A Critical Study of the Literary Content of the Palestinian Textbook
English for Palestine

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Abstract:

During the 1980s, a reassessment of the role or roles that literature could play in building the learner's competence at the linguistic, cultural and personal or emotional levels has taken place. Researchers started to argue that the natural exposure to unrestrained language in authentic texts eventually contributes to the students' overall language proficiency. The researchers believe that the new Palestinian syllabus launched in 2000, advocates an earlier start in language instruction, however, this longer exposure to the English language is not fully utilized to familiarize students with the great works of English literature. In this paper, the researchers attempt to shed light on the actual literary content of the Palestinian English syllabus: *English for Palestine*. They present a descriptive analysis of the actual literary texts available in each grade level in terms of themes, length, genre, author, age and authenticity. The researchers also investigate the various purposes achieved through the presentation of literary texts and the type of instructional support available. Results show that literature is used in the Palestinian syllabus mainly as a means to achieve the ultimate end of building students' overall proficiency. Poetry emerged as the dominant literary genre in the whole series with a few samples of dramatic and narrative texts. Literary genres other than poetry are not characterized by the same level of authenticity. Moreover, many literary periods in addition to major writers and poets are not fully covered which leaves students inadequately prepared for college programs in similar fields.

Keywords: classroom literature, Palestinian syllabus, Literary content, English for Palestine, Literary materials in Palestinian curriculum

Introduction and theoretical background:

One may contrast the current view with regard to the role of literature in the language classroom with the view dominant in the early stages of implementing the communicative paradigm. Upon reviewing the recent approaches to language learning as outlined by Widdowson (1978), and Brumfit and Johnson (1979) one may easily notice that the approaches which gained popularity in the 1960s and 70s of the 20st century relegated literature to the periphery of the language classroom. This ignorance of literature has led to giving exclusive attention to language notions and functions marshaled by the new communicative curriculum. During that period and out of a presumed deeper understanding of learner needs, according to Maley and Duff (2005), interest of language teachers changed from the production of scholars with an elitist education to the prolific production of learners with a more functional everyday orientation towards language learning. In 1981, Brumfit called for a retreat from that standpoint arguing that by its nature, literature provides ample content for any course in foreign language teaching. It would also provide a natural sequencing tool for a notional syllabus that gradually presents concepts and subject matter.

Since the early eighties, literature teaching has received more focus than it used to get in the past. Nowadays, it may be viewed within the wider context of content instruction currently gaining impetus in the field of language teaching around the globe. When associated with the other language skills, literature is the richest content that may well play an important role in developing students' overall literacy and cultural awareness.   Additionally, literature raises learners' motivation towards reading in general and their interest in and critical evaluation of their own experiences in the general context of human endeavor.

Before digging deeper in the argument regarding the role and importance of literature, it may be necessary to agree on a definition for the term literature in light of previous studies. Literature (with capital L) has traditionally been viewed as the best in human writing in a certain language. Reading such literary canons was the ultimate goal of language learning according to some traditional teaching methods such as Grammar Translation.   According to Maley & Duff (2005), many educational institutions included in their syllabi literary materials pertaining to the "parade of great writers" starting with Beowulf and ending with Virgini Wolf. Special emphasis was laid on metaphysical poets, Jane Austen, Dickens and other classic writers.

This traditional view of literature has undergone change during the post modern period which broadened the definition of literature to include other nontraditional genres such as feminist or detective writings. Thornbury (2006) argues that although literature did not feature strongly in foreign language materials for a long period of time, it has started to regain strength and prominence recently for a multitude of reasons. He further states that the conception of literature has changed to include works from outside the classic literary canon such as postmodern or contemporary literature. The function of literature, according to Thornbury, has also been extended to include aspects similar to those characterizing other genres such as media, philosophy, political speeches, and advertising.

One of the advantages of such a debate as to what constitutes literature is broadening the type of literary texts that may be included for learners of various age groups in different countries and sociopolitical contexts. Maley and Duff, for instance, argue that while canonical texts are generally accompanied with a heavy linguistic, cultural, and historical burden, more updated texts or "quasi-literary" texts –such as advertising

texts" (p.181) are relieved of such heavy weight. These texts can hence be more accessible and relevant to students of younger ages.

