

Next Generation Higher National Unit Specification

Literature: Close Reading Skills (SCQF level 7)

Unit code: J76D 47
SCQF level: 7 (8 SCQF credit points)
Valid from: session 2023–24

Prototype unit specification for use in pilot delivery only (version 1.0) March 2023

This unit specification provides detailed information about the unit to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year.

This unit specification is for teachers and lecturers and contains all the mandatory information required to deliver and assess the unit.

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This edition: March 2023 (version 1.0)

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Unit purpose

This unit helps learners to develop skills in reading, understanding and appreciating a range of literary texts from different historical periods, and to demonstrate this understanding and appreciation by producing literary criticism, including practical criticism.

Entry to the unit is at your centre's discretion. However, we recommend that learners have communication and literary skills to at least SCQF level 6 or equivalent.

Learners can take the unit as part of a Higher National Group Award (HN Group Award). They can also study it as a stand-alone unit for continuing professional development.

Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

- 1 analyse and interpret prose from different time periods
- 2 analyse and interpret poetry from different time periods

Evidence requirements

Learners should provide written or oral evidence covering both outcomes, produced under open-book conditions. You should give learners each assessment task at appropriate points in the unit. Learners should submit their work for marking on a date that you have provided or agreed with them.

Analyse and interpret prose from different time periods (outcome 1)

Learners must analyse two prose texts from different time periods. They must produce a written response of at least 500 words on each text or an oral presentation of approximately 5 minutes on each prose text. Texts selected should be short, complete works, or extracts of about 500 words.

Learners' responses must:

- ◆ summarise key elements and central concerns
- ◆ interpret underlying meaning
- ◆ explain the narrative method
- ◆ analyse significant linguistic and literary features
- ◆ discuss the literary techniques used
- ◆ explain the analysis and interpretation, using appropriate critical terminology
- ◆ support comments with detailed reference to the text

Analyse and interpret poetry from different time periods (outcome 2)

Learners must analyse two poems from different time periods. They must produce a written response of at least 500 words on each poem or an oral presentation of approximately 5 minutes on each poem.

Learners' responses for outcome 2 must:

- ◆ summarise key elements and central concerns
- ◆ interpret underlying meaning
- ◆ identify persona/implied speaker
- ◆ analyse significant linguistic and literary features
- ◆ discuss the creative techniques used
- ◆ explain the analysis and interpretation, using appropriate critical terminology
- ◆ support comments with detailed reference to the text

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Learners must fully reference their assessments, using reliable sources appropriate for SCQF level 7. They must list all sources in a bibliography or reference list, in a recognised standard format such as Harvard or APA.

The SCQF level of the unit provides additional context relating to the quality of evidence. Learners should:

- ◆ contribute information that is complex, accurate and relevant to its purpose and audience
- ◆ present ideas clearly and coherently
- ◆ use a structure that is appropriate to the purpose
- ◆ provide supporting evidence or references

Knowledge and skills

The following table shows the knowledge and skills covered by the unit outcomes:

Knowledge	Skills
<p>Outcome 1 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ how the following literary techniques add meaning to prose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — structure or plot — characterisation — setting in time and place — tone, mood and atmosphere — dialogue — imagery, style or language including, where appropriate, distinctive use of dialect, syntax and diction — method of narration and point of view — theme — distinctive genre of prose, where appropriate — other distinctive literary or linguistic features, where appropriate 	<p>Outcome 1 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ use close reading skills to analyse and interpret prose from different time periods
<p>Outcome 2 Learners should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ how the following literary techniques add meaning to poetry: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — verse form or poetic structure — personal point of view — poetic technique — figurative use of language — mood and tone — other distinctive poetic and linguistic features, where appropriate — overall effect or underlying meaning 	<p>Outcome 2 Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ use close reading skills to analyse and interpret poetry from different time periods

Meta-skills

Throughout the unit, learners develop meta-skills to enhance their employability. This unit helps learners develop the meta-skills of self-management, social intelligence and innovation. Learners should develop meta-skills naturally throughout the unit. You should encourage learners to develop a minimum of one area in each of the three categories, but they do not need to cover all suggested subsections. The following suggestions may help shape delivery and assessment, and vary depending on the chosen topics and assessment method.

