

International AS and A-level **English Literature**

(9675) Specification



For teaching from 2027 onwards

For International AS exams

May/June 2028 onwards

For International A-level exams

May/June 2029 onwards

For teaching and examination outside
the United Kingdom



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Are you using the latest version of this specification?

- You will always find the most up-to-date version of this specification on our website at oxfordaqa.com/9675
- We will write to you if there are significant changes to the specification.

1 Introduction

1.1 Why choose OxfordAQA International AS and A-levels?

Our international qualifications enable schools that follow a British curriculum to benefit from the best education expertise in the United Kingdom (UK).

Our International AS and A-levels offer the same rigour and high quality as AS and A-levels in the UK and are relevant and appealing to students worldwide. They reflect a deep understanding of the needs of teachers and schools around the globe and are brought to you by Oxford University Press and AQA, the UK's leading awarding body.

Providing valid and reliable assessments, these qualifications are based on over 100 years of experience, academic research and international best practice. They have been independently validated as being to the same standard as the qualifications accredited by the UK examinations regulator, Ofqual. They reflect the latest changes to the British system, enabling students to progress to higher education with up-to-date qualifications.

You can find out about OxfordAQA at oxfordaqa.com

1.2 Why choose our International AS and A-level English Literature?

We have worked closely with teachers and universities to develop relevant, engaging and up-to-date specifications that approach the reading and study of literature through the lens of genre and theory, encouraging the independent study of a range of texts within a shared context, giving logic and meaning to the way that texts are grouped for study. This unifying approach facilitates the inclusion of a range of wider reading, thus extending students' experience and appreciation of literature.

Offering clear progression from International GCSE, these courses allow students to build on the skills and knowledge already gained and prepare them for their next steps.

The variety of assessment styles used, such as passage-based questions, unseen material, open and closed-book approaches allows students to develop a wide range of skills, such as the ability to read critically, analyse, evaluate and undertake independent research which are valuable for both further study and future employment.

This specification has been designed by an expert team to give international students an interesting and rigorous course in English literature. The course reflects the international contexts in which the students are studying, while at the same time preparing them for further study of the subject (should they wish to do so) at leading universities across the world.

You can find out about all our international AS and A-level English Literature qualifications at oxfordaqa.com/english

1.3 Recognition

OxfordAQA meet the needs of international students. They are an international alternative and comparable in standard to the Ofqual regulated qualifications offered in the UK. Our qualifications have been independently benchmarked by UK ENIC, the UK national agency for providing expert opinion on qualifications worldwide. They have confirmed they can be considered 'comparable to the overall GCE A-level and GCSE standard offered in the UK'.

To read their report and see the latest list of universities who have stated they accept these international qualifications, visit oxfordaqa.com/recognition

1.4 The Oxford International Programme learner attributes

In order to equip students with the skills they need for success both now and in the future, we have worked with Oxford University Press to create the Oxford International Programme. This combines the Oxford International Curriculum with OxfordAQA qualifications, creating an integrated offer for international schools, from Early Years to A-level.

At its core we have introduced the Oxford International Programme learner attributes – the skills and competencies that enable our students to thrive academically, socially and personally.

The learner attributes, alongside our focus on demonstrating higher order critical thinking skills, ensure that students are equipped to get the grades that will take them places, and build the skills they need to be successful when they get there.



1.5 Support and resources to help you teach

We know that support and resources are vital for your teaching and that you have limited time to find or develop good quality materials. That's why we've worked with experienced teachers to provide you with resources that will help you confidently plan, teach and prepare for exams.

Teaching resources

You will have access to:

- sample schemes of work to help you plan your course with confidence
- teacher guidance notes to give you the essential information you need to deliver the specification
- training courses to help you deliver our qualifications
- student textbooks that have been checked and approved by us
- engaging worksheets and activities developed by teachers, for teachers.

Preparing for exams

You will have access to the support you need to prepare for our exams, including:

- specimen papers and mark schemes
- exemplar student answers with examiner commentaries.

Analyse your students' results with enhanced results analysis (ERA)

After the first examination series, you can use this tool to see which questions were the most challenging, how the results compare to previous years and where your students need to improve. ERA, our free online results analysis tool, will help you see where to focus your teaching.

Information about results, including maintaining standards over time, grade boundaries and our post-results services, will be available on our website in preparation for the first examination series.

Help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at oxfordaqa.com/9675

You can contact the subject team directly at info@oxfordaqa.com or call us on +44 (0)161 696 5995 (option 1 and then 1 again).

Please note: We aim to respond to all email enquiries within two working days.

Our UK office hours are Monday to Friday, 8am – 5pm.

2 Specification at a glance

The titles of the qualifications are:

- OxfordAQA International Advanced Subsidiary in English Literature
- OxfordAQA International Advanced Level in English Literature.

These qualifications are modular. The full International A-level is intended to be taken over two years. The specification content for the International AS is half that of an International A-level. The International AS can be taken as a stand-alone qualification or can be used to count towards the International A-level. Students can take the International AS in the first year and then take the International A2 in the second year to complete the International A-level or they can take all the units together in the same examination series at the end of the course.

For OxfordAQA International AS and A-level, students can:

- take units 1 and 2 only, for the OxfordAQA International AS qualification
- or
- take units 1 and 2, for the OxfordAQA International AS qualification, in one series, then units 3 and 4 (or non-exam equivalent), for the OxfordAQA International A-level qualification in a later series
- or
- take units 1, 2, 3 and 4 (or non-exam equivalent) in the same series, leading to the full OxfordAQA International A-level.

Re-sits will be allowed for any units. One re-sit per unit will be allowed and the highest mark will count. Unlimited re-sits for the whole qualification will be allowed.

Non-exam assessment marks (NEA) can be carried forward when re-sitting a qualification (either International AS or International A-level).

The guided learning hours (GLH) for an OxfordAQA International Advanced Subsidiary is 180.

The guided learning hours (GLH) for an OxfordAQA International Advanced Level is 360.

These figures are for guidance only and may vary according to local practice and the learner's prior experience of the subject.

