



Katedraliskolan Skara IB Diploma Programme



English A: Literature SL/HL

General course description

Students read, analyse, and research diverse and significant literary texts, from Shakespeare to contemporary postcolonial works, in the context of their cultural and historical settings. Students practice applying basic literary terms, concepts, and critical strategies, while learning to appreciate the conventions of a variety of genres, with primary focus on the novel. A wide range of texts, including a substantial number of world literature texts, are taught.

All students, SL and HL, study the key genres across a wide range of historical periods. SL students focus on 10 literary works on the course, while HL students study 13 literary works. In order to enhance the ability of students to truly appreciate and understand literature, to comprehend its multiple levels of reality and unreality, to be able to analyse and discuss literature in a proper critical vocabulary, and to really derive enjoyment from it, the course concentrates upon deepening the students' knowledge of stylistic techniques and artistic forms, which writers employ in their work, and of the intellectual strategies which literary critics use to interpret and discuss literary works.

Literary works are read with care and thoughtfulness; their ideas discussed with others in class, in order to understand these works on the multiple levels of imagery and meaning they body forth. Students will learn that one does not think well in a vacuum, that ideas benefit immeasurably through exchange with others in a series of critical dialogues. English Literature is therefore a course which requires curiosity, but also demands intellectual rigor and a good knowledge of the English language, as it is not a language acquisition course as such. On the contrary, the course uses the English language as a tool to help students grasp the basic knowledge needed in order to be able to enter the challenging and rewarding field of academic studies which is literature. The students need to be open-minded, risk-taking and reflecting communicators to be able to develop as students while learning the essential analytical skills, therefore TOK-related topics and the IB Learner Profile come naturally into the every-day-work of discussions in the classroom.

Students can opt to study English at either Higher or Standard Level. The course is examined through oral assessments, submitted coursework, and a final examination period.



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Methods and goals

Initially students are introduced to literary concepts such as plot development and chronology, characterization, narrative viewpoint, imagery and other stylistic/literary devices. The first novel taught, *Whale Rider*, set in New Zealand, is also analysed in comparison to the film adaptation of the work, in order to discuss aspects of plausibility in transferring a story/plot from a written media into a visual one, and effect on readers/audience created by changing the narrative perspective of the plot.

Shakespeare's play *King Lear*, a selection of 19th century Romantic poetry, emphasizing John Keats' poems, as well as letters written by the poet, and Virginia Woolf's early 20th century feminist essay *A Room of One's Own*, are taught with focus on understanding them as products of specific historical, cultural and artistic currents, and in the case of the play students also evaluate it as performance text meant for stage production.

The course offers a variety of genres, primarily focusing on the novel, but students also study poems, plays and essays, encompassing issues like colonialism, post-colonialism, identity, home, belonging, sexuality, upbringing and political power; they study writing which celebrates new freedoms and new ways of assessing humanity, self, and the world through works by classic authors such as Shakespeare, Blake, Wordsworth, Shelley, Lord Byron, Keats, Virginia Woolf, Scott F Fitzgerald and Kazuo Ishiguro, as well as postcolonial writers and contemporary writers, such as Chinua Achebe, Mark Behr, Witi Ihimaera, and Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie.

The area of literature in translation is addressed through the study of works originally written in Afrikaans, Spanish and French (Creole), focusing on the cultural contexts of the works, but also on the challenge involved in translating literature, and thereby a whole mind-set of a people/culture, into another language and cultural context. Does the original work remain, or does the translator create something new, something else, which boils down to questions such as what is the role of the translator?

Orally, in class, we work with debates, presentations, discussions, speeches, as well as letting students dramatize selected scenes from works studied, in order to reach a more profound understanding of tone and mood, as well as characterisation, plot development, themes etc.

In English A Literature there are plenty of opportunities to work with the values of the IB learner profile, since characterisation and themes related to the literary works offer numerous opportunities to discuss issues related to the IB core. TOK too comes naturally into the course, as discussions deal with topics such as; good/bad literature, whether the writer is important, or if the text is the primary source to be dealt with regardless of the writer's intention, the effect of diction and thereby the power of language, etc. The goal of the course is to create open-minded, critical thinkers, who are willing to participate in discussions on a variety of topics, and who are knowledgeable and well educated in the field of literature.



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Assessment SL

External assessment:

Paper 1:

Guided literary analysis

Paper 2:

Academic Essay

Written assignment:

A reflective statement and a literary essay on one work in translation

Internal assessment:

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

Individual oral commentary:

Students present a formal oral commentary and answer subsequent questions on an extract from a literary work.

Individual oral presentation:

The presentation is based on works studied in class.



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Assessment HL

External assessment:

Paper 1:

Literary commentary

Paper 2:

Academic Essay

Written assignment:

A reflective statement and a literary essay on one work in translation

Internal Assessment:

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

Individual oral commentary and discussion:

Formal oral commentary on poetry followed by a discussion based on a literary work of another genre

Individual oral presentation:

The presentation is based on works studied in class



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Course material

Croft, Steven, and Cross, Helen. *Literature, Criticism and Style* (Oxford)

David, James, and Nic, Amy. *English Literature for the IB Diploma* (Cambridge)

Tyson, Hannah, and Beverley, Mark. *English A: Literature – Course Companion* (Oxford)

Novels:

Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart* (Nigeria)

Behr, Mark. *The Smell of Apples* (South Africa)

Condé, Maryse. *Crossing the Mangrove* (from French – Guadelope)

Fitzgerald, Scott F. *The Great Gatsby* (the US)

Ihimaera, Witi. *Whale Rider* (NZ)

Ishiguro, Kazuo. *The Remains of the Day* (England)

Ngozie Adichie, Chimamanda. *Purple Hibiscus* (the US/Nigeria)

Matthee, Dalene. *Fie!a's Child* (from Afrikaans – South Africa)

Plays:

Lorca, Federico Garcia. *Blood Wedding* (from Spanish – Spain)

Shakespeare, William. *King Lear* (England)

Essay:

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own* (England)

Poetry:

Keats, John. *Selected Poems and Letters* (England)

Selected Romantic Poetry (e.g. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Blake - England)



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Teacher and email

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Further information

[Link to Diploma Programme Curriculum briefs](#)