

Language A: literature school-supported self- taught student guide

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Diploma Programme
Language A: literature school-supported self-taught
student guide

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Peterson House, Malthouse Avenue, Cardiff Gate
Cardiff, Wales CF23 8GL
United Kingdom
Website: ibo.org

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IB mission statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.



IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:

INQUIRERS

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

KNOWLEDGEABLE

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

THINKERS

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

COMMUNICATORS

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

PRINCIPLED

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

OPEN-MINDED

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

CARING

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

RISK-TAKERS

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

BALANCED

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

REFLECTIVE

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.

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Introduction

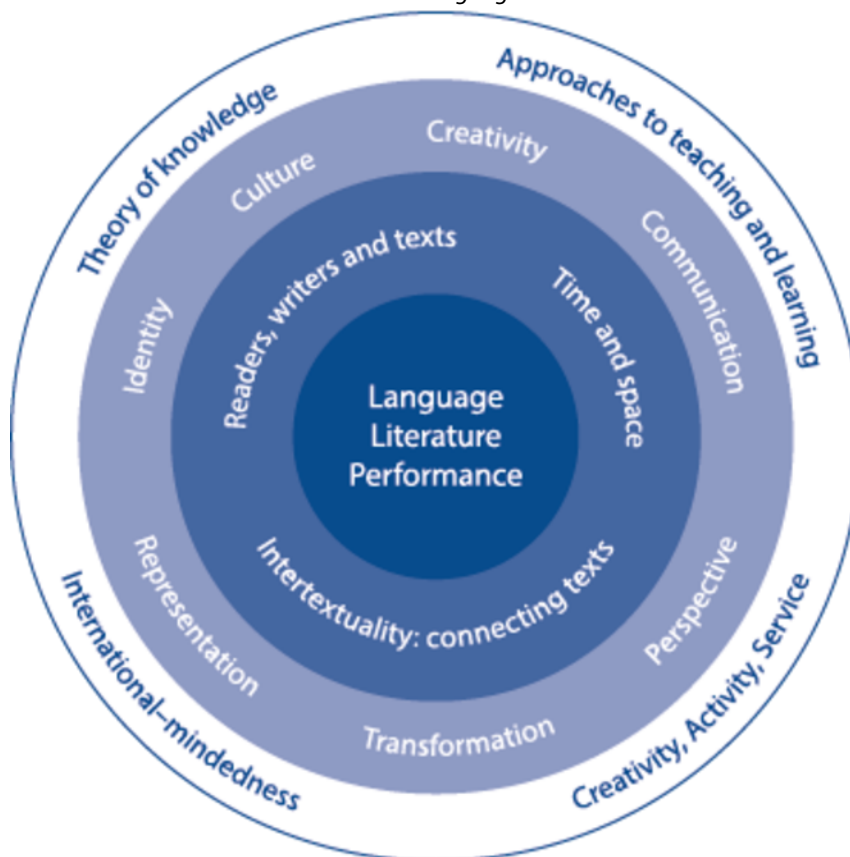
This course is part of the studies in language and literature group and this guide to being a school-supported self-taught student (SSST) will help you understand it better. It is not meant to be a replacement for the *Language A: literature guide*. You should read both to understand the course fully.

Being a self-taught student offers a unique opportunity to study the literature of a language that may not be offered at your school as a taught subject. A certain level of autonomy is expected, for example you will be asked to develop a list of literary works and a timeline. You will also be expected to autonomously administer the 150 hours required for the study of the course.

The information included in this section is intended for SSST students who are taking this standard level (SL) course over a period of two years. If you are taking the course on an anticipated status it is essential to consult with your supervisor to ensure that you comply with the correct dates for submission of assessment tasks.

Figure 1

A model of Studies in language and literature



Language A: literature SSST is similar to the taught course, which is built on the notion of conceptual learning. This means that the course is organized around concepts, or big ideas, which makes it easier to form connections between subjects and between parts of a course. Concepts are important as they are applicable and transferable to real-life situations. In this course, the central concepts are culture,

communication, transformation, perspective, creativity, representation and identity. When reading and studying a literary work, you should explore how it relates to these concepts.

This will help to:

- see how the literary works are relevant to your world and your experiences
- make connections between works studied in the course
- make connections with theory of knowledge (TOK), the approaches to learning and international-mindedness
- make connections with other subjects you are studying
- become a flexible and critical reader.

The course is organized into three areas of exploration which blend together while each providing a focus for investigation:

- **Readers, writers and texts** introduces the notion of literature, its purposes and the ways in which texts can be read, interpreted and responded to.
- **Time and space** draws attention to the fact that texts are not isolated entities, but are connected to space and time.
- **Intertextuality:connecting texts** focuses on the connections between and among diverse texts, traditions, creators and ideas.

The aims of the three classroom-based courses in studies in language and literature are to:

- engage with a range of texts in a variety of media and forms from different periods, styles and cultures
- develop skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, presenting and performing
- develop skills in interpretation, analysis and evaluation
- develop sensitivity to the formal and aesthetic qualities of texts and an appreciation of how they contribute to diverse responses and open up multiple meanings
- develop an understanding of relationships between texts and a variety of perspectives, cultural contexts and local and global issues and an appreciation of how they contribute to diverse responses and open up multiple meanings
- develop an understanding of the relationships between studies in language and literature and other disciplines
- communicate and collaborate in a confident and creative way
- foster a lifelong interest in and enjoyment of language and literature.

SSST support material

This resource has been created to help with your studies. You will find everything you need to know about the course and assessments here. You will also find information on how to progress through the course, examples of writing and speaking, as well as downloadable planning tables and worksheets that can help with your learning.

Academic honesty

Academic honesty in the Diploma Programme (DP) is a set of values and behaviours informed by the attributes of the learner profile. In teaching, learning and assessment, academic honesty serves to promote personal integrity, engender respect for the integrity of others and their work, and ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge and skills they acquire during their studies. As you prepare for the assessments in this course be mindful that you are expected to complete your own work on each assessment.

This means that you need to work on your own, and also acknowledge and reference any secondary sources to which you might refer in your assessment. This includes text, graphs, images and/or data published in print or in electronic sources. Also, when you quote words, phrases, or sentences from the

works themselves in your written assignment, remember to cite page or line numbers using the format you have been taught.

Any forms of academic dishonesty, including collusion and plagiarism, may result in removal of your candidacy for an IB diploma. Please review the IB policy on academic honesty as well as your own school's policy on this important matter.

Self-assessment: Identifying the skills required





To start, examine the syllabus outline and course aims. Consider this unique opportunity to design a course and study literature as a self-taught student. Reflect on the reasons behind your choice and on the current state of the skills you possess. The diagnostic tool [here](#) will help you do this.

