Course notes

International Baccalaureate · IB Diploma · Language A: Language and Literature · HL

IB Language A language and literature first assessment 2021; English focus

English is the teaching focus. SL studies four literary works, HL six, plus non-literary bodies of work. School chooses texts under the guide; oral connects one literary work and one non-literary body of work through a global issue.

SL: one unseen analysis Paper 1 75 min 35%, comparative Paper 2 105 min 35%, individual oral 30%. HL: two unseen analyses Paper 1 135 min 35%, Paper 2 105 min 25%, HL essay 20%, oral 20%.

Readers, writers and texts · English non-literary analysis

Identify text type, audience and purpose, then analyse how choices construct meaning.

Visual hierarchy, diction, framing and register can guide attention and position the reader.

> ■ **Checked example**
>
> Only three days left combines a restrictive word with a time limit; the large countdown makes urgency visible.
> Explain how this could prompt quick action, while acknowledging that different readers may resist the message.

■ Limits and practice

Do not list techniques without their function or assume an effect occurs for every reader.

HL analyses both unseen texts in Paper 1; SL chooses one. Practise complete analysis rather than doubling an SL answer.

What is the best analysis of the countdown?

Answer: It makes the time limit prominent and supports the advert's pressure to act quickly.

Time and space; intertextuality · Literary comparison and context

Paper 2 compares two studied literary works in response to a question.

Use topic-led comparison: connect a specific choice in one work to a related or contrasting choice in the other.

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■ Checked example

One narrator may withhold a character's motives while another presents interior thought. Compare how these choices position readers to judge exclusion.
Select precise evidence from the school's texts and connect it to your thesis.

■ Limits and practice

Do not compare one literary and one non-literary text for Paper 2.

Context informs an interpretation but cannot replace close reading or prove a single fixed meaning.

What is suitable evidence for Paper 2?

Answer: Specific authorial choices from two studied literary works linked to the question.

Individual oral · A global issue across literary and non-literary work

The global issue should have wider significance and operate in local contexts.

For this course, connect a literary work and a non-literary body of work; explain how choices construct the issue in extracts and beyond them.

■ Checked example

Select an extract where labels shape a character's treatment and a related text from an approved non-literary body of work.
Compare how diction and framing operate, then show where the pattern continues or changes across each work.

■ Limits and practice

The oral is supervised spoken assessment, not an essay submitted in its place.

Teacher verifies text eligibility, extract limits, notes and scheduling against the guide.

Which pairing belongs to this course's oral?

Answer: One literary work and one non-literary body of work exploring the same global issue.

HL essay · A sustained line of inquiry

The HL essay develops an independent line of inquiry using studied material and detailed analysis.

Choose evidence that advances the argument and acknowledge complications rather than repeating a thesis.

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■ Checked example

Ask how a recurrent contrast constructs belonging across a selected work. Trace changes in the pattern and analyse moments that resist the initial reading.
Revise topic sentences so each contributes a distinct step in the argument.

■ Limits and practice

Do not recycle the oral or Paper 2 material without checking assessment reuse rules with the teacher.

The essay is coursework with supervision and authenticity checks, not an invented timed paper.

What gives the essay coherence?

Answer: A focused inquiry advanced through connected analysis and precise evidence.

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