

# Teacher Guide

## Cambridge International AS & A Level Literature in English 9695

For examination from 2021



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# Introduction

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## The purpose of the teacher guide

This teacher guide is designed to help you to organise and plan your teaching for Cambridge International AS and A Level Literature in English (9695). It offers advice and guidance on teaching strategies and preparing your learners for the final assessment.

As an international awarding body, many of our candidates are either multi-lingual or possess English as a second language which presents them with great opportunities but also with potential barriers.

The set texts will be appropriate for study at AS and A level and demanding in different ways so it is hoped that there will be enough variety in terms of cultural context and style for teachers to consider the interests, experience and needs of their learners in their choices of text. Some learners may need more time and support when they initially read a Shakespeare play or some may need some specific exercises to develop their critical vocabulary and writing skills. This will help learners to express their ideas more effectively and develop them to a greater degree of complexity. It is important to promote opportunities for verbal rehearsal, modelling and feedback because these can be useful tools in developing language and analytical skills. **See section 3.2**



In this guide we have also included some prompts and tips on how to incorporate the development of language skills within the general teaching of this subject. This information is indicated in the text with the icon shown here.

The compulsory Unseen question at AS level on Paper 2 means that all candidates will need to develop independence and competence in the skills of close reading, analysis and expressing a detailed personal response.

## What do I need to get started?

You should make sure at an early stage that you have access to the School Support Hub, [www.cambridgeinternational.org/support](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/support). You can obtain a login from your Examinations Officer. This provides a wide range of resources to help you, including:

- syllabuses
- past examination papers and specimen papers
- mark schemes
- examiner reports
- example candidate response booklets
- schemes of work
- a resources list
- community resources and discussion forum

All of these forms of teacher support are invaluable in helping you and your learners understand exactly what Cambridge expects of candidates in examinations, and will help you to prepare your learners appropriately.

When planning your course, your starting point should be the syllabus. This contains information on the overall aims, the key concepts and the assessment objectives. The syllabus also provides information on the set texts and lists of the poems and the short stories. Some of these texts change each year so you need to be sure you are looking at the list for the year that is relevant to the year of your examination. The syllabus gives details of the papers, the question types, some help on the kind of command words used as well as a list of the changes from 2020 to 2021.

It is most important that you become thoroughly familiar with all parts of the syllabus document and the level descriptors in the mark schemes. These expand on the assessment objectives and are helpful when thinking about skills development, formative assessment and interim target setting.

You will then need to devise a scheme of work. To do this, you need to think about how you will organise the time that you have available to help learners to understand and learn the content and concepts required by

## Introduction

the syllabus, and to develop the necessary skills. Cambridge provides a scheme of work that you could use as a starting point but you will undoubtedly want to produce your own at some point.

Your scheme of work will help you to determine what resources you will require to deliver the course and this will help you to build up teaching, learning and reference resources such as text books, appropriate critical material and worksheets.

# 1. Planning the course

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This section looks at how you can plan your course to ensure that you can cover the whole syllabus within the time that you have available. It includes long-term planning such as developing a scheme of work and planning for individual lessons.



It is important to promote critical thinking skills and collaborative work because these can help learners to acquire new, critical vocabulary and improve fluency. In this subject, active learning is vital in developing a competent and confident personal response. Giving learners responsibility for aspects of a text or roles within a discussion helps to increase motivation and self-confidence as well as interest in the topic.

Section 4 provides some ideas and activities for developing language skills within the lesson without increasing the teacher's workload.

## 1.1 Key factors to consider when planning your course

These factors will need to be considered before starting the planning of your course.

- the amount of teaching time available each week for the duration of the course.
- the availability of resources such as access to ICT, text books and secondary critical material.
- the prior knowledge of your learners.
- the level of English language of the learners.
- whether your teaching groups will be mixed ability.
- the number of lessons you will need to cover the syllabus.

## 1.2 Long-term planning

A long-term plan will provide the overall structure of your course. This will depend on whether your school is offering the one-year AS level course as a stand-alone qualification, or when candidates will sit the AS components if you are offering a two-year course to A Level.

Cambridge International AS Literature in English makes up the first half of the Cambridge International A Level course and provides a foundation for the study of English Literature at Cambridge International A Level. An A Level qualification in English Literature can be achieved either as a staged assessment over different examination series or in one examination series.

Learners can take three different combinations routes to obtaining either an AS or A Level qualification:

- **AS Level only:** Paper 1 and 2 are taken at the end of the first year.
- **A Level:** taken over two years with Paper 1 and 2 taken at the end of the first year and Paper 3 and 4 taken at the end of the second year.
- **A Level:** all components are taken in the same examination series.

If, after achieving the AS Level, any candidate wishes to go on and take the A Level, you must notify Cambridge using the procedure laid out in the Administrative Guide.

In planning your course you should consider selecting a variety of texts that will enable learners to maintain and extend their interest as well as giving them a dynamic range of works upon which to practise and develop their skills.

It is important to note that you do not need to teach the syllabus content in the order in which it is printed in the syllabus. It is likely that you will want to order your teaching to suit your particular needs and preferences. This may be done in a number of ways.

- Start with a brief introduction to the genres of Drama, Poetry and Prose. You could provide learners with short extracts that will allow them to discuss and analyse how a writer creates different effects on the reader.
- Start with paired or group activities to establish trust and generate enthusiasm.

## Section 1: Planning the course

- Start with the text you think is most easily accessible and the learners will enjoy. Don't feel that the initial analysis needs to be exhaustive.
- Think of the long-term plan as moving in a spiral. You can revise texts by exploring different extracts so that learners can practise their skills and deepen their knowledge and appreciation of the content as they grow more confident in their analysis.

A long-term plan is not fixed: it is a working document. As the course progresses, you can adapt it as required. When you have worked through it once or twice you will have a much better idea of the best way for you to work through the syllabus and the texts.

### 1.3 Medium-term planning

Medium-term planning is the most important of the three types. Medium-term plans are often called 'Schemes of Work' and these schemes inform you and other English teachers in your school what will be taught and when. They often cover 6 or 8 weeks and help to prioritise and order the aspects of content or skills you want to cover.

Some examples of schemes of work can be found on the School Support Hub ([www.cambridgeinternational.org/support](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/support)). A password is needed to access the site and your Examination Officer will be able to provide you with one.

These schemes of work are useful resources. They are often generic, but you will see how the skills in the assessment objectives have been broken down into a progression of teaching and learning steps and applied to the different textual forms of Poetry, Prose and Drama.

It is better to develop your own scheme of work as this is more likely to be suitable for your Centre and your learners. You will naturally take into account the relative difficulty or importance of particular aspects of the texts you have chosen or consider what work can be undertaken by the learners outside school time so that classroom time can be used for more intensive teacher-led activities.

A medium-term plan, like a long-term plan, should not be too fixed. It should, if necessary, be changed if it is found not to be working as planned. You should review your schemes of work at the end of each year to assess how well they have worked and to decide if any improvements could be made.

### 1.4 Short-term planning

Short-term planning involves planning for a single lesson or perhaps a small group of lessons. It involves the activities which will take place which will allow learner to work through the course content, and develop their skills. You should also outline the progress that is expected of the learners during the lesson.

Short-term planning is something that is done by individual teachers, taking into account their own strengths and the needs of the learners they will be teaching. Teachers new to the subject may need guidance but the plan should still be their own.

