

# GCSE English: Virtual communities

Summer 2022



Welcome



## Outline

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- Your evaluation experiences
- What is 'evaluation'?
- Evaluation and textual significance

## Why evaluation?

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The mean mark on Q4 ranges from about 6.5/20 (November 2021) as the lowest average, up to 9.7/20 as the highest (June 2019).

## What is evaluation?

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### **Exhibit A:**

AO4: Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references.

### **Exhibit B: Level 3 descriptors:**

- shows clear and relevant evaluation
- evaluates clearly the effect(s) on the reader
- shows clear understanding of writer's methods
- selects a range of relevant textual references
- makes a clear and relevant response to the focus of the statement.

## What is evaluation?

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### **Exhibit C:**

'Evaluation of a writer's choice of vocabulary, form, grammatical and structural features: explaining and illustrating how vocabulary and grammar contribute to effectiveness and impact, using linguistic and literary terminology accurately to do so and paying attention to detail; analysing and evaluating how form and structure contribute to the effectiveness and impact of a text.'

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## The evaluation question: Q4 Paper 1, November 2021

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Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the source, from **line 20 to the end**.

A student said, 'From the moment he arrives at Master's compound, the writer portrays Ugwu's feelings of pure excitement, but by the end it seems that he may be very disappointed.'

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- consider your own impressions of Ugwu's feelings
- evaluate how the writer describes Ugwu's feelings by the end
- support your response with references to the text.

## Activity one: experiences of evaluation

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- When do you teach the skills of critical evaluation?
- How do you teach these skills?
- When do your students practise responding to previously unseen literary texts?

## Is evaluation a literature essay?

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## Evaluation and literary criticism

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‘Literature is an effective tool for engaging students in critical thinking. Teaching children to analyse and evaluate literary texts appropriate to their age and interests, we can help them develop critical thinking skills. This involves seeing relationships between events, drawing inferences, analysing events, synthesising evidence and evaluating both the content of a text and the language used to express ideas contained within it.’

Unit 5: Facilitating Critical Thinking through Literature by Open Resources for English Language Teaching

## AQA Stretch and Challenge Materials (2019): Getting to Grades 8 and 9

### Evaluation is ...

Personal and subjective

Evidence based

Explains/analyses

Interpretative, qualitative and philosophical

Do **you** agree with the statement? To what extent?

**Why** do you agree/disagree? **What** is happening in the text to make you think this?

**Where** is the evidence? (textual detail)

**How** does the writer convince you through the language/techniques they use?

**What** themes and ideas are evident from the text? **What** are the big ideas?

## GCSE English Literature: Assessment Objectives

AO1: Read, understand and respond to texts. Students should be able to:

- maintain a critical style and develop an **informed personal response**
- use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.

Critical view (how far you agree with the statement).

## GCSE English Literature: Assessment Objectives

AO2: **Analyse the language, form and structure** used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.



How the writer's use of structure, methods, style etc persuades you to this view.

AO3: Show understanding of the **relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.**



Why? Enhance the response by developing inferences through references to textual 'significance'.

## Activity two: evaluation and literature

- How do you use literature exam texts to practise the skills required for evaluation?

## Evaluation and textual 'significance'

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## Is 'evaluation' the language question in disguise?

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### Language question

- How
- Granular
- Fragment
- Discrete
- Primarily close-up

### Evaluation question

- How well/how far
- Synoptic
- Whole
- Connected
- Wide-angle to close-up



## What is textual 'significance'?

'Significance shapes meaning and meaning shapes significance, in a virtuous circle. ... It is the way that the big picture helps us see the detail, and the detail helps us compose the big picture.'

Eagleton, R. (2020), 'Powerful knowledge', 'cultural literacy' and the study of literature in schools. *Impact*, 2020: 2-41. © 2021 Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain

## Activity three: binary oppositions and big ideas

Rural/city life

Rich/poor

Familiar/strange

Youth/maturity

Real/imaginary

Innocence/experience

Nature/humanity

Social status

Social mobility

Thresholds/boundaries

Rites of passage

Power and authority

Power and space

Hubris, greed

Gender

Class

Race

Human v human

Human v self

Human v society

Human v nature

## Activity three: binary oppositions and big ideas

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1. Which 'big ideas' do you teach?
2. Which texts do you use to teach these big ideas? Which year group?

## Activity four: binary oppositions and big ideas

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How would these binary oppositions and big ideas help with past sources?

- *Sound of Thunder* (November 2018)
- *The Mill* (June 2019)
- *The Silk Factory* (November 2020)

Can you think of any more binary oppositions and 'big ideas' that might be useful in the teaching of English and English Literature?

## Activity four: some ideas

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*Sound of Thunder* (November 2018):

- hubris
- humans vs nature
- power and authority
- power and space.

