



# Syllabus

## Cambridge O Level Literature in English 2010

Use this syllabus for exams in 2023, 2024 and 2025.  
Exams are available in the June and November series.



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## Why choose Cambridge International?

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Cambridge International prepares school students for life, helping them develop an informed curiosity and a lasting passion for learning. We are part of the University of Cambridge.

Our Cambridge Pathway gives students a clear path for educational success from age 5 to 19. Schools can shape the curriculum around how they want students to learn – with a wide range of subjects and flexible ways to offer them. It helps students discover new abilities and a wider world, and gives them the skills they need for life, so they can achieve at school, university and work.

Our programmes and qualifications set the global standard for international education. They are created by subject experts, rooted in academic rigour and reflect the latest educational research. They provide a strong platform for learners to progress from one stage to the next, and are well supported by teaching and learning resources.

Our mission is to provide educational benefit through provision of international programmes and qualifications for school education and to be the world leader in this field. Together with schools, we develop Cambridge learners who are confident, responsible, reflective, innovative and engaged – equipped for success in the modern world.

Every year, nearly a million Cambridge students from 10 000 schools in 160 countries prepare for their future with the Cambridge Pathway.

**'We think the Cambridge curriculum is superb preparation for university.'**

**Christoph Guttentag**, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, Duke University, USA



### Quality management

Cambridge International is committed to providing exceptional quality. In line with this commitment, our quality management system for the provision of international qualifications and education programmes for students aged 5 to 19 is independently certified as meeting the internationally recognised standard, ISO 9001:2015. Learn more at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/ISO9001](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/ISO9001)

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## **Important: Changes to this syllabus**

**For information about changes to this syllabus for 2023, 2024 and 2025, go to page 25.**

The latest syllabus is version 2, published January 2021.



# 1 Why choose this syllabus?

## Key benefits

Cambridge O Level is typically for 14 to 16 year olds and is an internationally recognised qualification. It has been designed especially for an international market and is sensitive to the needs of different countries. Cambridge O Level is designed for learners whose first language may not be English, and this is acknowledged throughout the examination process.

Our programmes balance a thorough knowledge and understanding of a subject and help to develop the skills learners need for their next steps in education or employment.

**Cambridge O Level Literature in English** offers learners the opportunity to read, interpret, evaluate and respond to a range of literature in English. The range includes drama, prose and poetry from the works of Shakespeare to contemporary literature. This course enables learners to deepen their understanding and appreciation of the ways in which writers use English to express meaning and achieve effects. Cambridge O Level Literature in English will stimulate learners to read for pleasure and to explore wider and universal issues, promoting a better understanding of themselves and the world.

Our approach in Cambridge O Level Literature in English encourages learners to be:

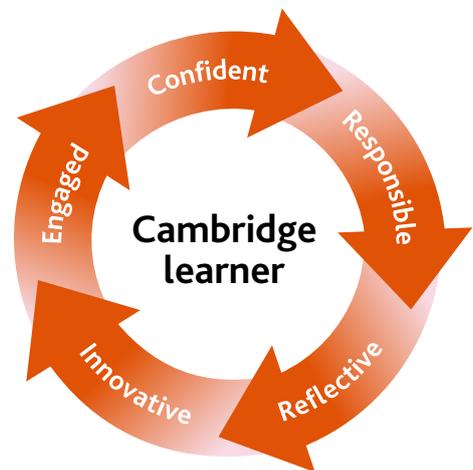
**confident**, exploring texts and ideas, and beginning to form personal insight

**responsible**, committing to their learning and developing approaches to analysis to better understand ideas of culture, context and the community

**reflective**, considering literary ideas that are presented in a range of ever-changing contexts

**innovative**, approaching tasks and texts with flexible thinking

**engaged**, recognising the role literature plays in matters of personal, social and global significance.



**'Cambridge O Level has helped me develop thinking and analytical skills which will go a long way in helping me with advanced studies.'**

**Kamal Khan Virk**, former student at Beaconhouse Garden Town Secondary School, Pakistan, who went on to study Actuarial Science at the London School of Economics

## International recognition and acceptance

Our expertise in curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment is the basis for the recognition of our programmes and qualifications around the world. The combination of knowledge and skills in Cambridge O Level Literature in English gives learners a solid foundation for further study. Candidates who achieve grades A\* to C are well prepared to follow a wide range of courses including Cambridge International AS & A Level English.

Cambridge O Levels are accepted and valued by leading universities and employers around the world as evidence of academic achievement. Many universities require a combination of Cambridge International AS & A Levels and Cambridge O Levels or equivalent to meet their entry requirements.

