



L-Università  
ta' Malta

MATSEC  
Examinations Board



# SEC 12 Syllabus

## English Literature

**2025**

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# Introduction

This syllabus is based on the curriculum principles outlined in *The National Curriculum Framework for All* (NCF) which was translated into law in 2012 and designed using the *Learning Outcomes Framework* that identify what students should know and be able to achieve by the end of their compulsory education.

As a learning outcomes-based syllabus, it addresses the holistic development of all learners and advocates a quality education for all as part of a coherent strategy for lifelong learning. It ensures that all children can obtain the necessary skills and attitudes to be future active citizens and to succeed at work and in society irrespective of socio-economic, cultural, racial, ethnic, religious, gender and sexual status. This syllabus provides equitable opportunities for all learners to achieve educational outcomes at the end of their schooling which will enable them to participate in lifelong and adult learning, reduce the high incidence of early school leaving and ensure that all learners attain key twenty-first century competences.

This programme also embeds learning outcomes related to cross-curricular themes, namely digital literacy; diversity; entrepreneurship creativity and innovation; sustainable development; learning to learn and cooperative learning and literacy. In this way students will be fully equipped with the skills, knowledge, attitudes and values needed to further learning, work, life and citizenship.

English Literature, as a subject, gives learners the opportunity to read, interpret and evaluate literary texts such as poetry, drama and prose. The subject leads students to identify and appreciate ways in which writers use English to create an artistic form and to present an informed, personal response to the texts they have studied. The subject also includes the exploration of wider universal issues, promoting students' understanding of themselves and the world around them.

*In this sense, English Literature has a crucial part to play in reaching cross-curricular outcomes. Narrative, poetry and drama are powerful tools in the development of empathy and understanding, bridging differences and appealing to our basic humanity.*

*Learning Outcomes Framework, English Literature, (DQSE 2015) p.19*

## **What does a study of the subject entail?**

English Literature demands a sensitivity to language and as such, learners need to exploit the skills they acquire in their English language lessons in order to learn about literary genre and devices and improve their ability to write about literary texts. In fact, literature is considered an integral part of English at all levels, where learners are exposed to regular opportunities to focus and engage with a range of literary texts. A multimodal approach is encouraged through which all learners would have the possibility to practise analytical, evaluative and creative skills. While students learn to understand English literature within time and space, they should also interact with texts on a personal and social level, thus enriching their reading experience.

## **How is the subject related to candidates' lives, to Malta, and/or to the world?**

Given that the Maltese context is a bilingual one where learners are exposed to English and have many opportunities for language use, engagement with the aesthetics of the language strengthens learners' knowledge and appreciation of the language. As learners read, enjoy and interact with a poem, play or prose text, they are empowered from a young age to better understand themselves, society, culture and human nature. Indeed, the study of English literature helps candidates become better individuals and commendable members of the human community.

**At the end of the programme, I can:**

1. develop a love of reading in the context of the idea of literature as a valuable aspect of life;
2. develop my critical, reflective and analytical skills relevant to close reading;
3. apply my knowledge of language to literary texts;
4. identify different ways by which to infer meaning and interpret literary texts;
5. interact with literary texts in different forms and from different periods and cultures;
6. recognise, appreciate and enjoy the figurative, creative and playful dimensions of words;
7. develop an awareness of literary genres, forms, styles and techniques;
8. extend my creative reading skills;
9. communicate an informed personal response appropriately and effectively;
10. respond orally or in writing to literary uses of language;
11. participate in the actual performance and/or writing of literature;
12. identify the contribution of literature across various media platforms.

## List of Learning Outcomes

**At the end of the programme:**

- LO 1. I can engage with and respond to a range of literary texts such as poetry, prose and drama written for a particular audience.
- LO 2. I can respond to a range of literary devices adopted in texts such as poetry, prose and drama and explain how they might be linked to theme, setting or character.
- LO 3. I can read literary texts such as poetry, prose and drama from the past and those which are more contemporary.
- LO 4. I can recommend a literary text such as poetry, prose and drama to others and give reasons for this.
- LO 5. I can respond to different aspects of set texts.
- LO 6. I can tackle unseen literary texts (poetry and prose) independently.
- LO 7. I can compare and contrast literary texts or parts of texts taken from poetry, prose and drama.
- LO 8. I can use evidence from literary texts (poetry, prose and drama), such as close reference, paraphrase and commentary, to support my explanation/discussion and can present these quotes using proper conventions.
- LO 9. I can interact with literary texts (poetry, prose and drama) I have read or listened to in a creative way.
- LO 10. I can interact with a Shakespearean text.
- LO 11. I can write well organised literature essays and/or speak in an organised manner about poetry, prose and drama, using the appropriate conventions.
- LO 12. I can write/speak accurately using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect.

*(adapted from LOF p.21)*

## List of Subject Foci

1. English Literature in time and place
2. Awareness of literary genres and devices
3. Writing about English Literature

## Programme Level Descriptors

This syllabus sets out the content and assessment arrangements for the award of Secondary Education Certificate in **ENGLISH LITERATURE** at Level 1, 2 or 3. First teaching of this programme begins in September 2022. First award certificates will be issued in 2025.

The following table refers to the qualification levels that can be obtained by candidates sitting for SEC examinations. These are generic statements that describe the depth and complexity of each level of study required to achieve an award at Level 1, 2 or 3 in English Literature. (Level 1 being the lowest and level 3 the highest).