Statement of the Problem:

Despite the renewed interest in literature as a tool to teach language, culture and to promote personal growth, current EFL syllabi including the Palestinian _English for Palestine _tend to downplay the role of literature through minimizing the quantity and compromising the quality of literary texts. As for quantity, literature constitutes a small percentage of the total number of reading texts presented in the textbook. These texts are small in number when compared to the other types of texts such as the expository and they are shorter in terms of length than the original texts from which they were selected.   These reading texts usually constitute the springboard for a number of speaking and writing activities that come later in the book. Absence of literature from the majority of these texts leads to a pale presence throughout the book.   In terms of quality, the literary texts currently available in the syllabus are eithercontrived, abridged, or summarized which deprives them of authenticity. This originality is an important feature of literary texts since it gives them the natural length, density, redundancy, and figurative language. As for the roles given to literature, they are realized in a few activities that focus mainly on the skill of writing and vocabulary development, hence, ignoring the role it might play in enhancing critical thinking, argumentation skills, and discourse competence.

Purpose of the study: This study aims at providing a comprehensive analysis of the literary component in the Palestinian textbook <u>English for Palestine</u>. The researchers start by providing an estimation of the number and length of texts, then they provide information as to the text author, genre, literary period, and authenticity level. The researchers further analyze the purpose for presenting each text in terms of promoting either linguistic, cultural or personal growth functions. The instructional support preceding or following each text is also analyzed in order to give an idea about the amount of attention each text receives.

Research questions:

1. What is the total number of the literary texts presented in the Palestinian syllabus, English for Palestine? What themes do the texts include? How long are they? and to which genres do they belong?
1. Which authors are selected for each grade level and where do these authors lie in terms of the historical periods and literary canon?
2. What is the level of authenticity of texts and how does that influence their quality?
3. What types of purposes (role) are achieved through the presentation of literary texts, e.g., development of linguistic, cultural or personal growth?
4. What type of instructional support is available for the various types of literary texts across grade levels?
5. Are the texts and activities systematically sequenced among the various grade levels in terms of length, genre, and instructional support?

Literature Review:

When making a case for the inclusion of literary materials in the EFL curriculum, different writers have made various claims as to the advantage of literary materials. Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) list ten advantages for literary texts from the

perspective of several scholars. These advantages include; cultural enrichment, linguistic model, mental training, extension of linguistic competence, authenticity, memorability, rhythmic resource, motivating material, openness to interpretation, and convenience. In the following lines, the researchers will present a synthesis of these points and will try to enrich them with similar views from various scholars. For some researchers, literary texts are a tool for cultural enrichment. When reading literature, students would enhance their cultural awareness and cross cultural understanding (Collie and Slater 1987; Schewe 1998; Silberstein; 1994). Another model proposed to explain the value of literature is the linguistic model which argues that literature contains best examples of "good" writing, language diversity, as well as lexical and grammatical range. For learners who have already mastered the smaller components of the linguistic structures, literature would enrich their linguistic competence by providing a wider range of items and hence more flexibility in oral and written expression. Some scholars focus on the mental advantage of reading literary materials. To them, reading literary materials is a type of training for the higher mental skills of critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis. Besides the enhancement of critical thinking, literature openness to several interpretations would also promote all types of interaction among learners (Duff and Maley 1990). As for memory stretching, poetry provides opportunities of enhancing the capabilities of human memory since it provides good examples of memorable language that can be stored as chunks to be analyzed in future usage. The rhythmic nature of poetry would also aid learners in developing a kind of appreciation of the musical nature of language (Maley and Moulding 1985). Literray materials are also commended by some authors for their natural authenticity which means that they are not specially written for the purpose of teaching and learning. They are also highly valued for their motivating nature in the sense that they stem from a writer's original thoughts and drives. Furthermore, they tackle human experience which may be directly relevant to that of the learner (Duff and Maley 1990; Lazar 1993).

