



IB ENGLISH LITERATURE

The Ultimate Study Guide



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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide was created with one purpose: to give you the ultimate resource for mastering your IB subject. It's built on the invaluable advice of our fantastic Lanterna tutors—the very best in the field.

These tutors not only achieved top grades in the IB themselves but also have years of experience helping students like you succeed. Their insights, strategies, and tips are pure gold—insider knowledge you won't find anywhere else online.

Whether you're a current student or trying to decide if this subject is right for you, this guide has everything you need to thrive.

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WHY SHOULD YOU TRUST US?

The tutors whose information we compiled to create this guide have not only conquered the IB but they are experts in simplifying the learning journey for you. The most common score for our IB tutors is the full 45 points. More specifically, they have received a 7 in this particular subject.

42.3

Average IB score of
our tutors

150K+

Hours tutored



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OVERVIEW: ENGLISH LITERATURE

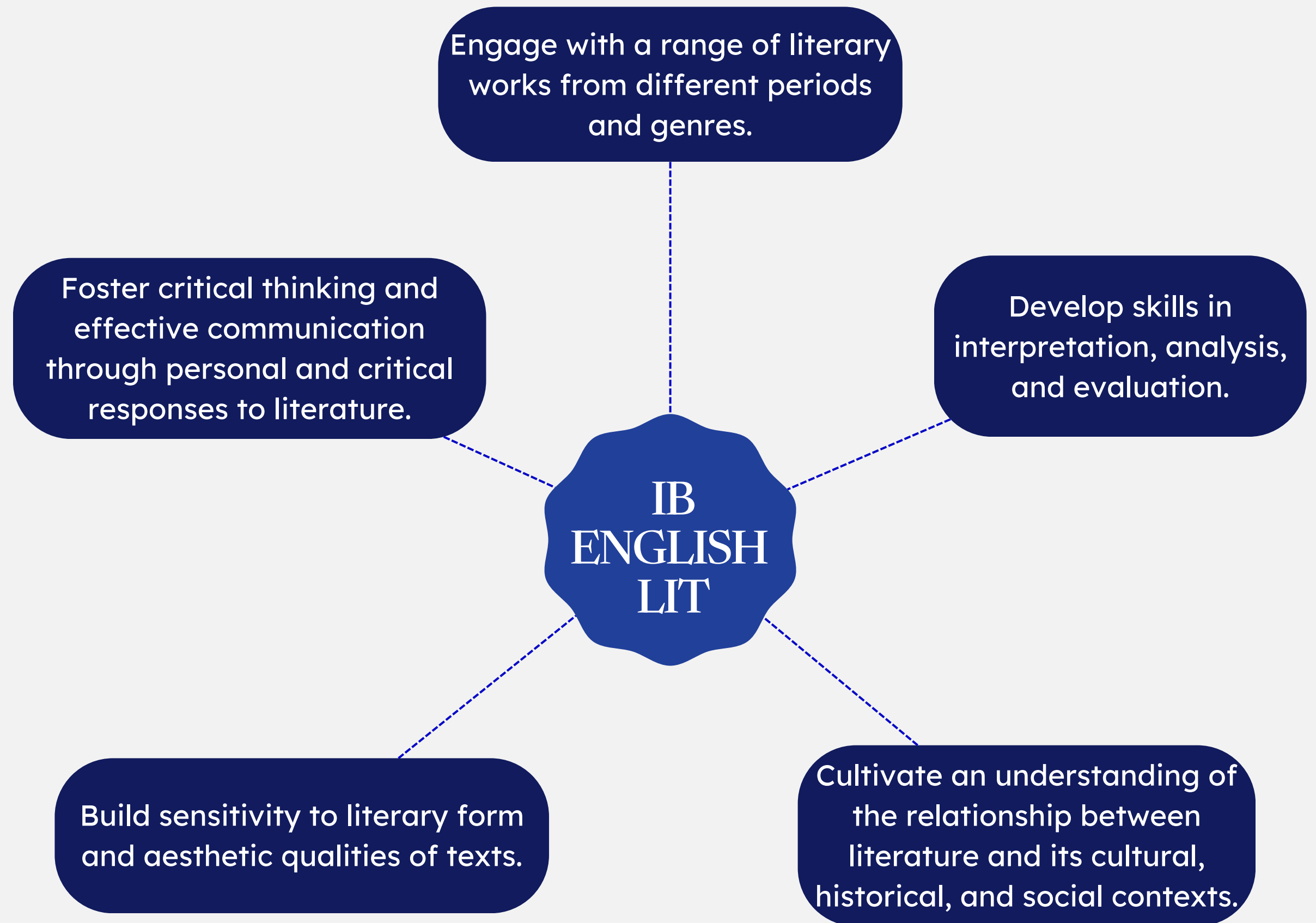
IB Language A: Literature is an in-depth exploration of literary works across cultures and time, focusing on how language shapes meaning, reflects experience, and influences perspectives.

