

1 Works in translation

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,

Key term



Context The surrounding circumstances of an event or text.

Chapter 1 – Works in translation



You should begin to familiarise yourself with the Glossary included at the back of this coursebook: key terms are used throughout the book, and the quicker you are at absorbing – and employing – them the more comfortable you will be in pinning down meaning using the correct terminology. Try to use one or two new literary terms in every lesson, or every written task.



TOK

In his essay, Judt goes on to write: 'If words fall into disrepair, what will substitute? They are all we have.' To what extent would you agree with Judt's statement? Is there anything beyond language? Are our identities wholly defined by the words we use? Are words all we have?

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 awoke 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.

Extended essay



The Russian critic Viktor Shklovsky has written that ‘the purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known ... Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important.’ In other words it is the writer’s job to make the object secondary to the sensation of experiencing that object, and writers – such as Kafka – do this through **defamiliarisation**. You could research this area of literary aesthetics in an extended essay.

TOK



The three-way relationship between writer, translator and reader is a complex one. Students of TOK may wish to do their presentations on this area: the knowledge issue is very clear – to what extent is the translator the ‘author’ of the work?

Key terms



Literal Language that is used and interpreted in its primary meaning.

Character A ‘person’ in a play, novel or poem.

Linguistic Of or belonging to language.

Biography/biographical An account of a life written by someone else.

Defamiliarisation A process in which a writer can make a reader perceive something in a new way, sometimes making them feel uncomfortable.

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.

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Key term

Theme In literature an idea that is explored and developed by the writer; for example, a theme in *Macbeth* is ambition.

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.



Figure 1.1 The Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821–1881).

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):

Criterion A	Fulfilling the requirements of the reflective statement	3 marks
Criterion B	Knowledge and understanding	6 marks
Criterion C	Appreciation of the writer's choices	6 marks
Criterion D	Organisation and development	5 marks
Criterion E	Language	5 marks
Total		25 marks

Key term



Argument There are several definitions of *argument*: in literature it can mean the summary of a plot; in literary criticism it means a position taken by the writer.



Read as much about other cultures and traditions as you can, and try to understand – and question – the ideas behind the issues. Question too your own preconceptions about the cultures you are reading about. Read writers who come from cultures about which you have no previous knowledge. You don't have to read just novels: poems, short stories or even articles from trusted and reputable websites or newspapers can widen your understanding of the world around you and prepare you for the pronounced international flavour of this course.



Students, as well as teachers, should have access to the prescribed literature in translation list, provided by the IB, so that you are completely confident that the authors you are studying have been approved.

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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).

