



# Literature

A stylized illustration of a quill pen resting on an inkwell. The quill is positioned as if it has just finished writing the word 'Literature', with a small splash of ink at the tip of the pen.

# Literature as part of the learners' entitlement

Literature holds a prominent role in the learners' personal, social and linguistic development. The reader becomes emotionally attached to the story and this has positive effects not only on one's personal growth but also on the whole learning process. Literature is authentic material that encourages interaction, expands language awareness and educates the whole person (Clandfield).

Literature can be a very flexible tool for English teachers as it requires no specialist training. It can be brief, contemporary and relevant, it enhances, supplements and complements the curriculum, it aids speaking and reading skills, it engages learners to use critical thinking, opens minds onto the world and assists with specific language learning (O'Connell).

The NCF (2012), places literature as essential for the learning of English and as part of the core English lessons.

“Developing language and literature skills enables children and young people to:

- use questioning, information, critical thinking, decision-making and memory to organise thoughts, ideas, feelings, and knowledge;
- communicate with others and respond to how others communicate;
- formulate, express and present their arguments, feelings and ideas in a persuasive manner;
- appreciate and enjoy the literary heritage of the languages they learn.

Through learning languages and literature, children and young people develop:

- a positive attitude towards communication;
  - a disposition towards critical and constructive dialogue;
  - an appreciation of aesthetic qualities and a willingness to strive for them. “
- (NCF, 2012, p.34)

# Teaching Literature

The aim behind this document is to provide teachers with practical and helpful ideas on how to approach literature and to empower them with techniques that work in the classroom. Literature offers learners valuable authentic material, cultural enrichment, language enrichment and personal involvement (Collie, Slater, 1988).

Little can learners achieve out of a literature lesson if teachers do not handle the interface between language and literature and do not aim to make literature a positive experience. When choosing a text, teachers are to keep in mind their learners' lives, experiences, emotions, needs, interests, cultural background and language level. Teachers should select texts that stimulate personal involvement, appeal to their interests and provoke strong reactions from them.

Literature is a powerful medium through which language can be taught effectively. Besides the strong linguistic input, it opens a window into other cultures, ideologies, conventions and eras, and helps learners develop cultural competence, awareness of differences and exposure to universal themes such as love, friendship and loss. It allows learners to reflect and make use of their creativity and critical thinking skills. Learners start developing closeness to characters, various emotional responses and application of creativity and critical thinking skills.

When teaching literature, one can adopt one of the following three models (Clandfield):

<b>Cultural Model</b>	Literature exposes learners to the target culture.
<b>Language Model</b>	Learners pay attention to the way the language is used.
<b>Personal Growth Model</b>	Learners draw on their own opinions, feelings and personal experiences.

Teachers are to find meaningful ways to assess learners during literature. The following are three levels of reading skills that can be scaffolded and used to teach and assess learners.

<b>On the line literal questions</b>	Easily answered questions which generally are about setting, character and main events
<b>Between the line inferential questions</b>	Open-ended questions that help learners connect with plot and characters and teach inference
<b>Beyond the line thematic questions</b>	Open-ended questions that help learners make connections within and outside of the text and bring up discussions surrounding universal themes

The choice of literary resources is very crucial. Literature should be diverse, have a universal appeal and relate to the learners’ lives. Learners are to build and explore the connectedness that the literary text evokes with themselves, with other literary pieces and with the world around them.

<b>Text-to-Self</b>	<b>Text-to-Text</b>	<b>Text-to-World</b>
What does this remind you of in your life?	How is the text similar to other texts you have read?	What does this remind you of in the real world?
How is the text similar to your life?	How is the text different from other texts you have read?	How is the text similar to things that happen in the real world?
How is the text different from your life?		How is the text different from things that happen in the real world?

Mohamed (2007), suggests that teachers ask themselves the following questions when choosing literary texts.

