

Teaching guide: Choosing suitable texts for the NEA (Making connections)

This resource supports students studying our A-level English Language and Literature (7707). The five step lesson suggestion is designed to support students choosing a focus and texts for their non-exam assessment (NEA) investigation.

It encourages students to think about:

- choosing literary and non-literary material
- deciding on a relevant focus
- making active connections.

By using a set text for *Imagined Worlds* students can explore what they know already about:

- **themes**
- some aspect of **representation**
- **particular language features**
- some aspect of **narrative/point of view**.

Remember, it's not possible to choose exam texts, but other texts by the same authors or from a similar source are acceptable.

Learning objectives

Students will:

- understand how to use stylistics as a research methodology
- begin to select research questions
- use the activity to trigger their own ideas for making active connections
- use the activity as a springboard for choosing literary and non-literary material.

Prior knowledge needed

Students should have some knowledge of these key concepts:

- genre
- narrative
- point of view
- register
- representation
- literariness.

Students should also be confident with choosing and applying language levels in order to showcase their skill in close language-driven analysis in the NEA's report-based format.

Lesson preparation

Teachers will need the following resources:

- whiteboard
- poster paper
- copies of the set text
- post-it notes
- internet access.

Activities

Part One: starter – explore literary texts (5 minutes)

Ask students to individually list key themes and significant language features from their Imagined Worlds text (see Example One, *Dracula*). You may want to remind students of the key concepts to generate interesting aspects (eg shifting narrative perspectives, or first person narration).

Part Two: exploring literary texts

Either, a student-led approach:

1. In groups, ask students to consolidate these into mind maps and present back to other groups. You could develop this naturally by exploring common or particularly unusual ideas.

Or, a more teacher-led alternative:

2. Take one response per student and create a front-of-class mind-map. Students will need to capture this for the next part, for example by photographing it.

Part Three: making connections to non-literary material

Compile a list of non-literary material types and sources, and give this to your students. Some ideas include:

- YouTube video
- TV
- film
- songs
- speech
- Twitter, Facebook, or other social media
- blogs
- newspapers/magazines
- books
- letters/diaries/emails.

Ask students to suggest non-literary material to link to each of the literary text ideas, and as many options as possible for each (see attached *Dracula* example).

One way to generate examples could be to think about the literary representation of accent and dialect or standard and non-standard English in literary texts (such as *Trainspotting*, *Wuthering Heights*, *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers*, or *V*). This could result in the following non-literary material:

- recordings (and phonetic transcriptions) of regional speakers, either:
 - produced by students
 - sourced from places like the [BBC Listening Project](#) / [BBC Voices](#)
- regional speakers recording a word list
- interviews with speakers talking about accent and dialects (their own and others)
- transcripts of television shows set in different areas
- newspaper articles about accent and dialect
- song lyrics featuring non-standard English or varieties of English
- emails from non-native English speakers
- computer mediated communication and social media language use.

Part Four: finding text extracts and non-literary material

Students use their set text to practise finding suitable extracts to match up the themes and concepts from their mind map.

Page number	Summary of extract

Next they research and record possible non-literary material to use.

Source	Website link

It could be effective to structure this as a group activity with some students taking responsibility for finding instances from the literary extracts, while others look for non-literary material.

This is developed when students discuss the suggestions and critically analyse suitability for investigation focus.

Part Five: plenary - validating ideas (5 minutes)

Each student chooses one of their connections, writes a 'tweet' on what they like about it, and sticks it on their group's poster or on the whiteboard.

Further work

1. The same activity could be repeated using another core literary text, if this is the approach taken to the NEA. Students may build an affinity with their investigation focus if they pursue a particular interest.
2. Students may narrow down their own choices more effectively if they produce their mind maps individually. This could then be followed up with the students exploring relevant secondary readings and creating research questions for their chosen texts and connections.

Example One, *Dracula*

Gothic

- horror
- terror
- motifs
- symbols.

Representation

- vampires
- monsters.

Deixis

- spatial
- personal.

Genre

- telegrams
- reports
- diaries.

Setting, place, and location.

Dracula

- themes
- ideas
- linguistic features
- concepts.

Standard and non-standard English.

Characterisation

- roles
- description
- dialogue.

Point of view, narration, and story-telling.

Representation of 'otherness'

- Different cultures.

Accent and dialect

- representation
- phonological features
- grammatical features
- lexical features.

Travel

- dangers
- journeys as self-discovery.

Gender

- women's language use (dialogue)
- representation of 'types' of woman
- representation of masculinity
- representation of femininity.

Example Two, *Dracula* and non-literary material

