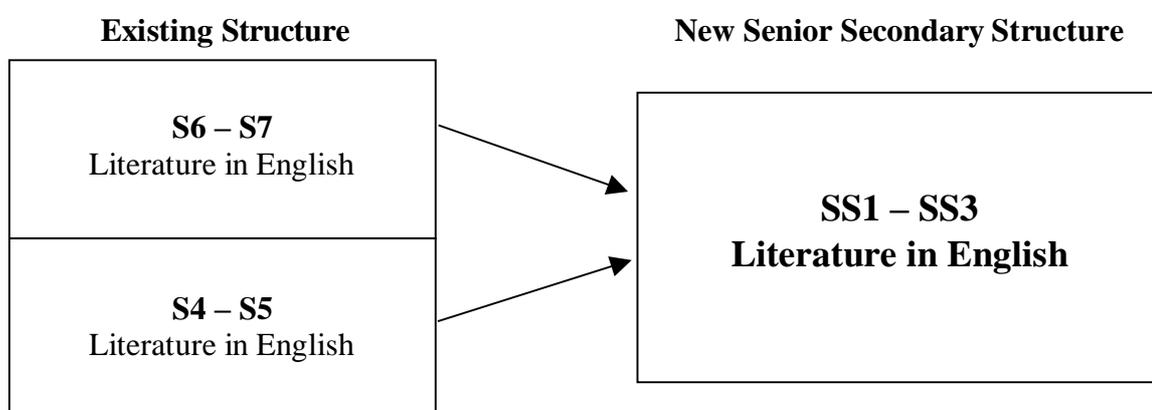# Literature in English

Introduction

1.   The English Language Education curriculum comprises two closely related subjects: English Language and Literature in English. English Language is the core subject for students from primary to senior secondary level (i.e. P1 – SS3), and Literature in English is an elective subject for students at senior secondary level (i.e. SS1 – SS3).

2.   As suggested in the following diagram, the design of the Senior Secondary Literature in English curriculum is built on the existing S4-5 literature curriculum as well as the ASL and AL literature curricula.

Existing Structure	**New Senior Secondary Structure**
S6 – S7 Literature in English	**SS1 – SS3** **Literature in English**
S4 – S5 Literature in English	

Rationale

3.   The rationale for studying Literature in English is as follows:

It helps students develop a humanistic outlook on life. Through a close interaction with literary or creative works which portray a diverse range of human thought, emotion and experience, learners are able to gain knowledge and understanding of the nature of human existence and to develop insights into and an appreciation of the world and of the society in which they live.

❧ Seeking to represent the human situation through a creative, emotive use of language, literary or creative texts are capable of offering learners much aesthetic, intellectual and emotional pleasure.

❧ The study of Literature in English has many practical aspects:

- It provides ample opportunities for learners to develop their creativity, sharpen their critical and analytical skills, and enhance their language proficiency;

- It broadens their awareness of the culture of different places where English is used, and enhances their appreciation and understanding of Hong Kong as a culturally diverse society; and

- The intellectual, aesthetic and emotional qualities, which Literature in English helps learners develop, prepare them for further study or work, particularly in areas such as publications and the media, where creativity, critical thinking and intercultural understanding are highly valued.

Curriculum Aims

4. The aims of the Literature in English curriculum are to enable learners to:

❧ appreciate and enjoy a wide range of literary or creative texts and other related cultural forms;

❧ develop their capacity for critical thinking, creativity, self-expression, personal growth, empathy and cultural understanding;

❧ enhance their awareness of the relationship between literature and society;

❧ develop a greater sensitivity to and control over the nuances of the English language; and

❧ be adequately prepared for areas of further study or work, where qualities promoted in the study of literature, such as creativity, critical thinking and intercultural understanding, are highly valued.

Curriculum Framework

(This part should be read in conjunction with the section "Curriculum Framework" of the Main Document. It should be noted that the curriculum framework suggested below is for initial consultation only. Feedback from the public will be taken into account and further details will be provided in the next stage of consultation.)

5.   As an elective subject, Literature in English constitutes 10% (approximately 255 hours) of the total lesson time of the senior secondary curriculum. Lesson time should be allocated according to students' needs with due consideration of their strengths and weaknesses. Equal emphasis should be placed on the various genres of prose, poetry, drama and film that students are required to study in the subject, and sufficient time should be allocated for initiating desired responses from students and providing advice and support on portfolio work and other related learning activities. The following is a suggested time allocation for the Literature in English curriculum:

	Percentage of lesson time (Approx. number of hours)
• Study of Set Texts	50% (128 hours)
• Literary Appreciation (Unseen texts)	30% (76 hours)
• Portfolio (Group work/Individual tutorials)	20% (51 hours)

6.   The Literature in English curriculum is organized into 4 Strands, which define the major targets or purposes of studying literature, i.e.

✄   the Interpersonal Strand (for conversing, arguing, justifying and discussing ideas, feelings and points of view about literary works);

✄   the Knowledge Strand (for developing and applying literary knowledge through interacting with literary texts);

✄   the Experience Strand (for understanding, enjoying and appreciating literary works and responding freely and imaginatively to them); and

✄   the Language Strand (for developing competency in language through critical reading of literary texts, and oral/written responses and discussion).

