

Literature as a Means to Approach Language Learning

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 - Literary texts as a catalyst for writing and speaking.
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1. THE ROLE OF THE LITERARY TEXT IN ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL).

1.1 The Characteristics of Literary Text

“[Literature is]the best which has been thought and said in the world”

(Arnold, 2006, p.5)

Arnold, M. ([1869] 2006). *Culture and Anarchy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

“[Literature is] something which alludes to reality...”

(Widdowson, 1999, p. 118)

Widdowson, P. (1999). *Literature*. London: Routledge

1. THE ROLE OF THE LITERARY TEXT IN ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL).

(...) a literary work “is”: an act, an event, of reading, never entirely separable from the act event (or act events) of writing that brought it into being as potentially readable text.

(Attridge, 2005, p.59)

Attridge, D. ([2004] 2005). *The Singularity of Literature*. London: Routledge.

To make it [the literary object] come into view a concrete act called reading is necessary, and it lasts as long as this act can last. Beyond that, there are only black marks on the paper.

(Sartre, 2006, p.29)

1. THE ROLE OF THE LITERARY TEXT IN ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL).

Each word (...); shapes our feelings, names them and attributes them to an imaginary personage who takes it upon himself to live them for us and who has no other substance than these borrowed passions; he confers objects, perspectives and horizons upon them.

Thus, for the reader, all is to do and all is already done; **the work exists only at the exact level of his capacities**; while he reads and creates, he knows that he can always go further in his reading, can always create more profoundly, and thus the work seems to him as inexhaustible and opaque as things.

(Sartre, 2006, p. 33)

Sartre. J.P. ([1948] 2006) *What is Literature?* Trans. Bernard Frechtman. London: Routledge

1. THE ROLE OF THE LITERARY TEXT IN ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL).

1.2 Literary Texts as a Teaching and Learning Resource

One of the strongest arguments for using literature in the language classroom is the enormous scope it offers. Literature can range from being deeply culture-specific to being universal. Discerningly selected, it can be used with students of all proficiency levels, to reveal links between cultures, to enhance learners' knowledge of target language and its culture, or as in the case of English, raise the awareness of its plural cultural identities. Literature can create deeper involvement and closer interaction than almost any other cultural product.

(Mishan, 2006 p.112)

Mishan, F. (2005). *Designing Authenticity into Language Learning Materials*. Bristol: Intellect Books.

1. THE ROLE OF THE LITERARY TEXT IN ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL).

It is true of course that the 'world' of a novel, play or short story is a created one, yet it offers a full and vivid context in which characters from many social backgrounds can be depicted. (...) This vivid imagined world can quickly give the foreign reader a feel for the codes and preoccupations that structure a real society.

(Collie & Slater, 2004, p.4)

Collie, J. & Slater, S. ([1987] 2004). *Literature in the Language Classroom: A Resource Book of Ideas and Activities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Texts can be read on different levels of meaning. Whether they are texts of information or works of literature, language is the stuff is made of.

(Kramsch, 1994 p.12)

Kramsch, C. ([1993] 1994). *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

1. THE ROLE OF THE LITERARY TEXT IN ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL).

It is that literature gives you ideas to think with. It stocks your mind. It does not indoctrinate, because diversity, counter argument, reappraisal and qualification are its essence. But it supplies the material for thought. Also, because it is the only art capable of criticism, it encourages questioning and self-questioning.”

(Carey, 2005, p.208)

Carey, J. (2005). *What Good Are the Arts?*. London: Faber and Faber.

1. THE ROLE OF THE LITERARY TEXT IN ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL).

When the language learner approaches a literary text, he or she should do so not in a spirit of humility (the 'how-will-I-ever-understand-what-such-a-great-writer-has-written approach) but in a spirit of discovery. As the reader explores literature, so not only do new worlds open up in the imagination, but new layers of language used and new examples of linguistic dexterity are exposed.

