



Oide

Tacú leis an bhFoghlaim
Ghairmiúil i measc Ceannairí
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

From Reading to Response: Navigating Sensitive Texts, Oracy, and Writing with Purpose

PLE 25-26





Structure of our Day

Session 1 9:15 – 11:00	Navigating Stories and Perspectives
11:00 – 11:20	 Tea/Coffee
Session 2 – 11:20 – 13:00	Oracy and Collaboration in the Classroom
13:00-14:00	 Lunch
Session 3 - 14:00 – 15:45	Writing with Purpose: Opportunities for Authentic Student Expression

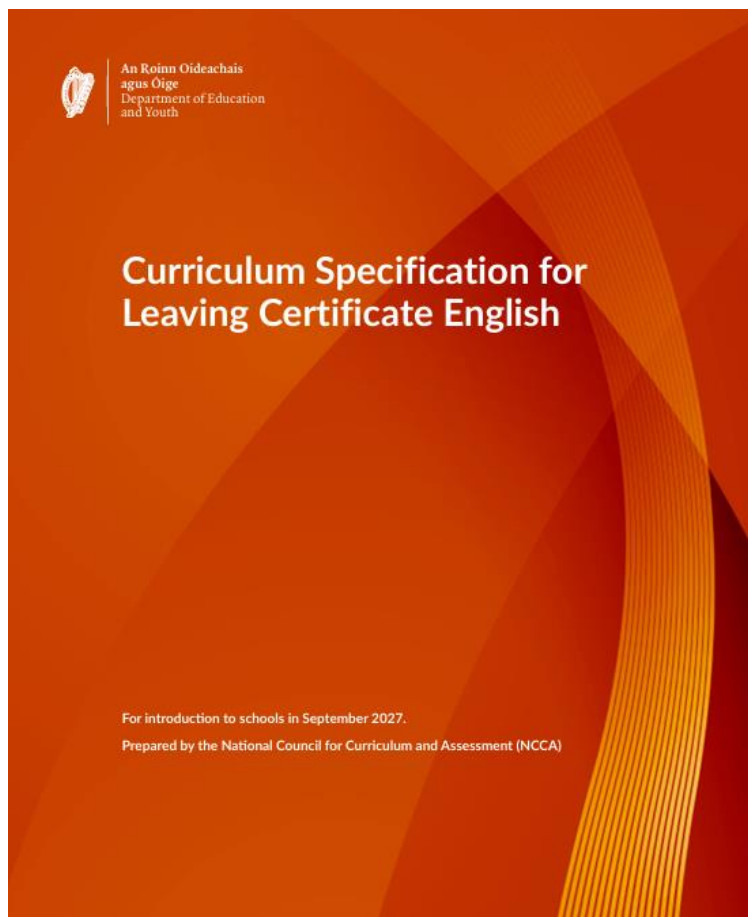


Scan to Access

Senior Cycle Redevelopment English Updates



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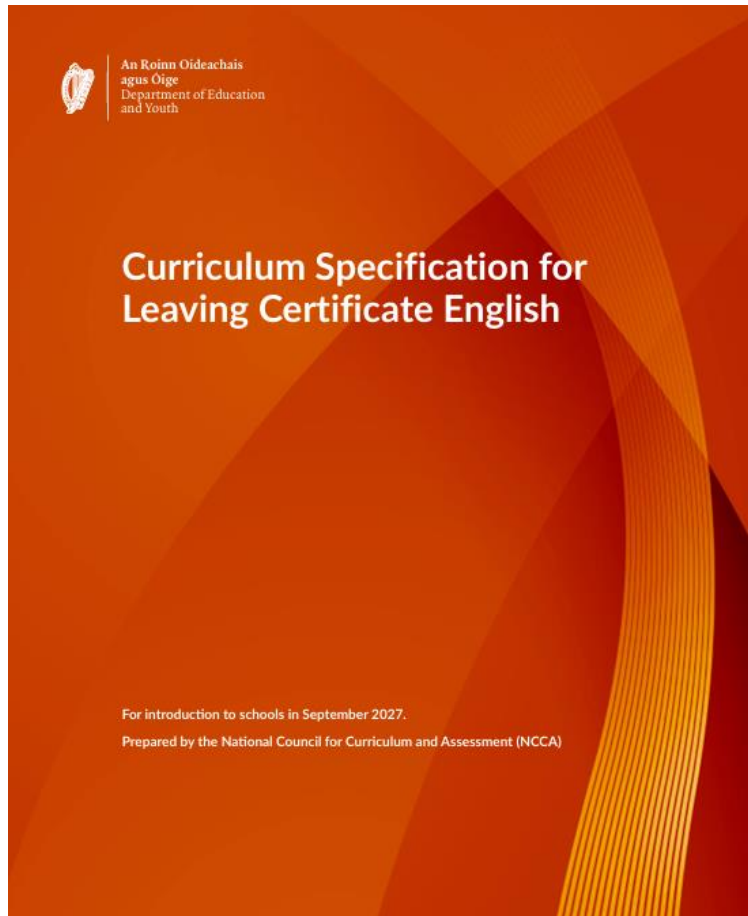
A new Leaving Certificate English specification will be introduced no earlier than September 2027 for fifth year students and will replace the current Leaving Certificate English syllabus.

Leaving Certificate English invites students into rich experiences with language so that they become fluent and thoughtful users of it and more aware of its significance in their lives. It develops a range of literacy and oral skills in a variety of areas, personal, social, and cultural. Students develop a wide range of skills and concepts. These will allow them to interpret and enjoy a range of material so that they become independent learners who can operate independently in the world beyond the school.

Leaving Certificate English is assessed at two levels, Ordinary and Higher level. - **NCCA**



At a Glance



- Published September 2nd, 2025
- Details in relation to AACs to be published in a separate document
- Introduction in schools no earlier than September 2027
