

# Alternative individual oral commentary and alternative individual oral presentation

## Assessment overview

### Assessing part 2 works

In September of your first year, you will receive oral commentary questions published by the IB for use in the examination sessions 20 months later. For example, in September 2014 the oral questions will be published for use in the May and November examination sessions in 2016. These questions will give a framework for the close study of part 2 works. During your one- or two-year course, you are asked to find a suitable 40-line passage or poem for each question that can be used as a basis for a commentary. Each of the questions will be framed to elicit a detailed, analytical response. Later, remember to ask your supervisor for the questions.

In March/September of the final year of your course, about two months before the written examinations, your school will receive an email relating to the alternative oral examination. This email will contain a candidate question paper and will stipulate the genre on which the alternative oral commentary will be based, and will give the choice of two of the five previously released questions for this genre.

### Assessing part 4 works

You will give a prepared oral presentation based on two of the three works studied in part 4 of the syllabus. You will prepare this presentation during your course of study, and will deliver it immediately after your oral commentary has concluded, using brief notes, and visual aids if so desired.

## Preparing for the individual oral commentary

You must use works studied in part 2 of your course. You will deliver a formal oral commentary using brief working notes only. For this commentary, you will aim to identify and explore all significant aspects of the extract. These include:

- situating the extract in the context of the work from which it has been taken (or in the body of work, in the case of poetry)
- showing an appreciation for the writer's choice of language in shaping meaning
- commenting on the effectiveness of the writer's techniques, including stylistic devices and their effect(s) on the reader.

You are expected to deliver the commentary in a structured and well-focused manner, using language and register appropriate for the activity.

## Step-by-step guide

### Step 1

Identify the broad literary genre of each of the two works that have been chosen from the PLA for part 2 of the course. From the pre-released list of questions, choose the set of questions that corresponds to each of those genres.

For example, if you have studied a novel or selected short stories, you must use questions under the heading "Prose fiction"; if you have studied plays or theatre, you must choose from under the heading "Drama"; and if you have studied essays, autobiography, biography, travel writing or satire, you must choose from under the heading "Prose non-fiction".

## **Step 2**

Prepare for section 1 of the alternative oral assessment during the one- or two-year course of study, exploring the part 2 works in detail, using the pre-released questions specific to the assessment year.

It is recommended that you receive the questions after you have had time to make an initial study of the part 2 works. This will help ensure that you do not narrow your study of the works by focusing solely on the assessment tasks. Studying your part 2 works in full, rather than merely in the context of the assessment tasks, will help you further develop skills that will be of great value in the other parts of the course.

However, you should still receive the questions well in advance of the date set for the alternative oral assessment, to allow you to use the questions to support your study. The supervisor must ensure that all SSST students understand how to use the questions in ways that extend the scope of their understanding of the part 2 works.

## **Step 3**

Select at least one passage or poem that is most appropriate for each question from the corresponding work that is being studied. Each passage must be approximately 40 lines in length (or a whole poem or part of a poem that is roughly equivalent to 40 lines).

For example, if a novel and a play are being studied, you will have at least ten different passages, one for each of the five prose fiction questions, and one for each of the five drama questions.

In this case you would need to be able to present a commentary on any of the questions for either the novel or the play.

## **Step 4**

Ensure that there is a meaningful link between the question and selected passage or poem. Each passage or poem selected must, therefore, reflect different aspects of the works, as indicated by the questions.

## **Conduct of section 1 of the alternative oral assessment**

Duration: preparation time 20 minutes; delivery 10 minutes

### **Preparation**

You will take copies of your chosen passages or poems, as well as notes on those passages into the preparation room for the alternative oral assessment.

You are given the assessment paper on which the oral assessment will be based. The instructions for section 1 will nominate one of the two genres studied and, for that genre, two out of the five questions will have been selected.

You will choose one of the questions and select the passage and the notes prepared for that question. During the 20-minute preparation time you can make final preparations for the individual oral commentary on that passage and question. The notes used during the recording may be those prepared during the course, work done during the 20-minute preparation time, or a combination of both. However, they must be brief notes in point form, totalling no more than one side of A4 paper.

