**IB DP Self-Taught Literature**

**Paper 1: Literary Commentary on Unseen Texts**

**Duration: 90 Minutes (1 hour and 30 minutes)**

**Weighting: 20%**

**Description:**

Paper 1 is a 90-minute exam that involves writing an essay in which you interpret a poem or prose passage written in your mother tongue.

This will be the first of your exams for this course in May or November of your second year, but you will practice this as your exam for Self-Taught throughout the duration of the course.

This is the one assessment in the course that does not depend on your knowledge of the 10 works you have studied; instead, it gives you a chance to analyse a poem or prose passage that you have probably never seen before using the skills of interpretation (close textual analysis) that you have developed in this course as well as literature classes you may have taken before this one.

It is important to note that the prose passage will very likely be excerpts from a larger work, which could be a novel, short story, essay, biography, journalism, or play, so it is important to recognize the different features of these types of prose writing.

You will also be given two guiding questions; these will also be written in your mother tongue. Do not answer the questions directly as short answers; INSTEAD, the examiner will expect you to involve your responses to these two questions somewhere in your commentary essay.

**Your primary objectives in this exam are to:**

* convey your knowledge and understanding of the passage (your interpretation)
* support this interpretation by referring directly to the key literary devices the writer uses (or choices the writer has made) and explaining the impact these devices and choices have on meaning
* organize your response coherently
* demonstrate the best of your writing ability in your mother tongue.

The skills assessed in this exam are basically the same as the ones you used for your individual oral commentary (IOC) when you selected passages from the two part 2 works to interpret in response to the ten prescribed questions sent by the IB, the only difference is that this is a written essay and you won’t know the passage beforehand. The interpretive skills, however, are just the same.

Here are eight key steps designed to guide your preparation for this exam:

1. In the first year of your course, ask your supervisor to give you all of the past standard level paper 1 exams from 2001 to the most recent exam year in your PLA language (your mother tongue).
2. Look carefully at the types of poems and prose passages that have appeared in the past.
3. Draft a list of the key literary devices used in your mother tongue to describe literary techniques, such as symbolism, voice, irony, stanza, rhyme, tone, and so on. You might be able to find such a list online or your supervisor might be able to help you with this.
4. If possible attend some classes in the taught languages of your school when paper 1 is being discussed; you can apply these skills of literary analysis to your mother tongue and use them with your own past papers.
5. Write a practice or mock paper 1 on your own every month; be sure you give yourself no more than 90 minutes.
6. Each time you write a practice paper 1, be sure to spend the first 20 minutes or so planning your analytical essay by reading the poem or prose passage (whichever you have selected) several times and drafting an outline for each paragraph; use this outline to guide you as you write each section of the essay.
7. Make sure your essay examines the poem or prose passage with attention both to “the whole” (as in the meaning it conveys to you as a unified piece of writing) and “the parts” (as in the details that give shape and local character to “the whole”).
8. And finally, as with every assessment in this course, pay close attention to the relevant assessment criteria.