the other, as just as fair and having perhaps the better claim

Yet knowing how way leads on to way I doubted if I should ever come back.

- Look at this line from the poem. *Two roads diverged in a wood, and I - I took the one less traveled by.* Why does the author repeat the word “I” twice? What effect does it have on the poem?

Discussion - Discuss these questions in partners or small groups.

- Do you like the poem?
- Many people in America consider this their favorite poem. Why do you think so?
- A moral is something that you can learn from a story, a poem or an experience. Does this poem have a moral?
- Think of some major decisions a person makes in their life. Make a list with a partner.
- Have you had to make any major decisions? Did you take the road less traveled by?

• *The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost

Understanding Poetry

Teacher's Notes - The Road Not Taken

by Lindsay Clandfield

Level: Upper Intermediate +

Note: This lesson plan combines the language and personal growth approaches to teaching literature. Students read one of America's favorite poems and analyze it in terms of the language the poet uses. By looking at ways the language is used in the poem (stylistics) students are made aware of differences between it and Standard English. The follow up is primarily a series of speaking activities to elicit students' opinions and feelings about the piece they have just read.

Choices and Decisions

Have the students do this in pairs or small groups. You could do this part without giving them the handout just yet.

Before You Read

If you have decided to hold back the handout, write the words on the board and set the task for students. Feedback on what they think the poem will be about.

Comprehension

When students have read the poem, ask them to first turn to a partner and explain what they understood by the poem. Then set the questions.

Answers will vary. Here is one interpretation.

- a) Both are "fair". One seems to be less walked on and grassy, although people have passed on both of them.
- b) Although he doesn't specifically say, one would assume that he is happy with his choice.
- c) Yes, because he stood for a long time debating which one to take.
- d) The author had to make a major decision in his life on what he wanted to do. He chose the more difficult way but has no regrets.

If students have difficulty with individual words, now is the time to check that they understand them. You can do this with the whole class or have them check the words in their dictionaries.

• *The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost

Understanding Poetry

Language Work

- a) both; one; it; the other; them; the first
- b) And I was sorry that I could not take both; And I was one traveler, I stood for a long time
Then I took the other which was just as fair and it had the better claim
Because I knew how way leads on to way I doubted if I would ever come back
- c) The repetition of the word “I” gives the effect of a pause (students should respect this while reading the poem aloud). The poet, imagining that he is talking about his life as an old man and is giving a sigh while explaining his choice.

Discussion

Students should do this in pairs or in small groups. Conduct feedback at the end.

B. Text analysis: historical texts

<i>For Whom the Bell Tolls</i> by Ernest Hemingway.....	40
<i>A Tale of Two Cities</i> by Charles Dickens	43

For Whom the Bell Tolls by Ernest Hemingway

Historical texts

For Whom the Bell Tolls was inspired by Hemingway's experiences as a foreign correspondent in Paris and Spain during the Spanish Civil War. In 1937, Hemingway travelled to Spain to write about the war for the North American Newspaper Alliance. When *For Whom the Bell Tolls* was published, it was considered Hemingway's finest work, and many critics still consider it to be his masterpiece. Specifically, the literary world praised Hemingway's spare style and powerful symbolism.

People still consider this book to be not only Hemingway's best, but also as one of the best war novels of all time.

It is the Spanish Civil War. In the forests of the Spanish Sierra, a guerrilla band prepares to blow up a vital bridge. Robert Jordan, a young American volunteer, has joined the small group of rebels on this mission. It is night in the rebel camp, and Pablo – one of the Spanish guerrillas – has insulted the American.

"Pablo is drunk" Primitivo said. "Pay him no heed, Inglés*."

"I do not think he is so drunk," Robert Jordan said.

Maria was standing behind him and Robert Jordan saw Pablo watching her over his shoulder. The small eyes, like a boar's, were watching her out of the round, stubble-covered head and Robert Jordan thought: I have known many killers in this war and some before and they were all different; there is no common trait nor feature; nor any such thing as the criminal type; but Pablo is certainly not handsome.

"I don't believe you can drink," he said to Pablo. "Nor that you're drunk."

"I am drunk," Pablo said with dignity. "To drink is nothing. It is to be drunk that is important."

Estoy muy borracho.**"

"I doubt it," Robert Jordan told him. "Cowardly, yes."

It was so quiet in the cave, suddenly, that he could hear the hissing noise the wood made burning on the hearth where Pilar cooked. He heard the sheepskin crackle as he rested his weight on his feet. He thought he could almost hear the snow falling outside. He could not, but he could hear the silence where it fell.

I'd like to kill him and have it over with, Robert Jordan was thinking. I don't know what he is going to do, but it is nothing good. Day after tomorrow is the bridge and this man is bad and he constitutes a danger to the success of the whole enterprise. Come on. Let us get it over with.

Pablo grinned at him and put one finger up and wiped it across his throat. He shook his head that turned only a little each way on his thick short neck.

"Nay, Inglés," he said. "Do not provoke me."

* Englishman ** I am very drunk.

• *For Whom The Bell Tolls* by Ernest Hemingway

Historical texts

Vocabulary in context

1. What kind of animal is a boar?
2. Pablo has a stubble-covered head. Does he have a lot of hair or only a little?
3. What is a hearth?
4. Look at the last sentence about Pablo. Can you mime the actions he does?
5. There are two examples of very old English expressions in the text. *Pay him no heed* and *Nay*. What do you think they mean?

Reported speech

Look at this example of direct speech from the text. It has been changed to reported speech. What changes do you notice?

“Pablo is drunk” Primitivo said. ----- Primitivo said that Pablo was drunk.

Now look at the following example, using the verb “tell” instead of “say”.

“Pay him no heed, Inglés.” ----- Primitivo told Robert to pay him no heed.

Find the other examples of direct speech in the text and change them to reported speech using “told” or “said”. What other changes did you make?

Writing

What do you think will happen next? Write a conclusion to this extract.

• ***For Whom The Bell Tolls* by Ernest Hemingway**

Historical texts

Webquest – Ernest Hemingway

Find out some more information about this famous American author and his work. You can use the following websites as a starting point.

www.gradesaver.com/ClassicNotes/Titles/belltolls/about.html

www.hemingway.org

www.lostgeneration.com www.timelesshemingway.com

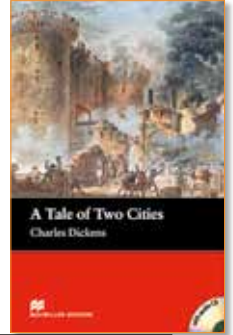
- When was the Spanish Civil War? Who fought against whom? Which side did Ernest Hemingway support?
- The main character in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is an American volunteer. Was this unusual in this war?
- Hemingway was one of the authors of “the lost generation”. What was “the lost generation”?
- Much of Hemingway’s writing was based on his adventures. What kind of adventures did he have?

A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens

Historical texts

A. Before Reading

1. Look at the cover of the book.



What can you see? _____

When do you think this happened? _____

Who are the people in the picture? _____

2. Read *A Note About the Story* p. 5-6.

When did the story happen?

The story is called 'A Tale of Two Cities'. Which two cities is the story about?

Why did the people not like aristocrats?

What happened to the aristocrats? _____

- ***A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens**
Historical texts

B. While Reading

3. Make a chart about the story. Fill in your chart for each chapter.

Example:

Chapter	Characters in this chapter	What happens to the main characters in the chapter?
1	Jarvis Lorry, Jerry Cruncher, Coach driver, Lucie Manette, Miss Pross	Mr Lorry meets Lucie Manette. She finds out her father is still alive.
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

- ***A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens**
Historical texts

7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		

• *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens

Historical texts

4. The judges find Charles Darnay guilty and send him to the guillotine. When Sydney Carton and John Barsad arrive at the prison, Darnay is writing a letter to his wife, Lucie. Write the first part of Darnay's letter.

