

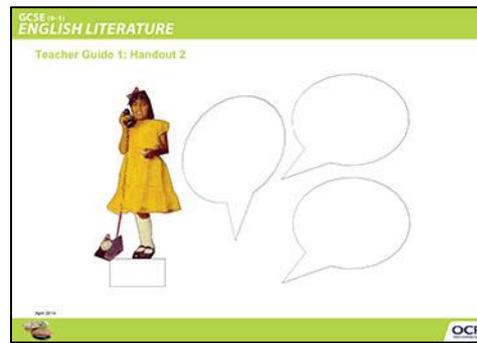
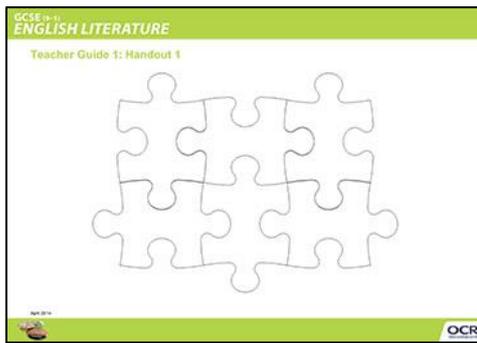
GCSE (9–1) ENGLISH LITERATURE

Teacher Guide 1

Exploring context – modern texts

Instructions and answers for teachers

These instructions should accompany the OCR resources 'Teacher Guide 1: Handout 1' and 'Teacher Guide 1: Handout 2', which support OCR GCSE (9–1) English Literature.



Comprehension skills: learners are able to articulate their understanding of aspects of plot, characterisation, events and settings, and to distinguish between literal and implied meaning.

Learners:

- reflect critically and evaluatively on their reading and, if relevant, are able to respond to social and/or cultural contextual factors
- pay attention to the details of a text – understanding the significance of a word, phrase or sentence in context.

Critical reading skills: learners reflect on the contexts in which texts are set, for example, those relating to social and cultural situations or experiences.

Learners:

- reflect critically and evaluatively on a text, using an understanding of context to inform reading.

Associated materials:

'Teacher Guide 1: Handout 1' and 'Teacher Guide 1: Handout 2' activity sheets.



GCSE (9–1) ENGLISH LITERATURE

Lead-in Activity:

Learners watch a number of the *New York Times*' '14 Actors Acting' videos on YouTube (the music should be turned off to avoid any hint of the context). Learners create their own contexts for the actors.

Anthony Mackie:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0Pyv755CSM&list=PLD5262066345158FF>

Lesley Manville

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQLvnreceil&index=5&list=PLD5262066345158FF>

Javier Bardem

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9i8qy4gDsd0&index=9&list=PLD5262066345158FF>

Learners see how context *generates* character behaviour, appearance etc.

NB: Context can be revealed through unpicking the writer's use of language: how words, phrases or sentences help build a theme, character or setting; and also the social, cultural or literary context a word or phrase is freighted with.



GCSE (9-1) ENGLISH LITERATURE

How context can inform understanding of a character



Activity:

Learners could consider the following line from *Anita and Me*: 'Did you do anything dangerous?'

Elicit that disembodied from the text, this sentence could mean *anything*. The person saying it could be alarmed, amused, distraught, gleeful...

Ask learners to locate the line in the text (p70, Harper Perennial edition, 2004). It is when Meena asks her father to tell her about the 'battles' he fought in India before coming to Britain.

Ask learners what the line 'Did you do anything dangerous?' reveals about Meena's character.

Learners might say: It shows she is inquisitive, mischievous, gleefully morbid...

Explain that by considering the social and historical contexts that the line is rooted in learners can demonstrate a more developed, richer understanding of her character.



GCSE (9–1) ENGLISH LITERATURE

Jigsaw exercise

1. Hand out a jigsaw puzzle template (Teacher Guide 1: Handout 1) on tracing paper and ask learners to cut out pieces.
2. Hand out a stand-up version of Meena and speech bubbles (Teacher Guide 1: Handout 2). Learners can cut out the pieces.
3. Learners find pictures that reference the different social and historical contexts within the novel. Some examples of social, cultural and historical contexts could be parent-child relationships (Mum, Dad, Nanima), Meena's extended family (aunties, uncles), Indian history (the troubles in India that her father and extended family were caught up in, for instance), childhood friendships (with Anita etc.).

