Daily Bard

TOOLKIT

The assessment map

The courses use different labels for the same few skills. This sheet sets them side by side, so that students know what is being rewarded and teachers can plan across systems.

USE IT FOR	COVERS	CHECK
Planning, marking, target setting	GCSE, A-level, AP Literature, IB, first-year university	Your own current specification for exact wording and weightings

The four things every course rewards

Strip away the codes and every literature course at this level asks for the same four things. Each resource in this library is built around them.

1. **An argument.** A clear, personal answer to the question asked, sustained from first line to last.
2. **Evidence.** Precise references and short quotations, chosen to prove a point and not to fill space.
3. **Analysis of method.** How language, form and structure create meaning, using accurate terms.
4. **A wider frame.** Context where it changes the reading, and, for older students, other interpretations.

GCSE English Literature

The assessment objectives used in England are shared across exam boards.

OBJECTIVE	IN PLAIN WORDS
AO1	Respond to the text with a clear, critical argument, supported by references and quotations.
AO2	Analyse the language, form and structure the writer uses, with the right terminology.
AO3	Show how the text relates to the contexts in which it was written and is read.
AO4	Write accurately: vocabulary, sentence structure, spelling and punctuation.

The exams are closed book, so quotations must be learnt. Short ones are enough: the quotation sheets are built for this. Shakespeare questions often begin from a printed extract and ask you to move out to the whole play.

A-level English Literature

OBJECTIVE	IN PLAIN WORDS
AO1	An informed, personal argument, using literary concepts and terms, in fluent and accurate writing.
AO2	Analyse how meanings are shaped by the writer's methods.
AO3	Show the significance and influence of the contexts in which texts are written and received.
AO4	Explore connections across literary texts.
AO5	Explore how texts can be read in different ways: critics, performances, your own alternatives.

The step up from GCSE is mostly AO5 and the quality of AO1. Interpretations should be argued with, not listed. Each **study guide** has a critical perspectives section written for this.

AP English Literature and Composition

The free-response section has three essays: poetry analysis, prose fiction analysis, and a literary argument on a work you choose. Shakespeare's plays are a frequent choice for the third. Each essay is marked on a six-point rubric.

ROW	POINTS	WHAT EARNS THEM
Thesis	0-1	A defensible interpretation that answers the prompt, not a restatement of it.
Evidence and commentary	0-4	Specific evidence, with commentary that explains how it supports a line of reasoning.
Sophistication	0-1	Complexity: tensions, alternative readings, a broader context, or a notably controlled style.

For the literary argument you write from memory, so you need a play you know well: its turning points, and a handful of exact phrases.

IB English A: Literature

COMPONENT	WHAT IT ASKS
Paper 1	Guided literary analysis of unseen passages.
Paper 2	A comparative essay on two works you have studied, in response to a general question.
Individual oral	A prepared talk linking extracts from two works to a global issue.
Higher level essay	A 1,200 to 1,500 word essay developing your own line of inquiry into one work.

The written criteria reward knowledge and interpretation, analysis and evaluation of the writer's choices, focus and organisation, and language. A Shakespeare play can serve in Paper 2, the oral or the higher level essay.

First-year university

There is no objectives grid, but the expectations are continuous with the above. Markers look for an argument that is your own, close reading as evidence, engagement with published criticism (answered, not just cited), awareness of the text as a script for performance and as a product of its period, and accurate referencing in the department's house style.

What this means for one paragraph

SKILL	GCSE	A-LEVEL	AP	IB	IN YOUR PARAGRAPH
Argument	AO1	AO1	Thesis	Interpretation	A first sentence that makes a claim
Evidence	AO1	AO1	Evidence	Knowledge	A short, exact, embedded quotation
Method	AO2	AO2	Commentary	Analysis	A named technique and its effect
Wider frame	AO3	AO3, AO5	Sophistication	Evaluation	A context or a second reading that changes the point

Self-assessment: mark your own essay

Read your essay with a pencil. Tick each statement only if you can point to the sentence that earns it.

- [ ] My introduction answers the question in a way someone could disagree with.
- [ ] Each paragraph's first sentence is about meaning, not plot.
- [ ] I quote in short phrases, accurately, inside my own sentences.
- [ ] I analyse at least one single word or sound in each paragraph.
- [ ] I comment on form or structure, not only on vocabulary.
- [ ] Every context point is tied to a specific line.
- [ ] I consider another interpretation and say why I accept or resist it.
- [ ] My conclusion makes a judgement, not a summary.

One target for next time:

Use it with

Plan to these criteria with the **essay planner**, practise the method row with the **close reading toolkit**, and find ready-made sequences in the **lesson plans**. Specifications are revised from time to time, so always confirm details against the current documents from your board or programme.

For a low-stakes daily habit alongside the set text, **Daily Bard** shows one passage of Shakespeare each morning, with a plain-English reading on the back of the leaf.



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