

OXFORD IB PREPARED



ENGLISH A: LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE



IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

Brian Chanen
Rob Allison

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Answers to the practice exam papers questions in this book can be found on your free support website. Access the support website here:

www.oxfordsecondary.com/ib-prepared-support

1 INTRODUCTION

This is not a book to help you prepare for the assessments in the IB Language and Literature program.

That is a surprising introduction to a book that is called *IB Prepared: English A Language and Literature*. But a little explanation will help you to not only use this book properly, but to approach IB assessment in a calm and confident manner.

The IB Language and Literature programme is meant to be an inquiry-driven, concept-based course that broadens your horizons, fosters a love for language and literature, teaches you how to look closely, consider contexts, think critically, and familiarizes you with the problems and pleasures of language and literature and how we approach them as an object of study. The course allows you

to enter a conversation amongst texts, authors, advertisers, songwriters, scholars and any people who are interested in our everyday encounter with words. You can simply reflect on your own on the reading, listening and viewing that you do and you will have gone a long way toward meeting the aims of the course. A discussion with a teacher and your classmates will allow you to focus your attention, refine your ideas and look in new directions. Researching as you produce work will bring new discoveries. Do these things, participate in the conversation, and you will meet the aims of the IB Language and Literature programme. And if you meet the aims, and the exam writers, assessment designers and rubric creators have done their work well, you will be successful.

There is no trick to getting a 7 in IB Language and Literature. There is no secret to figuring out a poem. There is no formula for writing the perfect Paper 1. The IB assessments are designed to see what you know and are able to do in relation to the works you study. If you are engaged with your learning, you should be prepared to be successful in the IB assessment.

However (and this is a big however), it is smart to know the rules of the game before you attempt an assessment. The more prepared you are for any situation, the better. The best athletes in the world don't just 'play the game', they get to know the rules, they make plans, they practise some skills. You will get the practice and skills you need by reading works, responding, and being an active participant in class. You can practise on your own or with the OUP IB English A Language and Literature Course Companion. This book, though, will lay out the rules of the game and we will also give you some examples of what 'good' and 'not so good' looks like in this game. This book will make you comfortable with the assessments so that you aren't taken by surprise.

We have been involved in curriculum design, exam paper authoring and examining for many years. We believe that reading, thinking and responding are the best things you can do to become a better student of language and literature. But nothing is more frustrating or even upsetting than when, as an examiner, we read papers that make it obvious that students didn't know the rules of the game, that they had the requirements of the assessment wrong, even though they may have engaged with work in the course. In that case, we haven't assessed what a student knows and can do. This book will make sure that you have the chance you deserve to show what you can do.

What you learn

Activity 1

Consider the images and the poem below as well as the questions that follow:

Text 1: An advertisement for Vitascope, an early movie projector, 1896



Text 2: A poem by Siegfried Sasson, 1920

"Picture Show"

And still they come and go: and this is all I know—
 That from the gloom I watch an endless picture-show,
 Where wild or listless faces flicker on their way,
 With glad or grievous hearts I'll never understand
 Because Time spins so fast, and they've no time to stay
 Beyond the moment's gesture of a lifted hand.
 And still, between the shadow and the blinding flame,
 The brave despair of men flings onward, ever the same
 As in those doom-lit years that wait them, and have been...
 And life is just the picture dancing on a screen.



Text 3: Bollywood advertisement in Mumbai's Dharavi slum



1. A general or personal question to start: what art forms do you engage with regularly? How and why do you 'consume' stories, songs and images?
2. These texts are all, in some way, about films or going to the movies or our relationships with popular cinema. What are the purposes of these texts and what do they have to say about movies?
3. Before going any further, write a brief response. Try to write a paragraph in response to these texts to the following question:
"What do you think these texts suggest about the human experience with language or art in general?"
4. How do these pieces offer different perspectives on the value of art or about how people 'consume' art?
5. Which of these texts has the biggest effect on you as a viewer or reader? Which one makes you consider emotions and ideas related to the subject matter and how is this accomplished?
6. These texts were produced in different times and places. Do you think thoughts and feelings raised by these texts are relevant to your experience today?
7. Do you think that film is more of an art or a technology? Do you think the viewers in the first text would have been more amazed by what is going on on-screen or with the technology? Is the speaker in the poem reacting more to the technology of film or to art in general, regardless of medium? Does our relationship with the experience of films suggest anything about our daily reality or our values?

