Objectives

In this chapter you will:

• learn what studying Part 1 of the course involves and how it is assessed through a final essay and a reflective statement
• explore strategies for preparing, planning and practising for each aspect of this part of the course, including the interactive oral, the reflective statement, developing a topic through supervised writing and the final essay
• engage with a number of text extracts from a variety of different genres and practise analysing how particular effects are achieved through writers’ choices of language, structure and form
• consider how different contexts affect our analysis of a text
• consider how the title of your final essay for the written assignment may develop as its aspect becomes more focused.

How is this chapter structured?

This chapter follows the shape of Part 1: Works in translation. There are four quite distinct stages in this part of the course which lead up to and include the written assignment, and each tests quite different skills.

1. In the first unit, Unit 1.1, you will look at what we mean by a ‘text in translation’, as well as the importance of context. Getting the balance right in these areas can make a substantial difference to how you will be assessed.

2. Unit 1.2 looks closely at how you should prepare for Part 1 of the course, and explains in clear English what you are being asked to do and how you will be assessed. Suggestions about how to make the most of this crucial stage of your coursework are provided.

3. Unit 1.3 is an analysis of the four stages of this part of the course: the interactive oral, the reflective statement, developing a topic through supervised writing and the final essay. There is a lot to absorb here, and you will be taken through this step by step.

4. Unit 1.4 offers practical advice on how to structure the final essay for the written assignment. This lengthy essay will be one of the most demanding - but, we hope, rewarding - parts of your English Literature course and it is very important that you prepare for it appropriately. You will focus on essential skills here (including how to quote correctly). There is also feedback from examiners.

You will also be asked to consider how you should prepare for analysing texts that may be quite different - in subject matter, style and cultural content - from anything you have studied before.

Throughout the chapter you will have to consider how the assessment criteria are applied. We will also look at the issue of contextualisation (a key part of this course). However, it should be stressed that this is, first and foremost, a literature course, and important though historical, biographical and sociological aspects undoubtedly are,
Chapter 1 – Works in translation

they should only be used to support your understanding of the texts you are studying. We will also consider the role of the translator.

To exemplify the analyses we will use examples of actual work by students. The IB syllabus recommends that the teacher should only give feedback on the first draft of the final Part 1 essay before it is submitted for assessment, and this expectation of independent learning should be respected. Of course, you can redraft your essay as many times as you like, and indeed this process of looking at your own work objectively is another important skill you should try to develop.

Unit 1.1 What is Part 1: Works in translation?

Part 1 of the English Literature course is called ‘Works in translation’. The IB Diploma is not just an international qualification, it is also a qualification with international-mindedness at its heart: it requires you to study literature in translation so that you enrich your appreciation of writers and the contexts they work in. In doing so you will deepen your understanding of their art and develop a more profound understanding of how human experience, although highly individualistic, has a universality which is often most effectively expressed through literature. Ultimately, and in line with the IB learner profile, it is hoped that in studying literature from other cultures you will deepen your tolerance of, empathy with and respect for those with perspectives other than your own.

A note on translated texts

The historian Tony Judt once described the use of language as ‘translating being into thought, thought into words and words into communication’. It is a complex process that we all use, and it could be argued that writers are more skilled at it than most. But what happens to that process when a text is translated? How does that process change? Does the writer become more distant from the reader? Is the original meaning of the text lost, or diluted?

Consider, for example, these opening sentences from one of the most popular text choices in Part 1: Franz Kafka’s The Metamorphosis. Here it is in its original German:

Als Gregor Samsa eines Morgens aus unruhigen Träumen erwachte, fand er sich in seinem Bett zu einem ungeheuren Ungeziefer verwandelt.

And here is a literal translation:

As Gregor Samsa one morning from restless dreams awoke, found he himself in his bed into an enormous vermin transformed.

And here are four alternative translations:

1. As Gregor Samsa one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect.

2. Gregory Samsa woke from uneasy dreams one morning to find himself changed into a giant bug.

3. One morning, upon awakening from agitated dreams, Gregor Samsa found himself, in his bed, transformed into a monstrous vermin.

4. When Gregor Samsa awoke from troubled dreams one morning he found that he had been transformed in his bed into an enormous bug.
We can see that each sentence is different, but that the writer's sense — his main intention — is preserved. But consider the following questions:

- Which translation is the most memorable, or vivid?
- Which is the weakest (and why)?
- Is the literal translation closest to Kafka's voice?
- What is lost in this version, and what is gained?
- In the other examples, are you reading the translator's words, or Kafka's?

Such questions seem extremely difficult to answer and although you should be aware of many of the issues surrounding translated texts, it is advisable to focus almost entirely on the words in that translation. Each of the tasks you are set — and this includes the final Part 1 essay — should be concerned with the translated text as the primary literary text.

Let us return to Kafka: by considering the different translations of a particularly emotive word ('insect', 'bug', 'vermin') a student is able to explore very subtle — but important — differences of meaning which influence our understanding of not only the character of Gregor Samsa, but also how other characters respond to him (which in turn affects our interpretation of these characters). If his family views him as 'vermin' then that is quite different from the more neutral 'insect' and the even less threatening 'bug'. As you can see, considering such word choices — and showing an awareness of the translator's craft — can be effective. And these word choices, despite being those of the translator, have to be seen as the author's choice.

**Text and context**

To get the most out of Part 1 of the course you will have to keep everything in balance: if you concentrate too much on just one aspect of this part you risk neglecting key areas which contribute to your final piece of work: the essay for the written assignment. It would be a mistake to spend too much time focusing on producing this if it meant that you neglected the interactive orals: each step is important. But, as we have seen, it would also be a mistake to concentrate on linguistic issues such as translation at the cost of the work you are studying: focus on the words in front of you, but be aware of some of the issues behind certain word choices.

The same goes for context. Your final essay for the written assignment should be a strong literary analysis, but that there should also be an implicit sense of the context of the works studied. That word — implicit — is important: your essay should show an understanding of the conditions that influence a work, and you have to show the examiner that you know a text cannot be written or read in isolation, removed from the world the writer or the reader lives in. The IB syllabus states that:

'This part of the course is a literary study of works in translation, based on close reading of the works themselves. Students are encouraged to appreciate the different perspectives of people from other cultures and to consider the role that culture plays in making sense of literary works.

Part 1 of the course aims to deepen the students' understanding of works as being products of a time and place. Artistic, philosophical, sociological, historical and biographical considerations are possible areas of study to enhance understanding of the works.' [our italics]

In other words, unless the context extends your analysis and understanding of the work then, at best, it won't gain you any marks, and if you spend too long on the work's background it may, at worst, lose you marks.
Chapter 1 – Works in translation

There are many ways in which an understanding of a wider context can deepen and enrich your understanding of a literary text. You could, for example, happily read and discuss Stendhal’s *Scarlet and Black* without a knowledge of 19th century France, but the events in the novel would resonate much more if you did have an understanding of these events; similarly, you could argue that you can only appreciate Lorca if you are familiar with Spanish society at the beginning of the 20th century, or that Brecht only makes sense if you know about German and Marxist politics, or that Murakami’s *themes* only really make sense if you have an insight into modern Japanese society. These are all no doubt true. But you also have to be realistic: this is a literature course, and you have a limited period of time to study often challenging texts. Be selective in your use of context, and ask your teacher for guidance. You should be aware that there are writers who lend themselves more to a political or biographical reading than others.

Let’s look at one such example.

**Fyodor Dostoyevsky**

The Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky was imprisoned in Siberia in 1849 for belonging to a group of political dissidents. He was sentenced to death. After a mock execution he was sent for four years of hard labour in exile. When he was released from prison his view of life had changed, both politically and spiritually (he gained a profound Christian faith). Such changes he viewed positively, and he wrote about them in various novels. He began to value instinctive thought as well as intellectual arguments, and promoted traditional values over those which he perceived as ‘Western’ and corrosive. His most famous novel, *Crime and Punishment*, was published in 1866. It tells the story of Raskolnikov, a young man who rejects the society he lives in and murders two women in a symbolic gesture of rebellion against it. He, like the book’s author, is sentenced to imprisonment, and he too finds redemption, through both his love of Sonia (a woman saved from prostitution by her faith) and God.

Now read this passage:

On the evening of the same day, when the barracks were locked, Raskolnikov lay on his plank bed and thought of her. He had even fancied that day that all the convicts who had been his enemies looked at him differently; he had even entered into talk with them and they answered him in a friendly way. He remembered that now, and thought it was bound to be so. Wasn’t everything now bound to be changed?