The course encourages students to engage with a wide range of literary texts and forms, analyzing both their own interpretations and the critical perspectives of others. Through this process, they develop key skills in literary analysis, evaluation, and creative response while reflecting on cultural contexts and global issues.

By fostering appreciation for the formal and aesthetic qualities of literature, students are empowered to think critically, communicate effectively, and gain a deeper understanding of how literature connects with other disciplines and real-world concerns.

COURSE AIMS

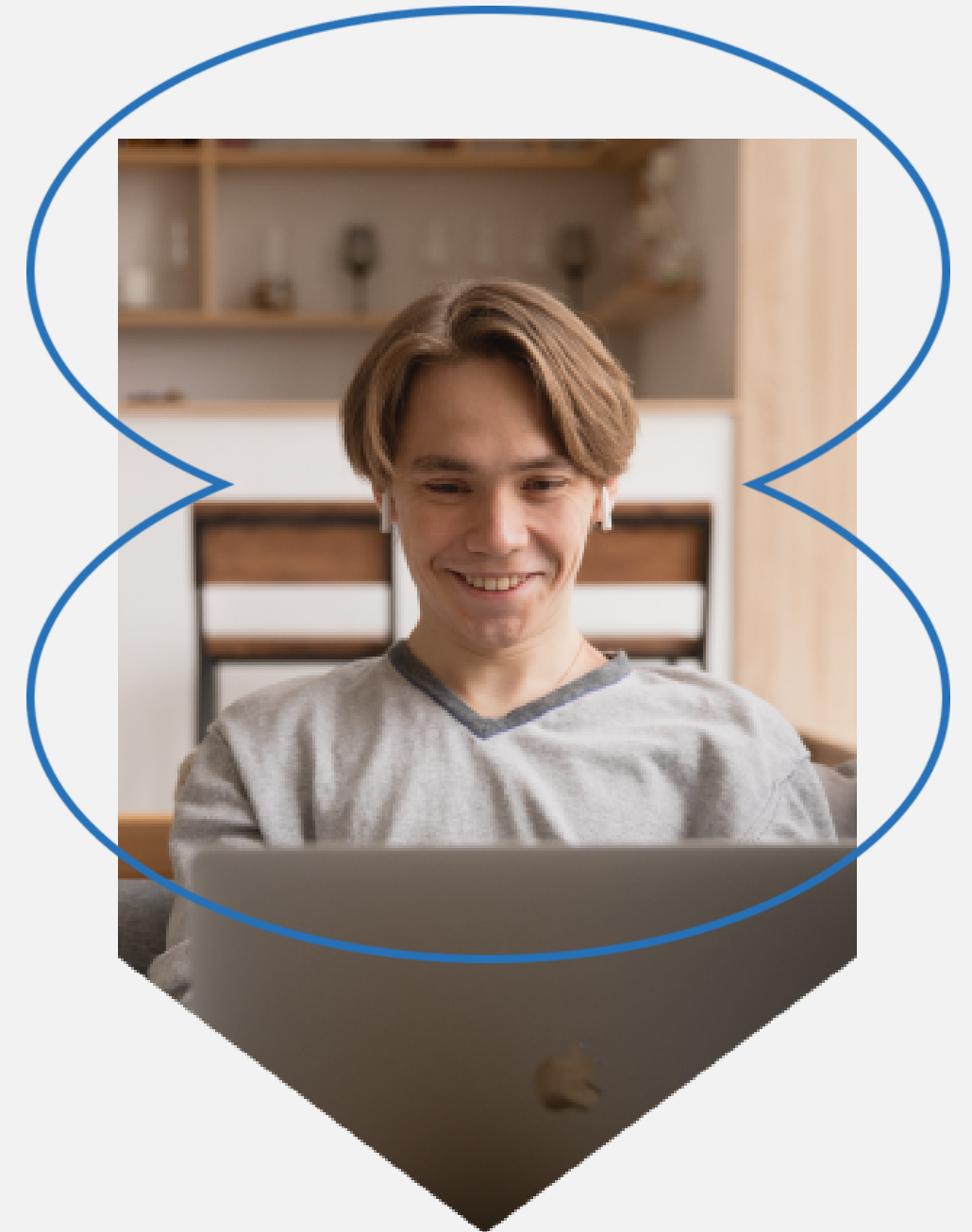
IB Language A: Literature explores the diverse manifestations of literature across cultures and history while fostering critical and creative engagement with texts.



