

A LEVEL

Teacher Guide

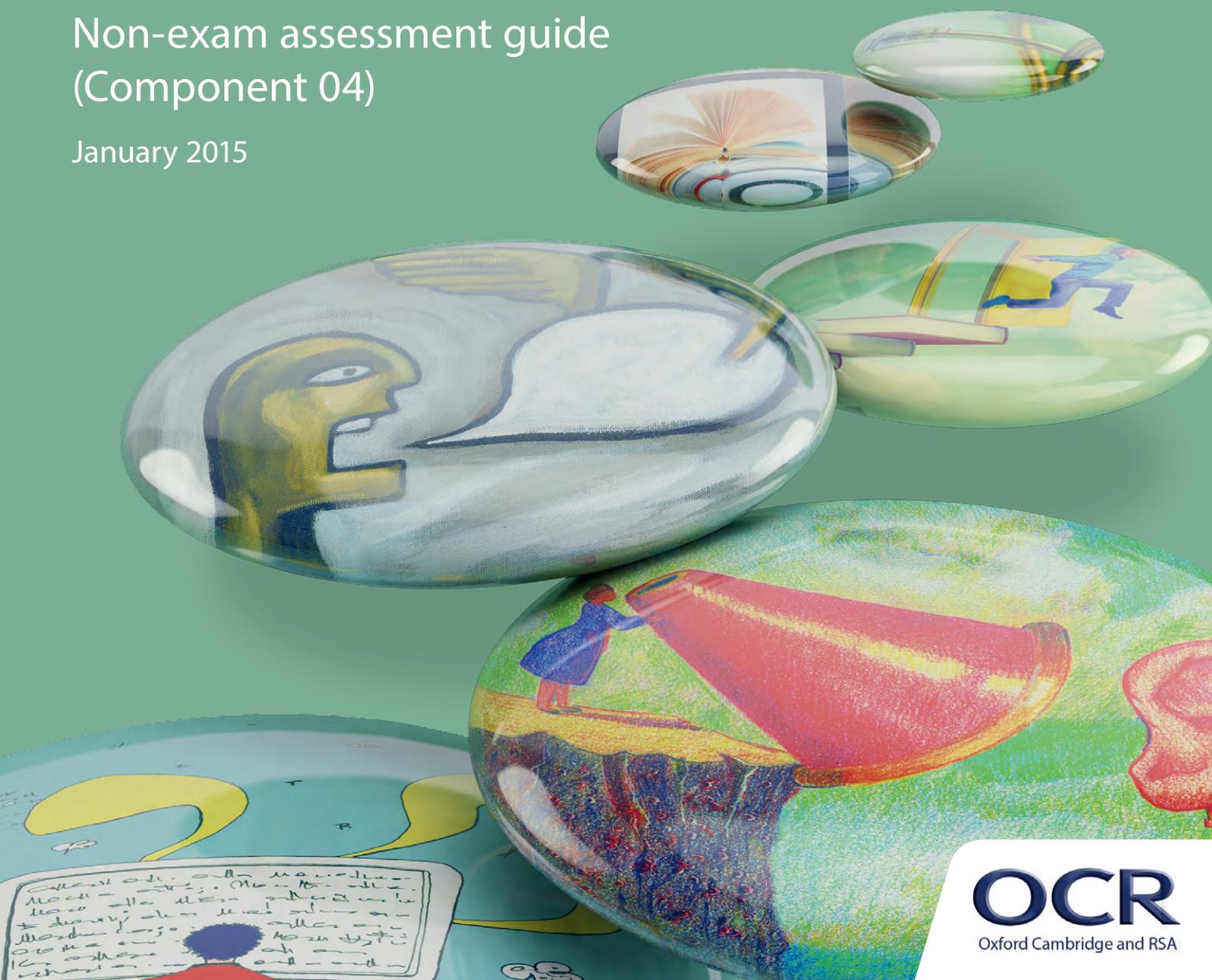
H474

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE (EMC)

Theme: Independent study:
analysing and producing texts

Non-exam assessment guide
(Component 04)

January 2015



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What is the Non-Examined Component?