## 2. Planning Lessons

### 2.1 Lesson plans and templates

A lesson plan is written by the teacher and should include details of how the lesson is intended to proceed. It should take account of:

- what is to be taught (lesson objectives)
- what is to be achieved by the learners (learning objectives, content and language)
- what the learners already know (previous learning and relevant knowledge)
- how learners' understanding will be monitored (assessment for learning)
- how learners at different levels of ability are going to access the lesson (differentiation).

It should detail the learning activities which will take place and have approximate timings showing how long each part of the lesson will last. It should also note the language focus for the lesson.

A lesson should ideally have three main parts:

- a beginning which engages and motivates the learners. This activity will also stimulate the background knowledge the learners can bring to the topic
- a middle which covers the main learning and language activities of the lesson
- an end, in which learners can assess and feedback their understanding of what has gone before.



It is most convenient to have a printed template to use in lesson planning. You could design your own but there are many available on the internet or in books. We have included an example lesson plan below and populated each section with helpful notes to guide you. A clean version of the template is also available in the Appendix for you to copy and use.

### 2.2 Constructing a lesson plan

<b>Lesson:</b>		<b>School:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>		<b>Teacher name:</b>	
<b>Class:</b>	<b>Number present:</b>	<b>Number absent:</b>	
<b>Learning objectives to which this lesson is contributing</b>	This will be based on something written in your medium-term plan. It will state which part of the syllabus the lesson is going to address.		
<b>Lesson objectives</b>	These may be the same as the learning objectives but more often will be only a part of them. This is what you intend the learners to fully grasp by the end of the lesson. It should be a realistic target and many learning objectives will take more than one lesson to be fully understood. It should also include a reference to the language the learner is likely to need to be able to reach the targets you set.		
<b>Vocabulary, terminology and phrases</b>	Literary terms appropriate to text: 'stream of consciousness', 'hyperbole', critical approaches: feminist; Marxist etc		
<b>Previous learning</b>	Reminders of context; aspects of content or skills		



### Section 3: Planning lessons

Plan		
Planned timings	Planned activities	Resources
 <p>Beginning</p>	<p>This should be a relatively brief part of the lesson and should vary: sometimes it might be text related or skills related. It might be intended to be a reminder of an issue from a previous lesson or a launch pad for some new aspect. Either way it is helpful if it is designed to signpost a focal point for the lesson and provoke a response: learners could be offered a provocative judgement on a character or issue or a brief quotation for analysis in pairs. They could be invited to provide textual evidence in support of a valid assertion or to challenge a simplistic view. It may be a short question and answer session, or a simple written task – a mind map – to elicit a framework of ideas to be applied to the content in the main body of the lesson. This starter session should also stimulate the interest of the learner by providing or making use of materials such as quotation cards, posters, snippet sheets, mind-maps or some activity which is personalised to encourage the learners to bring their own research or opinion on a topic. This should be learner focused with as little teacher talk time as possible.</p> <p>Feedback here can be brief: ‘what worked well’; ‘even better if’. Relevant points about the use of evidence or further development of ideas or corrections to misunderstandings can come in the main body. Give an estimated time, usually about five to ten minutes depending on the activity.</p>	<p>Your plan should also include a list of the resources (books, internet, practical materials such as post-it notes, plain paper for poster making; different coloured marker pens or highlighters etc.) which will be needed in each session of the lesson.</p>
 <p>Middle</p>	<p>This may build on and extend previous understanding, explore and solve practical problems, develop knowledge and skills, practise previously learned techniques or any of many other alternatives. It is important not to include too many activities, but equally important not to spend so much time on one activity that learners become de-motivated. Good lessons will involve the learners in the activities as much as possible. Activities should encourage the learners to have confidence in communication through speaking or writing and there should be some feedback from</p>	

## Section 2: Planning lessons

	the teacher regarding possible language errors or more precise and effective ways of expressing ideas. Timings should be included for each separate activity.	
<b>Additional information</b>		
<b>Differentiation: How do you plan to give more support? How do you plan to challenge the more able learners?</b>	<b>Assessment: How are you planning to check learners' learning?</b>	<b>Health and safety check: ICT links</b>
How will you try to ensure that the lesson is accessible to all of the learners so that all will benefit from the experience? This is especially important with mixed-ability groups. There is more on differentiation in the next section.	It is good practice to check: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what your learners knew/understood before the lesson (content)</li> <li>• how this has changed after the lesson, including language and communication improvements (language).</li> </ul>	If your lesson includes any practical activity such as performance of a dramatic scene, an assessment of the risks involved should be included with the lesson plan.
<b>Reflection and evaluation</b>		
<b>Reflection</b> Were the lesson objectives realistic? What did the learners learn today? What was the learning atmosphere like? Did my planned differentiation work well? Did I stick to timings? What changes did I make from my plan and why?	<b>Use the space below to reflect on your lesson. Answer the most relevant questions from the box on the left about your lesson.</b>	
	As soon as possible after the lesson you need to think about how well (or badly) it went. There are two reasons for this; if you share your plan with other teachers in your Centre it will enable them to learn from your experiences. It is a good idea to discuss with colleagues how well lessons went. This applies whether they went well or whether there were problems.	
	It will also help next time you teach the same topic. If the timing was wrong or the activities did not fully occupy the learners' you may want to change some aspects of the lesson next time.	
	There is no need to re-plan a successful lesson every year, though the resources might change depending on the set text, but it is always good to learn from experience and to incorporate improvements next time.	

### Section 3: Planning lessons

#### Summary evaluation

**What two things went really well? (Consider both teaching and learning.)**

1.

2.

**What two things would have improved the lesson? (Consider both teaching and learning.)**

1.

2.

**What have I learned from this lesson about the class or individuals that will inform my next lesson?**

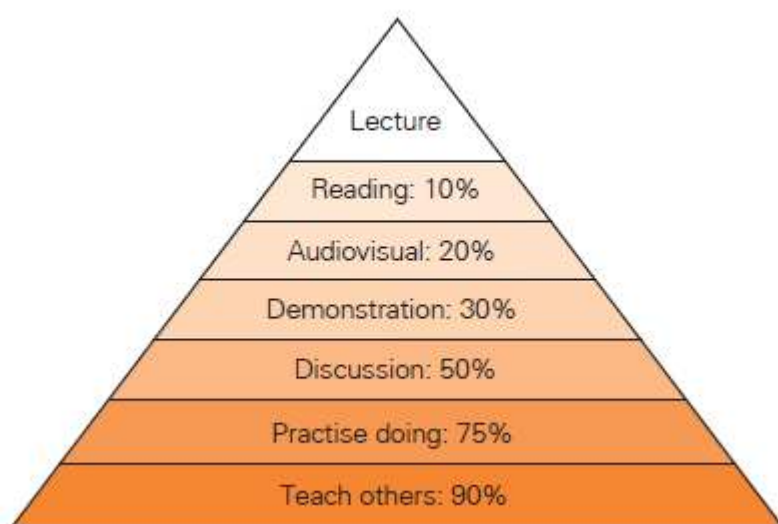
## 3. Classroom Practice

### 3.1 Active learning

Not every topic in English Literature can be taught by means of a lecture from the teacher followed by textbook exercises and essay writing. A description/explanation by the teacher is easily forgotten by the learner, even if it was understood in the first place.