- Professional learning will commence one year prior to implementation.

Key Documents



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Junior Cycle English



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Transition Year Programme Statement

For introduction across all schools in September 2025.
Prepared by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)

THE LEAVING CERTIFICATE ENGLISH SYLLABUS

PREFACE

The remit of the specialist course committee for English, which was put in place by the NCCA, stressed that the new English syllabus should give priority to the study and acquisition of the language skills, both oral and written, that are needed for adult life.

Leaving Certificate English Syllabus

Developing students' interest in literature remains central to Leaving Certificate English. The syllabus has also been innovative in this area. Building on the Junior Certificate syllabus, it has introduced the comparative study of texts and the study of film, enlarged the range of choice in texts and revised and updated the poetry course.



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Looking at English Draft Guide for Post-Primary Schools

Inspectorate
January 2023

Department of Education Inspectorate
gov.ie/education

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Session 1:

Navigating Stories & Perspectives

Our Focus this Session is to...



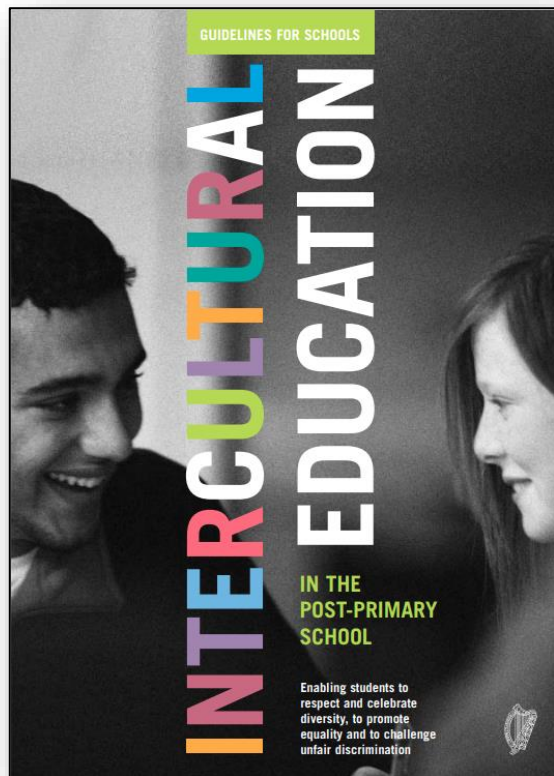
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- Explore the challenges and opportunities within our text selections
- Discuss possible strategies for facilitating sensitive themes, evaluating text choices, and understanding student perspectives.