C. After Reading

5. Draw a line to join the name of the character to the right description.

Example:

Madame Defarge ————— her face was hard and unkind.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1) Mr Jarvis Lorry | a) ... was tall and handsome. He had smooth, dark hair and he wore fine clothes. |
| 2) Charles Darnay | b) ... had very pale skin and dark eyes. His hair and clothes were untidy. He had not always been kind to people. |
| 3) Marquis St Evrémonte | c) ... is kind to Lucie Manette and Doctor Manette. He doesn't have a family of his own and likes to visit Lucie and Dr Manette. |
| 4) Sydney Carlton | d) ... was often angry and shouted at people in the story. People were scared of him. |

• *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens

Historical texts

6. Imagine you are Charles Darnay. Write a list of 5 sentences about things that have happened in your life. Include one false sentence. Give your sentences to another student in the class. Ask him/her to say which is the false sentence.

Example:

I lived in England.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

3. Literature knowledge

Using authentic texts can be a motivating way to teach Literature. It gets students thinking about what they read and about famous English speaking authors of whom they may already have heard.

Books, books, books	49
Know the authors: Shakespeare and Cervantes	51
Know the author: Lewis Carroll	52
How to Write an Account of a Novel	60

• *Books, books, books* Literature knowledge

The English book quiz

Part One: Your teacher will show you or describe different things associated with a book. Can you name them all in English?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Part Two: Here are some famous authors who wrote in English. Can you name a book they have written?

CHARLES DICKENS
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
JRR TOLKEIN
AGATHA CHRISTIE
ERNEST HEMINGWAY

Part Three: Here are some titles of famous books. Can you name the authors?

THE NAME OF THE ROSE
THE SATANIC VERSES
TALES OF MYSTERY AND HORROR
ALICE IN WONDERLAND

- **Books, books, books**
Literature knowledge

Discussion questions: Books, reading and literature

A. BOOKS AND READING IN GENERAL

- 1) Do you read a lot? How many books do you read a book every month? Or every year?
- 2) What are you reading at the moment? Do you like it?
- 3) Do you have a favourite book or books? What is it about?
- 4) What kinds of books do you like to read?
- 5) If a film is made of a book, do you prefer to read the book or watch the film first?

B. THINKING ABOUT LITERATURE

- 1) Who are some of the most famous authors in Spain?
- 2) Think about the most famous piece of literature from Spain. What is it about?
- 3) Do/Did you have to study famous authors at school? Why?
- 4) Is it difficult to understand famous literature?
- 5) Does literature have to be old?
- 6) What English literature do you know? Have you read any?
- 7) Have you ever read a graded reader of English literature?
- 8) Literature is sometimes divided into three categories: poems, short stories and novels. Which do you prefer reading? Why?

Know the authors: Shakespeare and Cervantes

Literature knowledge

LITERATURE

Shakespeare and Cervantes.



1 Write.

was born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon	was born in 1547 in Alcalá de Henares
wrote novels, plays and poetry	wrote <i>Don Quixote</i>
was a professional actor	wrote <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
wrote 37 plays and poetry	died in 1616
William Shakespeare ...	Miguel de Cervantes ...

2 Write the names of the plays.

Julius Caesar Romeo and Juliet Hamlet

1 _____

This play is about a young prince. This prince is the son of the dead King of Denmark. This is a very long play and includes the famous line '*To be or not to be, that is the question.*' Shakespeare wrote this tragedy in about 1601.



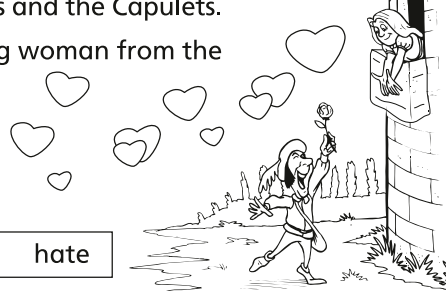
2 _____

This play is one of Shakespeare's Roman plays. The story is about a powerful Roman dictator. Marcus Brutus kills the dictator because he is too powerful. At the end of the play Brutus dies also. Shakespeare wrote this tragedy in about 1599.



3 _____

This play is about two enemy families in Verona: the Montagues and the Capulets. A young man from the Montague family is in love with a young woman from the Capulet family. Shakespeare wrote this tragedy in about 1595.



3 Complete the text with the words in the box.

poison die love marry secret party hate

The play *Romeo and Juliet* is a tragedy. Two families, the Montagues and the Capulets, (1) _____ each other. Romeo Montague meets Juliet Capulet at a (2) _____. They are teenagers and they fall in (3) _____. The two lovers decide to (4) _____. Their families don't know about their plans. Romeo and Juliet marry in (5) _____. But later someone tells Romeo that Juliet is dead. Romeo drinks some (6) _____ and dies. But Juliet is not really dead. When Juliet wakes up and sees Romeo dead, she kills herself. So in the end Romeo and Juliet both (7) _____.

Know the author: Lewis Carroll

Literature knowledge

The life and work of Lewis Carroll

Worksheet

Name:

Activity 1 The life of Lewis Carroll

Read the information on [WIKIPEDIA](#) about Lewis Carroll and answer the questions.



1. What was Lewis Carroll's real name?

.....

2. Where and when was he born?

.....

3. What disorders did Carroll suffer from?

.....

.....

4. What University did Carroll attend and what did he study?

.....

5. How was he inspired to write *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* ?

.....

.....

6. Which publisher first published *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in 1865?

.....