<p><b>Level 1</b></p> <p>At the end of the programme the candidate will have obtained basic knowledge, skills and competences in the subject such as basic repetitive communication skills and the ability to follow basic, simple instructions to complete tasks. Support is embedded within the task.</p>
<p><b>Level 2</b></p> <p>At the end of the programme the candidate will have obtained good knowledge, skills and competence in the subject such as the interpretation of given information and ideas. The candidate will have developed the ability to carry out complex tasks. Limited support may be embedded within the task.</p>
<p><b>Level 3</b></p> <p>At the end of the programme the candidate will autonomously apply knowledge and skills to a variety of complex tasks. Candidates will utilise critical thinking skills to analyse, evaluate and reflect upon their own work and that of others. Problem solving tasks may be part of the assessment process.</p>

# Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

<b>Subject Focus:</b>	<b>English Literature</b>
<b>Learning Outcome 1: Paper I and Paper II</b>	I can engage with and respond to a range of literary texts such as poetry, prose and drama written for a particular audience.

Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 1)	Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 2)	Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 3)
1.1a I can, with support, reply orally/in writing to lower order questions asked about a poem, prose or drama text.	1.2a I can reply orally/in writing to higher order questions about a poem, prose or drama text.	
1.1b I can, with support, speak/write about the basic plot in a poem, prose or drama text.	1.2b I can speak/write about characters and the main theme(s) in a poem, prose or drama text.	1.3b I can speak/write about some of the following features: character, main themes, structure and language in a poem, prose or drama text.
1.1c I can, with support, identify one reason why a poem, prose or drama text is suitable for a particular audience.	1.2c I can give at least two reasons why a poem, prose or drama text is suitable for a particular audience.	1.3c I can explain in detail why a poem, prose or drama text is suitable for a particular audience.
1.1d I can, with support, keep within a set timeframe in my oral/written response.		

<b>Subject Focus:</b>	<b>English Literature</b>
<b>Learning Outcome 2: Paper I and Paper II</b>	I can respond to a range of literary devices adopted in texts such as poetry, prose and drama and explain how they might be linked to theme, setting or character.

Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 1)	Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 2)	Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 3)
2.1a I can, with support, identify a number of literary devices in a text.	2.2a I can explain the effect of different literary devices in a text.	2.3a I can evaluate the effects and functions of literary devices in a text.
2.1b I can, with support, identify at least one difference in how literary devices are used in poetry, prose and drama texts.	2.2b I can describe how literary devices are used similarly or differently in poetry, prose and drama texts.	2.3b I can analyse how literary devices are used similarly or differently in poetry, prose and drama texts.
2.1c I can, with support, describe how at least one literary device conveys a particular meaning about a character.	2.2c I can explain how at least two literary devices are related to a character and a theme.	2.3c I can discuss how literary devices are linked to themes, character(s) and setting.

<b>Subject Focus:</b>	<b>English Literature</b>
<b>Learning Outcome 3: Paper I and Paper II</b>	I can read literary texts such as poetry, prose and drama from the past and those which are more contemporary.

Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 1)	Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 2)	Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 3)
3.1a I can, with support, identify literary devices used in a text written in the past.	3.2a I can analyse literary devices adopted in a text written in the past.	3.3a I can evaluate the effect(s) generated by literary devices adopted in a text written in the past.
3.1b I can, with support, identify literary devices used in a contemporary text.	3.2b I can analyse literary devices adopted in a contemporary text.	3.3b I can evaluate the effect(s) generated by literary devices adopted in a contemporary text.
3.1c I can, with support, identify <b>the difference(s) and similarity(ies) between</b> a text written in the past and one which is more contemporary.	3.2c I can describe the difference(s) and similarity(ies) between a text written in the past and one which is more contemporary.	3.3c I can analyse and discuss the difference(s) and similarity(ies) between a text written in the past and one which is more contemporary.



<b>Subject Focus:</b>	<b>English Literature</b>
<b>Learning Outcome 4: Paper I</b>	I can recommend a literary text such as poetry, prose and drama to others and give reasons for this.

Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 1)	Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 2)	Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 3)
4.1a I can, with support, identify the point of view in my recommendation of the text.	4.2a I can discuss the main theme(s) in my recommendation of the text.	4.3a I can evaluate any distinctive literary attributes to explain my recommendation.
4.1b I can, with support, describe an important or interesting event in the text.	4.2b I can explain why a particular event in a text is important or interesting.	4.3b I can evaluate the significance of particular events in the text.
4.1c I can, with support, recommend a text to a particular audience by referring to one feature. <i>e.g. plot, characters, etc.</i>	4.2c I can recommend a text to a particular audience by referring to different features. <i>e.g. genre, etc.</i>	4.3c I can use rhetoric to persuade my audience to read a text or watch a play by referring to different features. <i>e.g. setting, mood, etc.</i>
4.1d I can, with support, write a short review about a literary text.	4.2d I can write a short review about a literary text.	4.3d I can write a review about a literary text.

<b>Subject Focus:</b>	<b>English Literature</b>
<b>Learning Outcome 5: Paper I and Paper II</b>	I can respond to different aspects of set texts.

Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 1)	Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 2)	Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 3)
5.1a I can, with support, identify different meanings of specific words.	5.2a I can analyse different meanings of specific words.	5.3a I can evaluate a text by referring to the different meanings of specific words.
5.1b I can, with support, describe how the text might/might not relate to my own experience.	5.2b I can discuss how the text might/might not relate to my own experience.	5.3b I can evaluate ways in which the text might/might not relate to my own experiences.
5.1c I can, with support, identify the elements of narrative. <i>e.g. plot, character, etc.</i>	5.2c I can discuss the elements of narrative. <i>e.g. setting, action, tone, etc.</i>	5.3c I can evaluate different elements of narrative. <i>e.g. voice, atmosphere, etc.</i>
5.1d I can, with support, identify the form used in a text.	5.2d I can describe the form and structure used in a text.	5.3d I can analyse form and structure used in a text.

<b>Subject Focus:</b>	<b>English Literature</b>
<b>Learning Outcome 6: Paper I and Paper II</b>	I can tackle unseen literary texts (poetry and prose) independently.

Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 1)	Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 2)	Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 3)
6.1a I can identify the main points of an unseen text.	6.2a I can describe the main points of an unseen text.	6.3a I can synthesise an unseen text.
6.1b I can identify at least one literary device in an unseen text.	6.2b I can explain at least two literary devices in an unseen text.	6.3b I can evaluate the main literary devices in an unseen text.
6.1c I can identify one grammatical structural feature or one presentational feature the writer uses to engage the reader in an unseen text.	6.2c I can describe how writers use linguistic, grammatical, structural and presentational features to engage and influence the reader in an unseen text.	6.3c I can evaluate how writers use linguistic, grammatical, structural and presentational features to engage and influence the reader in an unseen text.
6.1d I can identify the main theme of an unseen text.	6.2d I can describe how the different literary devices in an unseen text contribute to the main theme or character.	6.3d I can evaluate the overall function of the combined literary devices in an unseen text.
6.1e I can describe how I feel about the unseen text by referring closely to it.	6.2e I can give a reason for my own personal reaction to the unseen text by referring closely to it.	6.3e I can discuss my own personal reaction(s) to the unseen text by referring closely to it.

<b>Subject Focus:</b>	<b>English Literature</b>
<b>Learning Outcome 7: Paper I and Paper II</b>	I can compare and contrast literary texts or parts of texts taken from poetry, prose and drama.

<b>Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 1)</b>	<b>Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 2)</b>	<b>Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 3)</b>
7.1a I can, with support, compare or contrast the purpose of literary texts.	7.2a I can compare and contrast the purpose and audience of literary texts.	
7.1b I can, with support, compare or contrast viewpoints used in two different texts.	7.2b I can compare and contrast viewpoints used in two different texts.	7.3b I can compare and contrast attitudes and viewpoints used in two different texts.
7.1c I can, with support, compare or contrast one literary device used in two different texts.	7.2c I can compare and contrast at least two literary devices used in two different texts.	7.3c I can compare and contrast different literary devices used in two different texts.
7.1d I can, with support, compare or contrast form in two different texts.	7.2d I can compare and contrast form used in two different texts.	7.3d I can compare and contrast form and structure used in two different texts.

<b>Subject Focus:</b>	<b>English Literature</b>
<b>Learning Outcome 8: Paper I and Paper II</b>	I can use evidence from literary texts (poetry, prose and drama), such as close reference, paraphrase and commentary, to support my explanation/discussion and can present these quotes using proper conventions.

<b>Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 1)</b>	<b>Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 2)</b>	<b>Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 3)</b>
8.1a I can, with support, identify parts of the text to defend a claim I made about the text.	8.2a I can summarise a part or parts of a text to defend a claim I made about the text.	8.3a I can use paraphrase as evidence to support a discussion about a text.
8.1b I can, with support, select quotations from a text to support my answer.	8.2b I can comment about the text by using some supporting evidence (e.g. quotations).	8.3b I can discuss the text by using substantial supporting evidence (e.g. paraphrases).

<b>Subject Focus:</b>	<b>English Literature</b>
<b>Learning Outcome 9: Paper I</b>	I can interact with literary texts (poetry, prose and drama) I have read or listened to in a creative way.

Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 1)	Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 2)	Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 3)
9.1a I can, with support, change the point of view of a character or poetic persona featured in a text by rewriting and/or dramatizing the part in a role play.	9.2a I can change the point of view of a character or poetic persona featured in a text by rewriting and/or dramatizing the part in a role play.	
9.1b I can, with support, use at least one literary device in a creative way.	9.2b I can use literary devices in a creative way. <i>e.g. writing a poem, play script or short story</i>	9.3b I can use narrative techniques in creative ways <i>e.g. in a short story.</i>
9.1c I can, with support, reshape the base text to contribute new insight. <i>e.g. extension/change</i>	9.2c I can reshape the base text to contribute new insight. <i>e.g. extension/change</i>	9.3c I can reshape the base text to contribute new insight while keeping in mind appropriacy of style. <i>e.g. extension/change</i>
9.1d I can, with support, create a short, alternative ending to the original text.	9.2d I can change the ending of the original text, thereby contributing a new insight to the original text.	9.3d I can change the ending of the original text and explain how it relates to theme(s).
9.1e I can, with support, change into a complete sentence at least two lines from a poem.	9.2e I can rewrite the stanza of a poem into a short paragraph that resembles prose.	9.3e I can rewrite a whole poem into a prose form.
9.1f I can, with support, change part of a prose text into a short dialogue.	9.2f I can dramatise parts of a prose text.	9.3f I can dramatise parts of a prose text and discuss the effect this change may have on an audience.

