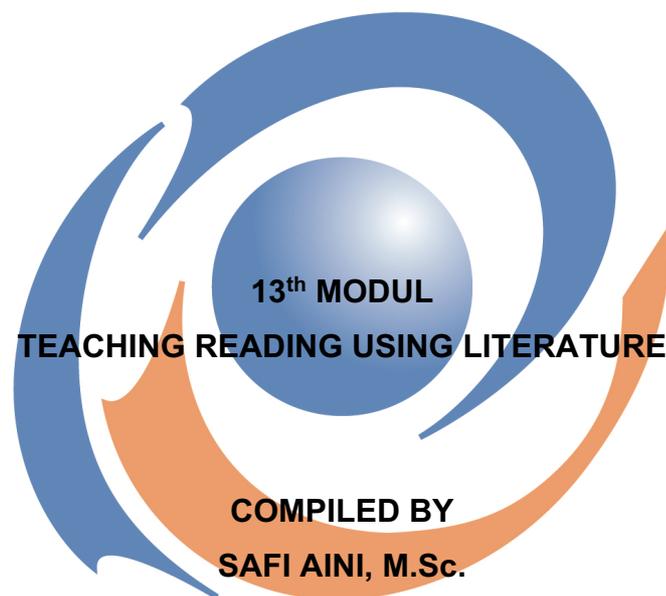


**MODUL INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE  
(PBI 321)**



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## TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH LITERATURE

### A. Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students are expected to be able to teach English especially reading skill by using literature, and what methods that an English teacher may implement.

### B. Explanation

Theoretically, **using of literature in language teaching is very advantageous**, for it offers four benefits: authentic material, cultural enrichment, language advancement, and personal growth (Collie & Slater, 1991). This is in line with Erkaya (2005) who notes four benefits of using of short stories to teach ESL/EFL, i.e. motivational, literary, cultural and higher-order thinking benefits.

First of all, **literary texts** can be more beneficial than informational materials in stimulating the acquisition process as they **provide authentic contexts for processing new language**. Literary texts expose learners to fresh themes and unexpected language. In this sense, 'a literary text is authentic text, real language in context, to which we can respond directly' (Brumfit and Carter, 1986, p. 15). This quality appears to make literature suitable and valuable to language teaching in many contexts and cultures. In addition, since literary texts contain language intended for native speakers, literature stands as a model for language learners to become familiar with different forms and conventions (Collie and Slater, 1991, p. 4; Ur, 1996, p. 201).

Second, containing real examples of grammatical structures and vocabulary items, **the literary texts raise learners' awareness of the range of the target language and advance their competence in all language skills** (Povey, 1967). Literary texts are not written for the specific purpose of teaching. Instead, they deal

with “things which mattered to the author when he wrote them” (Maley, 1989, p. 12). So, compared to the language samples in the textbooks, the language is far richer and more varied. Many genuine features of the written language such as “the formation and function of sentences, the variety of possible structures, and the different ways of connecting ideas” are presented at many levels of difficulty (Collie and Slater, 1994, p. 5). By assigning learners to explore the literary language, they have been at the same time been encouraged to think about the norms of the language use (Widdowson, 1975, cited in Lazar, 1993, p. 18). Learners are encouraged to familiarize themselves with different language uses, forms or conventions. Such exposure is essential for the learners especially for their language development. Thus, they can appreciate the richness and variety of the language and become more sensitive to the features of it.

Third, using literature in language teaching has the advantage of **providing cultural information about the target language**. Literary texts increase foreign language learners' insight into the country and the people whose language is being learnt (Collie and Slater, 1991), which fosters learners' ability to interpret discourse in different social and cultural target language contexts (Savvidou, 2004). By reading literary works, learners learn to see a world through another's eyes, observing human values and a different kind of living, and discovering that others living in very different societies. They will understand and become broadly aware of the social, political, historical, cultural events happening in a certain society. Through literature, learners can deepen their cultural understanding. Finally, since literature enables students to understand and appreciate other cultures, societies and ideologies different from their own, it encourages personal growth and intellectual development (Carter and Long, 1991, pp. 2-4).

Despite the benefits, literature also has problems such as in using a prose, we have figurative language; for novel, it needs long time to finish; for drama, it is difficult to act out in a big class. Hence, short story may be a solution as it is practical, not complicated, has a variety of choice, and can be used with all levels. Some basic criteria of choosing a short story are readability of the text. English teacher should consider needs and ability of students, linguistics level, and amount of background information required to understand the language of the literature.

In addition to the previous criteria, Spack (1985) suggests the aspect of interest to be considered in choosing stories that would interest students that he/she most likes to read and teach, and that have been made into film to provide visual interpretation. Furthermore, conversation in a short story starts at the **literal stage** with detail setting, characters, and plot in which the students can understand literally, can be replied by precise reference to the text. Then, it moves to the **inferential level** in which students should make speculations and interpretations in understanding the characters, setting, and theme, and the author's point of view.