• Know the author: Lewis Carroll_2

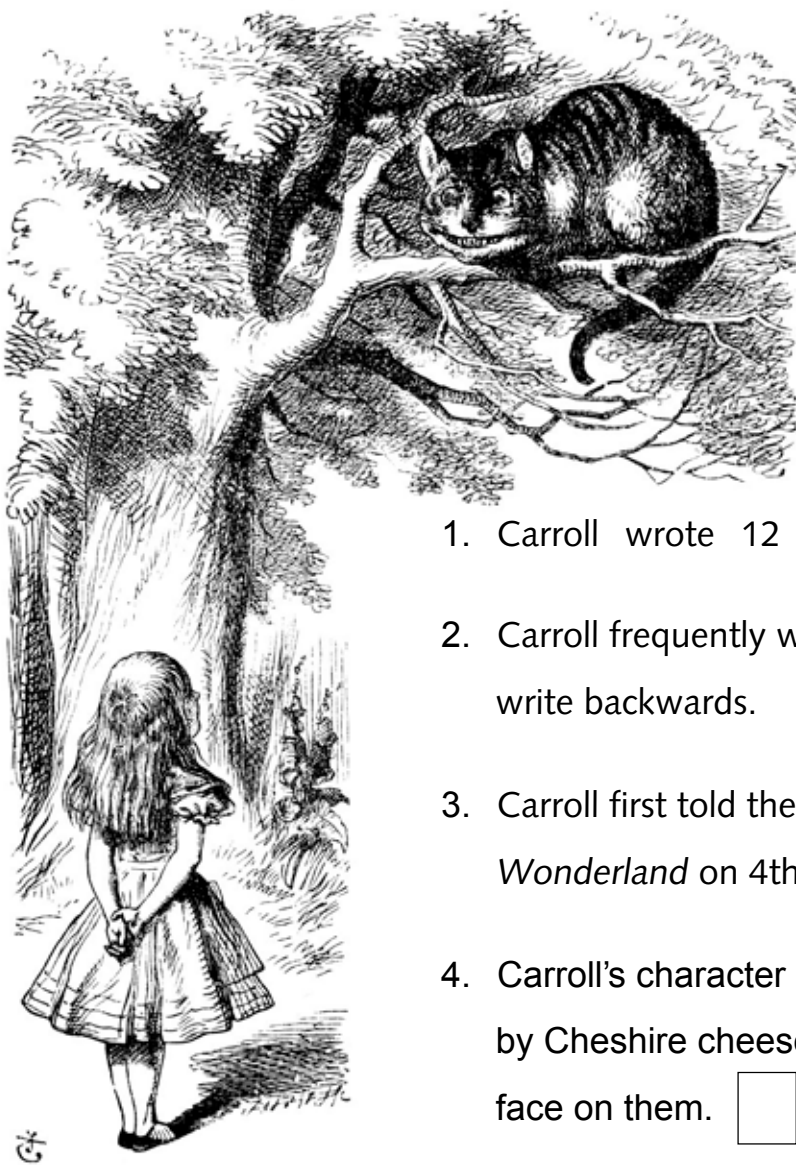
Literature knowledge

The life and work of Lewis Carroll

Worksheet

Name:

Activity 2 Ten random facts about Lewis Carroll's life and work



Read the statements and decide if they are true or false.

CLICK and check to find the correct answers.

1. Carroll wrote 12 books on Mathematics. ☐
2. Carroll frequently wrote letters and would sometimes write backwards. ☐
3. Carroll first told the story of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* on 4th June 1862 ☐
4. Carroll's character of the **CHESHIRE CAT** was inspired by Cheshire cheese molds that had a smiling cat's face on them. ☐
5. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* has been translated into over 100 languages. ☐

• Know the author: Lewis Carroll

Literature knowledge

The life and work of Lewis Carroll

Worksheet

Name:

Activity 3 *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

Read the **PLOT** of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and tick the characters that appear in the plot. Which characters are not mentioned in the plot?

☐ The Mad Hatter

☐ Tweedle-Dum & Tweedle-Dee

☐ The White Rabbit



☐ Mouse

☐ Walrus

☐ Dinah

☐ Caterpillar

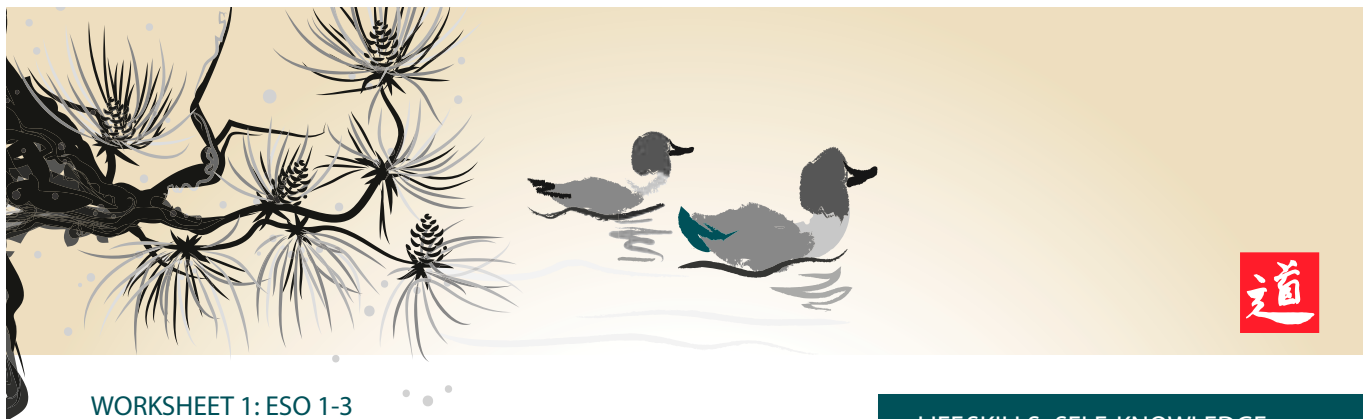
☐ The Duchess

☐ The Queen of Hearts

☐ The Cheshire Cat

How to Write a Haiku

Literature knowledge



WORKSHEET 1: ESO 1-3

What are you like? Think of one adjective for every letter of your name (either starting with it or containing it) to describe yourself. Then give a reason for your choice. Look at the examples below to help you.

LIFESKILLS - SELF-KNOWLEDGE:
Students write a poem using the letters in their name.

I'm active because I do many activities after school . For example, I go dancing and do pilates .
I'm friendly because I like meeting new people .
I'm practical because I try to solve my problems in the fastest way possible .

.....

.....

.....

.....

Now look at the following acronym:

A is for active; I usually go swimming and dancing during the week .
N is in friendly; I love meeting people and spending a lot of time with my friends .
A is in practical; I always try to find a quick solution to problems .
Active, friendly, practical . Yes, this is me! :)

Finally, write your own English acronym using the one above as your model.

The letters in my name define me:

..... is for* ; I usually

..... ; I love

..... ; I always

..... ; I love

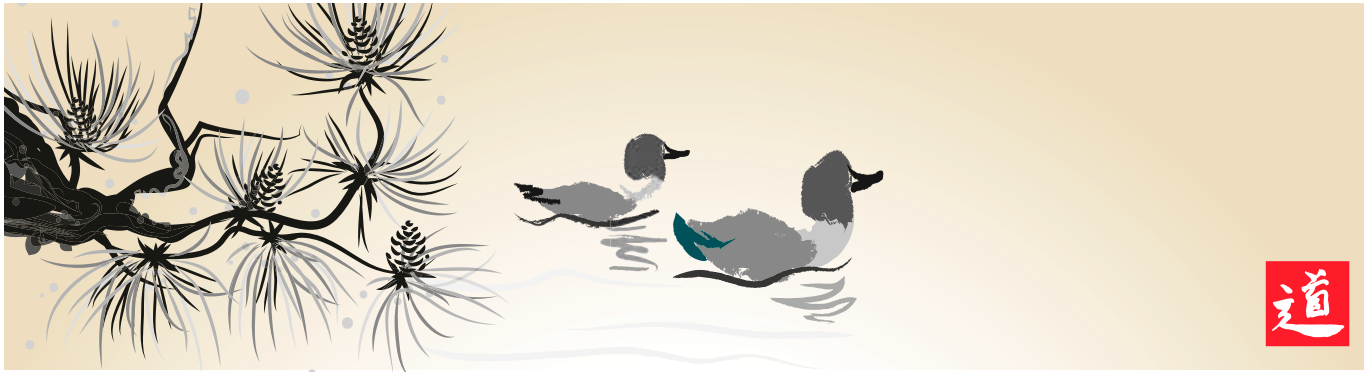
..... ;

..... and Yes, this is me! :)

*(Note: if the adjective you use contains the letter, but doesn't start with it, you can say "..... is IN").

• How to Write a Haiku

Literature knowledge



WORKSHEET 2: ESO 4-Bachillerato

Watch the video and complete the following guide to write haikus.

Watch the video

LIFE SKILLS - CREATIVITY:

In groups, students look for information on haikus to answer the questions on the worksheet.

1. What is a haiku poem?

.....

2. How many lines does it have?

.....

3. How many syllables does a haiku have on the whole?

.....

4. How many syllables does each line have?

.....

5. Does it have to rhyme?

.....

6. What other features does a haiku have?

a)

b)

7. What does "cutting point" actually refer to?

.....