Along the same lines, Lazar (1993) proposes several advantages for using literature in the foreign language classroom. To him, literature provides motivation, enhances information about culture, and promotes opportunities for language acquisition. It also qualifies students' interpretive capacities and their overall personal growth through the development of their imaginative and affective scope.
Burke and Brumfit (1986) underscore the importance of teaching literature for similar advantages, i.e., development of written and oral skills, the enhancement of critical and analytical ability, and unleashing the imaginative capacity of students. These authors also add to these reiterated advantages the capacity that literature has in the enhancement of "liberal, ethical, and humanitarian attitude" (171-72).
Rossner (1983), Brumfit and Carter (1986) as well as Carter (1988) stress the advantage of reading literary texts over expository texts by arguing that the interpretation of any regular text depends partially on the previous or background knowledge that the reader holds. From that perspective, the expository text provides the reader only with partial information. Literary texts, by contrast, are highly subjective and they contain novel content that keeps up the surge of the reader's interest till the very end.

Some researchers argue that besides the traditionally cited advantages for teaching literature such as consolidating the four language skills and developing reading strategies and cognitive maturation, literary materials have the greatest advantage of promoting learners emotional intelligence (EQ). This type of intelligence is highly

relevant to EFL learners who are in great need for the components of EQ, namely, motivation, self-awareness, empathy, self-regulation, and social skills (Goleman, 1988; Nasr, 2001;Laddouse-Porter, 2001).

Methodology:

    The researchers decided to conduct a comprehensive study of the selection and sequencing of literary materials in the Palestinian textbook English for Palestine. The literary content selection was investigated in terms of the text title, its genre, instructional purpose, and support. In addition to those variables, the researchers also looked at other elements in each text such as the text authenticity, author and period where applicable. In order to reflect all these elements in the content selection, a table was built to provide a breakdown of all the mentioned variables across the various grade levels. Titles and authors of the texts were taken directly from the students' textbook then the text was classified according to its genre and period. Due to the lack of information in the students' book itself, the researchers had to look up some of the texts from additional print and electronic sources. As for the text purpose, the researchers applied the taxonomy they built on the basis of the consensus of literature with regard to the general purposes of literature teaching in the foreign language classroom.   These purposes include the linguistic, the cultural, and the personal growth purpose. As for instructional support, the researchers provided a breakdown of all the activities and instructional materials (e.g. tape recorder) that accompany each text.

    The researchers also investigated whether the texts and their activities are sequenced in terms of certain criteria such as length, genre, period or support.

Results:

In this section, the researchers attempt to present results of their research in the order of the research questions outlined earlier. The researchers will start by stating the question then results will be categorized under three sections each of which pertains to a series of four grade levels.

Question One:

What is the total number of the literary texts presented in the Palestinian syllabus, English for Palestine? What themes do the texts include?How long are they? and to which genres do they belong?

1st-4th grade

    During this stage, the learners are exposed to a total number of 39 songs. Twelve of these songs are in the first grade, 16 in the second grade, 5 in the third grade, and 6 in the fourth grade textbook. Songs in this stage range in length between 3-12 lines. Interestingly, however, songs within and across the four grade levels do not seem to be arranged gradually according to number of songs or to the increase in length. Grade one, for instance, contains some eight line songs "Your head is green", while grade 4 contains some 5 line songs "One Baby in a Bed" (see appendix A). Criteria for arrangement seem to be related to the topic of the lesson as well as to the related notions and functions. Topics presented in each grade level depend on the learners' cognitive and linguistic level. Notions and functions that form the centerpiece of each selected poem fall squarely within these topics or themes, e.g., letters, numbers, animals, and body parts in the first grade. One of the notions that receive primary attention in the first through the fourth grade is numbers. Learners are given the chance to practice listening to and

saying numbers in a number of songs, e.g., "Five black cats" in the first grade, "Six short socks in the second grade" and "Ten men went to dig" in the fourth grade. Functions related to the general themes or topics also receive due attention. The functions of greeting, enquiry, preference, and complimenting are all available. If we take enquiry as an example, we find several poems that embody this function clearly, e.g., "What's this…?" in the first grade, "Where is Polly…?" in the second grade and "Where can I buy a sweater…?" in the fourth grade.