The non-examined component is marked and moderated by the centre and standardised by the Awarding Body. It comprises two non exam assessment tasks:

- **Task 1: Analytical and comparative writing:** one essay of 1500 – 2000 words on a non-fiction text chosen from a list set by OCR and a second free choice text selected by the candidate. At least one text must have been published post-2000.
- **Task 2: Original non-fiction writing:** one piece of original writing in a non-fiction form of approximately 1000 – 1200 words with a 150 word introduction.

The non-examined component gives candidates an opportunity to work independently, pursuing a particular interest and developing an expertise that builds on an area of study from elsewhere in the course. Both tasks arise from the work of the course and are designed to be integrated with the examination components. For instance they build on Component 1, where the anthology of texts will have given candidates experience of a wide range of non-fiction and spoken texts that may suggest to them text choices for their second free choice text and will have given them understanding of the generic conventions and techniques of a range of non-fiction text types. The tasks also extend the approaches of Component 3, 'Reading as a writer, writing as a reader'. Having studied and produced a narrative text in an examined component, students will study and produce texts from a non-fiction genre in this component. Awareness of the techniques of their chosen genre for original writing in Task 2 is likely to come from at least one of the texts studied in Task 1.

There is an emphasis in the non-examined component on deep and extended work. The tasks allow candidates to apply synoptically their knowledge and skills, demonstrating the coherent learning that has taken place across the course as a whole.



Task 1

As a non-examined (coursework) component, students have the opportunity to follow their individual interests and to explore a wider range of texts. The skills of stylistic analysis developed over the course can now be applied with the benefit of time and research to produce a deeper exploration of linguistic and literary techniques and choices. This analysis involves consideration of connections and relationships between texts, which will influence an effective choice of linked texts.

- *Advice on selection of appropriate linked texts and tasks will widen the type and range of texts studied throughout the qualification*

The choice of the two texts is constrained by some absolute requirements, set out below. Advisory recommendations follow, to help teachers support their students in making sensible choices.

Absolute Requirements

1. Centres **must submit all proposed texts and tasks to OCR for approval, using the Text(s) and Task(s) Proposal Form available on OCR's website**
2. The non-examined element extends the range of genres studied over the A level Language and Literature specification, so one text studied must be non-fiction. This is achieved in the prescribed list for Text 1. **At least one** text must be chosen from the prescribed list of non-fiction.
3. Text 2, the free-choice text, can be in any genre, literary or non-literary, spoken or written, provided that it is 'substantial', defined here as published in book form. This means, for example, that ephemeral blogs may not be the focus for the comparative analysis, but any that are now published in book form can be chosen. One example is provided on the prescribed list: *I Am The Secret Footballer*. Similarly, an article by Caitlin Moran is not appropriate, but a published collection of her writings is: e.g. *Moranthology*, published in 2014.
4. Candidates must choose at least one text published in the 21st century. This can either be Text 1 from the prescribed list, or Text 2, the free choice text. For instance, if students choose George Orwell or Jenny Diski for Text 1, their free-choice text must be a text written in this century. If they choose a 21st century text from the prescribed list, their free choice text can be from **any** period, including 21st century.



Advisory Recommendations and Supportive Examples

- *How to pair the non-fiction text (list) with a free choice text. What meaningful links should condition this choice?*

A strong advisory recommendation concerns the need to find meaningful links between two texts for the analytical study. It is not enough simply to *like* the two texts; they must be comparable in some significant way that is amenable to relatively small-scale study. It may be, of course, that one text is chosen primarily on the basis of personal taste. Indeed, this is often a promising basis for engaged study. A football fan, for example, may be drawn immediately to *The Secret Footballer*; equally students might immediately be attracted by the graphic designs and witty approach to personal difficulties in Allie Bosch's *Hyperbole and a Half*. However, students would then need to find a second text pairing that gives them a strong focus for comparative analysis and so plenty to say.