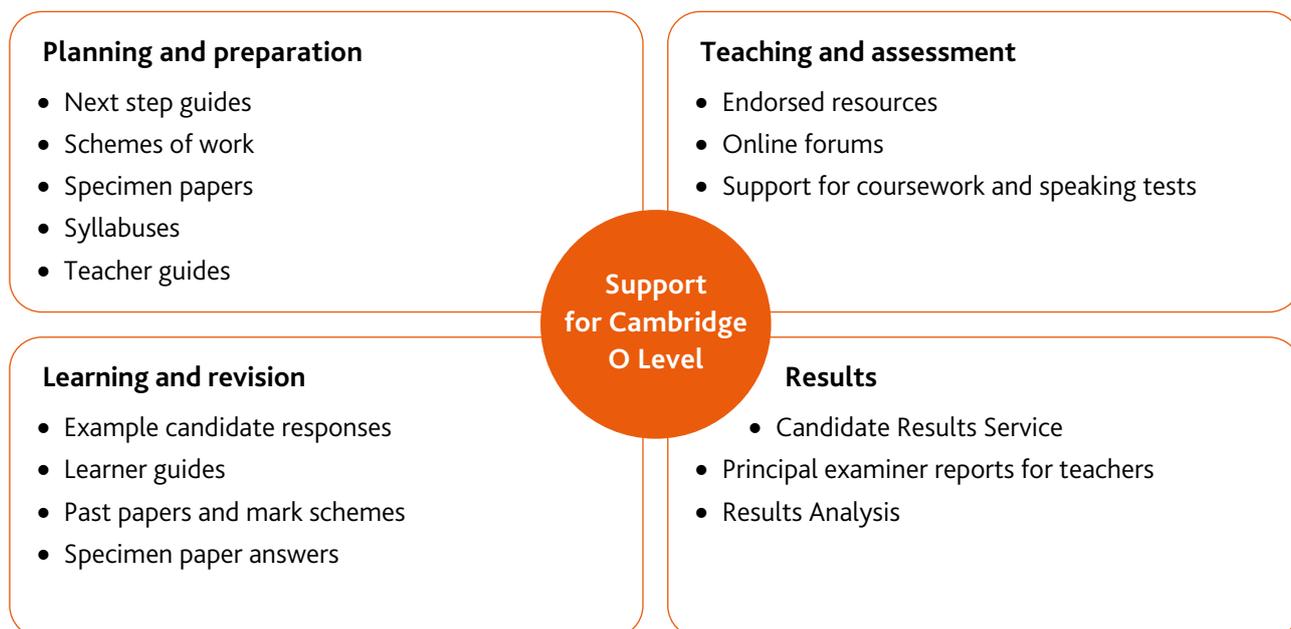
Learn more at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition)

## Supporting teachers

We provide a wide range of resources, detailed guidance and innovative training and professional development so that you can give your students the best possible preparation for Cambridge O Level. To find out which resources are available for each syllabus go to our School Support Hub.

The School Support Hub is our secure online site for Cambridge teachers where you can find the resources you need to deliver our programmes. You can also keep up to date with your subject and the global Cambridge community through our online discussion forums.

Find out more at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/support](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/support)



Sign up for email notifications about changes to syllabuses, including new and revised products and services at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/syllabusupdates](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/syllabusupdates)

## Professional development

We support teachers through:

- Introductory Training – face-to-face or online
- Extension Training – face-to-face or online
- Enrichment Professional Development – face-to-face or online

Find out more at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/events](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/events)

- Cambridge Professional Development Qualifications

Find out more at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/profdev](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/profdev)



### Supporting exams officers

We provide comprehensive support and guidance for all Cambridge exams officers. Find out more at: [www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide)

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## 2 Syllabus overview

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### Aims

The aims describe the purposes of a course based on this syllabus.

The aims are to enable students to:

- enjoy the experience of reading literature
- understand and respond to literary texts in different forms and from different periods and cultures
- communicate an informed personal response appropriately and effectively
- appreciate different ways in which writers achieve their effects
- experience literature's contribution to aesthetic, imaginative and intellectual growth
- explore the contribution of literature to an understanding of areas of human concern.

Cambridge Assessment International Education is an education organisation and politically neutral. The contents of this syllabus, examination papers and associated materials do not endorse any political view. We endeavour to treat all aspects of the exam process neutrally.



## Content overview

This syllabus enables learners to read, interpret and evaluate texts through the study of literature in English.