This questionnaire is based on the aims of the course and helps to identify your readiness to tackle its key aspects.

You should complete this a number of times.

- Before starting the course, as it will enable you to draw up an action plan to develop your skills and understandings.
- Twice during the school year, as it will help you to reflect upon your progress.
- Towards the end of the course, as this will help you plan your approach to the assessment tasks.

Every time you complete the questionnaire, your answers should be discussed with your supervisor, who must sign it each time.

Where are you on the learning continuum? Draw an X to indicate your current state.		
How familiar am I with the literary traditions (authors, literary forms, history) of the SSST language?		
		
Emerging	Developing	Proficient
How confident do I feel about reading literature in the SSST language?		
		
Emerging	Developing	Proficient
How well can I write essays in the SSST language?		
		
Emerging	Developing	Proficient
How articulately can I speak about literature (themes, attitudes, perspectives) in the SSST language?		
		
Emerging	Developing	Proficient
How well can I give a presentation about literature in the SSST language?		

Where are you on the learning continuum? Draw an X to indicate your current state.		
Emerging	Developing	Proficient
How well can I identify the strategies an author used to create meaning with literature in the SSST language?		
Emerging	Developing	Proficient
How well can I establish connections between works I am reading and the key concepts in the subject?		
Emerging	Developing	Proficient
How well can I establish connections between works I am reading and other subjects I am studying?		
Emerging	Developing	Proficient
How aware am I of the importance of the time and place that the work was written in?		
Emerging	Developing	Proficient
How well can I understand the way in which the time and place I live in influences the way that I interpret or read a work?		
Emerging	Developing	Proficient
How well can I identify global issues that arise in a work?		
Emerging	Developing	Proficient
How well can I compare and contrast works on the basis of a common global issue?		

Where are you on the learning continuum? Draw an X to indicate your current state.		
Emerging	Developing	Proficient
To what extent can I study independently?		
Emerging	Developing	Proficient
To what extent can I learn without direct instruction?		
Emerging	Developing	Proficient

Specific areas to review	Specific follow-up steps to learn more

Name of student:	Signature of supervisor:
Date:	Date:

Help available to self-taught students

An SSST supervisor

Your school must appoint an SSST supervisor who teaches a course in studies in language and literature.

Your supervisor will:

- guide you in developing a booklist
- approve your booklist once completed, ensuring that it meets course requirements
- help you to set a timeline of study
- help you to choose which other language A classes you could attend to further your studies
- discuss the assessment components and the assessment criteria for the course
- meet with you individually about your progress at least once a month
- meet you and other SSST students as a group weekly at a fixed time in your school timetable
- administer the individual oral component
- connect with your first and best language tutor
- be a resource for your literary studies
- give you access to past papers and exemplars.

A tutor in your first and best language

Your school must also assign a tutor who is proficient in your first and best language. This person will help in areas where your SSST supervisor may not be able. The tutor will be particularly helpful when you start preparing for the assessment components and need feedback on your work.

Other language A teachers

Depending on the size of the school, there may be other language A or literature teachers apart from your supervisor with whom you can meet to discuss your studies, even though they may not be familiar with the works or the language. In some circumstances, it may be possible to join a language A: literature class to study translated works that you may have in common with that class.

Librarians

Librarians may also be able to help you compile a booklist, carry out research, and discuss literature.

Other teachers

There are many teachers at your school who can help further your understanding of the literature you are studying. To address the questions in different parts of the syllabus your TOK teachers can help correlate areas of knowledge and ways of knowing with the works you are studying. Alternatively, if you are studying a novel set in a certain time period, you could discuss it with a history teacher. If you are studying drama, you could discuss dramatic techniques with theatre arts teachers.

Other DP students

All DP students must take at least one studies in language and literature course. All of the students in these courses will be following the same structure and looking at the same concepts, or big ideas, that you are studying, even if they are not studying the same works or language. Discussing your work with other learners can help you all make connections between literature and its study across languages.

Creating a booklist of works to study

As a language A: literature SSST student you will have to read nine works. You will choose these from a list of authors that the IB has created, called the *Prescribed reading list*, which can be found on the programme resource centre.

You should compile a list of literary works to be studied in the SSST course according to the following requirements:

- nine works overall, written by authors on the *Prescribed reading list*
- a minimum of two works studied linked to each of the areas of exploration of the course
- coverage of at least three of the four literary forms (poetry, drama, fiction, non-fiction)
- coverage of at least three periods
- a minimum of four works originally written in the language A being studied, by authors on the *Prescribed reading list*
- a minimum of three works translated into your language A, originally written in a different language than the language A being studied, by authors on the *Prescribed reading list*
- works from a minimum of three places as defined by the *Prescribed reading list* in relation to the language A you are studying, covering at least two different continents.

All of the works on your booklist must be chosen from the *Prescribed reading list*. In this resource, there are authors who have written in the language A that you are studying. The reading list also contains various selections of authors who have written in other languages.

The *Language A: literature guide* defines a “work” as “one single major literary text, such as a novel, autobiography or biography; two or more shorter literary texts such as novellas; five to ten short stories; five to eight essays; ten to 15 letters; or a substantial section or the whole of a long poem (at least 600 lines) or 15 to 20 shorter poems”. When more than one text is studied as part of a “work”, they must be from the same author. It is important to remember this definition when choosing works to study.

If you do not know much about authors in other languages, you should start by having a look at the six recommended authors in each language. Other issues to consider are whether it is easy it is to obtain a copy of the work written in any other language in translation. You are strongly advised to choose works that have been translated into the language A that you are studying. However, if that is not possible, you can read a work translated into another language you understand, such as the school’s medium language. For example, if you want to read *Romeo and Juliet* but cannot find it in your language A, it can be read in English, French or Spanish.

It is important to remember that if you choose this option, it is not likely that this work can be used for assessment components which require you to quote from the works you’ve studied.

When deciding on a booklist, you should try to include works which balance gender, time, place and literary forms. You can use the search filters in the *Prescribed reading list* to find authors who have written in particular languages, literary forms, periods and places. These filters can help ensure that you have chosen works which meet the course requirements. Remember that some writers publish in more than one literary form, so it is important when choosing specific works by these authors that you fulfill the literary form requirement of the course.

In discussions with your tutor, supervisor, other teachers, peers or family members, you can also consult them on ways you can make your booklist more varied in terms of different voices and perspectives.

Please remember to devote enough time to thinking about the booklist, the extent to which it addresses all the requirements of the course and the extent to which it offers opportunities to prepare for the assessment components.

Three checklists have been created to make sure that your chosen works cover all the requirements of the course and help plan your time month by month.