<b>Subject Focus:</b>	<b>English Literature</b>
<b>Learning Outcome 10: Paper I</b>	I can interact with a Shakespearean text.

Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 1)	Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 2)	Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 3)
	10.2a I can, with support, use some examples from Shakespeare’s language as it is used as everyday expressions (e.g. vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, etc).	10.3a I can use some examples from Shakespeare’s language as it is used in everyday expressions (e.g. vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, etc).
10.1b I can, with support, identify the main events that occur in a Shakespearean play.	10.2b I can describe the main events that occur in a Shakespearean play.	10.3b I can analyse the main events that occur in a Shakespearean play.
10.1c I can, with support, identify the main characters in a Shakespearean play.	10.2c I can describe character roles in a Shakespearean play.	10.3c I can evaluate character development in a Shakespearean play.
10.1d I can, with support, describe how I feel about a Shakespearean play by giving reasons.	10.2d I can make an informed personal response about the main themes in a Shakespearean play.	10.3d I can make an informed personal response about Shakespeare’s choices of poetic language, dramatic structure and theatrical form.
	10.2e I can explain how Shakespeare was reacting to the context of his time.	10.3e I can demonstrate a clear understanding of social, historical and cultural context when analysing a Shakespearean play.

<b>Subject Focus:</b>	<b>English Literature</b>
<b>Learning Outcome 11: Paper I and Paper II</b>	I can write well organised literature essays and / or speak in an organised manner about poetry, prose and drama, using the appropriate conventions.

Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 1)	Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 2)	Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 3)
11.1a I can, with support, complete a short essay/presentation about different aspects of a literary text.	11.2a I can structure an essay/presentation in a way that includes an introduction, paragraphs in the body and a conclusion.	
	11.2b I can use quotations effectively as an integral part of my writing/presentation. <i>e.g. embedding of quotations, block quotations, etc.</i>	
	11.2c I can present a clear argument when discussing different aspects of a literary text.	11.3c I can present a clear argument/exposition about different aspects of a literary text.
	11.2d I can incorporate literary terminology in my writing/presentation about literary texts.	11.3d I can demonstrate advanced awareness of literary terminology.
	11.2e I can organise my ideas logically in a short, coherent essay/presentation.	11.3e I can present well organised ideas that make my claims clear and effective using cohesive devices appropriately.
		11.3f I can adopt advanced vocabulary when writing about set texts.



<b>Subject Focus:</b>	<b>English Literature</b>
<b>Learning Outcome 12: Paper I and Paper II</b>	I can write/speak accurately using a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect.

<b>Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 1)</b>	<b>Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 2)</b>	<b>Assessment Criteria (LEVEL 3)</b>
12.1a I can, with support, use fairly accurate language.	12.2a I can use language with reasonable accuracy.	12.3a I can use language with consistent accuracy.
12.1b I can, with support, use a fairly good range of vocabulary for clarity, purpose and effect.	12.2b I can use a good range of vocabulary fairly accurately for clarity, purpose and effect.	12.3b I can use a wide range of vocabulary accurately for clarity, purpose and effect.
12.1c I can, with support, use a fairly good range of sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect.	12.2c I can use a good range of sentence structures fairly accurately for clarity, purpose and effect.	12.3c I can use a wide range of sentence structures accurately for clarity, purpose and effect.

# Scheme of Assessment

## School Candidates

The assessment consists of Paper I and Paper 2. Paper I consists of unmoderated school-based assessment (SBA) that is to be set and assessed by the school. Paper II consists of a controlled assessment that will take place at the end of the three-year programme.

**School-based assessment (SBA):** is any type of assessment of a candidate made by the school relevant to the respective SEC syllabus contributing to the final level awarded in the subject.

**Controlled assessment:** is comprised of a two-hour written exam set at the end of the programme and differentiated between two tiers:

- a. Levels 1 and 2;
- b. Levels 2 and 3.

Candidates are to satisfy the examiner in Paper I and Paper II to obtain a level higher than 1.

**Paper I - School Based Assessment:** 30% of the total marks.

The school-based assessment shall be marked out of 100 each year (9, 10 and 11). The assessment for each year will contribute to 10% of the overall mark and will be reported to MATSEC by the school in Year 11. Therefore, each year will equally contribute to the final mark of the school-based assessment. The school-based assessment shall reflect the MATSEC syllabus covered in Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11.

School-based assessment can be pegged at either of two categories:

- SBA at categories 1-2 must identify assessment criteria from these two levels. It is suggested that ACs are weighted at a ratio of 40% at Level 1 and 60% at Level 2.
- SBA at categories 1-2-3 must identify assessment criteria from each of Levels 1, 2, and 3. It is suggested that ACs are weighted at a ratio of 30% at each of Levels 1 and 2, and 40% at Level 3.

The mark for SBA at level categories 1-2 presented for a qualification at level categories 2-3 will be calculated to 60% of the original mark. The mark stands in all other cases.

**Paper II - Controlled Assessment (70% of the total mark)**

**Written Examination (100 marks; 2 hours)**

**Controlled Assessment will:**

- cover all learning outcomes including all learning outcomes which are not indicated to be covered through SBA;
- be marked out of 100.

