**IB English Exams**

**Sixteen Years’ Worth of HL Paper Two Questions**

**2016**

***Prose: The Novel and Short Story***

* A plot twist intrigues both writer and reader, but the seeds of that turn of events must be sown early to ensure its plausibility. Compare the ways in which at least two authors you have studied have prepared the reader for these plot twists.
* Characters in works of prose fiction are often running away or escaping from something or someone. Compare the means by which such flight is presented, and its narrative significance, in at least two of the prose works you have studied.
* Readers are often enticed by the idiosyncratic or quirky narrator. Compare how at least two authors that you have studied have crafted such distinctive voices, and to what effect.

**2015**

***Prose: The Novel and Short Story***

* A narrator may be close to, or even part of, the action in a work of fiction, or distant in time and/or space. What is the effect of either the closeness or the distance of narrators in at least two works you have studied?
* We often talk of characters arriving at some sort of epiphany; with reference in at least two works you have studied, compare the means by which our attention is drawn to these moments and their impact within the works.
* “We read fiction because it pleases us, is beautiful.” What, to you, constitutes this “beauty” in a work of prose fiction and to what extent and by what means have at least two of the authors you have studied created “beautiful” works?

**2014**

***Prose: The Novel and Short Story***

* Using at least two works you have studied, show how and to what extent authors have created interesting characters whose thoughts remain hidden.
* Discuss the importance of the journey as an organizing structure in at least two works you have studied.
* Discuss the means by which authors endeavor to control our sympathy in at least two works you have studied.

**2013**

***Prose: The Novel and Short Story***

* Though plot may be said, at its simplest level, to be a sequence of events, what truly distinguishes prose fiction is the use of narrative disruption: impediment, detour, diversion, or digression. In at least two works in your study, how have writers created narrative disruption and to what effect?
* “Successful characterization involves taking the reader to the heart, to the inner core, of an imagined person.” In at least two works in your study, discuss by what means and with what degree of success authors have tried to “take you to the heart” of their characters.
* A moral or a lesson is a common convention in stories. In what ways, and for what purposes, have at least two of your chosen authors either adhered to, or subverted this convention?

**2012**

***Prose: The Novel and Short Story***

* In what ways and to what effect do *at least two* of the works you have studied explore the conflict between private and public interest?
* “Fiction is by its nature artificial: it provides a means of conferring shape, pattern, and order on chaos.” To what extent do you find this statement to be true of *at least two* works you have studied?

***General Literature***

* In what ways and to what effect have *at least two* of the works you have studied employed elements of exaggeration or a sense of the grotesque in their portrayal of character, setting, or action?
* To what extent is that which is man-made a concern in *at least two* of the works you have studied?
* How far and to what effect do *at least two* of the works you have studied make use of individual or multiple voices to articulate key ideas?
* In what ways are *at least two* of the works you have studied interested in the portrayal of psychological, physical, or some other kind of violence?

**2011**

***Prose: The Novel and Short Story***

* In what ways and for what reasons do the works of prose fiction you have studied seek to represent thought or interior consciousness?
* ‘Fiction is an essentially rhetorical art—that is to say the novelist or short-story writer persuades us to share a certain view of the world for the duration of the reading experience.” To what extent do you agree with this statement?

***General Literature***

* Authors are aware of the power of their works to shock the reader. Referring to *at least two* of the works in your study, explore some of the methods they have employed to do this.
* In what ways and to what effects do *at least two* of the works you have studied make use of one or more aspects of the natural work as a significant motif?
* Texts frequently present two (or more) realities, which are often very different. Referring to *at least two* of the works you have studied, show to what extent and in what ways writers have made use of the interest and tension this creates.
* “A writer is always being asked ‘For whom do you write?’.” Discuss the author’s sense of his or her audience in *at least two* of the works you have studied.

**2010**

***Prose: The Novel and Short Story***

* “Where other people exist genuine individuality is never possible.” To what extent does this statement reflect the experiences of the central characters and problems encountered by them in *at least two* works of prose fiction you have read.
* Discuss the ways in which *at least two* writers you have studied have sought to undermine or interfere with the “voices” of their characters in order to persuade, manipulate or instruct their audience.