WHO SHOULD CHOOSE IT?

IB Language A: Literature is ideal for students who are passionate about reading, analyzing texts, and exploring diverse literary works from different cultures and periods. This course is a great choice if you:

- Love reading and engaging with literary texts across genres and styles.
- Are curious about how language shapes meaning and reflects human experience.
- Enjoy interpreting texts and discussing different perspectives and themes.
- Are considering careers in literature, journalism, education, publishing, or creative writing.



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SL

Teaching Hours **150**

Exams **3 hours**

Syllabus Components

- Readers, Writers and Texts
- Time and Space
- Intertextuality (Connecting Texts)



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HL

Teaching Hours **240**

Exams **4 hours + HL essay**

HL students study more texts and more literary forms, with a deeper focus on intertextuality.

02

HOW BIG IS THE JUMP FROM SL → HL

The jump from SL to HL in English Literature is significant, with tutors rating it 3.33 out of 5.

HL requires students to explore texts in much greater depth and write more complex and nuanced literary analyses.



Compiled from our best IB English Literature tutors

WHO SHOULD PICK HL?

Enjoys Deep Literary Analysis

If you love breaking down themes, symbols, and styles in literature, HL is for you.

Strong Writing and Argumentation Skills

HL requires structured, sophisticated essays with detailed textual evidence.

Comfortable with Independent Research

The HL essay demands personal exploration of literature, making it ideal for self-motivated learners.

Aspiring for Literature, Humanities, or Journalism

If you're considering literature, law, journalism, philosophy, or humanities-based subjects at university, HL is a strong choice.



CORE SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

Love for Reading and Writing

A genuine interest in reading a wide range of texts is crucial. Writing regularly will help sharpen your analytical and communication skills.



Synthesize Ideas and Make Connections

Compare texts, themes, and styles. Draw connections between different literary works to develop a more comprehensive understanding.



Think Beyond the Text

Explore how literature reflects and challenges societal norms, cultural beliefs, and historical movements, enriching your interpretation and response.



Communicate Clearly and Effectively

Articulate your insights through well-structured essays and oral presentations. Express ideas with clarity, coherence, and strong evidence.



Master Critical Analysis

Understand themes, character development, and literary techniques in-depth. Analyze how these elements relate to broader historical and cultural contexts.



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03

“WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SKILL FOR A STUDENT TO DEVELOP?”

