A LEVEL

ENGLISH LITERATURE

H472
For first teaching in 2015

Literature post-1900:
Guide to Task Setting

Version 2

www.ocr.org.uk/english
Task 1: Close Reading

This task requires close analytical focus on the extract, passage or poem, balanced with awareness of how the extract, passage or poem relates to the text as a whole.

Therefore tasks should:

- make explicit the requirement to comment closely on the writing of the extract, passage or poem e.g. Analyse in detail/Comment closely etc.
- ask learners to relate the extract, passage or poem in some way to the text from which it is taken, e.g. considering how far it reflects the style and concerns...

**Examples**

Comment closely on Heaney’s presentation of the body and the viewer’s response in ‘Punishment,’ considering how it reflects the style and concerns of Heaney’s ‘bog poems’ in *North*.

Text: Passage from *The Namesake* (Jhumpa Lahiri): from p.122 ‘The night is windy…’ to p.124 ‘…You remind me of everything that followed.’

Write a detailed commentary of Lahiri’s presentation of this conversation between Gogol and his father, discussing the excerpt’s significance in *The Namesake*’s concern with names and naming.

Text: Passage from *Jerusalem* (Jez Butterworth): from p.32, from Pea: ‘Why did he stop?’ to Johnny: ‘[…] those houses’ll need painting.’

Discuss in detail ways in which Butterworth presents Johnny in this extract, considering how it contributes to his characterisation in *Jerusalem* as a whole.

Task 1: Re-creative writing

This task requires a recreated piece, directly related to the original text, which reflects the style and concerns of that text. It also requires a commentary where learners discuss what they have attempted and how their piece of writing demonstrates aspects of the original text.

Therefore tasks should ask for:

- a recreative piece of writing, reflecting aspects of the style and concerns of the original text
- a commentary which evaluates ways in which the recreated piece of writing imitates features of the original text.

**Examples**

Text: *The World’s Wife* (Carol Ann Duffy)

Choose another female character similar to those created by Duffy and write a poem exploring them and their experience using language and poetic methods you have observed in *The World’s Wife*. Add a commentary which explains how your choices have been influenced by Duffy’s poems and in what ways you have attempted to mirror her style and concerns.

Text: *Reading in the Dark* (Seamus Deane)

Write another narrative section to be placed at a particular point in the novel, making sure to consider the age of the narrator at the point you have chosen. Add a commentary which evaluates ways in which you have imitated Deane’s characteristic style and concerns.

Text: *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Tennessee Williams)

Write a soliloquy for Mitch to be performed at the end of Scene 9. Add a commentary which discusses ways you have imitated Williams’ characterisation of Mitch, considering this particular point in the development of the play.
**Task 2: Comparative Essay**

This task requires learners to make connections between the writing and concerns of two texts. The task must have a literary focus.

Therefore tasks should:

- explicitly require comparison or contrast between the texts
- focus the comparison or contrast on a literary aspect of the texts (e.g. the presentation of a key theme).

**Examples**

Texts: *Selected Poems* (Wilfred Owen) and *Birdsong* (Sebastian Faulks)

Compare some of the ways in which Owen and Faulks present the horrors of warfare and soldiers’ experience.

Texts: *Resistance* (Owen Sheers) and *Dunsinane* (David Greig)

Compare ways in which Sheers and Greig explore the complexities of invasion and resistance in *Resistance* and *Dunsinane*.

Texts: *Becoming Strangers* (Louise Dean) and *Selected Poems* (Elizabeth Jennings)

By comparing Dean’s and Jennings’ presentation of illness in *Becoming Strangers* and *Selected Poems*, say how far they can be said to offer hope.

Further examples can be found in the Non Exam Assessment Guide, published April 2015.
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