The aims and objectives of language and literature

If you engaged with the activity above, you have at least touched on everything that you should do in the IB Language and Literature course. A single activity is not a replacement for learning over time, but the questions above were meant to make you consider texts in a way that meets the aims of the course. Assessment, the official external and

internal assessment, is meant to see if you meet the objectives of the course. Those objectives are derived from the aims of the course. If we had to reduce the aims of the course to one sentence, we would probably say something like, “engage with, enjoy and think about the widest range of texts you can in the widest number of ways that you can.” If you were to do this (and you have been doing this for the past decade or so), you will meet the aims of the course. We put a lot of rules in the IB Language and Literature Guide. These rules help to keep the course consistent, help to keep it fair and help teachers to construct a course of study. But ultimately, the most important information for students and teachers comes right at the beginning of the guide in the aims.

Consider the aims of all courses in studies in language and literature and their relation to the questions we asked above.

The aims of all subjects in studies in language and literature are to enable students to:

1. engage with a range of texts, in a variety of media and forms, from different periods, styles, and cultures
2. develop skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, presenting and performing
3. develop skills in interpretation, analysis and evaluation
4. 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
5. 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
6. develop an understanding of the relationships between studies in language and literature and other disciplines
7. communicate and collaborate in a confident and creative way
8. foster a lifelong interest in and enjoyment of language and literature.

Some cognitive science

We think that you can go a long way by focusing on aim number eight above. If you enjoy language and literature, you will almost automatically do everything else – think about it, explore it, consider what it means and why it is important. The guide, however, usefully breaks down ways to be sure that you learn all the skills that you need to approach language in all forms and to communicate your ideas about it. The structure of the course itself and the objectives that are covered in the assessments naturally help you to learn. Recently, advances in cognitive science have suggested that there are clear steps you can take to help yourself learn. If we briefly consider these steps in relation to the objectives of the course, you will see that you don't have to panic about the IB assessments, you simply have to participate and plan in a sensible way.

Some of the best ways to study and learn

Ask, explain and connect	One of the best ways to learn is to question, elaborate and make connections. In this book we will ask you questions, but you can always think of questions on your own. The questions we ask about texts in this book are models of the questions you should ask yourself while reading. When you engage with material, question it and then make connections (between one text and another, to concepts you have learned in other classes, to skills you have learned in previous English classes), you will learn and improve your skills.
Space out your studying	Cramming your studying into one evening isn't the best way to learn. You are lucky in language and literature in that throughout the course you engage with texts in such a way that you are always learning and always preparing. Try to think of the course (and this book) as a way of spacing your study so that your learning sticks.
Switch topics	When studying, it is a good idea to switch subjects. Study 20 minutes of math and then switch to some reading or writing. This gives you a chance to digest material, but it also allows you to make connections between concepts or between different ways of looking at the world. In this book, we have already switched topics. From looking at language and literature, we have moved to ideas about studying. Even switching from reading to writing can help your brain build better connections.
Use words and images	Use images when you learn. Describe ideas in words and try your hand at making diagrams and sketches. Sometimes a quick sketch can help you remember a key concept or engage with a work in a new way.
Think of concrete examples	"Authors and creators use a variety of techniques to portray the minds of characters" is a pretty broad concept. But if you can think of concrete examples, you can learn better (Shakespeare's characters speak their minds directly, an image shows the expression of a person, etc.).
Recall what you know	If I asked, "Are most of the books you read written from a first person point-of-view or a third person point of view?" your immediate response might be "I don't know." But if you force yourself to recall, that simple action helps you to learn and remember. You will be surprised how your mind works once you sit down and really try to recall. Try to remember the last five books you read. Were they written in first person or third person (or even second)?
Repeat	Repeating or revisiting ideas, concepts and content can help you learn. In the language and literature course all of the concepts and skills overlap and repeat. By constantly reading, viewing and listening to new texts and work you are revisiting key ideas and practising key skills.

