

Assessment components and objectives

This section is designed to help you understand how work will be assessed. There are three assessment objectives:

Know, understand and interpret

This assessment objective will determine the extent to which you are aware of the ideas and attitudes portrayed in the literary works you have studied, how far you can explain their meaning and how satisfactorily you can use such knowledge and understanding to come to relevant conclusions. This objective will be assessed in all the components by criterion A.

Analyse and evaluate

This objective will determine the extent to which you can break down the works you are exploring into their component parts to discover how meanings and implications are constructed. It also requires you to consider whether these component parts are fit for purpose and how they work to achieve a particular aim. This objective will be assessed in all the components by criterion B. In paper 2, this objective will also assess how far you have identified and evaluated the relationships and/or similarities and differences between different texts.

Communicate

The assessment objective which addresses communication exists in all the components in the criteria related to focus and organisation (criterion C) on the one hand, and use of language on the other (criterion D).

Although it is important to be acquainted with these objectives, they are not meant to be used as a way to structure your work. They are presented as separate categories but should not be regarded as isolated entities and should be seen as working jointly to formulate one cohesive and thorough response.

Paper 1

Paper 1 is an externally-assessed component which gives you the chance to apply the skills acquired and developed throughout the course to an unseen text. It is a paper that requires you to have consolidated your interpretation, analysis and evaluation skills and to transfer those skills to an unseen text.

The exam paper will consist of two extracts or texts from different literary forms, each accompanied by a guiding question. You will have to choose one of them and develop a response that demonstrates an awareness of how meaning is created. The guiding question will suggest a point of entry into the extracts or texts that allows you to focus on a stylistic or technical element. You are free to pursue a different line of inquiry. You should bear in mind that what is expected in this component is not an exhaustive discussion of all the aspects of the extracts or texts, but rather a reading of it that focuses on one of its prominent stylistic features.

Know, understand and interpret

Relevant assessment objectives

- Know, understand and interpret elements of literary, stylistic, rhetorical, visual and/or performance craft.
- Know, understand and interpret features of particular text types and literary forms.

You will be expected to show an understanding of the extracts or texts, identifying its literary, rhetorical and stylistic features, and highlight any patterns that can be seen in their use.

The guiding question is designed to give you a point of entry into the text. It is not compulsory to answer it directly, but you may find it useful in structuring your response. For example, if the extract or text is a poem and the question asks how imagery evokes the impact of love in a person's life, you should analyse the poem in order to identify the imagery and any patterns in its use and interpret how these are used to communicate a particular view of love. You could ask which view of love and its effect on people does the poem offer?

Analyse and evaluate

Relevant assessment objectives

- Analyse and evaluate ways in which the use of language creates meaning.
- Analyse and evaluate uses and effects of literary, stylistic, rhetorical, visual or theatrical techniques.
- Analyse and evaluate ways in which extracts or texts may offer perspectives on human concerns.

You will be expected to consider how the author of the unseen extracts or texts has used language to create meaning. Using the example of a poem and a question concerning how imagery evokes the impact of love in a person's life, a good analysis and evaluation would explore how its imagery creates a particular view of love. There might also be a discussion about how the particular conventions of the literary form have been used to highlight such a view. The structural aspects of the poem could be explored in relation to how effectively they help convey ideas and attitudes about love. In all these cases there should be an assessment of the ways in which style and form relate to meaning.

Communicate

Relevant assessment objectives

- Communicate ideas in clear, logical and persuasive ways.

- Communicate in a range of styles and registers and for a variety of purposes and situations.

Criterion C in paper 1 assesses how well-organized, coherent and focused the presentation of ideas is in your answer. The guiding question that accompanies the extracts or texts is not compulsory but it can be a good point of entry into the passage and it could provide you with a focus to make sure your analysis is coherent. In the example provided above, the examiner creating the paper considered that the focus on imagery would be an interesting one to develop in the case of this particular poem. Centring your analysis on this aspect will help you to make sure that your ideas are coherently developed. If you decide not to answer the guiding question make sure you choose an alternative point of entry so that your analysis develops a coherent and focused reading of the extracts or texts. This criterion interacts closely with criterion A in the sense that, to make your answer coherent, you will be expected to integrate evidence from the text to support your arguments in your answer. In this case, you would be expected to quote examples of imagery from the poem. How you integrate those quotations into your analysis and how you use them to support the points you are making will largely determine how effective the organization of your analysis is.