Slide presentations of explanations may certainly have a place in the classroom, but the learning remains passive. The learner is not involved in discovering the information, which is the process in which the learning becomes active. Research has shown that the more a learner is involved in the process of learning, the more they retain. This is also true of language acquisition, one of the topics of Paper 3.

The learning pyramid below shows the percentage of information retained as a result of different forms of delivery stimulating different learning processes.



From this it is clear that activities where the learners actually participate work better. The example lesson plan above contains ideas on how learners can become creative, and then learn actively rather than passively. At least some active learning should be used alongside explanation and textbook or worksheet exercises in order to maximise learning.

Most coursebooks now adopt an active learning approach to the teaching of English Literature. The *Collins Cambridge International AS and A Level Student's Book* offers a skills-building approach to the new syllabus through analysis and writing. It is endorsed by Cambridge and will support transition from IGCSE to dealing with the Unseen question at AS Level. This book also helps learners to see examples of successful writing, which are modelled throughout the units, and it includes a glossary of the literary terms used as well as a brief introduction to literary critical theory.

Here are some strategies that you can try in your next lesson some of which will be expanded upon in the next section.



- record language prompts on the whiteboard.
- encourage learners to underline key terms.
- use images: mind maps, charts, story boards.
- provide writing frames.
- enable learners to write collaboratively.
- introduce learners to new language before setting a task.
- provide sentence stems and model language.
- activate prior knowledge of the subject.

### Section 3: Classroom Practice

- create a bank of useful expressions.
- repeat explanations and progressively increase the difficulty of explanations.
- provide feedback on language and content.
- highlight examples of good language use from learners.

The teaching should also take account of the different needs and abilities across the full range of learners represented in the group.

The teacher's role is to:

- manage the learning experience.
- structure and organise the lesson.
- stimulate engagement and promote a love of Literature.
- build confidence and competence in a range of skills.



Active learning strategies ensure learners can develop their language skills by providing opportunities to express themselves, to listen to others, correct, and rephrase their answers to improve their levels of fluency and precision.

### 3.2 Strategies for managing learning

Different texts provide different learning opportunities. For example, a play might be best acted out or read aloud, poems can be read in private or aloud in class. The biggest challenge for many learners with English as a second or third language is getting through a novel.

For each text you will need to decide what the key areas to focus on are. The broad 'headings' will be:

- themes or 'concerns' (term used in examination questions).
- plot and/or structure.
- characters and characterisation.
- language and style.
- perspective/point of view.
- related contextual knowledge – historical, sociological and biographical.
- other interpretation or critical opinions.

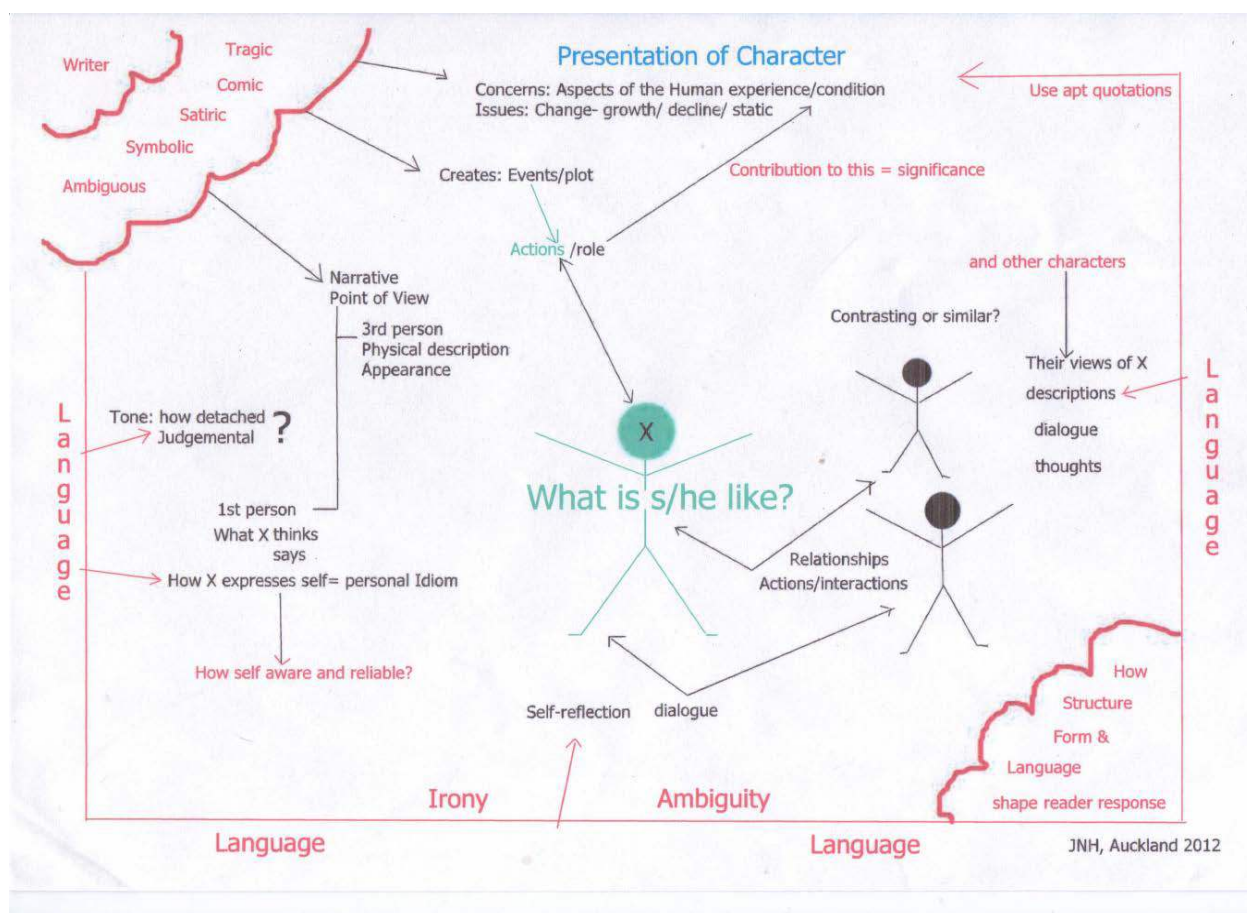
You will need to develop strategies in your scheme of work for each text which addresses each of these broad areas and focuses on relevant skills to develop critical analysis, understanding and personal response. It is also important that learners can explain how a writer has an effect on a reader or audience whilst supporting comments with quotes and evidence from a text.

A framework to develop discussion of character and characterisation in a given text might include headings such as:

- narrative point of view: first person/third person
- role
- the description and judgement of the narrator and other characters
- the character's actions, speech, thoughts and relationships with others
- choice and tone of the language used by the character or about him/her.

Using such frameworks helps to develop learners' ability from basic knowledge and understanding of a character to an analysis of how a writer's methods construct a role for the character. Frameworks work even better if they can be presented in a visual form and printed to be used in discussions and written work. Frequent use of such visual prompts aids learning and recall in examinations. Learners enjoy devising them and teachers can take advantage of their enthusiasm for creating visual resources like this:

## Section 4: Preparing learners for final assessment



### 3.2.1 Active reading

For a variety of reasons, teachers may find themselves reading aloud while at the same time worrying about the how their learners can maintain attention, process the material and retain it. Confident readers may be able to do a lot of the initial reading outside the classroom, but all readers process material more effectively if they are actively reading for a particular purpose.