Self-management

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ focusing: processing, understanding, filtering and sorting relevant facts and knowledge to complete assessments to clear deadlines; producing appropriate work
- ◆ integrity: sourcing information ethically; demonstrating the skill of academic referencing
- ◆ adapting: acquiring new knowledge and skills, as well as using different technologies to communicate, carry out research and complete assessments; working through a virtual learning environment (VLE); reflecting on own performance
- ◆ initiative: decision making; reading and thinking about useful sources using library facilities; sticking to tasks and making sufficient progress; setting own deadlines during the assessment

Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ communicating: listening to information on how to analyse using close reading skills; explaining ideas; producing suitable, understandable assessment responses; sharing written or oral ideas and opinions on ideas covered in the unit
- ◆ feeling: discussing specific prose or poetry, and expressing opinions and understanding other perspectives; respecting each other's viewpoint in discussions
- ◆ collaborating: working together on projects; taking account of others in planning and carrying out tasks; building relationships with peers

Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

- ◆ curiosity: seeking knowledge about literary techniques and examples of prose and poetry; making the most of library research time; taking part in class discussion and debate; questioning ideas
- ◆ sense-making: participating in discussions; blending a range of ideas; considering and evaluating different ideas

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- ◆ critical thinking: making logical connections and reasoned judgements through discussion, debate and drawing conclusions based on evidence; reviewing and evaluating written information

Learners could also develop other meta-skills in the unit, depending on the learning and teaching activities you carry out. These include:

- ◆ social intelligence: leading
- ◆ innovation: creativity

Literacies

Learners develop core skills in the following literacies:

Communication

Learners develop communication skills by presenting information in written or oral form. It is part of the evidence requirements for the unit to ensure learners convey complex ideas in a well-structured and coherent way, with references where appropriate. You can give learners opportunities to carry out oral presentations and engage in discussions.

Digital

Learners develop digital skills and computer literacy by using digital packages to produce assessments, and internet sources to research information on close reading skills and literary techniques. You can give them guidance on appropriate sources. Using a VLE also supports digital skills.

Learning for Sustainability

Learning for Sustainability aims to build the values, attitudes, knowledge, skills and confidence needed to develop practices and make decisions that are compatible with a sustainable and equitable society. In the unit, there are opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of social sustainability in specific works of prose or poetry used to develop skills or in assessment, that may touch on or directly link to the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#).

Delivery of unit

You can deliver this unit as part of an HN Group Award or as a stand-alone unit.

The overall unit delivery time is a notional 40 hours of contact time for delivery and assessment. We expect learners to commit to a further 40 hours of self-directed study.

The amount of time you allocate to each outcome is at your discretion. We suggest the following distribution of time, including assessment:

Outcome 1 — Analyse and interpret prose from different time periods (20 hours).

Outcome 2 — Analyse and interpret poetry from different time periods (20 hours).

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

Content and context for this unit

This unit helps learners to develop skills in reading, understanding and appreciating a range of literary texts from different time periods. It also develops skills in producing literary criticism, including practical criticism.

The unit is concerned with close reading skills as applied to literature, in contrast with the more traditional literature course. It focuses specifically on exploring literary technique by close analysis of extracts of prose texts, and shorter forms of poetry or extracts from longer poems.

For each outcome, you must assess learners on two texts from different time periods, likely to be at least a decade apart. There is no restriction on the type of literature learners can study, as long as it allows serious critical analysis using close reading techniques. You should select a variety of texts to enable learners to appreciate the diversity of language, style, form and concerns of literature from different eras and cultures. Suitable prose could include short stories, or extracts from a novel, biography or autobiography, prose drama, travel writing or memoirs. Suitable poetry could be traditional, modernist or contemporary. Some Scottish literature makes particularly effective use of literary techniques to convey themes and ideas that define an era by marking significant change in the perception of roles of gender and race, as well as the influence of established world views about science or religion.

You can support the study of these texts by comparing and contrasting them with thematically linked texts, writers' visits, studying the television, radio and film adaptations of texts, group work and independent research, and your direct exposition.

Formative work may include reading and analysing literature and current reviews, background research, class and group discussions, oral presentations, and produce critical analysis on a range of prose and poetry. Discussion and questions should relate to what is contained in the text, but learners could benefit from an understanding of the wider context. Learners need not be wholly unfamiliar with the texts but should not have analysed them in detail previously.

Approaches to delivery

You should structure the teaching programme to allow time for learners to develop meta-skills. You could help them to review the practical skills needed to analyse prose and poetry using close reading skills. You should allow time for formative work to practise and develop skills, and for discussion.

You can approach the outcomes in any order, or you can connect the outcomes thematically to allow a holistic approach to the development of relevant close reading skills.

Learners can benefit from a varied and active learning approach, where they engage in supported, independent and collaborative learning. You should encourage learners to take a participative and practical approach. Delivery methods could include:

- ◆ tutorial question and answer sessions
- ◆ individual and group research tasks
- ◆ presenting findings
- ◆ VLE
- ◆ digital tools and social media
- ◆ film and visual images
- ◆ close reading of sources

The section on meta-skills provides further guidance on incorporating different skills into delivery and evidence.