<b>MQF 1 &amp; 2</b>		
<b>Section</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Mark</b>
A – Poetry	Part A – MCQs, T/F, brief response questions on unseen poem	22
	Part B – Controlled compare and contrast of the unseen poem and a set poem	18
B – Drama	Questions on set texts with guided points. Candidates are required to write three very short paragraphs on a selected text from each section.	30
C – Prose		30

*Table 2: Scheme of Assessment, Levels 1 – 2 (school candidates)*

<b>MQF 2 &amp; 3</b>		
<b>Section</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Mark</b>
A – Poetry	Part A – Guided critical response on unseen poem	20
	Part B – Guided compare and contrast of unseen and set poem	20
B – Drama	Candidates are required to write an essay in response to guided questions linked to the excerpt of their choice.	30
C – Prose	Candidates are required to write an essay in response to guided questions linked to the excerpt of their choice.	30

*Table 3: Scheme of Assessment, Levels 2 – 3 (school candidates)*

### Private Candidates

Private candidates will not be expected to carry out any school-based assessment as school candidates. Instead, private candidates need to sit for another Controlled paper as an alternative to the school-based assessment. Private candidates will be assessed through the means of TWO Controlled papers, one of which is common with school candidates.

### Paper I – Controlled Assessment - Private Candidates Only (30% of the total mark)

#### Written Examination (100 marks)

Paper I for private candidates shall be a controlled assessment assessing levels 1, 2 and 3 as described in the respective syllabus and set and marked by MATSEC. It shall mainly focus on the learning outcomes marked in the respective syllabi as suggested for school-based assessment.

Learning outcomes with assessment criteria in the psychomotor domain can be assessed by asking questions in pen-and-paper format seeking understanding of the activity.

#### Controlled Assessment will:

- be marked out of 100.

MQF 1, 2 & 3 (Paper I)		
Section	Description	Mark
A – Drama	Part A – Review of a Shakespeare text	15
	Part B – Textual intervention (Drama set text)	25
B – Prose	Unseen Prose – Guided questions	30
C – Poetry	Guided comparative task on two set poems	30

**Paper II is common with school candidates**

# Appendices

## A GLOSSARY OF LITERARY TERMS

### LITERARY DEVICES

**Alliteration:** The repetition of initial consonant sounds used especially in poetry to emphasize and link words as well as to create pleasing musical sounds. Example – the fair breeze blew, the white foam flew.

**Allusion:** A reference to a well-known person, place, event, literary work, or work of art to enrich the reading experience by adding meaning.

**Characterisation:** Techniques a writer uses to create and develop a character by what:

- he/she does or says,
- other characters say about him/her, or how they react to him/her
- the author reveals directly or through a narrator.

**Dialect:** Speech that reflects pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar typical of a geographical region.

**Flashback:** Interruption of the chronological (time) order to present something that occurred before the beginning of the story.

**Figurative Language:** Language that has meaning beyond the literal meaning; also known as “figures of speech.”

- Simile: comparison of two things using the words “like” or “as,” e.g. “Her smile was as cold as ice.”
- Metaphor: comparison of two things essentially different but with some similarities; does not use “like” or “as,” e.g. “Her smile was ice.”
- Hyperbole: a purposeful exaggeration for emphasis or humour.
- Personification: human qualities attributed to an animal, object, or idea, e.g. “The wind exhaled.”

**Free Verse:** Poetry that does not conform to a regular meter or rhyme scheme. Poets who write in free verse try to reproduce the natural rhythms of spoken language.

**Foreshadowing:** Important hints that an author drops to prepare the reader for what is to come, and help the reader anticipate the outcome.

**Imagery:** Words or phrases that appeal to the reader’s senses.

**Humour:** The quality of a literary or informative work that makes the character and/or situations seem funny, amusing, or ludicrous.

**Irony:** A technique that involves surprising, interesting, or amusing contradictions or contrasts. Verbal irony occurs when words are used to suggest the opposite of their usual meaning. An irony of situation is when an event occurs that directly contradicts expectations.

**Onomatopoeia:** The use of words that imitate sounds. Examples would be *hiss*, *buzz*, *swish*, and *crunch*.

**Point of View:** Perspective from which the story is told

- First-person: narrator is a character in the story; uses “I,” “we,” etc.
- Third-person: narrator outside the story; uses “he,” “she,” “they”
- Third-person limited: narrator tells only what one character perceives
- Third-person omniscient: narrator can see into the minds of all characters.

**Satire:** Writing that comments humorously on human flaws, ideas, social customs, or institutions in order to change them.

**Style:** The distinctive way that a writer uses language including such factors as word choice, sentence length, arrangement, and complexity, and the use of figurative language and imagery.

**Suspense:** A feeling of excitement, curiosity, or expectation about what will happen.

**Symbol:** Person, place, or thing that represents something beyond itself, most often something concrete or tangible that represents an abstract idea.

## LITERARY FORMS

**Allegory:** A story, play or poem that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or political one.

**Autobiography:** A writer's story of his or her own life.

**Biography:** A writer's account of some other person's life.

**Comedy:** Writing that deals with life in a humorous way, often poking fun at people's mistakes.

**Drama:** Also called a play, this writing form uses dialogue to share its message and is meant to be performed in front of an audience.

**Essay:** A short piece of nonfiction that expresses the writer's opinion or shares information about a subject.

**Fable:** A short story that often uses talking animals as the main characters and teaches an explicit moral or lesson.

**Fantasy:** A story set in an imaginary world in which the characters usually have supernatural powers or abilities.

**Folktale:** A story originally passed from one generation to another by word of mouth only. The characters are usually all good or all bad and in the end are rewarded or punished as they deserve.

**Historical Fiction:** A made-up story that is based on a real time and place in history, so fact is mixed with fiction.

