

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH
TEACHING SYLLABUS 2013
Lower and Upper Secondary



Curriculum Planning & Development Division
Ministry of Education, Singapore

- Literature as a Discipline
- Areas of Study
- Principles of Literature Teaching and Learning
- Aims of the *Literature in English Teaching Syllabus 2013*
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LITERATURE AS A DISCIPLINE

Literature is the critical study of literary texts.¹ Central to the subject is the critical analysis of how language is purposefully and creatively used in texts in order to create meaning and explore issues or themes. Through the literary skills of reading and responding critically and personally to literary texts, students actively construct meaning and in the process make connections between the texts, their lives and the world. The study of Literature encourages students to enter imagined worlds and explore, examine, and reflect on both current and timeless issues, as well as their individuality and humanity.

The study of literary texts both sharpens and broadens students' minds. The critical thinking skills uniquely offered by the study of Literature include:

- cultivating a questioning mind;
- exploring personal and social issues; and
- interrogating and managing ambiguities and multiple perspectives.

Literature also builds in students socio-cultural sensitivity and awareness, as well as a global outlook, by offering opportunities for them to explore a wide range of literary texts written in different contexts and from various parts of the world, connecting them to other ages and cultures. It develops empathy and stimulates thinking about beliefs and values.

These characteristics of the subject are aptly suited to the 21st century, which is a time of rapid development and shifting perspectives in many areas, including the socio-cultural and the ethical-moral. The national initiatives of 21st Century Competencies, Social and Emotional Learning, National Education and Thinking Skills are naturally woven into Literature. The knowledge, skills and dispositions acquired and opportunities grasped in the study of Literature will stand students in good stead as active citizens of Singapore and the world.

At the Secondary level, Literature focuses on the study of whole and sustained literary texts from the three main genres: prose, poetry and drama. Teachers will lead students in analysing and responding to these genres of literary texts in five Areas of Study.

AREAS OF STUDY

The Areas of Study refer to the various elements that make up a literary text. The Areas of Study from the 2007 Syllabus have been revised to reflect current understandings of the disciplinarity of the subject. They are applicable to both Lower and Upper Secondary, and the Express and Normal (Academic) courses.

The Areas of Study comprise the following:

- **Plot**

This refers to how events are linked through cause and effect relationships within a text.

- **Character**

This refers to representations of a person, with motivations and intellectual, moral and emotional qualities.

- **Setting and Atmosphere**

Setting refers to the time, place, physical details and circumstances in which a situation occurs. Atmosphere refers to the mood or emotional quality of the writing, usually created through the setting.

- **Theme**

This refers to the central idea(s) in a text.