- [my booklist](#)
- [ensuring a booklist meets course requirements](#)
- [timeline template](#).

It is important to complete the checklists and discuss any issues arising with your supervisor.

My booklist

	Author	Title	Language	Literary form	Period	Place	Area of exploration
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							

Ensuring a booklist meets course requirements

I have chosen:	Notes	Yes/No
Nine works		
At least four works originally written in the language A being studied.		
At least three works in translation.	Works in translation: works originally written in a different language than the language A being studied.	
Works from at least three of the four literary forms.	Literary forms: poetry, drama, fiction, non-fiction.	
Works which cover at least three periods.	Period: century the works were written in.	
Works which cover at least three places, and at least two continents.	Places: countries or occasionally regions which the author is closely associated with, and not the setting of the work.	
At least two works for each of the areas of exploration.	Areas of exploration: Readers, writers and texts; Time and space; Intertextuality: Connecting texts.	

If you answered no to any of the questions above, revise your selection of works again before discussing your choices with your supervisor and, when you have made the necessary changes, complete the checklist again.

Name of student:	Signature of supervisor:
Date:	Date:

Timeline template

This template is for you to plan how you are going to organize your study.

The expectation is that you will devote 150 hours of study to this SL course over 18 months. The first month has been outlined to include the essential initial steps that all SSST students must complete. The final month of study has also been outlined to allow for sufficient review and revision time before assessment paper 1 and paper 2 take place.

You can adapt the template according to your school year and the number of months of study.

Each month should include:

- work being studied
- approaches you will focus on (related to the area of exploration you are working on)
- preparation for assessment
- any meetings with your tutor or/and supervisor.

Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation for course • Overview of the course • Readiness questionnaire • How to create booklist • Introduction • Completing the timeline • Introduction to the study of literature. 			
Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8
Month 9	Month 10	Month 11	Month 12
Month 13	Month 14	Month 15	Month 16
Month 17	Month 18	Exam dates:	
	Revision in preparation for DP exams Complete past papers Review learner portfolio entries.	DP exams Paper 1 and paper 2.	

Name of student:	Signature of supervisor:
Date:	Date:

Foundation knowledge and skills

Now that you have embarked on this course and devised a booklist, it is important to establish foundation knowledge and skills for a successful journey. To do this, every time a work is studied, you should reflect on the key aspects of stylistic analysis, concepts and global issues. These will be reflected in your learner portfolio, which records your approaches to studying a work, and is a central element of your course.

Stylistic analysis

The first step towards a detailed stylistic analysis of a text is to consider the specialist terminology of literary criticism that is unique to the literary tradition of the language A you are studying as an SSST student.

The main purpose of this terminology is to help you to:

- recognize and label the elements (or author's choices) that make literature "literary" as opposed to descriptive or informational
- explain how these elements or choices affect you, the reader, and your understanding of the text, the writer's style and its larger purpose or global impact.

Each language and its literature has literary vocabulary that is unique, so you should search for and become familiar with the list of terms appropriate to the study of the literature of your language A. Lists of literary terms could be found on the internet, or they may be something your supervisor can help you access.

Literary terms are important because they enable ideas to be expressed about patterns you will learn to recognize in your booklist, although not all of them will apply to every work.

Sound patterns: how words create "sound effects" that help you create meaning.

Rhythmic/metrical patterns: how words might follow or violate an underlying beat or pulse.

Image patterns: how words create "pictures" that shift and change, perhaps becoming a symbol.

Visual/spatial patterns: how the visual appearance of the words on the page, especially poetry, impacts meaning.

Syntactical patterns: how the words follow or violate traditional grammatical rules.

Patterns of denotation and connotation: how different meanings of the same word might impact interpretation and possibly create ambiguity.

Patterns of punctuation: how punctuation affects the meaning of the words around them.

Patterns of sentence structure: how sentence construction, such as short, long or complex, impacts the way a character or narrator's voice is perceived.

Patterns of stanza structure: in poetry, how the structure of a poem into discrete units of text shapes its meaning.

Patterns of conflict: how conflicts are introduced, developed, resolved, or left unresolved.

Rhetorical patterns: how persuasive devices, such as ethos, pathos and logos, as well as fallacies, impact the relationship between the writer, speaker and the reader.

Dramaturgical patterns: how the conventions of drama—the ways in which a play shifts from page to stage—are followed or violated.

Once you have learned terms and can recognize stylistic patterns, sentences can be created by arranging words in different combinations.

The table below illustrates how this could be done by choosing words from each column to create a new sentence, for example: "The **menacing tone** in the text **emphasizes the speaker's** reluctance to confront his past".

Adjective	Stylistic aspect	Verb	Attitudes and ideas of agent acting
bold	imagery	emphasizes	the speaker's
inconsistent	perspective	diminishes	the character's
menacing	tone	highlights	the writer's

Adjective	Stylistic aspect	Verb	Attitudes and ideas of agent acting
looming	symbol	enhances	the reader's
bucolic	setting	contradicts	the narrator's
formal	phrasing	reverses	
inverted	syntax	informs	
simple	sentence structure	ambiguates	
fastidious	characterization	clarifies	
childlike	diction	reiterates	
contorted	personification	underpins	
derivative	repetition	exaggerates	
chaotic	punctuation	juxtaposes	

Concepts

Central to the DP language A courses are the seven concepts of culture, creativity, communication, perspective, transformation, representation and identity. These concepts are “broad, powerful organizing ideas that have relevance both within and across subject areas” (*Approaches to teaching and learning in the Diploma Programme* guide). They are at the heart of the course and will enable the study of works on your booklist to be organized by guiding you think about them in greater depth and making it easier to establish connections between them.

As you read each of the works on your booklist, you will realize that they are connected to most, if not all, of these concepts. When you reflect on each work, explore the way these concepts are present in it and to what extent some have a greater relevance than others. This will help you to reflect upon the nature of the statement the work might be making.

The following table contains some discussion points for each of the seven concepts, and some ideas which may be explored in the reading log entries which will form part of your portfolio. You should take these ideas as a springboard to get you thinking about the seven concepts in creative and personal ways.

