

## **Language A: Language and Literature 20011-2013 (based on Language A: language and literature subject guide, IBO, 2011)**

The language A: language and literature course aims to develop skills of textual analysis and the understanding that texts, both literary and non-literary, can be seen as autonomous yet related to culturally determined reading practices. The course is designed to be flexible- in a way that reflects the interests and concerns that are relevant to students while developing a range of transferable skills. An understanding of the ways in which formal elements are used to create meaning in a text is combined with an exploration of how that meaning is affected by reading practices that are culturally defined and by the circumstances of production and reception.

The language A: language and literature course investigates the construction of meaning in a variety of contexts, both in art (literature) and in everyday life. Students develop appreciation of the impact of the context (cultural and social) of both the writer and reader on textual construction and interpretation. For example, students should be able to understand how:

- the intended purchaser of a product will affect the tone of language and use of image in the creation of an advert, or how
- the use of rhetorical and propaganda techniques can shape meaning in the delivery of a politician's campaign speech.

The appreciation of literary techniques as used in the various genres of literature forms an important aspect of this study.

### **What is the definition of texts?**

Texts in this course are broadly described as follows: texts are anything that is produced with the intent of conveying a meaning to an audience, incorporating both spoken and written acts of communication, and the associated use of images and visual and aural stimuli. Texts under this definition can be literary or non-literary. They include any communicative device used to convey a message or idea, for example:

- single images/ films/ voice recordings/ books/ blogs/ twitters/ poetry/ prose.

These various types of texts make different demands on the readers, viewers or listeners. Thus they are open to various interpretations based on the context in which they are written and received. The texts used in this course give students the opportunity to understand them according to their form, content, purpose and audience and through the social, historical, cultural and workplace contexts that produce and value them.

## **Part 1: Language in cultural context**

This section aims to illustrate, through the study of a wide variety of texts, the key point that the meaning of texts is rarely fixed but is shifting and fluid, constantly affected by the impact of language change and the specific cultural contexts in which texts are produced and received. There is a focus on a broad range of non-literary texts, both written and oral, and students examine how a variety of conventions inform the production of writing or speech and how the impact of the circumstances of reception inflect their meaning.

Students have opportunities to analyse a number of different texts from a variety of media and situations, noting the way their contexts and the conventions to which they subscribe can be seen to generate meaning. For example, the differing language features of particular types of letters, emails, blogs or text messages may be compared, and students explore the choices made by the producers of these texts. This could lead into explorations of the way language acts to affirm identity or to denote gradations of power within society (for example, in the construction of gender, the “Other”, young or old people and people with disabilities).

These ideas are intellectually challenging but language users are, of course, constantly making choices and decisions with regard to language and these choices encode their beliefs, judgments and perceptions of the world around them. A key aim of this section is to encourage students to develop an awareness of the fact these choices are made and that they have consequences and an impact in the social world.

This supports students in achieving the three learning outcomes for this section of the course.

- Analyse how audience and purpose affect the structure and content of texts.
- Analyse the impact of language changes.
- Demonstrate an awareness of how language and meaning are shaped by culture and context.

## **Part 2: Language and mass communication**

This builds on the work undertaken in part 1 and in many ways is an extension and development of it, looking not just at how the individual engages with language and meaning but also at how institutional structures influence the meaning in texts and are themselves influenced by the social, commercial and political worlds in which they operate.

The learning outcomes require students to do the following.

- Examine different forms of communication within the media.

- Show an awareness of the potential for educational, political or ideological influence of the media.
- Show the way mass media use language and image to inform, persuade or entertain.

Students work on the analysis of different kinds of media products and develop some of the topics looked at in part 1. The way status is encoded in language, for example, could lead to work on political campaigning and the positioning and presentation of politicians and their ideas in the media. Similarly the establishment of community identity through language could lead to work related to the third learning outcome—perhaps examining the diversity of audience and the use of style and register.

The assessment outcomes focus on the detail with which students can analyse texts and their stylistic features in relation to their role and function in, or when presented as, particular media products. An example of this might involve the student analysing the language used to describe a military campaign in the press or on news television, looking at how different constituencies—civilians, aid workers and “allied” or “enemy” forces, for example- are portrayed.

Background work on the power and influence of large media institutions is less important than the close analysis of the details of a particular media product such as an advertisement, newspaper article or institutional use of a social networking site. Students will have opportunities to explore issues such as stereotyping and the use of language by the state and in the presentation of areas including the arts.