He thought of her. He remembered how continually he had tormented her and wounded her heart. He remembered her pale and thin little face. But these recollections scarcely troubled him now; he knew with what infinite love he would now repay all her sufferings. And what were all the agonies of the past! Everything, even his crime, his sentence and imprisonment, seemed to him now in the first rush of feeling an external, strange fact with which he had no concern. But he could not think for long together of anything that evening, and he could not have analysed anything consciously; he was simply feeling. Life had stepped into the place of theory and something quite different would work itself out in his mind.

Under his pillow lay the New Testament. He took it up mechanically. The book belonged to Sonia; it was the one from which she had read the raising of
Lazarus to him. At first he was afraid that she would worry him about religion, would talk about the gospel and pester him with books. But to his great surprise she had not once approached the subject and had not even offered him the Testament. He had asked her for it himself not long before his illness and she brought him the book without a word. Till now he had not opened it.

It is clear that if you were studying this text, then an understanding of the author’s life would be invaluable: linking Dostoyevsky’s life with his art is a valid process for a student; but if that life begins to obscure the literature itself, then it stops being an essay of literary analysis. If you were to use this passage as a key extract for your final essay, you would use what you know of the author’s life to inform your argument, but the focus would still be on the development of character and the themes of love, spiritual awakening and transformation, and you would look closely at the language used – the imagery employed – as well as the biblical allusions which are clearly linked to Raskolnikov’s ‘resurrection’ to further your points. The text remains central, and the life and other contexts should be used to enhance our understanding of the work.

Unit 1.2 How and what will you study for Part 1?

Part 1 of the course could be characterised by the differences in context and perspective you are expected to explore. Here you are exposed to writers from outside your culture, and you are encouraged to read texts written originally in a language other than the language of instruction (in this case, English). All the writers you study for Part 1 must come from the prescribed literature in translation (PLT) list.

- In Part 1 SL students study two works; HL students study three works.
- You can study texts from a variety of different languages.
- You can study texts from the same genre or different genres.
- Place is roughly defined as a geocultural region, such as a province, country or continent.

The advantage of studying works from the same genre is that you gain a more secure understanding of that genre’s conventions. However, you or your teacher may wish to widen your knowledge base by choosing texts from different genres. Remember that you have to talk about all the texts you have studied, but your written assignment is on only one of those texts.

How is Part 1 assessed?

At both SL and HL the assessment of Part 1 counts for 25% of your total marks for English Literature. The marks for the written assignment are distributed as follows (you can find a more detailed explanation of these criteria in the Introduction on page xii):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion A</th>
<th>Fulfilling the requirements of the reflective statement</th>
<th>3 marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criterion B</td>
<td>Knowledge and understanding</td>
<td>6 marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion C</td>
<td>Appreciation of the writer’s choices</td>
<td>6 marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion D</td>
<td>Organisation and development</td>
<td>5 marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion E</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>5 marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>25 marks</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1 – Works in translation

There are four stages to the assessment for Part 1 of the course (a more detailed analysis of this structure is given in Unit 1.3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>The interactive oral</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is a focused class discussion, led by students, based on each of the works studied. All the students and the teacher participate in the discussion for each work.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is not externally assessed.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>The reflective statement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For each interactive oral you complete you will write a short reflective statement (300–400 words). Each will be kept on file by your school. You will submit to the examiner the reflective statement which relates to the work on which you base your essay (see stage 4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is externally assessed by Criterion A.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>Developing the topic – supervised writing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You will be asked to respond to each of the works studied in a supervised written exercise undertaken in class time. You will be provided with prompts by your teacher on the texts, but you will not have seen these prompts in advance. You will then choose one of these supervised writing pieces and develop it into your essay. Each piece of supervised writing will be kept on file by your school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is not externally assessed, although it may be used to authenticate your work.</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Stage 4</th>
<th>Production of the essay</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is a 1200–1500 word essay on a literary aspect of one work, developed from one of the pieces of supervised writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is externally assessed by Criteria B, C, D and E.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.2** Your essay is likely to evolve over several different stages.

As you can see, the aim is for you to engage with each text you are studying, and to move from a wide and collaboratively understood exploration towards an increasingly focused and individual analysis of a particular aspect of one work. The interactive orals you do in lessons should allow you to explore a number of areas that have interested you in class, and the short, reflective statements provide you with an opportunity to articulate your thoughts still further, but this time on paper. One of the supervised writing pieces will form the basis of your essay for assessment, and this sustained piece of analysis, along with the reflective statement, completes your assessed work in Part 1. This progressive structure allows you, your teacher and the examiner an opportunity to see how your responses to texts develop over time, moving from the general to the specific.

**How should I prepare for Part 1?**

This part of the course is diverse in content, structure and assessment. It will challenge you, not only in what you think about other cultures and traditions, but also in how you work. In some respect it a micro-course in itself, condensing a wide range of approaches into a small number of teaching weeks (the IB syllabus states that SL students should have 40 hours of teaching on this part of the course, and HL students should have 65). There is an emphasis on independent learning, with the most important work being done, unsupervised, by you, but with guidance from your teacher.
Be organised
As this course moves from the general to the specific it really is important that you do not discard any ideas or notes which may help you in your final essay for the written assignment. Might that comment a classmate made about transcendence in a novel by Gabriel García Márquez be useful later on? It could be, so don’t ignore it. From the very first lesson you have on your Part 1 texts you should take notes, and use every opportunity to speak as practice for the interactive orals. Develop your note-taking skills, and your speaking and listening skills.

Be open-minded
In the IB’s mission statement, ‘intercultural understanding and respect’ are placed at the forefront of its aims, and it also states that a main objective of the IB’s mission is to encourage students to realise that ‘other people, with their differences, can also be right’. This is not to say that we should not judge others, or that there are no moral absolutes but only moral relativism; it means that it often pays to listen to others and, importantly, to understand their contexts and backgrounds before condemning their actions. Harper Lee, the author of To Kill a Mockingbird, puts it more vividly when she writes that ‘you never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view – until you climb into his skin and walk around in it’, which is both admirable and aspirational. You cannot hope to empathise with each character or writer you read about, or every person you meet, but that movement away from the self is inherently healthy.

Open-mindedness will benefit you at a more ‘local’ level as well; listen to your classmates (and your teacher of course), and you will be listened to in turn. Ask questions and evaluate the answers you hear before questioning their validity. And as you absorb their thoughts, and listen to your own developing ideas, you will learn and grow as a student.

Unit 1.3 The four stages: a step-by-step guide
The IB syllabus states that in Part 1 of the course teachers should aim to develop the student’s ability to:
• understand the content of the work and the qualities of the work as literature
• recognise the role played by context and conventions in literary works
• respond independently to the works studied by connecting the individual and cultural experience of the reader with the text.

The ultimate aim of Part 1 is to produce a well-informed essay, but a closely linked aim is to study each text carefully, and each step of this part of the course contributes to that written assignment. To ensure that your understanding of technique and context is as secure as it can be, you are set a number of different tasks; if you prepare yourself properly you will both enjoy them and gain a great deal from completing them. Once you have studied your texts, the first stage of the four-step process is the interactive oral.

Stage 1: The interactive oral
What is the interactive oral?
• It is a class discussion led by students in which all the students and the teacher participate.
• SL students will discuss their two texts, and HL students will discuss their three texts.
• A minimum time required for discussion is 30 minutes for each work, but class sizes may mean that this is adjusted so that each student is given an active role.
Chapter 1 – Works in translation

- Remember, there is an expectation for every student to initiate an aspect of the discussion in at least one interactive oral.
- It is not recorded.

Although there is considerable room for spontaneous and informed discussion, all students should address the key cultural and contextual considerations. In this sense each interactive oral is perhaps a more structured and targeted everyday class discussion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The questions</th>
<th>Some questions to think about and use in the interactive oral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In what ways do time and place matter in this work?</td>
<td>• To what extent does the period, and the setting, affect our understanding of the work?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Are the characters’ actions, their language, and the ideas that the writer explores through them principally shaped by the time they were written in?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is this different from the period the work is set in?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To what extent does the work’s location shape the characters’ actions as well as our understanding of the work itself?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Does the writer describe something that is localised, both in time and place, or is there a greater universality in what he or she is describing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What was easy to understand and what was difficult in relation to the social and cultural context and issues?</td>
<td>• What were the major challenges you found in trying to understand works of literature which were outside your usual cultural and social experiences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Did these differences surprise you? What did you find relatively easy to grasp? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What connections did you find between issues in the work and your own culture and experience?</td>
<td>• What similarities did you discover between your own social and cultural context and the work you have been studying?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How could you explain these? Were these connections specific to a particular perspective or idea, or were they more universal in scope?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What aspects of technique are interesting in the work?</td>
<td>• What is it about the writer’s style that has caught your attention? Is it the subject matter? The way that language is used? The characterisation or plot? The skills you have developed in other areas of the course will help you here.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are both broad and exacting questions, but as you know them in advance you should be able to plan some good responses. Remember, though, that this is an interactive oral, which means that you listen and contribute to the whole discussion: you should not read from a prepared script or expect to give a presentation to class.