***General Literature***

* Compare the presentation and significance of older people in *at least two* works you have studied.
* “With the exception, perhaps, of music and dance, in all kinds of art it is possible to distinguish the content from the form.” In what ways do *at least two* works you have studied make use of this relationship between content and form.
* Discuss the role of education and/or learning (in the widest sense) in *at least two* works you have studied.
* Literature often deals with the themes of coincidence, chance or accident. To what extent, and in what ways, have *at least two* works you have studied dealt with all or any of these ideas.

**2009**

***Prose: The Novel and Short Story***

* “Authors use the portrayal of characters who are somehow trapped or imprisoned as a means to criticize society. Referring closely to *at least two* of the works in your study, show to what extent and in what ways this statement is true.
* Analyze the extent to which the reliability of the narrator can affect the reader’s understanding of events in *at least two* of the works you have studied.

***General Literature***

* Writers of literature rarely offer answers that resolve the issues they raise. To what extent and in what ways does this statement apply to *at least two* of the works you have studied?
* In what ways is the literature you have studied concerned with gaining, maintaining or losing a paradise of some kind? Refer closely in your answer to *at least two* works.
* Poetry can be prosaic and prose can be poetic. Explore this statement in relation to the varieties of language used in *at least two* of the works you have studied.
* “There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.” To what extent and to do *at least two* of the works you have studied present concepts of good and bad as a matter of perception?

**2008**

***Prose: The Novel and Short Story***

* Discuss the ways in which *at least two* novels or short stories you have studied demonstrate that the search for identity can be a conscious or an unconscious process.
* “Defiance becomes our duty in the face of injustice.” Referring to *at least two* works you have studied, explore the ways in which the writers have attempted to persuade us to accept or challenge this view.

***General Literature***

* “Why won’t writers allow children simply to be children?” Discuss the presentation and significance of children, or the state of childhood, in *at least two* works you have studied in the light of this complaint.
* It is said that writers are the conscience of the world. In what ways have *at least two* of the works you have studied encouraged you to appreciate or question this assertion?
* “Art is a lie that makes us realize the truth.” Discuss *at least two* works you have studied in light of this statement, and say how far you would agree with it.
* “Although doubt is not a pleasant condition, certainty is an absurd one.” In the light of this statement, explore the impressions of doubt and/or certainty conveyed in *at least two* works you have studied.

**2007**

***Prose: The Novel and Short Story***

* “The art of the storyteller is to hold the attention of the reader.” With reference to **two** or **three** works you have studied, discuss ways in which the writers have employed techniques that hold your attention.
* Literature is often about crossing boundaries, both physically and mentally. In what ways, and to what extent, does the crossing of boundaries contribute to **two** or **three** works you have studied?

***General Literature***

* Some writers present a world view that is pessimistic and disorderly, while others present a world of hope and possibility. How, and to what extent, do your writers reflect these views in **two** or **three** works you have studied?
* “It is the role of literature to challenge and confront the conventional values of a society.” In what ways, and to what extent, have conventional values been challenged in **two** or **three** works you have studied?
* “Memory feeds imagination.” To what effect has memory been used in **two** or **three** works you have studied?
* “It is impossible for literature to be completely objective.” How, and to what extent, does this statement apply to **two** or **three** works you have studied?

**2006**

***Prose: The Novel and Short Story***

* “My own preference is for a story that is kaleidoscopic, with a number of different voices rather than one character speaking for the entire novel or short story.” Focusing on single and/or multiple voices, discuss the effects of viewpoint in the **two or three** novels or short stories you have studied.
* “The characters of a novel can only be individualized if they are set in a background of particularized time and place.” How important is the setting of a particular time and/or place to the development of the characters? Refer in detail to *at least two* novels or short stories.

***General Literature***

* “Art is on the side of the oppressed.” Evaluate the means by which **two or three** works in your study either confirm or raise questions about the validity of this assertion.
* “Works of literature are often layered, and may require close attention to discover their depth and complexity.” With respect to **two or three** of the works you have studied, show how valued this view is.
* “A writer conveys not only experiences but a whole world in which these are possible.” With respect to **two or three** works you have studied, discuss whether the author has created a coherent, imagined “world.”
* In what ways and to what effect have writers in your study made use of illustrative elements such as anecdotes, analogies, allusions and the like in their works?