(Bassnett & Grundy, 1993, p.2)

Bassnett, S. & Grundy, P. (1993). *Language Through Literature: Creative Language Teaching Through Literature*. Burnt Mill: Longman.

2. HOW TO GET YOUR STUDENTS ENGAGED IN READING ACTIVITIES?

Class Reading:

- ✓ structures in-class learning allowing all students to access the learning regardless of the page number they reach.

<https://youtu.be/YaSr9zv-YMc>

1. Examine and read key chapters and quotes together.

Reading the first chapter aloud with students is critical for providing the context needed for improved comprehension during independent reading.

2. Make audio versions of the text available.

Reading can be difficult for students because of dyslexia, emerging language development, or even personal preference.

2. HOW TO GET YOUR STUDENTS ENGAGED IN READING ACTIVITIES?

3. Teach predominant themes or skills that will be useful in analyzing that novel.

We can make learning more authentic and accessible by planning around transfer goals rather than just teaching the text. For example, the focus of a unit might shift from students reading and discussing George Orwell's *1984* to students recognizing social injustice in the world.

3. Provide smaller and diverse supplemental texts.

These are works that pair with the book, such as poetry, nonfiction articles, videos, or songs. These will provide multiple entry points for your students to comprehend the book's themes and ideas.

2. HOW TO GET YOUR STUDENTS ENGAGED IN READING ACTIVITIES?

5. **Allow your students choose what to read.**

Offer a selection of three or more texts to increase student engagement and provide differentiated options based on reading level and interest. To choose books for an effective unit, organize them by theme or style. You can encourage students to read for pleasure.

<https://youtu.be/g20xJkEv6QQ>

5. **Offer students a chance to sample new genres and styles of books in the school library.**

To maximize students' options, offer an activity where five-minute timers prompt students to rotate among tables that each represent a different genre.

<https://view.genially.com/68f14085c8525ea72756e02f>

3. PRACTICAL EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES BASED ON LITERARY TEXTS IN ENGLISH LESSONS (LEVELS A2, B1 AND B2).

How do you choose the text for a particular class or lesson?

The relevance of the text

too old to enjoy text	<i>Age of students</i> _____	too young to enjoy text
too developed to find text challenging	<i>Intellectual maturity of students</i> _____	too immature to understand text
too developed to find text engaging	<i>Students' emotional understanding</i> _____	too immature to relate to text
too advanced to be challenged by the text	<i>Students' linguistic proficiency</i> _____	too elementary to cope with the text
too well-developed to be challenged by the text	<i>Students' literary background</i> _____	insufficient to cope with with the text

far removed from themes/content of text	<i>Students' interests/hobbies</i> _____	close to themes/content of text
too remote from text to help comprehension	<i>Students' cultural background</i> _____	close enough to text for easy comprehension

3. PRACTICAL EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES BASED ON LITERARY TEXTS IN ENGLISH LESSONS (LEVELS A2, B1 AND B2).

How do you choose the text for a particular class or lesson?

Checklist for choosing literary texts

TYPE OF COURSE

Level of students
Students' reasons for learning English
Kind of English required
Length/intensity of course

TYPE OF STUDENTS

Age
Intellectual maturity
Emotional understanding
Interests/Hobbies
Cultural background
Linguistic proficiency
Literary background

OTHER TEXT-RELATED FACTORS

Availability of texts
Length of text
Exploitability
Fit with syllabus

Lazar, G. ([1993] 2005). *Literature and Language Teaching: A Guide for Teachers and Trainers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

3. PRACTICAL EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES BASED ON LITERARY TEXTS IN ENGLISH LESSONS (LEVELS A2, B1 AND B2).