By studying poetry, prose and drama learners develop an understanding of literal meaning, relevant contexts and of the deeper themes or attitudes that may be expressed. Through their studies, they learn to recognise and appreciate the ways in which writers use English to achieve a range of effects, and will be able to present an informed, personal response to the material they have studied.

All learners study four texts for the O Level: one poetry text, one prose text, and two drama texts.

The syllabus encourages the exploration of wider and universal issues, promoting learners' better understanding of themselves and of the world around them.

This O Level syllabus shares content with other Literature in English syllabuses. For further support see the School Support Hub for IGCSE Literature in English (0475). Textbooks endorsed to support IGCSE Literature in English (0475) are suitable for use with this syllabus.



## Assessment overview

All candidates take two components. Candidates will be eligible for grades A\* to E.

All candidates take:		and:	
<b>Paper 1</b>	1 hour 30 minutes	<b>Paper 2</b>	1 hour 30 minutes
Poetry and Prose	50%	Drama	50%
50 marks		50 marks	
Two questions on two texts: one poetry and one prose		Two questions on two texts	
Externally assessed		Externally assessed	

Information on availability is in the **Before you start** section.

## Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives (AOs) are:

### AO1

Show detailed knowledge of the content of literary texts in the three main forms (drama, poetry and prose), supported by reference to the text.

### AO2

Understand the meanings of literary texts and their contexts, and explore texts beyond surface meanings to show deeper awareness of ideas and attitudes.

### AO3

Recognise and appreciate ways in which writers use language, structure and form to create and shape meanings and effects.

### AO4

Communicate a sensitive and informed personal response to literary texts.

## Weighting for assessment objectives

The approximate weightings allocated to each of the assessment objectives (AOs) are summarised below.

### Assessment objectives as a percentage of the qualification

Assessment objective	Weighting in O Level %
AO1	25
AO2	25
AO3	25
AO4	25
Total	100

### Assessment objectives as a percentage of each component

Assessment objective	Weighting in components %	
	Paper 1	Paper 2
AO1	25	25
AO2	25	25
AO3	25	25
AO4	25	25
Total	100	100

## 3 Subject content

Set texts regularly rotate on the syllabus and may change from one year of examination to the next. Before you begin teaching, check the set text list for the year in which your candidates will take their examinations.

This syllabus gives you the flexibility to design a course that will interest, challenge and engage your learners. Where appropriate you are responsible for selecting texts, resources and examples to support your learners' study. These should be appropriate for the learners' age, cultural background and learning context as well as complying with your school policies and local legal requirements.

The set texts for each year of the syllabus are listed. For some texts we specify which edition to use. Where the edition is not specified, candidates may use any edition of the set text, provided it is not an abridgement or a simplified version.

### Set texts for examination in 2023 – Paper 1

Candidates answer on **one** set text in Section A (Poetry).

#### Section A: Poetry

From *Songs of Ourselves Volume 1, Part 4*, the following 15 poems:

- Margaret Atwood, 'The City Planners'
- Boey Kim Cheng, 'The Planners'
- Thom Gunn, 'The Man with Night Sweats'
- Robert Lowell, 'Night Sweat'
- Edward Thomas, 'Rain'
- Anne Stevenson, 'The Spirit is too Blunt an Instrument'
- Tony Harrison, 'From Long Distance'
- W H Auden, 'Funeral Blues'
- Thomas Hardy, 'He Never Expected Much'
- Fleur Adcock, 'The Telephone Call'
- Peter Porter, 'A Consumer's Report'
- Judith Wright, 'Request To A Year'
- Charles Tennyson Turner, 'On Finding a Small Fly Crushed in a Book'
- Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Ozymandias'
- Stevie Smith, 'Away, Melancholy'

These may be found in *Songs of Ourselves Volume 1: The University of Cambridge International Examinations Anthology of Poetry in English* (Cambridge University Press). Poems printed in the paper will be as printed in this text.

## Set texts for examination in 2023 continued

### Section A: Poetry continued

From *Songs of Ourselves Volume 2*, Part 4, the following 15 poems:

Elizabeth Thomas ('Corinna'), 'The Forsaken Wife'

Philip Bourke Marston, 'After'

Algernon Charles Swinburne, 'A Leave-Taking'

Sir Thomas Wyatt, 'I Find No Peace'

James Joyce, 'I Hear an Army'

Charlotte Mew, 'Rooms'

Robert Browning, 'Love in a Life'

Lauris Edmond, 'Waterfall'

Mary Monck ('Marinda'), 'Verses Written on Her Death-bed at Bath to Her Husband in London'

A R D Fairburn, 'Rhyme of the Dead Self'

Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Stanzas Written in Dejection, Near Naples'

Derek Walcott, 'Nearing Forty'

Elinor Morton Wylie, 'Now Let No Charitable Hope'

Alexander Pope, 'From An Essay on Criticism'

Henry Wotton, 'The Character of a Happy Life'

These may be found in *Songs of Ourselves Volume 2: The University of Cambridge International Examinations Anthology of Poetry in English* (Cambridge University Press). Poems printed in the paper will be as printed in this text.

