

English & Literature Extension

Unit 4: Text-centred and world-context-centred strategies for short literary texts

About this resource

This resource relates to the text-centred and world-context-centred theoretical strategies required for external assessment in Unit 4. It is intended to help teachers implement teaching and learning strategies to prepare students for the external assessment in their school setting. It provides information about:

- syllabus specifications for the theorised exploration of an unseen text
- supporting resources
- strategies for producing text-centred and world-context-centred readings.

Syllabus specifications

Refer to Section 3.5.2 of the *English & Literature Extension General Senior Syllabus 2020 v1.1*.

Description

The external assessment requires students to select one unseen short text from a selection of three short texts of comparable complexity that are provided in the external examination.

Students then apply aspects of text-centred and world-context-centred theoretical approaches to this text to explore it in depth and produce a theorised close reading of it.

Students will support their reading of the text with close reference to the text and the theoretical underpinnings of their reading.

Conditions

- Time: 2.5 hours, which includes 30 minutes planning time (reading and annotations)
- Length: 800–1000 words (excluding quotations)
- Other
 - selection of three unseen short texts of comparable complexity provided in the examination.

Supporting resources

A range of resources are available on the QCAA Portal to support teachers as they help students to prepare for the external assessment in Unit 4, including:

- English & Literature Extension 2020 resources (available on the School Portal)
 - *Unit 4 sample teaching, learning and assessment plan*, which outlines strategies and learning experiences to prepare for the external assessment
 - *Mock: Question and response book*
 - *Mock: Stimulus book*

- *Mock: Marking guide*
- *Using mock external assessments: A guide for teachers*
- *Mock external assessment toolkit for school leaders* (available on Noticeboard).

Strategies for producing close readings

A close reading involves focusing on specific details of a literary text in order to produce a justifiable interpretation. A close reading should:

- demonstrate understanding of how the stylistic and formal aspects of a work of literature contribute to its meaning
- be structured around a thesis that presents an interpretation of the selected text. This thesis should be supported by arguments and evidence in the form of analysis of particular textual features of a literary text and how these position the reader.

Students can employ a number of strategies to develop a text-centred and world-context-centred interpretation of a text.

Text-centred strategies

Some strategies that students could use to produce a text-centred reading include focusing on:

- generic conventions — How does the text conform to or challenge the conventions associated with its genre to communicate key ideas or themes?
- binary oppositions — Are there key binary oppositions that underpin and structure the text? Who or what is privileged and marginalised? How do these binary oppositions underpin representations and ideologies reinforced in the text? A binary opposition can be treated as a structuring principle that stabilises meaning in the text, or as a false dichotomy whose instability undermines the unity of the text
- narration — How is the text narrated to position the audience? Consider how point of view (e.g. first person vs. third person), focalisation and voice position the reader in relation to perspectives, ideas and reliability of the characters or narrator in the text
- symbols and metaphors — What are some key symbols and/or metaphors that significantly contribute to meaning in the text? Consider symbols and metaphors that are repeated and/or developed in a text to shape representations and ideas in the text
- stylistic features and literary techniques — How are stylistic features and literary techniques used to shape meaning? Consider how the author has used
 - dialogue
 - imagery and figurative devices
 - characterisation
 - text structures
 - rhetorical devices.

World-context-centred strategies

Some strategies that students could use to produce a world-context-centred reading include focusing on:

- representations — How does the text construct representations of people, groups, places or ideas?
- ideology — What cultural beliefs, values and attitudes that reinforce particular power structures in society underpin the text? How does the text challenge or reinforce dominant worldviews?
- cultural ideas — Consider how the text upholds or resists prevalent cultural ideas related to topics such as
 - race
 - gender
 - class
 - sexuality
 - age
 - the environment.