“



“Love reading and writing. Passion for literature makes it easier to engage with the material and express ideas effectively.”

“Develop articulate writing and speaking skills. Communicating insights on how form and content relate is essential for success.”

“Focus on critical analysis. Understanding themes, character development, and literary techniques, while linking them to broader contexts, is key for excelling in essays and assessments.”

MEMORIZATION



5.5 OUT OF 10

The average rating our tutors gave for the importance of **strong memorization** for IB English Lit

ASSESSMENT STRUCTURE

PAPER 1

External — 35% final grade

Guided analysis of unseen non-literary passage/passages from different text types.

For SL: 1 hour 15 min

For HL: 2 hours 15 min

PAPER 2

External

Comparative essay based on two literary works written in response to a choice of one out of four questions.

For SL: 1 hour 45 mins. 35% of final grade

For HL: 1 hour 45 mins. 25% of final grade

INDIVIDUAL ORAL

Internal

Prepared oral response on the way that one literary work and one non-literary body of work studied have approached a common global issue.

For SL: 30% of final grade

For HL: 20% of final grade

HL ESSAY

Internal

Prepared oral response on the way that one work originally written in the language studied and one work studied in translation have approached a common global issue.

HL ONLY. Completed over time

Worth 20% of final grade

TRICKS FOR YOUR PAPER 1

Do's

- Read the passage carefully before writing. Identify key themes, literary devices, and tone before starting your response.
- Plan your analysis before you start writing. Organize your ideas logically and ensure you have a clear argument.
- Use literary terminology accurately. Mention techniques like metaphor, imagery, enjambment, and narrative voice.
- Focus on HOW meaning is created. Don't just summarize—analyze how the writer's choices affect meaning.

Don'ts

- Don't describe the passage without analysis. Avoid retelling the content instead of explaining its effects.
- Don't ignore structure and style. Discuss sentence length, punctuation, and narrative perspective when relevant.
- Don't rush into writing without a plan. Poor structure will weaken your argument.
- Don't use vague language. Be specific about techniques and their impact.



TRICKS FOR YOUR PAPER 2

Do's

- Answer the question directly. Address the prompt with a clear, well-structured argument.
- Make clear comparisons. Analyze both works side by side, discussing similarities and differences.
- Use evidence from both texts. Support points with well-chosen quotes and examples.
- Focus on the bigger picture. Consider themes, context, and literary techniques rather than just plot details.

Don'ts

- Don't write two separate essays. Your response must be a comparison, not two disconnected analyses.
- Don't forget to balance your discussion. Avoid over-focusing on one text while neglecting the other.
- Don't summarize the texts. Assume the examiner knows the books—focus on analysis.
- Don't neglect authorial intent. Discuss why the writer made certain choices, not just what happens in the text.



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TRICKS FOR YOUR HL ESSAY

Do's

- Choose a strong research question. Your essay should be focused and allow for deep literary analysis.
- Use a clear thesis statement. Outline your main argument in the introduction and stick to it.
- Integrate critical perspectives. Use literary criticism or historical context where relevant.
- Plan and revise your work. Edit carefully to improve clarity, coherence, and argument strength.

Don'ts

- Don't pick a broad topic. Avoid vague or general discussions—keep your essay focused.
- Don't just summarize the text. Your essay should analyze and interpret, not retell.
- Don't neglect textual evidence. Every argument must be backed up with specific examples.
- Don't submit without proofreading. Grammar, spelling, and coherence are all crucial for top marks.

HOW TO ACE YOUR IO

PRACTICE SPEAKING CLEARLY AND CONFIDENTLY

Focus on delivering your points in a structured and engaging manner. Practice speaking with clarity and confidence to ensure your analysis comes across effectively.

ANALYZE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TEXTS AND GLOBAL ISSUES

Go beyond summary by analyzing how the texts engage with broader global issues. Highlight the connections between the works and how they reflect or challenge important themes.