Ted Hughes, the following 15 poems:

'The Thought-Fox'

'The Jaguar'

'The Horses'

'Wind'

'Relic'

'Hawk Roosting'

'Cat and Mouse'

'Snowdrop'

'The Harvest Moon'

'Football at Slack'

'Roe-Deer'

'A Memory'

'Telegraph Wires'

'Anniversary'

'The Other'

These may be found in *New Selected Poems 1957 – 1994*, by Ted Hughes (Faber and Faber). Poems printed in the paper will be as printed in this text.

## Set texts for examination in 2023 continued

Candidates answer on **one** set text in Section B (Prose).

### Section B: Prose

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie *Purple Hibiscus*

Charles Dickens *Great Expectations*

Daphne du Maurier *Rebecca*

Henry James *Washington Square*

Jhumpa Lahiri *The Namesake*

Joan Lindsay *Picnic at Hanging Rock*

Yann Martel *Life of Pi*

From *Stories of Ourselves Volume 2*, the following 10 stories:

no. 2 Nathaniel Hawthorne, 'Dr Heidegger's Experiment'

no. 16 O Henry, 'The Furnished Room'

no. 18 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 'The Widow's Might'

no. 25 Henry Handel Richardson, 'And Women Must Weep'

no. 29 Marghanita Laski, 'The Tower'

no. 31 Janet Frame, 'The Reservoir'

no. 32 Langston Hughes, 'Thank You M'am'

no. 41 Anjana Appachana, 'Sharmaji'

no. 43 Yiyun Li, 'A Thousand Years of Good Prayers'

no. 44 Segun Afolabi, 'Mrs Mahmood'

This selection of 10 short stories may be found in *Stories of Ourselves Volume 2: The University of Cambridge International Examinations Anthology of Short Stories in English* (Cambridge University Press); passages from these stories in the paper will be printed as in this text.

## Set texts for examination in 2023 – Paper 2

Candidates must answer on **two** different set texts from the following:

Lynn Nottage *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*

R C Sheriff *Journey's End*

Wole Soyinka *Death and the King's Horseman*

William Shakespeare *Twelfth Night*

William Shakespeare *Othello*

## Set texts for examination in 2024 – Paper 1

Set texts regularly rotate on the syllabus and may change from one year of examination to the next. Before you begin teaching, check the set text list for the year in which your candidates will take their examinations.

The set texts for 2024 are listed here. For some texts we specify which edition to use. Where the edition is not specified, candidates may use any edition of the set text, provided it is not an abridgement or a simplified version.

Candidates answer on **one** set text in Section A (Poetry).

### Section A: Poetry

From *Songs of Ourselves Volume 1*, Part 4, the following 15 poems:

Margaret Atwood, 'The City Planners'

Boey Kim Cheng, 'The Planners'

Thom Gunn, 'The Man with Night Sweats'

Robert Lowell, 'Night Sweat'

Edward Thomas, 'Rain'

Anne Stevenson, 'The Spirit is too Blunt an Instrument'

Tony Harrison, 'From Long Distance'

W H Auden, 'Funeral Blues'

Thomas Hardy, 'He Never Expected Much'

Fleur Adcock, 'The Telephone Call'

Peter Porter, 'A Consumer's Report'

Judith Wright, 'Request To A Year'

Charles Tennyson Turner, 'On Finding a Small Fly Crushed in a Book'

Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Ozymandias'

Stevie Smith, 'Away, Melancholy'

These may be found in *Songs of Ourselves Volume 1: The University of Cambridge International Examinations Anthology of Poetry in English* (Cambridge University Press). Poems printed in the paper will be as printed in this text.

