The individual oral

IB DP English A: Literature: the individual oral (IO)

The individual oral

- explain the format and criteria of the individual oral;
- choose a **significant**, **transnational** global issue and tell it apart from a topic;
- pair a work originally in English with a work in translation;

The individual oral (2)

- analyse an extract from a work in translation;
- structure 10 minutes of speaking from notes, not a script.

Choosing a global issue

- A global issue is **significant 重要的** (it matters to many people), **transnational 跨国的** (it exists in more than one country) and felt in everyday life.
- It belongs to one of five **fields of inquiry 探究领域**:
- A topic ("madness") is not yet an issue.
- An issue is a tension or problem: "how a society silences people who question its norms by calling them mad".

The two works

- Gilman wrote from experience: she had been prescribed a "rest cure" for depression.
- Lu Xun wrote during the New Culture Movement, when young writers attacked old Confucian traditions; the madman's fear of "eating people" is a metaphor for a society that destroys individuals in the name of morality.

The two works (2)

- When you discuss a work in translation, analyse features that survive translation (structure, narrative voice, imagery, symbols) and be careful with single words: they belong partly to the translator.
- Students who read Chinese can, of course, refer to the original.

Structuring the 10 minutes

- *Plan the 10 minutes, then expect 5 minutes of questions*
- 1. **Introduction** (about 1 minute): the global issue, the two works, and your main argument. 2. **First extract** (about 4 minutes): three or four features, each with brief evidence, each linked to the issue; then link the extract to the work as a whole. 3. **Second extract** (about 3½ minutes): the same. 4. **Comparison and conclusion** (about 1½ minutes): how the two works present the issue differently, and why, given their contexts.

Structuring the 10 minutes (2)

- You may bring the two extracts (clean copies) and up to 10 bullet points of notes.
- You must not read a script.

The criteria

- **Common mistakes:** spending eight minutes on one work; talking about the issue in general without analysing the extracts; forgetting the works as a whole (examiners expect you to connect each extract to the complete work).
- Check the conditions before using the result.

Sources for this lesson

- International Baccalaureate, *Language A: Literature guide* (first assessment 2021), individual oral criteria.
- C. P. Gilman, "The Yellow Wall-Paper", *The New England Magazine* (January 1892), and "Why I Wrote The Yellow Wallpaper" (1913).
- Lu Xun, "**A Madman's Diary**", *New Youth* (May 1918), translated by J. Lovell in *The Real Story of Ah-Q and Other Tales of China* (2009).
- S. Weir Mitchell, *Fat and Blood* (1877), on the rest cure.

Common errors

- Choosing a topic ("madness") instead of a global issue ("how societies silence people who challenge them").
- Spending eight minutes on one work and two on the other.
- Talking about the issue in general without analysing the extracts.

Common errors (2)

- Forgetting the works as a whole; connect each extract to the complete work.
- Reading from a script; you may bring only brief notes.
- Analysing a translator's word choice as if it were the author's own.

Key terms

- **Individual oral (IO)**: the internal assessment: 10 minutes on a global issue through two extracts, then 5 minutes of questions.
- **Global issue**: an issue that is **significant**, **transnational** and felt in everyday life.
- **Work in translation**: a literary work originally written in another language.

Key terms (2)

- **Field of inquiry**: one of five broad areas from which global issues come, such as politics, power and justice.
- **Extract**: a short passage (about 40 lines) chosen from a work for the oral.

Check yourself

- 1.
- How long is the IO, how is it marked, and what is it worth at SL and HL? 2.
- Turn the topic "madness" into a global issue. 3.
- Why does the narrator of "The Yellow Wall-Paper" keep her diary in secret? 4.