SAMPLE LESSON

ENGLISH CULTURE AND LITERATURE

Instructor's Handbook of Lesson Notes

The Neighbourhood Voices Project Edition

A community is also a text: a place with a voice, a history, and lessons still being read.

Advanced Literary Studies | College-Level English as a Second Language

Prerequisite: Language and Culture

Ministerial Competency 4SA3: Treat in English Literary Works and Subjects of Social or Cultural Scope

Fall 2026

Complete Edition: Front Matter, Units 1 to 15, and Appendices

Featuring the Neighbourhood Voices Project Research Focus, with a Literary Pathway for Literature-Inclined Students

Aligned with the New Ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur Framework (Devis ministériel)

Prepared by

Didimus Zencha Ayeseh

SAMPLE LESSON ---- 1
ENGLISH CULTURE AND LITERATURE ---- 1
8.1 Why This Unit Matters ---- 3
8.2 Learning Objectives ---- 3
Evaluation: Complete Guide, Midterm Writing (20%) ---- 3
Student Strategy Checklist ---- 4
Sample Task and Model Answer ---- 5
8.3 Core Literary Content: From One Claim to a Sustained Argument ---- 5
Worked Examples ---- 6
8.4 Language and Grammar Focus: Transitional Expressions ---- 7
8.5 Classroom Activities ---- 8
8.6 Pedagogical Callout Boxes ---- 8
8.7 Practice Exercises and Answer Key ---- 9
Exercise A (Guided): Choose the Best Transition ---- 9
Exercise B (Independent): Outline a Literary Argument ---- 10
8.8 Homework ---- 11
8.9 Teacher Notes ---- 11

Diagram: At a Glance

Module 2 continues | Focus: thesis, evidence, and transitions | Assessment: Midterm Writing, 20%

8.1 Why This Unit Matters

Unit 8 scales the single-paragraph skill from the Close Reading Exam up to a full, multi-paragraph literary argument, worth 20 percent, the largest assessment students have faced so far. Building a sustained argument, not just one strong claim, is the central new demand this unit.

8.2 Learning Objectives

- Build a multi-paragraph literary argument with a clear thesis carried through each body paragraph.
- Use topic sentences that connect each paragraph back to the thesis.
- Use a range of transitional expressions to signal how ideas relate to one another.
- Select and sequence evidence across an essay, rather than clustering it all in one place.

Evaluation: Complete Guide, Midterm Writing (20%)

Model: Task Specifications

Format: a take-home, thesis-based literary analysis essay, approximately 400 to 500 words, on a prompt covering Trifles, “Marriage Is a Private Affair,” or “The Road Not Taken,” written outside class over approximately one unit.

Content: an introduction with a clear, arguable thesis; two to three body paragraphs, each with a topic sentence connected to the thesis and at least one integrated,

correctly cited quotation; and a conclusion that extends, rather than simply repeats, the thesis. Language expectation: varied sentence structures, accurate grammar, and at least three different transitional expressions used correctly across the essay.

Criterion	Strong Performance	Developing Performance
Thesis and Argument (Literary Analysis and Communication, 80%)	Thesis is specific and arguable; every paragraph visibly develops it.	Thesis is vague or paragraphs drift away from it.
Evidence (Literary Analysis and Communication, 80%)	Evidence is well chosen, integrated, and explained; not merely inserted.	Evidence is present but under-explained or loosely related to the claim.
Organization and Transitions (Literary Analysis and Communication, 80%)	Clear paragraph structure with topic sentences and varied, accurate transitions.	Paragraphs feel like a list; transitions are repetitive, missing, or incorrect.
Language (20%)	Sentence variety and grammatical accuracy support a confident, readable argument.	Repeated grammar errors or simple sentence patterns limit clarity.

Student Strategy Checklist

- Draft your thesis before you draft your introduction; write the introduction around the thesis, not the other way around.
- Give each body paragraph one clear job, stated in its topic sentence, that visibly serves the thesis.
- Plan your evidence before you write: which quotation goes in which paragraph, and why there.

- Use a different transitional expression at the start of each new paragraph; avoid repeating the same one twice.
- Write your conclusion to extend the thesis, for example by naming its broader significance, not to simply restate it word for word.
- Apply the ARMS and CUPS revision strategies from 102 before submitting: Add, Remove, Move, or Substitute content, then check Capitalization, Usage, Punctuation, and Spelling.