Here are a few ideas:

- Select a few key words that are very significant and might be problematic. You could give learners five minutes to find these words in the dictionary or they can create their own glossary.
- Set a brief question or offer a statement for learners to find evidence to support their opinions as they read or listen.
- Offer snippet sheets to practise close reading and analysis. These are short 5–10 line extracts that cover either one or a variety of aspects in the text, for example, the beginnings of short stories, the use of setting or characterisation. This is very useful for novels because it enables learners to practise close reading of one area of the text.
- Ask learners to take responsibility for preparing a chapter, scene or poem to present to the class. This could take the form of a commentary or presentation but there will be more class involvement if the task is to create a quiz or revision activity. This can help to check understanding of content, or opinions on the significance of particular details, or the effectiveness of specific devices.
- Encourage the use of different sized sticky notes for brief summaries, significant points about theme or character, and the extraction of short, useful quotations. This is particularly useful for novels. Some learners enjoy devising colour coding to facilitate the retrieval of material on theme, character or style.
- Facilitate note making on poems and prompt annotations around the text by providing a template.
- Map the themes and stylistic issues across a selection of poetry or short stories using charts and tables.
- Chop up poems for learners to sequence using all sorts of internal clues. This encourages close reading, helps learners to focus on structure and development of ideas, rhyme scheme etc.
- Provide short cloze texts for learners to discuss and provide their own inserts or decide where a given list of the out-takes might fit.

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- Give learners a sheet of brief paraphrases, literary features, comments on effects which do not occur in the order that they appear in the text to be cut up and attached or sticky-noted onto the text in an appropriate place. This is useful for poems and longer speeches from plays and supports poster making.
- Perform group or paired preparations of short extracts, informed by discussions of the effects of the writing: the local context, the significance of particular details, the choice of language and tone. This is particularly useful for drama and poetry texts but also works with short passages of authorial description/commentary or dialogue in novels.



### 3.2.2 Managing discussions

Teachers need to establish a classroom environment which encourages all learners to speak, to articulate their ideas and support them with evidence from the text. The most confident learners can dominate teacher-led discussions and sometimes the useful insights discussed in class do not appear in written work.

Here are a few ideas to make discussions more active, inclusive and productive:

- Explain the importance of verbal rehearsal – in speaking, listening and modifying their expression learners will develop greater fluency and precision, which they can model in their writing. You can encourage them to model their responses on you and other members of the group by encouraging the use of revision. Learners repeat their idea, but rephrase this with more effective expression. Explain this is not an act of criticism but a learning opportunity.
- Re-arrange the classroom so that learners can sit in small groups of 4 or 6. This will encourage trust and confidence in speaking and more active listening.
- Suggest two issues, each to be discussed by one pair, first with a shoulder partner and then reported to the partner sitting opposite who will in turn report on the other issue. They could finish with an evaluation of the ideas in groups of four. The teacher can listen to these discussions to note useful insights or misunderstandings – but should reserve feedback until the plenary session.
- Give each group a slightly different aspect to explore in a specific part of a text so that they need to listen to each group's report and take notes.
- Encourage every member of the class to participate by giving out 4–6 coloured counters to each group with a particular aspect for each person to lead discussion on. For example, blue for theme, green for character, other colours for aspects of form, methods or effects. Before learners have to present their ideas, they can form a group of one colour to collate and organise their points. You can then ask for a particular person to make the report for the whole group and give a few minutes for checking and coaching or you can select random learners to give a response.
- Hot-seating is particularly useful to revise novels and plays. 4-6 individuals are given the names of characters. They are interviewed by the class and asked questions about their personalities, action, motivation and feelings about themselves and each other. This tests the individual learner's understanding but the whole class can be asked to provide textual evidence to support or challenge opinions about the character.

To capture the learning and encourage inclusion into more extended written work later, use a variety of short written outcomes. These can be written collaboratively or done individually and then peer reviewed, e.g.:

- Scaffolded paragraphs: e.g. point – evidence – analysis – link
- Annotations – sticky notes can be arranged around a piece of text as a poster for learners to make comments about the language, form and structure or other aspects of the text
- Charts and diagrams – learners can create charts and diagrams that relate to plot or character. It is helpful for these to be displayed on a wall as prompts or revision aids and could be revisited as a starter for the next lesson.



### 3.2.3 Supporting writing

- Provide frameworks or templates for making notes. This can be even more effective if the frameworks are created by the group to fit a specific text or task. See one for comedy in Appendix 2.
- Offer word banks of adjectives to describe characters, tone, atmosphere as well as literary and linguistic terms.
- Suggest a series of sentence starters that learners can use for a particular purpose. For example, to encourage learners to show that they are aware of ambiguity and the possibility of alternative readings they could be given – or asked to provide – a list of interpretative phrases such as:  
*The writer might be suggesting [...] or perhaps [...]*  
*It could be argued that...*  
*An audience might respond by ...*

## Section 4: Preparing learners for final assessment

*Alternatively...*

- Ask for short paragraphs that learners write for a particular purpose. For example, to comment on the structure of a poem or passage; comment on an aspect of character or theme; analyse the significance and effect of a particular quotation – as well as introductions and conclusions.
- Discuss criteria for success in each exercise before learners undertake the task so they can assess their performance and see how to improve.
- Help learners to analyse their own writing in terms of the assessment objectives by giving them access to the mark scheme and encouraging them to annotate their own essays with comments from the mark scheme.
- Give learners the Principal Examiner's report for different questions before asking them to try a similar assignment. Learners could also read this after they have completed a first draft to see if they can raise their level of achievement.

### 3.3 Differentiation



Differentiation is a way of trying to ensure that members of your group with different abilities can all access the material you are delivering. There are a number of ways of approaching this problem and they can also be found in books and on the web. They fall into three main categories.

- **Differentiation by outcome.** In this method, an open-ended task is set which can be accessed by all. For example, 'Discuss the contribution of the Mechanicals to the comedy of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*'. Learners will produce different results according to their ability, but all of their 'outputs' will be valid. This is the principle behind the construction of the questions in the examinations.
- **Differentiation by task.** Set learners slightly different tasks based on the same objective. This may involve different worksheets which pose questions on the same topic where different levels or amounts of understanding are required.
- **Differentiation by support.** All learners undertake the same task but those who are weaker are given additional support. Writing frames, where a template is provided for them to record their work, are one way of doing this. Similarly, when completing a cloze reading exercise, some learners could be offered a bank of words.



## 4. Preparing learners for final assessment

### 4.1 Understanding the language of assessment

Learners feel more confident and perform better in the final examinations if they know what is expected of them and have had access to the resources available such as past papers, mark schemes, examiners' reports and sample scripts.

As mentioned, you will find many useful resources on Cambridge's secure website for teachers at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/support](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/support). You can obtain a log in for this from your Exam Officer. From this site you can download past papers and marks schemes which can be used to practise model answers. You will also find examiner reports for each paper. These indicate the strengths and weaknesses of candidate performance across the whole cohort sitting the examination.

