

Unseen fiction



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Introduction

This GCSE pack has been designed to support students with the reading fiction elements of GCSE English Language. It is intended to help students develop an appreciation for the wide range of literature that they may encounter in the exam, as well as building their confidence in the assessment requirements.

This pack has been devised for use with the AQA, Edexcel and WJEC Eduqas specifications for GCSE English Language. There are specific resources and exam-style practice questions for each of these specifications included within the pack. The activities help students to develop skills in comprehension, selecting and synthesising information, analysing language and structure, and evaluating texts critically. While the majority of the text extracts and activities are relevant to the OCR specification, there are no activities building the skills required for AO3.

The pack contains eight fiction text excerpts or complete texts from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. The activities accompanying the texts target assessment objectives sequentially, from part of AO1 for the first extract to activities targeting AO1, AO2 and AO4 and exam-style questions for the eighth extract.

The texts are organised as follows:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Text 1: | <i>Kerfol</i> by Edith Wharton (1916)
AO1 – identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas. |
| Text 2: | <i>The War of the Worlds</i> by H.G. Wells (1897)
AO1 – select and synthesise evidence from different texts. |
| Text 3: | <i>My Ántonia</i> by Willa Cather (1918)
AO2 – explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views. |

Text 4: 'The Christmas Present' by Richmal Crompton (1922)

AO2 – explain, comment on and analyse how writers use structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views.

Text 5: *Mort* by Terry Pratchett (1987)

AO2 – explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views.

Text 6: 'Printer's Devil Court' by Susan Hill (2014)

AO4 – evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references.

Text 7: 'Down to a Sunless Sea' by Neil Gaiman (2013)

AO1 – identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas, and select and synthesise evidence from different texts.

AO4 – evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references.

Text 8: *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini (2007)

AO1 – identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas, and select and synthesise evidence from different texts.

AO2 – explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views.

AO4 – evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references.

Additional notes for exam boards

AQA GCSE English Language Paper 1: Explorations in creative reading and writing

All of the texts and activities in this pack are applicable to this exam, except for the focus on the second bullet point of AO1 in text 2.

Edexcel GCSE (9-1) in English Language – Component 1 Fiction and Imaginative Writing

The fiction extract in the exam will be from the 19th century. The 20th-century texts chosen in the first half of the pack (texts 1-4) are from the early part of the century.

OCR GCSE (9-1) English Language – Component 2 Exploring effects and impact (Reading)

The fiction extract in the exam will be from the 20th or 21st century and will be accompanied by a partner text, which may be either literary fiction or non-fiction. This specification assesses AO1, AO2, AO3 and AO4, and in this teaching pack, we have omitted activities to support the learning of AO3. We have also not included exam-style practice questions for this exam board.

WJEC Eduqas GCSE (9-1) in English Language – Component 1

The fiction extract in the exam will be from the 20th century. Many of the texts in this teaching pack were written in the 20th century. We have included a series of practice exam questions for this board in spite of text 8 having been written at the start of the 21st century.

The pack also features a series of ‘top tips’ for approaching an unseen fiction text in the exam.

Our thanks go to our contributor Jane Coe who has written this teaching pack.

Text 1

Kerfol



The extract below is from Part 1 of a story called *Kerfol*, first published in 1916 by Edith Wharton. In the extract the narrator, who remains unnamed throughout the story, goes to visit a grand house in Brittany in France which he is thinking of buying. The house is called 'Kerfol'.

The building was so fine that I felt a desire to explore it for its own sake. I looked about the court, wondering in which corner the guardian lodged. Then I pushed open the barrier and went in. As I did so, a dog barred my way. He was such a remarkably beautiful little dog that for a moment he made me forget the splendid place he was defending. I was not sure of his breed at the time, but have since learned that it was Chinese, and that he was of a rare variety called the 'Sleeve-dog'. He was very small and golden brown, with large brown eyes and a ruffled throat: he looked like a large tawny chrysanthemum. I said to myself: 'These little beasts always snap and scream, and somebody will be out in a minute.'

The little animal stood before me, forbidding, almost menacing: there was anger in his large brown eyes. But he made no sound, he came no nearer. Instead, as I advanced, he gradually fell back, and I noticed that another dog, a vague rough brindled thing, had limped up on a lame leg. 'There'll be a hubbub now,' I thought; for at the same moment a third dog, a long-haired white mongrel, slipped out of a doorway and joined the others. All three stood looking at me with grave eyes; but not a sound came from them. As I advanced they continued to fall back on muffled paws, still watching me. 'At a given point, they'll all charge at my ankles: it's one of the jokes that dogs who live together put up on one,' I thought. I was not alarmed, for they were neither large nor formidable. But they let me wander about the court as I pleased, following me at a little distance—always the same distance—and always keeping their eyes on me. Presently I looked across at the ruined facade, and saw that in one of its empty window-frames another dog stood: a white pointer with one brown ear. He was an old grave dog, much more experienced than the others; and he seemed to be observing me with a deeper intentness. 'I'll hear from *him*,' I said to myself; but he stood in the window-frame, against the trees of the park, and continued to watch me without moving. I stared back at him for a time, to see if the sense that he was being watched would not rouse him. Half the width of the court lay between us, and we gazed at each other silently across it. But he did not stir, and at last I turned away. Behind me I found the rest of the pack, with a newcomer added:

Kerfol by Edith Wharton

Text 1

Extract from *Kerfol* by Edith Wharton (1916)

AO1

Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas.

Starter activities

- **Assessment objective.** Read or show the assessment objective you'll be exploring this lesson and then offer students the following three definitions:

AO1: Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas.

1. This means: find information in the text and show you can understand straightforward ideas and 'read between the lines'.
2. This means: find information in the text and explain it using quotations.
3. This means: explore what a writer is trying to say and explain the effects they are trying to create.

Get students to decide which of the definitions is correct (it is definition 1).

- **First look at the text.** Read the opening paragraph of the extract from *Kerfol*. The narrator sees the first dog. Ask students to write down four things we discover about the dog.

It may be useful to teach students some basic rules for this simple task:

- number the points
- write a single, separate point on each line
- write short sentences and include a noun and a verb (It was ..., The dog is ... etc.).

See the PowerPoint presentation for answers.

Main activities

- **Interpreting implicit ideas.** Read the whole text as a class and then ask students to reread the text independently. Using **Resource 2** (The