

## National Unit Specification: general information

**UNIT** English: Literary Study (Higher)

**NUMBER** D8VJ 12

**COURSE** English (Higher)

### SUMMARY

While each unit in the Higher course requires deployment and development of reading, writing, talking and listening skills for a range of purposes, the Literary Study unit focuses on the reading of literature and on responding critically to that reading. Candidates will read and learn about a variety of literary texts of recognised quality. The skills and concepts acquired and developed will enable candidates to respond in different ways to texts which have been studied by the class, group or individual and to unseen texts. The texts which are studied should be drawn from at least two of the four genres prose fiction, poetry, drama and mass media – and at least one of these texts should be Scottish.

Literary Study is a mandatory component unit of the Higher English course. It may also be used to form part of other unit groupings created to fulfil particular purposes. The unit builds upon skills and experience gained in Standard Grade English or in Intermediate 2 English.

The content of the unit comprises:

- the skills and concepts required for reading literary texts of quality
- the skills and concepts required for responding critically (in essays/analyses) to literary texts of quality
- the skills and concepts required for individual talk, discussion and listening.

### OUTCOME

A Textual Analysis of an unseen text.

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### Administrative Information

**Superclass:** FC

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## **National Unit Specification: general information (cont)**

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### **RECOMMENDED ENTRY**

While entry is at the discretion of the centre, candidates would normally be expected to have attained one of the following:

- Standard Grade English at Credit level
- Intermediate 2 English.

### **CREDIT VALUE**

1 credit at Higher.

### **CORE SKILLS**

There is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components in this unit.

Additional information about core skills is published in the *Catalogue of Core Skills in National Qualifications* (SQA, 2001).

## **National Unit Specification: statement of standards**

### **UNIT**      English: Literary Study (Higher)

Acceptable performance in this unit will be the satisfactory achievement of the standards set out in this part of the unit specification. All sections of the statement of standards are mandatory and cannot be altered without reference to the Scottish Qualifications Authority.

#### **OUTCOME**

A Textual Analysis of an unseen text.

#### **Performance criteria**

##### *Understanding*

Responses demonstrate secure understanding of key elements, central concerns and significant details of the text.

##### *Analysis*

Responses explain accurately and in detail the ways in which aspects of structure/style/language contribute to meaning/effect/impact.

##### *Evaluation*

Responses reveal engagement with the text or aspects of the text and stated or implied evaluation of effectiveness, using appropriate critical terminology and substantiated by detailed and relevant evidence from the text.

#### **Evidence requirements**

One Textual Analysis of an unseen text.

The Textual Analysis must be of a previously unseen literary text (prose or poetry or drama).

The responses to the Textual Analysis must be unassisted and written in the presenting centre under supervision.

The candidate must meet all of the performance criteria in response to one text.

## National Unit Specification: support notes

### UNIT English: Literary Study (Higher)

This part of the unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

#### GUIDANCE ON THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT FOR THIS UNIT

While all language purposes may be covered in this unit, there will be particular focus on purposes related to critical appreciation and analysis of literature.

**The candidate will analyse, study and respond to texts drawn from at least two of the following four genres:**

- prose (novel(s), or a selection of short stories, or extended personal account(s) such as autobiography, memoirs, diary, travelogue, essays, etc)
- poetry (a selection)
- drama
- mass media.

**The candidate will engage in a variety of reading, writing, talking and listening activities such as:**

- class and personal study of texts
- analysing literary devices and effects
- group discussion and presentation of ideas about texts
- organising and formulating critical ideas in discussion papers and essays
- discussing different approaches to and ideas about texts with teachers/lecturers and peers
- exploring the insights and judgements of others
- acquiring critical concepts and awareness of concepts through direct teaching
- applying critical concepts through exploration of texts
- witnessing performance(s).

#### **Outcome**

A Textual Analysis of an unseen text.

The candidate will be assessed in critical reading and response through a Textual Analysis of an unseen text.

The summary table gives indication of content and context. Opportunities for talking and listening activities will arise as candidates pursue study in this unit.

The texts studied should include at least one Scottish text.

Works in translation may be studied.