Sample Task and Model Answer

Model: Model Outline for a Sample Prompt

Prompt: “How does Trifles use domestic detail to build its argument about who is allowed to see the truth?”

Thesis: Trifles argues that the truth of the crime is legible only to those trained to read domestic detail, and that this same trained attention is exactly what the male investigators dismiss as unimportant.

Body paragraph 1 (topic sentence): The uneven stitching in the quilt first signals that something in the household has gone wrong, long before any direct evidence of the crime appears.

Body paragraph 2 (topic sentence): The broken birdcage builds on this signal, translating disorder into a specific, symbolic account of loss and confinement.

Body paragraph 3 (topic sentence): Because the men dismiss these same details as ‘trifles,’ the play argues that the truth was available all along, just invisible to those not trained to look for it.

Conclusion (extension): the play's title becomes ironic once the domestic details are shown to carry the entire moral weight of the plot.

8.3 Core Literary Content: From One Claim to a Sustained Argument

Concrete moment. Show students a single strong thesis sentence about Trifles, then three unordered, unconnected body paragraphs about the play,

each making a good point but with no clear relationship to one another or to the thesis.

Guided noticing question. Ask: “Each paragraph is individually strong. So why does reading all three together still feel disorganized?” Students usually notice that nothing signals how the paragraphs relate, and that none of them explicitly returns to the thesis.

Model: Plain Definition

A literary argument is a thesis carried consistently across multiple paragraphs, each of which develops one part of that thesis using its own topic sentence and evidence, connected by clear transitions.

Everyday comparison. Building a sustained argument is like building a case for a group project deadline extension: one good reason might not convince your professor, but three connected reasons, presented in a clear order with a clear connection between them, build something much harder to dismiss.

Worked Examples

1. A topic sentence that serves the thesis. If the thesis is about domestic detail revealing truth, a weak topic sentence reads: “The quilt is mentioned in the play.” A strong topic sentence reads: “The uneven stitching in the quilt is the first domestic detail that signals something in the household has gone wrong.” The strong version already argues, not just describes.

2. Sequencing evidence. Placing the strongest, most specific piece of evidence in the final body paragraph, right before the conclusion, often leaves the strongest impression; placing it first can also work if it is used to set up the paragraphs that follow. Either order should be a deliberate choice, not an accident of note-taking order.

3. A transition that does real work. Weak: “Also, the birdcage is a symbol.” This transition adds nothing. Strong: “Building on this same pattern of overlooked detail, the broken birdcage extends the quilt's warning into

something more explicitly symbolic." This transition explains the relationship between two paragraphs, not just their sequence.

8.4 Language and Grammar Focus: Transitional Expressions

A sustained argument depends on transitional expressions that show a reader exactly how one idea relates to the last: addition, contrast, cause, or consequence.

Model: Plain Definition

A transitional expression is a word or short phrase, placed at or near the start of a sentence or paragraph, that signals the logical relationship between that idea and the one before it.

Relationship	Expressions	Example
Addition	furthermore, moreover, in addition	Furthermore, the broken cage door reinforces the same idea of confinement.
Contrast	however, on the other hand, nevertheless	The men see disorder; the women, however, see evidence.
Cause / consequence	as a result, consequently, therefore	The men dismiss the kitchen as unimportant; consequently, they miss the strongest evidence in the play.
Emphasis / conclusion	ultimately, in short, above all	Ultimately, the play argues that attentiveness, not authority, uncovers the truth.

Common Error

Incorrect: "Also, also, the quilt shows disorder." Repeating the same weak connector across multiple paragraphs signals underdeveloped organization.

Corrected: vary connectors across the essay, and prefer a transition that names the actual relationship, such as 'building on this pattern' or 'in contrast to the men's

dismissal.’

8.5 Classroom Activities

Activity	Steps, Timing, and Grouping	Teacher Note
Paragraph Reordering (15 minutes, small groups)	Give groups three body paragraphs about the same thesis, printed out of order with transitions removed. Groups decide the most logical order and write a transition to open each paragraph.	Accept more than one defensible order, as long as the group can justify their sequencing choice aloud.
Outline Workshop for the Midterm Essay (25 minutes, individual with instructor conferencing)	Students draft a one-page outline for their Midterm Writing essay: thesis, three topic sentences, and one piece of planned evidence per paragraph. Instructor circulates for brief individual feedback.	Prioritize conferencing with students whose Unit 7 exam showed a weak thesis or unintegrated evidence.