## Set texts for examination in 2024 continued

**Section A: Poetry continued**

From *Songs of Ourselves Volume 2*, Part 4, the following 15 poems:

Elizabeth Thomas ('Corinna'), 'The Forsaken Wife'

Philip Bourke Marston, 'After'

Algernon Charles Swinburne, 'A Leave-Taking'

Sir Thomas Wyatt, 'I Find No Peace'

James Joyce, 'I Hear an Army'

Charlotte Mew, 'Rooms'

Robert Browning, 'Love in a Life'

Lauris Edmond, 'Waterfall'

Mary Monck ('Marinda'), 'Verses Written on Her Death-bed at Bath to Her Husband in London'

A R D Fairburn, 'Rhyme of the Dead Self'

Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Stanzas Written in Dejection, Near Naples'

Derek Walcott, 'Nearing Forty'

Elinor Morton Wylie, 'Now Let No Charitable Hope'

Alexander Pope, 'From An Essay on Criticism'

Henry Wotton, 'The Character of a Happy Life'

These may be found in *Songs of Ourselves Volume 2: The University of Cambridge International Examinations Anthology of Poetry in English* (Cambridge University Press). Poems printed in the paper will be as printed in this text.

Ted Hughes, the following 15 poems:

'The Thought-Fox'

'The Jaguar'

'The Horses'

'Wind'

'Relic'

'Hawk Roosting'

'Cat and Mouse'

'Snowdrop'

'The Harvest Moon'

'Football at Slack'

'Roe-Deer'

'A Memory'

'Telegraph Wires'

'Anniversary'

'The Other'

These may be found in *New Selected Poems 1957 – 1994*, by Ted Hughes (Faber and Faber). Poems printed in the paper will be as printed in this text.

## Set texts for examination in 2024 continued

Candidates answer on **one** set text in Section B (Prose).

### Section B: Prose

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie *Purple Hibiscus*

Charles Dickens *Great Expectations*

Daphne du Maurier *Rebecca*

Jhumpa Lahiri *The Namesake*

Joan Lindsay *Picnic at Hanging Rock*

Yann Martel *Life of Pi*

H G Wells *The War of the Worlds*

From *Stories of Ourselves Volume 2*, the following 10 stories:

no. 2 Nathaniel Hawthorne, 'Dr Heidegger's Experiment'

no. 16 O Henry, 'The Furnished Room'

no. 18 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, 'The Widow's Might'

no. 25 Henry Handel Richardson, 'And Women Must Weep'

no. 29 Marghanita Laski, 'The Tower'

no. 31 Janet Frame, 'The Reservoir'

no. 32 Langston Hughes, 'Thank You M'am'

no. 41 Anjana Appachana, 'Sharmaji'

no. 43 Yiyun Li, 'A Thousand Years of Good Prayers'

no. 44 Segun Afolabi, 'Mrs Mahmood'

This selection of 10 short stories may be found in *Stories of Ourselves Volume 2: The University of Cambridge International Examinations Anthology of Short Stories in English* (Cambridge University Press); passages from these stories in the paper will be printed as in this text.

## Set texts for examination in 2024 – Paper 2

Candidates must answer on **two** different set texts from the following:

Lynn Nottage *Crumbs from the Table of Joy*

Wole Soyinka *Death and the King's Horseman*

Tennessee Williams *A Streetcar Named Desire*

William Shakespeare *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

William Shakespeare *Othello*

## Set texts for examination in 2025 – Paper 1

Set texts regularly rotate on the syllabus and may change from one year of examination to the next. Before you begin teaching, check the set text list for the year in which your candidates will take their examinations.

The set texts for 2025 are listed here. For some texts we specify which edition to use. Where the edition is not specified, candidates may use any edition of the set text, provided it is not an abridgement or a simplified version.

Candidates answer on **one** set text in Section A (Poetry).

### Section A: Poetry

From *Songs of Ourselves Volume 1*, Part 4, the following 15 poems:

Margaret Atwood, 'The City Planners'  
 Boey Kim Cheng, 'The Planners'  
 Thom Gunn, 'The Man with Night Sweats'  
 Robert Lowell, 'Night Sweat'  
 Edward Thomas, 'Rain'  
 Anne Stevenson, 'The Spirit is too Blunt an Instrument'  
 Tony Harrison, 'From Long Distance'  
 W H Auden, 'Funeral Blues'  
 Thomas Hardy, 'He Never Expected Much'  
 Fleur Adcock, 'The Telephone Call'  
 Peter Porter, 'A Consumer's Report'  
 Judith Wright, 'Request To A Year'  
 Charles Tennyson Turner, 'On Finding a Small Fly Crushed in a Book'  
 Percy Bysshe Shelley, 'Ozymandias'  
 Stevie Smith, 'Away, Melancholy'

These may be found in *Songs of Ourselves Volume 1: The University of Cambridge International Examinations Anthology of Poetry in English* (Cambridge University Press). Poems printed in the paper will be as printed in this text.

