



Cambridge Assessment  
International Education

# Syllabus

## Cambridge O Level Literature in English 2010

For examination in June and November 2020 and 2021.



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## Why choose Cambridge?

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Cambridge Assessment International Education 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 international qualifications are recognised by the world's best universities and employers, giving students a wide range of options in their education and career. As a not-for-profit organisation, we devote our resources to delivering high-quality educational programmes that can unlock learners' potential.

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 an international education from Cambridge International.

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

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



### Quality management

Our systems for managing the provision of international qualifications and education programmes for students aged 5 to 19 are certified as meeting the internationally recognised standard for quality management, ISO 9001:2008. Learn more at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/ISO9001](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/ISO9001)

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## Changes to this syllabus



For information about changes to this syllabus for 2020 and 2021, go to page 19.

The latest syllabus is version 1, published September 2017. There are no significant changes which affect teaching.

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# 1 Why choose this syllabus?

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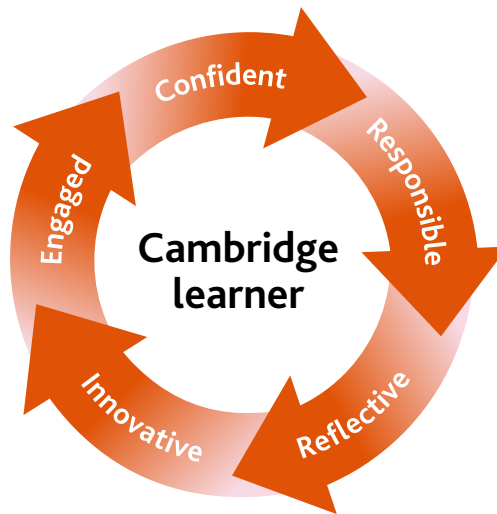
## Key benefits

Cambridge O Level syllabuses are created especially for international students. For over 25 years, we have worked with schools and teachers worldwide to develop syllabuses that are suitable for different countries, different types of schools and for learners with a wide range of abilities. These qualifications are designed for students whose first language may or may not be English and this is acknowledged throughout the examination process.

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 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.

Our approach encourages learners to be:



**'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

## Recognition and progression

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 practical resources, detailed guidance and innovative training and professional development so that you can give your learners the best possible preparation for Cambridge O Level.



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## 2 Syllabus overview

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### Aims

The syllabus aims summarise the context in which you should view the syllabus content and describe the purposes of a course based on this syllabus. They are not listed in order of priority.

The aims are to develop learners who:

- communicate accurately, appropriately and effectively in speech and writing
- understand and respond imaginatively to what they hear, read and experience
- enjoy literature and appreciate its contribution to aesthetic and imaginative growth
- explore areas of universal human concern, which will lead to a better understanding of themselves and others

### Content overview

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

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

### Support for Cambridge O Level Literature in English



Our School Support Hub [www.cambridgeinternational.org/support](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/support) provides Cambridge schools with a secure site for downloading specimen and past question papers, mark schemes, grade thresholds and other curriculum resources specific to this syllabus. The School Support Hub community offers teachers the opportunity to connect with each other and to ask questions related to the syllabus.

## Assessment overview

All candidates take Paper 1 Poetry and Prose, and Paper 2 Drama.

### All candidates take:

**Paper 1** 1 hour 30 minutes  
Poetry and Prose 50%  
50 marks  
Two questions, each on a different text  
Externally assessed

### and

**Paper 2** 1 hour 30 minutes  
Drama 50%  
50 marks  
Two questions (these may both be on one play  
or may be on two different plays)  
Externally assessed

## Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives (AOs) are:

**AO1**  
Show detailed knowledge of the content of literary texts.

**AO2**  
Understand the ways literary texts can be interpreted from surface level to deeper awareness of ideas and attitudes and their contexts.

**AO3**  
Recognise and appreciate ways in which writers use language.

**AO4**  
Recognise and appreciate ways in which writers achieve their effects (e.g. structure, plot, characterisation, dramatic tension, imagery, rhythm, setting and mood).

**AO5**  
Communicate a sensitive and informed personal response to what is read.

## 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	20
AO2	20
AO3	20
AO4	20
AO5	20

### Assessment objectives as a percentage of each component

Assessment objective	Weighting in components %	
	Paper 1	Paper 2
AO1	20	20
AO2	20	20
AO3	20	20
AO4	20	20
AO5	20	20



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## 3 Subject content

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The set texts for each year of the syllabus are listed below. 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.