2.1 Subject content and assessments

International AS

1. Unit 1: Elements of dramatic tragedy
2. Unit 2: Place in literary texts

International A-level

3. Unit 3: Elements of crime and mystery (A-level only)
4. Unit 4: Literary representations (A-level only)

2.2 International AS

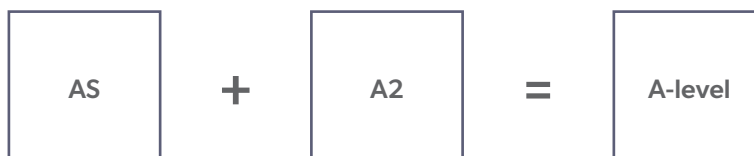
Assessments

Unit 1: Elements of dramatic tragedy	+	Unit 2: Place in literary texts
What's assessed <p>Students answer two questions, one from each section.</p> <p>Study of two drama texts.</p>		What's assessed <p>Students answer two questions, one from each section.</p> <p>Study of one prose text and one poetry text.</p>
How it's assessed <p>Written exam: 2 hours</p> <p>Closed book</p> <p>50 marks</p> <p>50% of the International AS assessment (20% of the International A-level assessment)</p>		How it's assessed <p>Written exam: 2 hours</p> <p>Open book</p> <p>50 marks</p> <p>50% of the International AS assessment (20% of the International A-level assessment)</p>
Questions <p>Section A: (25 marks) One passage-based question on Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedy.</p> <p>Section B: (25 marks) One essay question on later dramatic tragedies.</p>		Questions <p>Section A: (25 marks) One essay question on prose set text.</p> <p>Section B: (25 marks) One essay question on poetry set text.</p>

2.3 International A2

Assessments

Unit 3: Elements of crime and mystery	+	Unit 4a: Literary representations	OR	Unit 4b: Literary representations
What's assessed Students answer two questions on texts of choice. Study of two texts.		What's assessed Students answer two questions on unseen texts: one prose text and one poetry text.		What's assessed Non-exam assessment. Study of two texts: one poetry text and one prose text. Two essays of 1,250–1,500 words, each responding to a different text.
How it's assessed Written exam: 2 hours Closed book 50 marks 30% of International A-level		How it's assessed Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes 50 marks 30% of International A-level		How it's assessed 50 marks 30% of International A-level Assessed by teachers and moderated by AQA
Questions Students answer two essay questions (25 marks each).		Questions Section A: Prose (25 marks) Section B: Poetry (25 marks) More than one unseen text may be included in each section.		



3 Subject content – International AS

OxfordAQA International AS and A-level English Literature specifications provide opportunities for students to develop the creative and critical skills that are essential both for further study and for employability.

A full understanding of the terms explored below will help teachers and students access these skills and engage meaningfully with the subject content.

Genre

- This specification encourages students to approach literary texts through an understanding of genre. This approach provides students with a meaningful way of connecting texts that foregrounds their literary qualities, encourages attention to relevant contexts, and encourages debate around different interpretations of the texts.
- Genre here is seen as referring to broad literary categories such as poetry and drama, but also more specialised sub-categories such as tragedy. It is also used to refer to cultural genres such as place, where the connections between texts operate in a different way.
- In all cases, texts are seen as using genres rather than definitively belonging to them. Some texts are multi-generic.
- In addition, genres are not regarded as being fixed. Texts may challenge the conventions of a genre, and genres themselves change in response to cultural and historical changes.
- This appreciation of the fluidity of genre means that a genre-based approach is ideally placed to encourage different interpretations of texts and a close focus on literary methods.

AS English Literature focuses on the ways in which literary study can be organized around aspects of two different approaches to genre. A-level English Literature offers a third approach to genre, while at the same time introducing students to different ways of reading and responding to texts.

Significance

- ‘Significance’ is a key word in this specification. It means something more than simply ‘importance’. Its use involves an understanding of the idea of ‘signification’.
- Signification involves investigating all the potential meanings of a text, or certain parts of a text, and how those meanings are created. It may relate to the ways the text is constructed or written; it may relate to relevant contexts; it may involve a debate around different possible critical readings.
- The following exemplar question illustrates the ways that ‘significance’ might be interpreted.

Study text: The Poetry of Thomas Hardy

Q. ‘Explore the significance of Hardy’s use of nature in his poetry’

This might be rephrased as: ‘What is signified by nature in Hardy’s poetry?’

Or as: ‘What different readings of Hardy’s poetry are made possible by his use of place?’

- A response to this question might consider the way that Hardy uses nature (philosophically) to signify a sense of loss or the transitory nature of life.
- Alternatively, his poetry might use nature (ecocritically) to signify values that endure beyond the life of an individual human.
- A third possibility is that the poet might use nature to convey a very personal, autobiographical or aesthetic experience.

Thus the trigger word ‘significance’ should indicate to students that they should consider aspects of genre, context, literary method and critical perspectives.

Elements

- Two of the four units in this specification have the word 'elements' in their titles, and a third unit 'Place in literary texts' requires a study of the significance of different elements or aspects of place within the set texts.
- The use of the word 'elements' signals that students are not expected to provide broad overviews of the genre named in the title of the unit, but instead focus on those elements or aspects of the genre which are relevant to the text and task.
- The examination questions will identify a specific element of the genre. This element may be taken from the list of examples provided in the specification under the unit headings, but these lists are not to be seen as exclusive.

Representation

- All of the four units in this specification require a focus on literary representation, the process through which writers represent the world to us.
- This means that students will be asked to do more than simply describe events, characters, ideas and settings. They should, more importantly and through an analysis of the writers' literary methods, explore the ways in which these elements of a text are presented.
- This approach should also naturally open up texts to different interpretations.
- The final unit in the specification, LT04, specifically focuses on representation, and it can thus be seen as building upon the understanding of how literature works that has been developed during the first three units.

Set texts have been chosen to illuminate the principles behind the specifications, while at the same time giving teachers the flexibility to design reading programmes which reflect the interests and ambitions of their specific cohorts.