#### 4.1.1 The rubric

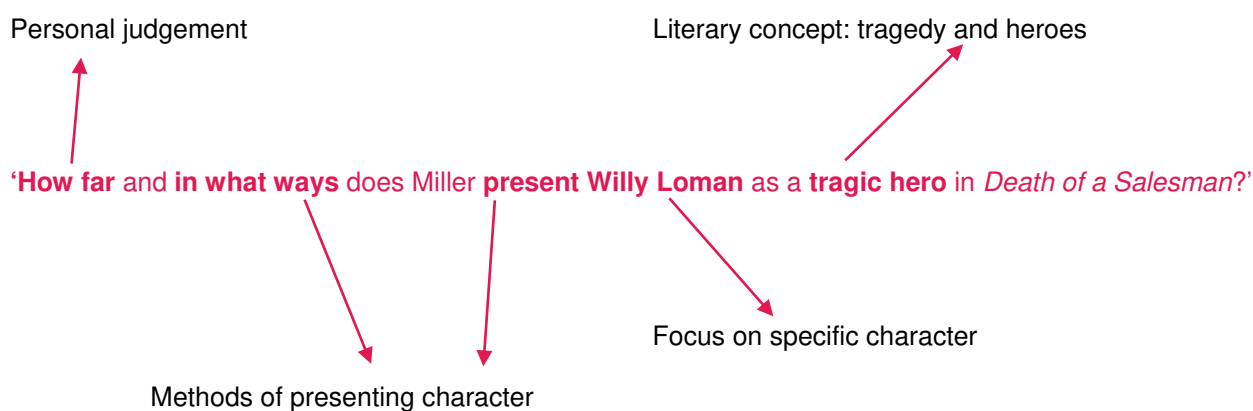
It is important to ensure that learners are aware of the key facts about the papers and the rubrics. For example, at A Level Paper 4: Pre- and Post-1900 Poetry and Prose requires them to offer **one** answer from each part of the paper on a **different genre**. You should make sure learners are aware of this before the examination. There are always some learners who will abandon a taught text and try to do a (b) question as an Unseen response.

Learners are now free to choose whether they do an (a) or (b) question on each of the set texts and less confident learners will often opt for the (b) question to make use of the given material. Remind them that at AS Level the focus of the (b) question will be on the given poem or extract whereas at A Level it is expected that learners will be able to offer detailed analysis of the given material whilst also showing good knowledge of the wider text. This will be evident in the questions with phrases like '*here and elsewhere in the text*' or '*how far it is characteristic of a writer's methods and concerns*'. This requirement is another reason why it is not advisable to attempt a (b) question on an unfamiliar text.

#### 4.1.2 The exam questions

Learners should carefully study the language used in the questions. The need for consistency across texts and examination sessions means that it is formulaic so even though the texts change, past papers are useful.

Train learners to deconstruct the questions so that they consider the aspect of a text they need to focus on, the significance of any given quotation or view used to direct a response and the command words. (See the syllabus for help with this.)



## Section 4: Preparing learners for final assessment

### 4.1.3 Check understanding of specific terms

The instruction to write a 'critical appreciation' of a poem or passage means that learners need to consider the writer's concerns, the development of the ideas within the text and to analyse the writer's methods. The writer's methods can include the use of form, literary devices, choice of the language etc. A learner should be able to show understanding and be able to respond to and comment on the effects of the writing.

The use of the phrase **dramatic effects** is to remind learners that the drama text is written to be performed and learners must consider the stage directions and stagecraft, such as use of lighting, sound, props and action. Learners should consider how revelations of character and situation are presented, paying particular attention to the choice of language and control of rhythm and tone within the dialogue. The phrase is not restricted to something shocking or melodramatic.

### 4.1.4 The assessment objectives

Stress that the assessment objectives are a framework and that to be placed in the higher levels, learners need to write strategically to ensure that they cover all the necessary AOs. For example, a narrative account might show detailed knowledge (AO1) but how well this is rewarded will depend on whether there is evidence of some selection in response to the question and some understanding of methods and concerns. The challenge for learners who use a narrative approach or who rely on paraphrase in answers to (b) questions is to include AO2.

In the new specifications, AO2 is focused on analysis. To do well learners must have shown an ability to analyse the effects of the writing and consider in some detail aspects of structure, language and form. This has implications for the use of quotations.

Spend time checking learners' understanding of the language of the assessment objectives and level descriptors in the mark scheme.

### 4.1.5 Frequent misunderstandings

**Personal response** means a discussion of the effects of the writing, an interpretation or analysis of the text. It is not an invitation to express personal opinions in a general way on aspects of the subject matter such as marriage, religion, moral concerns, gender and sexuality etc.

**Context** in the final examination essays needs to be used to suggest how knowledge of the literary, social and historical context helps an understanding and analysis of a writer's concerns and methods. It is more effective when used in relation to specific textual details rather than as a generalised afterthought or as a biography of the author.

**Evaluation** (AO 5 at A Level) means that a critical theory or viewpoint is applied to details within the set text. In an exam, candidates are not expected to include long explanations of Modernism or The Theatre of the Absurd but learners will be rewarded if they have been able to apply some aspect of critical or literary theory to the set text. The key skill here is if learners have been able to use it to enhance their own understanding of the writer's methods and effects.

## 4.2 Tackling the Unseen question

Preparing for the Unseen question is no different from preparing for the (b) questions on the set texts. The active learning strategies are designed to develop confidence in creating an independent response to an Unseen text by teaching transferable skills and giving lots of practice in using them.

The internet gives access to many suitable libraries of resources. For example, The Poetry Archive website is a good general resource for poetry, with audio recordings of readings of poems and further links to the works of contemporary and classical poets: [www.poetryarchive.org](http://www.poetryarchive.org)

Teachers will have their own banks of materials from previous as well as current set texts which can be used for the Unseen paper practice. However, they can save themselves a lot of time by investing in two new course books endorsed by Cambridge:

*The Cambridge International AS and A Level Literature in English Coursebook* by Elizabeth Whittome and the *Collins Cambridge International AS and A Level Literature in English Student's Book* by Cairney, Gould, Kirby

## Section 4: Preparing learners for final assessment

and Vardy are both complete courses, written to the new specifications. They provide a structured skills-building approach using appropriate material. Whittome has provided a selection of texts from a broad range of historical periods and cultures to present the course through detailed lesson plans. The Collins book focuses on learner development through writing. Both books include specific sections on dealing with Unseen questions and provide model answers and the exercises in the book are carefully structured and varied to develop understanding and skills..

### 4.2.1 Strategies for approaching the Unseen question in the examination

- Choose the right text. Encourage candidates to skim read all texts in the exam and choose the one they feel they can write most about. They should not be put off a text because it includes occasional words or phrases that they don't understand. Problematic words will be explained in a glossary.
- Focus on the question. This will usually ask how a writer presents a specific thing: feelings about a child, death, a character or setting etc. Questions will not include contextual material and learners are not expected to speculate or try to 'place' the texts in a period or movement.
- Select specific details or short quotations to use to display analysis of language and discuss effects.
- Encourage candidates to spend time planning in their exam. Learners should put their points in a coherent order and write up, referring back to their plan to make sure they have covered all their ideas.

### 4.3 Examination essay writing skills



The examination is a test of the learners' understanding and response to the language in the texts and of their own ability to express their ideas. Throughout the course, learners will have learnt new vocabulary, critical concepts and literary terms. Exercises in writing short paragraphs that focus on aspects of structure, character and literary methods should be developed and sequenced into continuous essays. In the examination, learners need to write a longer essay, shaping their knowledge to the task and displaying a range of skills. For the Unseen element on Paper 2 they have to read and choose a text, respond to it and structure their essay within an hour.