Assessment activities such as the further oral activity and the written tasks will grow out of the exploratory work students undertake in looking at the topics (for example, bias or censorship) when working to achieve the learning outcomes in this part of the course.

### **Part 3: Literature—texts and contexts**

There are two key goals.

- In general, students are made aware of the importance and influence of context when studying any work.
- Specifically, students are given the opportunity to prepare for paper 2, an assessment that incorporates the part 3 texts and constitutes a large part of their overall mark for the course.

Students may also base a written task on the part 3 texts. At SL and HL, one part 3 text must be chosen from the prescribed literature in translation (PLT) list.

As with all parts of the syllabus, close reading is an essential element of student success. However, students must also be able to “pull away” from the text, incorporating not only the historical context of the work, but also the facts surrounding the work’s critical reception and their own personal responses to the work and the ways in which it may resonate with their world view. By selecting texts that belong to a culture very different to the student’s own, the research and exploration of context can develop even greater importance, as the student cannot even assume familiarity with the circumstances of the text’s production.

Students will be asked to consider not only the social issues inherent in a text (such as gender issues, political issues, conflicts between the individual and society), but also the ways in which the literary devices at work (such as narrative structure, elements of style) could be influencing the meaning of the text. Rounding out this holistic approach to a work is the student’s consideration of his or her own personal reading of a text—and the acknowledgment that there are actually several “correct” ways to read a work that do not necessarily negate the validity of alternative readings.

The paper 2 questions, which are the same for both SL and HL, take a philosophical approach to the texts studied, inviting students to explore some of the major themes found in literature; students are free to either compare or contrast their texts, in terms of the questions asked, and a wide variety of explorations are possible. However, students must at all times support their exploration with detailed knowledge of the texts studied, and therefore, it is important to achieve the right balance between contextual exploration and exploration of the language and structure—between external and internal exploration of the texts studied.

Teaching the part 3 texts should familiarize students with the skills of textual interpretation. The three learning outcomes for part 3 state that by the end of the course, students should be able to meet the following requirements.

- Consider the changing historical, cultural and social contexts in which particular texts are written and received.
- Demonstrate how the formal elements of the text, genre and structure can not only be seen to influence meaning but can also be influenced by context.
- Understand the attitudes and values expressed by literary texts and their impact on readers.

Students need to be willing to read around their texts, and discover how attitudes to the texts have developed and changed since their first publication. Part 3 encourages the student to see the text as a social construct. Teachers will want to encourage research and debate as essential classroom activities. Students will then soon discover the multiple layers of meaning in literary texts, and will become familiar with ways of discussing these, both in writing and in speech.

## Part 4: Literature—critical study

The purpose of this part of the syllabus might be summarized in terms of the development of close reading skills. Close reading is one of the key skills needed for study at university level, not only for those intending to study literature, but across all subject areas. Close reading is reading a text with the intention of understanding both its fabric and its purpose. The close reader does not simply access the text, but maintains a critical perspective, constantly asking questions about the provenance, structure and purpose of the writing. The importance of close reading is further demonstrated through the chosen assessment vehicle for this part of the course.

The main assessment for part 4 is the individual oral commentary, although students may also submit a written task based on their part 4 texts. At SL students study two texts, while at HL they study three; however, the assessment procedure and the assessment criteria are the same at both levels. Students must engage closely with the language and structure of the texts, and search for ways of interpreting them. They should not be satisfied with only one interpretation, but should search for alternative (maybe even oppositional) readings.

There are three learning outcomes for part 4, each depending on the skill of close reading. At the end of the course, students should be able to meet the following requirements.

- Explore literary works in detail.
- Analyse elements such as theme and the ethical stance or moral values of literary texts.
- Understand and make appropriate use of literary terms.

Students must have a detailed understanding of the texts chosen for part 4. The text choice for part 4 is restricted to the prescribed list of authors (PLAs) for the language A studied.

## Requirements

Students study a minimum of **four** literary works at SL and **six** works at HL. There are two book lists that must be used in conjunction with this guide.

**Prescribed literature in translation (PLT)**—there is one PLT list for all language A courses.

**Prescribed list of authors (PLA)**—each language A that has been authorized for study and listed in the *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme* has its own PLA.

**Note:** Neither authors nor texts may be repeated anywhere in parts 3 and 4.

### **Standard level**

Students are required to study **four** literature texts.