- Is the language level accessible?
- Does it provide comprehensible input?
- Do the literary devices help learners understand and enjoy the story?
- Will the learner find it interesting and engaging?
- Are the illustrations clear, attractive, and big enough?
- Can the story be linked to other curriculum areas?
- Will it provide a positive learning experience and a desire to continue learning?
- What kinds of values and attitudes does it project?
- Will these be acceptable to learners?
- Will it help learners become more aware of the outside world?
- Does the story have potential for a variety of follow-up work?

Teachers should consider looking into the works of children’s laureates and poet laureates.

Children’s Laureate	Young People’s Poet Laureate
<p style="text-align: center;">           Quentin Blake            Anne Fine            Sir Michael Morpurgo            Jacqueline Wilson            Michael Rosen            Anthony Browne            Julia Donaldson            Malorie Blackman            Chris Riddell            Lauren Child            Cressida Cowell         </p>	<p style="text-align: center;">           Jack Prelutsky            Mary Ann Hoberman            J. Patrick Lewis            Kenn Nesbitt            Jacquelyn Wilson            Margarita Engle            Naomi Shihab NYE         </p> 

# What is literature?

Literature can be studied in its original forms or in simplified or abridged versions. All three writing styles have some things in common, but there are specific differences in their structure that will help you to identify one from the other.

## Prose

Prose or story writing is made up of sentences and paragraphs, without any metrical (or rhyming) structure. The elements of prose include characterisation, setting, plot, point of view, theme, conflict, style, tone, mood and foreshadowing expectations about upcoming events. Teachers can expose learners to a wide range of styles, some having first person or third person narration, others focusing on accurate details about present and past events and personalities and others being fictional.

Prose usually focuses on one specific object, idea, event, or concept. It doesn't need to have a conflict or problem, other characters, or even a clear plot or setting. There are four distinct types of prose:

<b>Fictional Prose</b> A work of fiction such as a novel or short story.	<b>Non-Fictional Prose</b> A written work based around facts, such as an autobiography or an essay.
<b>Heroic Prose</b> A type of prose which is literary that can be either written or spoken such as a myth or a legend.	<b>Poetry Prose</b> A form of prose that is intertwined with elements of poetry.

# Class Activities

## Before reading

- Point at the front and back cover of the book and ask questions about the cover.
  - What is the book going to be about?
  - Is the book part of a series?
  - How does the blurb help you?
  - What did you learn from the blurb?
  - Who is the target audience?
  - Have you read other books or poems written by the same author?
  - Who is its audience?
  - What colours are prominent on the book cover? What might these colours symbolise?
  - What might \_\_\_ symbolise?
  - What clues can you find that might help you figure out what this book is about?
  - Does this book remind you of another book/story/movie/play/poem you have read?
  - How can this book be similar to events in your personal life?
  - Does this book remind you of events that happened in the world?
- Teach new vocabulary in advance. Learners can match words with definitions; choose the best definition; look up words in a dictionary; fill in the blanks in sentences using the new words, match words with visuals ...

## While reading

- Point out that the book is divided into chapters and explain how chapters develop the story and can be set in different places and at different times.
- Explain new vocabulary.
- Stop occasionally and discuss how the story is developing.
- Ask questions that allow and encourage learners to interact with the story and explore it in more depth. These suggested questions are based on Bloom's

Taxonomy; an educational framework consisting of six major categories: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, evaluation and creativity.