**Myth:** A traditional story intended to explain some mystery of nature, religious doctrine, or cultural belief. The gods and goddesses of mythology have supernatural powers, but the human characters usually do not.

**Novel:** A book-length, fictional prose story. Because of its length, a novel's characters and plot are usually more developed than those of a short story.

**Poetry:** A literary work that uses concise, colourful, often rhythmic language to express ideas or emotions. Examples: ballad, blank verse, free verse, elegy, limerick, sonnet.

**Prose:** A literary work that uses the familiar spoken form of language, sentence after sentence.

**Realistic Fiction:** Writing that attempts to show life as it really is.

**Magic Realism:** Writing in which realistic narrative is combined with surreal elements of dream and fantasy.

**Science Fiction:** Writing based on real or imaginary scientific developments and often set in the future.

**Short Story:** Shorter than a novel, this piece of literature can usually be read in one sitting. Because of its length, it has only a few characters and focuses on one problem or conflict.

## LITERARY ELEMENTS

**Action:** Everything that happens in a story.

**Antagonist:** The person or force that works against the hero of the story. (See protagonist)

**Character:** One of the people (or animals) in a story.

**Climax:** The high point in the action of a story.

**Conflict:** A problem or struggle between two opposing forces in a story.

There are four basic conflicts:

- Person Against Person: A problem between characters.
- Person Against Self: A problem within a character's own mind.
- Person Against Society: A problem between a character and society, school, the law, or some tradition.
- Person Against Nature: A problem between a character and some element of nature—a blizzard, a hurricane, a mountain climb, etc.

**Dialogue:** The conversations that characters have with one another.

**Exposition:** The part of the story, usually near the beginning, in which the characters are introduced, the background is explained, and the setting is described.

**Falling Action:** The action and dialogue following the climax that lead the reader into the story's end.

**Mood:** The feeling a piece of literature is intended to create in a reader.

**Moral:** The lesson a story teaches.

**Narrator:** The person or character who actually tells the story, filling in the background information and bridging the gaps between dialogue. (See Point of View)

**Plot:** The action that makes up the story, following a plan called the plot line.

**Plot line:** The planned action or series of events in a story. There are five parts: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.

**Protagonist:** The main character in a story, often a good or heroic type.

**Resolution:** The part of the story in which the problems are solved and the action comes to a satisfying end.

**Rising Action:** The central part of the story during which various problems arise after a conflict is introduced.

**Setting:** The place and the time frame in which a story takes place.

**Style:** The distinctive way that a writer uses language including such factors as word choice, sentence length, arrangement, and complexity, and the use of figurative language and imagery.

**Theme:** The message about life or human nature that is "the focus" in the story that the writer tells.

**Tone:** The writer's attitude towards a subject or an audience. Tone is generally conveyed through the choice of words, or the viewpoint of a writer on a particular subject.

## Set texts for SEC English Literature

Genre	LEVEL 1-2-3
Drama	
	1. <i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</i> by Simon Stephens (play script)
	2. <i>A View from the Bridge</i> by Arthur Miller
	3. <i>Macbeth</i> by William Shakespeare
	4. <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> by William Shakespeare
	5. <i>Wild Girl, Wild Boy*</i> and <i>Skellig</i> by David Almond
Prose	
	1. <i>The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas</i> by John Boyne
	2. <i>A Christmas Carol</i> by Charles Dickens
	3. <i>Animal Farm</i> by George Orwell
	4. <i>Listen to the Moon</i> by Michael Morpurgo
	5. <i>The Breadwinner</i> by Deborah Ellis*
	6. <i>Short Stories:</i>
	a. <i>The Red Room</i> by H. G. Wells
	b. <i>Farthing House</i> by Susan Hill
	c. <i>The Whole Town's Sleeping</i> by Ray Bradbury
	d. <i>A Terribly Strange Bed</i> by Wilkie Collins
	e. <i>The Landlady</i> by Roald Dahl
	f. <i>Lamb to the Slaughter</i> by Roald Dahl
	g. <i>The Speckled Band</i> by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Poetry	
	1. <i>The Sea</i> by James Reeves*
	2. <i>Night Mail</i> by W.H. Auden
	3. <i>We Refugees</i> by Benjamin Zephaniah*
	4. <i>Dulce et Decorum Est</i> by Wilfred Owen
	5. <i>We are Going to See the Rabbit</i> by Alan Brownjohn*
	6. <i>Caged Bird</i> by Maya Angelou*
	7. <i>Ozymandias</i> by Percy Bysshe Shelley
	8. <i>Valentine</i> by Carol Ann Duffy*
	9. <i>Sonnet LX</i> by William Shakespeare
	10. <i>Slow Reader</i> by Vicki Feaver*
	11. <i>First Day at School</i> by Roger McGough*
	12. <i>Fireworks</i> by James Reeves*

\*Titles marked with an asterisk refer to the list of texts linked to the LEVEL 1-2 controlled assessment.



**Set Texts: Poetry**

**The Sea**

The sea is a hungry dog,  
Giant and grey.  
He rolls on the beach all day.  
With his clashing teeth and shaggy jaws  
Hour upon hour he gnaws  
The rumbling, tumbling stones,  
And 'Bones, bones, bones, bones!'  
The giant sea-dog moans,  
Licking his greasy paws.