3.1 Unit 1: Elements of dramatic tragedy

In Elements of dramatic tragedy, the texts are connected through the mainstream literary genres of drama and tragedy. Texts have been selected because they share some of the common features of traditional tragic drama while also offering some interesting variations. Students will study two drama texts. Questions on Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedy in Section A will use a passage as a starting point. Questions on Later dramatic tragedies in Section B will be essay questions.

Students will write on two plays, one from Section A and one from Section B. At the core of all the set texts is a tragic hero or heroine who is flawed in some way, who suffers and causes suffering to others. Some tragic elements will be more in evidence in some texts than in others and students will need to understand how particular elements of the tragic genre are used and how they work in the two chosen texts. The absence of an 'aspect' can be as significant as its presence.

There is no exhaustive list of the 'elements' of tragedy but areas that can usefully be explored include:

- the type of the tragic text itself, whether it is classical and about public figures or domestic and about representations of ordinary people
- the settings for the tragedy, both places and times
- tragic isolation
- the journey towards death of the protagonists, their flaws, pride and folly, their blindness and insight, their discovery and learning, their moral values
- the role of the tragic villain or opponent, if there is one, who directly affects the fortune of the hero, who engages in a contest of power and is partly responsible for the hero's demise
- the presence of fate, whether the hero's end is presented as being inevitable
- how the behaviour of the heroes affects the world around them
- the significance of violence and revenge

- the significance of the past
- how the tragedy ultimately affects the audience, acting as a commentary on the real world, moving the audience through pity and fear to an understanding of the human condition.

Elements of drama should also be explored in this unit. The plays should be studied as plays, and their dramatic qualities carefully considered.

There is no exhaustive list of the 'elements' of drama but areas that might usefully be explored include:

- the structural pattern of the text as it moves through complication to catastrophe, from order to disorder, through climax to resolution, from the prosperity and happiness of the hero to the tragic conclusion
- the use of plots and sub-plots
- the pattern of the main characters' physical presence or absence on the stage
- dramatic action and movement
- the way that dramatic language is used to heighten the tragedy
- the dramatic significance of the use of verse and prose
- monologues, asides, soliloquies, dialogue
- the dramatist's use of the stage
- non-verbal dramatic effects such as music and lighting.

Section A: Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedy – select one from:

William Shakespeare	<i>Othello</i>
William Shakespeare	<i>King Lear</i>
William Shakespeare	<i>Hamlet</i>
Thomas Middleton	<i>The Changeling</i>
John Webster	<i>The Duchess of Malfi</i>

Section B: Later dramatic tragedies – select one from:

Arthur Miller	<i>Death of a Salesman</i>
Tennessee Williams	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i>
Henrik Ibsen	<i>Hedda Gabler</i>
Wole Soyinka	<i>Death and the King's Horseman</i>
Caryl Churchill	<i>Top Girls</i>

3.2 Unit 2: Place in literary texts

In Place in literary texts the texts are linked through the cultural genre of place. Texts are connected through the significance of place(s) in the texts. On a surface level, place could refer to broad settings such as whole countries, time periods and particular societies. It could also be far more precise and specific and refer to rooms, houses, villages or smaller natural spaces such as gardens or fields. However, 'place' could also be understood in a more abstract manner – it could refer to ideas of belonging or isolation, to social or political spaces and to the connections between place and human relationships and identity.

Students study one prose text and one poetry text. This is an open book examination.

There is no exhaustive list of the potential reference to place but ideas that can usefully be explored include:

- specific geographical locations and their potential significances, ranging from pathways, woods, villages to whole countries
- locations (and possibly times) where stories take place
- the significance of the natural world, its beauty and/or hostility and possibly where it has been spoiled
- the representation of cities and urban spaces, their development and their deconstruction
- buildings such as houses or places of business; their construction and their state of upkeep from run-down and ruined, to fresh and new
- use and significance of place names – perhaps as part of language and representations of place
- the representation of social identity and how people are placed in society
- ideas of social class and status within a social group
- place as a setting for human relationships
- place as a political space and how this affects different social groups
- issues of colonisation and partition
- the idea of home and homeland
- borders, social/cultural and political divisions
- the language and representation of place.

Section A: Prose – select one from:	
Joseph Conrad	<i>Heart of Darkness</i>
F. Scott Fitzgerald	<i>The Great Gatsby</i>
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie	<i>Americanah</i>
Andrea Levy	<i>Small Island</i>
Emily Bronte	<i>Wuthering Heights</i>
Elif Shafak	<i>The Island of Missing Trees</i>

Section A: Poetry – select one from:

Robert Frost selection:

Mending Wall; The Black Cottage; After Apple-Picking; The Wood-Pile; The Road Not Taken; Birches; “Out, Out –”; Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening; A Brook in the City; On Looking Up by Chance at the Constellation; Desert Places; An Unstamped Letter in our Rural Letter Box.

Thomas Hardy selection:

Neutral Tones; At an Inn; At a Lunar Eclipse; To an Unborn Pauper Child; The Darkling Thrush; The Self-Unseeing; Channel Firing; The Convergence of the Twain; The Going; After a Journey; Beeny Cliff, At Castle Boterel; Places; The Oxen; In Time of ‘The Breaking of Nations’.

Seamus Heaney selection:

Mid-Term Break; Personal Helicon; The Peninsula; Requiem for the Croppies; Bogland; Anahorish; A New Song; The Tollund Man; Westering; North; Bog Queen; The Graubelle Man; Punishment; Act of Union; The Toome Road.

Imtiaz Dharker selection:

The Haunted House; At the Lahore Karhai; Number 106; Waiting for Crossrail; Rapt; The City; Speech Balloon; London Bells; Meanwhile at the Irani Bakery; Passport Photo; Midnight, Christmas Eve; Talisman; Digging up the Bones; Leaving Fingerprints; Bombil, Bumla, Bummalo.

Kathleen Jamie selection:

The Sea House; Mr and Mrs Scotland are Dead; The Wishing Tree; Water Day; The Cave of the Fish; Pipistrelles; The Tree House; Bosegran; Forget it; Lochan; Hackit; The Galilean Moons; Moon; Glacial; The Hinds.

4 Subject content – International A-level

There are two units. Unit 3 is an examination and Unit 4 has an optional route, either non-exam assessment or examination.