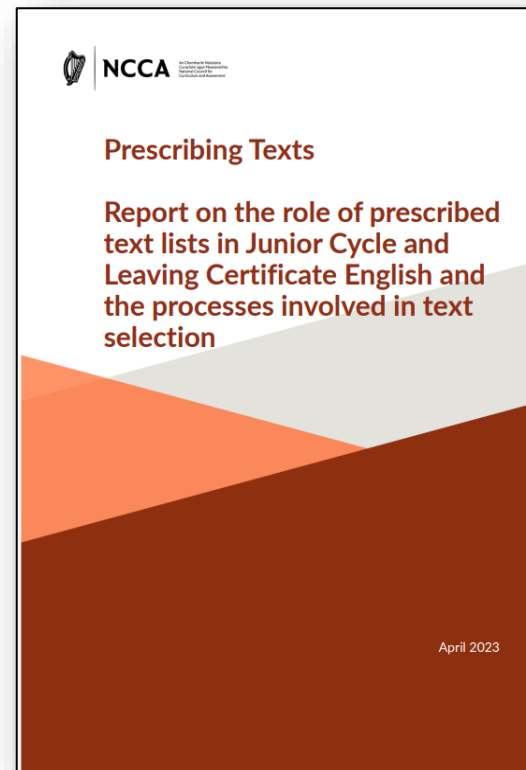


Rationale



'An intercultural education is valuable to all students in equipping them to participate in an increasingly diverse Ireland, Europe and global society.'

(NCCA, *Intercultural Education in Post-Primary Schools: Guidelines for Teachers*, 2006).



'The English classroom is a space where issues such as love, loss, revenge, power, race, class, authority, etc. are discussed and examined, usually in response to issues arising in texts studied.'

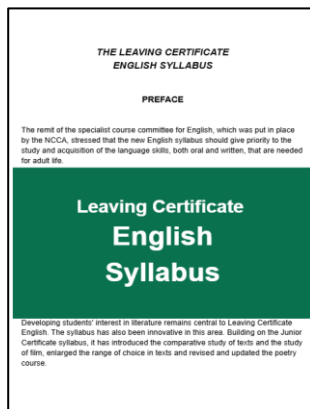
(NCCA, *Prescribing Texts: Report on the role of prescribed texts lists in JC and LC English and the processes involved in text selection*, 2023).



The Range of Texts

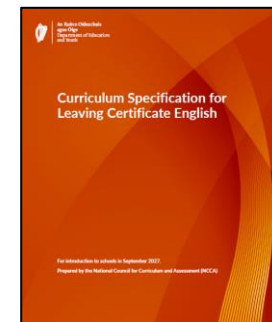
“It is vital that teachers introduce students to texts which create a **meaningful context and invite dialogue** and interaction...”

(Leaving Cert. English syllabus, 1999 p.6)



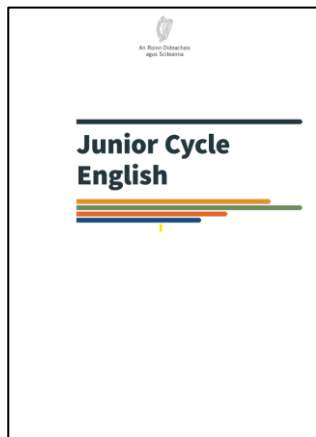
“They will engage with a range of texts that give voice to **varied cultural identities**, representations and **social perspectives**. Students will see the world they live in reflected in the texts they engage with, but also, they should **explore other lives, times and experiences** to develop empathy and an understanding of the world around them”

(English SC Spec. 2025 p.4)



“To engage personally with and think critically about an increasingly **broad range** of spoken, written and multimodal texts.”