8. How can a cutting point be achieved in English?

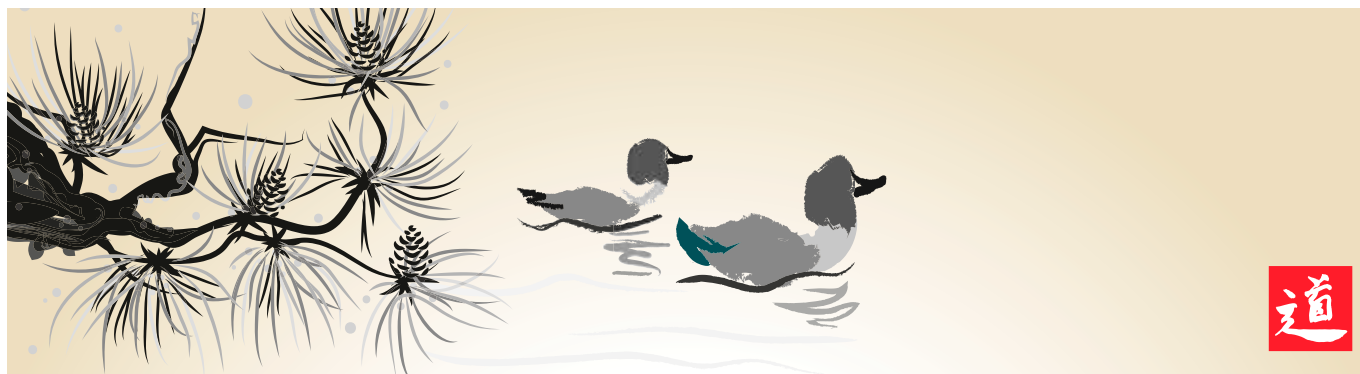
.....

9. How can a reference to one of the four seasons be achieved apart from using the actual name of each of the seasons? Give an example.

.....

• How to Write a Haiku

Literature knowledge



10. What are the three steps to follow when writing a haiku poem?

- a)
- b)
- c)

11. Look at this sample haiku. What season does it refer to?

.....

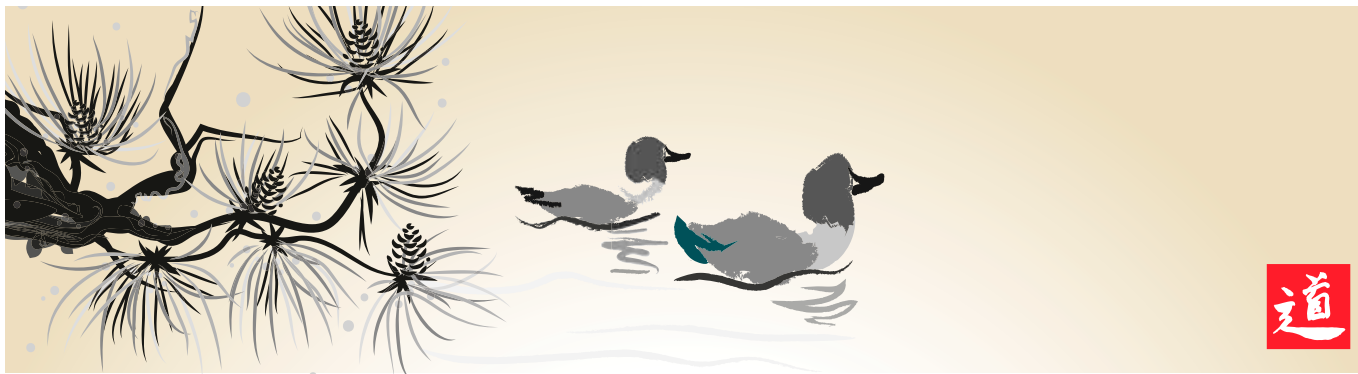
*On a scorching day [5 syllables]
a kangaroo flicks its ear; [7 syllables]
the fly zooms away . [5 syllables]*

Now brainstorm ideas to write your own haiku. Remember to follow the 5-7-5 syllable structure and the guidelines from the video.



• How to Write a Haiku

Literature knowledge



TEACHER'S NOTES

WORKSHEET 2: LIFE SKILLS - Creativity (ESO 4 - Bachillerato)

1. Tell the students that they are going to write a haiku poem in English.
2. Show students the video on haiku poems to get an idea of what they are. [VIDEO](#)
3. Now divide students into small groups of 3 or 4.
4. Give students worksheet 4 and play the video again for them to answer the questions on how to write a haiku.
5. Go over the answers in open class and read them together with students as preparation for the actual writing.
6. Students now have to think of a topic for their haiku (for example, spring) and brainstorm ideas on possible words to write. You could give them 5-10 minutes to think of words together and come up with a list.
7. After that, get students to start writing their lines, bearing in mind the structure of a haiku (5-7-5 syllables on three lines).
8. Go round monitoring and helping students with any vocabulary problems they might have.

As a follow-up activity, you could ask students to type up their haikus and illustrate them with an image. Students could then swap texts with their classmates so everyone could read everyone's texts. You could also hang them around the classroom to display the students' work. Alternatively, you could make an e-book with the haikus and the pictures using Mixbook: www.mixbook.com or an interactive slideshow using PhotoPeach: www.photopeach.com

This activity will foster cooperative learning and collaboration, as the task will be done in small groups and every student in the group will be contributing with his/her ideas.

It will also increase students' cultural awareness, as they will learn about a Japanese form of poetry which does not exist in their country.

Finally, the activity will enhance creativity and imagination, because the students will write their own haiku poem, choosing the season they would like to focus on and the images they would like to include.

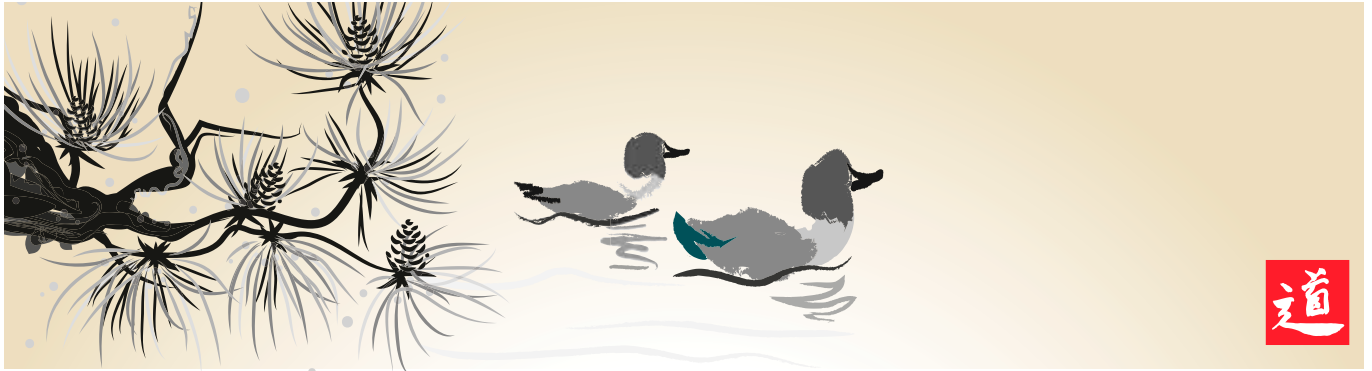


ANSWER KEY

1. What is haiku poem?
It's an ancient form of Japanese poetry.
2. How many lines does it have?
3
3. How many syllables does a haiku have on the whole?
17

• How to Write a Haiku

Literature knowledge



TEACHER'S NOTES

4. How many syllables does each line have?
Line one has 5 syllables, line two has 7 syllables and line three has 5 syllables
5. Does it have to rhyme?
No.
6. What other features does a haiku have?
 - a) It has a cutting point
 - b) It contains a seasonal reference
7. What does "cutting point" actually refer to?
Something which divides the haiku into two parts.
8. How can a cutting point be achieved in English?
With punctuation.
9. How can a reference to one of the four seasons be achieved apart from using the actual name of each of the seasons? Give an example.
You could use words associated to a particular season as an indirect reference. For example, cherry blossoms refer to spring, hot refers to summer, snowy to winter and brown leaves to autumn.
10. What are the three steps to follow when writing a haiku poem?
 - a) Decide on a topic to write about.
 - b) Picture this image in your mind and use it to set the scene and convey a particular feeling in your poem
 - c) Share your haiku with your friends.
- 11) Look at this sample haiku. What season does it refer to?
To summer.

