

# English A: Looking back on the Pre-D. P.

Mike Bagosy

## Overview

A cohort of 24 mixed Language and Literature A, and Language B students began their preparatory activities for the IB Diploma program in April 2022. This report focuses on their program over the previous 9 months. Focusing on the A stream, the instructor repeated the same entry-level year of teaching to a great advantage as the “newness” of the program could now be replaced by a wiser focus on skill-building than the previous year. As per the previous year, the main goal was to have a balance between scaffolding instruction and challenging the students to deepen and stretch their thinking. Vocabulary instruction was more innovative and testing frequency halved. Literature study was started earlier and successful group activities from the previous year were moved forward to allow group bonding and personal responsibility to take root earlier. This instructor tried to give regular chances for writing development as well as scaffolding activities wherever possible starting with group work to allow brainstorming and the shaping of ideas through discussion. When the group seemed more or less ready, we moved to individual work. Confidence seemed to grow on a sturdier foundation of both abstract, conceptual thinking, and their increasing ability to analyze and express their ideas more clearly, more accurately and in academic English.

## Flow and Content (Table 1.1)

We started with a focus on building bonds through group work while setting a tone of regular study through encouraging academic writing development along with related vocabulary and grammar development.

By the end of month 1 (April) the students had had personal interviews and solidified their choice of course A - Literature, or Course B - Language Acquisition. This allowed 7 students to begin to study weekly together for 5 periods. They seemed eager to work together though some had reservations about whether the course would be too much of a challenge. By the end of May, two more students joined from the B group as they felt they could manage the higher level.

The same textbook was used in this pre-DP program but in a more targeted manner. (Text: Brad Philpot's English A: Language and Literature for the IB Diploma) We left out some abstraction in favor of getting down to practicing analysis of different text types as early as possible. Groups were frequently changed for variety and to get students used to working with anyone. This group's competitive nature was a mild barrier to smooth progress in the beginning but grew more supportive through trust built up on group work in literature circles and making a commercial. The sharing of mock Paper 1 criteria analysis was helpful to the students to see their progress and others' thinking, mistakes and all.

A new approach was taken for basic vocabulary development. Instead of students reading a textbook article with words to study embedded in a context, students were given a list of 30 words including their various forms, from the 570 academic word list by Averil Coxhead. For week 1 of the cycle, students were encouraged to study the words and practice through self-study or in-class use of Quizlet and group competition within that medium, followed by an activity chosen to make use of the words in a fun and cooperative (and sometimes competitive) way. In week 2 of the cycle, students would have a 15 word quiz to test their knowledge of meaning and word forms. The students responded to the study and activities with a high degree of positivity, and seemed to find the process worthwhile, as indicated in their reflections as well as the vocabulary becoming part of their working vocabulary.

The literature circles were begun using a rather short 10 page essay, but packed with terminology and social situations that were novel for the students. This primer to literature circles, approached gently, served them well to be able to ramp up to a full graphic novel a short time later.

For a variety of reasons, this pre-DP cohort seems to be adapting quickly and steadily to the academic demands of the future assessments they will face in the future. From the instructor's point of view, I have the odd feeling of seeing these students improve surprisingly quickly and the outcome is often a degree or more, higher quality, than I remember teaching them.