**Here is I show you a research done by Pardede (2011) about Using Short stories to Teach Language Skills.** In his article, he said that stories are very useful in the trials to improve students' vocabulary and reading. The results of Lao and Krashen's (2000) study which compared the reading achievement between a group of students that read literary texts and a second group that read non-literary texts at a university in Hong Kong revealed that the group who read literary texts made better improvement in vocabulary and reading. Using *A Long Walk Home* (see the appendix), three activities can be conducted to help students to acquire more vocabulary. These activities are related to form, meaning, and use respectively.

1. Complete the word form chart below. The first word has been done for you. Remember that some words do not have all forms.

Verb	Adverb	Participle	Noun	Adjective
grow	-	growing	growth	-
				remote
	hardly			
			opportunity	
immerse				

There can be as many words as the teacher thinks necessary. However there should not too many words included in a short story so as not to make students lose interest in the activity. This activity helps students to learn more vocabulary, and it also teaches them how to use a dictionary.

2. Write the letter of the definition/synonym in column B that most closely matches each word/phrase in column A.

A	B
a. to spare	1. appear; make an appearance;
b. immersed	2. lateness
c. to show up	3. free for other use
d. tardiness	4. engaged wholly or deeply; absorbed
e. ...	5. ...

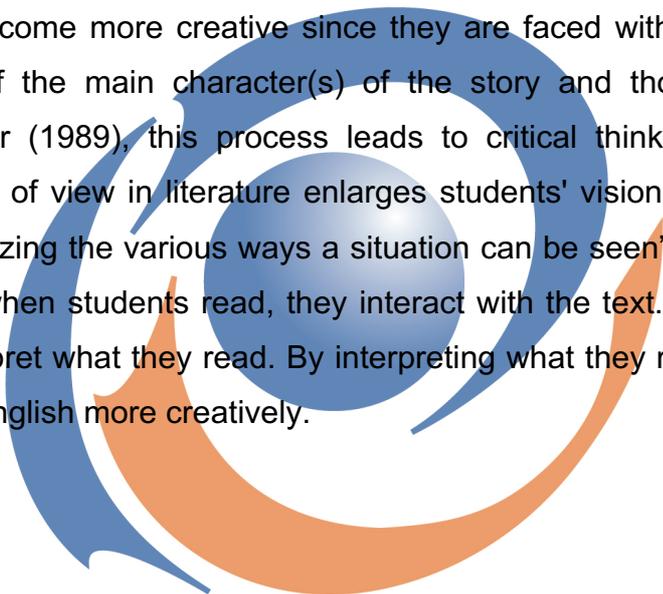
In this activity, the words/phrases in column A come from the story students are reading. The definitions and/or synonyms provided in column B must match the meaning of the words/phrases in the context of the story to help students to understand how a different word/phrase can be used in the same context.



3. Choose the word/phrase from column A in the previous activity that best fits each of the following sentences. You may need to add -s to a plural word or to a third person singular of a verb in the present tense, -ed to the past tense of regular verbs, -ing for present participle, etc.
- She finally \_\_\_\_\_ after we waited for her for two hours.
  - Johan was so \_\_\_\_\_ in his that he did not realize morning had broken.
  - After finishing this homework, I have quite much \_\_\_\_\_ time.
  - Mr. Moore looked angry when I entered the meeting room. But he finally excused my \_\_\_\_\_ after I finished explaining why I was late.

In activity 3, students practice using the words they already understand the meanings of. Since “Bill” does not include a list of unknown words/phrases in bold and the words/phrases do not have explanation and/or synonyms on the footnote, teachers should add both. To motivate students do such activity, teacher may explain: “The list of words helps you go on reading without troubling yourself stopping for too long to look them up in a dictionary or thesaurus.” High-intermediate and advanced students also profit from literary texts. What they read gives them the opportunity to come up with their own insights and helps them speak the language in a more imaginative way.

Students become more creative since they are faced with their own point of view, that/those of the main character(s) of the story and those of their peers. According to Oster (1989), this process leads to critical thinking, by confirming, “Focusing on point of view in literature enlarges students’ vision and fosters critical thinking by dramatizing the various ways a situation can be seen” (p. 85). This could happen because when students read, they interact with the text. By interacting with the text, they interpret what they read. By interpreting what they read, they can work toward speaking English more creatively.



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### C. Exercise

1. What is using literature in language teaching advantageous?

### D. Answer Key

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## E. References

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283724743 Using Short Stories to Teach Language Skills](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283724743_Using_Short_Stories_to_Teach_Language_Skills)

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