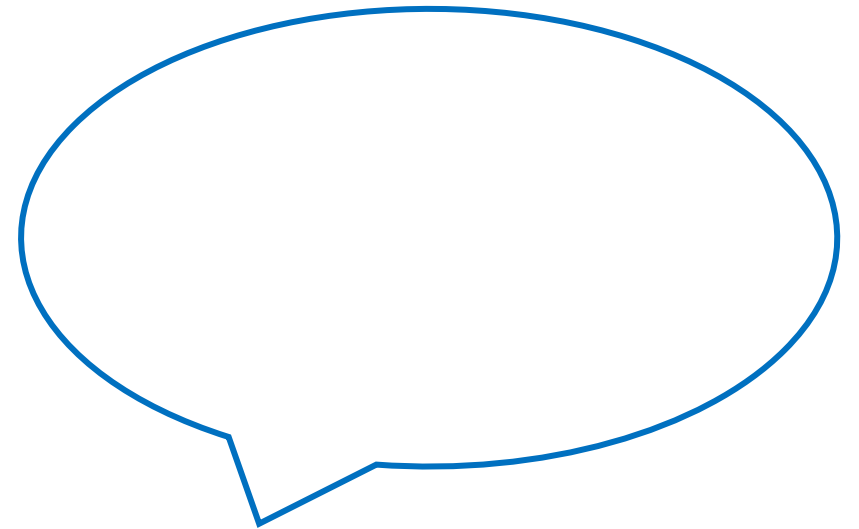


Summer Application Bootcamp: CELAT Advice Session



Welcome!



Dr Hannah Bower, Churchill College
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Today's Session, 11.30-1.00

- 1) **An overview of the CELAT** – what it is, how it is structured and what we are looking for (and not looking for) in your answers.
- 2) We will **work through the sample paper** together.
- 3) Advice on **how to prepare for the assessment**
- 4) Final 15-20 minutes for **questions**

What is the CELAT?

- A **90-minute written assessment**, now completed online.
- **Everyone** who applies to study English at Cambridge **and is shortlisted is required to take the assessment** (no matter what college they apply to).
- **You do not need to register in advance for the assessment.** The college you have applied to will provide details directly to you.
- The test will be marked by a team of assessors at the university and the college you have applied to will receive your mark.
- **By itself, that mark will not determine whether your application is successful. It will be just one part of your application** alongside your UCAS application, personal statement, and interview.
- **So, try to think of it as just another chance to show off your passion for thinking and reading about literature!**

1 hour 30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

This question paper contains five texts, (a) to (e). Select two of the passages, and compare/contrast them in any manner that seems interesting to you, paying particular attention to distinctive features of structure, language and style. There is no word limit, but markers reward quality over quantity. You are advised (though not required) **to spend at least 30 minutes reading the paper, and the remaining 60 minutes writing your answer.**

This task **is designed to assess your responsiveness to unfamiliar literary material** and your skills in **close reading**. Marks are **not awarded for references to other texts or authors you have studied**. **The task does not require you to do any research**. Answers should be typed and uploaded in a format readable in Microsoft Word. Please save your answer with the file name UCAS number_College_Surname_First Name

No texts, dictionaries or sources of reference should be used in the examination. Other than a word-processing application you should not use any other resources.

From the English Faculty website:

<https://www.english.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying.htm>

‘We encourage you not to be nervous about it, but rather to enjoy it as a chance to practise: it is designed to test your skills rather than your knowledge’

1 hour 30 minutes

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The following passages are all linked by the theme of dance. They are arranged chronologically by date of publication. Read all the material carefully, and then complete the task.

- (a) From *Evelina* (1778), a novel by Frances Burney page 4
- (b) 'Javanese Dancers' (1892), a complete poem by Arthur Symonds page 5
- (c) From *Nervous Conditions* (1988), a novel by Tsitsi Dangarembga page 6
- (d) From *Arcadia* (1993), a play by Tom Stoppard page 8
- (e) 'Learning to Dance' (2010), the preface to a poetry collection by Alice Walker page 10

15 minute exercise

- **Spend 10 minutes reading and annotating/making notes on your given extract.** You will be asked to share one or two of these points with the group. As you annotate, consider the following questions:
 - What is interesting to you about the extract and about the way that extract presents dance?
 - How does the author deploy language, form, and structure to create that presentation? How exactly do the literary devices and techniques used create the effects and messages you are noticing? **Be as precise as you can in your close readings here – explain how the effect is created and give evidence to support your point!**
 - Remember to think about form – does the fact that the extract is in prose or verse, or is a poem, play, novel, song, travelogue or preface shape what the writer can do?
- **Spend 5 minutes reading through the other three extracts** that we are discussing today, so that the comments made by the rest of the group make sense. You do not need to annotate these.



Discussion!

How To Handle Comparisons

- When comparing and contrasting two texts, it can be difficult to know how to structure your answer to make sure you are really connecting the two texts (rather than just discussing them discretely alongside each other).
- Sometimes candidates move back and forwards between both texts multiple times in one paragraph. That can be disorientating to read. **Does anyone have any ideas about how you might structure your comparison more effectively?**
- One idea might be to organise your paragraphs thematically. For instance, you might have a paragraph on the way nature imagery is used to represent X in both texts or a paragraph on the way that sentence structure contributes to the portrayal of Y in both texts. Within that paragraph, you could discuss that particular feature in both texts, comparing how it works similarly **and** differently.
- Alternatively, you could discuss the portrayal of X (so, in our case, dance) in one text in the first half of the essay and then use the second half of the essay to make connections to the second text.

Final Pointers

- Remember we are testing **close-reading skills, not knowledge!**
- So....think carefully **about the passage before you** and **be as precise as you can** when explaining how a particular device creates a particular effect. Give evidence too.
- Think carefully about **how you will structure your answer** to make sure you are comparing and contrasting the texts in meaningful ways.
- The assessment instructions recommend you **spend 30 minutes reading the extracts and planning your answer** – use this time! You could spend 5 minutes skim reading all of the extracts, 15 minutes annotating the two passages you have chosen, and 10 minutes planning the structure of your answer.

Ways to Prepare:

- Practise reading outside of your comfort zone.
- You could do this by looking at a resource like the Poetry Foundation's Poem of the Day page - <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/poem-of-the-day>
- You could also use the Cambridge Literature Timeline (<http://www.tiki-toki.com/timeline/entry/75515/Cambridge-Literature-Timeline/>) to find the names of writers you are not familiar with and then read a little bit of their work – a chapter or a small poem is enough!
- When you have found a short poem or a few paragraphs from a new writer, spend 10-15 minutes annotating that poem or extract in the way we have today. What would you want to say about it if it appeared in the ELAT?
- To practise your writing skills, you could then spend 10 minutes writing some of your thoughts into a short paragraph.



Questions!

Emails:

hb391@cam.ac.uk (I can clarify anything that is unclear in this PowerPoint!)

outreach@lucy.cam.ac.uk – helpful for clarifying any questions about the logistics of the process.

english-faculty@lists.cam.ac.uk

admissions@cam.ac.uk

Websites:

<https://www.english.cam.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/index.htm>

Literature timeline - <http://www.tiki-toki.com/timeline/entry/75515/Cambridge-Literature-Timeline>