(JC English spec. 2015, p.5)




Reflecting on Texts in Previous CPD



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TEXTFLIX My Class Drama Film Poetry Novel Short Story Non-literary



Considerations when reviewing chosen texts:

- ★ Gender balance
- ★ Positive role models
- ★ Representation of nationalities, cultures, socio-economic status
- ★ Is there a single story or multiple narratives?
- ★ Other...

Text choice for Junior Cycle English

‘It is essential that over the three years of junior cycle, students have a wide and varied experience of texts that **stimulate, engage, inspire and challenge** them.’

(English Specification, p. 10)




Prepare



Pre-Teach Key Concepts

Read



Making Connections

React



Making Judgements

What Challenges Arise When Teaching Complex Texts?



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- Curriculum restrictions
- Student engagement and perceptions
- Teacher preparation and support
- Digital or media literacy issues
- Sensitive or controversial topics



Benefits of Engaging with Strong Narratives



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- Enhances understanding
- Promotes an appreciation of sociocultural change
- Develops ideas and interpretations
- Boosts cognition and emotional intelligence
- Creates reading enjoyment!

(Aguirre, 2012)



“A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies...The man who never reads lives only one.”

George R.R. Martin, *A Dance with Dragons*



Texts Across Time



- **Then vs. Now:** How might different audiences see these texts differently?
- **Big Ideas:** What do they show about identity, power, or values?
- **Changing Meanings:** How can the meaning of texts change over time?



Text Choices and Learner Context

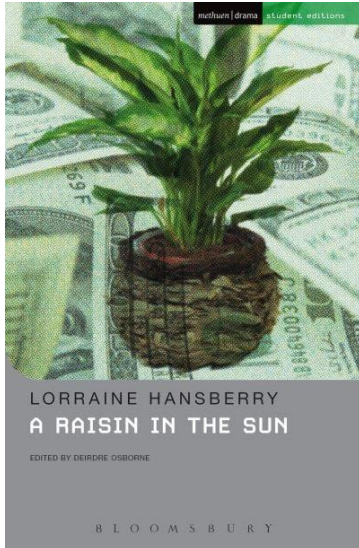


Image courtesy of
Methuen

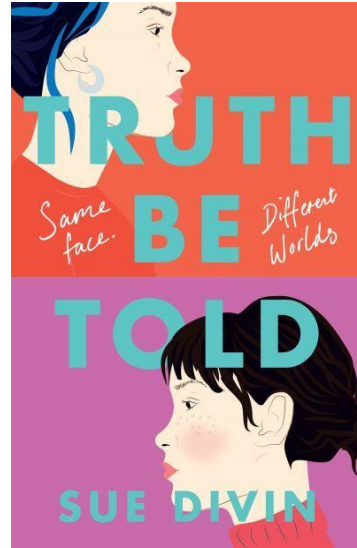


Image courtesy of
Macmillan



Image courtesy of
Random House

Reflect in your departments:

1. What factors do you consider when choosing texts and classroom materials for your learners?
2. To what extent does the context and background of the learners influence how you negotiate these chosen texts?

Food for Thought: The Need for Analysis



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"A story is a way to say something that can't be said any other way, and it takes every word in the story to say what the meaning is."

(Flannery O'Connor, 1969)



"I don't regard the 80s as a historical period as it was during my lifetime. I wrote the book during lockdown, sitting daily at a desk, for a year. ...everything I had to say, I said in the novel. It cannot be put any other way."

(Claire Keegan, 2025)



'Is it enough to just read the texts?'