Culture	<p>You may be familiar with more than one culture. You will certainly have a direct connection to at least one and relate to it closely. Literary texts are similarly linked to culture and this concept asks how this might affect the text and how far it can be seen as a product of that culture rather than as something that stands completely alone.</p> <p>Questions or tasks for reading log entries:</p> <p>Some of the works you have read might be very difficult for someone to understand who was unfamiliar with the cultural context in which the work is set. Was this your experience with any of the works you have read for the course so far?</p> <p>Can an author write successfully about a culture of which they are not a part?</p> <p>How is the cultural context of the work you are studying at the moment revealed?</p>
Creativity	<p>Creativity describes the imaginative activity by which a writer processes ideas and experiences in the writing of a text. Just as important is the creativity needed by the reader to realize the potential meanings of the text.</p> <p>Questions or tasks for reading log entries:</p> <p>Consider which of the works you have read so far has been particularly successful in drawing you into the world created by the writer. What do you think went into the creation of that world?</p> <p>Think about another work you have read which was more open or ambiguous in connection with its meanings. How creative do you need to be as a reader to explore the possible different meanings of a work?</p> <p>Try to find many possible interpretations of the work you are reading or of one of its elements.</p> <p>Write an alternative ending or part of the book you are reading that changes its interpretation, but that tries to replicate the author’s style.</p>
Communication	<p>This concept asks whether literary texts aim primarily to communicate an idea or teach something to the reader, or whether they are opportunities for self-expression or entertainment.</p>

	<p>Questions or tasks for reading log entries:</p> <p>Think about a work which has been very difficult for you to understand and required you to do some research before you could fully comprehend it. You could also think about works which were easily understood at a first reading but then revealed other meanings. What caused one to be more easily understood than the other?</p> <p>What is the main aim of the work that you are studying? How do you know this?</p> <p>How accessible is this work to you as a reader? What might prevent a reader understanding this work?</p>
Identity	<p>Each literary text usually contains different characters with different traits. When you study these characters you may find that implicit behind them are the views or thoughts of the author. In other words, these characters may represent some aspect of the identity of the author. At the same time, characters can also be a mirror that helps you to recognize yourself. Studying literary characters may also result therefore in an exploration of your own identity.</p> <p>Questions or tasks for reading log entries:</p> <p>Consider a character from those in the works you have studied that you really admire. How far do you think it was the intention of the work to elicit this response in you?</p> <p>List the personality traits of any one character: label the ones that you think represent some aspect of the author's identity and the ones that you find similar to your own.</p>
Perspective	<p>The concept of perspective revolves around both the way that readers may understand a text in different ways and also the way that text presents a particular viewpoint.</p> <p>Questions or tasks for reading log entries:</p> <p>Consider to what extent you have identified with or felt challenged by perspectives offered in the works you have read.</p> <p>Explore how a work has confirmed or deepened your views on a particular issue.</p> <p>How successfully has the work you are reading right now presented a particular point of view?</p>
Representation	<p>This concept asks us to consider how far the world of a text corresponds to the real world. Some writers may aim to represent the outside world as faithfully as possible. Some others may instead choose to create more abstract literary texts. If you think about painting, this difference might become clear if you contrast the portraits of Leonardo da Vinci with those of Picasso. Similarly, among the texts you have read, there might be some which offered a very realistic portrait of the world they represented, while others might give us a portrait of life and the world which is fragmented, distorted or idealized.</p> <p>Questions or tasks for reading log entries:</p> <p>How similar is the world in the work you are reading to the real world?</p> <p>How recognisable are the characters and their attitudes?</p> <p>In what ways does the use of language in the works you have read represent in itself a view of the world?</p>
Transformation	<p>This concept is about the act of reading a text and the nature of the change that reading brings about. Studying a text is a complex process where as we read and think about the text, the text for us changes and we as a reader change because of what we have read. At the same time, as we read more texts and make</p>

connections between them, another transformation occurs in how we regard the texts.

Questions or tasks for reading log entries:

From your own reading, think about a work that has impacted your thinking about writing, a topic or issue, or reading. What was it about the work that transformed your thinking?

Write about a work that is changing your thinking. What is being transformed: your views on reading, on writing or on an issue?

Compare two works that you have read in the course. How does comparing them change how you understand each work? How do the works seem different after this comparison?

Global issues

During the two-year course, you will investigate how a range of texts connect clearly to a variety of global issues. You will then explore the ways in which these issues are present in your booklist and how different authors and texts represent, reflect and/or explore them through their choice of literary form, structure, language use or literary devices. The global issues you select will shape your focus for the individual oral.

Properties of a global issue

A global issue incorporates the following three properties:

- it has significance on a wide or large scale
- it is transnational
- its impact is felt in everyday, local contexts.

The following list contains some suggested fields of inquiry.

Culture, identity and community

This study could focus on the way in which works explore aspects of family, community, class, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality and nationality, and the way that these impact on individuals and societies. You could, for example, examine issues concerning migration, multiculturalism, colonialism and nationalism.

One global issue which could be examined here relates to the way that identities are constructed and the role of the community in shaping or suppressing identity.

Beliefs, values and education

You could focus on the way in which works explore the beliefs and values nurtured in particular societies and the ways they contribute to the shaping of individuals and communities. You could investigate the tensions that arise when there are conflicts and the value and effects of education.

One global issue in this field of inquiry that you could examine is how different individuals and communities respond to change and whether their system of beliefs resists or accepts change.

Politics, power and justice

The ways in which works explore aspects of rights and responsibilities could be looked at, along with the workings and structures of governments, the hierarchies of power, the sharing of wealth and resources, equality and inequality, the limits of justice, and the law, peace and conflict.

One global issue which could be explored here is how the relationships of power are represented in the works and whether there is any individual or group which is deprived of power and silenced or marginalized.

Art, creativity and the imagination

The study could focus on the ways in which works explore aspects of aesthetic inspiration, creation, craft, and beauty, the shaping and challenging of perceptions through art, and the function, value and effects of art in society.

One global issue that could be explored within this field of inquiry is the role of the artist in the world of the work. If any of the characters in the work is an artist, it could be interesting to consider what view of the role of the artist and of art is expressed through this character.

Science, technology and the environment

The study could examine the ways in which works explore the relationship between humans and the natural environment, the implications of technology and media for society and the consequences of scientific development and progress.

One global issue you could explore here would be the extent to which science is presented in the work as realizing the potential of human beings or threatening and limiting it.

The learner portfolio

Compiling a learner portfolio is a key part of your journey as a self-taught student.

Your learner portfolio can be a journal, electronic or handwritten, notebook, folder, blog or any other format that suits your learning style and shows your learning journey. It will be the basis of ongoing meetings with your supervisor and the discussions about your reflections and your progress.

The “[course structure](#)” section contains specific guidance to ensure your learner portfolio is used effectively in every part of the syllabus to prepare for the different assessment components.

