

A Level English Language and Literature: Independent Study: Analysing and Producing Texts
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- AO1** - Apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study as appropriate, using associated terminology and coherent written expression.
- AO2** - Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in texts.
- AO3** - Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which texts are produced and received.
- AO4** - Explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic and literary concepts and methods
- AO5** - Demonstrate expertise and creativity in the use of English to communicate in different ways

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Learners will need to know:
Task 1 – Analytical and Comparative Writing

- **Historical context:** The life of Truman Capote, gender norms in 1950s rural America, the origins of 'true crime', homosexuality in 1950s America, Highway 66, the death penalty, the 'Bible Belt', the production and reception of *In Cold Blood*; any other historical context relevant to the student's choice of their 2nd text
- **Aspects of Narrative:** Narrative voice, dual-narrative, suspense and tension, dialogue, foreshadowing, symbols and motifs, characterisation etc.
- **Lexis and Semantics:** language registers, semantic field, figurative language, jargon, polysyndeton etc.
- **Grammar:** sentence types, sentence forms, word classes
- **Conventions of the 'true crime' genre:** the blurred boundaries of fiction and non-fiction, murder of an innocent victim, isolated setting, psychologically complex murderer, the sleuth, red-herrings etc.
- **Pragmatics:** humour, sarcasm, implied meaning, connotations, values, and attitudes

Section B – Writing Non-Fiction

- **Rhetorical Devices:** Anaphora, hypophora, epistrophe, triplet, rhetorical question etc.
- **Conventions of mode and genre** (including, but not limited to): written and spoken modes, planned vs. spontaneous texts; *diary, satire, graphic novel, musical review, audio-narrative, leaflet, and blog*
- **Features of multimodal texts:** graphology, typography, orthography

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In this component, learners independently produce two tasks. The first is a comparative essay with a word count between 1500-2000 words. With this task, learners must compare Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* with any other text published after the year 2000. Each learner will have a unique 2nd text, as no two learners can compare the same works. The second task is to produce a piece of original non-fiction writing, based on one of the numerous modes and genres first introduced at AS Level in Component 1. The 2nd task must have a word count between 1000-1200 words, and will include an introduction of approximately 150 words, which requires learners to identify key elements of their original writing and show the way in which their writing reveals an understanding of their chosen genre.

The non-exam assessment provides learners with the perfect opportunity to develop an independent work ethic, which is an invaluable asset at the undergraduate level. Learners must apply the analytic skills that they have developed at AS Level to their reading and understanding of *In Cold Blood* and their 2nd text-- they must engage with the latter text entirely on their own. Task 1 builds on the skills and knowledge of Component 1, which requires learners to compare two non-fiction texts. Learners will also need to draw upon their knowledge of modes and genres, with reference to the *Anthology of Texts*, in choosing the genre of their text for Task 2.

Component 4 challenges students to work in an entirely self-sufficient manner, requiring them to read, research, plan and write an essay without direct teacher support. Learners must meet certain deadlines throughout the year, including: choosing and reading their 2nd text, devising a plan (with quotations), producing a first draft, and completing a final draft. Task 2 similarly requires learners to meet various deadlines, including a first and final draft. In this way, students are acquainted with the entire process of producing an

essay (from planning to completion), which will provide them with a framework for future essay-writing at the university level.

The independent study allows learners to explore a range of topics, as well as writing styles, on their own terms. While Task 1 hones students' essay-writing skills, Task 2 allows them to interrogate a genre and topic of their choice, requiring them to reflect on their own personal experiences and the world in which they live. Past topics have been as diverse as: a speech on Black Lives Matter, an essay on psychoanalytic literary criticism, a podcast on hyperreality, and an opinion article tackling racism in football. Both tasks demand that learners find their own voice through a process of reading, reflecting, planning and, ultimately, writing.