You could reduce these key questions down to a more manageable form: by doing so you can keep them in mind as you read any text from a culture and tradition that is not immediately familiar:

1. Time and place
2. Easy and difficult
3. Connections
4. Technique

Or think about it as a simple mnemonic: TECT.
Let's try to apply this to Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. Read the following three extracts from this novella and then do the activities that follow.

**Text 1.1 Extracts from *The Metamorphosis*, Franz Kafka, 1915**

**Opening paragraph, Chapter 1**

One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin. He lay on his armour-like back, and if he lifted his head a little he could see his brown belly, slightly domed and divided by arches into stiff sections. The bedding was hardly able to cover it and seemed ready to slide off any moment. His many legs, pitifully thin compared with the size of the rest of him, waved about helplessly as he looked.

**Second paragraph, Chapter 1**

'What's happened to me?' he thought. It wasn't a dream. His room, a proper human room although a little too small, lay peacefully between its four familiar walls. A collection of textile samples lay spread out on the table — Samsa was a travelling salesman — and above it there hung a picture that he had recently cut out of an illustrated magazine and housed in a nice, gilded frame. It showed a lady fitted out with a fur hat and fur boa who sat upright, raising a heavy fur muff that covered the whole of her lower arm towards the viewer.

**Opening paragraph, Chapter 2**

It was not until it was getting dark that evening that Gregor awoke from his deep and coma-like sleep. He would have woken sooner afterwards anyway even if he hadn't been disturbed, as he had had enough sleep and felt fully rested. But he had the impression that some hurried steps and the sound of the door leading into the front room being carefully shut had woken him. The light from the electric street lamps shone palely here and there onto the ceiling and tops of the furniture, but down below, where Gregor was, it was dark. He pushed himself over to the door, feeling his way clumsily with his antennae — of which he was now beginning to learn the value — in order to see what had been happening there. The whole of his left side seemed like one, painfully stretched scar, and he limped badly on his two rows of legs. One of the legs had been badly injured in the events of that morning — it was nearly a miracle that only one of them had been — and dragged along lifelessly.

**Figure 1.3 *The Metamorphosis*, directed by Derek Goldman, Synetic Theater, USA, 2010.**

*Technique:* this long, descriptive sentence adopts a very matter-of-fact tone; in doing so it defamiliarizes the character and the action, even more from the reader.

*Connections:* strange though the passage is, it is referencing an ordinary scene, and one that we can all empathise with: we have all woken up in the morning feeling disoriented, with the blanket about to slide to the floor.

**Tip**

You might find your meaning becomes clearer if you consult the Glossary at the back of the book. In particular look at the definitions for the following literary terms and see if you can use them here: rhetorical question, simple sentence, complex sentence, tone, and characterisation.
Chapter 1 - Works in translation

Activity 1.1

1. Read the mark ups for the first paragraph of The Metamorphosis in Text 1.1 and think about how an interpretation has begun to be formed from this initial process. Ask yourself the following questions:
   - How helpful has the TECT mnemonic been here (see page 8)? Did you find it helpful to structure your response?
   - What role has context played in helping your understanding of the text?
   - Do you have a better understanding of Kafka’s technique after analysing this text in this way?

2. Now try to apply the same structured marking-up process to the second paragraph (your teacher may be able to provide you with a clean copy of the passage which you will be able to mark up), asking the same short questions: look for differences and connections, and think about the writer’s technique as well as the time and place explored in the text.

3. By the beginning of the second chapter Gregor’s family are turning against him as they feel increasingly alienated by their son’s alarming transformation; at the end of the previous chapter Gregor’s father has locked him in his bedroom. Again, your teacher may be able to provide you with a copy of the passage.

Complete this activity either with another classmate or in a group.
   - Read the opening paragraph of Chapter 2 of The Metamorphosis (Text 1.1) twice.
   - Mark it up using the four-point mnemonic.
   - In addition to thinking of some answers to the four questions, jot down some questions you could ask your classmate(s). Once you have all done this, initiate a really meaningful discussion amongst yourselves.
   - Listen to your classmates’ answers carefully, and try to write down some brief follow-up questions (for example: ‘Why do you think Kafka does this?’, ‘What is the main theme being explored here?’ and so on).

There are obvious parallels between the first paragraphs of Chapters 1 and 2 of Text 1.1: both have domestic settings, and both, initially at least, seem to describe an everyday scene. But a key word – ‘antennae’ – alerts us to the unreality of what is being described, just as ‘vermin’ did in the very first paragraph of the novel. Kafka then goes on to describe the rows of legs, which further emphasises the transfiguration Gregor has undergone.

You can practice very short, interactive orals with your classmates with any text, translated or not, and in doing so you will develop critical reading skills – as well as speaking and listening skills – which are invaluable in this part of the course. We would advise that in order to prepare for Part 1 you choose texts that are outside your usual cultural and social contexts, and these very often include texts in translation.

Text 1.2 is another opening to a well-known text. For this activity we are not going to tell you anything about the text, its context or any other background information. Focus instead on the language: analyse the writer’s technique, the imagery used, the tone of voice employed and the detail revealed, as well as the historical references.
Text 1.2

On August 16, 1968, I was handed a book written by a certain Abbé Vallet, Le Manuscrit de Dom Adson de Melk, traduit en français d’après l’édition de Dom J. Mabillon (Aux Presses de l’Abbaye de la Source, Paris 1842). Supplemented by historical information that was actually quite scant, the book claimed to reproduce faithfully a fourteenth-century manuscript that, in its turn, had been found in the monastery of Melk by the great eighteenth-century man of learning, to whom we owe so much information about the history of the Benedictine order. The scholarly discovery (I mean mine, the third in chronological order) entertained me while I was in Prague, waiting for a dear friend. Six days later Soviet troops invaded that unhappy city. I managed, not without adventure, to reach the Austrian border at Linz, and from there I journeyed to Vienna, where I met my beloved, and together we sailed up the Danube.

Activity 1.2

1 Once you have written some notes on the language used in Text 1.2, begin to widen your analysis, keeping in mind the four guiding questions we have already discussed (the TECT questions):
   - Time & place
   - Easy & difficult
   - Connections
   - Technique

2 Now try to write one question relating to this text for every member of your class, including your teacher; if your class is quite large write one question for each pair of students. You don’t need to provide the answers to the questions: the aim is to initiate a stimulating conversation. With your teacher’s agreement you could chair the debate, listening to every question and prompting fellow classmates to respond.

We have looked at several very different openings, but now let’s consider the conclusion of The Unbearable Lightness of Being by Milan Kundera, originally published in Czech in 1985.

Text 1.3 The Unbearable Lightness of Being, Milan Kundera, 1984

On they danced to the strains of the piano and violin. Tereza leaned her head on Tomas’s shoulder. Just as she had when they flew together in the airplane through the storm clouds. She was experiencing the same odd happiness and odd sadness as then. The sadness meant: we are at the last station. The happiness meant: we are together. The sadness was form, the happiness content. Happiness filled the space of sadness.
Chapter 1 – Works in translation

They went back to their table. She danced twice more with the collective farm chairman and once with the young man, who was so drunk he fell with her on the dance floor.

Then they all went upstairs and to their two separate rooms.

Tomas turned the key and switched on the ceiling light. Tereza saw two beds pushed together, one of them flanked by a bedside table and lamp. Up out of the lampshade, startled by the overhead light, flew a large nocturnal butterfly that began circling the room. The strains of the piano and violin rose up weakly from below.

Figure 1.4 A still from the 1988 film adaptation of The Unbearable Lightness of Being, directed by Philip Kaufman.

Activity 1.3

Remember that developing your ability to discuss literature with others is an important part of the English Literature course. Take some time now to discuss this passage with another student. Here are some questions you could ask each other:

1. How important is the setting here? Are there any suggestions about where the text is located? How does it contribute to our understanding of the text? What about time? Are there any clues that locate it within a particular historical period? It seems to be set in a dance hall or hotel: does that affect the characters’ behaviour?

2. What did you find easy to understand and what did you find that was more difficult? Was it the action, or was it something more abstract, such as the themes which are developed at the end of the first paragraph?

3. What connections can you make between your own experiences and the context of this text? What links are there between your own culture and experience and those described in this text? A personal response is favoured here.

4. What did you find particularly memorable about the writer’s technique? Did you find the descriptions vivid? Is the characterisation clear? What about the use of symbolism in the final paragraph: how do you think this might tie in with the lives of the characters, and perhaps with life itself?