To do this effectively learners need to plan by:

- Deconstructing the question. Learners should focus on key words to understand what the question is asking them to do.
- Creating a mind-map on a range of relevant points and decide on the most effective order.
- Looking for an angle on the question or the material to help them develop an argument. In dealing with a question or the Unseen question, it can be particularly effective to select a specific sentence or phrase that highlights a theme or significant image in terms of point of view or effect.
- Spending 10–15 minutes on reading and planning time (if doing the (b) question) at this stage usually results in a more focused and effectively structured response.

#### 4.3.1 Structuring an exam response

Learners should ensure that:

- Introductions are productive. Learners should use the introduction to discuss the question and set an agenda for their response to the text and question.
- Conclusions offer a final significant insight, taking into account the evidence offered before.
- The main body of the essay consists of four or more paragraphs that explore the question fully. Each paragraph should be supported by a relevant specific reference to the text or a quotation. Quotations and textual references should then be analysed for use of language or literary features so that they can discuss the effects of the writing.
- Their argument is clear. Learners should look for points of comparison and contrast and use discourse markers to signpost their argument logically.
- Written expression is clear and fluent. Learners will not be penalised for occasional lapses in accuracy of expression if the content is good. Quality of expression will impact on their ability to express more complex ideas and in some cases where communication breaks down more frequently, this will restrict their levels of achievement.
- Essays include some evidence of close reading and technical analysis.

Learners do not need to count the number of words used.

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### 4.3.2 Supporting the writing of an analytical paragraph

Encourage them to:



- make a statement
- support it with evidence – use a specific reference or quotation
- quotations should be short. Teach them how to break up a longer one and embed them within their own sentences
- analyse the method – say how the use of a particular device contributes to meaning or effect
- show personal response by offering an interpretation or discussing the effects of the writing.

Here is a worked example:

*In every cry of every Man,  
In every Infants cry of fear,  
In every voice: in every ban  
The mind-forg'd manacles I hear*

'London' by William Blake

In Blake's poem 'London', the poetic speaker seems to be merely observing the people of the city and describing what he sees and hears. However, as we can see in the stanza above, the speaker, rather than simply describing, is intuiting an internal emotional condition from the observable appearance and behaviour of the people. Men and infants alike are said to "cry", and this fearful condition is ascribed to the general population, as emphasised by the poet's emphatic repetition of the word "every". Ultimately, the speaker dispenses with any pretence to mere observation, suggesting that the situation of London's people is one of mental enslavement in "mind-forg'd manacles" which are so obvious that the speaker can, metaphorically, "hear" them clanking inside the heads of the people because of the effect of the rhyme.



- Tell the learners to highlight the statement, note where the evidence is, identify where the writer shows how choice of language creates meaning and find evidence of the personal response.
- Ask them about the meaning and usefulness of the word 'intuiting'. Can they work it out from the context?
- Ask them to note the embedding of the quotations – how brief they are and how the comments show close attention to poetic method.
- Ask them whether they can add to this paragraph by saying something about the sentence structure and its effect.

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### Extension activity:

Ask learners to select a paragraph from one of their own essays to self-assess their writing, identifying strengths and areas for improvement. Learners could do the same annotation exercise or this could be a peer assessment activity.

Before learners hand in an essay for marking, they could self-assess and check their work. Learners could then be redraft these paragraphs in the same essay or in a subsequent one.

### 4.4 Study habits

Learners will probably have a preferred method for studying and revising. However, not all of these methods are necessarily effective.

Much research has been published on this subject, suggesting that some of the following methods are not effective:

- generous use of highlighters
- reading and re-reading notes
- working exhaustively and alone
- re-writing existing notes to create a more attractive set of notes.

Dedicated learners will often revise intensely for long periods and convince themselves that they have prepared thoroughly. Sadly, they may well have been largely wasting their time, especially if they are aiming to develop transferable skills as well as a deep understanding and appreciation of their texts and do well in the examinations.

Here are some methods that are proven to work for most learners:

- Distributive practice: that is, spreading out study over time. This method is believed to aid true understanding of the topics and will be aided by the spiralling structure of the course in which concepts and skills are being constantly revisited and reapplied in new or different contexts.
- Studying in short bursts, followed by regular self-testing over several weeks, e.g. learning a bank of short quotations for each text.
- At the end of a revision session, writing down what they can remember perhaps in a mind map.
- Creating a revision timetable for the mock and final exams. This will ensure that they study different texts as well as their other subjects – little, but often.
- Answering many practice questions/past papers.
- Connecting ideas together by the use of mind maps.

### 4.5 Deep subject understanding

If learners start to make connections between concepts, not only will the study of the subject be more enjoyable for them, but a deeper understanding will be nurtured. For example:

- Set poems can be visually mapped to highlight common or contrasting themes or ideas. This is a helpful approach to identify examples of poetic methods and the different effects.
- Short stories can also be mapped to help learners to see areas for comparison and contrast. A useful way to do this can be Venn Diagrams and tables.
- Learners can explore the use of setting or methods of characterisation across the genres of the set texts.

This kind of short interleaving exercise can build confidence in analysing texts and help learners to identify where there are gaps in their knowledge.

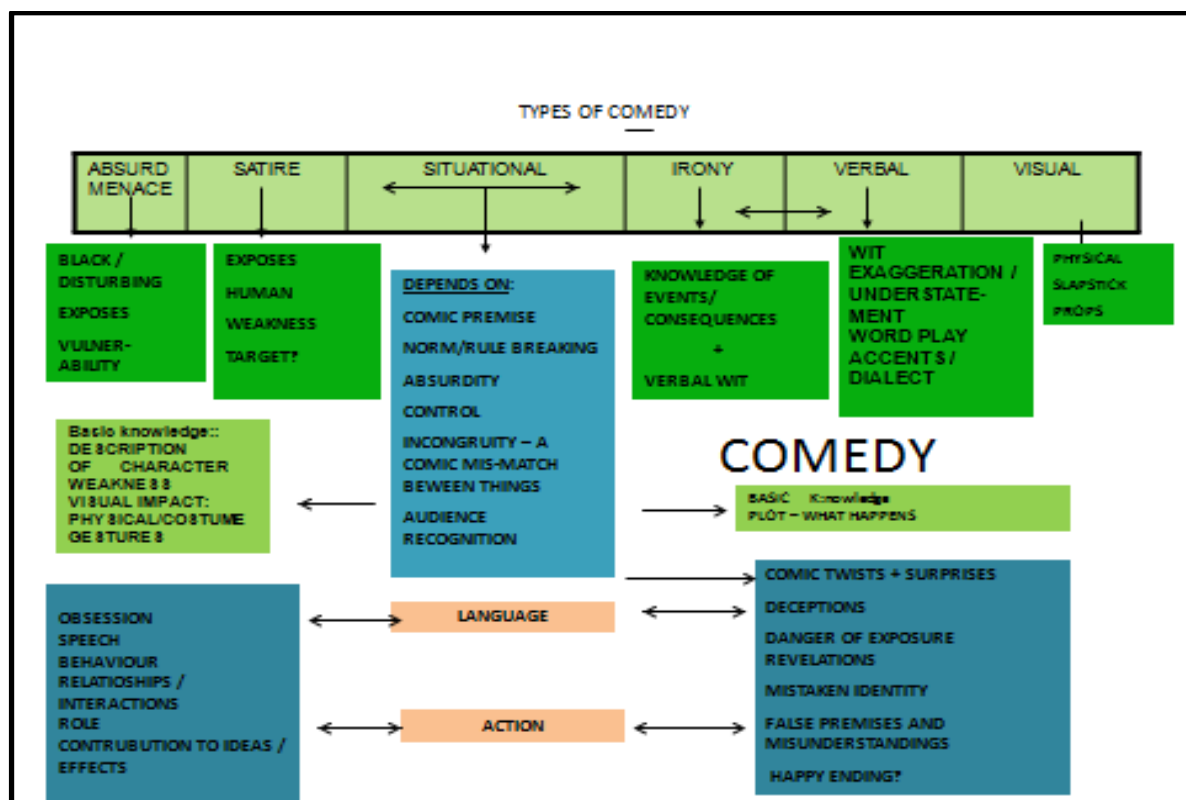
Using visual charts and mind maps can sometimes be more effective than extensive note taking because they encourage more explicit recording of the connections between texts whilst allowing for expansion of the ideas.