## Set texts for examination in 2025 continued

### Section A: Poetry continued

From *Songs of Ourselves Volume 2*, Part 3, the following 15 poems:

Nancy Fotheringham Cato, 'The Road'  
Sarah Jackson, 'The Instant of My Death'  
Arun Kolatkar, 'The Bus'  
Julius Chingono, 'At the Bus Station'  
Imtiaz Dharker, 'These are the Times We Live in'  
Elizabeth Jennings, 'The Enemies'  
Sampurna Chattarji, 'Boxes'  
W H Auden, 'The Capital'  
Arthur Yap, 'an afternoon nap'  
Elizabeth Smither, 'Plaits'  
Elizabeth Daryush, 'Children of Wealth'  
Thomas Love Peacock, 'Rich and Poor or, Saint and Sinner'  
Musaemura Zimunya, 'A Long Journey'  
Stevie Smith, 'Touch and Go'  
George Szirtes, 'Song'

These may be found in *Songs of Ourselves Volume 2: The University of Cambridge International Examinations Anthology of Poetry in English* (Cambridge University Press). Poems printed in the paper will be as printed in this text.

Ted Hughes, the following 15 poems:

'The Thought-Fox'	'The Harvest Moon'
'The Jaguar'	'Football at Slack'
'The Horses'	'Roe-Deer'
'Wind'	'A Memory'
'Relic'	'Telegraph Wires'
'Hawk Roosting'	'Anniversary'
'Cat and Mouse'	'The Other'
'Snowdrop'	

These may be found in *New Selected Poems 1957 – 1994*, by Ted Hughes (Faber and Faber). Poems printed in the paper will be as printed in this text.

## Set texts for examination in 2025 continued

Candidates answer on **one** set text in Section B (Prose).

### Section B: Prose

Chinua Achebe *Things Fall Apart*

Anita Desai *Fire on the Mountain*

Charles Dickens *Great Expectations*

Daphne du Maurier *Rebecca*

Harper Lee *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Joan Lindsay *Picnic at Hanging Rock*

H G Wells *The War of the Worlds*

From *Stories of Ourselves Volume 2*, the following 10 stories:

no. 3 Christina Rossetti, 'Nick'

no. 14 Olive Schreiner, 'The Woman's Rose'

no. 26 Ralph Ellison, 'The Black Ball'

no. 30 Mulk Raj Anand, 'The Gold Watch'

no. 35 Margaret Atwood, 'When It Happens'

no. 37 J G Ballard, 'The Man Who Walked on the Moon'

no. 38 Jamaica Kincaid, 'A Walk to the Jetty'

no. 40 Jane Gardam, 'Showing the Flag'

no. 47 Aminatta Forna, 'Haywards Heath'

no. 49 Romesh Gunsekera, 'Fluke'

This selection of 10 short stories may be found in *Stories of Ourselves Volume 2: The University of Cambridge International Examinations Anthology of Short Stories in English* (Cambridge University Press); passages from these stories in the paper will be printed as in this text.

## Set texts for examination in 2025 – Paper 2

Candidates must answer on **two** different set texts from the following:

Shelagh Delaney *A Taste of Honey*

Wole Soyinka *Death and the King's Horseman*

Tennessee Williams *A Streetcar Named Desire*

William Shakespeare *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

William Shakespeare *Antony and Cleopatra*

### Resources: set text editions for classroom use

There are many editions of set texts available, with newer editions sometimes including notes (often displayed on facing pages), illustrations, activities and further resources which make these texts particularly useful and user-friendly for classroom use.

The edition of Shakespeare used for setting extract questions on examination papers is the Alexander Text of *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, ed. Peter Alexander (Collins, 1951; new edition 2006, introduced by Peter Ackroyd). However, this complete, standard one-volume edition is not recommended for classroom study of individual plays.

Although we do not specify editions of individual plays, here are some examples of reliable and useful series:

- Cambridge School Shakespeare series      edited R Gibson, V Wienand and R Andrews
- Cambridge Literature series                edited J Baxter
- Penguin Shakespeare                        Penguin
- Oxford School Shakespeare                Oxford University Press
- Heinemann Shakespeare                    Heinemann
- Longman School Shakespeare              Pearson-Longman, series editor John O'Connor  
(useful for candidates with a second-language English background)

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## 4 Details of the assessment

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### Paper 1 – Poetry and Prose

Written paper, 1 hour 30 minutes, 50 marks

This is a **compulsory** written paper. It is an externally set assessment, marked by Cambridge International.