There are many other questions you could ask. Again, try to use short follow-up questions with your classmates if you do this short exercise with them.
Stage 2: The reflective statement

What is the reflective statement?

- The reflective statement is a short piece of writing of between 300 and 400 words.
- It is assessed using Criterion A (Fulfilling the requirements of the reflective statement).
- Although this is assessed, the reflective statement can be done outside class time.
- It can be revised before it is submitted to the IB examiner.

You will be asked to reflect on every interactive oral you complete; this is called the reflective statement. The only reflective statement that goes forward to the examiner is the one that has relevance to your final essay for the written assignment. The reasoning behind this is that the IB examiner wants to see how the final essay has evolved, and to what extent you have followed the four steps of Part 1 of the course.

Like the interactive oral, there is a lot of scope for personal expression in the reflective statement, but also like the interactive oral, questions will be provided that will help you structure your response. Examples of the types of guiding questions you might receive are given below, along with some points you might consider when planning your reflective statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The questions</th>
<th>Some points to think about for your reflective statement</th>
<th>Optional or required?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 What elements of the role played by context were illuminated or developed by you?</td>
<td>To what extent did you understand the different contexts (biographical, social, historical, artistic) which helped shape the work? How satisfactorily did you articulate these in the interactive oral? Think about the 'what' and the 'when'. To what extent did you interpret these different contexts? Think about the 'why' and the 'how'.</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 What aspects of the discussion most interested you?</td>
<td>A personal response is required here: what stimulated you most of all, and why? Relate your points to the work under discussion; make the connections between your experiences and those explored in the text relevant and appropriate.</td>
<td>Optional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 What new angles on the work did the discussion provoke for you?</td>
<td>These new angles could come from your classmates (remember, it is 'interactive' and you should show how you are learning from others) as well as yourself. Again, keep the text at the centre of your writing here.</td>
<td>Optional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How does the reflective statement work in practice?

Perhaps the best way to explain how this works in practice is to look at some student samples. Alex is an SL student who studied the following texts for Part 1 of the course:

Henrik Ibsen  A Doll's House
Anton Chekhov  Three Sisters

After Alex's class had studied both texts over a number of weeks the teacher felt it appropriate to prepare them for their first interactive oral. The focus was on A Doll’s House. This play, written in 1879, was originally written in Norwegian. It tells the story of a stultifying marriage: the husband, Torvald, infantilises his wife Nora until, unable to live so restrictively, she decides to leave him and their children and establish a new life alone. When it was first performed it caused uproar: it was seen as radically subversive,
Chapter 1 – Works in translation

The IB syllabus states that the reflective statement which accompanies the final essay does not have to be ‘explicitly connected to the topic’. However, there should be some connection, and it will undoubtedly benefit you if you prepare for the final essay by growing your ideas and developing arguments over time. Showing the links conveys to the examiner a maturing of thought and a deepening consideration of your area of interest.

The first interactive oral was on Henrik Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*. The play is one of the most powerful pieces of literature I have ever read, and I hope that my interest in it – and the themes Ibsen explores – were clearly conveyed to the group. Much of the discussion focused on the importance of context in understanding the power of Ibsen’s ideas, and it would be impossible to really appreciate the full implications of Nora’s final actions if we did not understand the society the play was written and performed in. Norway (and indeed Western Europe) in the late 19th century was a deeply conservative and patriarchal society, although it is a generalisation, middle-class women like Nora were not expected to work. Instead, their role was to look after the children and attend to their husbands.

I argued that Ibsen’s presentation of Nora was more radical than a simple rejection of the ‘stay-at-home mother’: in fact, what Nora rejects is still difficult to accept in many cultures: for a man to leave his wife and children is not unusual, but for a woman to do so is seen by many as immoral and unnatural. Understanding this position goes some way to explaining why it caused such a scandal when it was first performed (and why Ibsen was forced to change the ending for the German audience).

I found the ideas that other classmates contributed very stimulating although I did not agree with them all: other students judged Nora’s actions less sympathetically than me, and argued that Ibsen did not necessarily intend us to unequivocally favour Nora’s actions, despite Torvald’s behaviour. Others felt the characterisation was weak, or inconsistent, and that the transformation of Nora to an early, radical feminist was unconvincing. I could sympathise with the latter point because if we compare her to the Nora of Act I there is little similarity; but I could not agree that Ibsen was not clear about how we should view her actions. It is clear that Ibsen did intend us to sympathise with Nora (and indeed for many women in the audience to empathise with her), and to think otherwise shows an unwillingness to accept the subversiveness of his message. It led to a stimulating discussion which, I hope, will inform my later written work.

383 words

This is a good reflective statement: it shows a strong, personal response to the text, and although the opinions Alex holds about Ibsen’s ideas and characters are firm, it is clear that he has listened and engaged with his classmates about certain differences of interpretation. It is also evident that Alex has a good contextual understanding of the play, but this does not get in the way of the text itself. Importantly, there are strands of thought in here which could be developed in Stage 3 of Part 1 (Developing the topic – supervised writing), and Alex is aware of this potential.
Let’s look at another reflective statement from the same class. Katja was involved in the same interactive oral as Alex, and this is her reflective statement:

I don’t think I did very well in this interactive oral. I don’t really understand the play, and to be honest I didn’t feel confident enough to make many contributions. I was probably the quietest member of the class, but others did dominate and didn’t allow me to speak very much. The teacher asked me if I thought that the context of the play was important, and I said it was because without understanding when the play was written we couldn’t really understand what the writer meant to say. I know that Nora is seen as a heroine for many women, and that Torvald, her husband, is guilty of imprisoning her. I’m not sure about this though: if Nora is such a strong character why does she allow Torvald to treat her like this to begin with? It doesn’t make sense. Also, when she leaves her children, isn’t she guilty of the same sort of selfishness that she accuses Torvald of throughout the play? The point I made, when I was allowed to speak, was that Nora is selfish and manipulative throughout the play, and her final action — leaving her family — is not a surprise because it is in character with everything else she does. I’m not sure if we’re expected to agree with her action, but there were many in the class who argued that we were, and they made some good points. Overall, as I say, I think I could have done better in this interactive oral; hopefully, in the next one I will be better prepared and will be allowed to speak more.

265 words

How would you rate this reflective statement? Is it weaker than Alex’s? If so, why? Try to be clear and honest but not unduly harsh about your evaluation. Look at the three guiding questions: are they all answered? How well did Katja do in exploring the role of context in the play? What are the strengths of this statement?

Reflective statements such as Katja’s are not uncommon. It should be noted that there are some strong points here which could, with some work and encouragement, be developed in the final essay for the written assignment: Katja’s interpretation of Nora as being essentially manipulative and selfish, rather than a heroine, deserves further work because it is a valid and intelligent point to make. But she has not reflected enough on this before writing down her thoughts.

**Text 1.4 No, I’m not afraid, Irina Ratushinskaya, 1984**

This poem was originally written in Russian. In 1983 Ratushinskaya was imprisoned for seven years in the Soviet ‘strict regime’ labour camp at Barashevo for distributing her poetry. There, she was beaten frequently, starved, force fed, and kept in solitary confinement. After a worldwide campaign she was released after three years. This poem was written one year into her sentence.
Chapter 1 – Works in translation

Tip
You may find that your analysis benefits from using specific literary terms; in this way you are able to get a better understanding of the writer’s technique. Using the Glossary at the back of this book, see if you can find where Ratushinskaya uses the following devices: first person narrative, enjambment, end-stopped line, verse, metaphor, simile, ellipsis, rhythm.

No, I’m not afraid: after a year
Of breathing these prison nights
I will survive into the sadness
To name which is escape.

The cockerel will weep freedom for me
And here – knee-deep in mire –
My gardens shed their water
And the northern air blows in draughts.

And how am I to carry to an alien planet
What are almost tears, as though towards home...
It isn’t true, I am afraid, my darling!
But make it look as though you haven’t noticed.

Activity 1.4
In pairs or groups, read the poem No, I’m not afraid by Irina Ratushinskaya. Try to do a condensed interactive oral and reflective statement based on this poem.

Some questions for the interactive oral:
1. In what ways do time and place matter in this work?
2. What was easy to understand and what was difficult in relation to the social and cultural context and issues?
3. What connections did you find between issues in the work and your own culture and experience?
4. What aspects of technique are interesting in the work?

Some questions for the reflective statement:
1. To what extent does understanding the context of this poem help you understand its meaning?
2. How does the poet convey the importance of the setting in this poem? Give examples.
3. Comment on the use of contrasting imagery in the second stanza: how does this shape your understanding of the poem?
4. What did you most strongly respond to in this poem?
5. What new angles and insights did others provide in the oral?