4.1 Unit 3: Elements of crime and mystery

In **Elements of crime and mystery** the texts are connected through a cultural genre. In all these texts a significant crime drives the narrative and the execution and consequences of the crime are fundamentally important to the way the text is structured. All set texts are narratives which focus on transgressions against established order and the specific breaking of either national, social, religious or moral laws. There is a choice of any two texts from eight. This is a closed book examination.

The elements that might be explored, depending on the individual text, include:

- the sense of mystery which needs to be unravelled
- the settings that are created as backdrops for criminal action and for the pursuit of the perpetrators of crime: both places and times will be significant here
- the nature of the crimes and the criminals, the criminals' motives and actions
- the backgrounds of the criminals; isolation, poverty, ill treatment
- detectives and detection
- the investigation that leads to the criminals capture or punishment
- how far there is a moral purpose and restoration of order
- guilt and remorse, confession and the desire for forgiveness
- the sense that there will be a resolution and the criminal will be punished
- the various consequences of crimes
- the victims of crime and the inclusion of suffering
- some central motifs such as love, money, power, danger and death
- the representation of various acts of violence: cruelty, aggression, exploitation, physical and emotional abuse
- punishment, justice, retribution, corruption, accusation, witnesses, the legal system
- the structural patterning of the text as it moves through a series of crises to some sense of order
- the way that language is used in the world that is created
- the way that crime writing is used to comment on society, particularly the representation of society at particular historical periods
- ultimately, how crime stories affect audiences and readers, creating suspense, repugnance, excitement and relief.

Select two from:	
William Shakespeare	<i>Macbeth</i>
Samuel Taylor Coleridge	<i>The Rime of the Ancient Mariner</i>
Robert Browning	<i>Selected Poems: The Laboratory, My Last Duchess, Porphyria's Lover, The Patriot, The Pied Piper of Hamelin, The Confessional, Time's Revenges, Count Gismond</i>
Charles Dickens	<i>Oliver Twist</i>
Edgar Allan Poe	<i>Collected Stories: The Murders in the Rue Morgue, The Man of the Crowd, The Pit and the Pendulum, The Black Cat, The Tell-Tale Heart, The Purloined Letter, The Fall of the House of Usher</i>
Robert Louis Stevenson	<i>Collected Stories: Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, The Body Snatcher, Markheim, A Lodging for the Night</i>
Agatha Christie	<i>The Murder of Roger Ackroyd</i>
Kate Atkinson	<i>When Will There Be Good News</i>
Oyinkan Braithwaite	<i>My Sister the Serial Killer</i>
Kiran Millwood Hargrave	<i>The Mercies</i>

4.2 Unit 4: Literary representations

There are two options here, one of which must be chosen, either **4a**: an examination paper using unseen texts, externally assessed, or **4b**: a non-exam assessment submission, teacher assessed and externally moderated.

The first three units of this specification have encouraged students to approach literary texts through an understanding of genre, finding significance through:

- analysing the ways texts are constructed and written
- weighing up the importance of contexts
- finding potential meanings and interpretations.

In the fourth unit of this specification students will be asked to build upon their understanding of how literature works through looking further at literary representations. Representation is used here to refer to the ways that writers present their fictional worlds. This focus on representation should help to reveal the view of the world which is offered in the text and therefore open up texts to different interpretations. Whichever of the optional routes is chosen, students will be rewarded for their ability to find meanings in texts.

In order to give some framework for the possibilities in this unit, four broad areas are identified. How they apply to each of the optional routes is described below.

- Representations of childhood/old age.
- Representations of war.
- Representations of women/men.
- Representations of race/class/culture.

The key word here is 'representations'. Students need to understand how representation works and how interpretations can arise from the close study of a particular text. It is important to note that, whichever assessment route is taken, the above areas are not topics which are prescribed for detailed study, and students are not expected to draw on extensive contextual knowledge of the topic, nor are they expected to refer to wider reading. They are areas which teachers and students can explore through the analysis of their own selected texts, and so practise and develop the skills of literary analysis and interpretation.

4a: Examination

This examination paper will require students to answer two separate questions on unseen texts. There will be one question on prose and one question on poetry. Both questions will be compulsory. More than one unseen text may be offered in the question. In each question students will be directed to make reference to the representation of an element of one of the four areas prescribed above.

The two questions will refer to different topic areas. The questions will be framed in such a way that students are guided towards specific elements of the unseen texts, rather than having to do a completely unaided exercise in practical criticism.

More information about this option can be found in the **Teaching guidance**.

4b: Non-exam assessment

This option is designed to encourage students to read widely, to choose their own texts (if appropriate) and to understand that the study of literature needs to be informed by an appreciation of the ways that writers shape and create meanings. A range of differentiated texts and tasks will ideally be seen across a centre's coursework submission for this component. It would not be appropriate for two students to deliver work on the same text and task. The creation of an individual response is of central importance to NEA, and students should be encouraged to deliver genuinely independent work.

Students must write about one poetry text and one prose text in separate responses.

The poetry text must be by a single author. The number of poems which constitute a text should be equivalent to those in the poetry texts seen in Unit 2 and Unit 3. If short stories are used, they must be by a single author. The number of stories which constitute a text should be equivalent to those seen in Unit 3. Students may select a small number of poems or short stories as their final focus in their NEA response; this selection should be discussed as being representative (or not) of the collection as a whole.

Each text chosen for study must be linked to a different topic chosen from the four named above. Students cannot choose texts from any of the AS/A-level exam set text lists. Texts chosen for study may include texts in translation. Texts chosen for study should allow access to a range of critical views and interpretations, and should maximise opportunities for writing with reference to ways in which meanings can be found in literature.

An example of a task linked to race/class/culture could be:

'Forster has written **A Passage to India** in such a way that it is impossible to sympathise with any of the English characters as there is so little to redeem them.' Exploring Forster's representation of the English in India, say how far you agree with this view.

Centres have access to an NEA adviser who will be available to offer support. They will be able to offer guidance on task setting and text choices as well as general advice about the NEA process. This service can be accessed by emailing info@oxfordaqa.com

More information about this option can be found in the **Teaching guidance and the Teaching Guide to NEA**.

