OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

A LEVEL

ENGLISH LITERATURE

H472

For first teaching in 2015

Literature post-1900: Guide to Task Setting

Version 2

Literature post-1900: Guide to Task Setting

Task 1: Close Reading

This task requires close analytical focus on the extract, passage or poem, balanced with awareness of how the extract, passage or poem relates to the text as a whole.

Therefore tasks should:

- make explicit the requirement to comment closely on the writing of the extract, passage or poem e.g. Analyse in detail/Comment closely etc.

- ask learners to relate the extract, passage or poem in some way to the text from which it is taken, e.g. considering how far it reflects the style and concerns...

Examples

Comment closely on Heaney's presentation of the body and the viewer's response in 'Punishment,' considering how it reflects the style and concerns of Heaney's 'bog poems' in *North*.

Text: Passage from *The Namesake* (Jumpa Lahiri): from p.122 'The night is windy…' to p.124 '…You remind me of everything that followed.'

Write a detailed commentary of Lahiri's presentation of this conversation between Gogol and his father, discussing the excerpt's significance in *The Namesake's* concern with names and naming.

Text: Passage from *Jerusalem* (Jez Butterworth): from p.32, from Pea: 'Why did he stop?' to Johnny: '[…] those houses'll need painting.'

Discuss in detail ways in which Butterworth presents Johnny in this extract, considering how it contributes to his characterisation in *Jerusalem* as a whole.

Task 1: Re-creative writing

This task requires a recreated piece, directly related to the original text, which reflects the style and concerns of that text. It also requires a commentary where learners discuss what they have attempted and how their piece of writing demonstrates aspects of the original text.

Therefore tasks should ask for:

- a recreative piece of writing, reflecting aspects of the style and concerns of the original text

- a commentary which evaluates ways in which the recreated piece of writing imitates features of the original text.

Examples

Text: *The World's Wife* (Carol Ann Duffy)

Choose another female character similar to those created by Duffy and write a poem exploring them and their experience using language and poetic methods you have observed in The World's Wife. Add a commentary which explains how your choices have been influenced by Duffy's poems and in what ways you have attempted to mirror her style and concerns.

Text: *Reading in the Dark (*Seamus Deane)

Write another narrative section to be placed at a particular point in the novel, making sure to consider the age of the narrator at the point you have chosen. Add a commentary which evaluates ways in which you have imitated Deane's characteristic style and concerns.

Text: *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Tennessee Williams)

Write a soliloquy for Mitch to be performed at the end of Scene 9. Add a commentary which discusses ways you have imitated Williams' characterisation of Mitch, considering this particular point in the development of the play.

Task 2: Comparative Essay

This task requires learners to make connections between the writing and concerns of two texts. The task must have a literary focus.

Therefore tasks should:

- explicitly require comparison or contrast between the texts

- focus the comparison or contrast on a literary aspect of the texts (e.g. the presentation of a key theme).

Examples

Texts: *Selected Poems* (Wilfred Owen) and Birdsong (Sebastian Faulks)

Compare some of the ways in which Owen and Faulks present the horrors of warfare and soldiers' experience.

Texts: *Resistance* (Owen Sheers) and Dunsinane (David Greig)

Compare ways in which Sheers and Greig explore the complexities of invasion and resistance in *Resistance* and *Dunsinane*.

Texts: *Becoming Strangers* (Louise Dean) and Selected Poems (Elizabeth Jennings)

By comparing Dean's and Jennings' presentation of illness in *Becoming Strangers* and *Selected Poems*, say how far they can be said to offer hope.

Further examples can be found in the Non Exam Assessment Guide, published April 2015.

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