### 2020 – Set texts for Paper 1

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

From *Songs of Ourselves Volume 1*, Part 3, the following 15 poems:

- Maya Angelou, 'Caged Bird'
- Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 'Sonnet 43'
- James K Baxter, 'Farmhand'
- Sujata Bhatt, 'Muliebrity'
- Isobel Dixon, 'Plenty'
- Rosemary Dobson, 'The Three Fates'
- Robert Hayden, 'Those Winter Sundays'
- Seamus Heaney, 'Mid-Term Break'
- Mervyn Morris, 'Little Boy Crying'
- Norman Nicholson, 'Rising Five'
- Adrienne Rich, 'Amends'
- Edna St Vincent Millay, 'Sonnet 29'
- Dennis Scott, 'Marrysong'
- Stevie Smith, 'Not Waving But Drowning'
- William Wordsworth, 'She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways'

You can find these poems in the anthology *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.

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

Kofi Awoonor, 'The Sea Eats the Land at Home'  
Robert Bridges, 'London Snow'  
Billy Collins, 'Afternoon with Irish Cows'  
David Constantine, 'Watching for Dolphins'  
William Cowper, 'The Poplar-Field'  
Allen Curnow, 'You will Know When You Get There'  
Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'The Caged Skylark'  
Elizabeth Jennings, 'In Praise of Creation'  
John Keats, 'Ode on Melancholy'  
Philip Larkin, 'Coming'  
Ruth Pitter, 'Stormcock in Elder'  
Peter Reading, 'Cetacean'  
Edna St Vincent Millay, 'The Buck in the Snow'  
Charlotte Smith, 'Written Near a Port on a Dark Evening'  
Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 'The Kraken'

You can find these poems in the anthology *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.

Carol Ann Duffy, the following 15 poems:

'Head of English'	'War Photographer'
'Recognition'	'Stealing'
'Foreign'	'Originally'
'In Mrs Tilscher's Class'	'We Remember Your Childhood Well'
'The <i>Darling</i> Letters'	'In Your Mind'
'The Good Teachers'	'Valentine'
'A Child's Sleep'	'Death of a Teacher'
'Prayer'	

You can find these poems in *New Selected Poems 1984 – 2004*, by Carol Ann Duffy (Picador). Poems printed in the paper will be printed as in this text.

Charlotte Brontë *Jane Eyre*  
 Anita Desai *In Custody*  
 Charles Dickens *Hard Times*  
 Zora Neale Hurston *Their Eyes Were Watching God*  
 John Knowles *A Separate Peace*  
 George Orwell *Nineteen Eighty-Four*  
 Alan Paton *Cry, The Beloved Country*

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

- no. 2 Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Fall of the House of Usher'
- no. 7 Stephen Crane, 'The Open Boat'
- no. 8 Edith Wharton, 'The Moving Finger'
- no. 18 Ray Bradbury, 'There Will Come Soft Rains'
- no. 23 Alex La Guma, 'The Lemon Orchard'
- no. 32 Bernard MacLaverty, 'Secrets'
- no. 33 John McGahern, 'The Stroat'
- no. 36 Patricia Grace, 'Journey'
- no. 37 Janet Frame, 'The Bath'
- no. 48 Tim Winton, 'On Her Knees'

You can find these stories in the anthology *Stories of Ourselves: The University of Cambridge International Examinations Anthology of Short Stories in English* (Cambridge University Press). Passages from these stories that appear in the paper will be printed as in this text.

## 2020 – Set texts for Paper 2

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

Lorraine Hansberry *A Raisin in the Sun*  
 Arthur Miller *The Crucible*  
 Terence Rattigan *The Winslow Boy*  
 William Shakespeare *Macbeth*  
 William Shakespeare *Romeo and Juliet*

## 2021 – Set texts for Paper 1

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

From *Songs of Ourselves Volume 1*, Part 3, the following 15 poems:

Maya Angelou, 'Caged Bird'  
Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 'Sonnet 43'  
James K Baxter, 'Farmhand'  
Sujata Bhatt, 'Muliebrity'  
Isobel Dixon, 'Plenty'  
Rosemary Dobson, 'The Three Fates'  
Robert Hayden, 'Those Winter Sundays'  
Seamus Heaney, 'Mid-Term Break'  
Mervyn Morris, 'Little Boy Crying'  
Norman Nicholson, 'Rising Five'  
Adrienne Rich, 'Amends'  
Edna St Vincent Millay, 'Sonnet 29'  
Dennis Scott, 'Marrysong'  
Stevie Smith, 'Not Waving But Drowning'  
William Wordsworth, 'She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways'

You can find these poems in the anthology *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.