A good starting point, when deciding on texts, is to consider the contextual factors used throughout the course – subject matter, genre, author, purpose, etc – and find two texts that share at least one point of similarity, then explore significant linguistic or literary differences in style, form or approach. Take *Stasiland* by Anna Funder, for example: it is investigative journalism about life in Germany divided by the Berlin Wall, based on recorded interviews with various people, and presented as personal viewpoint on the suffering caused by the Stasi secret police service. Funder's novel *All That I Am* is set in Hitler's Germany, but uses a fictional third person narrative to portray some similar themes. *The Firm: The Inside Story of the Stasi* by Gary Bruce is an historical account of the Stasi, also based on interviews, but without the personal voice. The science fantasy novel by China Mieville, *The City and a City* is set in a fictional world where twin cities are divided by an imaginary wall, policed by a secret force, the Breach. Any of these pairings might allow for fruitful comparative analyses, for instance looking at differences in the use of voice, or how interview material is used differently, or how a single aspect such as the representation of the agents of repression, is explored differently through fiction and non-fiction.

- *How to frame tasks that are exploratory, and do enable students to 'engage creatively and critically with a wide range of texts' and to 'undertake independent and sustained studies to develop their skills as producers and interpreters of language'. (Subject Criteria for A Level English Language and Literature)*



A second strong advisory recommendation concerns the framing of tasks to allow students to write successful comparative analyses of their chosen texts.

In order to achieve sufficient depth and detail of analysis in 1500 – 2000 words, the task should have an appropriately sharp focus. In Funder's *Stasiland*, for example, her written presentation of the recorded interviews is interesting: given the genre, she cannot give a full verbatim account, so must select and, at times, rephrase, presenting dialogue as if in a novel. In addition, she offers contextual details - descriptions of people and places – and her own personal interpretation of the scene. An analysis of dialogue in *Stasiland* could be compared with either verbatim accounts, or with fictional dialogue. Such a task would require close analysis at the levels of lexis and grammar, drawing on some of the linguistic concepts used for the study of spoken language in Paper 1, and also on narrative techniques re voice and representations of speech and thought studied for Paper 3. This could be a fruitful angle for an essay.

Study of rhetorical devices such as bathos and hyperbole could be applied to an analysis of humour in *The Lost Continent* by Bill Bryson, compared with that of a younger female commentator, Caitlin Moran in her collection of articles for the Guardian, *Moranthology*. Alternatively the voice of the persona of Bryson could be compared with that of another contemporary travel writer such as Sara Wheeler or Jonathan Raban in his highly acclaimed book *Coasting*. All of these might provide a sharp focus for comparison.

- *How to ensure / encourage teacher-supported autonomy in the process of producing Task 1*

A third strong advisory recommendation concerns the degree of independence in students' selection of texts and tasks for Task 1. It is not appropriate in the non-examined component for students to all select the same two texts and same tasks for their analytical comparison. Ideally students would have free choice of both texts. However, in recognition of the realities of different classrooms, there might be some perfectly appropriate 'half-way house' approaches, which provide the required elements of independent choice. For instance, there might be some element of shared experience (for instance a shared choice for Text 1), in which case the second text should be a genuine individual free choice text. Or, there might be a choice between a cluster of prescribed texts and a cluster of free choice texts recommended by the teacher. Or, perhaps teachers might open up the prescribed text list to students for free choice of a pairing from this list (with the caveat that one must be 21st century). The teacher's role as guide and mentor is important in introducing students to works they might not otherwise have considered.