Candidates answer **two** questions: one from Section A (Poetry) and one from Section B (Prose). All questions carry equal marks (25 marks each).

There is a choice of two questions on each text.

Relevant passages/poems are printed on the question paper.

Set texts for this component are listed in Section 3 of this syllabus.

Candidates may **not** take their set texts into the exam room.

All questions encourage an informed personal response and test all four assessment objectives.

Candidates will have to demonstrate the following:

- knowledge of the content of the text – through reference to detail and use of quotations from the text (AO1)
- understanding of characters, relationships, situations and themes (AO2)
- understanding of the writer's intentions and methods – response to the writer's use of language (AO3)
- personal response – sometimes directly (answering questions such as 'What do you think?', 'What are your feelings about...?') and sometimes by implication (answering questions such as 'Explore the ways in which...') (AO4).

### Paper 2 – Drama

Written paper, 1 hour 30 minutes, 50 marks

This is a **compulsory** written paper. It is an externally set assessment, marked by Cambridge International.

Candidates answer **two** questions on two texts. All questions carry equal marks (25 marks each).

There is a choice of two questions on each text: either (a) a passage-based question or (b) an essay question. Candidates must answer one passage-based question and one essay question.

Relevant passages are printed on the question paper.

Set texts for this component are listed in Section 3 of this syllabus.

Candidates may **not** take their set texts into the exam room.

All questions encourage an informed personal response and test all four assessment objectives.

Candidates will have to demonstrate the following:

- knowledge of the content of the text – through reference to detail and use of quotations from the text (AO1)
- understanding of characters, relationships, situations and themes (AO2)
- understanding of the writer's intentions and methods – response to the writer's use of language (AO3)
- personal response – sometimes directly (answering questions such as 'What do you think?', 'What are your feelings about...?') and sometimes by implication (answering questions such as 'Explore the ways in which...') (AO4).

## Command words

Command words and their meanings help candidates know what is expected from them in the exam. The table below includes command words used in the assessment for this syllabus. The use of the command word will relate to the subject context.

Command word	What it means
<b>Explore</b>	write in detail about particular aspects

Phrases such as 'How does the writer convey ...?', 'In what ways does the writer ...?' 'What do you find particularly memorable ...?' may also be seen in the assessment for this syllabus.

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## 5 What else you need to know

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This section is an overview of other information you need to know about this syllabus. It will help to share the administrative information with your exams officer so they know when you will need their support. Find more information about our administrative processes at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide)

### Before you start

#### Previous study

We recommend that learners starting this course should have studied an English curriculum such as the Cambridge Lower Secondary programme or equivalent national educational framework.

#### Guided learning hours

We design Cambridge O Level syllabuses based on learners having about 130 guided learning hours for each subject during the course but this is for guidance only. The number of hours a learner needs to achieve the qualification may vary according to local practice and their previous experience of the subject.

#### Availability and timetables

Cambridge O Levels are available to centres in administrative zones 3, 4 and 5.

You can enter candidates in the June and November exam series. You can view the timetable for your administrative zone at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables)

Check you are using the syllabus for the year the candidate is taking the exam.

Private candidates can enter for this syllabus. For more information, please refer to the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*.

#### Combining with other syllabuses

Candidates can take this syllabus alongside other Cambridge International syllabuses in a single exam series. The only exceptions are:

- Cambridge IGCSE™ Literature in English (0475)
- Cambridge IGCSE World Literature (0408)
- Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) Literature in English (0992)
- syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

Cambridge O Level, Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) syllabuses are at the same level.

## Making entries

Exams officers are responsible for submitting entries to Cambridge International. We encourage them to work closely with you to make sure they enter the right number of candidates for the right combination of syllabus components. Entry option codes and instructions for submitting entries are in the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*. Your exams officer has a copy of this guide.

### Exam administration

To keep our exams secure, we produce question papers for different areas of the world, known as administrative zones. We allocate all Cambridge schools to one administrative zone determined by their location. Each zone has a specific timetable. Some of our syllabuses offer candidates different assessment options. An entry option code is used to identify the components the candidate will take relevant to the administrative zone and the available assessment options.

### Support for exams officers

We know how important exams officers are to the successful running of exams. We provide them with the support they need to make your entries on time. Your exams officer will find this support, and guidance for all other phases of the Cambridge Exams Cycle, at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide)

### Retakes

Candidates can retake the whole qualification as many times as they want to. Information on retake entries is at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/entries](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/entries)

### Equality and inclusion

We have taken great care to avoid bias of any kind in the preparation of this syllabus and related assessment materials. In our effort to comply with the UK Equality Act (2010) we have taken all reasonable steps to avoid any direct and indirect discrimination.