How to Write an Account of a Novel

Literature knowledge

What is an 'account'?

A short account is like a review. It should give a short description of the novel and no more. It should cover the main subjects of **plot**, **characters**, **narration**, **themes** and **style**. There is no need to go into detail. It may help the reader decide if they want to read the novel or not. Or it may show an examiner or a tutor that you, as a student, have read and understood the main points of the novel.

An example

You are going to read a short account of Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*. Use the exercises below (1-4) to help you analyse the text.

Focus on information

- 1 Before you read the account, look at the list below. Tick what you think is the most important information about the novel. Remember, this is a short introduction to the novel, so it isn't possible to include all the information.

- ☐ title
- ☐ author
- ☐ genre
- ☐ publication date
- ☐ author's other works
- ☐ historical context
- ☐ names of main characters
- ☐ description of the main characters
- ☐ description of minor characters
- ☐ quotes from the text
- ☐ narrative style
- ☐ description of the plot
- ☐ explanation of subplots
- ☐ main themes
- ☐ description of the author's style

• How to Write an Account of a Novel

Literature knowledge

2 Read the account and check your answers to 1.

- 1 *Pride and Prejudice* is the second of Jane Austen's six novels. The novel describes how Lizzy Bennet meets her future husband, Mr Darcy, but before the two of them can fall in love and be truly happy, Mr Darcy must learn to overcome his pride, and Lizzy must learn to overcome her prejudice.
- 2 Both the timeframe and the setting of the novel are limited. The plot focuses on a year in the life of the Bennet family, and all the action takes place in the homes and gardens of the Bennets and their friends and family. The action in the novel focuses on social meetings and events, and the relationships between the various characters.
- 3 A third person narrator tells the story through Lizzy's eyes. We, the readers, see both the characters and events as she sees them. We, too, are not sure about Darcy at the beginning and are happy to believe the stories that Wickham tells about him. We are as surprised as Lizzy is when Darcy first proposes marriage to her, and as embarrassed as she is when her mother continually makes a fool of herself in public.
- 4 The theme of marriage arises in all Austen's novels. In provincial England in the 18th century, making the right marriage was important, not only for personal reasons, but for financial and social reasons too. Mrs Bennet represents a shallow, materialistic attitude to marriage. She is only interested in the social status that marriage gives. She does not think about the couple's chances of future happiness. Lizzy is the opposite. She has learnt from the mistakes of her parents and she does not want a marriage that is not based on respect, understanding and love. This is the ideal marriage in Austen's world: a marriage with social and financial stability and where both partners love and respect each other equally.
- 5 Throughout the novel Austen makes fun of the personality of Mrs Bennet and those of other similar characters. Characters such as Lady Catherine de Bourgh and Mr Collins show their shallow attitudes through their actions and words, as does Mrs Bennet. We laugh at them, but we also judge them. They are seen as silly, self-important and vain. They are more interested in what people think of them, than in the true value of people and things.
- 6 The novel is as much about truth and honesty, as it is about love. Both Lizzy and Darcy have to learn to judge – and love – people for their true worth, rather than judging them through the eyes of society. This is a theme that is as important today as it was 200 hundred years ago. I believe that the strength of the novel is its ability to tell a story that deals with the basic problems facing people and society across the ages.

Focus on organisation

3 Read the account again and match the paragraphs (1-6) to the summary of their contents (a-f).

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a) details about the plot | _____ |
| b) a discussion of style | _____ |
| c) a personal reaction to the novel | _____ |
| d) a discussion of the main theme | _____ |
| e) an introduction to the plot and the main characters | _____ |
| f) details about the narrator and narrative style | _____ |

• How to Write an Account of a Novel

Literature knowledge

- 4 Read the account again and answer the questions below. Underline the sections in the account that help you answer the questions.
- 1 Who are the main characters?
 - 2 What happens to them?
 - 3 How long does the story last?
 - 4 Where does it take place?
 - 5 Who tells the story?
 - 6 Whose viewpoint do we see?
 - 7 What is the main theme?
 - 8 What does the novel say about the main theme?
 - 9 What literary device is described?
 - 10 What does the writer like the most about the novel?

Focus on useful language

- 5 Find the phrases (1-8) in the account and match them to their functions (a-h).
- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1 The novel describes how ... | a describing the novel's main message |
| 2 The plot focuses on ... | b giving information about viewpoint |
| 3 The action takes place in ... | c discussing the author's style |
| 4 The narrator tells the story through ... | d explaining a character's role |
| 5 Mrs Bennet represents ... | e introducing the main storyline |
| 6 Throughout the novel the author ... | f giving your opinion |
| 7 The novel is as much about ... as it is about ... | g giving details about the setting |
| 8 I believe that ... | h explaining the timeframe |
- 6 Use the expressions in bold in exercise 1 above to complete the sentences below.
- 1 The white whale _____ the uncontrollable power of nature.
 - 2 Most of the action _____ on board the **Pequod**.
 - 3 Our Mutual Friend _____ a dead man's will influences and changes the lives of John Harmon and his friends.
 - 4 _____ uses effective imagery which creates the atmosphere of dirt and decay surrounding the Chancery.
 - 5 _____ Rebecca is one of the great love stories of all time.
 - 6 Pip _____ in the first person.
 - 7 The plot _____ the childhood experiences of young Pip.
 - 8 Moby Dick _____ revenge and madness _____ the power of nature.

• *How to Write an Account of a Novel*

Literature knowledge

7 Reorder the words in the sentences below.

1 main have not one Middlemarch character does

2 various follows plot the people stories the of

3 guides third an stories us narrator through the person

4 Middlemarch in themes are many there

5 marriage important of the one most is

6 whaling ship of story tells the Moby Dick

7 sea action place at most the takes of

8 symbol the things white whale many of a

8 Underline the phrases above that you could use in an account of another novel.

Writing task

Now it's your turn. You're going to write an account of a novel you've read recently. The exercises below will take you through the process step by step. They will help you make decisions about:

- 1 what information to include
- 2 what order to include it in
- 3 the language you need to put your ideas across

• *How to Write an Account of a Novel*

Literature knowledge

Focus on information

9 Decide on the novel you are going to write about and then write notes in the table below.

Title	_____
Author	_____
Genre	_____
Historical context	_____ _____
Main characters	_____ _____
Minor characters	_____ _____
Plot	_____ _____
Sub plot/s	_____ _____
Narrative style	_____ _____
Main theme	_____ _____
Other themes	_____ _____
Author's style	_____ _____
Literary devices used	_____ _____

10 Look at your notes and decide what information you are going to include. Remember, you can't include everything. You need to choose the information that you think is the most important and interesting.

• *How to Write an Account of a Novel*

Literature knowledge

Focus on organisation

- 11 Look at the paragraph plan below. Look at your notes again and decide what you are going to say in each paragraph. Remember that you want to keep your account short, so don't try to include too much information.