It could be a preliminary exercise in the early stages of the course to categorise the contextual factors of each text. Although many of the texts cross genres (*Skating to Antarctica* is a travelogue / childhood memoir), a class group can compile a list of possible examples under the headings of non-fiction genres: travel writing; reportage; journalism; autobiography; biography; childhood memoir; confessional; humour; self-help; true crime; graphic non-fiction; etc. If this is done over the course, students will have had many recommendations and angles for comparing texts before they need to make a final choice of second text for comparison.

Whatever the balance of freedom of choice to guided selection, students should determine their own angle on the text, in consultation with their teacher, rather than writing to a single prescribed title handed down to them.

See a list of possible pairings of texts on [pages 11 – 14](#).



Task 2

Absolute requirements

Candidates must produce a 1,000 – 1,200 word piece of original writing in a non-fiction form. This extends the range of writing undertaken over the course, as Component 3 requires the production of a short narrative. It includes a short 150 word introduction, outlining some of the key elements the writer would like to draw attention to.

Advisory Recommendations and Supportive Examples

- *Approaches to creating 'original writing' for Task 2 – particularly exemplification of appropriate style models that encourage students towards producing 'real' texts for specific purposes and audiences*

One advisory recommendation concerns the need for effective writers to be readers. Each genre is defined by a set of characteristics. Even writers of innovative or genre-bending texts need to be aware of the prevailing forms and techniques, in order to adapt to them, while remaining broadly within that genre. Therefore it's advisable for students to read and study the genre they will undertake for their own writing.

Study for Paper 1 gives candidates experience of a wide range of possible text types. In the spirit of 'reading as writers, writing as readers' that underpins this specification, candidates can experiment with short writing exercises, as they explore the techniques of each genre. Activities encouraging constructive criticism and explanation of the writer's choices will develop understanding of their chosen genre and use of literary and linguistic techniques.

A second strong advisory recommendation concerns avoiding inappropriate genres. Some genres in the anthology will not be appropriate for the coursework task, because of length or lack of crafting. Any spontaneously produced spoken genre, such as interviews, or electronic texts, such as Twitter are not appropriate coursework writing tasks. There may, however, be other electronic genres that meet the requirements, for instance a highly planned, substantial website or blog. There are examples of such writing in the list for Task 1: *The Secret Footballer* and *Hyperbole and a Half* and in the anthology for Component 1.

A third strong advisory recommendation concerns the question of authenticity in the production of a non-fiction text. It is not the intention to limit students only to the kinds of contexts where they might



actually produce a text, such as a speech delivered in a debating society, or a talk that could be presented in a school, college or local community context. Other contexts are equally acceptable, so long as students are demonstrating their expertise and understanding of a non-fiction genre and techniques, rather than straying into territory that is fictional and imagined, and that they broadly follow the kinds of practices adopted by non-fiction writers. For instance they could write biography, in which they properly research an aspect of the life of an individual and consider how to shape this as biographical writing, drawing on their reading of inventive biography, as in *Stuart: A Life Backwards*. However, an imagined interview with a famous person, dead or alive, would not be acceptable as the writing of the responses of the interviewee would be entirely fictional.

Candidates may also choose to produce a persuasive text in a written or electronic genre: Julia Gilliard's 'Speech to Parliament' in the anthology, or satire such as the pieces by Jonathan Swift and Craig Brown. As well as the examples of journalism in the anthology, the list for Task 1 includes some appropriate contemporary collections of blogs and newspaper columns: *What the Chinese Don't Eat* and *The Secret Footballer*.

Candidates may prefer to script an informative text on a topic they are knowledgeable about, for a specific audience. In the anthology, there's an example of a TV script for CBeebies and an extract from Grayson Perry's Reith Lecture. Although there is no requirement for the text to reach its audience/be published, it's important to have a clear sense of the intended context. Feasible outlets for student writing would be an illustrated talk for children, or a presentation uploaded onto YouTube. The most successful tasks will be likely to allow candidates to access their own areas of expertise, rather than researching facts as if for an essay.