Student Concerns



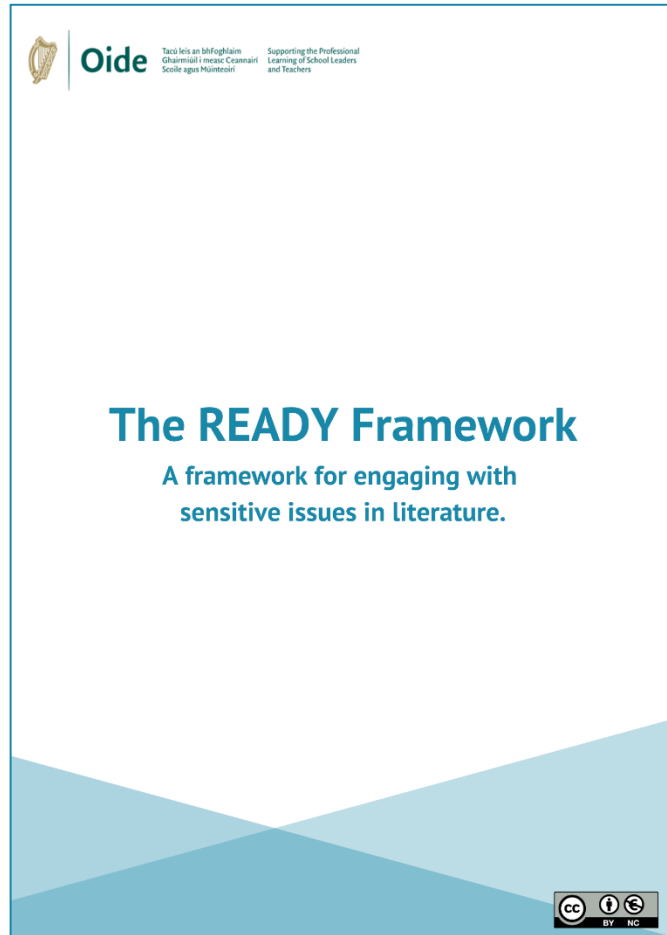
“Why does this matter?”

“What if I get it wrong?”

“Is it safe to say this?”



The READY Framework



R – Recognise: Acknowledge sensitive themes in texts

E – Establish Boundaries: Create safe and respectful discussion spaces

A – Activate Content/Context: Connect texts to students' lives and surroundings

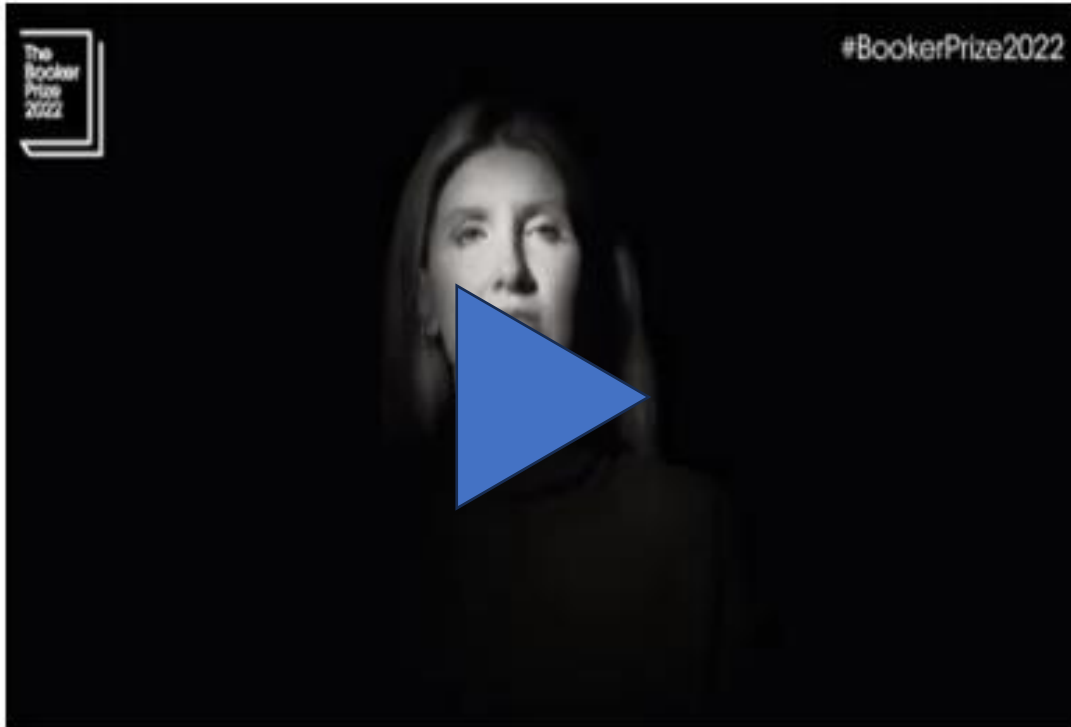
D – Discuss Responsibly/Responsibility: Encourage critical thinking and empathy