8.6 Pedagogical Callout Boxes

Teaching Tip

Require the one-page outline from the Outline Workshop as a small completion grade before the essay is due. Students who skip outlining are far more likely to submit a Midterm Writing essay with a drifting, unfocused argument.

Diagram: Argument Skeleton

A simple boxed outline for the board: Thesis (one box) with three arrows leading

down to Topic Sentence 1, Topic Sentence 2, and Topic Sentence 3 (three boxes), each with a smaller box beneath it labelled Evidence. This reusable skeleton can be rebuilt for any thesis-based essay for the rest of the semester.

8.7 Practice Exercises and Answer Key

Exercise A (Guided): Choose the Best Transition

Item 1 is modelled. For items 2 to 10, choose the transitional expression that best fits the logical relationship shown.

Model: Item 1, Modelled

"The quilt shows uneven stitching. ___, the birdcage shows visible damage." → Similarly, because both sentences describe parallel examples of the same idea.

2. "The men dismiss the kitchen as unimportant. ___, they miss the play's central evidence." (cause/consequence)

3. "The father says nothing. ___, his silence speaks louder than an outburst would." (contrast)

4. "The first paragraph proves the quilt is symbolic. ___, the second paragraph shows the birdcage extends this symbolism." (addition)

5. "The speaker claims the path was less travelled. ___, he earlier admits the two paths looked about the same." (contrast)

6. "The women see meaning in the domestic details. ___, the play argues that attentiveness reveals truth." (conclusion/emphasis)

7. "Nnaemeka makes his own choice. ___, he accepts the strain this creates with his father." (addition)

8. "The village expects a traditional marriage. ___, one person's break from this expectation feels significant." (cause/consequence)

9. "The poem uses plain, simple language. ___, it explores a genuinely complex idea." (contrast)

10. “The evidence in paragraph one is textual. ___, the evidence in paragraph two draws on historical context.” (addition)

11. “Each body paragraph develops a different piece of evidence. ___, together they build one sustained argument.” (conclusion/emphasis)

Model: Answer Key, Exercise A

2. As a result / Consequently 3. However / Yet 4. Furthermore / In addition 5. However / Yet 6. Ultimately / In short 7. Furthermore / In addition 8. As a result / Consequently 9. However / Yet 10. Furthermore / In addition 11. Ultimately / In short

Exercise B (Independent): Outline a Literary Argument

Choose one of the three texts studied so far. Answer all ten items to build a complete essay outline.

1. Write one specific, arguable thesis about your chosen text.

2. Write a topic sentence for body paragraph 1 that clearly serves your thesis.

3. Name one piece of evidence (a paraphrased detail or short quotation idea) you would use in body paragraph 1.

4. Write a topic sentence for body paragraph 2 that clearly serves your thesis.

5. Name one piece of evidence you would use in body paragraph 2.

6. Write a topic sentence for body paragraph 3 that clearly serves your thesis.

7. Name one piece of evidence you would use in body paragraph 3.

8. Write one transitional sentence connecting body paragraph 1 to body paragraph 2.

9. Write one transitional sentence connecting body paragraph 2 to body paragraph 3.

10. Write one concluding sentence that extends, rather than repeats, your thesis.

Model: Answer Key, Exercise B

This exercise is self-generated, so there is no single correct answer. When reviewing student outlines, confirm that: each topic sentence in items 2, 4, and 6 explicitly connects back to the thesis in item 1, rather than simply introducing a new topic; the evidence named in items 3, 5, and 7 is specific enough to be traced to an actual moment in the text; the transitions in items 8 and 9 name a real logical relationship rather than only signalling sequence (first, second, third); and the conclusion in item 10 adds a new dimension, such as broader significance, rather than repeating the thesis word for word.

8.8 Homework

Draft the full Midterm Writing essay from the outline developed in class, and bring a printed or digital draft to Unit 9 for a brief peer check before final submission.

8.9 Teacher Notes

- The 20 percent weight of this task makes it the first assessment where a genuinely weak submission can visibly affect a student's overall grade; consider offering optional office hours in the days before the deadline.
- Watch for essays that summarize the plot at length instead of arguing a thesis; this is the most common weakness at this module and is best caught at the outline module in Part 8.5, not after a full draft is written.
- Keep the model outline in Part 8.2 visible or distributed as a handout; several students will benefit from seeing a complete worked example before attempting their own.