5 Scheme of assessment

Find mark schemes, and specimen papers for new courses, on our website at oxfordaqa.com/9675

These qualifications are modular. The full International A-level is intended to be taken over two years. The specification content for the International AS is half that of an International A-level.

The International AS can be taken as a stand-alone qualification or it can count towards the International A-level. To complete the International A-level, students can take the International AS in their first year and the International A2 in their second year or they can take all the units together in the same examination series at the end of the two year course.

The specification content will be split across units and will include some synoptic assessment. This allows students to draw together different areas of knowledge from across the full course of study.

All materials are available in English only.

Our international AS and A-level exams in English Literature include questions that allow students to demonstrate their ability to:

- draw together their knowledge, skills and understanding from across the full course of study
- provide extended responses.

5.1 Availability of assessment units and certification

Examinations and certification for this specification are available as follows:

	Availability of units		Availability of certification	
	International AS	International A2	International AS	International A-level
June 2028	✓		✓	
January 2029	✓		✓	
June 2029	✓	✓	✓	✓
January 2030 onwards	✓	✓	✓	✓
June 2030 onwards	✓	✓	✓	✓

5.2 Aims

Courses based on this specification should encourage students to:

- develop their creative and critical skills in reading and analysing texts
- explore aspects of literary representation
- find meanings in texts
- deepen their understanding of how interpretations of texts vary according to contexts
- gain understanding of literary critical works from various theoretical starting points.

5.3 Assessment Objectives

The exams and non-exam assessment (NEA) will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives:

- AO1: Demonstrate understanding of the ways in which readers find meanings in texts, showing an understanding of genre, the significance of contexts, and the ways in which different interpretations can be found.
- AO2: Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts with close attention to authorial methods.
- AO3: Express informed, personal and argued responses to literary texts, using appropriate concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate writing.

All three AOs are weighted equally in all questions across both International AS and International A-level. This coherent approach to the study of the subject means that AOs support learning rather than dominate it.

5.3.1 Assessment Objective weightings for International AS English literature

Assessment Objectives (AOs)	Unit weightings (approx %)		Overall weighting of AOs (approx %)
	Unit 1	Unit 2	
AO1	16.66	16.66	33.33
AO2	16.66	16.66	33.33
AO3	16.66	16.66	33.33
Overall weighting of units (%)	50	50	100

5.3.2 Assessment Objective weightings for International A-level English literature

Assessment Objectives (AOs)	Unit weightings (approx %)				Overall weighting of AOs (approx %)
	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	
AO1	6.66	6.66	10	10	33.33
AO2	6.66	6.66	10	10	33.33
AO3	6.66	6.66	10	10	33.33
Overall weighting of components (%)	20	20	30	30	100

5.4 Assessment weightings

The raw marks awarded on each unit will be transferred to a uniform mark scale (UMS) to meet the weighting of the units and to ensure comparability between units sat in different exam series. Students' final grades will be calculated by adding together the uniform marks for all units. The maximum raw and uniform marks are shown in the table below.

Unit	Maximum raw mark	Percentage weighting International A-level (AS)	Maximum uniform mark
Unit 1: Elements of dramatic tragedy	50	20 (50)	80
Unit 2: Place in literary texts	50	20 (50)	80
International AS qualification	–	40 (100)	160
Unit 3: Elements of crime and mystery	50	30	120
Unit 4: Literary representations	50	30	120
International A-level qualification	–	100	400

For more detail on UMS, see Section 7.3.

5.5 Levels of response mark schemes: principles of progression

All three AOs are weighted equally in all questions across both International AS and International A-level. This facilitates the holistic approach to marking that the specification adopts. This means that the questions are set up to ensure that if they are answered fully and in all their parts, the student will be addressing all three AOs. This is why the specification places such value on the importance of thinking freshly in the exam and answering the specifics of the question.

When marking students' work, it may be helpful to think in terms of the words emboldened in the 'How to arrive at a mark' column in the mark scheme. If an answer is always **straightforward** and **relevant** (for example) it is likely to sit at top band 3. If it has only flashes of more **straightforward** thinking or only a little **relevant** comment, then it is likely to be at the bottom of the band.

This document will exemplify what an individual paragraph might look like within each of the bands from band 2 to band 5. Of course, a full answer might include work that fits into multiple different bands and where this happens, a best fit approach is sensible when awarding marks. The paragraphs represent different levels of response to Unit 1 'Elements of dramatic tragedy', specifically the passage-based question on **Othello**. The purpose of this is to exemplify a general quality of discussion and although **Othello** is written about, this is only for exemplification purposes and the content is therefore applicable to all texts and units. Individual mark schemes and exemplar material with detailed commentaries are available on our website for guidance regarding specific units, texts and questions.

Band 1: largely irrelevant or largely misunderstood 0-5 marks

- The term 'largely irrelevant' means that the student has made very little attempt to respond to the specifics of the task and has offered little more than random comments on the text.
- If the response shows little understanding of the text and/or the task and makes frequent factual errors about the text it is likely to be best described as largely misunderstood.

Band 2: simple and/or generalised

6-10 marks

- Students writing **simply** will make basic, under-developed statements with limited use of textual support or references. Method is likely to be reliant on word level understanding. There is likely to be little sense of the writer's general shaping and control of the text.
- Generalised** writing is work that is within the vicinity of the task but isn't yet relevant or clearly connected to it.

'Iago is a villain because he treats Roderigo really badly even though he pretends to be his friend. He says 'Thus do I ever make my fool my purse', which shows that he thinks Roderigo is a fool'.

Band 3: relevant and straightforward

11-15 marks

- Straightforward** writing shows progression from simple writing because there will be evidence of ideas being developed with some helpful textual support. There will also be some comments and understanding on a range of methods and an awareness of elements of drama where the text is a play.
- Relevant** answers understand and respond to the task directly and with clarity.