Criterion D assesses the use of language in your answer. This refers to the correctness, precision and appropriateness of your use of words and sentence structure. This is a guided analysis and the register should be appropriately formal and academic. This means there should not be informal expressions in your answer. You should avoid, for example, short forms. It might also help to become familiar with specific terms to describe different literary features. For this particular question, being able to refer to different types of imagery such as visual, auditory and figurative, and to specific literary figures like metaphor, simile and synecdoche may also be helpful.

Advice on preparation

Paper 1 gives you the opportunity to deal with the technical and formal aspects of literary texts. As you will have the extracts and texts in front of you, it allows you to provide close evidence from them to support the arguments you want to construct about it.

To get ready for paper 1, you must develop your reading and writing skills. The best preparation is to read as wide as possible a variety of texts and forms in your SSST language. It is also important to have a firm understanding of literary terminology, but remember that simply recognising or listing literary features is unlikely to contribute to a carefully-reasoned argument about the extracts or texts you choose to write about.

In addition to reading and annotating texts, you should practise writing about them. It will be helpful to investigate how this type of analysis is written and structured in your language of study. Please remember, you are expected to produce a reasoned argument on the use and importance of a significant stylistic feature central to the given passage.

When dealing with the extracts or texts in paper 1 you must be able to explain the effect of the use of the significant stylistic feature and support this with careful analysis. It is not enough just to describe the feature and give examples: it is also necessary to write about how they are used to develop the meaning of the text. To give an example, writing in the assessment “there is a lot of imagery here” is not productive. Writing something like “imagery is used extensively in the text and is central to the creation of the fearful, tense atmosphere that characterizes the piece”, and then going on to explore specific instances of imagery and how they convey fear and tension, would be more profitable.

Activities to help you prepare for paper 1

- When studying a literary text, you should keep a note of particular extracts that contain interesting literary features and use your learner portfolio to practice a close analysis of them. When you do this, ensure you have examples from different literary forms.
- Look at the marking criteria of paper 1 and cut up the separate bands of each criterion. See if you can put them back together in the correct order for each criterion, from the lowest mark to the highest mark.

- Ask your SSST supervisor to provide you with examples of student work in the teacher support material (TSM) and mark these with the assessment criteria. Afterwards, compare your mark with the one awarded by the examiner. What could this student have done to make their analysis better? What did they do well? How does this affect what you will do in your analyses? Write your reflection in your learner portfolio.
- Use the assessment criteria to mark what you have written in your practice analysis. Which were the areas where you did well and which areas could you improve? Discuss with your supervisor or tutor what you can do to improve these areas.

Paper 2

Paper 2 is an externally-assessed component requiring an essay in response to a given question concerning a comparative critical discussion of two works studied during your course.

There will be four questions presented in the paper 2 exam, one of which should be chosen for your essay.

You must refer to two works you have studied and focus closely on the topic in the question. You should compare and contrast the two works in the light of the question, analysing their formal and stylistic features as well as the way these features contribute to the creation of meaning in the texts. You will need to think carefully about which of the works you have studied can be best explored in relation to the question and which of the questions will enable you to best demonstrate your understanding of the works you have studied.

Know, understand and interpret

Relevant assessment objectives

- Know, understand and interpret a range of texts, works and/or performances, and their meanings and implications.
- Know, understand and interpret contexts in which texts are written and/or received.
- Know, understand and interpret elements of literary, stylistic, rhetorical, visual and/or performance craft.
- Know, understand and interpret features of particular text types and literary forms.

You will be expected to show knowledge and understanding of the meanings evident in two works you are discussing; focusing on how these are conveyed and their relevance to the chosen question. Knowledge of the contexts of the works in relation to the question selected is also important. How the craft of the writer, in terms of their use of literary, stylistic, performance and rhetorical devices, can be understood and might be interpreted also needs exploration, as do the features of the selected works.

For example, if you choose a question such as “there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so”. To what extent do two of the works you have studied present concepts of good and bad as a matter of perception? When answering, you should ensure you show an understanding of the two works through the lens of the concept of good and bad. You should identify where there are different perceptions of good and bad and go on to develop an interpretation of the works in relation to the question.

Parallels should be drawn between the two works to show similarities and differences in the way the topic is presented and addressed. How effectively you have compared and contrasted both works in relation to the question would be considered in this assessment objective.