5th-8th grade

During this stage, the learners are exposed to a total of, 6 fables, 6 songs and 15 poems. The narrative literary genre makes its first appearance in the fifth grade textbook which presents 4 well known fables that have become part of the collective human experience, namely, "The Tortoise and the Hare", "The Wolf's Shoes", "The Princess and the Three friends" and the "Cats and the Monkey". These fables range in length between 15-27 lines. As for the six songs, they are all included in the fifth grade textbook.   They revolve around themes and activities that seem to be interesting for this particular age group, e.g., kiting, rowing, racing, and hiking. The songs range in length between four to twenty lines.

   As for the poems, five of them are in the sixth grade, six in the seventh grade, and five in the eighth grade textbook. They range in length between eight to twenty lines. Networking, communicating, empathy, sports and other themes related to exploring oneself within the larger world are all common in this grade level.

9th-12th grade

   With the exception of the tenth grade, where learners receive no literary input of any type, the learners during this stage are exposed to a number of genres, namely, poetry, fiction, and drama. The ninth grade contains four poems that range in length between 11 - 30 lines. Themes of these poems vary, but there is clear focus on the development of a sense of empathy and belonging to school "A School Creed", to fellow humans "The Book of Life", and to the larger world "The News".

   The tenth grade is totally lacking in literary texts. The researchers found no clear justification or explanation for this especially that this grade is followed by the eleventh which contains a rather lengthy fictional text, i.e., Silas Marner.

The eleventh grade, as already mentioned, provides one abridged and summarized literary text. The text consists of 12 chapters with an average length of 1-2 pages for each chapter. Interestingly, the text itself and the supporting instructional activities are presented in the workbook, a practice that is fundamentally different from the way texts were presented in previous stages and grades. Silas Marner tackles several themes including man's attitude towards morality and religion.

   As for the 12th grade, the textbook contains two literary genres, namely, poetry and drama. As for poetry, there are five poems which tackle themes of self discipline "If", "Solitude", and "Be Strong", attitude to nature, in "I Had a Dove", and commitment to the human cause in "War is Never Over".

   The twelfth grade textbook also contains an abridged version of five acts of the timeless Shakespearean play <u>King Lear</u>. Each act is summarized to an average length of 2/3rds – one whole page.

Question Two
Which authors are selected for each grade level and where do these authors lie in terms of the historical periods?
1ˢᵗ to 4ᵗʰ grade

All songs presented during this stage are anonymous. They seem to be contrived for the purpose of language teaching since the notions and functions they present are tightly linked to the themes presented in each lesson.
5ᵗʰ -8ᵗʰ grade

The fables and poems presented for the fifth grade students are all anonymous. When going back to some of the original texts of the fables such as the "Tortoise and the Hare", the researchers found several versions on the World Wide Web but none of them matches the text in the students' book. Besides being abridged, the researchers also noticed that the original text has been summarized to match the length of other reading passages in the students' book. Hence, the researchers believe that the texts were contrived by the book authors to fulfill certain linguistic purposes.

As for the sixth grade, the three poets provided, namely, Susan Schutz, Telcine Turner and Tony Mitton, are all 20ᵗʰ century post modern writers. The seventh grade textbook contains poems by Eleanor Farjeon, Stanley Cook, Jane Whittle and Jo Peters. As for the eighth grade, several poets are mentioned, including Ann Bonner, Celia Warren, Ivy Eastwick, John Kitching and John Cotton. As in the case of the sixth grade, all poets included in the 7ᵗʰ and 8ᵗʰ grades are twentieth century modern or post modern writers *(see appendix A).*
9ᵗʰ- 12ᵗʰ grade

Three poets are mentioned in the ninth grade, namely, Philip Waddel, Margaret Curtis, and David Harmer, all of whom are twentieth century poets belonging to either the modern or post modern era *(See appendix A).* As for the eleventh grade, one narrative text is presented in the students' book, namely, Silas Marner by George Eliot, who is considered to be a 19ᵗʰ century Victorian writer.