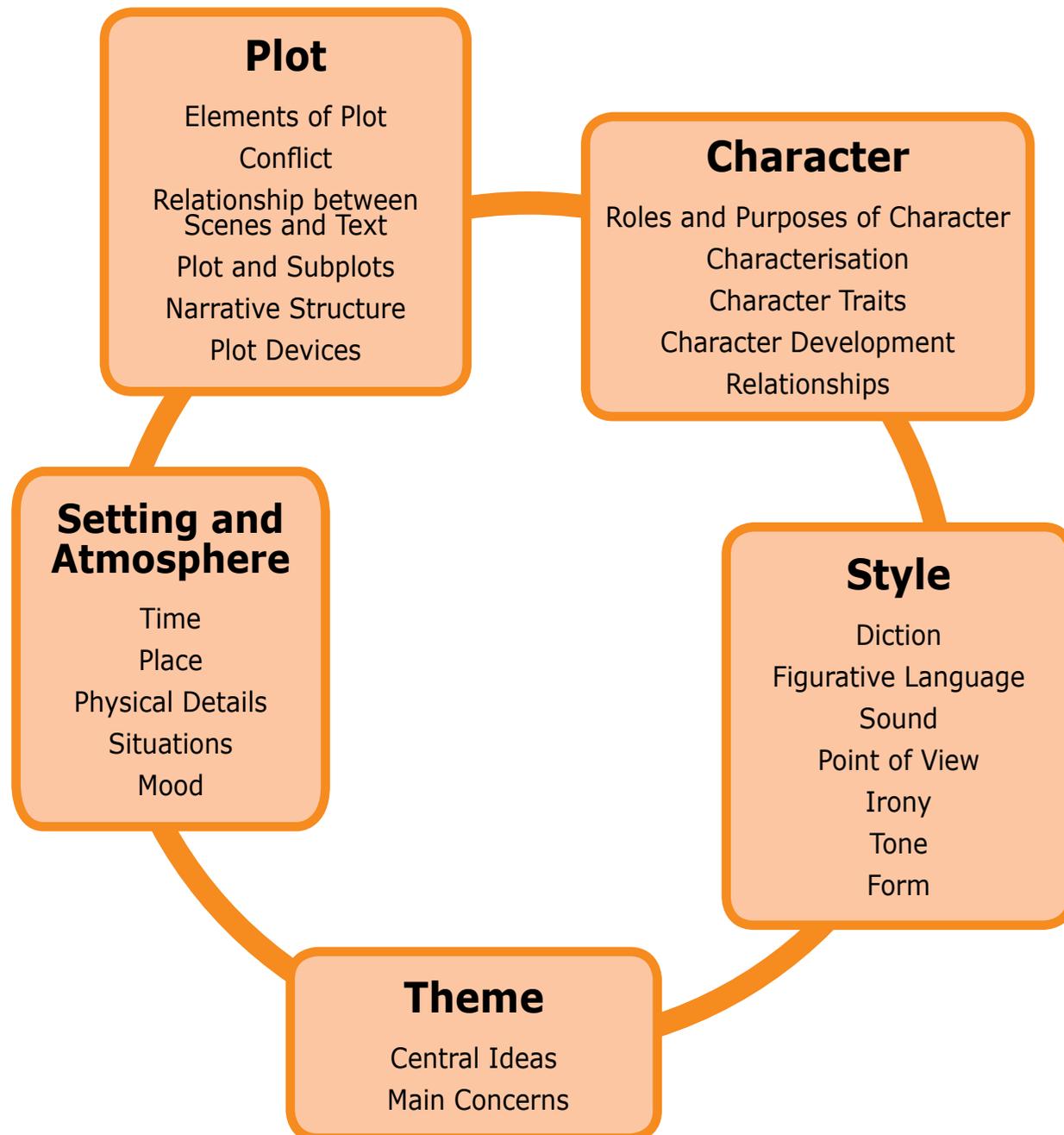
- **Style**

This refers to the writer's purposeful use of language to achieve certain effects.

A diagrammatic representation of the Areas of Study is shown overleaf. This representation is intended as a quick reference for teachers and does not show the overlaps that exist among the Areas of Study and what they comprise. The Areas of Study are also presented in no particular order of difficulty or importance. They are elaborated on in the Learning Outcomes.

In teaching the Areas of Study, teachers will lead students to a holistic and meaningful appreciation of the texts being studied. They will help students understand how the study of any Area needs to take into account one or more of the other Areas. Teachers will also be guided by the three Principles of Literature Teaching and Learning.

THE AREAS OF STUDY IN LITERATURE



PRINCIPLES OF LITERATURE TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Principles are:

1. Personal Engagement

Teachers will:

- create a positive classroom environment where literary texts are discussed, enjoyed and valued; and
- structure classroom interaction to enable students to:
 - engage with texts;
 - develop individual responses to texts; and
 - share and evaluate different viewpoints and perspectives.

2. Critical Appreciation

Teachers will:

- model the use of key skills for critical appreciation of texts; and
- provide specific feedback to guide students in developing critical responses that are substantiated by textual evidence.

3. Meaningful Connections

Teachers will:

- guide students to explore connections between literary texts and students' own lives, the rest of the world and other texts; and
- encourage a love of Literature through providing opportunities for students to engage with a wide range of literary texts across the three genres of prose, poetry and drama, set and written in different contexts and from various parts of the world.

AIMS OF THE LITERATURE IN ENGLISH TEACHING SYLLABUS 2013

Literature as a subject is first introduced at the Secondary level. The *Literature in English Teaching Syllabus 2013* is designed to provide students with a strong foundation in the study of Literature and cultivate in them a love for the subject by the end of Secondary education.

The Aims of the *Literature in English Teaching Syllabus 2013* are to enable students to:

- discover the joys of reading Literature and become aware of new ways of perceiving the world around them;
- appreciate the aesthetic value of language;
- engage personally with a variety of texts and draw connections between self, texts and the world in order to develop intellectual, emotional, socio-cultural and global awareness;
- articulate perceptive and analytical thinking when discussing and writing about literary texts;
- explore how the elements of different genres function in literary works to achieve specific effects; and
- appreciate the importance of the contexts in which literary texts are written and understood.

DESIRED STUDENT OUTCOMES

A student who has completed this course in Literature will:

- be able to critically and independently read, analyse and appreciate literary texts;
- be able to develop and effectively communicate personal and critical responses to literary texts and others' views; and
- have read and appreciated literary texts from different parts of the world, including works from the three main literary genres.

- Learning Outcomes
- Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions
- Strands



LEARNING OUTCOMES, KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND DISPOSITIONS, AND STRANDS

The *Literature in English Teaching Syllabus 2013* builds on the strengths of the 2007 Syllabus to provide teachers with a sense of familiarity while continuing to emphasise key areas important to the teaching and learning of Literature.