Life writing and autobiography provide rich potential for Task 2. Any piece submitted for the non-examined component would need to be carefully drafted and the introduction would need to show that the student had considered elements of genre and context in their writing. They need to consider the context in which their piece might be published. Weblogs are an obvious outlet for autobiographical writing, as *Hyperbole and a Half* demonstrates. Candidates might also script an autobiographical piece for a listening audience, such as a humorous podcast. It is worth reminding students that it is not necessary to invent an exciting life in order to write a very successful autobiographical piece.

Travel writing is another possibility, with the example of Bill Bryson's *The Lost Continent* to show that it can be entertaining to read about ordinary places. Each year, newspapers hold competitions for aspiring writers. Young writers often begin with travel blogs (www.unbravegirl.com and www.johnnyvagabond.com) which can be a stepping stone into print. We would strongly recommend



that students write about places they have been to themselves, to give themselves a rich enough set of ideas and experiences to draw on.

The 150 word introduction

The 150 word introduction serves to identify some key elements of their original writing that candidates would like to draw attention to, indicating how their writing reveals understanding of the chosen genre and its techniques. Clearly, it must be written succinctly, in order to achieve this within the word count. Candidates should write the introduction as if to a fellow writer (the actual audience being the teacher/moderator) who is familiar with the scope of non-fiction genres encountered over the course. They should be as specific as possible about the genre, indicating any cross-over aspects. For example:

My text is a piece of feature journalism, with autobiographical elements, aiming to create childhood feelings most readers can identify with, so using literary and rhetorical techniques.

This account of genre will inevitably include reference to subject matter and purposes (*create childhood feelings ... can identify with*). In terms of audience, students should be encouraged to recognise that many texts are of broad interest, rather than addressed to narrow, niche audiences (for instance young people, or particular social groups) and therefore it is only worth commenting on audience if there is something significant to say (for instance that it is addressed to a specialist readership of rock music lovers, or fans of a particular sport).

Having stated significant contextual factors succinctly (as in the example above), candidates can use the introduction to pinpoint the approach or techniques they used to achieve this. The reference to 'feature journalism ... literary and rhetorical techniques' can be exemplified with a few specific examples:

the use of a 'hook' at the beginning; bringing the article full circle with an echo from first to last sentence; use of very short sentences for impact; personalisation of the bully and victim; final irony; use of emotive lexis; triple structures, etc.

These kinds of brief comments allow the writer either to point out other techniques used, or go into more detailed explanation of the most important ones.



The Non-Examined Component for A Level English Language and Literature:

Ideas for Free Choice Texts as Pairings for Set Texts

The suggestions below give you some ideas for the rich variety of pairings that are possible for the non-fiction coursework comparative essay (Task 1).

At least one of the two texts must be a 21st century text. These are signalled with an asterisk (*) in the list below.

The free choice text can be a second non-fiction text, or a text from any other genre, provided that it has been published in book form at some point in its life. So, for instance, blogs that have been published as a book are allowable but blogs that are only online are not.

It is permissible for students to choose two texts from the set text list, so long as one is a 21st century text. Some pairings from the list would work very well, for instance, *Stuart: A Life Backwards* and *Down and Out in Paris and London*, or *Why Be Happy When You Could be Normal?* and *The Examined Life*, or *The Examined Life* and *Skating to Antarctica*, or *In Cold Blood* and *Stasiland*.

We have not grouped the suggestions that follow under headings like travel, memoir, reportage, journalism, biography and so on because fruitful connections might be made in lots of different ways. For instance, *Skating to Antarctica* might lend itself to being compared with other memoirs, travel writing, writing about Antarctica, poetry about the inner life or states of mind, non-fiction about psychological trauma, texts that cross genres in interesting ways, texts about childhood in a range of genres, texts that use snow and whiteness as a central image and so on.

The lists on the next page are very much a starting point for students and teachers to find interesting comparisons between texts.