When you consider the broad aims of the course and consider the best ways to learn any new material, the ways in which the objectives of the course have been broken down and distributed amongst the different assessments makes sense. You will be able to meet all of these objectives spaced out throughout the two-year programme and you will be able to show that you have met the objectives in a variety of ways:

Assessment Objectives

Know, understand and interpret:

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





Analyse and evaluate:

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

Communicate:

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

Assessment objective	Which component addresses this assessment objective?	How is the assessment objective addressed?
Know, understand and interpret	Paper 1	The response to a previously unseen non-literary passage requires students to show their knowledge and understanding of texts and text types and their ability to establish their own interpretation from the text and to come to conclusions about it.
	Paper 2	The essay on two literary works requires students to show their knowledge and understanding of the works and interpret their implications, and their similarities and differences, in connection with a given focus.
	Internal assessment	Students are required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of one non-literary body of work and one work in their course of studies and interpret them in relation to a global issue.
	HL essay	Students are required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of one of the bodies of work or works studied in relation to a line of inquiry they have selected.
Analyse and evaluate	Paper 1	Students are required to explore a previously unseen non-literary passage and write a response to it analysing and evaluating how the writer's choices have contributed to meaning.
	Paper 2	Students are required to write a comparative analysis and evaluation of two of the works studied in terms of the demands of a given question.
	Internal assessment	Students are required to evaluate one non-literary body of work and one work studied in terms of a global issue present in both of them, and analyse and evaluate how their unique perspectives are constructed by means of the authors' choices.
	HL essay	Students are required to analyse and evaluate one of the bodies of work or works studied in relation to a line of inquiry of their own choice.
Communicate	Paper 1	Students are required to write a formal, well-organized and well-focused response using language appropriate to a formal essay.
	Paper 2	Students are required to write a formal essay which is well-organized, which offers a balanced comparison between two works, and which is clearly focused on a given question.
	Internal assessment	Students are required to deliver a well-organized, coherent, convincing and balanced oral which focuses on a global issue of their own choice.
	HL essay	Students are required to write a formal essay exploring a line of inquiry in relation to a body of work or work. The essay should be formal, well-structured and should evidence good citation and referencing skills.

The learner portfolio – organizing a learning space

Activity 2

Working with texts

Consider the images below and answer the questions that follow.

Text 1: An advertisement for Coca Cola (1960s)



1. What is the main selling point of this product?
2. What does this advertisement assume about your prior knowledge of Coca Cola?
3. Does the advertisement give you any helpful information or appeal to any particular emotions?
4. Who is the audience for this advertisement? Is it possible for a very wide audience to understand it without explanation?

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A BIT OF DETAIL. The No. 1 Autographic Kodak, Jr. makes pictures 2 1/4 x 3 1/4 inches. It measures 3 1/2 x 3 1/2 x 6 3/4 inches. Has brilliant, reversible, collapsible finder, tripod sockets for both vertical and horizontal exposures; covered with fine seal grain leather and is well made in every detail. Simple to use, efficient in its work and economical to operate.

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No. 1 Autographic Kodak Junior, with No. 1 Kodak Ball Bearing shutter and Kodak Anastigmat lens, <i>f. 7.7</i> ,	\$15.00
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Text 2: A Kodak camera advertisement, 1915

1. How is this advertisement different from the advertisement for Coca Cola?
2. Does the product itself 'demand' a certain kind of advertisement or could a camera advertisement be more similar to the one for Coca Cola?
3. How would you advertise an inexpensive camera today, especially considering the rise in mobile phone cameras? Sketch a few possibilities for a print ad for a camera including any copy (the words used in the advertisement).

Throughout this book, and throughout the IB Language and Literature course, you will encounter and respond to texts. In order to improve your reading skills – or to improve your ability to flexibly respond to texts and engage in analysis and interpretation – you need to think in writing and through images. The learner portfolio in the IB Language and Literature course is the place where you can not only work to improve your skills of analysis, interpretation and evaluation, but where you can also communicate your ideas, compile research, and experiment.

The learner portfolio is a required, but not assessed, element of the course. It is a place for you to take notes, complete assignments, write drafts and record your progress as a learner. The learner portfolio might seem like a strange component to place at the beginning of this book. If it isn't assessed, why make it an important focus from the start? The answer is that this book and the course itself are about 'doing'. What do you actually do in this course in order to learn and how will that doing and learning prepare you for assessment? Remember, you shouldn't actually be worried about practising the assessment or figuring out tricks to succeed in the assessment. If your focus is on engaging with texts and sharing your ideas, you will grow and your results on the assessments will reflect this growth. The learner portfolio is a place for you to practise and learn.