<b>REMEMBERING</b>	<p>When and where did the story take place?</p> <p>Who are the main characters?</p> <p>What does the main character look like?</p> <p>How does the book begin?</p> <p>Where in the book would you find ...?</p>
<b>UNDERSTANDING</b>	<p>What is the book about?</p> <p>From whose point of view is the story told?</p> <p>What is happening?</p> <p>What might this mean?</p> <p>Which part do you like best? Why?</p>
<b>APPLYING</b>	<p>Can you think of another story with a similar theme?</p> <p>Can you think of another story character similar to a character in this book?</p> <p>Have you had any similar experiences?</p> <p>Which stories have openings like this?</p> <p>Can you think of another author who writes in a similar style?</p>
<b>ANALYSING</b>	<p>How has the author used description to show how this character is feeling?</p> <p>How does the layout help ...?</p> <p>Can you explain why ...?</p> <p>Why did the author choose these words?</p> <p>What evidence can you use to support your view?</p>
<b>EVALUATING</b>	<p>Which text/story is better? Why?</p> <p>Which parts of the text could be improved?</p> <p>Which text is more persuasive? Why?</p> <p>Did it have an effective ending?</p> <p>Who would you recommend this to?</p>
<b>CREATING</b>	<p>Using the evidence in the text, what do you think about...?</p> <p>If you were the main character, how would you have reacted to this?</p> <p>What would this character think?</p> <p>Are there any other reasons why this might have happened?</p> <p>Have the views in this text affected your opinion? Why? How?</p>

Adapted from: <https://www.twinkl.com/mt/resource/t-l-53668-blooms-balloons-blooms-taxonomy-questions-for-reading-cards>

Follow-up Activities (which are suitable for poetry and drama lessons)

- **Alternative Cover**  
Learners design and describe an alternative cover for the book.
- **Picture Profile**  
Learners draw a detailed picture of the main character/villain/hero and write a brief description of the character.
- **Answering Questions**  
Learners write words/phrases/numbers, dates or time in gaps; mark a statement as True or False; underline, circle, or tick the correct answer; match; complete grids with information; tick or label pictures or simple diagrams; and produce short-answer responses.
- **Story Timeline**  
Learners draw a timeline with the important events of the story.
- **Story Climax**  
Learners draw the most exciting part (climax) of the story and justify why they think it is the most powerful part.
- **Alternative Ending**  
Learners write a different story ending.
- **Blurb Writing**  
Learners write a new blurb for the book.
- **Book Review**  
Learners write or fill in a book review.
- **Story Writing**  
Learners adapt the story in another form e.g. a story gets written in the form of a poem or playscript.
- **Character/Author Interview**  
Learners write a set of questions they could ask one of the characters or the author. In pairs, learners participate in pretend interviews where one learner pretends to be the author or character and the other the interviewer.
- **Additional Research**  
Learners examine aspects of the life in the society, culture, era portrayed in the story, customs and cultures, life and works by the same author... For example, after reading *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*, learners can examine aspects of life and culture in the Middle East such as dress, food, music and jobs.

- Music  
Learners listen to music which corresponds to the story.
- Films  
Learners watch the film based on the story and compare and contrast the different film adaptations. For example, following the story *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* learners can watch the old and new film versions.
- Other Books  
Learners read other stories involving similar elements of the literary text or by the same author/poet/playwright.
- Art and Craft  
Learners draw, colour and create related crafts. For example, following the story *The Gruffalo*, learners can make masks of the different characters in the story.
- Cooking/Baking  
Learners replicate or do similar activities found in the story such as cooking. For example, after reading *A Little Princess*, learners can have a tea party (like the party Sara, the main character gave).
- Technology  
Learners conduct multiple choice quizzes using the Kahoot and Quizizz app. Learners create posters of their favourite parts of the story using PicCollage. Learners share their experiences, feelings and reactions inspired by a literary text using Mentimeter, J2Easy or Padlet.
- Drama/Acting  
Learners act out the entire story or selected parts.
- Diary Entry  
Learners complete a character's diary.
- Character Weaknesses and Strengths  
Learners list the character's weaknesses and strengths.
- Better solutions  
Learners come up with better solutions to solve the problems in the story.
- Missing Person Poster  
Learners create a missing person poster for one of the characters.

