

WL Part 1 Works in Translation: Stages & Rubrics

The clumsy formulations I grew up with—what is the moral of the story? what is the hero's or heroine's tragic flaw?—still influence and flatten the questions people often ask about literary works, as if there were one answer, and a right answer, at that. The genius of literary study comes in asking questions, not in finding answers. -Marjorie Garber, *The Use and Abuse of Literature*

Stage 1: Interactive Oral (IO)

After the initial introduction of the text, students must prepare an interactive oral which helps probe into cultural and contextual considerations. Interactive Orals must involve every student in the class at least once. This can be done via presentation on guided context (author biography, historical events, political events, setting, culture, etc.), panel discussions on controversial issues, or role playing activities. The teacher will be involved in the discussion. Each work must receive 30 minutes of interactive oral discussion. Questions to consider for the interactive oral:

- In what ways do time and place matter to this work?
- Are there connections between issues in the text and your culture and experiences?
- What aspects of the work's technique seem to connect to its particular context?

Stage 2: Reflective Statement (RS)

Upon completion of each interactive oral, students will write a reflective statement about the IO, 300-400 words in length, in response to the same question:

How was your understanding of cultural and contextual considerations of the work developed through the interactive oral?

There is a penalty for writing less than 300 words or more than 400 words. Each statement will be submitted to the teacher immediately after writing it and kept on file until the Supervised Writing is completed. The appropriate reflective statement will be attached to the essay for submission to the IB examiner. The guiding question must be written at the top of each RS; the title and the author of the work used must be clearly stated. The RS will be later typed and then assessed with the final Written Assignment (WA) using Criterion A. *The RS will be graded using Criterion A of the IB Written Assignment Rubric.*

Stage 3: Supervised Writing (SW)

After all IOs, the teacher will provide three prompts that will direct, though not unduly restrict, a Supervised Writing within a 45 minute time period. Students will choose a prompt that is interesting and potentially worth pursuing for a 1200–1500 (5-page) word Written Assignment. Texts may be used for reference. This Supervised Writing is collected, copied, and kept on file until needed for the Written Assignment. Note: Legitimate use of secondary sources in the essay is not prohibited; however, emphasis is placed on independent and creative thought. *Teachers will not mark or grade the SW.*

Stage 4: Written Assignment (WA)

Working from the Supervised Writing, students must produce a 1200-1500 word essay. Students must conference with the teacher about topics and prepared outline of the Written Assignment. The teacher will review the first draft providing an oral response, making general comments on organization, detail, and the potential of the draft to eventuate into a final essay. *Teachers will not reshape or edit the Written Assignment in any way but will provide a Class grade using IB Written Assignment Rubric.*

Reflective Statement (RS) Samples

SAMPLE 1 Work used: *Antigone*

Question: How was your understanding of cultural and contextual considerations of the work developed through the interactive oral?

In our interactive orals today we discussed the cultural and contextual consideration of Sophocles' play Antigone. In our discussion we covered the life and career of Sophocles, later versions of Antigone, and the development of Greek tragedy.

From our discussion it was easy to see that not much was known about Sophocles, or at least not much that was certain. However, it was apparent that he had achieved a lot in his life time and that he had lived in Athens, Greece when it was at the height of its power. During this time Athens was full of great philosophers, politicians and, of course, playwrights of which Sophocles was arguably the greatest. Sophocles was said to have written 123 plays but all have been lost but 7. Of the seven we have, all or most are great plays. They are a testament to Sophocles play writing prowess.

In our discussion about the development of Greek theatre influential playwrights were discussed. One that stood out to me was that of Thespis. He was the innovator behind the addition of multiple actors to the role as chorus—where it had previously been only one person. In Antigone we can see that Sophocles took a similar approach as he also uses multiple people in his Chorus—people who represent members of the community.

We also learned that Antigone was a play that was popularly adapted or presented again. Jean Anouilh adapted the play and put it on in Nazi occupied France in 1943. It was seen as a sign of resistance with Creon representing the Vichy government and Antigone representing the French Resistance. This use of Antigone was a recurring theme as its popularity grew again in America during the Vietnam War.

I think the most useful part of this IO was the discussion about Antigone being used as a play of protest. For me this really drew attention to the theme of protest and resistance in the play itself, while at the same time making me more aware of the contextual considerations of the play.

SAMPLE 2 Work used: *Broken April*

Question: How was your understanding of cultural and contextual considerations of the work developed through the interactive oral?

I thought it was interesting for the IO today to challenge the biased lens through which I was viewing the Albanian blood feuds in Kadare's novel, Broken April. It is easy to jump on board with his apparent rhetorical agenda and label blood feuds as ridiculous, barbaric, archaic, exotic, etc. When people consider equally ridiculous seeing laws or practices from other countries, however, I have to ask myself, "Am I living within similar constructs that are not labeled as negatively as blood feuds?"

This is not to say that I disagree with Kadare's rhetorical agenda: if the atrocities committed in Albania really similar to atrocities of class and race in the United States, well, they are still atrocities. I do think it's important for readers as it is for the characters of Bessian and Diana to realize that an outsider cannot understand the functional extent of blood feuds within the Albanian culture. Do the blood feuds primarily encourage unnecessary killing or do they provide a structure for people to manifest violence, which they are likely to do anyway?

Bessian's devotion to the culture of the High Plateau and Diana's resistance to it could, perhaps, indicate the dilemma that every reader faces with the beliefs and practices of the *Kanun*: should we romanticize things (as Bessian does) or follow our instincts (as Diana does)? S

Perhaps we really should not find this all so different from people's devotion to their church or their political parties. Perhaps devotion to anything is one and the same to everything.