Y – Yield Space: Give students room for reflection and voice

Using READY: *‘Small Things Like These’*



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Video courtesy of The Booker Prize

- R** – Recognise: What sensitive or challenging themes stand out?
- E** – Establish Boundaries: What might make students hesitant to discuss this?
- A** – Activate Content/Context: How might I connect this theme to students' real lives?
- D** – Discuss Responsibly/Responsibility: How could I help students explore ethical or emotional dimensions?
- Y** – Yield Space: How could I give room for student voice and reflection?

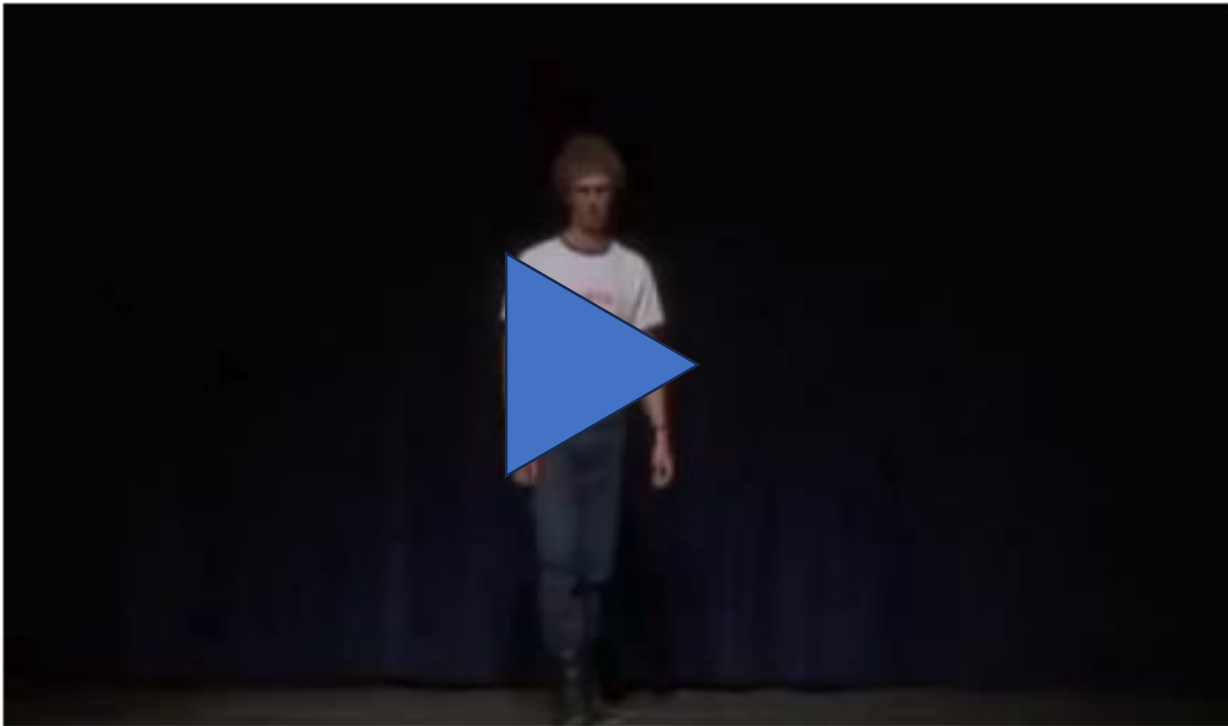
**Consider the extract and its challenges
in relation to your own context.**