The above activity is a good example of both something that you could do in the learner portfolio and of something that involves a number of approaches to learning that will help you learn. These questions ask for reading, thinking, responding, recalling, making connections, researching and creating. The work that you do in the learner portfolio will serve you well when you are working on your Individual Oral or your Higher Level Essay. The learner portfolio is a place where you can keep track of important ideas that might be used in your Paper 2. But always remember that the learner portfolio isn't only a collection of notes to help you study in the future, but a vehicle for study in the present.

Some ideas for your learner portfolio:

Collect images as a 'response' to the texts/works/bodies of work you study in class. This can be done in a digital learner portfolio or by cutting and pasting images into a hard-copy portfolio.	Create an 'art gallery' that goes along with your study in the class. You can find works of art that match the time period or culture or the stylistic concerns. This is a great way to think about the broader concerns of representation, transformation and creativity.
Create your own memes based on stylistic features, moments in the works you study or key concepts.	Note links you find to other subject areas. The more distant the links seem, the better. Do you recognize anything from physics in the texts you encounter?
Keep an ongoing 'dialectic journal' with one side of your journal (whether digital or print) as a place to put quotations and passages and the other side to write responses or reflections.	Write pieces in response to, or as a debate with, the authors you read.
Create advertisements based on the literary works you study and try to write short stories or poems based on advertisements you might study as non-literary works.	Make your own drawings and charts in relation to works. These could be explanatory or they could simply be reactions.
Keep notes from class discussions.	Play with text types: make Instagram posts out of poetry you study. Post a passage as an Instagram picture and explain in the post.
Brainstorm ideas for a Higher Level Essay.	Write and perform your own music in response to a text. Post the video in your digital journal.
Keep track of global issues and relevant passages for your Individual Oral.	Make a podcast as an explanation and discussion of a non-literary body of work.
Practise guided analyses for Paper 1.	Create a sculpture! Upload pictures to your learner portfolio or record yourself in the process of creating the sculpture.
Create a Spotify (or other) playlist to go along with the work you are studying.	Create an Instagram profile for a character in a work you are reading.
Write creatively or create your own non-literary texts. These don't have to be imitations or 'pastiche' – simply let yourself explore.	Use your journal to practise remembering. A couple of months after you have read a work or a body of work, create a page called 'memories' and simply start writing down everything you remember about the work.

» Assessment tip

Command terms

In order to be consistent across the entire programme, IB has defined certain words that appear in assessments. These words are called 'command terms' because they are the instructions you receive in assessments. The command terms are fairly straightforward, but it is good to be aware of the official IB definitions.

Command term	Definition
Analyse	Break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure.
Comment	Give a judgment based on a given statement or result of a calculation.
Compare	Give an account of the similarities between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
Compare and contrast	Give an account of similarities and differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
Contrast	Give an account of the differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
Describe	Give a detailed account.
Discuss	Offer a considered and balanced review that includes a range of arguments, factors or hypotheses. Opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence.
Evaluate	Make an appraisal by weighing up the strengths and limitations.
Examine	Consider an argument or concept in a way that uncovers the assumptions and interrelationships of the issue.
Explain	Give a detailed account including reasons or causes.
Explore	Undertake a systematic process of discovery.
Interpret	Use knowledge and understanding to recognize trends and draw conclusions from given information.
Investigate	Observe, study, or make a detailed and systematic examination, in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions.
Justify	Give valid reasons or evidence to support an answer or conclusion.
Present	Offer for display, observation, examination or consideration.
To what extent	Consider the merits or otherwise of an argument or concept. Opinions and conclusions should be presented clearly and supported with appropriate evidence and sound argument.

Approaches to learning in the Diploma Programme

The learner portfolio is also a tool for both metacognition and review. In other words, looking over your learner portfolio should help you think about your own thinking. What are your strengths and areas for growth? What are ways that you learn best? One of the underpinnings of the IB programme is an area called 'approaches to learning'. Research and cognitive science tells us that there are not only ways to

remember and study, but there are approaches that have proven effective over time to help us learn. By thinking about the best ways to learn, you are better able to approach what you do in the classroom, what you write in your learner portfolio and how you engage with activities in this book. For each approach, we will suggest how you might think of the approach as well as how it might serve you in being prepared for assessment.

First, teaching in the IB programme is based on a number of approaches. Though these are the ideas that inform your teachers as they plan the syllabus and lessons, these ideas are good for you to know. If you think about how learning is structured, you get an insight into the big picture so that you can then focus your attention on what matters. The following approaches are at the heart of all IB learning.