**2005**

***Prose: The Novel and Short Story***

* How far, and in what ways, do writers present issues of self-awareness and/or self-deception in **two or three** novels or short stories you have studied?
* Symbols and/or motifs are an essential element of many novels and short stories. How have either or both of these devices been used and, in your opinion, how successfully, in **two or three** of the works you have studied?

***General Literature***

* Using **two or three** works you have studied, discuss how and to what extent the writers have show the pervasive influence of the past.
* If one of the roles of literature is to provide insight into human nature, by what techniques and to what degree did your texts offer you such insight? Discus with reference to **two or three** works you have studied.
* A writer may speak in his or her own voice or take on the voice of a character or persona. Comparing **two or three** works you have studied in the light of this statement, discuss what effects these choices have on each work as a whole.
* “In the end is my beginning.” This is a statement made by an author to describe how he organizes his works. What do you understand by the sentence, and how does it cast light on the literary strategies employed in **two or three** works you have studied.

**2004:**

***Prose: The Novel and Short Story***

* Compare the ways in which writers of **two or three** novels in your study have sought to make their portrayal of characters and/or situations credible.
* With close reference to **two or three** novels in your study, compare the ways in which writers have used narrative strategies and with what effect.

***General Literature***

* “Some writers succeed in hypnotizing the reader; others compel the reader to think.” Compare and contrast **two or three** works of literature in your study in light of this statement.
* “In literature the concept of ‘home’ is often used to locate the thoughts of memories and dreams of humankind.” In the light of this quotation, explore the ways in which ‘home’ is used in **two or three** works of literature you have studied.
* Compare the ways in which writers have explored the relationship between experience and understanding. Refer in detail to any **two or three** works of literature in your study.
* Consider the use made of music or musical elements in any **two or three** works of literature you have studied.

**2003**

***Prose: The Novel and Short Story***

* “Not rounding off, but opening out.” Comment upon the way writers of the novel short story deal with the ending in relation to the whole. In your answer you should refer to **two or three** novels you have studied.
* To what extent would you agree that plot should be valued more highly than style in the novel? In your answer you should refer to **two or three** novels you have studied.

***General Literature***

* In what ways does the concept “freedom of choice” inform your reading in any **two or three** works you have studied?
* To what extent have you found it possible, in your consideration of literary works, to separate the individual from his or her public role? In your answer you should refer to any **two or three** works you have studied?
* “Fact versus fantasy; this is a clash that can have comic or tragic results.” Bearing this statement in mind, explore the results of using realism and fantasy in any **two or three** works you have studied.
* Compare how writers in your study have explored the themes of judgment and punishment, or disguise and deceit, and with what effect.

**2002**

***Prose: The Novel and Short Story***

* In novels and short stories, characters tend to have both an “inner life” and a “public life.” Both of these may be part of the fiction, if not equally in every work. Choose examples from your reading to discuss how and how effectively these two aspects of human existence are presented.
* A story has to be told by somebody. Compare in detail your impressions of the “storytellers” in **two or three** novels you have studied. Was the “storyteller” the same as the writer (implicitly or explicitly) or not? How does this question influence your reading?

***General Literature***

* To read a work which was produced in a culture other than your own has difficulties, but cultural differences between audience and text may be productive. How far do you agree?
* Literature admits conflicts between good and good, as well as between good and evil. Which **two or three** works would you choose to discuss to illustrate this generalization, and why might both types of conflict be important?
* Compare in some detail the use made of the cinema or techniques form the cinema in **two or three** works you have studied.
* How far has your study of **two or three** works of literature suggested that the idea of the writer’s “intention” is beset with difficulties or is a useful approach of both?

**2001**

***Prose: The Novel and Short Story***

* Compare the openings of novels which you have read, saying how these openings have drawn your into fiction, and how re-reading of them reflects the primary concerns of each work.
* Novels often present the inner or private thoughts of the characters involved. Discuss how and to what effect novels which you have read made use of such ‘inner or private thoughts.’

***General Literature***

* Discuss in what ways argument and persuasion are included in literary works you have studied. Compare the effects in **two** works you choose.
* “The best lack conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity.” Consider works you have studied in light of this statement.
* “Satire is a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody’s face but their own.” How far have you found that the enjoyment of satire or satirical elements in your reading arises from such a view?
* To what extent, and with what effect, how works in your study incorporated either conflict and/or reconciliation between values of science and those of art?