3.1 Literary texts for lead in activities.

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Q5B6RS111Zj5Ce_8dPAA30zUZABOSv9y?usp=sharing

3.2 Literary texts at the heart of English lessons: reading and comprehension activities.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rJkcSB5C5ISs7fUxWyGwGLuVKjcJEPaV?usp=sharing>

3.3 Literary texts as a catalyst for writing and speaking.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/15P2AT7JOIAgENsjOvYQN-r1DJmITSr0q?usp=sharing>

3.4 Extensive Reading

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1l_q9usYay1M9VeFduaOB4V-9tWnqhtgg?usp=sharing

3. PRACTICAL EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES BASED ON LITERARY TEXTS IN ENGLISH LESSONS (LEVELS A2, B1 AND B2).

With a literary text in EFL lessons students should be able to:

1. Link ideas to the subject of a text based on: illustrations, titles, keywords, front and back covers. ...
2. Speculate on the meaning of the text through: text extracts, listening to and viewing prompts, free writing. ...
3. Research information about the author, the theme and the context. ...
4. Express an opinion on the subject of the text.
5. Confirm hypotheses formulated through: subject/main idea; spatio-temporal context; characters.
6. Recognise the genre of the text: adventure, historical fiction, science fiction, biography, fairy tale;
7. Identify the writer's intentions by considering:
 - Sociocultural context.
 - Text, paragraph or sentence structure.
 - Registers.

3. PRACTICAL EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES BASED ON LITERARY TEXTS IN ENGLISH LESSONS (LEVELS A2, B1 AND B2).

- Narrative elements: (sequence of events, characters, etc.).
 - Descriptive elements: (absence of action and/or references to time/place, appeals to the senses: sounds, smells, tastes, colours, etc.).
 - Language.
8. Produce interpretations of the text.
 8. Generate text about the text by inferring meaning.
 8. Develop cultural awareness through interaction with the text:
 - distinguish and compare sociocultural references (from their own culture and the target culture).
 11. Confirm or revise initial expectations.
 11. Assess the factual and moral aspects of a text and expresses an opinion.
 11. Use the text as a starting point for various creative activities: parallel texts, dramatisations, role-plays, visual representations, creating other forms of art and mini-lectures.

Primary Resources

- Angelou, M. et all. Liz Gerschel (ed). (1996). *Quartet of Stories*. Harlow: Longman.
- Dahl, R. (1993). *Collected Short Stories*. London: Penguin Books.
- Lessing, D. (1993). *London Observed*. London: Flamingo.
- Kureishi, H. (2003 [1997]). *Love in a Blue Time*. London: faber and faber.
- Rushdie, S. (1995). *East, West*. London: Vintage.
- Magalhães, J.M. & Gomes, J.S.(2004). *Didáctica e Conteúdos Programáticos do Inglês Ramo Educacional 2º ano: Breve Antologia para uso em aulas de inglês 2004 / 2005*. Lisboa: Universidade de Lisboa, Faculdade de Letras.
- Townsend, S. (2012 [2001]). *The Public Confessions of a Middle-Aged Woman (Aged 55 ¾)*. London: Penguin Books.

Resources

- Arnold, M. ([1869] 2006). *Culture and Anarchy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Attridge, D. ([2004] 2005). *The Singularity of Literature*. London: Routledge.
- Bassnett, S. & Grundy, P. (1993). *Language Through Literature: Creative Language Teaching Through Literature*. Burnt Mill: Longman.
- Carey, J. (2005). *What Good Are the Arts?*. London: Faber and Faber.
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- Sartre, J.P. ([1948] 2006) *What is Literature?* Trans. Bernard Frechtman. London: Routledge
- Widdowson, P. (1999). *Literature*. London: Routledge.

Online Resources

- Edutopia (2024) *Reigniting the Joy of Reading With Book Tastings* <https://www.edutopia.org/video/reigniting-reading-joy-book-tastings>
- Edutopia (2024), How to Get Teens Engaged as Readers <https://www.edutopia.org/video/how-to-get-teens-reading>
- Edutopia (2022), 5 Tips for Teaching Novels When Students Won't Read [5 Tips for Teaching Novels When Students Won't Read | Edutopia](#)