Stage 3: Developing the topic – supervised writing
What is supervised writing?
- As well as responding orally to each work studied and writing a reflective statement, you will also have to write an essay in class time on each work. These essays are known as the ‘supervised writing’. They will be completed under exam conditions, although you will be allowed to refer to copies of the works.
- HL students will write three supervised pieces; SL students will write two.
• The recommended time for each piece of writing is 40–50 minutes.
• At the end of the lesson the essay must be handed in; you should not re-draft it or correct it after the allocated time.
• You will choose one of these pieces to develop into your final essay, and the original piece of writing will be kept on file for reference, but will not be given a mark.
• You will be provided with prompts by your teacher. These can be generic questions, or they can be appropriate to specific works. You will not see these prompts before you write the essays: the IB syllabus states that these prompts are designed ‘to encourage independent critical writing and to stimulate thinking about an assignment topic’.

Here are some examples of the sort of prompts you might get for supervised writing:
• What is the impact on the work of a major choice and/or decision made by the characters?
• Are different voices used to express thoughts and feelings in the poems of X? What effect do these have on your responses to the poems?
• Do you think there are some characters in the work whose chief role is to convey cultural values?
• To what extent do time and place influence your reading of the work?
• Would you agree that this work reinforces stereotypes more than it challenges them?
• Is the world view presented in X’s plays pessimistic rather than hopeful?
• Are the female characters in X’s novels better role models than the male characters?
• Are the short stories of X closer to propaganda than real art?
• To what extent would you agree that after reading the poetry of X we have a clear – but less happy – view of the world?

You can view these supervised essays in several ways:
• They allow you to build on the work you have already achieved in the interactive oral and the reflective statement. In that sense they consolidate what you have already learned.
• Your essays will benefit from the additional prompts provided by your teacher: they will be clearer, and more focused on specific subject areas.
• Should you do well in these supervised essays you will certainly have a solid foundation for the final essay, which is the main goal for Part 1 of the course.

Remember that Part 1 of the English Literature course can be characterised by a phased and selective focusing of ideas: you move from studying two or three texts in class, and from discussing them as a group, to working on a reflective statement on your own; now, with the supervised writing, you have to drill down even further into your texts before choosing one aspect to concentrate on in the final essay. This is a transitional point in your studies of Part 1: Works in translation; read the prompts carefully and keep in mind the possibility that you might develop one of these essays into an essay of between 1200 and 1500 words.

Think about the texts you have studied, either for Part 1 of the English Literature course or for another part of the course; if you have just started studying for the Diploma then also think about the literary texts you have studied over the last two years. It is possible to write generic questions on any text, and it is also possible to write very focused questions on specific texts. Neither type, however, is desirable for these essays: if the questions are too general then your answers could be vague; if the questions are too narrow you could be guided away from the main themes the writer wants you to think about, and which is required at this level.
Activity 1.5

Here are ten prompts: which do you think are acceptable for this part of the course, and why? If you finish this task quickly, think about re-writing these questions so that they are suited to your texts.

1. ‘Frank Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis* is not concerned with a giant insect: instead, it charts the decline of man into something less than human. In that sense it is a fable of modern times.’ Would you agree with this statement?

2. Would you agree that Frank Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis* is completely without hope?

3. To what extent does Irina Ratushinskaya’s poetry provide us with a human, rather than purely political, insight into the Soviet Union?

4. Which books have you most enjoyed studying for Part 1 of your course?

5. ‘Kundera’s *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* is only concerned with the Prague Spring of 1968.’ Would you agree?

6. Discuss the importance of inanimate objects in *A Doll’s House*.

7. ‘All literature is a lie.’ Do you agree?

8. Which context has been the most important to your study of *X*? The biographical? The sociological? The political? The historical? Or the geographical? Explain your answer.

9. ‘The surrealism of *The Metamorphosis* rests not in Gregor’s transformation but in the ordinary way Kafka describes it.’ Would you agree?

10. ‘In *A Doll’s House* Ibsen describes not just the tragedy of women, but also the tragedy of men: they are as trapped by society’s expectations as the females he describes.’ Would you agree?

As you can see, getting the balance right in such questions can be difficult.

Let’s look at how Alex and Katja got on with this stage of the course. They have completed their interactive orals and are now ready to work on their first piece of supervised writing, again on *A Doll’s House* by Henrik Ibsen. Although the play may not be familiar to you, it is still useful to see how each student approached this task. We will look at their introductory paragraphs and their concluding paragraphs.

Katja and Alex both wrote an essay on this text, and were given 40 minutes to write it in. They decided to have a copy of the play with them, but did not use any notes written before the assignment. At the end of the lesson the written work was handed in to the teacher. They were given the following prompts by their teacher on the day of the supervised writing task:

1. To what extent would you agree that Nora’s decision to leave her husband and children is morally right?

2. Would you agree that Torvald, as much as Nora, symbolises the cultural and social conditions of the time?

3. Would you agree that Ibsen’s play, although bleak in its portrayal of marriage, is ultimately hopeful?
Activity 1.6
Read the opening paragraphs of both essays below and discuss with a classmate, or your teacher, their strengths and weaknesses in relation to the prompts given. It should be noted that both students have English as a first language.

This is Alex's opening paragraph:
Nora's decision to leave both her husband, Torvald, and her children is the only logical and morally defensible action she could take at the end of the play. From the very opening scene, Ibsen's characterisation clearly shows us how Nora has been reduced to nothing more than an extension of her husband's identity: in order for her to move from being his 'songbird' or 'doll' to a woman in her own right she has to leave him. Torvald - the ambitious bank manager - is preoccupied with his reputation and controls everything about him - his career, his family, his reputation, even what his wife is allowed to eat - and he does so with a ruthlessness that the audience cannot help but find alienating. Nora's references to herself as his doll might sound odd, and to some perhaps even endearing, but he calls her his 'squalor', a wife who is overly generous with money, and her emotions, but who, for him, knows the value of nothing and must be controlled. It is far more judgemental, and more accusatory, than her evaluation of herself. The imagery used by Ibsen throughout the play is that of a woman reduced to nothing more than an add-on to her husband. Her decision is portrayed as brave and unavoidable.

In the final scene of the play Nora says to Torvald that 'for eight years [she has] been living here with a complete stranger'; it is a damning conclusion. Ibsen shows us how society traps people into loveless marriages: they gradually drift apart until they become unrecognizable from the people they once were. By exposing this situation Ibsen not only reveals a deep truth at the heart of 19th century European culture, but, through Nora's actions, he also challenges its right to continue.

And this is Katja's opening paragraph:
No, I don't think that Nora's decision to leave her husband and children was the right thing to do. In fact, Ibsen himself, when under pressure from his audience in Germany, decided to change the ending of the play, allowing the couple to continue to live together, but perhaps to make up for their mistakes. I think this is a better and more hopeful ending, and I also think that it is more believable: Nora clearly loves her children, and although it is understandable that she would want to leave her husband, it is much more difficult for a woman to leave her children. By this I mean that both sociologically, and biologically, a woman finds it more difficult to leave her children than a man does. Ibsen realised this, of course, and in the version that we read in class - which sees Nora leave them - he was aware
that it would cause a huge outcry. Torvald, although an unpleasant character, does not deserve to be rejected in this way; yes, he does control Nora, but he does so in a way which is perfectly in keeping with male behaviour at the time. In this he is not unusual.

Now look at their conclusions. Don’t forget to refer to the prompts given by the teacher.

This is Alex’s conclusion:

Ibsen’s play, although outwardly bleak, does have hope. Nora’s transformation, from a ‘squanderbird’ and a ‘doll’ to a woman who is not ‘bound’ to her husband in any way, but is free from ‘any such obligations’, is a truly radical, liberated change, and one which a modern audience would respond to more favourably than those who originally saw it. Importantly, she also releases Torvald from their loveless marriage which is, in itself, a selfless act, and one which is often overlooked by those critics who seek to condemn Nora’s actions as being totally self-motivated. Ibsen seems to be saying that if women become free in a society men also become free.

And this is Katja’s conclusion:

A Doll’s House is not an optimistic play. Nora not only leaves her husband, but she also leaves her innocent children. As I have said earlier, this is an unnatural and unforgivable act. She goes further, though, and tells Torvald that they are now strangers, and that she never wants to see her children again. I don’t agree that this marriage is typical of the time; there were many people who were happily married at the time, and so Ibsen does misrepresent marriage, or, rather, makes it too black and white. If there is hope it lies with Torvald who is now left to protect his children and who might recover to be a better man. In fact, at the end, he says he wants to believe in miracles, and perhaps Ibsen is saying that the miracle he will soon experience is a world free from his manipulative, selfish wife.