Main focus	Notes on contents
1 introduction	title: _____ author: _____ main characters: _____ one sentence summary of plot: _____ anything else? _____
2 plot	timeframe: _____ setting: _____ action: _____ anything else? _____
3 narrator	narrative style: _____ _____ point of view: _____ _____
4 main theme	one sentence summary of main theme: _____ _____ examples from the novel: _____ _____
5 style	main aspect of style: _____ _____ example from novel: _____ _____
6 personal response	what aspect of the novel appeals most to you? _____ _____ _____ _____

• *How to Write an Account of a Novel*

Literature knowledge

Focus on language

12 Take time to do the following. Use the useful language section above to help you:

- write a one sentence summary of the main story
- write a sentence describing the timeframe and setting
- write a one sentence summary of the narrative style
- write a sentence introducing the main theme
- write a sentence explaining the author's style
- write a sentence explaining your feelings about the novel

Writing

13 Now you are ready to write your account. Use the sentences in exercise 12 as the basis for your six paragraphs. You may want to change them a little to fit in with the other points you want to make. As you write your account, keep looking back to your paragraph plan (exercise 11 above) to make sure you're including all the necessary information. Remember, this is just a short account, you are not expected to write everything you know about the novel!

14 When you have finished, read through your account and imagine that you know nothing about the novel that you have described. Answer the following questions.

- Does the account give a clear picture?
- Would you like to know more?
- Would you be interested in reading the novel?

• How to Write an Account of a Novel

Literature knowledge

Answer Key

Analysing the question

Exercise 3

- 1 it doesn't have to be the main character
- 2 and makes his/her first appearance
- 3 metaphors, similes, satire and irony
- 4 comment on the lack of change
- 5 what the character fails to learn

Exercise 4

- 1 Consider the significance of money in *Middlemarch*. Comment on the uses and abuses of money in the novel and discuss how it influences people's choices.
 - general discussion of the theme of money in the novel
 - examples of good and bad use of money by characters in the novel
 - examples of how money influences the choices of two or more of the main characters
- 2 Discuss the difficulties involved in 'making a good marriage' as described in *Middlemarch*. Consider the difference between what people are looking for in a marriage and the reality of married life. Take two examples from the novel and outline the problems faced by the two couples.
 - discuss the concept of a 'good marriage' as described in the novel
 - give examples of how one or two characters are disappointed by the 'reality' of their marriage/
 - choose two couples and explain in detail the problems they faced
- 3 Discuss the character of Ahab in *Moby Dick*. He is stubborn, selfish, revengeful and destructive, but there are times when we feel pity for him. Explore both sides of the man, his obsession and his humanity.
 - give a brief description of the captain
 - give examples of the four characteristics (stubborn, selfish, revengeful, destructive)
 - give an example of a time when you feel pity for him
 - compare the two sides of his character
- 4 Discuss how the narrator, Ishmael, gradually introduces us to the world of captain Ahab and the great white whale in *Moby Dick*. Think about how other people's descriptions and stories are used to introduce the characters long before they make a direct appearance.
 - give a brief description of the narrator and the narrative style
 - outline how we first hear about the captain and the whale
 - give examples of stories and descriptions of the two

• *How to Write an Account of a Novel*

Literature knowledge

Exercise 5

Paragraph 1 Who is the character? What is she like? What is her role in the plot?	Bella Wilfer young and beautiful John Harmon will inherit a lot of money if he marries her
Paragraph 2 What is the first impression? How is it created?	spoilt, selfish but good natured her words, her actions (pulling at her hair)
Paragraph 3 What are the main characteristics associated with her?	beauty, love of money, good nature
Paragraph 4 How does she change? What lesson does she learn?	She loses her interest in money. That money can change people, that love and kindness are more important than money
Paragraph 5 Is her character believable? Why/why not? What is her role in the novel?	Not completely. She is manipulated by John Harmon and Mr Boffin and when she finds out she isn't angry.
Paragraph 6 What is the main theme of the novel? How does Bella's story connect to the main theme?	the power and influence of money through the will, through her relationship with the Boffins and her father.
Paragraph 7 What is the central message of the novel?	That although money can bring sadness and trouble, it is also essential in living a dignified life.

• How to Write an Account of a Novel

Literature knowledge

Building an argument and using supporting evidence

Exercise 2

- 1 – summary of argument
- 2 – evidence from the plot
- 3 – first statement of argument
- 4 – important situation in the plot
- 5 – important situation in the plot
- 6 – further exploration of the argument

Using quotations

Exercise 1

- 1 'He must marry a certain girl who is now eighteen and very beautiful.'
- 2 'Here I am in this ugly, black dress, Pa,' she said. 'I'm like a widow who has never been married. I was going to be rich but now I have nothing. No husband, no money. It was bad enough to be told to marry a stranger. But it's worse, much worse, when the man gets drowned.'
- 3 'She became, perhaps, a little more proud, a little more spoilt. She certainly became very interested in money and in all the pretty things she could buy with it. If she thought about her old home and her family, she never talked about them.'
- 4 'Oh, Pa, I can think of nothing but money. I am so greedy for all the things that money can buy. And as I can't beg, borrow or steal money, I have made up my mind to marry someone with money'
- 5 'I try hard not to believe it, but I think Mr Boffin's money is changing him. He is always kind to me, of course, but to others he is becoming hard and cruel. How terrible the power of money is, Pa! I know it, because I know its power over me. Money is always in my thoughts. Everything comes back to money and what it can do.'
- 6 'Don't give me your money, Mr Boffin, I won't have it. Keep it away from me. It only brings sadness and trouble!'

'When I came here, I loved and respected you. But your money has changed you. I used to love money, but now I hate it, and I hate you too.'

Exercise 2

- a) Extracts 2, 5 and 6 are used for more than one quote.
- b) 'how terrible the power of money is' is slightly reworded to: *the 'terrible power' of money*

• *How to Write an Account of a Novel*

Literature knowledge

Exercise 3

- 1 'very beautiful' / 'like a widow who has never been married'
- 2 'I was going to be rich and now I have nothing. No husband, no money. It was bad enough to be told to marry a stranger. But it's worse, much worse when the man gets himself drowned!'
- 3 'very interested in money and in all the pretty things she could buy with it.' / 'I can think of nothing but money. I'm so greedy for all the things it can buy.' / 'terrible power' / 'I used to love money, but now I hate it,' / 'only brings sadness and trouble'
- 4 'hard and cruel'
- 5 'everything comes back to money and what it can do.'

Using connectors

Exercise 1

- 1 however
- 2 throughout the novel
- 3 in the first half of the novel
- 4 in the second half of the novel
- 5 in order to 6 I believe that
- 7 what's more
- 8 on the one hand / on the other

Exercise 2

- 1 but
- 2 at all times
- 3 at the beginning
- 4 later on
- 5 so as to
- 6 in my opinion
- 7 moreover
- 8 firstly/equally

Exercise 3

- 1 however, but, on the one hand/on the other, firstly/equally
- 2 in the first half of the novel, in the second half of the novel, at the beginning, at all times, later on
- 3 I believe that, in my opinion
- 4 in order to, so as to
- 5 what's more, moreover

How to Write a Detailed Essay of a Novel

Literature knowledge

Choose a character from a novel you have read recently. Explain how the novelist presents and describes the character and how the character grows and changes during the novel. Discuss any lessons the character learns and how this connects to the main theme of the novel.