Teaching in the IB programme is:

- **based on inquiry**

Inquiry is one of the most important approaches in IB Language and Literature. Teaching based on inquiry means that your teacher is asking you to find your way into literary and non-literary texts and works. Inquiry means that you are asking important questions from a disciplinary perspective, asking how these questions matter, and searching for possible answers. We will provide more specific ideas about inquiry below.

- **focused on conceptual understanding**

Teaching in language and literature isn't about the accumulation of facts – memorizing a list of literary terms, remembering 'answers' about the important themes in a work. Teaching and learning in language and literature is about getting at big ideas and big questions. Like inquiry, this is so central to the course that we will give more specific examples below. Inquiry and conceptual understanding were at the forefront of the design of this IB Language and Literature course and you will see the inquiry-driven, conceptually-based teaching clearly reflected in assessments. In this course, it isn't important to remember that "Gatsby's yellow car represents x," so much as it is important to think about how authors represent tensions in the world through various choices they make.

- **developed in local and global contexts**

Good teaching connects ideas with the world around us. It is important that the things we learn are related to our local contexts and then we see how these connect to the wider world. This is one of the reasons that you read works and texts from a variety of places and cultures. This kind of grounding in the world is also something that you can consider in your learner portfolio. Don't be afraid to think



about how all kinds of language affect you personally. Make connections to the world you live in – a poem might remind you of something that happened to you when you were young or something you recently read online. Maybe a long essay from a magazine reminds you of a funny meme. While not all kinds of responses fit into a formal academic essay or an exam paper, every kind of response and connection helps you to learn. And when it comes to the Individual Oral, making connections to local and global issues is at the heart of the assignment!

- **focused on effective teamwork and collaboration**

This is why you have class discussions and work in groups in your classroom. We work and learn best when we work together. Discussing a text with a fellow student pushes you to think further and consider new ideas. Though you are often making an argument in an essay, you are really **exploring** around a particular idea or line of inquiry. Considering possibilities and offering possible responses involves seeing things from different points of view, so encountering those different points of view in the classroom is important. You might ask, though, how this applies to the very solitary act of reading, or working in the learner portfolio or working through the activities in this book. First of all, Sheridan Blau, a literary critic, once suggested that all reading is collaborative. We think along with the author, for one. But we are also in conversation with all of the works that have come before, or the reactions to the work that have come before. When you watch a play, you are coming to it already thinking about other plays you have seen or about how a play might be similar to a movie. If you have read a review before seeing a play, you will essentially be having a conversation with that review as you watch the play. And this book is not about giving you answers and tricks, but asking you to enter collaborative inquiry into language, literature and the problems inherent in studying both.

- **designed to remove barriers to learning**

Perhaps you don't think about this very often, but part of teaching is about making it easier for you, the student, to learn, no matter what your background or your personal attributes. Sometimes things get in the way of your learning. Even particular works or texts – perhaps they address a subject that is very personal and upsetting to you – can make it difficult for you to learn sometimes. So just as teachers should be trying to remove barriers, you should try to be aware of what can be in the way of your learning and find

strategies to remove these barriers. Sometimes you need help to do this. You may need help, for example, in finding a quiet place you can study or being sure you are eating some healthy food. Being aware of barriers can help you to be prepared.

- **informed by assessment**

Your teachers make plans based on their assessment of your learning. If they understand where you are going and where you are now, they can make decisions about how to help you get there. That is why your classroom teacher is the best person to guide your learning in this course. We have based this book, essentially, on our experience with working with students over the years and looking at results on thousands of assessments. It is important, though, that you think about where you need to go next. Self-assessing, and remembering that the IB assessments themselves are just another way of figuring out what you are able to do, will help you to keep taking steps forward.

The IB learner profile

If you think about the qualities of an IB learner, you can better approach all of your classes. Being prepared means being a well-rounded learner. The official IB learner profile is a good reminder as well as a good model:

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 other 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.

Learning skills in the IB

In addition to the approaches your teachers are taking (and that you can adopt on your own), there are skills that are integral to learning that run across the IB programme and that you can clearly see reflected in the course itself. The following skills are at the heart of the work you do in the IB Language and Literature course:

Thinking skills (metacognition, reflection, critical thinking, creative thinking, transfer)

These are all skills that you practise on a daily basis and can practise by responding to texts and questions in this book. You can think about your own thinking and how you learn, you can reflect on texts, respond to questions and create in your learner portfolio. Importantly, the skills you learn in this course transfer to other areas of learning. When skills transfer, they build stronger connections in your brain.