### Activity 1.7

1. Like his reflective statement, Alex’s opening paragraph appears stronger than Katja’s, but can you be specific: where would Alex pick up marks, and where would Katja lose them? Although these supervised pieces are not assessed they are kept on file for reference as part of your course. It may help you to think about assessing both pieces using some of the criteria. Mark both students’ work according to the criteria below. Don’t just look at the marks available; consider also the questions in the second column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion B</th>
<th>How well does the student understand and interpret the texts? Does he/she have a secure grasp of the context, and does he/she analyse Ibsen’s meaning convincingly?</th>
<th>6 marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criterion C</td>
<td>To what extent does the student show an appreciation of the way in which Ibsen’s choices have shaped the meaning of the play?</td>
<td>6 marks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 Now imagine that you are Alex's and Katja's teacher. You are going to give them feedback on their introductions and conclusions which will help them improve on their next supervised essay. What advice would you give them? You should aim to write five points for each student but two of those points should be encouraging and positive; find the strengths of the pieces and make them both aware of these. You also have to point out where they have lost marks, and suggest strategies for building on their work so that they can write a stronger essay next time. You may wish to encourage them to consider the following areas:

- literary terms to pin down meaning
- using quotations to support arguments
- linking and developing their points
- ensuring the prompts are effectively covered.

Stage 4: Production of the essay

What is the final essay for the written assignment?

- The final essay is the fourth and final stage of Part 1: Works in translation.
- It is a 1200–1500 word essay on a literary aspect of one work, developed from one of the pieces of supervised writing.
- Your teacher will guide you in choosing the aspect you wish to focus on; your teacher is allowed to look at a single draft of the assignment before evaluating its potential. This evaluation process could take the form of a conversation and/or a written response separate from the draft assignment. After this feedback from your teacher, your will complete the final essay and then submit it for external assessment.
- The final essay will be accompanied by the appropriate reflective statement. The required length of the whole assignment is 300–400 words for the reflective statement and 1200–1500 words for the essay.

What is meant by the ‘aspect’?

By ‘aspect’ we mean the subject area you are going to concentrate on in your final essay: it should be focused, rather than general, but have enough depth to support an essay of this length. The aspect should lead the analysis, and your treatment of this aspect is what you are assessed on (rather than the aspect itself). It is very important that you get this right, and that you spend time thinking about it and the essay question you are going to research. Remember that your teacher should not give you an aspect to explore: it should come from you. Remember too that the essay title, although worked on with your teacher, should be essentially your ideas and your wording.

A typical example of this process might begin with a student interested in writing on Ibsen’s representation of women in *A Doll’s House* (this is an example of the aspect, although it isn’t clearly defined yet). The teacher thinks this sounds promising and asks the student to write an essay title for it (in doing so the teacher hopes that the student
Chapter 1 – Works in translation

Key terms

Contrastive pair Two words, phrases or images that work in contrast to each other for effect.

Matriarchy A society dominated by women.

Patriarchy A society dominated by men.

Exposition A device in which a writer gives essential information about what has happened leading up to the action about to unfold.

Draft one: The representation of women in A Doll’s House.

Draft two: To what extent is the behaviour of women in A Doll’s House shaped by social pressures?

Draft three: To what extent is Nora’s behaviour in A Doll’s House controlled by the male characters?

Draft four: To what extent is Nora’s development a rejection of a patriarchal society?

Draft five: From ‘squanderbird’ to freebird: an analysis of the female rejection of a patriarchal society in Ibsen’s A Doll’s House.

Draft six: From ‘squanderbird’ to freebird: an analysis of the relationship between femininity and patriarchy in Ibsen’s A Doll’s House.

As you can see, this process can take time and it could be argued that the title in draft three is a perfectly acceptable one for the final essay; however, by draft six the student has arrived at a title that has many strengths. Let’s deconstruct each element to see why it might work so well.

From ‘squanderbird’ to freebird: an analysis of the relationship between femininity and patriarchy in Ibsen’s A Doll’s House.

1 ‘Squanderbird’ references Torvald’s derogatory name for Nora; this shows an immediate awareness of the text.

2 Although this isn’t a direct quotation it does act as an effective contrastive pair: the juxtaposition shows the journey that Nora symbolically makes.

3 It is important to show that this is something more than an overview (the first four draft titles were vague in this area).

4 This is the key difference between drafts five and six. In draft five the use of the word ‘rejection’ is too direct and allows for little subtlety of approach: it characterises Nora as rejecting all men throughout the play, when of course she doesn’t do this (and it could be argued that she is rejecting the male behaviour personified by her husband, rather than men per se).

5 Strictly speaking the contrastive pair should be ‘matriarchy’ and ‘patriarchy’ but the former is not appropriate to either Ibsen or Nora: the play explores what it means to be female in a male-dominated (or patriarchal) society, rather than the differences between a female-dominated (matriarchal) society and one dominated by men.

6 Only a minor point, but it is good to have the author’s name and the title of the work included in the title.

After further reflection the student felt that the following title more clearly clarified the aspect under analysis:

Draft seven: From ‘squanderbird’ to freebird: an analysis of the symbols of repression in Ibsen’s A Doll’s House.
You are interested in an aspect of the text (for example, the representation of female characters in Ibsen's *A Doll's House*).

You take your idea for the essay to your teacher who says that although it is an interesting area it is too broad and needs to be more focused. Your teacher tells you to try to write an essay title on this aspect.

After several drafts you eventually get the essay title which you are happy with: it is focused but it allows you the scope to explore the main themes of the text.

You write the first draft of the essay and submit it to your teacher.

Your teacher gives you feedback on your essay and discusses where you might re-draft it. You make the changes and submit your second draft. It includes references and a bibliography, which you have drawn up carefully.

Your teacher is happy with this new draft and it is submitted, together with the appropriate reflective statement, to the IB.

**Figure 1.6** A typical process for a final essay.

**Further advice on the final essay for the written assignment**

- As we have seen, the aspect is very important, so take a lot of care getting its focus just right; it should be open to detailed analysis and developed argument.
- Try to avoid questions on very general themes, or basic analyses of key characters. Instead, identify more particular, even quirky, topics to investigate. For example, which final essays would you prefer to read?

  - An analysis of the character of Meursault in *The Outsider*  
    *Or*
  
  - The suicidal impulse: an analysis of self-alienation and destruction in Camus’ *The Outsider*  
    *Or*
  
  - A study of imprisonment in *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*  
    *Or*
  
  - 'Art isn’t a matter of what, but of how': an analysis of individualism and captivity in Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*  
    *Or*
  
  - Female characters in *Woman at Point Zero*  
    *Or*
  
  - The flight from the self: escape and imprisonment in Nawal El Saadawi’s *Woman at Point Zero*  
    *Or*

**Tip**

Too many students choose vague topics such as ‘jealousy’, ‘loneliness’ or ‘hatred’, and they fail to be specific about the author’s aims. Do not get the subject and the theme confused: ‘hatred’ is a subject, while ‘the idea that all-consuming hatred is psychologically disturbing’ is a theme.
Chapter 1 – Works in translation

Key terms

Motif A recurring structural device that reminds the audience of an important theme.

Connote/connotation To imply something in a word or phrase other than its literal definition; an association evoked by a particular word.

- Emphasise how an author develops the characters rather than relating how characters simply develop by themselves.
- Don’t simply retell the plot; concentrate instead on analysing how the author has used certain plot devices to move the narrative along.
- Look closely at the author’s style, and how this style develops key themes.
- Some authors repeat the same – or similar – symbols to explore and represent themes they are especially interested in (colour is a very common one). These repeated symbols are referred to as motifs. Find them, and as you begin to link them you may see an argument developing. Sometimes they are obvious (for example, the repeated use of the colour red in a text can connote passion, sex, love, or even death); others are less obvious, but these can be even more appropriate for the final Part 1 essay. For example it would be possible to write an assignment on ‘An analysis of class in Chekhov’s Three Sisters’ on Chekhov but it might be more focused, and different, to consider writing on ‘The representation and importance of inanimate objects in Chekhov’s Three Sisters’. These aspects don’t immediately sound related, but there are two points to take from such a change in title and focus:
  1. Class in Chekhov is a very familiar theme, and it’s a good idea to avoid very obvious aspects.
  2. Chekhov explores class in many different ways, and one way it is represented is through inanimate objects (or motifs) – a samovar, a book, a picture frame – and the characters’ different attitudes to these objects illuminates subtle differences within society. In other words, you’re exploring the same subject, but from a different angle.
- Be specific: don’t write too generally, and don’t try to force too much diverse material into one essay (or indeed into one paragraph).
- Paragraph regularly and correctly, and make sure you link your paragraphs.
- Use key quotations to support your points.
- Don’t be afraid to give a personal view of the question, although it is often advisable to avoid using ‘I’ in these formal, assessed essays. Instead, write ‘the reader’ or ‘we’, or, if it is a pay, ‘the audience’.
- Consult critical texts but be very careful to record where you take every quotation or reference from: you gain marks by doing such research. If you fail to state your sources you could be guilty of plagiarism. If you take a quotation from a website, record its complete URL (for example, not just www.gutenberg.org but http://www.gutenberg.org/files/7986/7986-h/7986-h.htm) and the date you accessed it.
- Within your group ensure – with your teacher’s cooperation – that nobody else uses the same title or analyses the same key passage.

