

## TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH LITERATURE

Azizova Makharam Rashitovna

Senior Lecturer, Department of Languages and Humanities,

Andijan State Technical Institute

Email: maharamazizova@gmail.com

Tel.: (+99891) 479-17-54

### Abstract:

This article is devoted to the use of literature in teaching English. It is spoken in the article, that the role of literature in the foreign language curriculum was unquestioned. It was believed that learners could only appreciate a language through the study of its highest form of expression. Literature was seen as the only way to get to know a nation's culture. Literature serves as excellent source material for students and also teachers. It can be selected as a wide range of texts from prose, drama, and poetry from different centuries.

**Keywords:** Literature, topic, collection, reading, dictionary vocabulary, authors, interpretation.

### Introduction

For hundreds of years, the role of literature in the foreign language curriculum was unquestioned. It was believed that learners could only appreciate a language through the study of its highest form of expression. Literature was seen as the only way to get to know a nation's culture, and in many cases, its people. Even though the literary language was often above the level of the learner and the vocabulary load unbearable, classes persevered in their laborious word-by-word translation of entire books.

Times changed. The 1970s and 80s saw teachers striving to bring the outside world into their classrooms and the clarion call was for authentic material such as train timetable and newspaper extracts to help learners to cope with the real world. Literature was not so much ousted as put into a corner and forgotten. There was even some question as to whether literature could be considered authentic or not! Perhaps we have now achieved a more reasonable balance. Literature can be taught in an interesting and eye-opening way. Later- level students are ready to read longer texts and whole books, and they appreciate passages with more substance and diversity than can be provided by a daily newspaper.

Literature serves as excellent source material for students and also teachers. It can be selected as a wide range of texts from prose, drama, and poetry from different centuries. Some texts will amuse, other will be thought-provoking but all will provide a challenge and a topic for discussion. Students are led into the texts via pre- comprehension tasks and the texts are exploited via language and skills-based exercises. Personalization runs throughout.



It would be most rewarding if students were inspired to read the original books having been introduced to them through extracts in Literature we feel sure in English. It is ideal for class work or for students working independently.

Literature helps teachers who would like to introduce their students to the pleasures of reading literature in English. The book can be divided into thematic units, some of which explore topics and issues. It can, however, be used on its own or to supplement any upper-intermediate course. It is a collection of literary texts and accompanying exercises selected and designed to provide enjoyment, vocabulary enrichment, and reading skills development. We hope that Literature is encouraging students to explore more literature in English on their own, as well as help them to develop the skills they need to do so. It organized in three steps:

1. Before Reading - preparing for the text.
2. While reading - exploring the meaning of the text.
3. After reading - responding imaginatively to the text.

The book may be accompanied by an audio tape with readings of most of the texts. Sometimes the taped material is essential to an exercise, sometimes students are encouraged to listen to it as they read, or after they have finished reading, simply to enhance their enjoyment and reinforce their comprehension of the text!

The answer key at the end of the book helps the teacher and allows students to use the book independently. Cultural information necessary for a full appreciation of the texts appears either in footnotes or in the answer key.

1. Although you can dip into the book at any point, the easier texts and activities are at the beginning, and the more challenging ones toward end.
2. If you want to cut down on class time per unit, you could set the pre- vocabulary activity as preparatory homework.
3. Some of the texts included in Literature have been made into films. Watching a video is a rewarding way for students to get a better understanding of the complete story. In a monolingual class, a subtitled version of the film can be useful.

4. Some additional tasks that students can try outside class are: -comparing an original literary text in English with a translation in mother tongue. -reading a longer literary text first in their mother tongue, or in a graded English version, before looking at key passages in the original.

It is recommended that you use a good English/English dictionary while you work through the vocabulary exercises. The words you meet in the vocabulary exercises are those which; to know before you read the texts. The vocabulary exercises do not deal with all the possible meanings, or even the most common meaning these words, but with their specific meaning in the literary text follows. We do not suggest that you try to learn all these words. Be careful not to use a dictionary all the time as you read. The essential vocabulary is dealt with in the pre- text exercises. Try also guess; meaning of new words from context, or to ignore unknown words the first time you read a text. If you are using this book your own, try to find someone else to work through the discussion activities with. It is not a course in English Literature, although works by famous author such as Byron and Dickens are included, as well as



contemporary and near- contemporary works by familiar and less well-known authors. It introduces the idea of reading literature and presents vocabulary which students find useful as they work through the book and the focus a single literary text or a selection of texts. Each of these: - contains biographical information about the authors in question to give teachers and students some background to the texts. - provides support for students and teachers where needed by dealing with important or difficult vocabulary items which occur in the texts. - contains varied and stimulating comprehension and text interpretation activities.

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