The *Literature in English Teaching Syllabus 2013* outlines the **Learning Outcomes**, which are the expected attainment targets to be achieved by students as a result of teacher instruction. Specifically, the Learning Outcomes comprise **Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions** that articulate the disciplinarity of the subject. They incorporate the Areas of Study and Spectrum of Skills from the 2007 Syllabus, but expand upon them with greater specificity about what will be taught and learnt. Students will need the Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions to enable them to understand, appreciate and critically engage with literary texts across the three main genres of prose, poetry and drama. Teachers will be guided by the Learning Outcomes, which will be achieved through the teaching of the Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions, to develop instructional and assessment plans that will best cater to their students' diverse needs, abilities and interests.

The Learning Outcomes will be attained by the end of Lower Secondary so that students will develop a strong foundation in the study of Literature. At Upper Secondary, teachers will revisit, reinforce and teach the Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions at increasing levels of difficulty and through the selection of more challenging texts so that students will achieve mastery in the subject.

In line with the Desired Student Outcomes, the Learning Outcomes are organised according to three **Strands** which form the basis of the discipline of the subject.

The Strands are:

1. Interpreting and Engaging with Texts

The first strand outlines the processes by which students make meaning from interacting with texts. Teachers will enable students to apply these processes in the Areas of Study (plot, character, setting and atmosphere, theme and style). This strand also draws attention to the contexts in which texts are written and read, and to the need to guide students to make connections with their own lives, other texts and the rest of the world in the process of understanding and engaging with texts.

2. Developing and Communicating Responses to Texts

The second strand focuses on the processes by which students form and articulate personal and critical responses to texts. It highlights the need to guide students to respond to others' views on texts, including their peers' and teachers', and possibly refine their own views in the light of different perspectives.

3. Reading and Appreciating a Wide Variety of Texts

The third strand focuses on developing a love for Literature in students, broadening their exposure to literary texts and developing students' ability to engage with texts diverse in issues and genres.

To enable students to critically analyse texts and respond to them, teachers will also teach the appropriate metalanguage for literary analysis and critical response.

The following overview diagram shows the connection among the following:

- Strands
- Learning Outcomes
- Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions



OVERVIEW

Strands

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions

(The KSDs below are only examples. The full lists of the KSDs are presented on pages 13-17.)

Strand 1 Interpreting and Engaging with Texts

Apply the processes of meaning-making in the Areas of Study (plot, character, setting and atmosphere, theme and style), explore the contexts in which texts are written and read, and make connections with self, other texts and the rest of the world

LO 1.1: Demonstrate understanding of how **plot** contributes to the meaning of texts

LO 1.2: Demonstrate understanding of how **character** contributes to the meaning of texts

LO 1.3: Demonstrate understanding of how **setting and atmosphere** contribute to the meaning of texts

LO 1.4: Demonstrate understanding of how **theme** contributes to the meaning of texts

LO 1.5: Demonstrate understanding of how **style** contributes to the meaning of texts

LO 1.6: Demonstrate understanding of the **relationships among the Areas of Study** within texts

LO 1.7: Demonstrate understanding that texts are written and read in specific **contexts** (e.g., historical, cultural, economic, political, social)

LO 1.8: Make **meaningful connections** between texts and the self, texts and other texts, and texts and the world

LO 1.9: Read and **critically appreciate texts independently**

e.g., Identify the various conflicts in a text and explain how these move the plot forward

e.g., Evaluate characters' actions, motivations and decisions

e.g., Describe the setting and atmosphere (e.g., time, place, physical details, situations)

e.g., Identify the themes of a text

e.g., Demonstrate appreciation of the aesthetic qualities of language used in a text to achieve certain effects

e.g., Analyse how the Areas of Study (plot, character, setting and atmosphere, theme and style) synthesise to create meaning in a text*

e.g., Demonstrate recognition of the contexts (e.g., cultural, historical, social, economic, political) in which a text is written

e.g., Demonstrate recognition of how readers' personal experiences, beliefs and values may influence their understanding and interpretations of a text

e.g., Apply skills of critical analysis to other literary texts independently*

Strand 2 Developing and Communicating Responses to Texts

Apply the processes of forming and articulating responses to texts, and respond to different views on them

LO 2.1: Develop **personal and critical responses** to texts

LO 2.2: Construct and effectively communicate **arguments**

LO 2.3: Respond to **different views and perspectives**

e.g., Formulate personal responses (e.g., thoughts, feelings, opinions) to a text by making connections between it and prior knowledge, personal experiences and imagination

e.g., Produce sensitive and informed personal responses

e.g., Respond personally and/ or critically to different views and perspectives (e.g., from teachers, peers, secondary sources) with evidence from a text

Strand 3 Reading and Appreciating a Wide Variety of Texts

Develop a love for Literature, broaden exposure to literary texts and develop the ability to engage with texts diverse in issues and genres

LO 3.1: Read and appreciate texts across the **three genres of prose, poetry and drama**

LO 3.2: Read and appreciate texts that reflect diverse **contexts and concerns**

e.g., Recognise and demonstrate appreciation of genre-specific conventions

e.g., Read and demonstrate engagement with a wide variety of texts



“While thought exists, words are alive
and literature becomes an escape,
not from, but into living.”