And when the night wind roars  
And the moon rocks in the stormy cloud,  
He bounds to his feet and snuffs and sniffs,  
Shaking his wet sides over the cliffs,  
And howls and hollos long and loud.

But on quiet days in May or June,  
When even the grasses on the dune  
Play no more their reedy tune,  
With his head between his paws  
He lies on the sandy shores,  
So quiet, so quiet, he scarcely snores.

James Reeves

*(Source: The New Dragon Book of Verse, ed. Harrison & Stuart-Clark (Oxford University Press))*

## Night Mail

This is the Night Mail crossing the Border,  
Bringing the cheque and the postal order,

Letters for the rich, letters for the poor,  
The shop at the corner, the girl next door.

Pulling up Beattock, a steady climb:  
The gradient's against her, but she's on time.

Past cotton-grass and moorland boulder,  
Shovelling white steam over her shoulder,

Snorting noisily, she passes  
Silent miles of wind-bent grasses.

Birds turn their heads as she approaches,  
Stare from bushes at her blank-faced coaches.

Sheep-dogs cannot turn her course;  
They slumber on with paws across.

In the farm she passes no one wakes,  
But a jug in a bedroom gently shakes.

Dawn freshens. Her climb is done.  
Down towards Glasgow she descends,  
Towards the steam tugs yelping down a glade of cranes,  
Towards the fields of apparatus, the furnaces  
Set on the dark plain like gigantic chessmen.  
All Scotland waits for her:  
In dark glens, beside pale-green lochs,  
Men long for news.

Letters of thanks, letters from banks,  
Letters of joy from girl and boy,  
Receipted bills and invitations  
To inspect new stock or to visit relations,  
And applications for situations,  
And timid lovers' declarations,  
And gossip, gossip from all the nations,  
News circumstantial, news financial,  
Letters with holiday snaps to enlarge in,  
Letters with faces scrawled on the margin,  
Letters from uncles, cousins, and aunts,  
Letters to Scotland from the South of France,  
Letters of condolence to Highlands and Lowlands,  
Written on paper of every hue,  
The pink, the violet, the white and the blue,  
The chatty, the catty, the boring, the adoring.  
The cold and official and the heart's outpouring,  
Clever, stupid, short and long,  
The typed and the printed and the spelt all wrong.

Thousands are still asleep,  
Dreaming of terrifying monsters  
Or of friendly tea beside the band in Cranston's or Crawford's:

Asleep in working Glasgow, asleep in well-set Edinburgh,  
Asleep in granite Aberdeen,  
They continue their dreams,  
But shall wake soon and hope for letters,  
And none will hear the postman's knock  
Without a quickening of the heart.  
For who can bear to feel himself forgotten?

W.H. Auden

*(Source: The Complete Works of W. H. Auden: Poems, Volume I: 1927–1939, 2022, Editor: Edward Mendelson, pp.627-8)*

## **We Refugees**

I come from a musical place  
Where they shoot me for my song  
And my brother has been tortured  
By my brother in my land.

I come from a beautiful place  
Where they hate my shade of skin  
They don't like the way I pray  
And they ban free poetry.

I come from a beautiful place  
Where girls cannot go to school  
There you are told what to believe  
And even young boys must grow beards.

I come from a great old forest  
I think it is now a field  
And the people I once knew  
Are not there now.

We can all be refugees  
Nobody is safe,  
All it takes is a mad leader  
Or no rain to bring forth food,  
We can all be refugees  
We can all be told to go,  
We can be hated by someone  
For being someone.

I come from a beautiful place  
Where the valley floods each year  
And each year the hurricane tells us  
That we must keep moving on.

I come from an ancient place  
All my family were born there  
And I would like to go there  
But I really want to live.

I come from a sunny, sandy place  
Where tourists go to darken skin  
And dealers like to sell guns there  
I just can't tell you what's the price.

I am told I have no country now  
I am told I am a lie  
I am told that modern history books  
May forget my name.

We can all be refugees  
Sometimes it only takes a day,  
Sometimes it only takes a handshake  
Or a paper that is signed.  
We all came from refugees  
Nobody simply just appeared,  
Nobody's here without a struggle,  
And why should we live in fear  
Of the weather or the troubles?  
We all came here from somewhere.

Benjamin Zephaniah

*(Source: <http://benjaminzephaniah.com/rhyming/we-refugees/>)*

### **Dulce et Decorum Est**

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,  
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,  
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs  
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.  
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots  
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;  
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots  
Of gas shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys! — An ecstasy of fumbling,  
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;  
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling,  
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime...  
Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,  
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,  
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace  
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,  
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;  
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,  
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud  
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, —  
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest  
To children ardent for some desperate glory,  
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est  
Pro patria mori.

Wilfred Owen

*(Sources: 'War Poem', Jon Stallworthy, 2009 & British Library Collection, [Link](#) to manuscript)*

### **We are Going to See the Rabbit**

We are going to see the rabbit.  
We are going to see the rabbit.  
Which rabbit, people say?  
Which rabbit, ask the children?  
Which rabbit?  
The only rabbit,  
The only rabbit in England,  
Sitting behind a barbed-wire fence  
Under the floodlights, neon lights,  
Sodium lights,  
Nibbling grass  
On the only patch of grass  
In England, in England  
(except the grass by the hoardings  
Which doesn't count.)  
We are going to see the rabbit  
And we must be there on time.

First we shall go by escalator,  
Then we shall go by underground,  
And then we shall go by motorway,  
And then by helicopterway,  
And the last 10 yards we shall have to go  
On foot.