Down and Out in Paris and London – George Orwell

The River Thames* – Peter Ackroyd

An Idiot Abroad: The Travel Diaries of Karl Pilkington* – Karl Pilkington

Walking Home* – Simon Armitage

Pies and Prejudice* – Stuart Maconie

Chavs: The Demonisation of the Working Class* – Owen Jones

Stasiland – Anna Funder *

The City in a City* – China Mieville

An Evil Cradling – Brian Keenan & John McCarthy

All that I am – Anna Funder

Skating to Antarctica – Jenny Diski

The Music Room * – William Fiennes

Don't Lets Go to the Dogs Tonight * – Alexandra Fuller

The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid* – Bill Bryson

Dotter of her Father's Eyes* – Mary Talbot & Bryan Talbot

The Lost Continent – Bill Bryson

The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid* – Bill Bryson

How I Escaped my Certain Fate* – Stewart Lee

Moranthology*– Caitlin Moran

Sound of Laughter* – Peter Kay

The Office TV scripts* – Ricky Gervais & Stephen Merchant

My Booky Wook* – Russell Brand

In Cold Blood – Truman Capote

A Place of Execution* – Val McDermid

A Life Inside: A Prisoner's Notebook* – Irwin James

Hey Nostradamus* – Douglas Coupland

Injustice – Life and Death in the Courtrooms of America* – Clive Stafford Smith

Zeitoun* – Dave Eggers

Journalism* – Joe Sacco

Columbine * – Dave Cullen

The Riots* – Gillian Slovo

We Need to Talk about Kevin* – Lionel Shriver

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Hyperbole and a Half – Allie Brosh*

Look, Claire! Look! * – Claire Pollard (poetry)

Sylvia Plath (poetry)

The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole Aged 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ – Sue Townsend

Maus – Art Spiegelmann

Dotter of her Father's Eyes* – Mary Talbot

The Examined Life* – Stephen Grosz

How to Be a Woman – Caitlin Moran

The Lady in the Van – Alan Bennett

Poppy Shakespeare – Clare Allan

The Man who thought his Wife was a Hat /Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain – Oliver Sacks

Fight Club – Chuck Palaniak

Keeper – Andrea Gillies

Stoner – John Williams

Stuart A Life Backwards* – Alexander Masters

Flaubert's Parrot – Julian Barnes

What is the What?* – Dave Eggar

Philomena: The True Story of a Mother* – Martin Sixsmith

Wolf Hall* – Hilary Mantel

The Emigrants – W.G. Sebald

A Long Walk to Freedom - Nelson Mandela

Dreams from my Father – Barack Obama

I am Malala* – Malala

Why Be Happy When You Could be Normal* – Jeannette Winterson

Father and Son – Edmund Gosse

Oranges are Not the Only Fruit – Jeanette Winterson

Billy* – Pamela Stevenson

Angela's Ashes – Frank McCourt

Running with Scissors* – Augusten Burroughs

I know why the Caged Bird Sings – Maya Angelou

Moab is my Washpot – Stephen Fry

Maggie and Me* – Damian Barr



Twelve Years a Slave

Bloodlines* – Fred D’Aguiar (poetry)

Feeding the Ghosts* – Fred D’Aguiar

A Mercy* – Toni Morrison

Property* – Valerie Martin

47* – Walter Mosley (*only Kindle or 2ndhand @ £17*)

What the Chinese Don’t Eat * – Xinran

Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China – Jung Chang

The Joy Luck Club – Amy Tan

Falling Leaves: The True Story of an Unwanted Chinese Daughter – Adeline Yen Mah

My Family and Other Disasters* – Lucy Mangan

The Guardian Columns 1998 - 2000 – Julie Birchill

The Hell of it All * – Charlie Brooker

Moranthology – Caitlin Moran

I am the Secret Footballer* – Anon

The Damned United* – David Peace

Fever Pitch – Nick Hornby

Futebol: The Brazilian Way of Life* – Alex Bellos

White City Blue – Tim Lott

My Autobiography* – Alex Ferguson

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