'Iago's duplicity can be seen through the way he refers to Roderigo as a 'snipe'. Shakespeare is showing here that Roderigo has been fooled by Iago because he thinks that he cares about him because of the line 'no more talk of drowning, do you hear'. However, actually Iago doesn't care about him and Shakespeare shows this through dramatic irony because he uses insults such as 'fool' and 'snipe' as soon as Roderigo leaves the stage'.

Band 4: thorough and coherent

16-20 marks

- Coherent** writing is writing where students have carefully and logically organised their work both within paragraphs and the essay as a whole. Their writing is easy to follow, and their argument is sustained.
- Students who write **thoroughly** will be developing their ideas in a purposeful and full way, using a range of helpful references and precise detail and commenting pertinently on methods such as structure and voice where it is relevant to do so.

'An aspect of Iago's villainy explored in this extract through his treatment of Roderigo is his duplicity. Iago had previously sworn 'by Janus' and this revering of the two-faced god is evident here when he refers to Roderigo as a 'snipe' and a 'fool' the minute he has left the stage. During the first half of the extract Iago speaks to Roderigo in prose, coaxing him out of his lovelorn suicidal thoughts with 'no more talk of drowning, do you hear'. However as soon as Iago is alone on stage and begins his soliloquy, he shifts into verse and explains to the audience that he would only 'time expend' with Roderigo for his 'own gained knowledge.' The ease with which he shifts from appearing like a comforting friend to revelling in his own extortion and abuse allows the audience to see the danger that Iago represents'.

Band 5: perceptive and assured

21-25 marks

Perceptive comments come from detailed textual knowledge that allows students to make mature and sensitive comments about the text and the task. Writing at this level is both engaging and academic and ideas are always tightly pinned in detail.

Assuredness refers to a student's skill in expression. Their writing will be confident and precise. It will be and backed up by thoughtfully selected support and comment on a range of methods.

'An aspect of Iago's villainy explored in this extract through his treatment of Roderigo is his duplicity. Iago's abuse and then support of Othello at the start of Act 1 is reversed here when he refers to Roderigo as a 'snipe' and a 'fool' the minute he has left the stage. During the first half of the extract, Iago speaks to Roderigo in colloquial prose, coaxing him out of his lovelorn suicidal thoughts with 'no more talk of drowning, do you hear'. However as soon as Iago is alone on stage and begins his soliloquy, he shifts into more formal verse and explains to the audience that he would only 'time expend' with Roderigo for his 'own gained knowledge'. The move to verse perhaps implies Iago's sense of Roderigo's worthlessness despite the latter's social superiority to Iago. The dramatic arc of the extract is clear. At the start Iago assures Roderigo of his allegiance – in the military context of the play, this is a significant statement – but by the end, Shakespeare makes clear that Roderigo is nothing more than a 'purse' to Iago. The ease with which he shifts from appearing like a comforting friend to revelling in his own extortion and abuse allows the audience to see the danger that Iago represents.'

5.6 Non-exam assessment marking criteria

Unit 4b: Literary representations (International A-level only)

Two Essays

Each piece of writing should be marked out of 25, using the mark scheme below, to give a total mark out of 50.

	AO	Typical features	How to arrive at mark
Band 5 Perceptive/Assured 21–25 marks ‘Perception’ is demonstrated when students are showing the depth of their understanding and responding sensitively to the texts and task. ‘Assuredness’ is shown when students write with confidence and conviction.	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive, assured and sophisticated argument in relation to the task assured use of literary critical concepts and terminology; mature and impressive expression 	This band is characterised by perceptive and assured work which shows confidence, sharpness of mind and sophistication in relation to the task.
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task assured engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used. 	At the top of the band students are consistently assured and will demonstrate sensitivity and perception across all three assessment objectives in the course of their response.
	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> perceptive understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task assuredness in the connection between contexts and genre, leading to perceptive interpretations. 	At the bottom of the band there will be coherence and accuracy with some perception but with less consistency and evenness.
Band 4 Coherent/Thorough 16–20 marks ‘Coherence’ is shown when students are logical and consistent in their arguments in relation to the task. They hold their ideas together in an intelligible way. ‘Thoroughness’ is shown when students write carefully and precisely with detail.	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> logical, thorough and coherent argument in relation to the task where ideas are debated in depth appropriate use of literary critical concepts and terminology; precise and accurate expression. 	This band is characterised by coherent and thorough work where ideas are linked together in a focused and purposeful way in relation to the task.
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thorough understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task thorough engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used. 	At the top of the band students will demonstrate a fully coherent and thorough argument across all three assessment objectives in the course of their response.
	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> thorough understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task coherence in the connection between contexts and genre, leading to carefully explained interpretations. 	At the bottom of the band ideas will be discussed in a shaped, relevant and purposeful way with a clear sense of direction, with one or two lapses in coherence and accuracy.

	AO	Typical features	How to arrive at mark
Band 3 Straightforward/ Relevant 11–15 marks ‘Straightforward’ work is shown when students make their ideas in relation to the task clearly known. ‘Relevant’ work is shown when students are focused on the task and use detail in an appropriate and supportive way.	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sensibly ordered ideas in a relevant argument in relation to the task • some use of literary critical concepts and terminology which are mainly appropriate; straightforward and clear expression. 	<p>This band is characterised by straightforward and relevant work where the student’s response to the task is clear and intelligible.</p> <p>At the top of the band students will demonstrate consistent straightforward understanding in the course of their argument. Ideas will be developed relevantly.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be flashes of relevant understanding with evidence of straightforward thinking.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • straightforward understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task • relevant engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used. 	
	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • straightforward understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task • relevant in the connection between contexts and genre, leading to straightforward interpretations. 	
Band 2 Simple/Generalised 6–10 marks ‘Simple’ work is shown when students write in an unelaborated and basic way in relation to the task. ‘Generalised’ work is shown when students write without regard to particular details.	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a simple structure to the argument which may not be consistent but which does relate to the task • generalised use of literary critical concepts and terminology; simple expression. 	<p>This band is characterised by simple and generalised work which is mainly linked to the task.</p> <p>At the top of the band students will demonstrate a basic generalised understanding in the course of their answer. Ideas will be developed in a simple way.</p> <p>At the bottom of the band there will be inconsistency, but the beginnings of a simple and generalised understanding.</p>
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple understanding of authorial methods in relation to the task • generalised engagement with how meanings are shaped by the methods used. 	
	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple understanding of the significance of relevant contexts in relation to the task • generalised in the connections between contexts and genre, leading to simple interpretations. 	