As for the Twelfth grade, the book contains a simplified version of the play <u>King Lear</u> by William Shakespeare, as well as a number of poems by John Keats, Rudyard Kipling, Cecil Harrison, Ella Wilcox, and Maltbie Babcock . With the exception of the Elizabethan Shakespeare and the Romantic Keats, all the other poets are either modern, e.g., Kipling, or post modern, e.g., Harrison and Wilcox *(see appendix A)*
Question Three
What is the level of authenticity of texts and how does that influence their quality?
1ˢᵗ-4ᵗʰ grade

As already mentioned, all songs presented during this stage are contrived or designed specifically for the purpose of language teaching. No authentic texts are presented despite the wide range of possibilities available in authentic and linguistically appropriate nursery rhymes in English speaking countries and around the globe.
5ᵗʰ-8ᵗʰ grade

None of the poems in the fifth grade are authentic; however, the sixth grade contains 5 authentic poems in addition to a translated narrative text, i.e., "The Oxen and the Lion". As for the seventh grade, the textbook contains six authentic poems in addition to a translated narrative text from the Arab culture. Finally, the

eighth grade contains five authentic poems. One may clearly notice that in this stage authenticity is found only in poetry which constitutes the major bulk of literary materials in the textbooks.

9th-12th grade

The ninth grade textbook contains 4 poems all of which are authentic. As for the tenth grade, no literary materials are included at all. The eleventh grade contains a sole narrative text, "Silas Marner", that is neither authentic in length, style nor in language. The original "Silas Marner" lies in 21 chapters and 210 pages while the eleventh grade text includes only summarized versions of chapters 1-12 with an average length of 1-2 pages for each chapter. As for the twelfth grade textbook, it contains five authentic poems, one authentic narrative by Anton Chekov, and one abridged play by William Shakespeare. The Shakespearean play, King Lear is both simplified and summarized. One may notice that "The Bet" is the only narrative text in the whole series that is presented in its original translated form, probably because it is phrased in modern English unlike King Lear which is written in Middle English, a language form generally unfamiliar to students.

Upon examining the whole series of the 12 texts and workbooks, one notices that authenticity is a distinctive feature of all the poems included. As for the narrative form, it is realized either in the fables, which are all simplified or in "The Bet" which is translated from Russian. Finally, the only dramatic text that is presented throughout the series is <u>King Lear</u>, and it is presented in a narrative form that makes it impossible for students to conceive it as a play. This is surprising taking into account the current national and international trends of focusing on drama as a means of language learning especially for young learners.

Question Four;

What types of purposes (roles) are achieved through the presentation of literary texts, e.g., development of linguistic, cultural or personal growth dimensions?

1st-4th grade

The songs available in the textbooks of the first four grades are presented mainly for their linguistic value. This linguistic purpose includes focus on letters, sounds, words and phrases. The songs reflect the notions and functions present in each lesson so they are clearly intended to continue with what was started earlier in the unit in terms of enhancing the students' linguistic competence. One should not ignore, however, that these songs show a clear rhyme and metrical pattern which helps in developing the students' aesthetic sense and musical appreciation.

5th -8th grade

Although the linguistic purpose dominates during this stage, there is also some focus on the personal growth aspects, e.g., didactic themes and morals as well as the aesthetic or musical appreciation. Interaction with fellow humans is highlighted in the sixth grade poem "Someone to Talk with" by Susan Schutz. Morality is stressed and fully discussed in the seventh grade narrative text "Othman the Honest".

9th-12th grade

During this last stage, the three purposes outlined above are combined. The linguistic purpose receives proper attention since many activities are designed to reinforce vocabulary development and pronunciation. The cultural purpose is reflected in many themes especially those pertaining to the classical texts such as "Silas Marner" and <u>King Lear.</u> As for the personal growth purpose, it is achieved

through the various activities which focus on analysis, critical thinking and open discussion of issues related to didactic themes and morality.

Question Five

What type of instructional support is available for the various types of literary texts across grade levels?

1ˢᵗ-4ᵗʰ grade

   The only type of instructional support available for the learners in this stage is the tape recorder. No other activities are provided to reinforce the vocabulary presented. It seems that the song itself is provided as a supporting text for language items presented earlier.

5ᵗʰ -8ᵗʰ grade

   Fables presented in the fifth, sixth and seventh grades represent the essential core of the lesson, i.e., the reading passage, hence they are used as the bases for all subsequent activities in the students' and the workbooks. In addition to regular language exercises focusing on practicing structures and new vocabulary, exercises supporting these texts also include discourse level work such as sentence ordering and some critical thinking exercises such as "predicting a different end" and "evaluating opposing viewpoints". It is worth mentioning that such narratives, i.e., fables, are the only case where a literary text represents the backbone of a lesson throughout the English for Palestine series. In all other cases, the text is either an addition to the main topic in the unit (as in the case of poetry) or it is presented in the form of "extra readings and practice" in the workbook.