Communication skills

This is the heart of language and literature. You communicate in order to better understand communication.

Social skills

Social skills in relation to learning are what you build as you collaborate and communicate. Also, the skills you have in self-regulation help you to learn, study and prepare.

Research skills

Opening this book is a form of research. You will also see that we often ask you to do a little research in order to better consider a text or a problem. Research is a direct by-product of inquiry.

Concepts, inquiry and the Areas of Exploration

An important aspect of the IB Language and Literature course is that it is based on important concepts in the study of language and literature. While you study individual works and texts and encounter a wide variety of ideas and problems, all of these elements are related to the underlying concepts. It is important to remember, though, that these concepts were not simply added to the course. The concepts have always existed as the underlying concerns in the appreciation, study and enjoyment of language and literature. Just as getting at the aims of the course is ultimately the best way to be a prepared, well-rounded student of language and literature, understanding that you are always engaging with key concepts will help you to learn. We would say that whether you know it or not, when you are dealing with a concrete issue (who is the narrator of this story? How does this image help to communicate ideas in this news article?) you are actually getting at important concepts such as ‘communication’, ‘perspective’ and ‘creativity’. You will also see that the concepts in the course can be useful reminders of how to find a way into a text. You can always say to yourself, “what does this work or body of work suggest about ‘representation’ and how people put the world on the page?” or “what does this work or body of work suggest about the importance of ‘culture’ to ‘identity’?”

These are the key concepts in the course:

- Culture
- Creativity
- Communication
- Perspective
- Transformation
- Representation
- Identity

The Areas of Exploration

The Areas of Exploration are the broad avenues of inquiry in the IB Language and Literature course. Texts can be considered from almost any angle and provide insight into problems related to all of the concepts in the course. Though the areas of exploration below obviously overlap, and though almost any text could be studied from the perspective of any of the three areas, these areas of exploration allow us to focus our attention and structure our study. In addition, the conceptual questions that underpin each area of exploration are the perfect starting point for inquiry and connect this inquiry to key concepts. In other words, if you ask yourself these questions – these questions that certainly do not have a fixed answer – you will be engaging in the work of the course, learning the skills you need, and preparing for the assessment.

Readers, writers and texts

This Area of Exploration introduces you to the nature of language and literature and their study. Specifically, the investigation in this area involves close attention to the details of texts in a variety of types, literary forms and genres so that students learn about the choices made by creators and the ways in which meaning is communicated through words, image, sound, etc. In your class, you will also focus on your own role as a reader in generating meaning and you will learn to negotiate your own understanding of a text with the ideas of others in the classroom. Your goal in this exploration is to ultimately understand the creativity of language, the relationship between language and thought and the aesthetic nature of literature. Texts are powerful means to express individual thoughts and feelings and your own thoughts and feelings and your own experience with texts are an essential part of communication.

The study in this Area of Exploration is directly related to every assessment in language and literature. This study should help you to consider the choices authors and producers make when creating their texts and should help you to consider where your own reactions originate. This is an ideal area to focus your attention on the skills of Paper 1, the guided textual analysis, but it is also an area that is useful in considering stylistic elements in relation to Paper 2, the Higher Level Essay and the Individual Oral. In addition, this Area of Exploration helps you to consider the role of language and literature very generally – an important consideration in all assessments.

These are the guiding conceptual questions in this area:

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

Time and space

‘Time and space’ focuses on the ability of language to connect people and the fact that language reflects, refracts and shapes communities and cultures. In this section of the course you will focus on works from a variety of sources that reflect a variety of cultures, time periods or perspectives. ‘Time and space’, in a sense, takes us outside of the text or asks us to consider the ways that the time and place we inhabit interacts with the time and place of a text’s production or of its story. While ‘Readers, writers and texts’ may focus our attention closely on the way meaning is produced by an individual author or in the mind of a given reader, ‘Time and space’ asks us to broaden our horizons.