USE PRECISE EXAMPLES

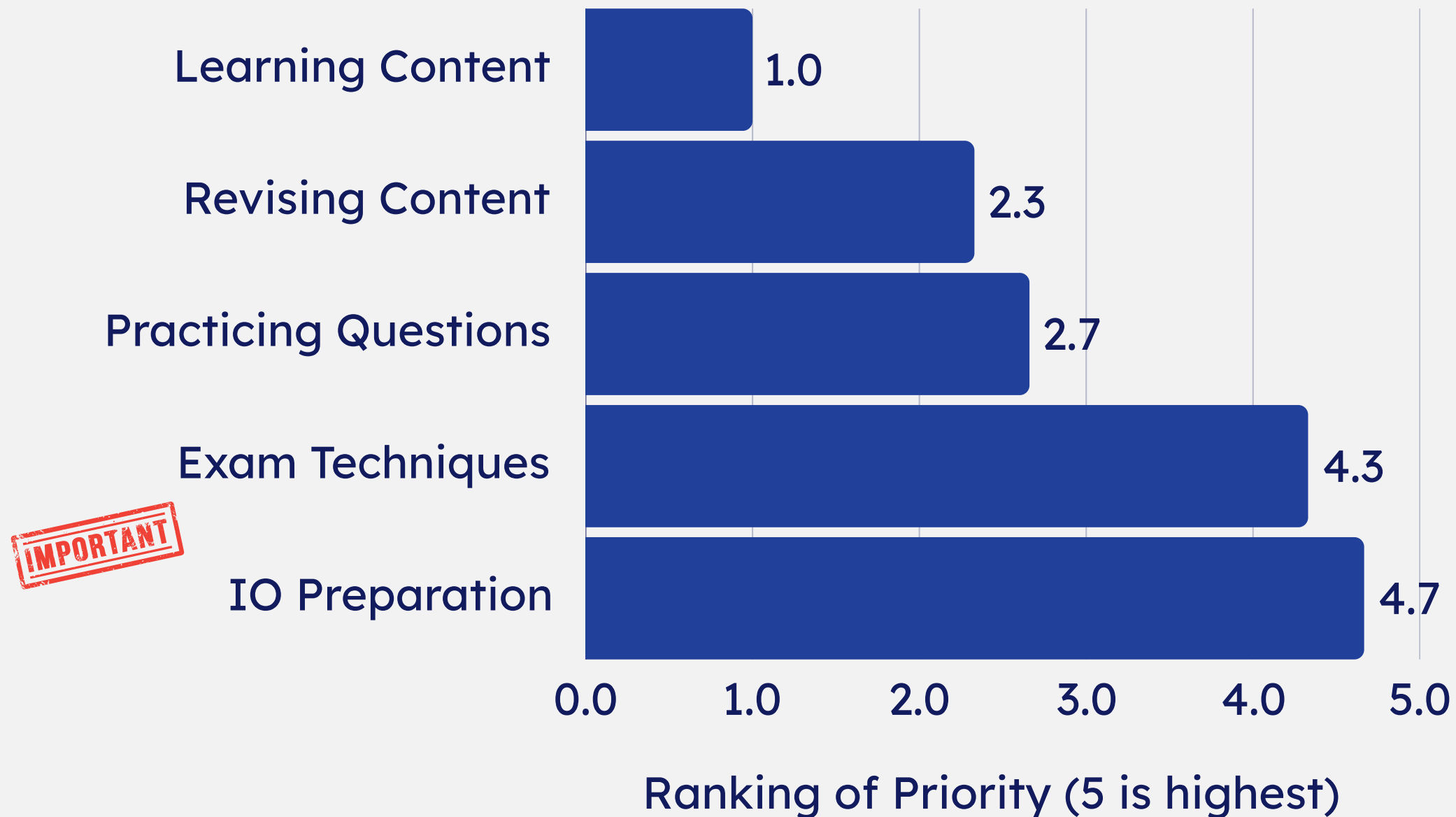
Support your arguments with well-chosen quotes and references. Be sure to use examples that directly reinforce your points and showcase your understanding of the texts.