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### 4.6 Possible revision activities

- For each text, create a set of cards with useful quotations on one side and a note about significance and use of language on the other. These can be used in pairs for a variety of games.
- Learners create trivial pursuit games or top trumps for particular texts.
- Use performance. It can be useful for learners to do dramatic readings of scenes from the plays or to act out of bits of dialogue from novels and poems because this can help learners to learn quotes and for understanding how language can be performed as well as read.
- Encourage revision of passages by using cloze exercises.
- Display posters on each short story or poem in a collection. Invite learners to make connections through colour-coding. Encourage learners to think of the position of specific posters as this will aid recall in the examination.
- In groups, learners can prepare presentations, on a section of a text or a whole piece, or could be encouraged to focus on themes, characters, genres. These could then be presented to and evaluated by the whole class.
- Hot-seating is an effective method to explore characterisation as it allows learners to ask exploratory questions and respond, using evidence taken from the text.
- Create charts and use them to stimulate discussion of the concepts, genres or themes and as a focus for evidence hunting.
- Comedy can sometimes prove difficult for learners to analyse. Here is one method for creating a chart to analyse comedy.



In the Appendix, you will find a work sheet applying elements of the chart above to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It could easily be used for *As You Like It*, *Much Ado About Nothing* or Wole Soyinka's *Jero* plays. Think about how you would adapt it for a darker play such as one by Beckett or Pinter.

Learners could also consider how the chart above could be adapted for tragedy.

## Section 4: Preparing learners for final assessment

### 4.7 Technology in and out of the classroom

There is now a great range of technological tools that can be used in and out of the classroom. It is important for learners to experience their learning in a variety of different ways, not least to maintain interest and motivation. Here are just some of the possibilities:

#### 4.7.1 Set up a literary chat room

Texts can be uploaded and certain individuals can be given responsibility for preparing annotations on the whole or specific parts of the texts. Other class members could then have to evaluate their analysis or offer suggestions of their own.

#### 4.7.2 Mobile apps

It is important to be careful when using mobile apps for education, but if chosen well, these can provide another mode of learning or revision for the learner. The options are numerous from games and quizzes to videos and animations.

'Socrative' is an excellent app for formative assessment and learners love it. You can create online multiple-choice style quizzes which provide immediate feedback to teachers, who can instantly identify problem areas. Correction and explanation can then be dealt with immediately.

#### 4.7.3 Audio books, videos and podcasts

Audio books can be another way for learners to access novels. This could be especially useful for revision or for learners to read sections for future lessons.

Teachers can also now easily record units of their own teaching in short, manageable portions. These can be made available to learners who can watch them as a homework assignment. This saves time and allows the teacher to concentrate on other aspects of learning, also allowing more time for formal assessment. The fact that these videos can be watched repeatedly is especially useful to the second language learner.

Encourage learners to find or make podcasts. These could include short readings from the texts, lists of short useful quotations with or without commentaries and comments about connections between the texts. These audio teaching aids are a handy alternative tool, which are especially useful while learners are travelling to and from school or do not want to disturb others. Listening to the same podcasts more than once can be especially useful for the second language learner.

#### 4.7.4 Film

Films of set plays and novels are often available but use of these should be carefully. It is not always useful to show the complete film of a play or novel before learners have had a chance to engage with the whole text because there are likely to be differences between the film and the original text. You should discourage learners to watch the film adaptation just before the examination. Films of novels can be good to provide a sense of time and place, character and plot but if learners rely on them, they will miss out on a variety of narrative methods, particularly the descriptive elements and the narrative voice.

Film should not merely be viewed as something that learners sit down and watch in order to add variation to a lesson. When showing a film, this can be stopped, images can be captured and made into a power point with questions. Learners often like creating these and working through a visually enhanced worksheet improves memory of the details.

### 4.8 Providing feedback on learner work

Whichever type of assignment you have given your learners to complete, it is necessary to provide meaningful feedback, in order for them to improve the quality of their written answers and understanding of a subject. The learner may find the subject itself challenging and/or may not have the skills in English to deal fully with the question. Either way, meaningful feedback using the descriptor levels in the mark scheme can help teachers and learners to set ongoing targets for improvement. The Principal Examiner reports give clear indications of how successful candidates have responded to specific questions and in describing the characteristics of less assured responses, they give both teachers and learners useful advice on textual issues, analysis and essay writing skills.

## Section 5: Resources and support

Providing feedback can be done in several ways such as:

- Using phrases from the level descriptors, useful ones are ‘narrative approach’, ‘a valid assertion needing support’, ‘a more or less convincing argument’.
- Feedback needs to be short and prioritised; specifically attached to an example of what they have done and will be more effective if they are told how to improve it. For example, ‘interesting view that is linked to the question. Next time you should back this up with evidence from the text.’
- Encourage learners to give each other feedback in collaborative exercises using ‘what worked well’ and ‘even better if’.
- Provide a situation where the learners are actively engaged in reviewing the questions with sample answers, the mark scheme and examiners’ reports so they can understand what distinguishes a very good response from one which is competent, basic or inadequate. This works best in pairs or small groups with teacher guidance.

### 4.9 The mock examination

Mock examinations are an important benchmark for teachers and learners, and it serves several purposes:

- It is an opportunity to test learners on the complete course material under proper exam conditions.
- It encourages revision and can be a good opportunity to cover effective techniques and strategies with your learners.
- Learners who are apprehensive or nervous about taking exams will have a chance to gain familiarity with the process so that ‘on the day’ they may feel less stressed and more confident.
- It provides an opportunity to spread the revision load of the subject over several months.

After reviewing the results of the mock exam, learners may gain an insight into the following:

- how successful their revision techniques have been
- which texts or aspects of analysis need more revision
- how they can effectively distribute their time in the exams. Learners should leave enough time at the end of the exam to check their answers
- if they were able to perform properly under pressure
- whether they need to improve their essay writing skills, taking into account their accurate use of literary terms

If learners treat the mock exams as if they were the finals, evidence indicates that they may well perform even better in their final assessment. Some may take considerable persuasion to take the mock exams seriously enough to revise properly. Learners need to be encouraged to appreciate that the process is a positive and supportive one, and one in which very useful feedback will be provided.

Even if learners have not completed the course by the time of the mock exams, an exam should be created which allows the learner to get the mock exam experience on the majority of the syllabus content.