In this section we are going to look at how to write a detailed answer to an essay question. When writing an answer to an essay question, it is important to make sure you understand the question and answer it directly and fully. The strongest essays have simple arguments which are well supported with information from the novel – usually either quotations or descriptions of actions and style.

Analysing the question

- 1 When you are given an essay question, the first thing to do is analyse the question to find out exactly what it's asking you to do. Look at the essay question above and underline all the key words.
- 2 Compare your answer to the one below. Did you underline the same words?

Choose a character (1) from a novel you have read recently. Explain how the novelist presents (2) and describes (3) the character and how the character grows and changes (4) during the novel. Discuss any lessons (5) the character learns and how this connects to the main theme (6) of the novel.

- 3 Look again at the words that have been underlined. These tell you exactly what you are expected to write in the essay. Use the expressions in the box to complete the notes.

and makes his/her first appearance
it doesn't have to be the main character
what the character fails to learn

comment on the lack of change
metaphors, similes, satire and irony

- 1 write about *one* character only. (1) _____.
- 2 look at the first time the character is introduced in the book (2) _____.
- 3 look at how the author uses dialogue, actions and literary devices, for example (3) _____.
- 4 look at any changes in the character. With a minor character there may not be any important changes. This is fine, but you must (4) _____.
- 5 answer this question – does the character learn anything important from his/her experiences? You may also want to discuss (5) _____ (eg, Captain Ahab in *Moby Dick* fails to understand that his obsession will end in disaster).

• How to Write a Detailed Essay of a Novel

Literature knowledge

- 4 Look at these essay questions. Underline the key words. What exactly are you being asked to write about? Which essay do you think would be the easiest to write? Why?

1 Consider the significance of money in *Middlemarch*. Comment on the good and bad uses of money in the novel and discuss how it affects people's choices.

2 Discuss the difficulties involved in 'making a good marriage' as described in *Middlemarch*. Think about the difference between what people are looking for in a marriage and the reality of married life. Take two examples from the novel and describe the problems faced by the two couples.

3 Discuss the character of Ahab in *Moby Dick*. He is stubborn, selfish, revengeful and destructive, but there are times when we feel pity for him. Explore both sides of the man, his obsession and his humanity.

4 Discuss how the narrator, Ishmael, gradually introduces us to the world of captain Ahab and the great white whale in *Moby Dick*. How are other people's descriptions and stories used to introduce the characters before they make a direct appearance?

An example

Read an answer to the question in exercise 1 above based on Dickens' novel *Our Mutual Friend*. Does the answer cover all the points highlighted in the question? Use the checklist below to help.

- ☐ Does it talk about one character?
- ☐ Does it talk about the first description of the character?
- ☐ Does it give details about how the character is described – for example, the literary devices used (dialogue, comparisons, etc.)
- ☐ Does it describe how the character changes?
- ☐ Does it talk about any lessons the character learns?
- ☐ Does it explain how the character connects to the main theme of the novel?

- 1 Bella Wilfer is one of the main characters in Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend*. A rich merchant has died and left all his money to his only son, John Harmon. But John can only receive the money on the condition that he marries the 'very beautiful' Bella Wilfer. However, John is not happy to marry Bella without first finding out more about her.
- 2 When we first meet Bella she has recently heard about the supposed drowning of John Harmon, the man who she was going to marry. She is dressed in black 'like a widow who has never been married' and she is disappointed by the news: 'I was going to be rich and now I have nothing. No husband, no money. It was bad enough to be told to marry a stranger. But it's worse, much worse when the man gets himself drowned!' Bella then pulls at her hair like a spoilt child and we get the impression that she is selfish, thinking only of herself and not of the dead man. But at the same time, she shows her good-nature as she jokes with her father about her bad luck.
- 3 Throughout the novel, three characteristics are associated with Bella, her beauty, her love of money and her good nature. In the first half of the novel, Bella's selfishness and greed are the focus, as she

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in money is highlighted in her repeated conversations with her father, where she shows that she is aware of her obsession and ashamed of it, 'I can think of nothing but money. I'm so greedy for all the things it can buy.'

- 4 In the second half of the novel, Bella learns about the 'terrible power' of money and stops being so selfish. Mr Boffin, who has received old Harmon's money, gives Bella a home and offers her to spend his money on her. But gradually, it seems, the power of money is changing the kind Mr Boffin, and making him 'hard and cruel'. Bella is shocked by the change and wants no more connection with him or his money. She has learnt her lesson, 'I used to love money, but now I hate it,' she cries as she leaves his house. However, Mr Boffin is only playing a part in a play created by John Harmon. In this play, Mr Boffin holds up a mirror to Bella's selfishness in order to cure her of her love for money. He helps her see that love and kindness are more important than money.
- 5 I believe that Bella is like a fairytale princess who is lifted from poverty to riches and lives happily ever after. And, like all fairytale characters, she is quite two-dimensional. She changes from a spoiled child to a loyal wife thanks to the actions of her future husband, not through her own choice. What's more, when she finally finds out about her husband's actions, she laughs and is grateful. She seems to exist more as an extension of John Harmon, than as an independent character.
- 6 The power of money is the main theme of *Our Mutual Friend*. Bella's role in the novel is to show the danger of money, of how it 'only brings sadness and trouble'. But her story also shows how powerful money is, and how it can control people's lives. John Harmon would not have met Bella if it were not for his father's money. The Boffins, who only know Bella by name, are able to take her away from her family thanks to their money and the position it gives them in society. Bella, herself, uses money to help her father and the happy ending of her fairytale is only complete when John Harmon finally receives his father's money.
- 7 Bella's story teaches us two things: on the one hand the love of money can make people hard and selfish. But on the other hand, money is very important because, in the end, 'everything comes back to money and what it can do.' And in the world of late Victorian London, without money, life becomes a desperate fight just to stay alive.

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5 Read the essay again and complete the table with information from the text.

Paragraph 1 Who is the character? What is she like? What is her role in the plot?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Paragraph 2 What is the first impression? How is it created?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Paragraph 3 What are the main characteristics associated with her?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Paragraph 4 How does she change? What lesson does she learn?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Paragraph 5 Is her character believable? Why/why not? What is her role in the novel?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Paragraph 6 What is the main theme of the novel? How does Bella's story connect to the main theme?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Paragraph 7 What is the central message of the novel?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

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Building an argument and using supporting evidence

- 1 Look at one of the paragraphs from the essay. Look at how the argument is built up and supported by quotation and examples from the text.

1 Simple statement of main theme

(1) The power of money is the main theme of *Our Mutual Friend*. (2) Bella's role in the novel is to show the danger of money, of how it 'only brings sadness and trouble'. (3) But her story also shows how powerful money is, and how it can control people's lives. (a) John Harmon would not have met Bella if it were not for his father's money. (b) The Boffins are able to take her away from her family thanks to their money and the position it gives them in society. (c) Bella, herself, uses money to help her father and the happy ending of her fairytale is only complete when John Harmon finally receives his father's money.

2 Explanation of how the character is related to the theme – supported by quoting the character's own words

3 Example of situation in novel which supports the explanation of how the character relates to the theme

- 2 Look at another paragraph. Match the notes to the numbers in the text.

summary of argument

first statement of argument

evidence from the plot

two important situations in the plot

further exploration of the argument

(1) I believe that Bella is like a fairytale princess (2) who is lifted from poverty to riches and lives happily ever after. (3) And, like all fairytale characters, she is quite two-dimensional. (4) She changes from a spoilt child to a loyal wife thanks to the actions of her future husband, not through her own choice. (5) What's more, when she finally finds out about her husband's actions, she laughs and is grateful. (6) She seems to be an extension of John Harmon, rather than an independent character.

