

Supported focus – Literary comparison and context

International Baccalaureate · IB Diploma · Language A: Language and Literature · HL

Scope and prerequisites

IB Language A language and literature first assessment 2021; English focus. This supplemental reference covers only the listed preparation outcomes. School selections, full-guide procedures and required live or recorded performance are separate.

- Compare authorial choices across two selected literary works
- Explain how contexts shape meaning without reducing a work to biography

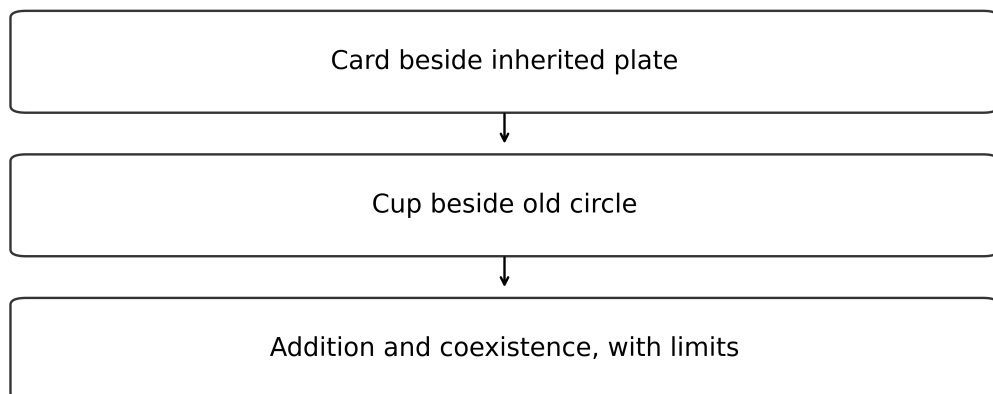
Prerequisites: Close reading ; comparative claim; context versus biography.

Explain and choose the method

Paper 2 compares two studied literary works in response to a question.

Use topic-led comparison: connect a specific choice in one work to a related or contrasting choice in the other.

A comparative argument explains a relationship through both texts. Use a shared question, then analyse a distinct choice in each text. “Both concern belonging” is a start, not a developed comparison. The original classroom context supplies no biography; analyse wording before suggesting a broader interpretation.



Original diagram of the worked relationship; read the full wording and qualifications.

Existing worked example: One narrator may withhold a character’s motives while another presents interior thought. Compare how these choices position readers to

judge exclusion. Select precise evidence from the school’s texts and connect it to your thesis.

Complete original context

Original classroom texts, written for this supplement. They are not school-selected assessed works.

Text A – The label Every morning I polished the brass plate beside the door. It carried my father’s name, and visitors asked for him even after I took charge of the shop. I answered their questions, found the parts, and wrapped each purchase. Still, at the door, they thanked the name on the plate. One afternoon I put a small card below it: “Ask for Leila.” The next visitor read the card aloud, hesitated, and then asked me where the hinges were. I left the brass plate shining. The card stayed too.

Text B – A space on the shelf (original poem) I cleared a place beside the cup, not where the cup had been. The shelf kept its old circle; the new wood still looked clean. By evening, two rings darkened it. I did not rub them out.

Context supplied for this exercise: both texts are contemporary original classroom writing in English. No author biography, translation history or evidence about a real society is supplied. Compare what the wording permits; do not invent historical facts. A real course comparison must use the school’s eligible studied works.

Independent practice and checked reasoning

■ Transfer 1

Compare how both texts represent making a place for a new identity. Write a complete comparative paragraph with quotations.

Reasoning: Both texts make identity visible through a small addition rather than complete replacement. In A, “Ask for Leila” gives the worker a public name beside the inherited brass plate, turning unnamed labour into recognition. In B, “beside” rather than “where” preserves the old cup’s place while creating another. A’s hesitation before a visitor speaks Leila’s name stages a social adjustment; B’s two darkened rings make coexistence visible without a visitor. The difference is between recognition through language and belonging through shared space, not a simple opposition between keeping and destroying the past.

■ Transfer 2

Identify one contrasting reading that complicates a wholly optimistic interpretation of A, without inventing biography.

Reasoning: Leila must add a request to be recognised, and the visitor hesitates, so recognition is not automatic. Keeping the shining plate may suggest respect, but could also show the inherited name retains authority. Both readings need the supplied details and should remain interpretations, not claims about the author’s family.

■ Transfer 3

Explain how you would transfer this method to two actual studied works and what must be verified before making historical-context claims.

Reasoning: Choose a question-led comparison, select precise scenes and authorial choices from both works, and test a counter-reading. Verify editions, eligible works, reliable contextual evidence and the relevance of that context to textual details. A general biography cannot replace analysis.

Limits and next use

Do not compare one literary and one non-literary text for Paper 2. Context informs an interpretation but cannot replace close reading or prove a single fixed meaning.

All tasks here are public original practice with authored guidance. They are not official questions or fresh diagnostics. Existing protected tests and mocks remain separate.