	AO	Typical features	How to arrive at mark
Band 1 Largely irrelevant/ largely misunderstood/ largely inaccurate 1–5 marks ‘Largely irrelevant’ work is shown when students write in an unclear way with only occasional reference to what is required by the question. ‘Largely misunderstood’ and ‘largely inaccurate’ work is shown when knowledge of the text is insecure, hazy and often wrong.	AO3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> some vague points in relation to the task and some ideas about task and text(s) 	This band is characterised by work which is largely irrelevant and largely misunderstood and largely inaccurate , and so unlikely to be addressing the AOs in a relevant way.
	AO2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the writing is likely to be unclear and incorrect; if it is accurate the content will be irrelevant. 	
	AO1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> little sense of the AOs in relation to the task; little sense of how meanings are shaped; little sense of any relevant contexts, genre or interpretations. 	At the top of the band students will mention some unconnected points in relation to the task during the course of their writing. The writing is likely to lack clarity. At the bottom of the band there will be no connection with the task; the writing will be hard to follow and irrelevant .
0 marks		No marks for response when nothing is written or where response has no connection to the text(s) or task.	

6 Non-exam assessment administration

Non-exam assessment (NEA) refers to the coursework elements of this specification. This specification contains the following non-exam assessment:

The NEA for the International A-level specification only is 'Literary representations' which consists of one response to a prose text and one response to a poetry text.

We are committed to delivering assessments of the highest quality and have developed practices and procedures that support this aim. To ensure that all students have a fair experience, we have worked with other awarding bodies in England to develop best practice for maintaining the integrity of exams. This is published through the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). We will maintain the same high standard through their use for OxfordAQA.

More information on all aspects of administration is available at oxfordaqa.com/exams-administration

For any immediate enquiries please [contact info@oxfordaqa.com](mailto:contact.info@oxfordaqa.com)

Please note: **We aim to respond to all email enquiries within two working days.**

Our UK office hours are Monday to Friday, 8am – 5pm local time.

6.1 Supervision and authentication

OxfordAQA Exams requires that:

- students must sign the Candidate record form to confirm that the work submitted is their own
- supervisors who have marked a student's work must sign the declaration of authentication on the Candidate record form. This is to confirm that the work is solely that of the student concerned and was conducted under the conditions laid down by this specification
- supervisors must ensure that a Candidate record form is submitted with each student's work.

Students must have sufficient direct supervision to ensure that the work submitted can be confidently authenticated as their own. This means that you must review the progress of the work throughout its evolution.

You may provide guidance and support to students so that they are clear about the requirements of the NEA work they need to undertake and the assessment criteria on which the work will be judged. You may also provide guidance to students on the suitability of their proposed NEA, particularly if it means they will not meet the requirements of the assessment criteria.

In schools where supervisors are familiar with students' other work the supervisor should be sufficiently aware of a student's standard and level of work to appreciate if the NEA submitted is beyond the ability of the student. Where this is not the case, centre coordinators should make sure that the NEA is completed under closer supervision.

When reviewing drafts of students' work, you must not comment or provide suggestions on how they could improve it. However, you can ask questions about the way they are approaching their work and you can highlight the requirements of the assessment criteria.

This will allow the moderator to see whether the student has been awarded an appropriate mark. Please note that you should sign the authentication statement on the Candidate record form. If the statement is not signed, we cannot accept the student's work for assessment.

Once a student submits work and it has been marked, you cannot return for improvement, even if the student has not received any feedback or is unaware of the mark awarded.

6.2 Avoiding malpractice

Please inform your students of the OxfordAQA regulations concerning malpractice. Students must not:

- submit work which is not their own
- lend work to other students
- allow other students access to, or the use of, their own independently sourced source material (this does not mean that students may not lend their books to another student, but students should be prevented from plagiarising other students' research)
- include work copied directly from books, the internet, artificial intelligence (AI) tools or other sources without acknowledgement and attribution
- submit work that is word-processed by a third person without acknowledgement
- include inappropriate, offensive or obscene material.

These actions constitute malpractice and a penalty will be given, for example, disqualification.

If you identify malpractice before the student signs the declaration of authentication, this does not need to be reported to us. Please deal with such instances in accordance with your school or college's internal procedures. We expect schools to treat such cases very seriously.

If you identify malpractice after the student has signed the declaration of authentication, the head of your school or college must submit full details of the case to us at the earliest opportunity. Please complete the form **JCQ/M1**, available from oxfordaqa.com/malpractice

You must record details of any work which is not the student's own on the front of the Candidate record form.

You should consult your exams officer about these procedures.

6.3 Teacher standardisation

We will provide support for using the assessment criteria through teacher standardisation. For further information about teacher standardisation visit our website at oxfordaqa.com

In the following situations teacher standardisation is essential. We will send you an invitation to complete teacher standardisation if:

- moderation from the previous year indicates a serious misinterpretation of the requirements
- a significant adjustment was made to the marks in the previous year
- your school or college is new to this specification.

For further support and advice please speak to your adviser. Email your subject team at info@oxfordaqa.com for details of your adviser.

6.4 Internal standardisation

Centre coordinators must standardise marking within the school to ensure that there are consistent marking standards for all students. The centre coordinator must sign the centre declaration sheet to confirm that internal standardisation has taken place.

Internal standardisation may involve:

- all supervisors assessing some trial pieces of work and identifying differences in performance
- discussing any differences in marking at a training meeting for all supervisors
- referring to reference and archive material such as examples from standardisation materials.

Other valid approaches are permissible.

6.5 Annotating

Supervisors must show clearly how the marks have been awarded in relation to the assessment criteria defined in the specification. This annotation will help the moderator to see as precisely as possible where the supervisor considers that the student has met the assessment criteria in the specification.