Activity 1.8

Below are twelve titles from six children’s folk tales. It is not important to know their plots, although many of you will have read them. What is important is that you think about why some titles are interesting and others less so. This might not appear to be a very serious exercise, but some insight might develop from it: which title not only appears more intriguing but offers greater scope for meaningful analysis? Some might sound odd, but that may be because nobody has ever thought of them before, and if you can capture that originality of approach then your essay could really stand out as distinctive.
### Titles

| Journeying in *Little Red Riding Hood*  
The use of the colour red as a motif of experience in *Little Red Riding Hood* | Both titles are interesting, but 'journeying' is rather vague: physical journeying (through the woods)? Or spiritual journeying? The use of red (in her name, in her clothing, with blood) has many connotations, and they are linked through the colour motif. |
| --- | --- |
| Aggression in *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*  
'The grass is always greener': an analysis of utopianism and hierarchy in *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* |  |
| In *One Thousand and One Nights*, would you agree that Bulukiya's quest is as much about an internal search for fulfillment as it is a physical searching?  
Is Bulukiya deluded? |  |
| Imprisonment in *Rapunzel*  
The unreachable woman: an analysis of the idealised woman in *Rapunzel* |  |
| Materialism in *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*  
The threat of the unknown: race and the threatened familiar in *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* |  |
| Snow White as a mother figure in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*  
The fragmented self: multiple personality disorder in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* |  |

### Developing the essay: sample student work

Look at the following essay written by a student studying Patrick Süskind's novel *Perfume*. This novel was first published in German in 1985. It is set in 18th century France, and tells the story of Jean-Baptiste Grenouille, a perfumer (born with no personal scent, but with a very pronounced sense of smell) who murders 25 girls. As you would expect, this novel is a dark, surreal narrative which is also preoccupied with the sense of smell, and so the teacher was intrigued when the student suggested writing on the 'visual elements' in the novel as her aspect for the final essay.

This was the first draft of her opening paragraph:

For Grenouille, darkness provides enlightenment, comfort and the ability to travel as desired; however, it also hits Grenouille like a bolt out of the blue that he has no scent. Grenouille's journey to the cave is packed with events using darkness as a period to find his own scent. Sleeping in the daytime in 'the most inaccessible spots' and eventually 'he travelled only by night' suggests animalistic qualities.
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He seemed to evolve into a nocturnal animal (by choice) because of his long-lived separation from society. Grenouille ‘did not need light to see by’, he had a gifted sense of smell, allowing him to sense, pursue and avoid both people and places. This illustrates Grenouille’s use of darkness as an advantage and a friend. The seclusion and dimness of the cave was one of the only places in which Grenouille ‘enjoyed himself’ for darkness was ‘the only world that he accepted, for it was much like the world of his soul’. Grenouille is aware of his unique sense of smell, which makes the dark surroundings in the cave (and elsewhere) hospitable, in fact he would not have liked the cave if ‘at the end of the tunnel it was’ not ‘pitch black night, even during the day’. In the darkness ‘he was safe at last’. At its peak, the cave became the trigger that enlightened Grenouille with the need for a journey to find his odour. The cave made Grenouille face up to himself and realise that ‘He could not flee’ the fact he had no odour, and ‘had to move towards it’.

There are lots of interesting ideas here but the student’s teacher felt that further work was needed on it. He talked to her about where he thought she could improve it, and provided her with some written feedback, and after several re-drafts she submitted it for the second time to her teacher. These are the opening paragraphs of the essay which was finally submitted to the IB examiner for assessment:

For Grenouille darkness, ironically, provides enlightenment. He is at ease in his cave, and he ‘travelled only by night’, giving him animalistic qualities. He seems to evolve into a nocturnal creature; to some extent this is done by choice, but it is also as a result of being rejected by society. Süsskind writes that Grenouille ‘did not need light to see by’, which emphasises both his powerful sense of smell, and also his mystical persona. Darkness becomes his friend, his ally, and the cave becomes the only place where he ‘enjoyed himself’ because darkness was ‘the only world that he accepted, for it was much like the world of his soul’. This last statement is telling: here Süsskind clearly links his main protagonist to evil, and so his habitat becomes more understandable, and, in one sense, natural (at least for Grenouille).

The setting is, then, an extension of the character: Grenouille would not have liked the cave if ‘at the end of the tunnel it was [not] pitch black night, even during the day.’ And it is the cave which forces him to face himself, to realise he could no longer ‘flee’ from his fate, and that instead of denying he ‘had no odour’ to himself he ‘had to move towards it’ instead. This acceptance – of himself and his own personal darkness – is pivotal in both plot and character.

**Activity 1.9**

Spend some time reading both drafts. Why is the second one better than the first? You may want to think about how much the student has understood and interpreted the text (Criterion B), her appreciation of the ways in which the writer’s choices shape meaning (Criterion C), how well organised the second draft is (Criterion D), and her use of language (Criterion E).
The final draft is stronger than the first, although they are both recognisably by the same student writing about something she is interested in. The assignment has evolved. The teacher's input has been crucial here, as, undoubtedly, have the several re-drafts the student did herself.

Criterion E is important, so let's look at how she has improved things between the first and final draft. One obvious difference is that by the second draft she has included the following literary terms:

ironically persona protagonist setting character plot

Because she has written about their effect (rather than just listing them) each literary term extends the student's argument, and pins down her meaning; you can also clearly see here how Criterion E informs Criterion B. She has also erased the clichés which can be rather lazy methods of expression (bolt out of the blue, packed with events, at its peak, face up to himself). Add to this the tighter use of punctuation and paragraphing, and the consistent use of the present tense, as well as various other improvements, and it is clear that this student will have moved from a 2 or a 3 for Criterion E to a 4 or a 5. Such gains make a critical difference.

**Applying the criteria: what do they mean?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
<th>What it means and how to apply it</th>
<th>Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criterion B</td>
<td>Knowledge and understanding</td>
<td>6 marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion C</td>
<td>Appreciation of the writer's choices</td>
<td>6 marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criterion D</td>
<td>Organisation and development</td>
<td>5 marks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unit 1.4 How should you structure and present your final Part 1 essay?

All successful essays are clearly organised and show a very secure knowledge of the text. Furthermore, there is a very strong focus on the effects of the writer’s choice of language, structure and form. A good final essay also shows a very confident understanding of the conventions of the genre being analysed. If you have followed the four steps, then the aspect you want to explore in your final essay for the written assignment may well have suggested itself to you by the time you have to write it: you will have discussed the texts in class, you will have talked to your teacher about important themes, and you will have completed several written tasks in advance of the main assignment. As we said earlier in this chapter, preparation is vital: think ahead and the final essay will be both easier and more enjoyable.

1 Firstly, remember to:
   - write the title of the essay at the top of the page
   - use italics, inverted commas or underlining to indicate the title of the text
   - use the author’s full name or surname
   - write about literature in the present tense
   - use formal, precise language: aim to say something very clever very simply
   - use the correct terminology for the text you are writing about (is it a novel, a play, a poem?).

2 Include an introduction which:
   - is one, concise paragraph
   - shows that you understand the essay title
   - focuses on the specific text (or extract) you are writing about
   - sets out a clear argument.

3 In the main body of the essay:
   - structure paragraphs: P (point) – E (evidence) – A (analysis) (the evidence should be a quotation)

   **P:** signpost where each paragraph is going in the first sentence
   **E:** use short, embedded quotations
   **A:** analyse the effects of the language you quote; you might use the word ‘suggests’ or a similar word

   - always consider how the author is shaping meaning
   - refer to literary techniques but always give examples and analyse their effects
   - always refer back to the main ‘thread’ of the argument so that you answer the question
   - use linking words in your writing
   - show awareness of different possible interpretations and contexts.
4 Write a concise conclusion that pulls together the threads of your arguments. Try to avoid beginning your conclusion with empty phrases such as ‘As I have shown’, or ‘In my conclusion I am going to show’; instead, make your final paragraph clear and balanced, re-stating your analysis but without repeating what you have spent the previous pages explaining.