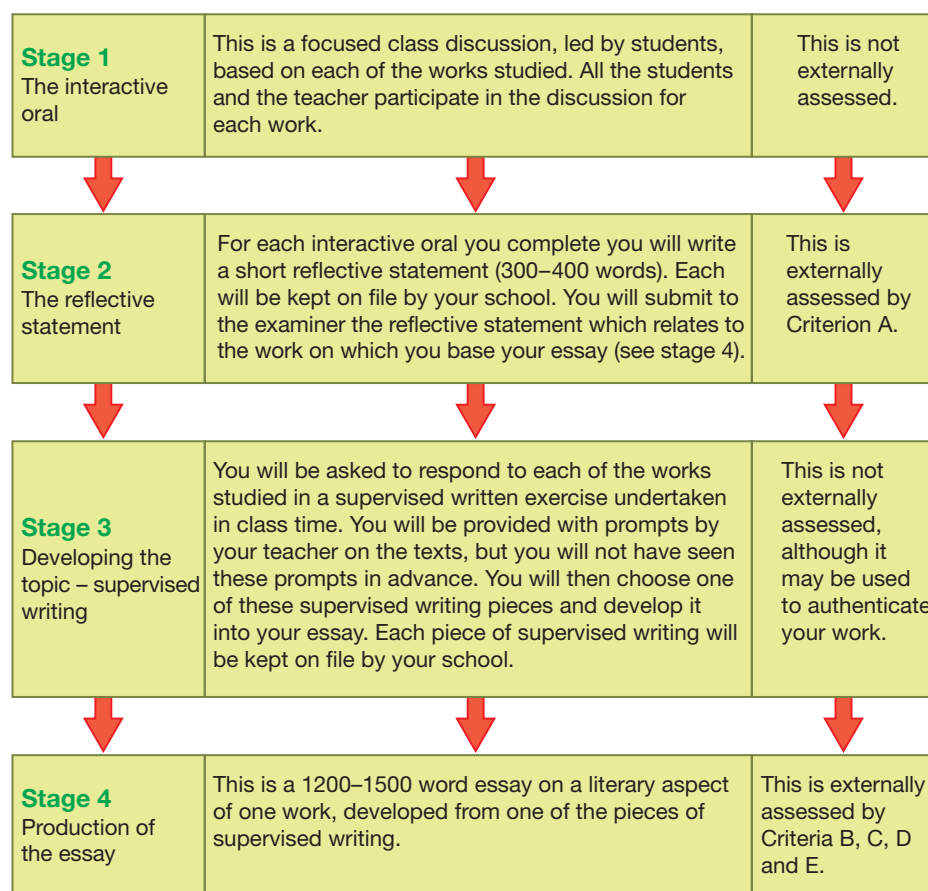


Figure 1.2 Your essay is likely to evolve over several different stages.

tip

In addition to the notes you keep in class, it is a good idea to keep a journal for Part 1 of your course. In this way you can record any ideas that come to you outside lesson time, either in discussions with your teacher and your classmates, or from your own wider reading.

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.

Key terms



Relativism A belief that morality and knowledge (among other contentious areas) are dependent on the value system they originate from and function within.

Quotation An extract from a text used in another text.

Convention An accepted format, structure, mode, style or behaviour.




You will see that the **quotations** given here are embedded. This is an important skill to try to develop, and although it can take time, it is worth practising it at every opportunity. It should be possible to take away the quotation marks without altering the 'flow' or sense of your sentence.

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- 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.



Key terms

Setting The physical, historical and even psychological context the text is located in.

Characterisation The process by which an author creates a character's distinctive qualities.

Plot What happens in the narrative.

The questions	Some questions to think about and use in the interactive oral
1 In what ways do time and place matter in this work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent does the period, and the setting, affect our understanding of the work? • Are the characters' actions, their language, and the ideas that the writer explores through them principally shaped by the time they were written in? • Is this different from the period the work is set in? • To what extent does the work's location shape the characters' actions as well as our understanding of the work itself? • 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?
2 What was easy to understand and what was difficult in relation to the social and cultural context and issues?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the major challenges you found in trying to understand works of literature which were outside your usual cultural and social experiences? • Did these differences surprise you? What did you find relatively easy to grasp? Why?
3 What connections did you find between issues in the work and your own culture and experience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What similarities did you discover between your own social and cultural context and the work you have been studying? • How could you explain these? Were these connections specific to a particular perspective or idea, or were they more universal in scope?
4 What aspects of technique are interesting in the work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

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.

Time and place: early in the morning, domestic setting. A new dawn, a new beginning. The seemingly innocent opening is in stark contrast to what is to come.

Easy and difficult: in itself this is very easy to picture – a large vermin lying on the bed – but it is initially difficult to understand as well because it is so unusual.

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

Opening paragraph, Chapter 1

One morning,¹ when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin.² 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.³ The bedding was hardly able to cover it and seemed ready to slide off any moment.⁴ 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 soon 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 defamiliarises 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.

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Key terms

Rhetorical question A question that is framed for effect, not necessarily for an answer.

Simple sentence A sentence that contains only one independent clause.

Complex sentence A sentence that contains two or more clauses.

Tone The emotional aspect of the voice of a text (for example, friendly, cold, intimate).

Paragraph A section of a piece of writing that is often concerned with one theme or key point.

Alienated/alienation The condition of being isolated from other people or a place; being removed from society.

Transfiguration The changing from one form to another.

Fable From the Latin word for ‘discourse, a story’; a short story in poetry or prose that has a strong moral message.

Conclusion The final part of a process; in an essay it usually contains a ‘summing up’ of the arguments.



Discussion

Discuss with another student whether Gregor has really changed into a vermin. Obviously this is impossible, and if we begin to follow this line of argument we end up asking ourselves as critics what Kafka really means. Is this just a **fable**, a story that illuminates another, deeper, moral truth about the human condition?

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 helped you structure your response?
 - What role has context played in adding to 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 practise 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.