TIME YOURSELF AND MANAGE YOUR PACE

Practice timing your presentation to ensure it fits within the allocated time. Maintain a steady pace and avoid speaking too quickly, as it could affect the clarity and coherence of your delivery. Make sure your presentation is structured with a clear introduction, body, and conclusion.



EFFECTIVE STUDY STRATEGIES



WHAT SHOULD YOU PRIORITIZE IN YOUR STUDY TIME?

Based on tutor insights, IO preparation and improving exam techniques are the key priorities for success in IB English Literature. Dedicate time to crafting a well-structured IO with strong textual analysis and coherent arguments. For exams, focus on improving essay-writing techniques and practicing how to analyze unseen texts under timed conditions. Consistent revision of key themes, literary devices, and past paper questions will help you build confidence and clarity in your responses.

UNDERSTAND
THE CONTENT

1

MEMORIZE &
ORGANIZE
SMARTLY

2

PRACTICE,
PRACTICE,
PRACTICE!

3

THE 3-STEP REVISION STRATEGY



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1. UNDERSTAND THE CONTENT

The first step in your revision is mastering each text's deeper meanings, context, and key themes. Focus on understanding how different works connect and relate to course concepts.



Create Detailed Notes

Summarize key texts with thorough notes on themes, characters, and literary techniques. Build a quote bank with well-chosen examples from across the text.



Condense and Summarize

Organize your notes into a structured revision grid for Paper 2, aligning parallel episodes and techniques across multiple texts.



Use Visual Resources

Mind maps and comparison charts help you visualize connections between texts and track recurring themes or techniques.



Practice Timed Writing

Write essays under timed conditions to master exam structure. Focus on crafting a clear argument and integrating evidence effectively. Use past papers and teacher feedback to refine your style.



Active Recall and Discussion

Quiz yourself on literary techniques and key quotes. Practice your Individual Oral with peers to build confidence and refine your analysis and delivery.

STRUGGLING WITH CONTENT?

WE CAN HELP

Using a tutor is a great way to understand complex content and prepare effectively.

Lanterna Tutors have received a 7 in the subject they are teaching and are able to break-down complex tasks so that they become more understandable and relatable.

They also know exactly what the IB requires and can guide you on what's most important for exams.

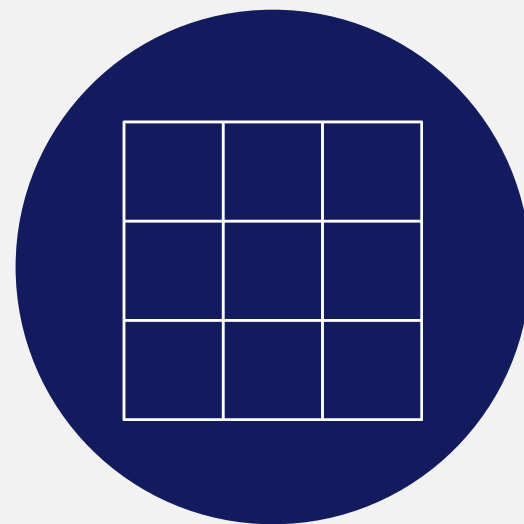


2. MEMORIZE & ORGANIZE SMARTLY



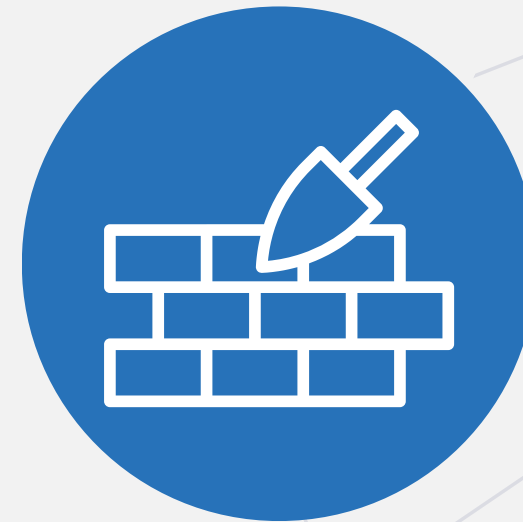
Build a Quote Bank

Collect key quotes for each text, focusing on significant themes, techniques, and literary devices. Use flashcards or a digital tool like Anki to practice active recall.