- Cyril Connolly

Notes:

The Strands, Learning Outcomes, and Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions are not organised in any hierarchical or sequential way.

Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions that are marked with an asterisk (*) are more suited for Upper Secondary and high progress learners at Lower Secondary.

Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions that are italicised will not be assessed formally, but they are important for students to learn as part of the discipline of Literature.

Strand 1: Interpreting and Engaging with Texts

LO 1.1	Demonstrate understanding of how plot contributes to the meaning of texts
KSDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate recognition of the elements of plot (e.g., exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution) and explain their significance• Identify the various conflicts in a text and explain how these move the plot forward• Explain the relationship between individual scenes and a text as a whole• Make connections between the plot and the subplots (where relevant)• Describe a text's narrative structure (e.g., a narrative presented in the form of letters, a narrative presented from different perspectives, a narrative presented in a chronological sequence of events) and explain its significance• Explain the effects of plot devices (e.g., flashback, foreshadowing)
LO 1.2	Demonstrate understanding of how character contributes to the meaning of texts
KSDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain the roles and purposes of characters• Make inferences about characters based on both direct characterisation (e.g., authorial descriptions) and indirect characterisation (e.g., characters' actions, words, thoughts, motivations, perspectives)• Evaluate characters' actions, motivations and decisions• Trace and analyse how characters develop and change• Analyse similarities and differences between characters (e.g., personalities, views, behaviour)• Analyse the relationships between and among characters (e.g., the effect one character has on another)• Trace and analyse how relationships between characters change• <i>Demonstrate awareness of the complexity of human relationships and behaviour through the study of character</i>

Notes:

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Strand 1: Interpreting and Engaging with Texts

LO 1.3	Demonstrate understanding of how setting and atmosphere contribute to the meaning of texts
KSDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the setting and atmosphere (e.g., time, place, physical details, situations) Explain the influence of setting and atmosphere on aspects of a text (e.g., character, theme) Analyse the significance of changes in setting and/ or atmosphere <i>Demonstrate understanding of the context of the action within a text</i>
LO 1.4	Demonstrate understanding of how theme contributes to the meaning of texts
KSDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the themes of a text Analyse and explain how the themes are developed to bring out the main concerns of a text <i>Demonstrate awareness that the writer's development of themes represents a particular view or comment on life</i>
LO 1.5	Demonstrate understanding of how style contributes to the meaning of texts
KSDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the following elements of style, and analyse and explain their effects on the reader and on a text (e.g., how they are used to develop the setting and atmosphere, how they are used to create nuances) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - diction (i.e., word choice) - use of figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor, personification, imagery, symbolism) - use of sound (e.g., rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, onomatopoeia, assonance) - point(s) of view in a text (e.g., 1st person, 3rd person omniscient) - irony (dramatic, situational and verbal) - tone (e.g., playful, sombre) - form (e.g., line length, ellipses) <i>Demonstrate appreciation of the aesthetic qualities of language used in a text to achieve certain effects</i>

Notes:

The Strands, Learning Outcomes, and Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions are not organised in any hierarchical or sequential way.

Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions that are marked with an asterisk (*) are more suited for Upper Secondary and high progress learners at Lower Secondary.

Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions that are italicised will not be assessed formally, but they are important for students to learn as part of the discipline of Literature.

Strand 1: Interpreting and Engaging with Texts

LO 1.6	Demonstrate understanding of relationships among the Areas of Study within texts
KSDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse how the Areas of Study (plot, character, setting and atmosphere, theme and style) synthesise to create meaning in a text*
LO 1.7	Demonstrate understanding that texts are written and read in specific contexts (e.g., historical, cultural, economic, political, social)
KSDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Demonstrate recognition of the contexts (e.g., cultural, historical, social, economic, political) in which a text is written</i> <i>Demonstrate recognition of and explain how the contexts influence the writer and shape a text's main concerns</i> <i>Demonstrate understanding that readers' backgrounds may influence their interpretations of a text</i> <i>Apply understanding of a text and its context to make sense of contemporary and historical issues and perspectives</i>
LO 1.8	Make meaningful connections between texts and the self, texts and other texts, and texts and the world
KSDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Demonstrate recognition of how readers' personal experiences, beliefs and values may influence their understanding and interpretations of a text</i> <i>Demonstrate understanding of how a text informs readers about human nature and the diversity of human experience</i> <i>Demonstrate understanding of how one text may inform readers' understanding of another text (where relevant)</i>
LO 1.9	Read and critically appreciate texts independently
KSDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply skills of critical analysis to other literary texts² independently* <i>Evaluate the literary merits of other texts by applying skills of critical analysis*</i>

Notes:

The Strands, Learning Outcomes, and Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions are not organised in any hierarchical or sequential way.

Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions that are marked with an asterisk (*) are more suited for Upper Secondary and high progress learners at Lower Secondary.

Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions that are italicised will not be assessed formally, but they are important for students to learn as part of the discipline of Literature.

Strand 2: Developing and Communicating Responses to Texts

LO 2.1	Develop personal and critical responses to texts
KSDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulate personal responses (e.g., thoughts, feelings, opinions) to a text by making connections between it and prior knowledge, personal experiences and imagination Critically refine personal responses through analysis, interpretation, evaluation, and synthesis of textual evidence Express responses in a variety of ways (e.g., diary entries, role play, creative writing, music)
LO 2.2	Construct and effectively communicate arguments
KSDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a text's main concerns for discussion Demonstrate sound understanding of a text in responses Develop ideas effectively (e.g., through elaboration, anticipating counter arguments where appropriate) Substantiate responses through judicious selection of evidence from a text Demonstrate sound reasoning throughout responses Articulate a consistent viewpoint Produce sensitive and informed personal responses Produce clear, organised and coherent responses Produce sustained written responses that convey arguments Use the appropriate metalanguage with understanding (e.g., simile, metaphor, foreshadowing, line, stanza, act, scene, narrator)
LO 2.3	Respond to different views and perspectives
KSDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond personally and/ or critically to different views and perspectives (e.g., from teachers, peers, secondary sources)³ with evidence from a text <i>Reassess own perspectives and refine personal views of a text, in the light of different views and perspectives</i>

Notes:

The Strands, Learning Outcomes, and Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions are not organised in any hierarchical or sequential way.

Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions that are marked with an asterisk (*) are more suited for Upper Secondary and high progress learners at Lower Secondary.

Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions that are italicised will not be assessed formally, but they are important for students to learn as part of the discipline of Literature.

Strand 3: Reading and Appreciating A Wide Variety Of Texts

LO 3.1	Read and appreciate texts across the three genres of prose, poetry and drama
KSDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise and demonstrate appreciation of genre-specific conventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prose (e.g., chapter, narrator) - poetry (e.g., stanza, sonnet) - drama (e.g., scene, soliloquy) Read and engage with a wide variety of prose, poetry and drama texts
LO 3.2	Read and appreciate texts that reflect diverse contexts and concerns
KSDs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read and demonstrate engagement with a wide variety of texts that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - are from different parts of the world - are set and written in different contexts (e.g., social, historical, political) - explore a range of human issues

- Specification of Content
- Assessing for Learning in Literature



SPECIFICATION OF CONTENT

This section specifies the genres and provides guidance on the number of texts to be studied at Lower and Upper Secondary.

Lower Secondary

Students will study texts from all three literary genres: prose, poetry and drama. By the end of the Lower Secondary Literature course, students will have critically analysed the following:



Texts selected will:

- offer sufficient scope for exploration and critical analysis in the various Areas of Study, and for building the necessary Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions for the attainment of the Learning Outcomes; and
- originate from various parts of the world, including Singapore.

Texts will be studied in their entirety to allow students to develop a holistic understanding of the Areas of Study. **Excerpts from novels, poems or plays will NOT be used as substitutes for entire texts.** However, they can be used in addition to the study of a full text to, for example, explore certain aspects of literary interest, or compare writers' treatments of a particular theme.