You are not permitted to read the notes aloud.

Notes used during the recording are sent to the examiner, along with the recording.

## Delivery

You will present the formal oral commentary and the invigilator records it. The time allowed for the commentary (section 1) is 10 minutes.

## Preparing for the individual oral presentation

As you prepare for the individual oral presentation, bear the following points in mind.

- You must study all three works selected for part 4.
- You are to deliver an individual oral presentation using brief working notes only.
- Your final presentation must be based on two of the three works studied in part 4.
- For the presentation, you will be expected to:
  - demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the works
  - deliver the presentation in an effective and engaging way, using language and register appropriate for the activity.

## Step-by-step guide

### Step 1

Study the works selected for part 4. Use these works as a starting point to develop your own personal writing. For example, if you choose “Prose other than fiction” which includes travel writing, autobiography, letters, essays, speeches, or more contemporary experiments in “creative non-fiction” you can explore these forms through your own writing.

This activity is designed for you to develop a range of abilities:

- to understand the conventions of prose other than fiction (or other genres where appropriate) through writing
- to acquire detailed understanding of effective authorial choices in these forms
- if so desired, to use a critique of your own writing as the basis for your oral presentation (however, you must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the original works studied, not of your own work).

### Step 2

Select a topic for the individual presentation. You **must** choose your topic independently, and the topic should reflect your personal interests.

Where a school has more than one SSST student studying the same language A, each student must choose a **separate and different** presentation topic.

Suitable topics include:

- the cultural setting of the works and related issues
- thematic focus
- characterization
- techniques and style
- the author’s attitude to particular elements of the works such as characters and subject matter
- the interpretations of particular elements from different perspectives.

### Step 3

Plan the presentation, and prepare brief working notes to be taken into the assessment room. This process must be done independently, albeit with the guidance of a supervisor.

As the final presentation is focused on **two** part 4 works, you may wish to take a comparative approach. However, this is not a requirement.

In order to succeed in criterion B, you must plan your presentation as if it were to be delivered to an audience, even though no audience will be physically present. You must remember that the examiner is in fact your audience, and should plan accordingly. When awarding marks for criterion B the examiner will take into account the fact that you are not able to engage your audience directly using eye contact and gesture. You can interest the audience (in this case, the examiner) through the use of rhetorical devices both verbal and structural, such as those used in speeches.

You may, if you wish, use visual aids to support your presentation. If you do so, copies of the visual aids used must be included with the notes sent to the examiner, and you must arrange and present the visual aids to allow the examiner to make use of them while listening to the presentation.

You will not be penalized if you choose not to include visual aids, as you can demonstrate consideration of your intended audience (the examiner) in non-visual ways.

## **Conduct of section 2 of the alternative oral assessment**

Weighting: 15%

Duration: 10 minutes delivery time

### **Presentation**

The oral presentation follows the oral commentary and the recording is not stopped or paused between the two tasks. The invigilator or student should verbally indicate the transition from the commentary to the presentation.

Note that you have only one attempt at the presentation.

You may take prepared notes into the assessment; these notes are sent to the examiner, along with the recording. Notes must be brief and in point form, totaling no more than one side of A4 paper.

You may also use visual aids in the presentation if you so wish.

In the presentation, you will be expected to show:

- knowledge and understanding of the works
- thorough appreciation of the aspect(s) discussed
- good use of strategies to engage an audience
- use of language and register appropriate for the activity.

### **Notes used in the assessment**

Schools are reminded that while SSST students may take their notes and texts into the preparation room, all notes taken into the final assessment room (for both the section 1 individual oral commentary and for the section 2 individual oral presentation) must be brief and in point form, totaling no more than one side of A4 paper for each section of the oral assessment.

Note that the student's notes must not comprise the full text of either the commentary or the presentation. Reading from a full transcript will be considered malpractice.