   As for the songs presented in this stage, they are largely similar to the previous one, i.e., 1ˢᵗ-4ᵗʰ grade in the sense that they only provide additional practice with the main language notions and functions. The only aesthetic aspects developed are rhyme and metrical patterns mainly realized in song recitation. As for poetry, plenty of activities are provided probably due to the fact that these texts are original or authentic in nature which enhances their potential for language work including vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. Supportive activities in this stage include poem recitation, listing, line completion, gist finding, open discussion questions, vocabulary matching, and even creative writing *(see appendix)*. All activities seem to be well sequenced and quite enriching for the students' linguistic, cultural as well personal growth aspects. This could be largely due to the authentic nature of texts which naturally equips them with sophistication and redundancy.

9ᵗʰ-12ᵗʰ

   The poems presented in the ninth grade build on the same techniques and activities adopted in the previous stage with more emphasis on open questions which allow for additional discussion, position adoption, and critical thinking. In the eleventh grade, only two general activities are presented, namely, "reading for pleasure" and "Tawjihi preparation". Reading for pleasure activities include multiple choice, event ordering, and summary choice. As for Tawjihi preparation, activities include short answers, gap filling, and quote identification.

   Finally, the Twelfth grade contains two to three supporting activities after each chapter of the short story or play. These activities include a variety of multiple choice, short answers, gap filling and sentence completion. No quote identification is included probably due to the lack of authenticity in the play which prevents authors from selecting significant quotes.

Question Six
Are the literary materials systematically sequenced among the various grade levels in terms of length, genre, period and instructional support?
1ˢᵗ-4ᵗʰ grade

Upon investigating the length of texts presented in this stage, one notices that there is no obvious grading since songs tend to fluctuate in the same range (3-12 lines) throughout this stage. Issues of genre and period are not applicable since all the songs are contrived for the purpose of language learning. As for the instructional support, it is rather surprising not to see any activity related to songs except for tape listening and poem recitation. This may lead to the poor preparation of learners for the next stage where songs and poems receive special attention in instructional support. It is worth noting that this stage is highly impoverished in terms of dramatic texts, narrative poems, classic lullabies, nursery rhymes, or lyrical ballads, all of which could provide substantial and enriching content for students in this grade.

5ᵗʰ-8ᵗʰ grade

There are only six instances of incorporating a narrative text during this stage. These texts are poorly prepared for in the previous stage because no narratives are seen in the 1ˢᵗ-4ᵗʰ grades due to the sole emphasis on songs. Surprisingly, these fables also seem to be the only preparation for the more sophisticated narrative texts that appear later in the secondary stage, namely, "The Bet" and "Silas Marner".

The reader may notice a significant increase in the length of texts during this stage with some poems including 16-25 lines. As for the instructional support accompanying the texts, one may observe the abundance in activities in both the student's and workbooks which lay the basis for subsequent activities on the verse and narrative texts presented later. It may also be noticed that during this stage, the foundations for open discussion and critical thinking are provided which make such activities easier for the learners to engage with as they progress to more advanced levels.

9ᵗʰ -12ᵗʰ grades

There is continuous emphasis on poetry during this stage with additional focus on the narrative form and drama. The poetry presented does not seem to follow a systematic sequence in length since some poems in the twelfth grade are 10 lines while some poems in the ninth grade are 30 lines long. As for the historical period, a mix of modern and post modern poems are presented with no clear historical progression. As for the instructional support, activities seem to decrease in number as we progress in the grades. The ninth grade, for instance, contains five to seven activities after each poem, while the tenth grade contains no texts and no activities whatsoever. As for the eleventh grade, only two activities follow each chapter in Silas Marner while the twelfth grade contains two to three activities after each poem, act or short story episode.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations:

This section attempts to discuss major highlights from the previous results section and to present principal conclusions and recommendations in light of the previous literature and the headings outlined in the analysis table *(See Appendix).*