## National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

### UNIT English: Literary Study (Higher)

#### GUIDANCE ON LEARNING AND TEACHING APPROACHES FOR THIS UNIT

The process of studying any text at any level of development should involve candidates in recognising and responding to its major aspects – eg themes, structure, plot, characterisation – and also in detailed analysis of the writer’s craft and of the ways in which the reader’s previous experience interacts with it to construct meaning. Whatever the degree of sophistication of the text and of expected candidate output, both elements should be there. Effective reading involves pursuit of meaning and appreciation of how it has been constructed, both in the detail of a text and in its broader characteristics. Ability to write critically about a text depends on awareness of and reflection on its major elements and also on understanding of how language is used to convey important or specially interesting aspects of the author’s intentions or to stimulate the reader’s mind in particularly interesting ways. If a text is approached from a “post-modern”, “deconstruction” angle, such close reading is also important for exposing hidden assumptions or ideologies informing the text. If candidates learn to analyse texts they are studying, they not only give themselves a firm foundation for writing critical essays about major aspects, but also develop a crucial set of skills for pursuing meaning in their interactions with any texts, including “unseen” texts.

Candidates will, therefore, develop a variety of close and extended reading skills and respond critically to a range of texts chosen from:

- prose: novel(s), or a selection of short stories, or personal accounts such as autobiography, travelogue, essays, diaries
- poetry (a selection)
- drama
- mass media.

Texts and extracts will, of course, be chosen with an eye to their particular appeal and suitability for a class or group, but early in the unit/course it is likely that texts will be chosen for their accessibility and obvious richness of language. Such **demonstration** texts will allow confidence-building. It is at this point that teachers/lecturers may choose to model approaches, showing how meaning is made through interaction with texts, through asking appropriate questions of the text and through relating the text to personal and literary experience. In this way, candidates will learn how experts approach a text at this level. They will also extend and enrich their experience through sharing and discussing strategies and viewpoints. As confidence and skills grow, candidates should be introduced to more demanding material.

This material will consist of a range of texts studied in depth (leading on to critical essays) to prepare for external course assessment. There will also be progression to analysis of complex “unseen” short texts or extracts (prose, poetry and drama) to continue the development of close reading skills.

Texts written by local authors, texts written in local dialect, and texts dealing with contentious or contemporary issues all fall within the scope of this unit. Teachers/lecturers will ensure, of course, that all texts selected are of high quality.

## National Unit Specification: support notes (cont)

### UNIT English: Literary Study (Higher)

#### Variety of Approaches

Teachers/lecturers will develop skills of analysis and critical response using a variety of methods.

Teaching approaches may include group discussion, sometimes with starter papers, and individual presentations, as well as strategies such as sequencing, prediction, annotation of text (dividing, marking, questioning), note-taking and researching, which might be used to develop skills in analysis and reflection. Collaborative investigation of text will enable candidates to try out ideas and to gain confidence in a group situation before moving on to explore texts independently. Writing about a text or about chosen aspects of a text, even at an early stage in its study, helps candidates to explore it. Such writing may cross usefully into the creative domain as candidates attempt extension, imitation and even parody. By means of such activities, command of critical concepts and vocabulary can be strengthened. Contextualised study and discussion can be supported by direct teaching and the use of appropriate critical texts and reference books. Some texts benefit from audio-visual presentation. At each stage and in every activity, candidates will be required to form points of view and to substantiate these with evidence from the text.

In order to respond with maturity to the language use of others, the candidate should be familiar with:

- language varieties (for example, register, dialect, standard and non-standard forms, Scots language forms, changing forms of language)
- classifications of language (for example, noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction, article, sentence, clause, phrase/group)
- conventions of written language
- critical terminology (for example, genre, literary terms, language features) for discussing prose, poetry, drama and media texts.

Appropriate contexts for developing knowledge may occur as a result of unit/course activities, but some direct teaching, such as modelling or explanation of concepts, may be required. Candidates should then be encouraged to demonstrate increasing independence in applying methods taught and knowledge acquired to the texts being studied.

Directed questions will focus on various aspects of texts, such as:

- identification and exploration of key ideas
- characterisation
- use of dialogue
- structure
- word choice
- tone
- narrative stance
- mood
- creation of a sense of place
- techniques/devices
- conventions of genre
- syntax
- layout.

## **National Unit Specification: support notes**

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These items are not hierarchical. Nor is it expected that an exhaustive analysis of all or most of these items will take place in relation to any single text. The candidate should be able to explore key areas of the text in an informed way and to do so independently.

#### **GUIDANCE ON APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT FOR THIS UNIT**

As assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching process, the candidate should be encouraged to read widely and to undertake a number of activities for formative purposes.

#### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

This unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. Special needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering special alternative outcomes for units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements* (SQA, 2001).