The learner portfolio is a place to:

- explore and reflect on the works you are studying
- record initial thoughts and developments, brainstorming, possible solutions and further questions raised
- store useful information, for example quotations, ideas, outlines and feedback
- reflect on learning
- reflect on the seven central DP language A concepts
- experiment with and develop your command of literary terminology in your own language
- engage with the command terms of the course
- compile detailed evaluations and critical analyses
- explore global issues
- interact with your tutor or/and supervisor and help to stimulate discussions between you and your tutor or/and supervisor
- record challenges faced and achievements
- exhibit your imaginative thoughts on the world in which the writer wrote the work
- exhibit your imaginative thoughts on the world in which readers have interpreted the work and responded to it over time
- experiment with the literary form of the work and with transformation operations that could be applied to the work
- respond creatively to the work you are studying
- consider how readers today from different political, social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds might approach and adapt the work
- compare and contrast works in terms of themes, style and perspectives.

Approaches to studying a work

Learner portfolio entries serve as cumulative preparation for the three assessments: Paper 1, paper 2 and the individual oral. However, it is about more than assessment. Your interpretations of each of the nine works on your booklist will build on a tradition of other, preceding interpretations. Recall, from your TOK class, the relationship between personal and shared knowledge. Your learner portfolio entries overlap both of these areas. They also help you to appreciate the impact of a writer's creative approach on their audience and how this compares to writers in other literary traditions. You will be able to explore these critical, creative and comparative approaches directly in your learner portfolio entries. For each of the nine works, you need to include **at least one response** using each of these approaches in your learner portfolio:

Critical

A critical approach to literary study entails using the skills of analysis such as literary terminology, close reading of writer's choices, knowledge of literary form conventions and awareness of the writer's and readers' contexts to construct an individual interpretation of the work. Your learner portfolio allows you to develop each of these skills—both in isolation and gradually in combination with each other. This might take the form of three paragraphs in which you analyse Mercutio's soliloquy from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* translated into your language A language. You could explore how the macabre imagery in Mercutio's speech is the culmination of the preceding chaos of the battle between the Capulets and Montagues and also foreshadows his own death. How does the content and structure of Mercutio's soliloquy make this character stand out among the others in the play?

Creative

You will also use the learner portfolio to explore the works using a creative approach by using and developing your imagination. When reading a work, you are not only a reader but also a writer. By putting yourself in the position of a writer, you can start exploring different tools that a writer needs to use, such as techniques, language, form or tone, to create a piece of work. This helps develop your skills as a critical reader. You can live in the imaginative world of the characters, situations and contexts and then weave those together to create something beautiful and build your own world.

Imagine yourself being Juliet, from *Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare, then re-create a page from Juliet's diary. What would Juliet write after meeting Romeo for the first time? You can write a few diary entries to express Juliet's thoughts and feelings. Another idea might be to write the biography for Romeo and Juliet that may include how old they were, their home town, how and where they met, what happened between them, their deaths or the results of their deaths. Imagine what life was like for a 14-year-old daughter living in a wealthy family in Verona during the Renaissance. How would this knowledge help you to enhance your understanding of the play as a whole? By being creative, you will gain knowledge, understand different literary forms and know how to use techniques and language better to approach your assessment components later.

Comparative

A comparative approach to the reading of a work involves establishing connections between works and becoming aware of their similarities and differences. A good starting point when you approach a work this way is to try to ask yourself how it relates to other works you have read before. No work is written in a vacuum; every writer is aware of a tradition that precedes them and of the fact that a new work will establish some kind of relation to it. This tradition expresses itself not only in universal themes that

literature addresses repeatedly, but also in the way and form in which they address them. A text may relate to another because of a similar subject matter they explore, but it also relates to all other texts that were written in the same literary form. It could be asked how far a text has adhered to or departed from their corresponding conventions.

Your task as a reader is to try to discover the nature of the relationship between this text and the literature that was written before and after it. This relationship could be one of continuity, of tension, or of questioning. The relationship could be implicit or explicit. For example, if you were reading *Romeo and Juliet*, you could explore how the play relates to previous or later literary explorations of other “star-crossed lovers”. You could ask how this play interacts with other tragedies by Shakespeare or by other writers. You could compare and contrast film versions by director Franco Zeffirelli, from 1968, and director Baz Luhrmann, from 1996. You could examine how the song composed by the band Radiohead for Luhrmann’s film, “Exit music (for a film)” interacts with Shakespeare’s play. The tasks chronicled in your learner portfolio could range from a Venn diagram establishing similarities and differences between the play and the two films to the creation of a song that could have been included in the film adaptation of the play.

Shaping your study

The course is structured around three areas of exploration. This section details each of these, along with the six associated organizing questions designed to help you to understand the kind of approach that each of the areas proposes.

While your study of literature will be structured by reading the works selected, you should also consider the broader questions of the area of exploration and the concepts of the course as a whole. The following questions are meant to guide your study of the works in each area. It could be helpful to consider using some of these as prompts to develop in your learner portfolio.

Area of exploration—readers, writers and texts

This part of the course is an introduction to literature. You will look at the ways in which texts are produced, read, interpreted, responded to and performed, and reflect on the role of literature. You will focus on the words on the page, their literal meaning, the type of literary text being read, the plot, character, setting, word choice and stylistic features.

In this part of the course you will develop the skills and approaches required to successfully engage with texts. You will also be introduced to the process of assessing texts through critical reflection. Use the six guiding conceptual questions for part one to help shape your study. They are:

1. Why and how do we study literature?
2. How are we affected by literary texts in various ways?
3. In what ways is meaning constructed, negotiated, expressed and interpreted?
4. How does language use vary among literary forms?
5. How does the structure or style of a literary text affect meaning?
6. How do literary texts offer both insights and challenges?

Through close attention to processes of production and reception, you will become aware of unique features of literature as a communicative act and of their relationship with literary texts. While this part of the course is an introductory unit, you will note that ideas and skills that will be introduced here are integral to and embedded throughout the course.

Unpacking the six guiding questions

Why and how do we study literature?

If you read a poem about migration or moving to a new country, you could also read a news article on the same topic. You could reflect in your learner portfolio on the special nature of literature: does a poem that engages with an idea function differently from a news article? Does a poem create similar or different emotions or thoughts? When considering how the two different texts are crafted, are there special skills and vocabulary needed to approach a literary text like a poem? Does a poem have a different value to you as a reader than an informational text?

How are we affected by literary texts in various ways?

You can keep a record of personal responses to the reading of each of the nine works in your learner portfolio and of the range of emotions and thoughts they inspire. How does a literary text affect your thinking about larger global issues? Does the literary text affect your emotions in different ways? Does your thinking about a character or event change your thinking about issues outside of the text? How can you think about a literary text as both entertainment and as an object for academic study?

In what ways is meaning constructed, negotiated, expressed and interpreted?

When reading a literary text, how do you correlate the patterns—or the “form” of the text—as well as the more holistic meaning—or the content—that emerges from it? Can form be separated from meaning? Can you explore how the author has made evocative choices in the creation of the literary text? How can the same text give rise to different interpretations? How does one interpretation stand in relation to those of readers and critics, past and present?