Using quotations

Quotations help us write a stronger essay. They help to support our description of the character, the novel and its main theme.

- 1 Look at the extracts below. Underline the words that are quoted in the essay.

- 1 a lawyer, Mr Mortimer Lightwood, talking about Harmon's will:

'He must marry a certain girl who is now eighteen and very beautiful.'

- 2 Bella's first words in the novel:

'Here I am in this ugly, black dress, Pa,' she said. 'I'm like a widow who has never been married. I was going to be rich but now I have nothing. No husband, no money. It was bad enough to be told to marry a stranger. But it's worse, much worse, when the man gets drowned.'

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- 3 Narrator, explaining how Bella adapted to living with Mr and Mrs Boffin:

'She became, perhaps, a little more proud, a little more spoilt. She certainly became very interested in money and in all the pretty things she could buy with it. If she thought about her old home and her family, she never talked about them.'

- 4 Bella, talking to her father when she goes to visit him:

'Oh, Pa, I can think of nothing but money. I am so greedy for all the things that money can buy. And as I can't beg, borrow or steal money, I have made up my mind to marry someone with money'

- 5 Bella, talking to her father on a later visit:

'I try hard not to believe it, but I think Mr Boffin's money is changing him. He is always kind to me, of course, but to others he is becoming hard and cruel. How terrible the power of money is, Pa! I know it, because I know its power over me. Money is always in my thoughts. Everything comes back to money and what it can do.'

- 6 Bella, announcing that she is going to leave the Boffins:

'Don't give me your money, Mr Boffin, I won't have it. Keep it away from me. It only brings sadness and trouble!'

'When I came here, I loved and respected you. But your money has changed you. I used to love money, but now I hate it, and I hate you too.'

- 2 Notice how the writer uses the quotes to fit the essay and answer these questions:

- a) Which extracts are used for more than one quote?
- b) Which extract is slightly reworded?

- 3 Notice how the writer uses the author's words to support his/her analysis and match the quotations in the essay to their use.

- 1 to support the description of Bella and her position at the beginning of the novel
- 2 to show her selfish attitude to her bad luck
- 3 to show Bella's changing attitudes to money
- 4 to describe the change in Mr Boffin
- 5 to explain one of the central messages of the novel

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Using connectors

The correct use of connectors is very important in a good essay. They help underline the organisation and structure of the essay. They help the reader see how the arguments are linked.

1 Look at these extracts from the essay. Complete the gaps with the words and phrases in the box.

also at the same time however I believe that in order to
in the first half of the novel in the second half of the novel on the one hand
on the other hand throughout the novel what's more

- 1 A rich merchant has died and left all his money to his only son, John Harmon. But John can only receive the money on the condition that he marries the 'very beautiful' Bella Wilfer. _____, John is not happy to marry Bella without first finding out more about her.
- 2 _____, three characteristics are associated with Bella, her beauty, her love of money and her good nature.
- 3 _____, Bella's selfishness and greed are the focus, as she becomes 'very interested in money and in all the pretty things she could buy with it.'
- 4 _____, Bella learns about the 'terrible power' of money and stops being so selfish.
- 5 Mr Boffin is only playing a part in a play set up by John Harmon. In this play, Mr Boffin holds up a mirror to Bella's selfishness _____ cure Bella of her love for money.
- 6 _____ Bella is like a fairytale princess who is lifted from poverty to riches and lives happily ever after.
- 7 She changes from a spoilt child to a loyal wife thanks to the actions of her future husband, not through her own choice. _____, when she finally finds out about her husband's actions, she laughs and is grateful.
- 8 Bella's story teaches us two things: _____ the love of money can make people hard and selfish. But _____, money is very important.

2 Look at the extracts again and fill the gaps using the synonyms below.

at all times at the beginning but firstly / equally in my opinion
later on moreover so as to

3 Look at the connectors in exercises 5 and 6 and answer these questions.

Which connectors are used to:

- 1 show contrast?
- 2 refer to sections of the novel?
- 3 express an opinion?
- 4 explain a reason
- 5 introduce additional information

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hint

Note: however and but

When we use **however**, it is always followed by a comma e.g. 'However, John is not happy to marry Bella without first finding out about her.'

But is not followed by a comma e.g. 'But John is not happy to marry Bella without first finding out more about her.'

Writing task

Choose a character from a novel you have read recently. Explain how the novelist presents and describes the character and how the character grows and changes during the novel. Discuss any lessons the character learns and how this connects to the main theme of the novel.

Read the essay question again. You are going to prepare an answer to the question based on a novel you have read recently.

Step 1: Collecting Information

- 1 Choose a character to write about. It does not need to be a minor character. It may be easier to write about a minor character as there will be less to say. But before you make your final choice, look carefully at the question and make sure you can cover all the points required.
- 2 Once your choice has been made, look back over the novel and your notes. Look carefully at the passages where:
 - the character is first mentioned
 - the character first speaks or does something concrete
 - any significant dialogue

As you read the passages make a note of any interesting or relevant quotations.

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3 Make notes about your character. Use the table below to help you.

<p>Paragraph 1</p> <p>Who is the character?</p> <p>What is he/she like?</p> <p>What is his/her role in the plot?</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Paragraph 2</p> <p>What is the first impression we get?</p> <p>How is it created?</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Paragraph 3</p> <p>What are the main characteristics associated with the character?</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Paragraph 4</p> <p>How does he/she change?</p> <p>What lesson/s does he/she learn?</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Paragraph 5</p> <p>Is the character believable? Why/why not?</p> <p>What is the character's role in the novel?</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Paragraph 6</p> <p>What is the main theme of the novel?</p> <p>How does your character's story relate to the main theme?</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Paragraph 7</p> <p>What is the central message of the novel?</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

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Step 2: Organising your Arguments

- 1 **Decide exactly what you want to say in each paragraph. Now is the time to decide what to exclude as well as what to include. Remember, you cannot say everything you know about the character. You need to decide what is the most interesting and important.**
- 2 Choose examples and quotations to support each of your arguments.

Step 3: Choosing the Right Words

- 1 Think carefully about what exactly you want to say and spend time writing one sentence summaries about the following:
 - 1 an introduction to the character
 - 2 a very brief explanation of his/her role in the story
 - 3 a summary of the characters main personality traits
 - 4 how the character changes/grows
 - 5 what lesson/s the character learns
 - 6 the main theme of the novel
 - 7 the central message of the novel

You may not use all of these sentences in our essay, or you may choose to reword them as you write the text, but the process of writing the summaries will help you clarify what exactly it is you want to say.

Step 4: Writing and Revising

- 1 Write the essay. Remember to keep looking back at your plan as you write to make sure you are including all the points you feel are important. Read back over what you are writing at regular intervals. You may find you want to make changes, add quotations or cut unnecessary examples.
- 2 When you've finished your essay, read it again and answer these questions. If your answer to any of the questions is no, go back and make the necessary changes to your essay.
 - Have I answered all the points in the question?
 - Have I used examples and quotations to support all my arguments?
 - Have I given a clear and faithful picture of the character?
 - Is the relationship between the character and the plot clear?
 - Is the relationship between the character and the main theme clear?
 - Would someone who has not read the novel be able to follow my arguments?

4. Interesting links

• *Macmillan Readers Website*

The Macmillan Readers Website provides ideas for self-study as well as activities for use in class. www.macmillanreaders.com



• *Macmillan Dictionary*

The Macmillan Online Dictionary is an excellent place to find definitions, and the thesaurus is helpful for students when writing their own poems. <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/>



• *Glossary of literary terms*

An excellent glossary of literary terms for language learners. <http://literary-devices.com/>