This Area of Exploration seems tailor-made for the Individual Oral. The consideration of broader contexts is a natural connection to the consideration of the ways in which texts engage with global issues. At the same time, it is important to remember that context, in all of its complexities, is an important aspect of meaning that relates to

questions you will consider in Paper 2, the ways in which you respond to the Paper 1 texts, and to a line of inquiry you might create in the Higher Level Essay, especially, perhaps, those related to identity, culture and representation.

These are the guiding conceptual questions in this area:

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

Intertextuality: connecting texts

The study in this area focuses on the concerns of intertextuality or the connections between and among media, text and audience involving diverse traditions and ideas. This area focuses on the comparative study of texts so that you may gain deeper appreciation of both unique characteristics of individual texts and how connections are sometimes purposefully, sometimes accidentally, sometimes broadly and sometimes specifically present and important. Throughout the course and this book you will see similarities and differences amongst diverse texts; this area of the course allows for a further exploration of literary and linguistic concerns, examples, interpretations and readings by studying a grouping of texts set by your teacher or set in a discussion of your own interests or the interests of a small group of students.

This Area of Exploration is a great place to specialize, make connections and deepen your exploration. This could be an area of exploration that broadens your horizons as you prepare for your Paper 2 exam. The skills you build in relation to comparison and the consideration of relationships between works will serve you well in the exam. At the same time, the consideration of intertextuality in relation to a non-literary body of work will help build your thinking in preparation for Paper 1. Really, as in all of the areas of exploration, you can see the guiding conceptual questions that frame this exploration as preparation from yet another angle.

These are the guiding conceptual questions in this area:

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

Conclusion and final activity

As a final reflection, we will offer you one last activity. We will ask you to read and compare two texts – one a passage from a literary work and the other a passage from a non-literary work (a textbook, in fact). The idea is for you to read them and compare the styles, purposes and the meaning of each. It may be useful for you to think about how similar these texts are and yet how differently we view them because of their different ‘text-types’.

Most importantly, however, we would like you to think of this final activity in the introductory section as a way to reflect on your own learning. How does this one comparison relate to the aims of the course, to the concepts in the course and to the key approaches to learning?

In order to help you reflect, after the questions we ask you to consider, we will ask follow-up questions to let you consider the nature of the course and the ways you can best prepare.

Activity 3

Text 1: from *The Rehearsal* by Eleanor Catton (2008)

The Head of Improvisation said, “Acting is not about making a copy of something that already exists. The proscenium arch is *not* a window. The stage is *not* a little three-walled room where life goes on as normal. Theater is a *concentrate* of life as normal. Theater is a *purified version* of real life, an extraction, an essence of human behavior that is stranger and more tragic and more perfect than everything that is ordinary about me and you.”

The Head of Improvisation plucked a tennis ball from the canvas bag at her side and tossed it across the group at one of the hopefuls. The boy caught the ball in the heels of both hands. “Don’t look at the Head of Acting,” the Head of Improvisation said. “Pretend he isn’t there. Look at me.”

She held her palms open and the boy tossed the ball sheepishly back. The Head of Acting made a savage little note on his clipboard with his pen.

“Let’s think about the ancient world for a second,” the Head of Improvisation said, shifting to tuck her legs underneath herself. “In the ancient world a statue of

Apollo or Aphrodite did not exist to trick people into thinking that the statue really was the god, or even that the statue really was a true *likeness* of the god. The function of the statue was simply a site of access. The statue existed so people could approach or experience the god *at that site*. Yes? Is everyone with me?”



She tossed a tennis ball to another hopeful, who flinched but managed to catch it and lob it carefully back. The Head of Improvisation caught it and held it in both hands for a moment, pushing thoughtfully at the balding fur, indenting the hard rubber of the ball and letting it snap back against her hand.

“So this statue is definitely not the *real thing*,” she continued. “The statue is not Apollo himself—anybody would agree with that, right? And it’s not a facsimile of the real thing either. It’s not a likeness of Apollo, a clue to what Apollo might *actually* look like, or what clothes he might *actually* wear. It’s neither of those things. The statue is only a site which makes worship possible. It is a site which makes it unnecessary to seek that particular connection elsewhere. That’s all. Why is what I’m saying important?”

She tossed the tennis ball at a girl across the group.

“Is it because that’s what theater is?” the girl said quickly, catching the ball neatly with her fingertips and pausing to answer the question before lobbing it back. “Theater isn’t real life, and it isn’t a perfect copy of real life. It’s just a point of access.”

“Yes,” the Head of Improvisation said, catching the ball and slamming it decisively into the palm of her other hand.

