External assessment

Students are required to analyse, compare and comment on the texts in the light of their understanding of audience and purpose. In order to achieve this, students need to analyse structure, language and style in addition to aspects such as text type, context, bias and/or ideological position.

The comparative analysis should be continuous and structured, include relevant examples from the texts and be balanced in its comments on the similarities and differences between the texts. Rather than simply listing formal aspects, students should focus on how such aspects are used to create particular effects.

The paper is assessed according to the assessment criteria published in this guide. The maximum mark for paper 1 is 20.

Paper 2: Essay
Duration: 2 hours
Weighting: 25%

Paper 2 consists of six questions based on the literary texts studied in part 3 of the language A: language and literature course. Students are required to answer one question only.

The format of paper 2 and the six questions are the same for both SL and HL students. However, there are specific assessment criteria for each level, reflecting different expectations in terms of the complexity and depth of the students’ responses.

Students will be expected to respond to questions in a way that shows their understanding of the learning outcomes demanded in part 3 of the course. They are expected to refer to at least two of the texts they have studied in class, analysing the works in the light of the way in which the contexts of production and reception affect their meaning. The following examples pinpoint some areas of discussion that students need to consider in their classwork while preparing for the assessment.

• Which social groups are omitted from a text, and what might this reflect about its production?
• What do you think of the assertion that the meaning of a text is fixed and does not change over time?
• How does a particular term or concept, such as childhood, change in the way it is represented in the texts you have studied?
• How is our critical perspective on literary texts affected by cultural practices?
• To what purpose do authors sometimes choose not to follow a chronological sequence of events in their literary works?
• How valid is the assertion that literature is a voice for the oppressed?
• To what extent is the critical approach taken to the analysis of a text itself influenced by specific cultural practices?

These ideas may be used interchangeably with those given at SL.

The paper is assessed according to the assessment criteria published in this guide. The maximum mark for paper 2 is 25.

Written tasks
Weighting: 20%

A written task demonstrates the student’s ability to choose an imaginative way of exploring an aspect of the material studied in the course. It must show a critical engagement with an aspect of a text or a topic.

Students complete at least four written tasks, two of which are submitted for external assessment.

The written tasks are assessed according to the assessment criteria published in this guide. The maximum mark for each written task is 20.
Supervision and teacher assistance
As part of the learning process, teachers can give advice to students on a first draft of the task. This advice should be in terms of the way in which the work could be improved, but this first draft must not be annotated or edited by the teacher. After making general comments on the first draft, teachers should not provide any further assistance.

Formal requirements for tasks 1 and 2
- One of the tasks submitted for external assessment must be a critical response to one of six prescribed questions (task 2).
- One of the tasks submitted for external assessment must be based on a literary text studied in part 3 or part 4 of the course. The other must be based on material studied in part 1 or part 2 of the course.
- Each task must be 800–1,000 words in length with an added rationale of 200–300 words. If the word limit is exceeded, the assessment will be based on the first 1,300 words.

Formal requirements for task 1
- The content of task 1 must relate to one of the four parts of the course.
- Students are free to choose a text type that is appropriate to the content of the task.
- A rationale must precede task 1.

Note: A formal essay is not an acceptable text type for task 1. Students are required to write an essay in paper 2.

Rationale
The rationale is not included in the word count (800–1,000 words) for the written task and should be 200–300 words in length. Text titles or topics recorded on the rationale are expected to match those recorded on the coversheet.

In their rationale students must explain:
- how the content of the task is linked to a particular part of the course
- how the task is intended to explore particular aspects of the course
- the nature of the task chosen
- information about audience, purpose and the social, cultural or historical context in which the task is set.

The rationale should not only include knowledge about the text or topic studied, but also about the formal conventions of the text type produced and how they relate to the aims of the task.

Practical requirements for task 1
Students may include illustrations in support of their work where this is appropriate. These must always be electronically embedded, not separately reproduced and physically attached. Written tasks submitted for assessment must be word processed and the electronic files must not exceed a maximum size, including any images, of 2 MB.
On the coversheet that precedes the task, students must include:

- student details
- examination session details
- the course summary (including details of each of the four parts studied)
- the total number of words for the task.

Both the student and teacher must sign the coversheet as a declaration that the task is the authentic work of the student.

The task must be written in the language A studied.

Students must acknowledge all sources used. Where appropriate—for example, when the task relies on the reader referring to stimulus material such as a key passage in a literary text, or an illustration, in order to understand what the student is attempting to do—the source material must be clearly referenced in a bibliography. These sources may be referred to by the examiner but will not be taken account of in the assessment; nevertheless they are important information for the assessor. In addition, this promotes good academic practice on the part of the student.