The standard assessment arrangements may present barriers for candidates with impairments. Where a candidate is eligible, we may be able to make arrangements to enable that candidate to access assessments and receive recognition of their attainment. We do not agree access arrangements if they give candidates an unfair advantage over others or if they compromise the standards being assessed.

Candidates who cannot access the assessment of any component may be able to receive an award based on the parts of the assessment they have completed.

Information on access arrangements is in the *Cambridge Handbook* at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide)

### Language

This syllabus and the related assessment materials are available in English only.

## After the exam

### Grading and reporting

Grades A\*, A, B, C, D or E indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge O Level.

A\* is the highest and E is the lowest. 'Ungraded' means that the candidate's performance did not meet the standard required for grade E. 'Ungraded' is reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate.

In specific circumstances your candidates may see one of the following letters on their statement of results:

- Q (PENDING)
- X (NO RESULT).

These letters do not appear on the certificate.

On the statement of results and certificates, Cambridge O Level is shown as GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION (GCE O LEVEL).

## How students and teachers can use the grades

Assessment at Cambridge O Level has two purposes:

- to measure learning and achievement  
The assessment:
  - confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus, to the levels described in the grade descriptions.
- to show likely future success  
The outcomes:
  - help predict which students are well prepared for a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful
  - help students choose the most suitable course or career.

## Grade descriptions

Grade descriptions are provided to give an indication of the standards of achievement candidates awarded particular grades are likely to show. Weakness in one aspect of the examination may be balanced by a better performance in some other aspect.

Grade descriptions for Cambridge O Level Literature in English will be published after the first assessment of the syllabus in 2023. Find more information at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/2010](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/2010)

## Changes to this syllabus for 2023, 2024 and 2025

The syllabus has been reviewed and revised for first examination in 2023. This is version 2 published 2021.

**You must read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme.**

### Changes to version 2 of the syllabus

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Changes to syllabus content</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'The Planners' by Boey Kim Cheng has replaced 'The Bay' by James K Baxter in set texts for Paper 1: for examination in 2023 (page 9), 2024 (page 12) and 2025 (page 15).</li> </ul> |
|------------------------------------|--|

### Changes to version 1 of the syllabus, published September 2020

<b>Changes to syllabus content</b>	<b>Aims</b>
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- The aims have been refreshed and updated.

#### Assessment Objectives

- There are now four assessment objectives in order to be more concise. The new assessment objectives test the same knowledge and skills as the current ones.
- The wording of the assessment objectives has been revised for clarity and to reflect the change from five to four objectives.

#### Subject content

- The set text lists have changed. Please see section 3 of this document for the separate lists of texts for examination in 2023, 2024 and 2025.
- The weighting of the assessment objectives has changed to reflect the change from five to four objectives. All assessment objectives continue to be evenly weighted.
- Before you begin teaching, check you are using the set text list for the year in which your candidates will take their examinations.
- All learners must now study **four** texts for the O Level: one poetry text, one prose text, and two drama texts

<b>Changes to assessment (including changes to specimen papers)</b>	<b>Paper 1</b>
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- The question paper rubric has changed. For their two essays, candidates must now answer one poetry question and one prose question. The instructions for the examination are as follows:  
Answer **two** questions in total:  
Section A (Poetry): answer **one** question.  
Section B (Prose): answer **one** question.
- The style and format of the questions has not changed.

*continued*

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**Changes to assessment  
(including changes to  
specimen papers) continued**

**Paper 2**

- The question paper rubric has changed. Candidates must now answer two questions on two **different** drama texts. They can no longer use the same drama text for two questions.
- Candidates must also write one of each type of essay: passage-based and essay-based.
- The instructions for the examination are as follows:  
Answer **two** questions.  
Your questions must be on **two** different set texts.  
You must answer **one** (a) passage-based question and **one** (b) essay question
- The style and format of the questions has not changed.

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In addition to reading the syllabus, you should refer to the updated specimen assessment materials. The specimen papers will help your students become familiar with exam requirements and command words in questions. The specimen mark schemes explain how students should answer questions to meet the assessment objectives.

Any textbooks endorsed to support the syllabus for examination from 2023 are suitable for use with this syllabus.



Cambridge Assessment International Education  
The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA, United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 (0)1223 553554 Fax: +44 (0)1223 553558  
Email: [info@cambridgeinternational.org](mailto:info@cambridgeinternational.org) [www.cambridgeinternational.org](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org)

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