How do style and form vary among different literary forms?

What are the conventions of literary forms? As you read different examples of each literary form it is important to notice that style and form change. What makes a specific stylistic or formal aspect of a literary form a defining one? What room for variation is there within a literary form? Has the literary form you are studying stayed the same through time or has it been reinterpreted or redefined?

How does the structure or style of a literary text affect meaning?

If you read a long novel with chapters, you might reflect on how this element of structure affects meaning. Is the length of the novel important? Does the length of the novel provide space for extended thought or the development of characters over time? What is the logic behind chapters? Do chapters end at moments in order to create suspense? Does a chapter help to clarify an idea or focus your attention on a key event? How does the language of the text affect meaning? Is the voice of the narrator very distinctive? Does the language of the story add to your experience of character or setting?

How do literary texts offer both insights and challenges?

When reading a literary text, sometimes you find yourself identifying with characters and situations. How does the text help you to gain a better understanding of yourself as a result of its exploration of such characters and situations? Does the text make you question your beliefs or see different situations in a new light? Does it allow you to become aware of different dimensions or layers of the reality around you?

Links to approaches to teaching and approaches to learning

The area of exploration "readers, writers and texts", which focuses on the three participants involved in the process of reading and writing, will allow you to explore the nature of literary communication and achieve a better understanding of it, developing **communication skills** in the process. As you read different works, you could reflect on what has made communication easier or more difficult in each of them and reach conclusions about what makes communication more effective. When looking at different writers, you could compare and contrast which of them appealed most and which of them made a better use of the resources available to them to convey their meaning. In turn, this will allow you to reflect upon whether any of these skills evidenced in the texts you read might be transferred to any writing you produce. In your learner portfolio, you could include a creative piece attempting to imitate one of the authors you have read and some of the strategies they used, then evaluate it against the author's original work. In which case, was communication more successful and why? It may also be interesting to consider whether any of the techniques used by the author might help in your own writing about the works or in your preparation for the individual oral.

If "readers, writers and texts" is the chosen area of exploration when reading your first works, you could start reflecting on whether the decisions you made in connection with the organization of your course—the books you have chosen and their arrangement on the booklist—are working, or whether you need to make adjustments. This will help you to develop your **self-management skills**. Your starting point will be your booklist. Which of the books on it might be interesting to read when thinking about readers, authors and texts? Remember there should be a minimum of two for each area of exploration. How many will you read for this area? Look at your timeline template in this guide. How long are you going to devote to each book? Think about the ways to monitor your progress and your use of time. Think about how often you are going to work on your learner portfolio and what kind of work you will do in it. Remember that you will be mostly working by yourself, so think about how you can maintain your motivation. Reflect on what kind of learner portfolio activities appeal to you the most and make sure you alternate these with others you do not find as appealing to make sure there is no loss of motivation and to ensure that you will keep going at a steady pace. As you progress through this area of exploration it will be useful to think about which strategies worked well for you and which ones didn't. An awareness of this will be helpful when you start planning how to approach the rest of the course.

These two categories of abilities are suitable here but not exclusive to this area of exploration. Which other skills do you think could be developed in this area?

Links to TOK

The following questions could be used to reflect on the connections between this area of exploration and TOK:

1. What do we learn about through literature? What role does literature fulfill? What is its purpose?
2. What different kinds of knowledge does the reader gain through literature?
3. Can the meaning of a literary text ever be free from ambiguity? Can there ever be one true meaning of a literary text?
4. What is the relationship between the writer and the reader and how does it impact the reader's understanding of the literary text?
5. Are some interpretations of a literary text better than others?
6. How does the experience differ when reading in the original language compared to reading in translation?
7. Does every literary text have an ideal reader? What are the challenges this presents for us as readers in our interaction with and understanding of the text?
8. How does the medium through which a literary text is presented impact how you experience it?
9. What constitutes or makes good evidence in literature?
10. Is the notion of literary form a restrictive one? How far do literary form conventions help, hinder or limit the production and reception of literature?

Links to CAS

In the DP, you are expected to use what you have learned and apply it to your creativity, activity, service (CAS) experiences and projects. There are many ways that the study of literature, knowledge of language A and development of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills can be used in the context of CAS.

Through reading about characters or situations you are developing a better understanding of yourself and others. In addition, while reading about other people, places and situations, you are developing the capacity for empathy, which will help you respond to the needs of people in meaningful ways. As you analyse, interpret and reflect on what you are reading, your skills as a critical thinker are growing and this will help you plan and execute CAS projects.

Another aim of the course is to think about and comment upon global issues in your textual analysis. You will be looking at issues on a global scale and may be able to see these reflected locally. You could consider different courses of action to manifest your raised awareness in the form of CAS experiences and projects. In turn, embarking on a CAS experience or project focused on global issues arising from the texts can enrich your literary studies as you will have experienced correlated situations in real life. The combined effect of this interaction is an appreciation that the texts that you write or read are not created or experienced in a vacuum but are relevant to your life and the community in which you live.

Here are some suggestions to help you start thinking about CAS in relation to the language A course:

Development of first or best language

The language of your study as an SSST student may be a minority language in your school. How many speakers of your language are in your school or community? Think about ways in which you can help these fellow speakers. Do you want to gather these people together for activities that you can lead? Is there a need to translate publications into your language A to help these speakers? Perhaps you can think about those who do not speak your language A. Is there a need to teach or promote your language? If you are dealing with language you will probably be dealing with creativity and if you are helping people you are dealing with service.

Literature

Think about the works that you have chosen to read. What have you learned about literature through the study of these works? How could you use this in a CAS project? Do you want to promote the reading of these works? Are these works, which were written in your language A, available in the library for other speakers of your language to access or are these texts available in other languages in the library at your school? Do you feel it would be important to have these works or others by the same author highlighted at your school to create an awareness of the literature of your language A? Are there speakers of your language outside of the school who would benefit from gaining access to the literature of your language A? Can you transform the text into a public performance? Would you want to use this performance to raise awareness of a global issue? Is there any instance of injustice in the text that makes you want to form an advocacy group to take action?

When dealing with literature in these ways, you could also be dealing with creativity and service.

Area of exploration—time and space

All literary texts are written by authors who are real people living in the real world. Though this may seem obvious, it is important to remember that texts are affected by a wide variety of contexts such as the life of the author, the times in which they lived, historical conditions reflected in the text and many other real-world factors. In this area of the course you will study texts that allow you to consider how history, culture, geography and many other external factors are all important to fully understand a literary text.