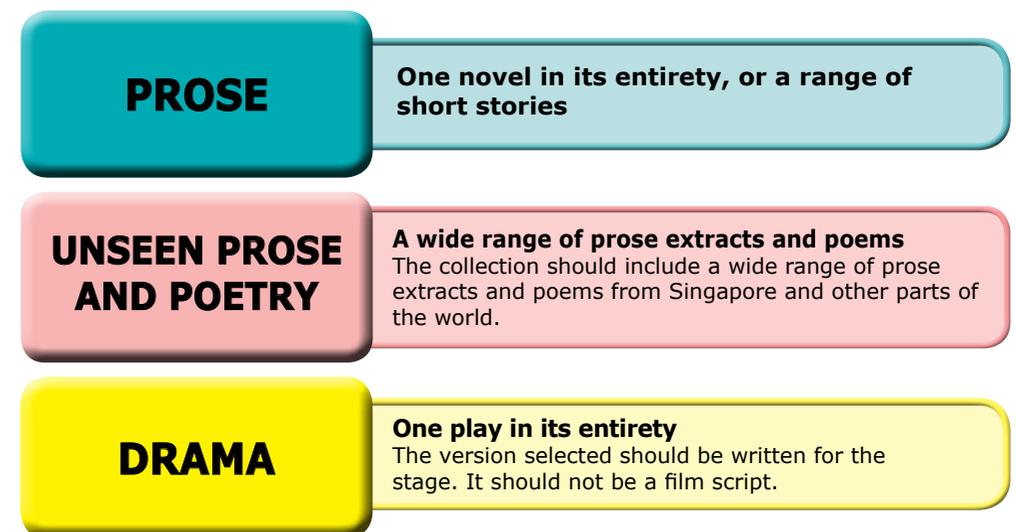
Over the course of the Lower Secondary years, teachers will introduce related works to students to encourage wider reading and a love for Literature. These can include, for example, other works by the same writer, or thematically or contextually related works. Students need not be assessed in their understanding of these other works.

Upper Secondary

When students have built the strong foundation in the study of Literature provided at Lower Secondary, they will have learnt the necessary Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions required to critically read and analyse Unseen Prose and Unseen Poetry at Upper Secondary.

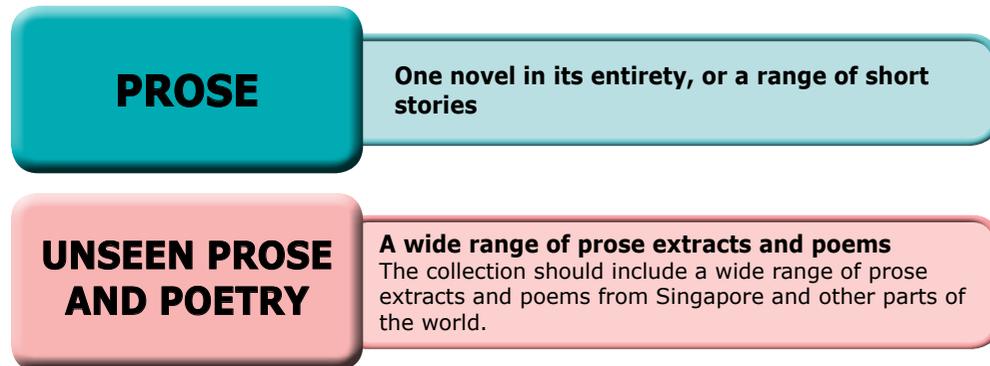
Full Literature

By the end of the Upper Secondary Literature course, students offering Full Literature will have critically analysed the following:⁴



Elective Literature

By the end of the Upper Secondary Literature course, students offering Elective Literature will have critically analysed the following:



Over the course of the Upper Secondary years for both Full and Elective Literature, teachers will introduce related works to students to encourage wider reading and a love for Literature. These can include, for example, other works by the same writer, or thematically or contextually related works. Students need not be assessed in their understanding of these other works.

ASSESSING FOR LEARNING IN LITERATURE

Assessment refers to any observation or measurement of the developmental progress and performance of students. In Literature, teachers will assess students holistically on their understanding and interpretation of, and response to, literary texts.

Why Assess

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning process and should be aligned with instructional planning decisions.

Literature teachers will align assessment with the aims and the learning outcomes in the Teaching Syllabus 2013 to promote and improve students' learning, and to establish what students can do as learners of Literature.

For teaching and learning to be effective, teachers will identify and monitor students' changing needs, abilities and interests so that they can modify or adapt their teaching methods. Teachers will also give timely and useful feedback to students and provide them with opportunities to act on the feedback to improve their learning.

