

# Unit: Books in their times

Duration: 9 lessons

English  
Year 7

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## About the unit

This unit introduces pupils to the notion of the English literary heritage and to certain key writers from that heritage. It aims to create interest and pleasure in the study of texts over time, to provide pupils with a framework for their wider reading and to introduce them to writing critically.

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## Prior learning

In order to complete this unit successfully, pupils should be able to draw on their experience of:

- working in groups;
- making presentations to different groups;
- articulating a personal response to literature;
- comparing texts;
- research, using different sources of information;
- using note making skills;
- language variation.

## Expectations

**Most pupils will:** understand how texts written at different times may differ at word, sentence and text level. They understand the characteristic themes and ideas of individual authors and of specific texts, and can analyse passages, referring to details in their explanation.

**Some pupils will not have progressed so far and will:** be able to identify some similarities and differences between texts written at different times.

**Some pupils will have progressed further and will:** identify and explain the key features which characterise texts written by different authors at different times. They will be able to convey their understanding to others through polished presentations.

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## Starters

- Chronological continuum
- Ancient & modern
- Sequencing
- Pre-1500 texts
- Dramatic reading
- Critical terms

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## Stages

1. How some writing consciously reflects earlier texts.

Comparison of texts: how can you tell how old a text is?

Construction of a literary timeline.

2. Research the life and work of an author.

Presentation to the class about the author.

Development of the timeline with additional information.

3. Reading texts over time which explore similar themes.

Group presentations of one of the texts to the class.

Pupils consider their own reading in the light of their knowledge of the literary heritage.

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## Resources

Extracts from key works and writers of the literary heritage such as *Beowulf*, *the fight with Grendel*; Chaucer, including *The Pardoner's Tale*; Anglo-Saxon poetry; Langland: *Piers Plowman*; Shakespeare; Pope; William Blake; Tennyson *Morte d'Arthur*; Charles Dickens; T.S.Eliot; *Lord of the Flies*; Alternative fairy tales such as *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*; Film: *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*.

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## Books in their time: Objectives stage 1

Word	Sentence	Reading	Writing	Speaking and listening
W16 Unfamiliar words	S18 Sentences in older text	R17 Independent reading R20 Literary heritage		

## Books in their time: Objectives stage 2

Word	Sentence	Reading	Writing	Speaking and listening
		R1 Locate information R4 Note-making R20 Literary heritage		S&L3 Shape a presentation S&L6 Report main points

## Books in their time: Objectives stage 3

Word	Sentence	Reading	Writing	Speaking and listening
W21 Subject vocabulary	S18 Sentences in older text	R20 Literary heritage	Wr19 Reflective writing	S&L3 Shape a presentation S&L17 Extend spoken repertoire

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## Stage 1 Lesson 1

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### Starter

- Issue copies of recent and contemporary fiction for personal reading during the unit. Give pupils as much choice as possible within a range of quality texts.

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### Introduction

- The teacher asks pupils to think of their favourite traditional stories and to describe the themes and significant events/situations of these stories. The teacher establishes common features of traditional tales.
- The teacher reads a story, such as *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka, which has been written in response to an earlier text.

### Development

- Pupils in groups make notes on ways in which the modern story reflects or departs from the original fairy tale, using a comparison grid that includes plot, character, sentence structure and use of language.

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### Plenary

The teacher reviews the modern and the traditional versions of the tale. Why might a modern version be different? Do pupils know any other stories which respond to earlier writing?

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### Homework

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## Stage 1 Lesson 2

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### Starter

- Create a chronological continuum. Give pairs of pupils cards, each containing a phrase or sentence, drawn from across the last millennium. Pupils arrange themselves in a timeline and explain the evidence for their positioning.

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### Introduction

- The teacher asks pupils: how can you tell how old a text is? Provisional ideas are collected based on pupils' previous reading experience.
- The teacher models reading of an older text from the literary heritage such as the fight with Grendel in *Beowulf* or an extract from Chaucer or Shakespeare.
- Use ancient and modern versions as appropriate.

### Development

- Working as a whole class, pupils annotate the extract, selecting those features which identify it as an older text.
- If time allows, groups of pupils discuss and annotate a second (brief) extract.

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### Plenary

The teacher reviews elements which help to identify older texts such as: word level (e.g. *words no longer in use, changes in spelling and meaning*); sentence level (e.g. *length of sentences, use of punctuation*); text level (e.g. *specific references, changes in subject matter, attitudes or values*). Pupils provide examples.

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### Homework

Pupils are asked to use the criteria identified in the lesson and collect an example from home or from the school library of an extract from an older text.

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## Stage 1 Lesson 3

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### Starter

- Give out cards which are in matching pairs: the early version of a word and its modern equivalent. Pupils have to find the card which matches the one they were given.
- Discuss language change, using these examples.

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### Introduction

- The teacher introduces the idea of a text timeline which will be used to provide an historical context for this unit. (Teachers could check with their History colleagues about the best way of doing this.)
- The teacher then places annotated copies of the texts discussed in the previous lesson on the timeline, talking through the reasons for the positioning.
- Discuss with pupils their examples from homework and place these on the text timeline.