And now we are going  
All the way to see the rabbit,  
We are nearly there,  
We are longing to see it,  
And so is the crowd  
Which is here in thousands  
With mounted policemen  
And big loudspeakers  
And bands and banners,  
And everyone has come a long way.

But soon we shall see it  
Sitting and nibbling  
The blades of grass  
In – but something has gone wrong!  
Why is everyone so angry,  
Why is everyone jostling  
And slanging and complaining?

The rabbit has gone,  
Yes, the rabbit has gone.  
He has actually burrowed down into the earth  
And made himself a warren, under the earth,  
Despite all these people,  
And what shall we do?  
What *can* we do?

It is all a pity, you must be disappointed,  
Go home and do something for today,  
Go home again, go home for today.  
For you cannot hear the rabbit, under the earth,  
Remarking rather sadly to himself, by himself,  
As he rests in his warren, under the earth:  
'It won't be long, they are bound to come,  
They are bound to come and find me, even here.'

Alan Brownjohn

*(Sources: <https://poemanalysis.com/alan-brownjohn/to-see-the-rabbit/>, Collected Poems: 1952-2006)*

## **Caged Bird**

A free bird leaps  
on the back of the wind  
and floats downstream  
till the current ends  
and dips his wing  
in the orange sun rays  
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks  
down his narrow cage  
can seldom see through  
his bars of rage  
his wings are clipped and  
his feet are tied  
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
of things unknown  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on the distant hill  
for the caged bird  
sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze  
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees  
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn bright lawn  
and he names the sky his own.

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams  
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream  
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied  
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
of things unknown  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on the distant hill  
for the caged bird  
sings of freedom.

Maya Angelou

*(Source: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/48989/caged-bird>)*

## Ozymandias

I met a traveller from an antique land  
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of old command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:  
And on the pedestal these words appear:  
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:  
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

*(Source: The New Dragon Book of Verse, ed. Harrison & Stuart-Clark (Oxford University Press))*

**Valentine**

Not a red rose or a satin heart.

I give you an onion.  
It is a moon wrapped in brown paper.  
It promises light  
like the careful undressing of love.

Here.  
It will blind you with tears  
like a lover.  
It will make your reflection  
a wobbling photo of grief.

I am trying to be truthful.

Not a cute card or a kissogram.

I give you an onion.  
Its fierce kiss will stay on your lips,  
possessive and faithful  
as we are,  
for as long as we are.

Take it.  
Its platinum loops shrink to a wedding ring,  
if you like.  
Lethal.  
Its scent will cling to your fingers,  
cling to your knife.

Carol Ann Duffy

(Source: <https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poem/valentine/>)



**Sonnet LX**

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,  
So do our minutes hasten to their end;  
Each changing place with that which goes before,  
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.  
Nativity, once in the main of light,  
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,  
Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,  
And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.  
Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth  
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,  
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,  
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow:  
    And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,  
    Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

William Shakespeare

*(Source: The New Dragon Book of Verse, ed. Harrison & Stuart-Clark (Oxford University Press))*

### Slow Reader

He can make sculptures  
and fabulous machines,  
invent games, tell jokes,  
give solemn, adult advice –  
but he is slow to read.  
When I take him on my knee  
with his *Ladybird* book  
he gazes into the air,  
sighing and shaking his head  
like an old man  
who knows the mountains  
are impassable.

He toys with words,  
letting them go cold  
as gristly meat,  
until I relent  
and let him wriggle free:  
a fish returning  
to its element,  
or a white-eyed colt – shying  
from the bit – who sees  
that if he takes it  
in his mouth  
he'll never run  
quite free again.

Vicki Feaver

(Source: <https://poetryarchive.org/poem/slow-reader/>, 1981)

## First Day at School

A millionbillionwillion miles from home  
Waiting for the bell to go. (To go where?)  
Why are they all so big, other children?  
So noisy? So much at home they  
must have been born in uniform.  
Lived all their lives in playgrounds.  
Spent the years inventing games  
that don't let me in. Games  
that are rough, that swallow you up.

And the railings.  
All around, the railings.  
Are they to keep out wolves and monsters?  
Things that carry off and eat children?  
Things you don't take sweets from?  
Perhaps they're to stop us getting out  
Running away from the lessins. Lessin.  
What does a lessin look like?  
Sounds small and slimy.  
They keep them in the classrooms.  
Whole rooms made out of glass. Imagine.

I wish I could remember my name  
Mummy said it would come in useful.  
Like wellies. When there's puddles.  
Yellowwellies. I wish she was here.  
I think my name is sewn on somewhere  
Perhaps the teacher will read it for me.  
Tea'cher. The one who makes the tea.

Roger McGough

*(Source: The New Oxford Book of Children's Verse, 1998 (Revised Edition), Editor: Neil Philip, p.290)*

## Fireworks

They rise like sudden fiery flowers  
That burst upon the night,  
Then fall to earth in burning showers  
Of crimson, blue and white.

Like buds too wonderful to name,  
Each miracle unfolds  
And Catherine wheels begin to flame  
Like whirling marigolds.

Rockets and Roman candles make  
An orchard of the sky,  
Where magic trees their petals shake  
Upon each gazing eye.

John Morris (James) Reeves

*(Source: <https://fromtroublesofthisworld.wordpress.com/2016/11/05/fireworks-by-john-morris-james-reeves/>)*