- Two texts chosen from the PLA for the language A
- One text in translation chosen from the PLT list for study in part 3
- One text chosen freely—from the PLA or elsewhere—written in the language A studied

Texts should be selected to cover at least two literary genres, two periods and, where appropriate, two places as defined in the PLA for the language A.

### **Higher level**

Students are required to study **six** literature texts.

- Four texts chosen from the PLA for the language A
- One text in translation chosen from the PLT list for study in part 3
- One text chosen freely—from the PLA, PLT list or elsewhere—and which may be in translation

Texts should be selected to cover at least two literary genres, two periods and, where appropriate, two places as defined in the PLA for the language A.

A text chosen freely at SL or HL must be of literary quality and of an appropriate challenge and complexity.

### **Assessment component Weighting- Standard Level**

#### **External assessment (4 hours) 70%**

##### **Paper 1: Comparative textual analysis (2 hours)**

The paper consists of two pairs of unseen texts.

Students write a comparative analysis of one pair of texts. (20 marks)

**25%**

##### **Paper 2: Essay (2 hours)**

In response to one of six questions students write an essay based on at least two of the literary texts studied in part 3. The questions are the same at SL but the assessment criteria are different. (25 marks)

**25%**

#### **Written tasks**

Students produce at least four written tasks based on material studied in the course.

Students submit two of these tasks for external assessment. (20 marks for each task)

One of the tasks submitted must be a critical response to one of the prescribed questions for the HL additional study.

Each task must be 800–1,000 words in length plus a rationale of 200–300 words.

**20%**

**Internal assessment**

This component is internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB at the end of the course.

**30%**

**Individual oral commentary**

Students comment on an extract from a literary text studied in part 4 of the course.

(30 marks)

Students are given two guiding questions.

**15%**

**Further oral activity**

Students complete at least two further oral activities, one based on part 1 and one based on part 2 of the course.

The mark of one further oral activity is submitted for final assessment. (30 marks)

**15%**

**Assessment component Weighting- Higher Level****External assessment (4 hours) 70%****Paper 1: Comparative textual analysis (2 hours)**

The paper consists of two pairs of unseen texts.

Students write a comparative analysis of one pair of texts. (20 marks)

**25%**

**Paper 2: Essay (2 hours)**

In response to one of six questions students write an essay based on at least two of the literary texts studied in part 3. The questions are the same at SL but the assessment criteria are different. (25 marks)

**25%**

**Written tasks**

Students produce at least four written tasks based on material studied in the course.

Students submit two of these tasks for external assessment. (20 marks for each task)

One of the tasks submitted must be a critical response to one of the prescribed questions for the HL additional study.

Each task must be 800–1,000 words in length plus a rationale of 200–300 words.

**20%**

**Internal assessment**

This component is internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB at the end of the course.

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**Individual oral commentary**

Students comment on an extract from a literary text studied in part 4 of the course.

(30 marks)

Students are given two guiding questions.

**15%**

**Further oral activity**

Students complete at least two further oral activities, one based on part 1 and one based on part 2 of the course.

The mark of one further oral activity is submitted for final assessment. (30 marks)

**15%**

**The following diagram illustrates the course Overview. The programme will be confirmed at a later date.**

\*For parts three and four choose a total of at least two genres, two periods and two places

<b>PART 1</b> Language in the cultural context SL: 40 HL: 60	<b>TOPIC EXAMPLES</b>			<b>TOPIC EXAMPLES</b>	<b>PART 2</b> Language and mass communication SL: 40 HL: 60
		<b>ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY</b>		
		Further oral activity	Further oral activity		
		Written tasks	Written tasks	[HL only]	
	[HL only]		<b>ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES</b>	[HL only]	
		Selection and use of appropriate presentation and language skills evaluation skills			
<b>PART 3</b> Literature – texts and contexts SL: 40 HL: 70	<b>TOPIC EXAMPLES*</b>		Knowledge and understanding	<b>TOPIC EXAMPLES*</b>	<b>PART 4</b> Literature – critical study SL: 30 HL: 50
	<b>PLA (or for SL freely chosen, but must be written in Language A):</b>		Application and analysis	<b>PLA:</b>	
	<b>PLT:</b>		Synthesis and evaluation	<b>PLA:</b>	
	<b>FREE: [HL only]</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY</b>	<b>PLA: (HL only)</b>	
		Paper 2	Individual oral		
		Written tasks	Written tasks		