7.   The Literature in English curriculum comprises learning objectives or focuses which embody the essential content of learning for the subject.   They include:

✄   knowledge of literary/creative works, focusing mainly on poetry, prose, drama and films;

✄   skills of literary comprehension and appreciation;

✄   literary competence development strategies; and

✄   attitudes.

Learning Targets

8.   The learning targets for a subject set out the knowledge/concepts, skills, values and attitudes that students need to develop. Students are expected to achieve the targets for Literature in English at senior secondary level under the various Strands listed below:

Interpersonal Strand

(a)   to present views and explain interpretations and evaluations of literary or creative texts[1] in English in the genres of prose, poetry, drama and film from around the world

(b)   to discuss literary or creative texts in terms of themes, issues, language and style

Knowledge Strand

(a)   to recognize the major features of literary or creative forms such as prose, poetry, drama and film

(b)   to understand literary terms and concepts and to apply them appropriately in appreciating, discussing and evaluating literary or creative texts

(c)   to understand and appreciate literary or creative texts, and to establish the interconnections within and between texts

Experience Strand

(a)   to gain pleasure and enjoyment from reading and viewing literary or creative texts

(b)   to develop creativity, critical thinking and powers of self-expression through various means of responding and giving expression to literary or creative texts. Such means may include engaging in:

- tasks or activities which encourage learners to make predictions and inferences
- descriptions, discussions and debates through which learners express their critical analyses, personal views or responses
- solo or choral speaking, role plays, drama performances, or dramatic reading of texts
- creative writing (and perhaps experimental filmmaking)
- reflective writing (e.g. journals, diaries)
- portfolio work

(c)   to understand one's own feelings through the mediation of literary or creative works

(d)   to explore the thoughts and feelings of others by entering imaginatively into the world of the characters in literary or creative texts

Language Strand

(a) to enhance reading comprehension and interpretative skills through studying and viewing a variety of literary or creative texts

(b) to enhance speaking and writing skills through oral/written presentation or exchange of views, ideas and feelings, literary analysis (including film reviews), and project work

(c) to develop awareness of the subtleties of language and of register and appropriacy through close interaction with a variety of literary or creative texts

(d) to gain greater awareness of the phonological system of English through appreciation and use of rhythm and rhyme, and other sound devices

(e) to increase vocabulary by means of exposure to a variety of authentic texts

Learning Objectives

9.   Learning objectives define more specifically what students are expected to learn in accordance with the learning targets specified for the subject. They serve as a resource list for curriculum, lesson and activity planning. The learning objectives that learners at senior secondary level should achieve are listed below:

Knowledge of Literary or Creative Works

(a) to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the content of a range of set texts in the genres of prose, poetry, drama and film

(b) to demonstrate a clear knowledge of, and the ability to apply, key literary terms in discussing literary or creative texts

Skills of Literary Comprehension and Appreciation

(a) to examine and discuss form and content, showing:

- comprehension of the thoughts and feelings conveyed in the texts

- critical appreciation of the language, technique and style through which these thoughts and feelings are expressed

- to demonstrate the ability to compare and contrast literary or creative texts in terms of themes, characterization, language, technique and style

(b) to show awareness of the connections between literary or creative texts and other cultural media (such as paintings, sculpture, photography)

(c) to apply some of the techniques learnt to one's own creative work

(d) to develop an interest in following up references and allusions, and the ability to establish interconnections within and between texts

Literary Competence Development Strategies

(a)   to develop analytical and critical skills, inferencing skills, and an awareness of irony and sensitivity to tone, through understanding and interpreting a broad range of literary or creative texts

(b)   to develop self-expression and creativity through responding freely and imaginatively to literary or creative texts through oral, written or performative means

(c)   to develop language and communication skills through:

- negotiating the possible meanings of literary or creative texts

- discussing and debating literary or creative works

- presenting feelings and ideas in both oral and written form with clarity, colour and emotion

Attitudes

(a)   to gain pleasure and enjoyment from reading and viewing literary or creative works

(b)   to develop a keen interest in reading and viewing literary or creative works and in responding to them through oral, written and performative means

(c)   to appreciate the beauty, flexibility and play of language at its best

(d)   to empathize with others

(e)   to gain increased awareness of human relationships and the interaction between the individual and society

(f)   to appreciate different cultures, attitudes and belief systems

Learning and Teaching

10.   The teaching of literature is not only the transmission of knowledge about literary texts but more importantly the development of the learner's faculties for enjoying and criticizing literature. Reading and viewing literature becomes a genuine part of their learning experience when students ask themselves questions about a text and attempt to come up with answers. It is only when students develop the ability to read and view critically and independently that they apply the ability to select and appreciate literature outside the classroom. Not only will their taste be cultivated but they will also develop a lifelong interest in reading and viewing. The emphasis of teaching literature should therefore fall on providing opportunities to students that will help them develop the ability to both respond sensitively to a text with enjoyment and analyze it critically.