The final essay: some examiners’ feedback
Here are some common issues cited by examiners about Part 1 essays. They are taken from subject reports over a number of years and are issued as feedback to schools after the grades have been awarded. Some will apply to you, others will not, but remember an earlier tip: start to think like a teacher or an examiner and you will begin to make fewer mistakes.

The aspect
Examiners feel that students should choose an aspect that is:
- clearly literary in its focus
- very specific
- clearly expressed
- sophisticated
- shows independent learning by the student
- of real interest to the student.

The treatment
Examiners favour assignments that:
- are led by the aspect, not the knowledge of the whole text
- are aware of how the context shapes the aspect
- have clearly defined arguments
- have a clear personal response.

The aspect has to drive the essay: this is your opportunity to show how strong your grasp is of a particularly significant part of a writer’s technique.

The presentation and language
Presentation and language are of course very important, and examiners are very keen that students’ assignments:
- stay within the word limit
- have introductions that are succinct and are not heavily biographical
- have fresh and memorable conclusions that do not simply provide an overview of the essay
- are carefully proofread so that simple mistakes are spotted and corrected
- contain quotations that are clearly supportive of the point being made and are accurately copied and shaped to purpose
- have bibliographies and footnotes.

The format
- Your essay should be word-processed.
- Use double spacing for your first draft so that you can write your own changes between lines as you re-draft; for the final draft use single spacing.
- When you submit your essay make sure you include your name, your candidate number, and the title of the essay.

tip
Writing about windows as a motif in an author’s work could be more effective than writing about the writer’s treatment of fate, or life and death: the former is focused whereas the latter are too broad. Windows may be symbolic of life or death, but you need to use the aspect as a way of pushing your argument ahead forcefully. Drilling down into symbols and similes can often be very rewarding and allow you to concentrate on the text itself.
Chapter 1 – Works in translation

- Remember that quotations are included in your word count; but bibliography and footnotes are not.
- Begin a separate page for your bibliography.
- Have a ‘header’ on every page with your name and candidate number on it.
- Number all pages.
- Approach the upper end of the word limit (1500 words) but be careful not to exceed it.
- Make sure you keep a copy of your final essay.
- Do a spell check, but do not rely on that as your only method of checking the English: do that yourself, taking your time.
- Give the word count at the end.

Using quotations and ‘close references’ effectively

Why use quotations and close references to the text?
Examiners expect you to have a good knowledge of the texts you are writing about, both for coursework and in the exams. Using regular – and appropriate – references to the text can show the examiner that you do know that text very well; however, you have to show that as well as knowing the text you also understand it, and one very obvious means of conveying this deeper appreciation of the text is to quote effectively. By interpreting the text – and by using quotations to support your analysis – you will invariably push your argument forward. And remember that it is the text that you are being assessed on, rather than the context it was written in: making short, telling references to specific parts of the text is fundamental to your work.

When is it appropriate to use a quotation?
This depends on your argument. For example, if you want to make reference to Macbeth’s growing alienation then you could refer to key episodes in the play. Should you wish to make a point about how his wife’s death makes his disillusionment with life profoundly bleak then you may wish to quote his description of life as ‘a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury signifying nothing’. This articulates very well how, by Act V, existence had become meaningless for him, and in turn explains his actions from this point onwards until his death. Here, you will see that the point is quite specific, that it is supported very well by a key quotation, that this quotation is embedded, and that the point is expanded upon after the quotation. As noted above, the pattern you should follow throughout your essay is:

P (point) – E (evidence) – A (analysis)

Think objectively about what you are arguing: if a point is relatively simple then you may only need to use one quotation or even a reference to where we can see this point in the text, but a major theme (such as alienation in Macbeth) will require several quotations to support your argument.

How should you use a quotation?
1 Remember to give some context to begin with: help the reader so that he or she knows where the quotation is coming from. It is important to know that the above quotation from Macbeth comes towards the end of the play rather than the beginning. Complex characters develop over the course of a work and you should show the examiner and your teacher that you are aware of this.
2 You should embed your quotation. This means that it should be integrated smoothly into your sentence; one test of this is to see if, when the quotation marks are taken away, the sentence still flows. Consider these two examples:

- Macbeth's growing disillusionment with life can be found in Act V: 'it is a tale told by an idiot … signifying nothing'. This shows that Macbeth sees life like an idiot.
- Macbeth's belief that life is 'a tale told by an idiot' emphasises how disillusioned he has become by Act V.

The first example is less 'smooth' than the first, and if you take the speech marks away its sense will be impaired still further; the second example has an embedded quotation and you can take the speech marks away and it still makes grammatical sense.

3 Expand your point after the quotation so that you make explicit what the quotation shows. In the first example above the second sentence repeats the point of the quotation, whereas the second quotation moves the argument along, deepening the point and expanding on the quotation.

4 Choose quotations carefully: they must support your arguments and be rich enough to expand upon. Don't just drop a quotation into a sentence in the hope that it will be self-explanatory.

**How long should a quotation be?**

Students often include quotations that are too long in their essays. This can cause problems because long quotations can break up the flow of the sentence, and this, in turn, dilutes the strength of the argument. For example, consider the argument this student is trying to make about Macbeth's growing sense of nihilism:

When Macbeth hears of his wife's death in Act V he articulates his growing disillusionment with life:

> Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
> To the last syllable of recorded time;
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle,
> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more. It is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury
> Signifying nothing.

This shows just how alienated he has become — from his wife, his friends, and even himself.

As you can see, there is too much in this long quotation to be contained within the point the student is trying to make. This overloading of ideas has to be guarded against or it will unbalance not just key parts of the point you are making, but even the whole
essay itself. Be selective: you can omit words if you feel they are not crucial to what you want to say, but remember to indicate where these cuts have been made. For example:

By Act V Macbeth increasingly sees life as a ‘tale told by an idiot [which means] nothing’ and this nihilism partly explains his actions on the battlefield in the final scene.

The square brackets here show that words have been omitted, but the quotation remains embedded and the point is well made.

You can also use ellipses to indicate where words have been taken out. To use an example from another of Shakespeare’s (1564–1616) plays:

Hamlet uses an extended metaphor when he articulates ‘how weary, stale, flat and unprofitable / Seem to me all the uses of this world! / [...] ‘tis an unweeded garden / That grows to seed’, and this imagery of dying nature clearly describes his own barren view of life.

You can also break quotations down into the key parts. For example:

In Act I, disgusted by his mother’s swift remarriage, Hamlet describes the world as ‘an unweeded garden’ full of ‘things rank and gross’, which in turn vividly describes how empty his view of the world has become since his father’s untimely death.

Longer quotations – of three or four lines – should be indented and set off from the rest of your text, and they should be used sparingly; they should almost always be introduced by a colon.

What else should you remember about using quotations? Don’t introduce quotations with rather empty introductions such as ‘The following quotation is important’ or ‘An example of this can be seen in this quotation’. It’s difficult to embed a quotation when you revert to such introductions. Always try to avoid writing ‘this shows’ immediately after your quotation because it should be very obvious what the quotation shows without you having to write it. Be more imaginative in your writing. Embedding a quotation effectively can be a challenge for some students, and, perhaps understandably, they decide to avoid using quotations from the texts they are studying because they feel that in doing so they will lose marks because they are not fully integrated into their own writing.

Provided that the evidence you are using from the text is appropriate and focused there is a simple rule: it is always better to quote than not quote. The more you practise using embedded quotations the more comfortable you will be in using them.

Is there anything else you should know about using quotations? If you are quoting from poetry or verse drama you should indicate the ends of lines with slash (/) marks (you can see one of these used above in the example from Hamlet), and follow the punctuation of the poetry as well (if the first letter of each line is capitalised then you should show that as well). Also, follow all spacing and indentations.

Finally, do remember to record where you take each quotation from and include it in your footnotes.
Chapter 1 summary
In the course of this chapter, we hope that you have:
• understood what you will study in Part 1 of the course and how it is assessed
• understood not only the different requirements for each part of the course, but also how they interlink
• developed a clear understanding of some of the factors involved in contextualising a translated work
• looked at a number of extracts and responded to them analytically
• developed a range of strategies to plan, prepare and deliver a successful final essay.

This part of the course is varied, both in structure and assessment, but we hope that you can now approach each task with confidence. Remember to be well organised and open-minded, and to take notes throughout. Challenging though it undoubtedly is, Part 1 is also a hugely rewarding course in itself; we hope that it acts as an introduction to writers whose work you will continue to read once you have finished your Diploma, and that it will also open up new world views.