Curriculum Flow Table 1.1

<p><b>Note: 1</b> T.T. stands for text type</p> <p><b>Note: 2</b> A stream had a vocabulary test every two weeks</p> <p><b>Note: 3</b> A &amp; B stream students had a grammar test about once every two months</p>		
	<b>Month</b>	<b>Target</b>
1	Apr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combined group readiness through academic writing activities and IB program demo lessons, and interviews</li> <li>• Program understanding to decide the appropriate future student direction</li> </ul>
2	May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a web page through Google sites to create a space for future portfolios</li> <li>• Begin T.T. Images and Magazine Covers</li> <li>• Examine Paper 1 criteria</li> </ul>
3	Jun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a mystery symbol</li> <li>• Define creativity and study guerrilla advertisements</li> <li>• Analyze Images and Magazine Covers, introduce notation</li> <li>• End of T.T. unit reflection posted on portfolio</li> </ul>
4	Jul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin T.T. Advertisements</li> <li>• Modified Paper 1 advertising analysis group work</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition into Paper 1 style of ad analysis</li> <li>• Write a modified mock Paper 1 (T.T.: Advertisement)</li> <li>• End of T.T. unit reflection posted on portfolio</li> </ul>
5	Aug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin T.T. Films and Commercials</li> <li>• Begin a first literature Circle - George Orwell's "Spike"</li> </ul>
6	Sep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue T.T. Films and Commercials</li> <li>• Continue and finish Literature Circles - George Orwell's "Spike"</li> <li>• Launch group presentation project: Make a 1 min. commercial of original idea</li> </ul>
7	Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin T.T. Comics and Graphic Novels</li> <li>• Practice study and analysis of different kinds of cartoons</li> </ul>
8	Nov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comics and Cartoons T.T. (Practice, analyze good and bad written assessment examples and write a realistic Paper 1 assessment)</li> <li>• Persepolis I &amp; II literature circles underway</li> </ul>
9	Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culmination of Film and Commercial TT: Presentation of creative group project of a 1 minute commercial.</li> <li>• Culmination of Literature Study: Final Literature Circle on Persepolis II with in-class movie watching</li> <li>• Introduce the concept of global issues and start a ½ IO based on literature</li> <li>• Graded reflection on student learning of T.T. Film and Commercials and Term 2</li> </ul>

### **Challenge to the Program**

One great weakness of this academically stimulating program exploded into view late in the pre-DP program. This put simply is: it is hard to find instructors for the Language and Literature A program. This needs to be mentioned as it is likely a strong risk for any public high school that is embarking on an IB program, or just nodding their heads in agreement if they have already started. There is no effective system inside of Japan that I am aware of that can attract high caliber teachers, willing to work hard for the program. Of course there are many teachers who might be interested and are highly qualified but living outside of the country and as such, cannot be reached as there was deemed no money to advertise the position available, nor the will to support someone from overseas with any transitional support required to help a newcomer to be sponsored and adjust to Japan.

There are very likely possible teachers residing in Japan who would drop everything for this career opportunity but again there is no system being used to get the word out. In the end, this school's approach was to depend on the network of known contacts that might exist among coworkers. This mostly meant the limited number of native teachers in the program (counting 2) and their potential

contacts. This time, the school was lucky but was really scraping the barrel to find anybody at all and in fact benefitted from one single contact that was available, trusted, capable, domestically stable and willing to embrace the newness of the program and concurrent training to make it all work out. The chance of not finding a teacher was scarily high. Furthermore it seems like it is no one's particular problem and thus it will not be solved but pushed off into a future that we can currently forget about. Even once found, teachers who hail from other countries are usually not long-term as they will eventually return to their home countries. In summary, it is beneficial for the program if experienced instructors can be found, nurtured and a system developed or money allocated to finding replacements.

### **Forward Facing**

I am not intending to change anything significantly for next year unless student interest causes this. As before, it is a deep pleasure and privilege to work with motivated young people who are stimulated with a worthwhile challenge. I hope this report contributes in some way to the advancement of the IB Program in Japanese schools.