Parent-child relationship



Extended Indian family



Indian history



Childhood friendships



4. Lay the tracing paper template over the pictures and cut around them.

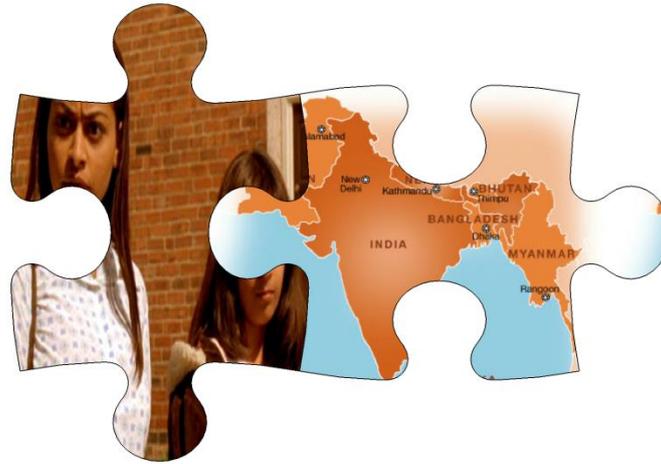


5. Learners choose a line from the text that Meena has said. For instance: 'Did you do anything dangerous?'
6. Learners discuss which contexts this line references.
7. Learners then fit these jigsaw pieces/contexts together. For instance: Meena saying 'Did you do anything dangerous?' relates to:
 - historical context: the troubles in India during partition, a context from which Meena's mother, father and extended family of aunties and uncles have emerged
 - social context: Meena's relationship with her mother and father.



GCSE (9-1) ENGLISH LITERATURE

Social context (immediate family) Historical/cultural context (Indian heritage)



- Learners place cut-out of Meena on top of whichever jigsaw pieces/contexts that the line references and write the line in the speech bubble that has emerged out of these different contexts.



Elicit from learners that the text must always be at the heart of what they say. They must decide what they want the line to help illustrate:

A theme?

April 2015



GCSE (9-1) ENGLISH LITERATURE

A character?

Then use the different contexts to keep bringing learners back to the text. The model helps illustrate this because the speech bubble is at the summit, growing out of the contexts and it is this line that learners should keep in focus.

Learners use the model they have created to support their understanding and write sample sentences:

- historical context (Indian history): for example, 'The question is typical of Meena's morbid fascination with her father's 'dangerous' adventures in India during partition.'
- social context (family): 'Meena would never dare to ask her mother such a brazen question. It illustrates not only her inquisitive and mischievous nature, but the close relationship she has with her father.'

Next, ask learners if they can develop their answers by finding other words, phrases or sentences that relate to the contexts they have identified.

Learners continue with jigsaw exercise

1. Learners find other quotations from the text that relate to the contexts they have identified.
2. Learners write these quotations on the tracing paper and lay them over the images
3. Learners place Meena and her speech bubble on the relevant jigsaw pieces again.

Learners then develop their answers using the new model they've made.



GCSE (9–1) ENGLISH LITERATURE

For example:

Indian history	Meena has nightmares of ‘blood red trains screaming through empty stations’ after overhearing some of the gruesome stories from the times of partition in one of her parents’ ghazals. (p75)
Immediate family	Her mother is less forthcoming: ‘...when I confronted mama about her courtship adventures her face closed up like a fan.’ (p32)

Using these context-related quotations that they have written on the tracing paper tell learners to develop their analysis of the line, ‘Did you do anything dangerous?’ Remind students to keep Meena’s character at the centre of what they write.

Below are examples of how their answers could be developed.

When Meena asks her father ‘Did you do anything dangerous?’, the question is typical of Meena’s morbid fascination and gleeful curiosity about her father’s adventures in India. Overhearing snippets of gruesome tales from her Uncles’ and Aunties’ experiences in India during partition at a ghazal lead to Meena having nightmares about ‘blood red trains screaming through empty stations’. The fact she asks her father for more stories from that time shows that she is fearless.

Meena would never dare ask her mother such a brazen question. When she asks her mother about her ‘courtship adventures’, her mother’s ‘face closed up like a fan.’ Perhaps, then, Meena’s relationship is closer to a friendship with her father at times.

Other words/phrases/sentences students might mine for contexts are suggested below.



GCSE (9–1) ENGLISH LITERATURE

Line	Contexts
Papa laughed, ‘Leave her! It was very groovy Meena! That was what you call a good jam-in, hey Tendon saab?’ (p115)	Social context: parent-child relationship Cultural context: relationship with extended family Cultural context: mix of British (groovy, jam-in) and Indian culture (Tendon saab)
‘No papa! I swear! I got the tin! I hid it and I was going to take it back tomorrow! Honest!’	Social context: parent-child relationship, childhood friendships (with Anita, Pinky and Baby)
Eleven-plus	Historical context: a grammar school entrance exam Social context: parent-child relationship, represents the aspirations Meena’s parents have for her Social context: it distinguishes Meena from her friends, she can escape Tollington, Anita cannot



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