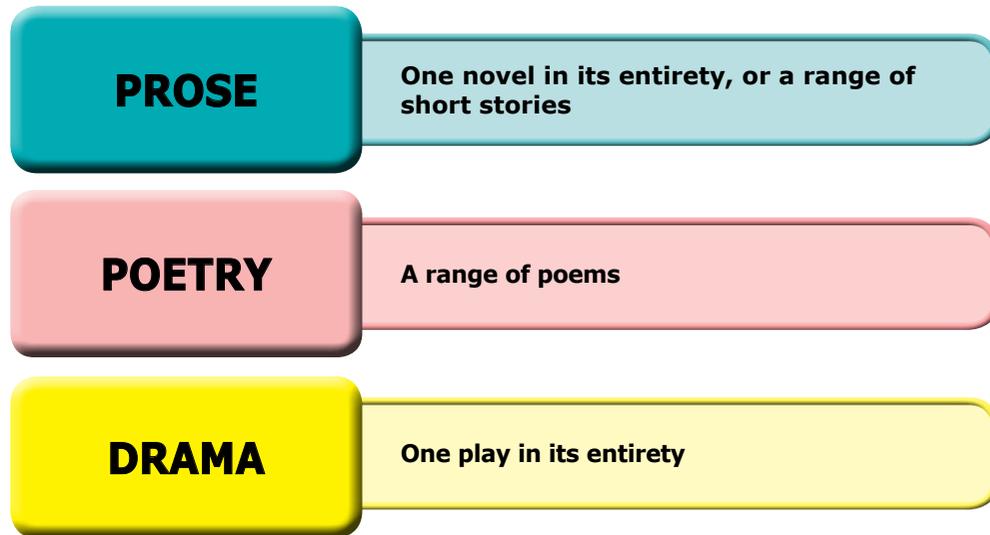
How to Assess

Teachers will:

- **identify students' learning gaps and needs** so that teaching strategies and activities can be changed or modified to improve their learning.
- **provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their skills and abilities** through meaningful tasks/ activities so that students' development and progress can be monitored, reported and communicated to parents at meaningful points.
- **provide rich, qualitative and formative feedback**, framed in terms of what students can and need to do, to help them determine the steps to take to improve their learning.
- **involve students actively in learning to assess themselves and each other** (i.e., self and peer assessment respectively) using explicit and clear assessment criteria that are made known to students.

What To Assess: Lower Secondary

Teachers will assess students in their understanding and analysis of the following:



By the end of Secondary Two, students will have been formally assessed:

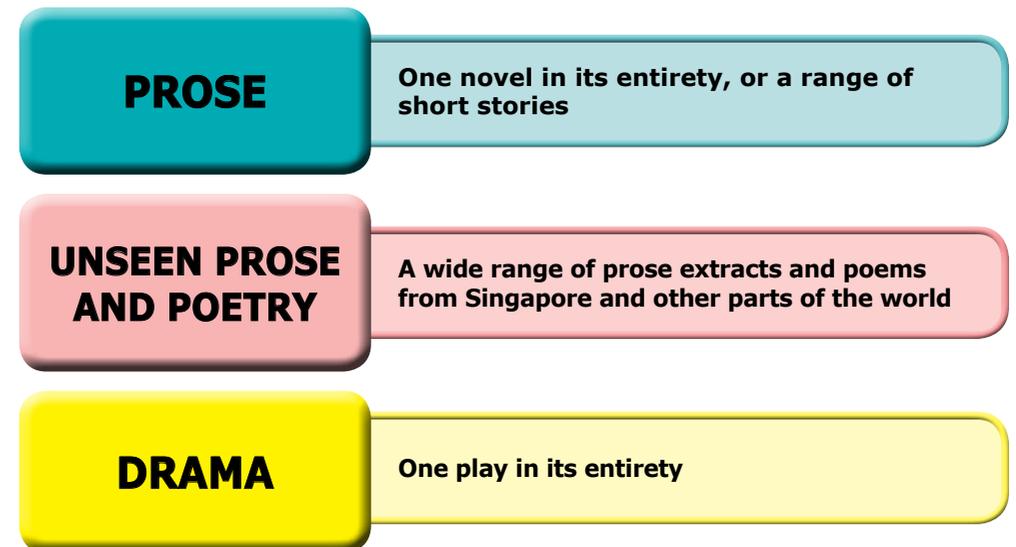
- in all the three genres; and
- on their ability to produce sustained, critical responses to passage-based and essay questions.

In addition, students may be assessed through other assessment tasks such as short-answer questions, performance tasks and portfolios.

What To Assess: Upper Secondary

Full Literature

Teachers will assess students in their understanding and analysis of the following:



By the end of Upper Secondary, students offering Full Literature will have been formally assessed:

- in all the three genres; and
- on their ability to produce sustained, critical responses to passage-based and essay questions, and questions on the Unseen.

What To Assess: Upper Secondary

Elective Literature

Teachers will assess students in their understanding and analysis of the following:



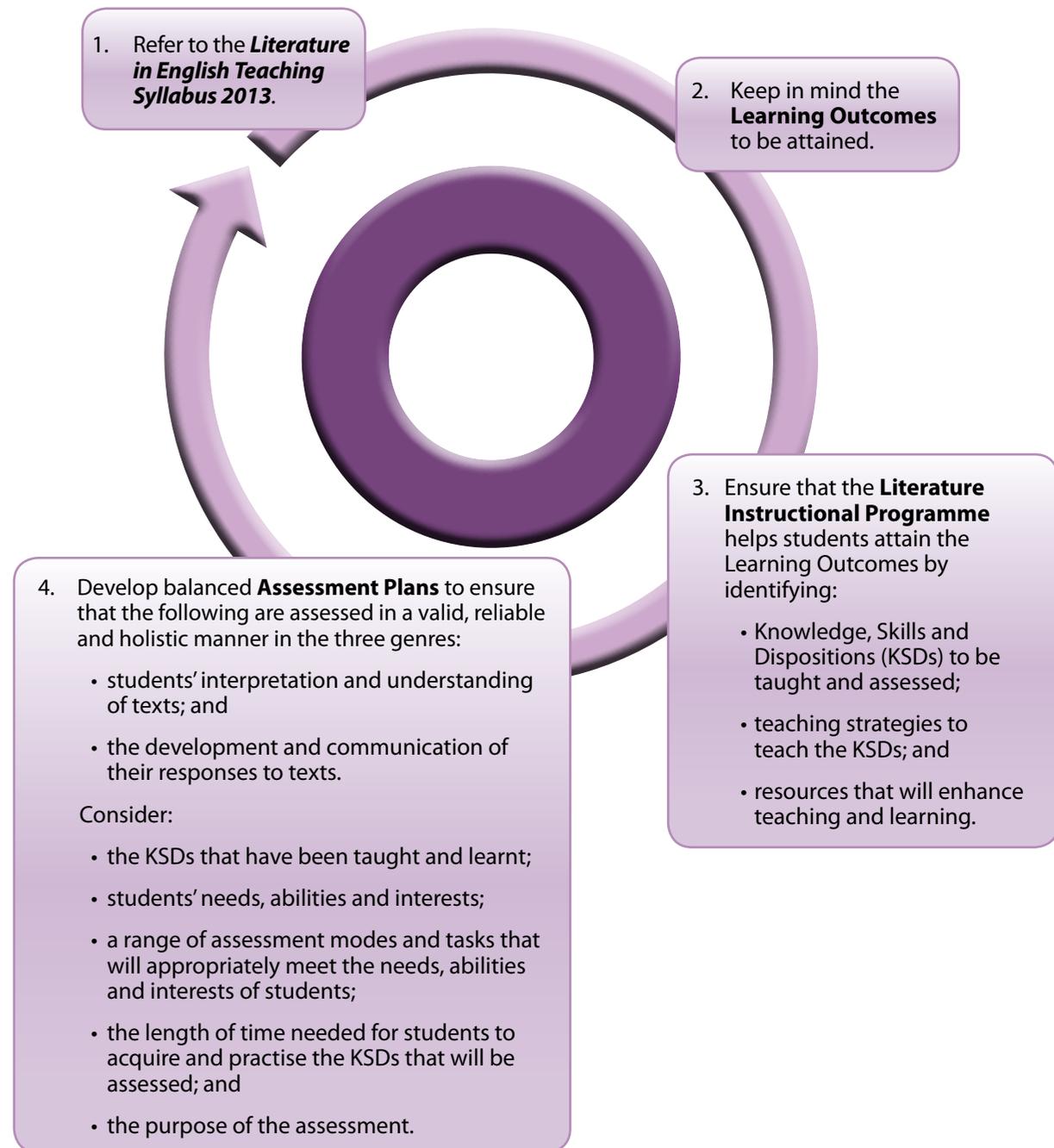
By the end of Upper Secondary, students offering Elective Literature will have been formally assessed:

- in the two genres of prose and poetry; and
- on their ability to produce sustained, critical responses to passage-based and essay questions, and questions on the Unseen.

In addition, students offering both Full and Elective Literature may be assessed through other assessment tasks such as short-answer questions, performance tasks and portfolios.

Planning Balanced Assessment

When planning assessment in school, teachers will implement a balanced system of learning and assessment by aligning assessment with the requirements of the *Literature in English Teaching Syllabus 2013*. Teachers will use the following as a guide:



“Literature adds to reality; it does not simply describe it.”

- C.S. Lewis



END NOTES

- 1 Literary texts refer to fictional texts that have literary merit, i.e., texts that:
 - offer opportunities to explore the Areas of Study (plot, character, setting and atmosphere, theme and style);
 - have enduring value, and open up readers to an exploration of the self in relation to the world they live in, adding to their understanding of the human condition;
 - allow for the rich discussion of universal themes that remain pertinent and relevant in a changing world; and
 - are written in rich language that invite close and critical analysis of style, such as the use of imagery, symbolism and irony.
- 2 Other literary texts refer to texts that have not been taught in class.
- 3 In the *Literature in English Teaching Syllabus 2013*, secondary sources refer to works that interpret and analyse literary texts. These can include, for example, commentaries, reviews and critical essays.
- 4 Teachers can refer to the SEAB website at www.seab.gov.sg for the relevant text list for a given year of examination.

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