While still attentive to the features of literary texts, in this area you will look at how the works you are reading represent, reflect and become part of life and culture. In doing so, consider the six guiding conceptual questions for this part of the course:

1. How important is cultural or historical context to the production and reception of a literary text?
2. How do we approach literary texts from different times and cultures to our own?
3. To what extent do literary texts offer insight into another culture?
4. How does the meaning and impact of a literary text change over time?
5. How do literary texts reflect, represent or form a part of cultural practices?
6. How does language represent social distinctions and identities?

You will investigate how texts engage with local and global contexts and how they mirror and connect with historical circumstances. Your investigations will enable you to gain an insight into other cultures and times, challenging or expanding your own perspectives. At the conclusion of this area of exploration you should gain a better understanding about the significance of the text in the world and the effects of the stylistic choices the writer has made.

Unpacking the six guiding questions

How important is cultural or historical context to the production and reception of a literary text?

When first reading a literary text you could consider researching the author's situation or looking into the cultural or political issues of their time. For instance, in reading a text written and set in medieval times, how important is it to have a good knowledge of this period? Does this information affect the way you think about the text? By better understanding the author's context, are you better able to understand the text or does this information seem to distract attention? In what ways does the context of production shape the meaning of a literary text?

How do we approach literary texts from different times and cultures to our own?

If reading a literary text produced in a culture other than your own, you could reflect upon the similarities and differences between your culture and the culture being described. How many of the concerns in the text seem to cross nations or cultures? How many concerns in the text are strongly rooted in the particulars of an unfamiliar place? Can time and place shape the way an author addresses a concern in a text? To what extent are belief systems a product of time and place?

To what extent do literary texts offer insight into another culture?

What does a reader learn from a text which comes from a different literary tradition? Does the reader acquire knowledge that goes beyond the literary text and extends into the context of its production? As you read the works in translation from authors on the reading list, you could think about whether those

works can be considered to accurately reflect the reality of the country in which they were written and whether something could be learned about these countries through reading them. Does a literary text offer a balanced portrayal of a culture or is the portrayal somehow biased or limited?

How does the meaning and impact of a literary text change over time?

The meanings a literary text conveys may not be stable or fixed through time. The impact it has on different audiences may also vary. How much of the meaning of a text depends on the context of the readers? Can it really be said that a text is better understood by its contemporary readers? What do new readers bring to the text and are their interpretations any less valid than those of the original readers? As you read literary texts from different periods, reflect on how readers living in the time they were published or later readers might have interpreted them in comparison to how you are reading them in your context. You might even ask yourself if your own reading of one particular text will change as you grow older.

How do literary texts reflect, represent or form a part of cultural practices?

The literary texts you read will often portray the way different societies or different groups within a society behave and interact with each other on the basis of their beliefs, norms and traditions. What kind of portrait do you get of these groups? In what light does the text see their cultural practices? Are there any groups which are marginalized, excluded or silenced within the text as a result of their cultural practices? Are other groups privileged or even idealized instead?

How does language represent social distinctions and identities?

As in real life, the way characters, narrators and poetic voices use language gives an indication not only of who they are but also of how they relate to others. What does the way a character uses language say about what they are like, how they see themselves and how they see others? How does this reflect the social hierarchies within the text and in the society that is represented in the literary text?

Links to approaches to teaching and approaches to learning

"Time and space" is an approach of the course that lends itself particularly well to interdisciplinary work. The claim that the understanding of a time and place cannot be achieved fully by approaching that context from only one discipline could easily be supported. As you may have realized from the "Sciences" group project, one gains in the understanding of an object of study by approaching it from the angles that different disciplines provide us with. Time and space offers an opportunity to develop **collaborative skills**. You could think about how other learners studying different subjects in the Individuals and societies group may help you to achieve a deeper understanding of either the context of production of a work, or some important element in it. You could also talk to a teacher of a subject which you think could contribute to the understanding of the text you are reading. Record the interview and reflect on it in your learner portfolio. Remember the importance of your SSST supervisor and make sure that you consult them whenever there is a question or problem you cannot solve alone. You could consider whether the knowledge and skills you are acquiring might help somebody else. If you think the text you are reading can help another student with a text or topic they are studying, suggest a meeting to share what you have learned. It will probably be useful to meet other language A students and share thoughts on what is useful and profitable in the course. Most importantly, remember that one key element in your collaborative skills is an ability to empathize. Dealing with texts which offer perspectives from different times and places will sometimes require an effort to *"understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right"* (IB Mission statement). Understanding the reasons for a person's behaviour will go a long way towards achieving a better understanding of them and being able to better collaborate.

This area of exploration could also help develop your **research skills**. In dealing with the contexts of production of literary texts, you will explore different sources to inquire about the ideas, beliefs, events and practices of that particular time and space. When you do so, you will have to make decisions about which sources to consult and what kind of information is most relevant and useful. After carefully investigating information in connection with the socio-historical, artistic and biographical elements of the context of the author at the time of production of the text, you will be able to make decisions about which of your findings is of greater relevance in your interpretation. You will also have to decide the extent to which contextual information is of use in your understanding of a text. This means developing an awareness that, if applied mechanically to a text, contextual information can often lead to simplistic readings which do not do justice to the complex ways in which a literary text interacts with its context. Consider at what point in reading a literary text you would prefer to do this research. Here research skills overlap with self-management skills: your awareness of preferred approaches to a literary text will indicate whether it is preferable for you to carry out research about context in time and place before, during or after you read a work.

Links to TOK

The following questions could be used to reflect upon the connections between this area of exploration and TOK:

1. To what extent is knowledge of the context of a literary text important for its understanding and interpretation?
2. To what extent can a reader understand the meaning of a literary text from a very different time and/or place?
3. What knowledge can audiences from different times and places gain from reading a literary text? Is the knowledge gained about a culture from reading a literary text about it always valid?
4. Can it ever be said that a literary text is no longer relevant for a person or a community? On which basis can a statement like that be supported?
5. How valid is it to apply a current critical lens to a literary text from the past?
6. To what extent can literary texts be considered historical documents?
7. How can a reader assess the quality of a translation? Are some translations better than others? How does the quality of the translation depend on the temporal and spatial context of the translator?
8. What issues arise when an author represents a culture that they are not a part of or a perspective different from their own?
9. What knowledge about a culture can be gained by reading a literary text?
10. Can a literary text be immoral or dangerous in the effect it has on its audience? Is the censorship of a text ever valid or justified?

Link to CAS

See “[Area of exploration—readers, writers and texts](#)”.

Area of exploration—intertextuality: connecting texts

The study in this part of the course focuses on the connections between and among diverse literary texts, traditions, creators and ideas. You will explore further aspects of meaning, literary form, approach and chronological development. This section focuses on the comparative study of literary texts to gain a deeper understanding of unique characteristics of individual texts and interesting connections between different texts.