11. Detailed learning and teaching suggestions will be provided to help students develop the skills of critical understanding and appreciation, and approach literary texts under the following genres:

- Prose fiction (the short story and novel)
- Poetry
- Drama
- Films

Assessment

(This part should be read in conjunction with the section "Assessment" of the Main Document.)

Aims of Assessment

12. Assessment is the practice of collecting evidence of student learning. The aims of assessment are to improve learning and teaching as well as to recognize the achievement of students. In the subject of Literature in English, assessment will closely align with the curriculum design, the curriculum aims, the learning targets and objectives and the learning processes.

Internal Assessment

13. Internal assessment refers to the assessment practices that schools employ as part of the learning and teaching strategies during the three-year study in Literature in English. To achieve this goal, schools are encouraged to employ both formative and summative assessment. Through an on-going evaluation of learners' performance and abilities, formative assessment helps to identify learners' strengths and weaknesses, and provide them with timely feedback and guidance. It also enables teachers to review and improve their teaching plans and strategies. Formative assessment should not solely be the teacher's responsibility. Learners should also be encouraged to take charge of their own learning by practising self and peer assessment.

14. Summative assessment seeks to evaluate learners' performance and abilities at the end of a period of time (e.g. end of a cycle, a school term or a school year). It provides a comprehensive picture of students' learning progress during the period and helps teachers check whether the major aspects of the learning targets and objectives have been achieved.

15. Schools might consider adopting a variety of activities which can contribute to either formative or summative assessment, e.g. discussions, presentations, written class work, performances, essays, projects and portfolios.

Standards-referenced Assessment (SRA)

16.   Public Assessment of Literature in English leads to a qualification in the subject to be offered by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority. In the public assessment of Literature in English, a standards-referenced approach will be adopted for grading and reporting student performance. The purpose of this approach is to recognize what each student can do in each subject at the end of the 3-year senior secondary education. The approach attempts to make implicit standards explicit. The performance of each student will be matched against a set of performance standards, set out in the form of descriptors indicating what a student must be able to do to merit a particular grade, instead of against the performance of other students. The descriptors will be provided at a later stage.

Modes of public assessment

(a)   Written examination

The Literature in English public examination consists of two papers, Paper 1 and Paper 2. Paper 1 assesses comprehension and appreciation of literary texts. In this paper, students are required to answer questions on an unseen poem and to write a critical analysis or critical analyses of one or two passages from the set texts for fiction or drama (see details of Paper 2 below).

Paper 2 involves essay writing based on set texts. Three sets of texts will be available for students to choose from to study. Each set consists of a variety of text types such as poems, plays, films, novels and short stories.

(b)   School-based Assessment (SBA)

The public assessment will include an SBA component which constitutes 20-30% of the total weighting. The merits of adopting SBA are as follows:

(i)   SBA provides a more valid assessment than an external examination, since it covers a more extensive range of learning outcomes through employing a wider range of assessment modes that are not all possible in written examinations.

(ii)   SBA enables the sustained work of students to be assessed. It provides a more comprehensive picture of student performance throughout the period of study rather than their performance in a one-off examination alone.

The SBA component of Literature in English involves the preparation of a portfolio comprising a number of English language texts produced by the student related to the study of Literature in English. The types of texts that might be included are:

- stories;
- pieces of literary prose;
- dramatic interludes/short plays;

- poems;
- pieces of literary criticism of texts originally written in English; and
- short films.

It should be noted that SBA is not an "add-on" element in the curriculum. Assessing students' performance is in fact an integral part of learning and teaching. The modes of SBA selected should be appropriate to the learning objectives and processes that are to be assessed. The design and implementation of SBA should avoid unduly increasing the burden of both teachers and students.

Supporting Measures

17. To support the implementation of the senior secondary Literature in English curriculum, the following professional development programmes and learning and teaching resource materials will be provided:

Professional Development Programmes

✄ **Development and implementation of a School-based Literature in English Curriculum**
Programmes in this area will help teachers to develop leadership capacity with respect to the development and implementation of a School-based Literature in English curriculum based on the recommendations set out in the new Senior Secondary Literature in English Curriculum and Assessment Guide.

✄ **School-based Assessment**
Programmes in this area will introduce teachers to the practice of School-based Assessment in Literature in English and help them to develop assessment plans and procedures for School-based Assessment.

✄ **Portfolio assessment**
Programmes in this area will introduce to teachers the practice of portfolio assessment in Literature in English, demonstrate to them how portfolio assessment supports learning and provide hands-on experience that will enable teachers to help learners prepare effective portfolios.

✄ **Professional development for teaching different aspects of the subject**
Programmes will be offered to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills in the teaching of the various literary genres featured in the new senior secondary Literature in English curriculum. These include poetry, drama, films, novels and short stories.

Learning and Teaching Resource Materials

- The Learning and Teaching of Poetry (Senior Secondary) – this resource package aims to facilitate the learning and teaching of poetry at senior secondary level through providing resources and insights into how learners can approach poetry analytically and creatively.

- Other resource materials in support of the implementation of the senior secondary Literature in English curriculum will also be developed.