Analyse and evaluate

Relevant assessment objectives

- Analyse and evaluate uses and effects of literary, stylistic, rhetorical, visual or theatrical techniques.
- Analyse and evaluate relationships among different texts.
- Analyse and evaluate ways in which texts may offer perspectives on human concerns.

In the case of the question referred to in the previous section, you would analyse primarily how literary devices in the works have been used to assert or question an absolute view of good and bad. In this connection, it will be necessary to use relevant evidence from the works to support your claims. You do not need to memorize quotes, but ensure that your arguments are justified with references to aspects of the

works themselves. You would also be expected to evaluate the way different techniques have been used to fulfill different aims in the works and their relative effectiveness.

Parallels should be drawn for this assessment objective between the two works to show similarities and differences in the way meaning has been constructed. How effectively you have compared and contrasted both works in relation to their literary features and the way these have constructed meaning would be considered in this assessment objective.

Communicate

Relevant assessment objectives

- Communicate ideas in clear, logical and persuasive ways.
- Communicate in a range of styles and registers and for a variety of purposes and situations.

Criterion C in paper 2 requires that your answer should be well focused. The focus that you are expected to apply in the case of paper 2 is the one indicated by the question. In an example question such as “there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so”, you are being asked whether the notions of good and bad are relative and therefore vary from person to person. You should make sure that everything in your essay is relevant to this focus. Another element to remember for this criterion is the balance between the two works under discussion and you should make sure that you have not discussed one at greater length than the other.

Criterion D does not differ much from the same criterion in paper 1. Both a guided analysis and a comparative essay are academic pieces of writing and therefore need to be formal and impersonal. In terms of language, it is useful to be familiar with a range of vocabulary to refer to and describe specific elements of texts like tone, perspective and characterization. Linking expressions and structures that relate to comparison and contrast could also help to organize your essay more effectively.

Advice on preparation

This exam is designed to test your knowledge and understanding of any two of the works studied and the way style and content interact. Your preparations should mean you come into the examination knowing and understanding at least three of the works studied, even though you will only write about two of them.

To help prepare for criteria A and B, you will need to take notes on stylistic and literary elements and themes that are present. You should consider how the writer crafts their writing and what the effects of this are upon the work and the reader.

As you read the works on your booklist throughout the course, you should get a sense of which ones complement each other. The richer and more varied the connections between two works, the more suitable they will be for paper 2. It is recommended that during your course, in consultation with your SSST tutor, you should set aside three works to study for paper 2. This will make revision for this component more manageable and make it easier to choose a question in the exam.

Paper 2 is a literary essay so you must ensure that you understand and have skills in essay writing. It is important to note that how an essay is structured and organized in one language may be different in another. Criterion C looks at the focus and organization of your comparative essay. As mentioned in the discussion of the assessment objectives, in this component it is not only organization and coherence that matters, but also that your essay should have a clear focus on the question. Therefore, you have to know how to organize and structure an essay. Criterion D assesses how appropriately you use language to make an argument. In your learner portfolio you should practise using a register and language that is appropriate for a comparative literary essay. This means using language that is precise, clear and accurate and utilizes literary terms when referring to the works.

You are not just being assessed on how to write an essay: you must be able to communicate understanding and give a comparative critical response to two works read in your study in response to one of four questions. This does not mean you have to memorize quotes, but you do have to know details about the works. For example, if you are writing about a novel, you should be able to discuss the plot, narrative style,

point of view and characters. If you are writing about a poem, you should show an understanding of the structure, form, and content.

Activities to help you prepare for paper 2

This will help you to understand how your work will be assessed:

- Look at the marking criteria of paper 2 and cut up the separate bands of each criterion. See if you can put them back together in the correct order for each criterion, from the lowest mark to the highest mark.
- Think of an ideal essay structure for paper 2. Write a plan for it on a piece of paper, then find another student who is also doing a language A subject to discuss it and see if they agree. Ask your tutor or supervisor what they think.
- Write a checklist for a successful paper 2 essay. What elements should a good paper 2 essay have? Use this checklist on a past paper which scored a high mark to see if you agree with the examiner.
- Ask your SSST supervisor to provide you with examples of student work in the teacher support material (TSM) and mark these with the assessment criteria. Afterwards, compare your mark with that given by the examiner. What could this student have done to make their essay better? What did they do well? How does this affect what you will do in your essay? Write your reflection in your portfolio.
- During your course, you should frequently ask your tutor or supervisor for examples of paper 2 essay questions to practise with so you can get used to the requirements, as well as applying and improving your comparative and analytical skills.
- Use the assessment criteria to mark what you have written in your practice essays. Which were the areas where you did well and which areas could you improve? Discuss with your supervisor or tutor what you can do to improve these areas.