*The Mill* (June 2019):

- rural/city life
- gender
- class;
- aspiration
- power and authority.

*The Silk Factory* (November 2020)

- familiar/strange
- real/imaginary
- thresholds/boundaries.

## Activity Five: skills map

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How might you use this skills map in your own schools?

- Identifying pupils' skills
- Curriculum planning
- Other

## Read the extract from *Half a Yellow Sun*

On pages 6 – 7 of your *Resource booklet*

## Activity six: reflection on reading

Rural/city life

Rich/poor

Familiar/strange

Youth/maturity

Real/imaginary

Innocence/experience

Nature/humanity

Social status

Social mobility

Thresholds/boundaries

Rites of passage

Power and authority

Power and space

Hubris, greed

Gender

Class

Race

Human v human

Human v self

Human v society

Human v nature

## Elaborative inferences: Ideas about...

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- African literature
- Nigeria
- Bildungsroman
- Cities
- Child labour
- Academics and universities
- The physicality of the environment
- Food as symbol
- Door as symbol
- White as symbol of purity/tabula rasa

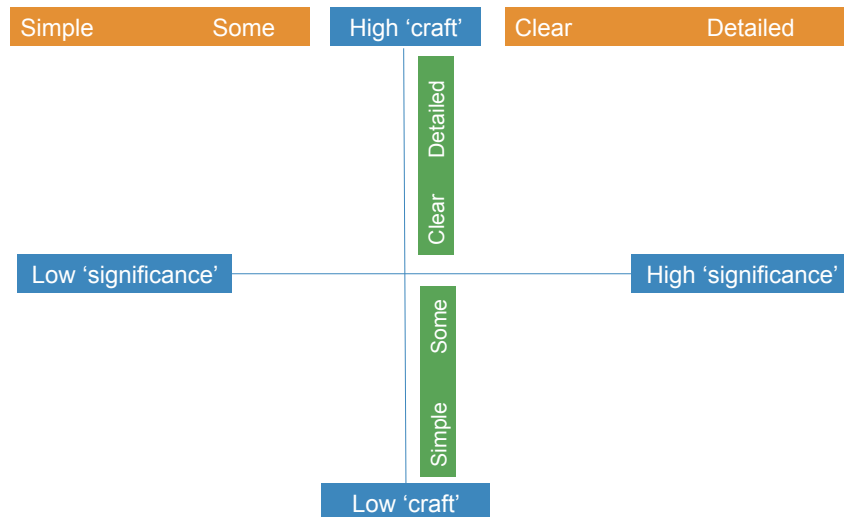
- We can't teach every 'big idea'
- Some are more text specific, some more global.
- This is where your curriculum planning is important.

## Activity seven: student responses to consider

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- Read the extracts from Students A – D in the *Resource booklet* on pages 9 – 12.
- Use the descriptors on the 'skills map' on page 5 of the *Resource booklet*.
- Decide where on the skills map you would place these responses.
- You can read commentaries on these responses in your additional booklet

## Blank skills map



## Effective reading

A model of effective reading might be organised around a number of different strategies:

- Read the text with 'why' questions to help students uncover the artifice of the text.
- Think about narrative functions such as characters' desires, motives, actions, goals, and consequences, or writerly methods such as 'why has the writer organised the text in this way or used this word instead of another'.
- Read the text visually: 'reading with a television in the head' can help students to apply cinematic schema to narrative structure and sequencing.
- Deepen elaborative inferences by asking questions such as 'what do I feel as I read this?' 'What emotions does the text provoke'? Or ask 'what does this [text/character/event etc.] remind me of'?
- Activate schema such as binary oppositions and 'big ideas'.

## Reflect

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How could you use the ideas in this session:

- in the classroom?
- to help develop your curriculum?

## Resources


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Take advantage of our extra resources in the 'Plan', 'Teach' and 'Assess' sections of our website.

[Subjects](#) / [English](#) / [GCSE](#) / [English Language \(8700\)](#)


### GCSE English Language

8700

 Because of the impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) there are some changes to how GCSE English Language will be assessed in 2022. [Find out more.](#)

Find all the information, support and resources you need to deliver our specification.

**Teaching from:** September 2015  
**Exams from:** June 2017  
**QAN code:** 601/4292/3



[Specification](#) | [Planning resources](#) | [Teaching resources](#) | [Assessment resources](#) | [Key dates](#)

## Event materials

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The electronic materials from this event will be available to download shortly. If you aren't able to download them at this time, they will be made available to you in the customer portal of our online booking system.

Once we receive notification that you have attended the course, you will be sent a certificate of attendance email. When you receive the email, please log in to your account and the materials will be available on the 'my resources' tab on the welcome screen.

## Any questions?

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## Get in touch

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Our friendly team will be happy to support you between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

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[aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)



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## Thank you

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