Recognising the Individual: *‘Napoleon Dynamite’*



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Courtesy of *Film Clips Live*

**Consider the extract and its challenges
in relation to your own context.**

- R** – Recognise: What sensitive or challenging themes stand out?
- E** – Establish Boundaries: What might make students hesitant to discuss this?
- A** – Activate Content/context: How might I connect this theme to students' real lives?
- D** – Discuss Responsibly/Responsibility: How could I help students explore ethical or emotional dimensions?
- Y** – Yield Space: How could I give room for student voice and reflection?



1. In your departments share your individual insights based on the two previous extracts. (4mins)
2. Choose a text you are **currently** teaching at JC/LC (prescribed/non-prescribed). Choose one READY principle that you feel is most powerful for this text.
3. Plan for 2–3 practical classroom strategies to bring that principle alive.

Each group designs a classroom-ready activity for a text/scene.
Your group should agree on:

Text/Scene: e.g., Small Things Like These, Christmas Eve sequence

READY Principle: e.g., Yield Space

Objective: What do we want students to learn or feel?

Activity Steps: Concrete actions for the lesson (e.g., role-play, debate, reflective journal).

Follow-Up: How will students process or extend this learning?

Your suggested activities can be photographed and uploaded or typed directly onto our shared Padlet for all participants to return to.



tinyurl.com/READYActivity

Measuring the Impact



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Why?



- Ensures principles translate into meaningful classroom impact
- Helps teachers and students identify what works and adapt where needed
- Encourages student voice, empathy, and critical thinking
- Supports teacher professional growth through evidence-based reflection

How?



- Exit tickets with one core learning and one question
- Student reflective journals responding to sensitive themes
- Discussion maps to track participation and perspectives
- Peer and self-assessment on group tasks

Spotlight on Prescribed Texts



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***'Of Mice and Men'* has been a classroom favourite for decades.**

- But is it the same text for today's students as it was for us upon our first read?
- Do its themes (loneliness, friendship, prejudice, mercy) land differently now?

Reflection Prompts:

- Why do we choose *Of Mice and Men* (or other favourites) every year?
- What critical conversations emerge when we teach it today?
- Are there perspectives, voices, or interpretations we may have missed before?



Spotlight on a Text We Always Come Back to...



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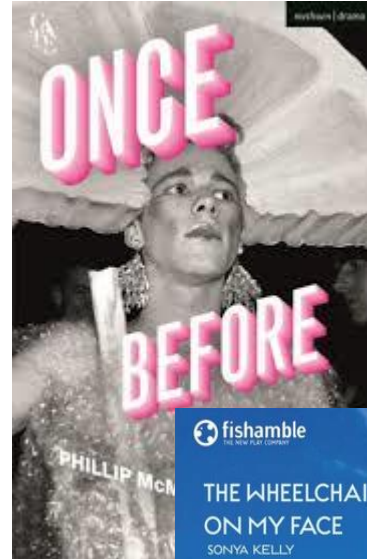
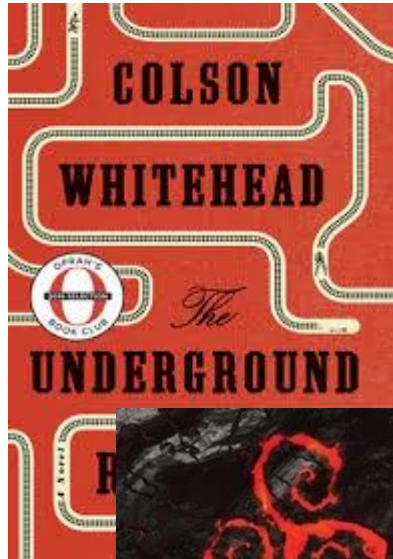
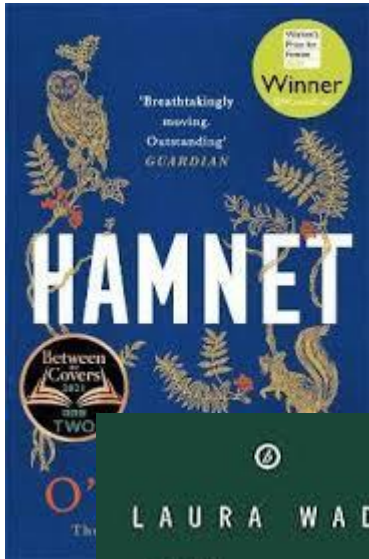