These activities may help you to understand your selected works and how you might write about them:

- After reading two works, you could try and find a common aspect such as theme, perspective or how imagery is being used to convey meanings and then outline their similarities and differences using a Venn diagram.
- In your portfolio, imagine and write a dialogue that the authors of two different works might have had, bringing out the similarities and differences.
- Rewrite the ending of two works, in each case using the perspective of the author of the other work to do so.
- Explore how the work of one of the authors you have read might have changed if written by another author on your booklist.
- Think of general questions that might appear in paper 2 which would be suitable for you to work on with different pairs of works you have read, then outline an answer.
- Take 20 minutes to write an introduction setting out your thesis in relation to the question you chose. Then, get another language A student to peer review your work.

Individual oral

The individual oral is one of the most exciting components of the course since the topic and focus are chosen by you in connection with aspects of your study that you find most interesting. This is a task that you independently develop with the support of your tutor or supervisor during the course of study.

The individual oral means speaking for 15 minutes focusing on this prompt:

Examine the ways in which the global issue of your choice is presented through the content and form of two of the works that you have studied.

The prompt requires you to discuss two works, one originally written in your language A and one that has been professionally translated into your language A, which can be brought together by a common global issue. The presence of the global issue in both works should be significant enough to be able to talk about it in relation to each one of the works. You will then choose one extract with a maximum of 40 lines from each work. These extracts should be a good example of how the global issue is shown in the work and should give you a chance to demonstrate how the presentation of the global issue is shaped through choices of language, form and structure.

You should use the extracts to focus your response upon precise issues, such as style, specific devices and other distinct techniques used to present the global matter. You do not need to learn quotations from the wider work. In the individual oral, you will discuss the extract and the work as a whole and will always use the global issue as a lens for your discussion. In the case of collections of literary texts such as short stories, poems or essays, you will need to draw connections with the other texts read as part of the study of the same author.

Knowledge of the global issue itself—beyond the treatment given to it in each of the works—is not expected.

Know, understand and interpret

Relevant assessment objectives

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- Know, understand and interpret contexts in which texts are written and/or received.
- Know, understand and interpret elements of literary, stylistic, rhetorical, visual and/or performance craft.
- Know, understand and interpret features of particular text types and literary forms.

Looking at your chosen works in relation to a global issue requires that you understand the possible meanings and implications of the two works selected. Understanding and interpreting contexts will be especially valuable in revealing the importance of the global issue in the works you are discussing. The form in which the works represent the global issue being explored will also need to be identified and understood. This will require referring to the literary, stylistic, rhetorical and performance craft the writers deploy in their works. The significance of the works' literary form features and how these might be examined and interpreted in relation to the question should be referenced.

For example, imagine you choose the global issue of politics, power and justice. You could talk about two extracts from two novels that focus on the oppression of the individual. One of the novels should originally be written in your SSST language and the other novel a work in translation. Your individual oral should feature an interpretation of how the contexts of the extracts and overall works, the elements of literary,

stylistic, rhetorical and/or performance craft and literary form, develop the examination of the oppression of the individual.

Analyse and evaluate

Relevant assessment objectives

- Analyse and evaluate the ways in which the use of language creates meaning.
- Analyse and evaluate uses and effects of literary, stylistic, rhetorical, visual or theatrical techniques.
- Analyse and evaluate relationships among different texts.
- Analyse and evaluate ways in which texts may offer perspectives on human concerns.

In the individual oral, the assessment objective relates to your analysis of how the author's choices of language, form and literary and stylistic devices have presented the global issue. You will also be expected to evaluate how the two authors have made different choices in presenting the same global issue. The focus of your analysis and evaluation will only be the authors' choices in relation to the global issue. It is not necessary to work on all aspects of the extracts. A key element of this component is the evaluation of how each of the chosen extracts interacts with the rest of the work it has been taken from.

Communicate

Relevant assessment objectives

- Communicate ideas in clear, logical and persuasive ways.
- Communicate in a range of styles and registers and for a variety of purposes and situations.