Sincerely, Mike Bagosy

# English A: Language and Literature 2023 - 2024

Mark Heppelle

## Studies in Language and Literature Aims

The aims of all subjects in studies and language and literature are designed to:

1. engage with a range of texts, in a variety of media and forms, from different time periods, styles, and cultures
2. develop skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, presenting and performing
3. develop skills in interpretation, analysis, and evaluation
4. develop sensitivity to the formal and aesthetic qualities of texts and an appreciation of how they contribute to diverse responses and open up multiple meanings
5. develop an understanding of the relationships between texts and a variety of perspectives, cultural contexts, and local and global issues and an appreciation of how they contribute to diverse responses and open up multiple meanings
6. develop an understanding of the relationships between studies in Language and Literature and other disciplines
7. communicate and collaborate in a confident and creative way
8. foster a lifelong interest in and enjoyment of language and literature

## Assessments and Objectives – Paper 1, Paper 2, Individual Oral, HL Essay

Know, understand and interpret:

- a range of texts, works and/or performances, and their meanings and implications
- contexts in which texts are written and/or received
- elements of literary, stylistic, rhetorical, visual and/or performance craft
- features of particular text types and literary forms

Analyze and evaluate:

- ways in which the use of language creates meaning
- uses and effects of literary, stylistic, rhetorical, visual or theatrical techniques
- relationships among different texts
- ways in which texts may offer perspectives on human concerns

Communicate

- ideas in clear, logical and persuasive ways
- in a range of styles, registers and for a variety of purposes and situations
- (for literature and performance only) ideas, emotion, character and atmosphere through performance.

### Works that will be read

- Persepolis (Satrapi, Marjane) – Graphic Novel P21 – Iran (in translation)
- The World’s Wife (Duffy, Carol Ann) – Collection of Poetry P20 – the UK
- Pride and Prejudice (Austen, Jane) – Novel P19 – the UK (\*HL only)
- The Crucible (Miller, Arthur) – Drama P20 – the US
- Things Fall Apart (Achebe, Chinua) – Novel P20 – Nigeria (not on the PRL)
- Hedda Gabler (Ibsen, Henrik) – Drama P19 – Norway (in translation) (\*HL only)

**Textbook (from Pre-DP)** – English A: Language and Literature for the IB Diploma – Cambridge University Press (Philpot, Brad)

**YouTube Channel and other materials** from The IB English Guys

	Literary Work	Global Issues	Non-literary Texts	Literary Criticism	Assessment (Formative)	Oral Activities	Writing Activities
April May	Persepolis	Protest, Politics	Malala Yousafzai – Speeches, Anthony Bourdain – Parts Unknown TV Series - Iran	Reader Response	Individual Oral, Paper 1	Literary Circle Discussions, Portfolio Presentations	Literary Circle Summary, Weekly Reflection
June July	The World’s Wife	Femininity, Masculinity	Justin Boldini TED Talk – “Man Enough”, Rebecca Solnit Essays – Men Explain Things to Me	Feminist	Individual Oral, Paper 1	Leading a discussion and examination on selected poems from The World’s Wife, Recitation	Note taking – Cornell Notes, Weekly Reflection
Sept. Oct.	Pride and Prejudice	Beauty	Bridgit Jones Diary - Movie	Review	Individual Oral, Paper 1	Literary Circle Discussions, Portfolio Presentations	Literary Circle Summary, Weekly Reflection
Nov. Dec.	The Crucible	Justice and War	Donald Trump – Presidential Speeches, The Black	Historical, Postcolonial, Cultural Studies	Paper 2	Literary Circle Discussions, Portfolio Presentations	Literary Circle Summary, Weekly

			Mirror – TV Series – Men Against Fire				Reflection
Jan. Feb. Mar.	Things Fall Apart	Colonialism, Racism	Chimamanda Adichie – TED Talk - The Danger of a Single Story, Binyavanga Wainaina – Article - How to Write About Africa	New Criticism	Individual Oral, HL Essay	Literary Circle Discussions, Portfolio Presentations	Literary Circle Summary, Weekly Reflection
April May	Hedda Gabler	Review	Review and Expansion	Review	Individual Oral, HL Essay	Literary Circle Discussions, Portfolio Presentations	Literary Circle Summary, Weekly Reflection

**June / July** – Review, assessment preparation, mock exams

**September / October** - Review, assessment preparation, mock exams

**November / December** – Assessment and reflection

### Overview

The students cover the works of literature and the non-literary works simultaneously. The students should make connections between the literary and non-literary using a variety of criteria including global issues. Students are encouraged to select their own non-literary texts and Bodies of Work (BOW) and present them to the class. The type number of non—literary text types that must be covered is not specified by The IB. The non-literary texts must be part of a BOW that is to be explored and examined in class. The number of non-literary texts that make up a BOW depends on the non-literary text type. The examination of the works of literature and the non-literary BOW lead directly to the assessments that the students will complete in order to receive their IB Diploma.