Create Comparison Grids

For Paper 2, align parallel episodes, themes, and techniques from multiple texts in a column-based grid, with well-chosen quotes for easy reference.



Know Your Essay Structure

Practice crafting a clear line of argument that incorporates one of the seven course concepts. Introduce, integrate, and interpret textual evidence effectively.



Practice Oral Commentary

For the IO, rehearse your commentary and practice Q&A sessions with peers to improve confidence and control.



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3. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!



The most important part of your revision is practice. 80% of your entire grade comes down to just a few hours of exams, so mastering how to answer questions is key. Think of exams like video game levels—repeat them enough, and they’ll become second nature. The more past papers you practice, the more confident and efficient you’ll be.

LEARN IB’S “CRYPTIC” LANGUAGE

This is where the markscheme is your best friend. It shows you exactly what the examiners expect in each answer. If you train yourself to write responses based on the markscheme, you’ll know precisely how to get full marks every time. Our tutors fast-track students to master this skill, teaching them how to break down questions, understand command terms like describe, explain, and evaluate, and write answers that hit full marks every time.

TIMING MATTERS TOO

Simulate real exam conditions by practicing under timed settings, focusing on data-based questions and longer responses. Review your mistakes, check how your answers compare to the markscheme, and adjust your strategy. With enough practice, exams will no longer feel like a challenge—they’ll feel like second nature.

BEST RESOURCES: WEBSITES



EasySevens (easysevens.com)

Offers a wide variety of resources tailored to IB students' needs, from notes to exam preparation materials.



McLaughlin Teaches English (mclaughlinteachesenglish.com)

A great resource for literary theory and critical reading techniques, valuable for both students and teachers.



Oxford English Dictionary (oed.com)

Essential for expanding vocabulary and understanding nuanced meanings in literary texts.



LitCharts (litcharts.com)

Breaks down key quotes, themes, and character analysis in major texts—great for deeper insights and exam preparation.

BEST RESOURCES: YOUTUBE



CrashCourse Literature

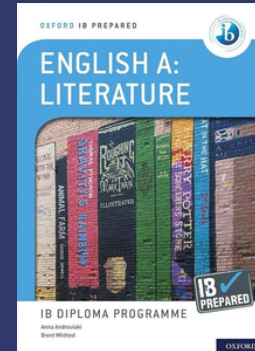
Engaging videos that break down complex literary concepts and analyze classic texts, focusing on literary devices, character development, and themes.



IB English Guys

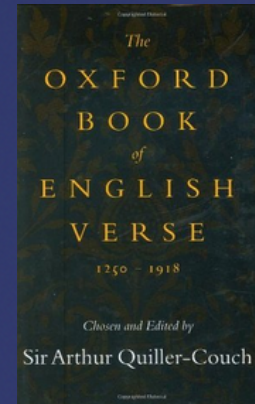
Breaks down exam components and rubrics, helping students understand what's expected in each assessment.

BEST RESOURCES: BOOKS



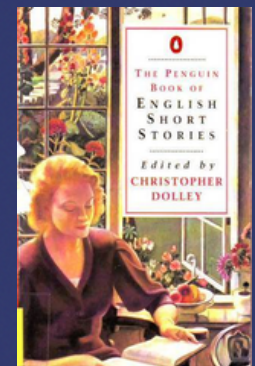
IB Prepared (Literature) – Oxford University Press

Offers the most thorough guidance for assessment preparation, with a focus on exam techniques and practice.



