Course notes

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

IB Language A literature first assessment 2021; English focus

English is the language studied. SL studies nine works, HL thirteen. School selects eligible works, including works in translation; oral pairs one originally written in English and one studied in translation.

SL: one guided unseen literary analysis Paper 1 75 min 35%, comparative Paper 2 105 min 35%, 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 · Literary form and close reading

Literary analysis connects wording and form to meaning. Personification assigns human qualities to something non-human.

Establish who speaks and what the passage makes available before treating a speaker as the author's own voice.

> ■ **Checked example**
>
> In the original classroom line, held its breath suspends ordinary movement and makes anticipation feel shared.
> Compare that interpretation with nearby details before claiming the phrase signals fear rather than excitement.

■ Limits and practice

The classroom line is original practice, not a quotation from a prescribed work.

Avoid an effect word such as vivid without explaining what is made vivid and why it matters.

What does the phrase most directly suggest?

Answer: Suspended movement and shared anticipation through personification.

Time and space; intertextuality · Comparative literary argument

A lyric can compress a moment while a novel develops events across a longer narrative.

Paper 2 requires a comparative argument about two studied works, supported by precise knowledge and authorial choices.

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■ Checked example

Build a paragraph about how time is arranged in each work: repetition may return a poem to one moment while retrospective narration revises an earlier event. Explain how this difference shapes the reader's understanding of memory.

■ Limits and practice

Do not imply every poem or novel works this way; verify the selected works.

Context should illuminate details rather than replace textual evidence with a history lesson.

What is the best comparative focus?

Answer: How each work's arrangement of time shapes its treatment of memory.

Individual oral · Global issue and works in translation

The oral connects one work originally written in the language studied and one studied in translation through a global issue.

Balance detailed extract analysis with the issue's treatment across both whole works.

■ Checked example

For a focused issue about exclusion through naming, compare the chosen extracts' labels, narrative positions and consequences.
Record the translator and edition, and avoid unsupported claims about wording in an original language you cannot read.

■ Limits and practice

This literature oral does not pair a literary work with an advert.

School verifies text choices, reuse rules, extract length, notes and authenticity against the full guide.

Which pairing fits the English literature oral?

Answer: One work originally written in English and one studied in English translation.

HL essay · Independent literary inquiry

A line of inquiry asks how a literary pattern shapes an interpretation.

Each paragraph should advance the argument with evidence, analysis and a connection to the inquiry.

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■ Checked example

Trace a selected image at the beginning, a turning point and the ending of the approved work. Compare its contexts and implications.
Test the argument against an occurrence that appears to resist it before refining the thesis.

■ Limits and practice

The HL essay is coursework, not an extra timed examination.

Confirm assessment reuse rules and citations with the teacher; a borrowed interpretation still needs acknowledgement.

What strengthens the inquiry most?

Answer: Analysis of how the pattern changes, including evidence that complicates the thesis.

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