**The role of the teacher**

- Provide guidance to students on the selection of the task, its development and level of challenge.
- Discuss the relationship between the written task and the stimulus material.
- Ensure that the topic is of an appropriate level of challenge and suitable to the length and focus of the task.

**Examples of task 1**

The following are examples of possible written tasks. These are intended for guidance only and are neither exhaustive nor compulsory.

- A short story exploring a minor character’s view of the main action of a literary text
- A public information document explaining the effects of new legislation on a community
- A diary entry in which a character from a work of fiction reveals their true feelings about another character or any aspects of the action of a literary text
- An episode from a literary text rewritten to place the action in another setting
- An opinion column that emphasizes the pervasiveness of female stereotyping in advertising and how these stereotypes are promoted for the purpose of raising company profits

**Aims of task 2**

Task 2 takes the form of a critical response and is a requirement of the HL course only. The aims of task 2 are:

- to consider in greater detail the material studied in the four parts of the language A: language and literature course
- to reflect and question in greater depth the values, beliefs and attitudes that are implied in the texts studied
- to encourage students to view texts in a number of ways
- to enable students to give an individual response to the way in which texts can be understood in the light of the prescribed questions.

**Formal requirements for task 2**

There are two prescribed questions for each of the areas of study listed below. Task 2 is a critical response to one of these six questions. The prescribed questions are designed to be as open as possible and are
intended to highlight broad areas within which students can explore and develop their responses to
the texts. The prescribed questions remain the same from session to session. See the section “Task 2—
questions” in this guide.

The critical response is based on material studied in the course. This material could be a longer work such as
a novel or a group of poems. It could also be a shorter text or texts such as a newspaper article or a sports
blog. A rationale is not included with task 2. Instead, students are expected to complete an outline on a
designated form that can be found in the Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme. This outline is
submitted with the task for external assessment.

This outline must be completed in class time and must include:

• the prescribed question that has been chosen

• the title of the text(s) for analysis

• the part of the course to which the task refers

• three or four key points that explain the particular focus of the task.

Where appropriate, task 2 must reference, in a bibliography, the relevant support documentation such as
the newspaper article or magazine advertisement on which it is based.

Where a complete shorter text is chosen (for example, a newspaper article or an advertisement from a
magazine) students may refer to other texts to support their response.

The critical response is in the style of a formal essay and must be clearly structured with an introduction,
clearly developed ideas or arguments and a conclusion.

Practical requirements for task 2
In addition to these noted for task 1, students are required to:

• include, where appropriate, bibliographic reference to the text(s) on which the critical response is
based when submitting the assessed work.

Areas of study for task 2
In preparation for task 2, students must address one of the following areas of study, which correspond to the
topics and material studied in the four parts of the course.

Reader, culture and text
Students are encouraged to consider that a text’s meaning is determined by the reader and by the cultural
context. The interpretation of a text is dependent on various factors, including:

• the reader and producer’s cultural identity or identities

• age

• gender

• social status

• the historical and cultural settings of the text and its production

• aspects of language and translation.

Power and privilege
Students are encouraged to consider how and why social groups are represented in texts in particular ways.
In addition, consideration may be given to who is excluded from or marginalized in a text, or whose views
are silenced. Social groups could include:

• women

• adolescents
External assessment

- senior citizens
- children
- immigrants
- ethnic minorities
- professions.

Text and genre
Students are encouraged to consider the genre in which a text is placed. Certain textual features belong to a particular genre and can be identified by a particular reader or audience. Writers make use of, or deviate from, particular conventions of genre in order to achieve particular effects. Students may also explore how texts borrow from other texts, and how texts can be re-imagined or reconstructed.

Examples of conventions of genre include:
- structure
- storyline
- characterization
- stylistic devices
- tone, mood and atmosphere
- register
- visual images and layout.

The following table gives examples of a possible range of tasks that could be selected for the four HL written tasks. This shows the wide range of ideas and texts that can be explored in a number of varied ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Written task and syllabus section</th>
<th>Possible title and description</th>
<th>Learning outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Task 1, part 3 Submitted for assessment</td>
<td>“From a Doll’s House to a Wasteland?”, adding a scene to A Doll’s House, exploring the consequences of Nora’s decision to leave</td>
<td>Changing historical, cultural and social contexts in which texts are written and received Attitudes and values expressed by texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 2, part 1</td>
<td>“The Climate Change Debate”, writing two pieces—one in the style of a left-of-centre ecology magazine, the other a right-wing political magazine. In the outline, explaining how language and argument are used differently</td>
<td>How audience and purpose affect the structure and content of texts How language and meaning are shaped by culture and context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 3, parts 3 and 4</td>
<td>“Another Life”, exploring aspects of a character in a literary text</td>
<td>Explore literary works in detail Attitudes and values expressed by texts Analyse theme and moral values in a text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>