The girl smiled quickly and darted a look at the Head of Acting to see if he had seen her triumph. He wasn’t watching.

The Head of Improvisation said, “The stage is not real life, and the stage is not a copy of real life. Just like the statue, the stage is only a place where things are *made present*. Things that would not ordinarily happen are made to happen on stage. The stage is a *site* at which people can access things that would otherwise not be available to them. The stage is a place where we can witness things in such a way that it becomes unnecessary for us to feel or perform these things ourselves. What am I talking about here?”

The question was too specific, and the hopefuls frowned at her in silence and pursed their lips to show they didn’t know. The Head of Improvisation was almost quivering. She scanned their faces quickly but without disappointment, already pursed and half-smiling as if the answer was waiting to bubble up and out of her in a kind of overflow of joy.

“Catharsis,” she said at last, crowing out the word. “Catharsis is what I am talking about. Catharsis is a word that all of you should know. Catharsis is the thing that makes *your* job worthwhile.”

Text 2: from *Theatrical Worlds* (2014), a theatre textbook

Nothing has as much potential as a stage. In all of its incarnations, it is a world of imagination, limitless possibilities, and the site of passionate labor. Consider the following moments repeated countless times from antiquity to today. An audience has assembled, full of anticipation, to witness a performance. The appointed time draws near. Perhaps these patrons are seeing this work for the first time. Maybe they have heard or read the opinions of others. It is possible that they have seen another version of the show created by other hands. Nevertheless, it is a certainty that this experience will be unique; every performance has a singular, organic nature—no two can be the same. Among the crowd, perhaps a playwright nervously sits, anxiously waiting to see what will become of his words. The director who shaped this production, once a powerful creative force, is now helplessness. Backstage, hidden from the curious eyes of the audience, actors fight with nerves. As they run their lines and movements in their heads, they adjust their costumes, or check on items they might use in the show. Some may have preshow rituals such as physical and vocal warm-ups. Others may simply enter a psychological state of preparation. All the hours of preparation will now be put to the test. Will the audience celebrate or reject what has been created?

It is time to begin. The actors take their places. Suddenly a signal is given to the audience—the theatre darkens, music is heard, a curtain rises, or actors simply enter the performance space. This is the moment of creation. In the next moment, a new world will appear where none existed, crafted to say something about the nature of our existence. This world, in turn, is the product of many others, one of practitioners who have shared their creativity in the service of this experience. If they have done their best, an everlasting impression will be made and lives may be changed forever.

This book seeks to give insight into the people and processes that create theatre. Like any other world—be it horse racing, fashion, or politics—understanding its complexities helps you appreciate it on a deeper plane. The intent of this book is not to strip away the feeling of magic that can happen in the presence of theatre but to add an element of wonder for the artistry that makes it work. At the same time, you can better understand how theatre seeks to reveal truths about the human condition; explores issues of ethics, gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and spirituality; and exists as a representation of the culture at large.

The benefits of studying theatre can be immense. Think of it as a structure that houses other domains of knowledge. It touches and has influenced disciplines such as languages and literature, psychology, music, science, law, journalism, and business. It enables you to cross cultural boundaries and bridge the distance that separates understanding. In the future, anthropologists will examine our contemporary theatre as a cultural artifact in order to help them understand who we were, how we saw ourselves, and what we aspired to be.

1. In what ways are these texts similar in terms of content?
2. How does the content serve different ends? Does it matter that the words in the first text are coming from a fictional character?
3. In what ways are each of these texts about representation? In what ways are these texts involved in a kind of representation?
4. How would you compare the 'tone' of the two texts? How do the texts employ similar tones for different purposes?

To consider:

1. How difficult is it for you to communicate your ideas about these texts? Which aspects are easy and which are difficult?
2. Do these texts remind you of others you have read?
3. Which of the seven concepts do you see either as subjects of these texts or as somehow related to what these texts are 'doing'? See if you can fill in this chart:

Concept	What the text is about	What the text is doing
Culture		
Creativity		
Communication		
Perspective		
Transformation		
Representation		
Identity		



4. How might the consideration of these texts require the use of the following skills or allow you to improve these skills?

Thinking skills	
Communication skills	
Social skills	
Research skills	

5. Finally, go back to the guiding conceptual questions for each Area of Exploration. How many of these do you think you could usefully answer in relation to these passages?

