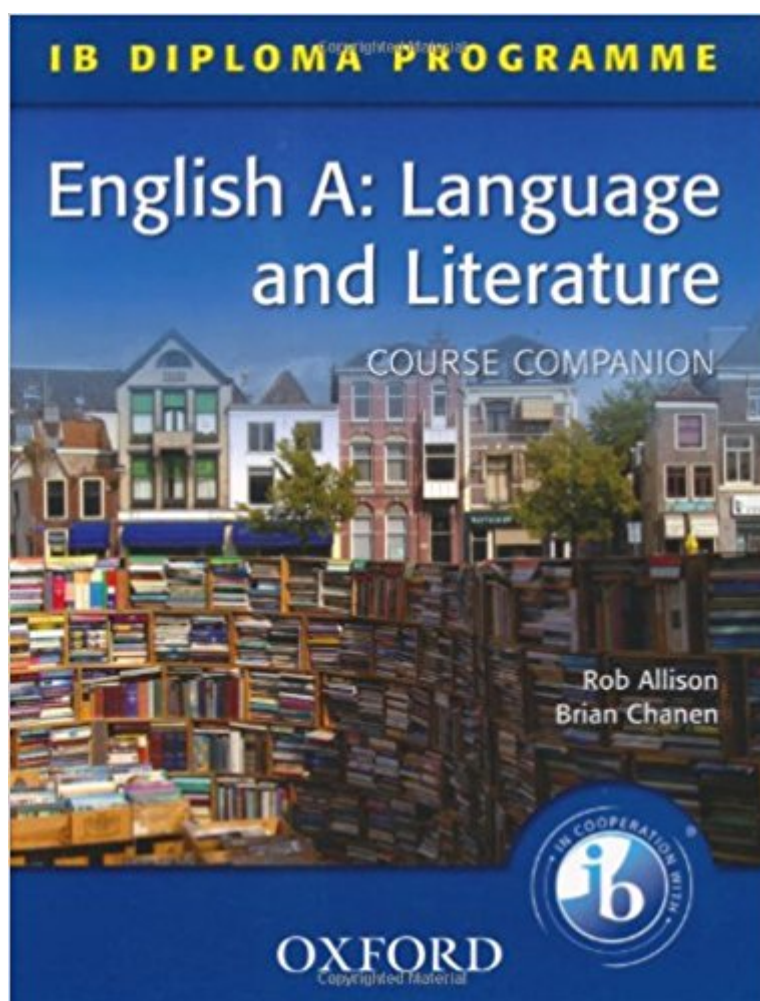




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# IB Diploma Course Companion: English A Language And Literature (International Baccalaureate)



## Synopsis

Uniquely developed with the IB for the 2011 English A syllabus! This new book has been specifically developed for the 2011 English A: Language and Literature syllabus at both Standard and Higher Level. It provides an engaging exploration of a wide focus on language and literature, along with a wealth of opportunities for students to develop skills in reading, viewing, listening, speaking and producing works in English.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I love this book! It is colourful and clear, with great tips for exactly how to go about specific tasks. I particularly like the section on 'Authorial Intentions', and I'm also delighted that this section features some comparative poetry analysis. Fiona Guertler, Head of English, International School, Dusseldorf Students would like it. It looks serious and adult-like without being dull. The sample answers, rationales, examiner comments, oral activities and marking criteria would be very useful to my students. So many aspects of the written tasks or the orals or the exam papers that students have concerns about are dealt with clearly and helpfully. Head of English, Turkey I think it is a very good book and will be of great help to my students. We are looking to 'adopt' it. Miriam de la Teja, IB Coordinator, Colegio Williams de Cuernavaca, Mexico It is a good guidance for both teachers and students, especially for language which is a vast subject to be covered. IB Coordinator, Greece The Oxford IB course books are the best ever resource for both teachers and students. They are practical, insightful and fully in line with the IB Course outcomes. Pat Hanson, IB Coordinator,

Academy of the Holy Cross, USA All of the Oxford IB course books are terrific. Carolyn Hawkins, IB Coordinator, Cookeville High School, USA We have adopted most of the Oxford course books for our school. We find them well written, well linked to TOK issues and age-appropriate. Sheta Saha, IB Coordinator, Chatsworth International School, Singapore

Rob Allison and Brian Chanen are well-respected in their field.

I take one main point of offense at this so-called "Course Companion." As an admittedly proud member of the International Baccalaureate program, I feel that it is my duty to write essays in a method that is most conducive to using up as little time as possible (i.e. writing in such a way that my sentences are long, obtusely-worded, and generally serve little purpose other than to fulfill what is undoubtedly an utterly arbitrary and rubbish word count not befitting an essay of mine). With this taken into account, however, I did not expect the "Course Companion" to mooch off my strategy. It is honestly the most frivolous piece of ambiguous, pointless, and obvious drivel that I have had the misfortune of having happened upon within the scope of recent memory. I mean, let's be honest here. A textbook (or "Course Companion," if you will) is meant to inform in a concise way, or at least to "develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people." This book has abjectly failed in its pursuit of the communication of any vital knowledge whatsoever. And even if there were some delicious morsels of vital information or inspiration within the book, it would be impossible to find given the grandiose scope of the obfuscation and gimmickry that runs rampant throughout the text. The layout, for starters, doesn't help in the least. It seems as if the "Course Companion" was going for a glitzy web page vibe, with lots of panes and images scattered around the text. Not only is this distracting and wholly inappropriate for maintaining even a semblance of organization, but it leaves instead the vibe of cheezy 80's technicolor. If a drunk 5-year-old were to be given a series of articles and fact points and told to arrange them as he saw fit in a book, it most likely would look remarkably similar to the Course Companion as presented in its final form. Further complicating matters is the syntax and general structure employed by the author. I've seen information presented more concisely in a John Kerry speech. The Course Companion presents information the way a nun bartends: tepidly and with a twinge of regret. For example, take this gem: "Similarly, our considerations of what kind of text may be recognized as literature will also recognize that this is a long and complex debate that involves a multiplicity of practices across different countries and cultures, and changes in the approaches to literature in the classroom over time." Not even Moses could part that sea of serpentine syntax. The mildly unfortunate consumer of this title ought to