Issues Related to Literary Genres, Authors, and Periods:

One may easily notice from the information presented in the previous section that the only literary genres included in the series are poetry (including songs), narrative texts (including fables), and one abridged version of a dramatic text, specifically King Lear. Poetry constitutes the major bulk of literary materials included probably due to its relatively short length. All the included poems fit in one page, sometimes along with the activities that support them. Even with this huge focus on poetry, most selections tend to fall within two or three literary periods. Those periods include the modern and post modern with just one or two poems from the Romantic period, traditionally a literary period highly suited for adolescent or middle school learners (5th-12th grades). The selected poets are not representative of major literary schools, movements or eras, hence, despite their authenticity, these poems do not give the learner a real taste of the great literature written in the English language. Among the post modern poets selected, one notices that the majority are British, which excludes writers from the rest of the core English speaking countries and from the periphery.

Real examples of the narrative form appear only in the secondary stage (11th grade) with almost no previous preparation for reading long narrative texts such as "Silas Marner" in its original form. That probably explains why the "Silas Marner" text included in the 11th grade is only one tenth of the original novel. The researchers looked up other abridged versions of the original text only to find that there are many other summaries that maintain some of the original aesthetic features of the literary text such as the elaborate description, dramatic dialogues and natural linguistic redundancy. Needless to say that this limited number of narrative texts has not given the text authors the opportunity to represent different types of narrative texts or literary periods. One may observe that classic writers who have achieved universal status such as Hemingway, the Brontes, and Austen as well as some classic children's writers such as Charles Dickens and Mark Twain are completely absent from the whole series.

The narrative form is very valuable for learners at all ages. The fables presented in the 5th, 6th, and 7th grade fall short of achieving the desired goals from a narrative which is by nature highly attractive to learners at all levels. In the context of their study on Chinese EFL pupils, researchers found that ten year olds in the fourth grade were capable of doing independent reading of picture stories that are approximately 300-500 words in length (Qiang, Lin, and Xin, 2009). Kapur (2009) argues that story reading could be relied on as a basic technique in the classroom. It also allows for additional variety in classroom activities that may be geared towards learners of all proficiency levels such as "reading aloud, repeated reading, choral reading, story-retelling and shared reading" (p.81). This last concept of shared reading is highlighted by Al-Zedjali and Etherton in the context of literacy development among Omani students. They argue that shared reading of a "big book" could be effectively incorporated within the regular class period.

The only dramatic text included in the whole series is a simplified paraphrased version of the Shakespearean King Lear. In addition to being much shorter than the original text (5 pages while the original is 165), the play is robbed of its original dramatic nature since authors of the series choose to include only a narrative version of the original dialogue. About 8 pages of dialogue in modern English are presented at the end to provide students with an idea about the original form of the play. No activities whatsoever are built on this part. This meager attention given to drama and dramatic texts is shocking in light of the huge emphasis this aspect receives in in-

service teacher training since drama is viewed as the optimal literary form for teaching within the communicative approach whose philosophy is built on interaction. It is also worth mentioning that similar to the presentation of narrative texts, plays do not receive their due attention in the textbook and are like many other literary forms underrepresented in terms of authors and literary periods.

No clear philosophy seems to lie behind the choice of King Lear as the sole dramatic text which makes it unrepresentative of all the periods of English literarture. One also wonders why modern writers such as Arthur Miller or Bernard Shaw were not included instead of translating a medieval text into modern English and compromising its overall quality.

In the context of focusing on issues of text selection, Brumfit (1986) states that the choice of texts which are related to students' experience and which lend themselves to interesting discussion is of equal importance. He further argues that popular themes change according to the students' interest and level. Besides the enhancement of critical thinking, literature openness to several interpretations would also promote all types of interaction among learners (Duff and Maley 1990).