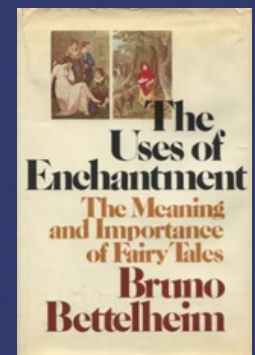
The Oxford Book of English Verse

A rich resource for studying poetry and improving textual analysis.



The Penguin Book of English Short Stories

An excellent collection of short stories for both teaching and reading pleasure.



The Uses of Enchantment by Bruno Bettelheim

Explores the psychological and symbolic significance of fairy tales and myths.

BEST APPS & TOOLS

MASTER ACTIVE RECALL

Use these flashcard apps to memorize effectively. Spaced repetition ensures key concepts stick in your long-term memory. Perfect for mastering definitions and tricky processes.



Quizlet



Anki

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Familiarize yourself with IB-style questions and learn how mark schemes are structured. Regular practice will help you refine your answers and boost confidence for exam day.



IB Questionbank & Past Papers



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ADVICE FROM EXPERT TUTORS

“

"Read widely and challenge your preconceptions. Make connections between texts and the internal and external worlds you inhabit—this deepens your understanding of literature."

READ WIDELY



ADVICE FROM EXPERT TUTORS



“

"Use your Learner Portfolio strategically.
It's a powerful tool for tracking ideas,
interpretations, and evidence throughout
the two years, making exam preparation
much easier."

**LEVERAGE YOUR LEARNER
PORTFOLIO**

ADVICE FROM EXPERT TUTORS

“

"Focus on understanding how quotes and themes contribute to a text's broader message—don't just memorize them. Engage with the material and practice writing regularly."

ENGAGE WITH TEXTS



ADVICE FROM EXPERT TUTORS



“

"Stay organized and consistent. Break your goals into manageable tasks, review feedback, and seek clarification early to build confidence and avoid feeling overwhelmed."

STAY ORGANIZED



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FINAL THOUGHTS

IB is challenging but totally achievable if you work smart. It's a content-heavy subject that requires consistent effort, but with the right strategies—like understanding concepts, building connections, and practicing effectively—you'll be on track for success.

WHAT IF I FEEL STUCK?

Sometimes all you need is a little extra guidance to save countless hours of frustration. Lanterna's tutors are IB experts who've been exactly where you are. More than just teaching content, they'll coach you on how to study smarter, manage your time, and build habits that lead to top marks. We've helped students go from 4s to 7s in a few months, and you can do the same with the right support.

WHO IS TUTORING FOR?

1

IF YOU FEEL STUCK AND DON'T KNOW HOW TO CATCH UP

When you've fallen behind, it can feel overwhelming. Having a tutor who's recently done your subject—and aced it—means you get targeted, personal guidance to catch up quickly and focus on what matters most. They'll help you minimise wasted time and maximise your chances of top grades.

2

IF YOU LACK GUIDANCE ON HOW TO STUDY OR TACKLE IAS

If you're unsure how to approach your IA, EE, or even how to revise effectively, a tutor can make all the difference. A lot of stress and time-waste comes from not knowing exactly what you're supposed to do and how to do it. Our tutors guide you step by step and make sure that things are done right the first time, and avoid the frustration later on.

3

IF YOU STRUGGLE WITH MOTIVATION, STUDY SKILLS, OR HABITS

Sometimes it's not about content—it's about knowing how to work efficiently. That's where our tutors at Lanterna stand out. With over 300 tutors, all recent IB graduates who scored 7s in their HL subjects, we know exactly how to help you best.

We don't just teach content—we coach you on building smart habits, managing your time, and studying effectively.



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SEE YOU AT THE TOP!

We hope you found this
guide useful.

Be sure to check out other our
study guides, as well as our
world class tutors.



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