appreciate the fact that this work almost entirely consists of this drivel. Should a wary soul find himself braving his way through an onslaught of needlessly long sentences and jargon that collapses into a swamp of confusing text, the information presented is not up to par. Like Ke\$ha on a Friday night, the text finds itself stumbling around and unable to find a good place to settle down. It either cannot get to the point (often saying things along the lines of "we will come back to this later") or obstinately refuses to go beyond the confines of a British assimilation course for former members of a nudist colony sealed off from all society ("In sport, these poles are frequently recognized and institutionalized into the role of analyst and colour commentator. An analyst is responsible for technical description of movement and strategy. Most commonly, analysts are former coaches or athletes with substantial insight and knowledge. A colour commentator, on the other hand, is responsible for providing the human interest side."). I've gotten bigger revelations from turning the page of a calendar. The efficacy of this boils down to its ability to communicate. However, the ironic part is that it cannot adequately communicate anything. There is not much information presented, and the layout does little other than to obstruct matters even further. To be honest, I've seen better text on a broken pager. I gleaned neither knowledge nor inspiration from the book. I also found little truth in the title of "Course Companion." Despite my purchase of this product, I nevertheless find myself sad, lonely, and lacking companionship. This beguiles me greatly.

The Course Companion tells me I am a "social animal," so therefore, I feel obligated to share my views with the general public. Yes, I am about to perform a "communicative act." I sincerely hope that my readers do not have an inaccurate "horizon of expectations" before reading this review, so I tried to make my title as accurate as possible. I certainly had a horizon of expectations before reading the Course Companion. When I first opened the Course Companion, (after absorbing the vivid color choices), I was intrigued. For 27 pages, I learned about how "language is dynamic." After I finished reading, I tried to look for some sort of knowledge to justify my waste of time, but the conclusion of the chapter assured me that the purpose of the last 27 pages was to show me that language "continues to evolve." 27 pages. Then, I thought, maybe this was just the typical sensationalist introduction that any course guide needs. Maybe, there will be some actual content in the next chapter. Once again, my "horizon of expectations" were crushed. For the next 16 pages, I learned that "language is intentional," and "men and women shop differently," because "men were once efficient hunters," while women sat at home and tried not to "poison the family." After that enlightening crash course on the history of anthropology, I read that "language is inherent," because Charles Darwin and Noam Chomsky say so. Suddenly I had an epiphany! Since supposedly humans

are "social animals," it would only make reasonable sense that "language is inherent!" Just when I thought I couldn't handle anymore intellectual stimulation, the course companion threw in "a useful definition" for me, how thoughtful! I never knew that society was "made up of individuals!" After 2 chapters of reading the Course Companion, I realized that the content was not going to get any more interesting. While IB tries to assert that this course is meant to make us "more critical readers," I am skeptical of how reading verbose filler expands my reading ability. However, the writers could have least attempted to write in an engaging way, or maybe proofread their work for grammatical mistakes. This course companion prides itself upon being different from the average textbook. Sometimes I feel like the course companion is trying to reach out to me, like its a lonely kid in a lunchroom trying to be my friend. Its desperate attempts to engage the audience can be seen through its continual use of second person. The more the course companion tries to relate to my life, the more awkward and uncomfortable I feel. It tries to relate to me by using slang words, and this just makes me feel more awkward. When the course companion isn't trying to relate to me, it likes to use redundant, non-sensical syntax. After turning randomly to a page, it took me no time at all to find some examples: -"What this simply means for going about your work in this course is a focus on active engagement rather than passive encounter." (confusing) -"We will talk about this more later" (who is this mysterious "we" that the course companion keeps referencing?) -"Similarly, our considerations of what kind of text may be recognized as literature will also recognize that this is a long and complex debate that involves a multiplicity of practices across different countries and cultures, and changes in the approaches to literature in the classroom over time." (I dare you to read this once and tell me what it means) -"While the following represents only a very basic and incomplete overview, some awareness of the changes over time can be useful" (it basically tells readers not to read the section because it is that bad) (also, way to use conditional voice to defer responsibility!) -"The fact of the matter is"-my seventh grade english teacher told me to stop using phrases like these -"Quite early in school we are taught to be wary of media bias" (YOU ARE EXACTLY RIGHT. SO WHAT THEN, IS THE POINT OF THIS COURSE) -"Almost every possible political message ranging from a speech to a small crowd to a mass emailing is an attempt at mass communication and these communicative acts are invariably communicated through a wide variety of media" (The way the entire book is written--Long, drawn out, sentences)At the beginning of this book, IB very craftily gave an example of the "IB learner profile." I did honestly try to read the course companion being "open-minded," but now it seems that I have been forced to "reflect" upon my wasted time. Simply put, do not try to assert that a course is beyond "content level," and then try to write a content level course companion describing it.

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