### Lesson Plan

Example – Non-literary BOW – Ketchup Advertisements

Students will examine Heinz Ketchup advertisements and discuss key features such as the visual narrative, copy, tagline and see how the advertisements have changed and evolved over time. The students will look for connections to global issues and to the literary works covered in the course.

Example – Literary Work – The Crucible

Each student will come to class prepared to present and discuss Act 1 of The Crucible from one of the following perspectives.

## **1. Connector**

Find at least two connections between the story and what you know about the world at present. They might be related to current events, personal experiences, movies or other books or anything else that relates to events depicted in what was read in *The Crucible*. Write a paragraph about each connection. Present these connections to the class and ask the other students to provide their connections.

Possible connecting topics – puritanism and individuality, hysteria, ideology, reputation, integrity

## **2. Illustrator**

Create or find an image that relates to the assigned reading. Consider drawing a picture, downloading images, creating a collage... Write a paragraph explaining how the image relates to the reading and make at least two questions for discussion relating to the image. During the literature circle, show your image to the group with without reading the explanation. Ask the other students to discuss how they think the image relates to the reading. Then read your explanation and ask your discussion questions.

## **3. Extract Extractor**

Select one extract from the reading of up to 40 consecutive lines of text. Explain to the class where the extract came from and how it connects to the reading as a whole. Present the as you would an individual oral – prepare 5 bullet points, do not use any visual aids, connect the extract to a global issue and speak for 5 minutes. After you speak, discuss your extract with the class.

## **4. Terms Expert**

Write down words and phrases that are significant in the reading. Make note of literature devices and figurative language (metaphors, similes, symbolism...). For each example, write a paragraph explaining the meaning and why they are important. Share these examples with the class and ask them to discuss your choices and if they have any other examples from the reading that they can share.

## **5. Character Explorer**

Choose two characters from the reading and present details about each character to the class. Use a character map to examine the characters and prepare 2 questions for each character that you will ask to the other students in the class. Be sure that the characters that you examine have not been covered in previous classes. Write a paragraph summary of each character.

## **6. The Backgrounder**

Research the author's background (the first discussion circle) and historical events (subsequent discussion circles) that connect to the reading. Write a paragraph summary.

Examples – Arthur Miller (week 1), the Red Scare and McCarthyism, the Salem Witch Trials, Puritan Societies



The teacher begins the lesson with a discussion question for the students. The students will have completed and uploaded answers to a set of comprehension questions before class. These can be checked in class before or after the discussion questions. The students then present their discussion role and lead the class. At the end of the lesson, provide some time for the students to summarize the lesson. Each student will upload their role summaries to Managebac. The material can be made available to the student's through Google Drive and the students can use this material to add to their Learner Portfolio.

### **Challenges**

The students must come to class prepared to lead the class when they are called upon and to actively participate in all discussions. If the student is absent from class, they are expected to upload their completed role to Managebac.

### **Outcomes**

This activity helps the students look at the literary work from a variety of perspectives. Each week a student is given a new role in the discussion. It takes approximately six classes (two – 50-minute classes) to cover one work of literature. Students keep track of the material that is covered in class in their Learner Portfolios and make connections between the works of literature (Paper 2), works of literature and non-literary BOW (Individual Oral), and non-literary works and BOW (Paper 1) using a variety of criteria and authorial choices and global issues. These activities help the students prepare for their final assessments