Work could be annotated by either of the following methods:

- key pieces of evidence flagged throughout the work by annotation
- summative comments on the work, referencing sections of the work.

6.6 Submitting marks

You must check that the correct marks are written on the Candidate record form. You must check that the mark on the Candidate record form is consistent with the mark submitted to OxfordAQA

The deadline for submitting the marks for each student is given at [oxfordaqa.com](https://www.oxfordaqa.com)

6.7 Keeping the students' work

Students' work must be kept under secure conditions from the time that it is marked, with completed Candidate record forms. After the moderation period and the deadline for enquiries about results, or once any enquiry is resolved, you may return the work to students.

6.8 Moderation

Moderation is the process used to standardise marks given by schools and colleges for non-exam assessment.

A sample of NEA evidence must be uploaded, this list of student work required will be shown in Centre Services in the Centre Marks Submission (CMS) area.

You will be provided with details of who your moderator is once all your centre assessed marks have been submitted. Work should be sent within 3 working days of submitting centre assessed marks.

The moderator marks a sample of the evidence. The moderator marks are compared with the marks provided by the school to check whether any changes are needed to bring the marking in line with our agreed standards. Any changes to marks will normally keep the school's rank order but, where major inconsistencies are found, we reserve the right to change this.

OxfordAQA Exams reserves the right to visit schools by arrangement to sample stages of the NEA process. This is particularly where there has been a serious misinterpretation of the specific requirements and/or where the nature of NEAs previously agreed by a centre have been inappropriate.

6.9 After moderation

You will receive a report when the results are issued, which will give feedback on the appropriateness of the NEA carried out and interpretation of the assessment criteria. We will give you the final marks when the results are issued.

7 General administration

We are committed to delivering assessments of the highest quality and have developed practices and procedures to support this aim. To ensure all students have a fair experience, we have worked with other awarding bodies in England to develop best practice for maintaining the integrity of exams. This is published through the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). We will maintain the same high standard through their use for OxfordAQA Exams.

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For any immediate enquiries please contact info@oxfordaqa.com

Please note: We aim to respond to all email enquiries within two working days.

Our UK office hours are Monday to Friday, 8am – 5pm local time.

7.1 Entries and codes

You should use the following subject award entry codes:

Qualification title	OxfordAQA Exams entry code
OxfordAQA International Advanced Subsidiary English Literature	9676
OxfordAQA International Advanced Level English Literature	9677

Please check the current version of the Entry Codes book and the latest information about making entries on oxfordaqa.com/exams-administration

You should use the following unit entry codes:

Unit 1 – LT01

Unit 2 – LT02

Unit 3 – LT03

Unit 4 – LT04A/LT04B

A unit entry will not trigger certification. You will also need to make an entry for the overall subject award in the series that certification is required.

Exams will be available May/June and in January.

7.2 Overlaps with other qualifications

There is overlapping content in the International AS and A-level specifications. This helps you teach the International AS and A-level together.

7.3 Awarding grades and reporting results

The International AS qualification will be graded on a five-point scale: A, B, C, D and E.

The International A-level qualification will be graded on a six-point scale: A*, A, B, C, D and E.

Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.

We will publish the minimum raw mark needed for each grade in each unit when we issue students' results. We will report a student's unit results to schools in terms of uniform marks and unit grades and we will report qualification results in terms of uniform marks and grades.

The relationship between uniform marks and grades is shown in the table below.

Grade	Uniform mark range per unit and per qualification			
	Unit 1 and Unit 2	International AS English Literature	Unit 3 and Unit 4	International A-level English Literature
Maximum uniform mark	80	160	120	240
A*			108 – 119	216 – 240
A	64 – 80	128 – 160	96 – 107	192 – 215
B	56 – 63	112 – 127	84 – 95	168 – 191
C	48 – 55	96 – 111	72 – 83	144 – 167
D	40 – 47	80 – 95	60 – 71	120 – 143
E	32 – 39	64 – 79	48 – 59	96 – 119

* For the award of grade A*, a student must achieve grade A in the full International A-level qualification and a minimum of 216 uniform marks in the aggregate of units 3 and 4.

7.4 Re-sits

Unit results remain available to count towards certification, whether or not they have already been used, provided the specification remains valid. Students can re-sit units as many times as they like, as long as they're within the shelf-life of the specification. The best result from each unit will count towards the final qualification grade. Students who wish to repeat a qualification may do so by re-sitting one or more units.

To be awarded a new subject grade, the appropriate subject award entry, as well as the unit entry/entries, must be submitted.

7.5 Previous learning and prerequisites

There are no previous learning requirements. Any requirements for entry to a course based on this specification are at the discretion of schools.

7.6 Access to assessment: equality and inclusion

Our general qualifications are designed to prepare students for a wide range of occupations and further study whilst assessing a wide range of competences.

The subject criteria have been assessed to ensure they test specific competences. The skills or knowledge required do not disadvantage particular groups of students.

Exam access arrangements are available for students with disabilities and special educational needs.

We comply with the **UK Equality Act 2010** to make reasonable adjustments to remove or lessen any disadvantage that affects a disabled student. Information about access arrangements is issued to schools when they become OxfordAQA centres.

7.7 Working with OxfordAQA for the first time

You will need to apply to become an OxfordAQA centre to offer our specifications to your students. Find out how at oxfordaqa.com/centreapprovals

7.8 Private candidates

Centres may accept private candidates for examined units/components only with the prior agreement of OxfordAQA.

If you are an approved OxfordAQA centre and wish to accept private candidates, please contact OxfordAQA at:

info@oxfordaqa.com

Private candidates may also enter for examined only units/components via the British Council; please contact your local British Council office for details.



Developing skills. *Building success.* Accessing universities worldwide.

Thank you for choosing OxfordAQA. Our globally recognised International GCSE and A-level qualifications blend subject knowledge with higher-order critical thinking skills – to encourage curiosity, independent thinking and a deeper understanding of the world.

These are the skills that will help students succeed in exams, thrive at university and be ready for life.

We look forward to supporting you and your students on this journey.

Get in touch

You can contact us at
oxfordaqa.com/contact-us

or email info@oxfordaqa.com