

A LITERATURE AS A TOOL FOR LANGUAGE TEACHING

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PRESENTATION SUMMARY

- Literature in ELT
- What do we mean by literature?
- Why use literature in the ELT classroom?
- What are some of the challenges to be faced with using literature in the classroom?
- How can literary texts be used?
- References

LITERATURE IN ELT

- The use of literature in the ELT classroom is enjoying a revival for a number of reasons.
- The role of literature in the ELT classroom has been re-assessed
- Many now view literary texts as:
 - providing rich linguistic input,
 - effective stimuli for students to express themselves in other languages and
 - a potential source of learner motivation.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY LITERATURE?

- John McRae (1994) distinguishes between literature with a capital L - the classical texts e.g. Shakespeare, Dickens - and literature with a small l, which refers to popular fiction, fables and song lyrics.
- The literature used in ELT classrooms today is no longer restricted to canonical texts from certain countries e.g. UK, USA, but includes the work of writers from a diverse range of countries and cultures using different forms of English.
- Literary texts can be studied in their original forms or in simplified or abridged versions.
- An increasing number of stories in English are written specifically for learners of other languages.
- The types of literary texts that can be studied inside and outside the ELT classroom include:
 - 1 Short stories
 - 2 Poems
 - 3 Novels
 - 4 Plays
 - 5 Song Lyrics

WHY USE LITERATURE IN THE ELT CLASSROOM?

- Literary texts can be supplemented by audio-texts, music CDs, film clips, podcasts, all of which enhance even further the richness of the sensory input that students receive.
- Literary texts offer a rich source of linguistic input and can help learners to practise the four skills - speaking, listening, reading and writing - in addition to exemplifying grammatical structures and presenting new vocabulary.
- Literature can help learners to develop their understanding of other cultures, awareness of 'difference' and to develop tolerance and understanding. At the same time literary texts can deal with universal themes such as love, war and loss that are not always covered in the world of course books.
- Literary works help learners to use their imagination, enhance their empathy for others and lead them to develop their own creativity.
- Literature lessons can lead to public displays of student output through posters of student creations e.g. poems, stories or through performances of plays. So for a variety of linguistic, cultural and personal growth reasons, literary texts can be more motivating than the referential ones often used in classrooms.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES TO BE FACED WITH USING LITERATURE IN THE CLASSROOM?

- Literary texts can present teachers and learners with a number of difficulties including:
 - text selection - texts need to be chosen that have relevance and interest to learners.
 - linguistic difficulty - texts need to be appropriate to the level of the students' comprehension.
 - length - shorter texts may be easier to use within the class time available, but longer texts provide more contextual details, and development of character and plot.
 - cultural difficulty - texts should not be so culturally dense that outsiders feel excluded from understanding essential meaning.
 - cultural appropriacy - learners should not be offended by textual content.

HOW CAN LITERARY TEXTS BE USED?

- Teachers can exploit literary texts in a large number of ways in the classroom.
- Classroom work with literary works may involve pre-reading tasks, interactive work on the text and follow up activities.
- Pulverness (2003) provides some useful advice:
- Maximise pre-reading support.
- Teachers can introduce the topic or theme of the text, pre-teach essential vocabulary items and use prediction tasks to arouse the interest and curiosity of students.
- Minimise the extent to which the teacher disturbs students' reading.
- Draw attention to stylistic peculiarity.
- Help students to appreciate the ways that writers use language to achieve particular effects.
- Provide frameworks for creative response.
- Invite learners to step into the shoes of the writer or invite them to modify, extend or add to a text.

REFERENCES

- Duff, A & Maley, A (2007) Literature (Resource Books for Teachers), Oxford University Press.
- Maley, A (2001) 'Literature in the language classroom' in The Cambridge Guide to Teaching ESOL, Cambridge University Press.
- McRae, J (1994) Literature with a small 'l', Macmillan Education.
- Pulverness, A (2003) 'Literature' in English Teaching Professional, October, Issue 29, Modern English Publishing

TEACHING MATERIAL (TUTORIALS)

- [Dead poets Society movie](#)
- <http://www.englishbook.rs/aktuelnosti/obavestjenja/285-digitalni-sadrzaji-i-resursi-za-srednje-skole>
(udžbenik engleskog jezika za srednju školu)
- www.teachingenglish.org.uk/using-literature
- [Material:](#)
- [BritLit materials](#)
- [BritLit e-book](#)
- [Fitch O'Connell's on teaching literature](#)
- [Audio and text](#)
- [Film and video](#)
- [Text and activity](#)