Throughout the unit, you should structure teaching to give learners opportunities to do individual and group activities. You can shape delivery and assessment to support learners to develop their academic skills, such as time management, multi-tasking ability, digital skills, essay-writing skills and questioning ability. You can design formative and summative activities and assessments that encourage learners to practise the skills they need to progress to the next level of study.

Approaches to assessment

You can generate evidence using different types of assessment. The following are suggestions only. There may be other methods that would be more suitable for learners.

You should assess learners after the appropriate amount of learning and skills development. If you assess each outcome separately, you should spread assessment across the unit at appropriate points. You can start with outcome 1 or outcome 2, as learners develop the skills of close reading and analysing in either outcome. You can choose where to start based on your learners' interests and needs.

You could assess each outcome separately using structured questions (at least five questions on each text or poem) for one poem or text, and essays for another with scaffolding or prompts, by an oral presentation or poster exhibition with oral explanation, or by a learner-created blog or website. You can use any method of assessment that allows learners to meet the evidence requirements.

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Learners' responses should relate to what is contained in the texts or poetry; wider reference is not required. Learners need not be wholly unfamiliar with the texts but should not have analysed them in detail previously.

You could assess each outcome separately on different themes, for example, love, loneliness, betrayal or conflict, or connect both outcomes thematically.

You could also assess the unit holistically, using an open-book assessment that covers both outcomes. The assessment could take the form of a project that uses close reading techniques on two texts and two poems connected by theme or literary techniques. If you decide to combine the two outcomes in one project, rather than two or four individual assessments, we recommend you do this towards the end of the unit.

Whatever method learners choose, they must provide a written response of approximately 500 words, or an individual oral presentation of 5 minutes in duration for each piece of prose or poem. This means that, to cover the requirements, learners' responses would amount to a total of approximately 2,000 words or 20 minutes across both outcomes. If learners choose an oral method, we recommend that you record this in some form and provide assessor notes and source notes on the presentation for external verification purposes.

You can choose to use a mix of methods across a group, as it may be more suitable for some learners to give a written response and for others to use an oral method. If using a poster and an oral presentation, learners should spend 5 minutes on the oral input for each piece of prose or poem. Whichever method learners choose, they must be able to access notes, textbooks and other materials, as it is an open-book assessment.

You should make learners aware of the importance of good judgement in selecting appropriate academic sources. You should encourage them to choose academic sources rather than generic search engines, to enable them to be more confident of information and better equipped to progress to SCQF level 8 units.

If learners are creating a blog or website for their assessment, it should not be in the public domain. Rather, it should be on an intranet or private area of your VLE to reduce the likelihood of plagiarism.

Authenticating learners' work is essential. You could collect notes or visual presentation materials from learners as further evidence of meeting SCQF level 7. You should monitor learners' progress throughout to authenticate submitted work. Where possible, you should use plagiarism detection software.

It is important that learners' responses to the assessment are at SCQF level 7.

Opportunities for e-assessment

Assessment that is supported by information and communication technology (ICT), such as e-testing or the use of e-portfolios or social software, may be appropriate for some assessments in this unit.

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If your centre wants to use e-assessment, you must ensure that you apply the national standard to all evidence and that conditions of assessment (as specified in the evidence requirements) are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence.

Equality and inclusion

This unit is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

You should take into account the needs of individual learners when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and/or those with additional support needs is available on the assessment arrangements web page:

www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements.

Information for learners

Literature: Close Reading Skills (SCQF level 7)

This information explains:

- ◆ what the unit is about
- ◆ what you should know or be able to do before you start
- ◆ what you need to do during the unit
- ◆ opportunities for further learning and employment

Unit information

The unit develops your skills in reading, understanding and appreciating a range of literary texts from different time periods. You explore literary techniques by analysing extracts of prose texts, and shorter forms of poetry or extracts from longer poems. You also produce literary criticism, including practical criticism, on a range of prose and poetry.

Before you start the unit, you should have good communication skills.

On completion of the unit, you are able to:

- 1 analyse and interpret prose from different time periods
- 2 analyse and interpret poetry from different time periods

You are assessed by open-book assessments covering both unit outcomes. This means that you have access to materials such as textbooks, notes and your virtual learning environment (VLE). You can give your assessment response in writing or orally. You will be assessed on two pieces of prose for outcome 1 and two poems for outcome 2. If your response is written, it must be approximately 500 words for each of the four items, and if oral, it must be 5 minutes for each of the four items.

Meta-skills

Throughout the unit, you can develop meta-skills to enhance your employability.

Meta-skills include self-management, social intelligence and innovation.

You develop these naturally as you take part in the learning and teaching activities and produce assessment responses. Improving meta-skills, such as organising your time (self-management) and communicating ideas clearly (social intelligence), is useful for current and future study, and employment.

Administrative information

Published: March 2023 (version 1.0)

Superclass: FC

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date

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