1. **Individually:** Consider one new perspective on a text you are studying that you'd like your students to consider this year.
2. **Pair:** Share ideas. What critical conversations could this open up?
3. **Whole group:** One or two volunteers feed back key insights.

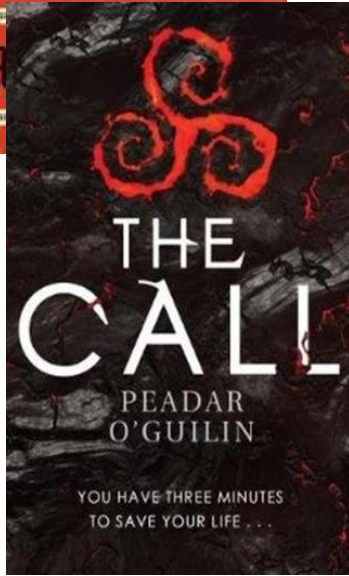
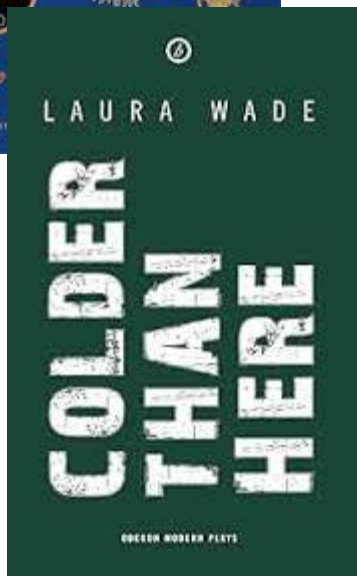
Spotlight on a Text We May Not Know as Well...



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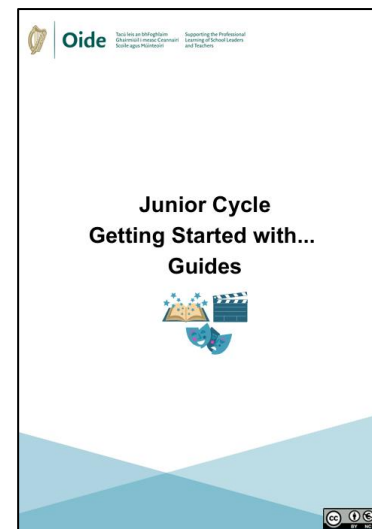
- What voices or experiences might be missing here that newer texts could bring into the classroom?





Getting Started With...

- Visit the Oide website to access all the Getting Started With Guides JC/LC Prescribed Material.
- Locate a text that might suit your class/context?
- Consider how the Ready framework might apply to these texts?



[tinyurl.com/
JCGettingSarted](https://tinyurl.com/JCGettingSarted)



[tinyurl.com/
LCGettingSarted](https://tinyurl.com/LCGettingSarted)

In Case You Didn't Know



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'Every Child a Reader'



childrensbooksireland.ie

From Reflection to Dialogue



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English Teacher - Yvonne Carey

- Co-created Class Expectations
- Socratic Circles
- Four Corner Debates
- Think, Pair, Share
- Triads
- Rally Coach
- Fishbowl
- **Spiderweb Discussion**



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BREAK

11.00 – 11.20



tinyurl.com/OideEnglishMailingList