### 4.10 Use of past papers

Past papers are a useful learning tool because they allow learners to practice the type of question that may come up in their final exams. If a text is new to the syllabus and does not feature on the past papers available, teachers can confidently invent appropriate questions. They just need to be aware of the differences in the formulations at AS and A Level e.g. ‘By what means and with what effects does the writer...?’ is an A Level formulation.

When teachers review past paper questions used in class and the mock examination, they should encourage learners to suggest indicative content in terms of ideas and textual evidence and, in discussion, talk about whether there are alternative approaches to the question, alternative interpretations or conflicting opinions, which quotations would be useful and how they can be analysed.

The Principal Examiners Reports for Teachers are very helpful to use in conjunction with the mark schemes. They give very useful feedback on approaches to the questions and the texts. Some of the same advice is reiterated year after year:

To maximise their levels of achievement learners need to:

- Study the complete text or selection of poetry. They might not have done everything within each text in very close detail, but at a basic level they are expected to know how novels and plays end. If they



## Section 4: Preparing learners for final assessment

have not done all the poems or short stories they might not be able to select ones relevant to the question or find themselves doing the (b) question as an Unseen.

- Ensure they write a literary response rather than a sociological or political one
- Deconstruct the question, paying attention to its constituent parts and the command words
- Demonstrate detailed knowledge of the texts which is selected and shaped to the task
- Interrogate how writers shape an audience's or a reader's response by their use of a range of literary methods
- Create a bank of multi-purpose quotations for each text that will allow for commentary on theme or character
- Present a personal response through analysis and discussion of the effects of the writing
- Consider alternative interpretations and critical views and interrogate them against the evidence in the text.

### 4.11 Command words

It is important that learners understand the vocabulary of the assessment objectives and the 'command words' of exam questions which indicate the approach they should take to an answer. Many of these 'command words' are listed in the syllabus. While these definitions are very helpful, remember that the context of the whole question will affect the explicit meaning of the command words.

You can use the Example Candidate Response booklet which contains candidate responses at different grades to help explain the implications of the command words and formulations to learners. Showing learners good sample responses to questions using different command words and formulations can help them see that at AS and A Level good responses focus on *how* a writer creates meaning and shapes a response. Weaker responses tend to focus on the *what* and offer narrative, descriptive or explanatory responses.

## 5. Resources and support

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### 5.1 Finding and evaluating resources

There is no shortage of resources to aid the teaching of English Literature. They can be found in text books and on the internet. The problem is finding one that is effective and that suits your situation. The quality of resources varies widely from 'home made' ones which are uploaded to the internet, to professionally produced ones. Those endorsed by Cambridge have already been mentioned. Critical material on key texts can be found in libraries and reviews on contemporary works can be found on the internet.

The problem is not so much finding resources, but evaluating whether they will suit your situation and how they can be used. You will need to think about the demands the resources make on the learners in terms of language and skill development and how you can use them to manufacture appropriate exercises.

Perhaps the easiest way to find reliable resources is to get them from a colleague who has already used them and can tell you how good they are. Sadly, this is often not possible. There are also resources to be found on Cambridge online, more details of which are given later in this section.

Resources from the internet and from books need to be scrutinised to see if they are useful. Here are a few general ones and some for set texts so you can see what is available.

- The Poetry International website holds poems and video material of the works of hundreds of modern and contemporary poets from around the world: [www.poetryinternationalweb.net](http://www.poetryinternationalweb.net)
- Video and audio recordings of full plays and excerpts from the works of Shakespeare are available from various online sources. For example, this excerpt from a production of Measure for Measure by the BBC: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p048j31b>
- You can watch excerpts and full productions of plays (including a complete performance of Arthur Miller's All My Sons, starring Zoë Wanamaker and David Suchet) on the Digital Theatre Plus website: <https://www.digitaltheatreplus.com>
- In this video Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, author of the novel Petals of Blood, discusses the importance of memory and the impact of colonialism: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AYP9sJvDcYE>

The internet has many reviews of contemporary works of literature. Try to draw upon reputable sources, such as the New York Times, The Observer. This review of Ian McEwan's novel Atonement is from the website of The Guardian newspaper: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2001/sep/22/fiction.ianmcewan>

### 5.2 School support hub

This is an excellent source of information. You need a username and password to access it which can be obtained from your Examinations Officer if you are in a Cambridge Centre.

On the School Support Hub, you will be able to access the syllabus and copies of past papers together with their mark schemes, examiner reports and grade thresholds, and a sample scheme of work which can be downloaded and used to gain further information on the delivery of this syllabus. There is also a list of resources and a link to the discussion forum where teachers can post comments and questions. It is worth looking at this from time to time and following interesting threads even if you do not post any comments of your own.

### 5.3 Training

Teacher Support also has a list of upcoming training events. These include:

- on-line courses, including tutor-led courses. The tutor-led courses are highly recommended to help you improve your teaching skills. They are intended for teachers who have already been teaching Cambridge International AS and A Level Literature in English for one year.
- face-to-face courses, held at various venues at different times throughout the year. These enable you to meet up with other Cambridge International AS and A Level Literature in English teachers, and also to interact directly with a trainer from Cambridge.
- online seminars, which are led over a short period of time by an expert, and focus on specific issues such as syllabus changes or the recent examination session.

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You can also find information about face-to-face training events at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/events](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/events).

In addition, Cambridge runs professional development courses for teachers who want to develop their thinking and practice. These include the Cambridge International Certificate for Teachers and Trainers, and the Cambridge International Diploma for Teachers and Trainers. You can find information about these at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/qualifications/teacher](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/qualifications/teacher).

## Appendix: Sample lesson plan template

<b>Lesson:</b>		<b>School:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>		<b>Teacher name:</b>	
<b>Class:</b>	<b>Number present:</b>	<b>Number absent:</b>	
<b>Learning objectives to which this lesson is contributing</b>			
<b>Lesson objectives</b>			
<b>Vocabulary, terminology and phrases</b>			
<b>Previous learning</b>			
<b>Plan</b>			
<b>Planned timings</b>	<b>Planned activities</b>	<b>Resources</b>	
Beginning			
Middle			
End			
<b>Additional information</b>			
<b>Differentiation: How do you plan to give more support? How do you plan to challenge the more able learners?</b>	<b>Assessment: How are you planning to check learners' learning?</b>	<b>Health and safety check: ICT links</b>	

Reflection and evaluation	
<b>Reflection</b> Were the lesson objectives realistic? What did the learners learn today? What was the learning atmosphere like? Did my planned differentiation work well? Did I stick to timings? What changes did I make from my plan and why?	<b>Use the space below to reflect on your lesson. Answer the most relevant questions from the box on the left about your lesson.</b>
Summary evaluation	
<b>What two things went really well? (Consider both teaching and learning.)</b> 1. 2.	
<b>What two things would have improved the lesson? (Consider both teaching and learning.)</b> 1. 2.	
<b>What have I learned from this lesson about the class or individuals that will inform my next lesson?</b>	

## Appendix: Comedy in A Midsummer Night's Dream

Aspect	Examples	Quotations
Situation: - not a recounting of the story but an analysis of the way human experience and expectations are used to generate humour.		
Irony – often depends on the audience knowing more than the characters.		
Characterisation – often exploits and exaggerates one particular character trait.		
Visual humour: characters' physical appearance and mannerisms.		
Actions/Stage business can often be very physical, slap stick, inappropriate, or exaggerated. It either reinforces or undermines the words in some way.		
Verbal humour: Selection of language Repartee – witty dialogue Jokes Exaggeration Repetition		

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