# Poetry



Since their earliest years, learners are exposed to and take great satisfaction in listening to and chanting nursery rhymes, play with words, rhymes, exploration of rhythm, repetition and sound. Poetry is the easiest writing style to identify because of its unique structure. Poems look different than all other writing styles and can be lots of fun. They also come in different shapes and sizes. Below is a list of some of the most common types of poetry.

- sonnet
- acrostic
- villanelle
- free verse
- haiku
- limerick
- ode
- elegy
- ballad
- epigram

Poetry is like singing a song. It has rhythm, or a beat and flow, and often rhymes.

Here are the characteristics of poetry at a glance:

- Verses are shorter and grouped into stanzas and couplets.
- Verses do not need to contain complete sentences.
- Poems usually rhyme, but do not always have to.
- Rhyming poems, follow a rhyming scheme or pattern.
- The number of words and syllables in each line creates a specific rhythm.

## Class Activities

- Get learners in the mood by discussing a related topic. Play some background music, show pictures to introduce the topic or get learners to share their personal experience and knowledge.
- Ask questions that explore the poem on different levels. You can adapt the jigsaw strategy which involves different groups/pairs answering different or the same sets of questions. Use the SLAM guide to unpack or analyse the meaning

of the poem. (Remember that some components of SLAM will be more important in one poem than another.)

<b>S</b>	Structure	<p>How are the line breaks structured?</p> <p>How are the stanzas organised?</p> <p>Is there punctuation? What does it look like?</p> <p>How does the structure affect the meaning of the poem?</p>
<b>L</b>	Language	<p>Is there figurative language present? (similes, metaphors, alliteration, hyperbole, onomatopoeia, personification)</p> <p>Are there sound devices present? (rhythm, rhyme, repetition)</p> <p>Is there sensory language in the poem?</p>
<b>A</b>	Affect	<p>Mood – How does the poem make you feel? What emotions are evoked because of the language being used?</p> <p>Tone – How does the author feel or want you to feel when you read the poem?</p>
<b>M</b>	Meaning	<p>What is the subject of the poem? What is the poem mainly about?</p> <p>Is there symbolism? What is the deeper meaning of the symbols used in the poem?</p> <p>What is the central message or theme of the poem?</p> <p>Why is the title important? How does it set the context of the poem?</p>

- Draw attention to useful syntax, grammar and vocabulary, and beware of common poetic conventions like inverted word order, ensuring that learners are aware that this is a deviation from the norms of everyday English language.

#### Follow-up Activities

- Talking about the poem

In pairs or groups learners talk about the poem.

- Writing activities

Learners complete worksheets, get involved in quizzes, complete sentence stems, write letters to a character, write about what might have happened before the beginning or after the ending of the poem ...

- Poetry Reciting  
Learners recite their favourite poems or their own poems.
- Asking the Author  
Learners write down questions they would like to ask the poet.
- Mad Libs  
Learners substitute words in the poem.
- Gallery Walk  
Place different poems around a room without their title. Learners come up with the titles for these poems.
- Predicting  
Learners predict ending verses or events occurring at the end of the poem.
- Visualising  
Learners come up with a way to depict the poem.
- Drama/Acting  
Learners act out the poem.
- Feel the Beat  
Learners read the poem with a rhythm.
- Writing  
Learners write their own poem or transfer the genre for example they write the poem in the form of a play or story.

## Drama

Drama is central for learners to increase and extend their verbal and non-verbal communication skills, express themselves, apply and develop different thinking skills including planning and predicting and grow in confidence, motivation and self-esteem. Drama allows learners to explore narrative and plot and make up their own dialogue and movements to fit the plot. Drama can be used as a learning tool to teach English and other areas of the curriculum.

Here are the characteristics of drama at a glance:

- It has a cast, characters, different settings and descriptions of what is happening. A play also has dialogue and stage directions.
- The cast is the group of people who are acting and pretending to be different characters.
- Dialogue is what each of the different characters is saying.
- Stage directions are written into a script for drama. They are the instructions to the actors that tell them where to stand, what to do with their bodies, what expression they should have on their face and how they should say their lines.