### Development

- In groups, pupils are given 5 extracts from key works from the literary heritage which show changes in the use of language over time. (Examples may include: Anglo-Saxon poetry, Chaucer, Langland, Shakespeare, Pope, Blake, Dickens, T.S.Eliot, and contemporary writers including those from alternative traditions such as American English or Black writing.)
- Pupils are asked to put the extracts into chronological order, justifying their choice in relation to previously identified features.

### Differentiation

- Differentiation can be achieved partly by careful matching of texts with particular groups of pupils. Teacher works with one group.

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### Plenary

The five extracts are reviewed in terms of significant word, sentence and text level features and placed in the correct chronological order on the timeline.

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### Homework

Reading of personal novels.

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## Stage 2 Lesson 4

### Starter

- Sequencing exercise on ways of telling a life story. Key elements of a significant writer's life are put on a card. In pairs, pupils must find more than one way of arranging them to tell the story of that writer's life.

### Introduction

- The teacher models researching the life and work of an author from the literary heritage. Use an extract from an autobiographical or biographical text or encyclopaedia to show how pupils can make notes on aspects of the life and work, such as, important events in the life, the historical background, titles and genres, key themes and ideas in the work.

### Development

- Pupils, in groups, are allocated authors from the literary heritage to work on, preferably in the library or, if necessary, in the classroom using resources provided by the teacher.
- A checklist or KWL frame can be provided to help weaker pupils to categorise their research.

### Plenary

The plenary is used to review the process of research. Where is the best place to find information? How much should pupils write? How can the work be shared? How much information is needed? How can the information be presented to the rest of the class?

### Homework

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## Stage 2 Lesson 5

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### Starter

- The teacher models giving a presentation, e.g. *using notes as prompts, not simply reading aloud, providing subtitles for aspects of the talk.*

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### Introduction

- Pupils in 'expert' groups prepare a brief presentation about their group's author, and add their author to the timeline.
- Pupils then re-group, jigsaw fashion, so that each new group contains an 'expert' on each author.

### Development

- Pupils present their findings to the new group.
- Pupils should be given a specific purpose for listening to others' presentations, e.g. *making notes for their own later writing about the literary heritage.*

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### Plenary

The teacher uses the plenary to establish links between writers and to discuss the timeline.

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### Homework

Pupils write a reflective evaluation of their contribution to the presentations as speakers and as listeners.

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## Stage 3 Lesson 6

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### Starter

- Pairs of pupils are given a line or two from a pre-1500 text such as *The Lord's Prayer* and asked to read it aloud.
- A third pupil watches, listens and reports back on how they tackled the task.

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### Introduction

- The teacher reminds pupils of the first lesson in this unit in which they met pre-1500 texts.
- Shared reading (or listening on tape) of an extract from Chaucer in the original and discussion of the difference between hearing and reading a pre-1500 text.
- The teacher tells pupils that they will be asked in groups to present one of the texts to the rest of the class.

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### Development

- In groups, pupils are allocated different text extracts to read and/ or listen to. Audiotapes can give access to texts which pupils could not read unaided. There needs to be links between the texts which should be from different times. (For example, the theme of betrayal can be found in *The Pardoner's Tale*, *The Bible*, *Morte d'Arthur*, *Macbeth*, etc.)
- Pupils decide on which part of the extract they will prepare as a presentation.
- The teacher works with the least fluent readers.

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### Plenary

Groups explain to the class how they decided on the particular extract which will form the basis of their presentation.

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### Homework

Ongoing personal reading.

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## Stage 3 Lesson 7

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### Starter

- Teacher models the reading aloud of an extract in a monotone and invites the class to suggest ways of improving the reading by 'directing' the teacher's performance.

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### Introduction

- Groups work on the texts they have selected to prepare for presentation through dramatised reading.

### Development

- Groups make their presentations.
- Pupils in the audience are given prompt sheets to focus their listening and evaluation.

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### Plenary

The plenary is used to discuss and evaluate the group presentations.

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### Homework

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## Stage 3 Lesson 8

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### Starter

- Pupils are given cards on which are written terms that might be appropriate in a book review. Pupils must create a positive/negative continuum of critical terms by arranging themselves in a line and be ready to explain why they stand where they do.

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### Introduction

- The teacher asks pupils to consider the book they have read for homework during the unit. The teacher models writing a critical response to something he/she is reading.
- A frame could be used to help pupils with the structure of the review and with the type of language and sentence structure most appropriate.

### Development

- Pupils plan their writing about their chosen text, using the terms introduced in Lesson 1 and 2. They attempt to relate the book to other similar works they have read or heard about, as modelled by the teacher.
- Writing partners comment on the plans.

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### Plenary

The teacher reinforces points about continuity and change in literature over time. References to contemporary literary and media texts are sought.

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### Homework

Pupils complete a review of their chosen text establishing references, where appropriate, to other writing and the timeline.

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## Stage 3 Lesson 9

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### Starter

- The teacher uses a review written by a pupil (not necessarily a pupil in the class) to model proof-reading.
- Pairs of pupils then have five minutes to proof-read each other's reviews, and authors make any changes they think useful.

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### Introduction

- In groups, pupils discuss the books they have read during the unit, and decide on their group's top recommendations. If recommending a book, they must provide evidence for their claims, e.g. *by reading an extract to make a point, describing an episode.*

### Development

- Each group puts forward its top recommendations.

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### Plenary

Through class discussion a list of books recommended by the class is built up and authors are added to the timeline.

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### Homework

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