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Kofi Awoonor, 'The Sea Eats the Land at Home'  
Robert Bridges, 'London Snow'  
Billy Collins, 'Afternoon with Irish Cows'  
David Constantine, 'Watching for Dolphins'  
William Cowper, 'The Poplar-Field'  
Allen Curnow, 'You will Know When You Get There'  
Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'The Caged Skylark'  
Elizabeth Jennings, 'In Praise of Creation'  
John Keats, 'Ode on Melancholy'  
Philip Larkin, 'Coming'  
Ruth Pitter, 'Stormcock in Elder'  
Peter Reading, 'Cetacean'  
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Anita Desai *In Custody*

Zora Neale Hurston *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Henry James *Washington Square*

John Knowles *A Separate Peace*

George Orwell *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

Alan Paton *Cry, The Beloved Country*

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You can find these stories in the anthology *Stories of Ourselves: The University of Cambridge International Examinations Anthology of Short Stories in English* (Cambridge University Press). Passages from these stories that appear in the paper will be printed as in this text.

## 2021 – Set texts for Paper 2

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

Lorraine Hansberry *A Raisin in the Sun*

Arthur Miller *The Crucible*

R C Sherriff *Journey's End*

William Shakespeare *Romeo and Juliet*

William Shakespeare *Twelfth Night*

### Resources: set text editions

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.

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

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, each on a different set text. 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 five assessment objectives.

Candidates will have to demonstrate the following:

- Personal response: sometimes directly (answering questions such as 'What do you think?', 'What are your feelings about ...?') and sometimes by implication (by answering questions such as 'Explore the ways in which ...')
- Knowledge of the text by referring to details and quotations from the text
- Understanding of characters, relationships, situations and themes
- Understanding of the writer's intentions and methods, and response to the writer's use of language.

### Paper 2 – Drama

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 (these may be both on **one** play or they may be on **two** different plays). 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.

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 five assessment objectives. Candidates will have to demonstrate the following:

- Personal response: sometimes directly (answering questions such as ‘What do you think?’, ‘What are your feelings about...?’) and sometimes by implication (by answering questions such as ‘Explore the ways in which...’)
- Knowledge of the text by referring to details and quotations from the text
- Understanding of characters, relationships, situations and themes
- Understanding of the writer’s intentions and methods, and response to the writer’s use of language.



## Command words

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/examsofficers](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsofficers)

### 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

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)

Cambridge O Levels are available to centres in Administrative Zones 3, 4 and 5. Centres in Administrative Zones 1, 2 or 6 wishing to enter candidates for Cambridge O Level examinations should contact Cambridge International Customer Services.

Private candidates can enter for this syllabus.

#### 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/examsOfficers](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsOfficers)

### Retakes

Candidates can retake the whole qualification as many times as they want to. This is a linear qualification so candidates cannot re-sit individual components.

### 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 compliance with the UK Equality Act (2010) we have designed this qualification to avoid any direct and indirect discrimination.

The standard assessment arrangements may present unnecessary barriers for candidates with disabilities or learning difficulties. We can put arrangements in place for these candidates to enable them to access the 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/examsOfficers](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsOfficers)

### 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 (result pending)
- X (no result)
- Y (to be issued)

These letters do not appear on the certificate.

## 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 O Level in 2020. Find more information at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/olevel](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/olevel)

## Changes to this syllabus for 2020 and 2021

The syllabus is version 1, published September 2017.

This document has a new design. It has been updated with the new name for Cambridge Assessment International Education.

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|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Changes to syllabus content</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The set texts have changed for 2020 and 2021. Please see section 3 of this syllabus for the set texts for 2020 and 2021.</li><li>• Information about the command words used in the assessment is now included.</li><li>• Minor changes to the wording of some sections have been made to improve clarity. There are no other changes to the syllabus or assessment.</li></ul> |
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|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Changes to assessment</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In Paper 2, the question numbering has been changed. Passage-based questions will now be labelled (a) and essay questions will now be labelled (b).</li><li>• In Paper 2 candidates are still required to answer <b>two</b> questions, they may be from one play or may be from two different plays.</li><li>• The specimen question papers remain the same.</li></ul> |
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**You are strongly advised to read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme.**

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