## Class Activities

Different types of drama lessons in class:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Scenarios</b></p> <p>Teachers use outlines of short simple stories for learners to act out and even improvise their own dialogue and mimes.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Improvisations</b></p> <p>Teachers give learners a basic situation and through drama learners explore the various possible outcomes of the situation and develop it using their own experiences and vivid imaginations.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Dramatic Poems and Dialogues</b></p> <p>Learners mime or make up their own movements and sound effects.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Scripted Drama</b></p> <p>Learners stage the performances.</p>

Teaching tips for a successful drama lesson:

- Use mixed ability groups so weaker readers and less confident learners feel part of the group. Change group members to allow learners to be exposed to different experiences, viewpoints, cultures ...
- Allow learners to negotiate which parts they want to play and to swap roles.

- Try to create a small drama space or use the school's hall or yard.
- Establish group rules and explain the importance of turn-taking.
- Use games and warm-ups to establish healthy group dynamics.
- Allow time for practice and rehearsals.
- Take some time before acting out the play to discuss setting and explore the characters' personality, motivation and behaviour, their relationships, the ideas and plotlines and the underlying themes.

#### Follow-up activities

- **Class Discussion**  
Learners participate in discussions related to underlying themes.
- **Improvising**  
Learners create spontaneous scenes/plays.
- **Peer- and Self-Reviews**  
Learners assess themselves and their peers after acting a play or scene.
- **Character Profile**  
Learners fill in a character profile about one of the characters in the play.
- **Researching**  
Learners research topics, cultures or themes that were introduced in the play.
- **Cooking/Baking**  
Learners participate in cooking activities related to the literary text.
- **'What happens next?'**  
Learners improvise, write and/or act an additional scene.
- **Writing**  
Learners re-write the play in the form of a narrative or poem. Learners tweak a scene or act, write a different ending or include a cliff-hanger.
- **Class Survey**  
Learners select their favourite characters or parts of the play.
- **Reading**  
Learners read the story/poem version of the playscript.
- **Play Review**  
Learners write or fill in a review about a play, act or scene.
- **Art and Craft**  
Learners draw, colour or create crafts or props related to the play or scene.

## Creating a literature-friendly classroom

- Keep your classroom library well stocked! The Literacy Agency has various initiatives which could help you build your class library.
- Create a reading environment. Turn a spare classroom corner or else transform an old cupboard. Beanbags and cushions are a bonus. These reading spaces can be organised according to the weekly theme.
- Encourage learners to become reading champions by awarding them special certificates, stickers or badges and have them read aloud (if they wish) during the school assembly.
- Hold literature circles.
- Have learners do reports or presentations about literary texts and their authors, poets or playwrights.
- Look out for theatre productions/films about books or plays.
- Invite authors, poets, playwrights and/or illustrators for school/class visits.
- Celebrate World Book Day, National Poet's Day and International Literacy Day.
- Create a literature bulletin board/corner/box in your classroom. Every few weeks, change the type of literary text and genre you display and add some information about it. Another option is to feature a different poet, writer or playwright and samples of their work.
- Create a "Literature Tree" in your classroom. Make a large tree on one of your walls and have learners present their own work on leaf or apple-cut outs to put on the tree.
- Make Christmas or Easter cards that feature rhymes.
- Write poems, plays or stories that feature Science or Social Studies topics such as space, mammals, countries, etc. and compile their work into a book.
- Integrate art by having learners choose their favourite literary text and copy it onto nice paper with illustrations. Watercolours are particularly nice with many poem types. For haiku, consider painting in the Japanese style of black/grey watercolour lines.
- Publish an anthology of your learners' work.
- Keep reflection journals. Learners can copy their own or their favourite literary work in their journals and then write about them – where they got the idea, favourite words or phrases, how it makes them feel, etc.

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