Connections between literary texts can be established in a variety of ways, such as through the study of a group of texts from the same literary form—for example, fiction, the sonnet, a tragedy; an exploration of a topic or concept as represented across literary texts—for example, power, heroism, gender; or an investigation into one of the seven concepts in studies in language and literature, such as representation or perspective.

Consider the six guiding conceptual questions in this part of the course:

1. How do literary texts adhere to and deviate from conventions associated with literary forms?
2. How do conventions and systems of reference evolve over time?
3. In what ways can diverse literary texts share points of similarity?
4. How valid is the notion of a classic literary text?
5. How can literary texts offer multiple perspectives of a single issue, topic or theme?
6. In what ways can comparison and interpretation be transformative?

From working with various literary forms you will become strong close readers and interpreters of texts. That will also help you to develop skills in analysing and criticizing literary texts and provide you with profound knowledge and appreciation of literature.

Unpacking the six guiding questions

How do literary texts adhere to and deviate from conventions associated with literary forms?

Consider why a writer has chosen a particular literary form to communicate their message. For example, an author may choose a novel to portray how an individual grows up because this form may be more appropriate to show the development of the character and reflect the process of acquiring maturity. However, another author may deviate from these conventions and choose to write a novel that starts when the character is already grown up and the reader slowly discovers how the process of maturity took place. In a novel the expectation is that the information provided by the narrator is true, but there are texts where this is not the case and the narrator is unreliable. In such cases you must, as a reader, be tolerant of uncertainty. You must consider why the author has included an unreliable narrator to tell the story.

How do conventions and systems of reference evolve over time?

Think of ways that clothes, music, and art come into and out of fashion from one generation to another. The same thing happens with different literary forms as they shift and shape their form to suit the changing tastes of the time. For example, you could compare the ways that elegies were written 1,000 years ago and the ways they have been written since. You can use this comparison to understand how different literary forms have changed over time and consider how these evolutions reflect, for example, social change. To what extent do the literary texts in this course show an evolution of conventions over time in relation to other texts of the same literary form?

In what ways can diverse literary texts share points of similarity?

Texts from different times, places and literary forms can have a lot more in common than might be expected. Points of connection might include adherence to literary form conventions. More importantly, they might share perspectives on issues such as love, death, migration, and identity. For example, a 19th century Vietnamese poem expressing the author’s feelings through natural imagery, an English Modernist short story expressing a character’s thoughts through the medium of everyday objects, and an ancient Greek tragedy that uses evocative dialogue to provoke exaggerated emotions among the audience may nevertheless all achieve a common purpose to endorse or question patriotic ideals. Alternatively, two texts might share similar points of contact based on the use of literary techniques, for example, two different texts might both use symbolism as a driving force to create meaning. Try to think of similar points of connection among the diverse literary texts you are reading.

How valid is the notion of a classic literary text?

Over time, different literary traditions might develop a sense of what makes some texts stand out as having more status or value than others. This suggests an inquiry into what the term classic means and how far its definition may vary between cultures. There may be many reasons why a book is considered a classic, some of which might come from ideological and cultural factors. There are issues of power and privilege at play when certain groups or authors are included and excluded when determining which texts are deemed classic. What are the criteria for evaluating what makes a literary text classic and who decides these criteria in different world cultures? When reading a book, you need to explore these questions as well as find out how the book makes sense to you as a classic text. How do these considerations apply to the choices you made in your own booklist?

How can literary texts offer multiple perspectives of a single issue, topic or theme?

Literary texts will often explore larger ideas related to human experience. Have a look at your booklist. To what extent does it include a variety of perspectives on an issue arising from differences in age, gender, race and identity? Can different or even opposing perspectives on a single issue be equally valid? You should consider whether it is possible to gain a deep understanding of an issue without taking into account multiple perspectives.

In what ways can comparison and interpretation be transformative?

Reading and writing enables you to find connections between the world represented by the writer in a literary text and your own—which you may be able to understand better by interpreting what was written. When you compare and contrast texts, your interpretation can transform your understanding of them. Through interpreting and comparing literary texts, you are transforming the way you see the world.

Transformation can be understood from four perspectives:

1. when a reader reads a text, and in the act of reading and interpreting, transforms it
2. when a writer reads a text, and being inspired by it, alludes to or even recreates it
3. when readers and writers transform texts, their view of the world and their place within it can change
4. when a text is read and re-read over time, the reader creates new meanings and as a reader, you are inevitably part of this process.

Links to approaches to teaching and approaches to learning

As you might probably have realized by this point, the choice of category of approaches to learning for each area of exploration has been, up to a certain extent, arbitrary: all categories of skills can be developed equally in each area of exploration. Just for the sake of demonstrating how you could develop all categories of skills in this course, we will focus on **thinking skills** for “intertextuality: connecting texts”. When you

compare and contrast two literary texts aiming at establishing links between them, you are developing critical-thinking skills: you need to identify the propositions each text is making first, and the way that such propositions are constructed in the texts so that you can make hypotheses about the level of commonality between them. After you formulate some hypotheses about what the two literary texts share, you need to decide whether these hypotheses are valid. When reading critical essays on literature, you will also find that critics establish connections between texts that are unexpected and that you might not have considered, even if you had read the texts the critic was referring to. As you study your nine chosen works, you could aim to find novel and creative ways in which they can be connected, and write about these new links in your learner portfolio. This will help develop creative-thinking skills useful when preparing for paper 2 and for the individual oral. Practising and developing creative-thinking skills will also make it easier for you to establish connections between any new and previously-read literary texts. This will make it more likely that you will transfer the knowledge you have acquired and the skills you have developed in your study to new literary texts you might encounter.

Links to TOK

The following questions could be used to reflect on the connections between this area of exploration and TOK:

1. Is it possible for a literary text to create new knowledge?
2. How does one make judgments about the literary merit of a literary text? Are some texts more “literary” than others?
3. How are literary texts categorized? Does categorizing literary texts impact on what is known about them?
4. Does knowledge of literary form conventions aid or hinder the readers’ understanding of a literary text?
5. What knowledge and understanding can be gained by comparing a literary text in its original language and its translation, or two translations of one same text?
6. Can reading an adaptation, an interpretation or a transformation of a literary text help to gain a better understanding of the original text?
7. How do others’ reactions to a literary text influence how it is understood?
8. What new knowledge can be gained by reading multiple literary texts by the same author?
9. How important is the understanding of an intertextual allusion to the understanding of a literary text?
10. What knowledge can be gained by reading two literary texts on a same topic or theme?

Links to CAS

See “Area of exploration—readers, writers and texts”.

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

- 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.

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.