The individual oral is organized and developed around the global issue of your choice and the assessment should revolve around the way in which it is presented in both works. If your chosen global issue was the oppression of the individual by totalitarian regimes, extracts you might choose should be clear examples of how it is manifested in the two works you have studied. Your discussion of extracts and of the works in general should focus exclusively on this. There should be balanced references and discussion of both works.

There are differences in criterion D between the individual oral and the other components in that it is an oral rather than a written exam. The mark that the external moderator will assign will be related to how effectively you communicate your views about the two works in connection with the global issue. You should try to be fluent in your discussion and aim at having an effect on the listener. You should aim to arouse their interest in the subject under discussion. Be careful not to over-rehearse your oral or try and memorize it, which will not help to impress your teacher or the external moderator.

Advice on preparation

Preparing for the oral is a multi-faceted and complex process. As you read your first work, you will start the work of preparing for the oral. Your portfolio is the place to keep your writing and ideas about the global issues, the works and the extracts. You should refer to your portfolio when preparing for the oral as a source document to guide your thinking and preparations.

For the 15-minute individual oral you should:

- choose two works—one must be a work originally written in your SSST language and one in translation
- decide on a global issue that is explored in some way in each of the works
- select an extract from each work that highlights the chosen global issue
- write the outline on the form that is given to you by your supervisor
- practise.

Structure of the individual oral

Introduction

Introduce your chosen global issue and the works you are using to present it. You may use a few general statements to explain what interests you and why you have chosen to delve into the two selected works. Refer broadly to the reasons why the works are suitable. Explicitly stating the structure you intend to follow is a good idea.

Body

Any form of structuring will be rewarded if it is effective and appropriate. The examiners will look for a structure that focuses on the global issue stated in the introduction, allows for a logical and coherent development of ideas and achieves a good balance between the treatment given to each work, and between the discussion of each of the extracts and the work as a whole.

Below are two examples of approaches that you can adopt in organizing your ideas around the chosen global issue.

- **Linear:** Take each extract in turn, discuss it through the lens of the global issue and relate it to the whole of the work it comes from. Once you have discussed each of the works separately in this way, devote some time to come to conclusions about the different ways the global issue was presented in either work.
- **Thematic:** Establish some aspects of the global issue that you would like to discuss in connection with both works. Use these aspects as organizing principle, and move back and forth between the extracts and the whole of the works for each one of them.

The individual oral, unlike paper 2, does not require you to explicitly compare and contrast both works. Neither criterion A or criterion B for the oral makes reference to comparison. It is therefore not necessary to follow an approach which favours comparison like the thematic one. It is however wise to consider both approaches and decide which one is going to allow you to develop your ideas more convincingly. Whichever approach is adopted, please remember to reference extracts and works to support your ideas.

Conclusion

Recall the global issue raised in the introduction and come to a conclusion about its overall significance in each of the works. Due to the nature of the task, you have had to foreground a global issue in your reading of the works. In your conclusion, you could reflect on how central the issue is in both works, and whether you think that it was the authors' intention to make it stand out. Alternatively, you could evaluate the impact of the treatment of the global issue in each work upon its readers.

Activities to help you prepare for the individual oral

Before choosing the works and extracts to use in your individual oral, you need to explore possible global issues in all the works you have chosen to read for your course.

- As you read each work, use your portfolio to make connections to the global issues they present. Identify page numbers and sections of the works that focus on the global issues.
- After you have read one work in translation and one work originally written in your SSST language, write in your portfolio about possible common global issues between the two works.
- As you continue to read more works, make more comparisons of the global issues explored—remember that the comparison is always between a work in translation with a work originally written in your SSST language.
- Practice selecting extracts from a work that address one global issue. Annotate each extract looking at how it develops and discusses the global issue. Try talking about how each extract develops the global issue. How long can you talk for?
- Look at the marking criteria of the individual oral and cut up the separate bands of each criterion. See if you can put them back together in the correct order for each criterion, from the lowest mark to the highest mark.

During your first year of study, your SSST supervisor will assign a date to record your individual oral. At this point you need to make the final choice about the single global issue you wish to explore and the two works that illustrate it. You should then decide on an appropriate extract from each of the works which:

- clearly illustrates your chosen global issue
- contains several instances of how language and style are used to convey the global issue itself or perspectives on it
- offers opportunities for connecting the extract to the rest of the work in terms of the global issue chosen.