 Issues related to instructional purpose and support:
   Upon reviewing the previous results combined with the data outlined in the attached table, one may notice that the linguistic and the aesthetic objectives receive the strongest focus. As for the cultural purpose it seems to be ignored in the formal instructional activities. Cultural concepts are available yet they are not highlighted in any of the exercises provided, which leaves any presentation of cultural items up to the teachers themselves. In their book Literature in the Language Classroom, Collie and Slater (2007) stress the value of literature in advancing cultural enrichment especially is EFL contexts where learners rarely get the chance to experience the target culture firsthand. They argue that although the world of a novel, a play or a story is an invented one, these literary works create an authentic context and atmosphere in which characters with real dreams, personalities and "preoccupations" move and talk, thus, enhancing the learners' perception of what might be taking place in everyday life, behind scenes or even within character minds and consciousness in the target culture (p. 4).

Sell (2005) argues that reading texts with a rich cultural component does not lead to "going native" or to the "suspension of learners' identity". Their exploration and analysis of target literary texts may even lead to questioning some of the target ideals presented. This will eventually lead to the development of a more "flexible affective competence" which will assist them in dealing with others in target culture contexts, the ultimate goal of many foreign language programs.

This lack of focus on all purposes of literature teaching as outlined by Parkinson and Reid Thomas (2000) may be due to the observation noted earlier that literary materials in the whole series seem to be perceived as an addition or an enrichment of the existing syllabus. This means that they are not seen as an independent entity containing many values in and of itself. This lack of focus on the integral value inherent in literary materials will harmfully influence Palestinian students who plan to pursue college education in the field of English or Arabic literature. Lack of focus on literary materials will deprive them of the information and skills needed to dig deeply into the great works of English, Arabic, or comparative literature. Literature is also of great value for students who pursue their studies abroad so as to get exposed to world

culture through great works of literature that have universal relevance and global value.

One of the arguments against the incorporation of literary materials in the syllabus is that literary works might be rather lengthy or that their authentic language might be beyond the grasp of students already grappling with the complexities of a foreign language.

Duff and Maley (2007) argue that instructors may cope with the challenging nature of literary texts by paying attention to a number of issues such as whether the text is interesting to students, whether the language is suitable and whether it required a lot of cultural or literary background knowledge. Other issues that need attention include the length of texts and their suitability for language learning purposes.

Lengthy literary texts do not have to be incorporated within the pages of the students' or the workbook (as done with Silas Marner or King Lear), rather, they could be presented in independent readers and could be allotted specific class periods within a month. Additionally, the problem of language complexity could be averted by presenting a well-thought selection of a variety of writers in the form of graded readers.   One may also argue that this fear of the complexity of literary language is unfounded taking into account the huge amount of receptive vocabulary literary works usually build among L1 and L2 extensive readers. One may even underscore the fact that the continuous exposure to the authentic language present in literary works might equip learners with a wealth of incidentally learnt lexical and structural items. These items reduce the burden of grappling with the elements of syntax and morphology which are more explicitly and traditionally presented in the textbook.

The value of literature is not limited to the incidental gain in lexical and structural items, rather it extends to include untraditional and elevated language use. Literature equips students with metaphorical, ironic, and elevated language currently implemented in the Media and densely available in literary texts. Politicians, scholars and senior journalists present their thoughts in a subtle way to evade facts and provide illusive arguments.   Students should be exposed to and trained in such discourse types.

Finally, one may argue that despite the change in the perception of literature and its role in the language classroom in general and the foreign language context in particular, current syllabi and textbooks such as English for Palestine, still seem to view literature as an addition to the mainstream syllabus or as a tool for consolidating previously learned linguistic aspects. What is currently available in the textbook falls short of achieving the grand objectives usually associated with literary studies including the linguistic, cultural, and emotional aspects. Serious revision of available literary materials in the Palestinian syllabus and parallel syllabi in the Arab World needs to take place. Not only should materials be reviewed in the context of syllabus design and materials development, but also the actual classroom practices as well as teachers' and students' attitudes towards the role and function of literary texts and excerpts should be deeply pondered and analyzed.   Literature has regained its status on the level of theory and research enquiry, however, its roles and purposes continue to be undermined and marginalized at various levels.

Incorporating literature entails careful study and analysis of texts to be included as well as careful consideration of the medium of presentation including additional readers and classroom activities.

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Appendix

Analysis of Literary Content in the PalestinianTextbook: <u>English for Palestine</u>
Grades 1-12

First Grade							
Text	**Genre**	**Author**	**Period**	**Authenticity**	**Length**	**Purpose**	**Instructional Support**
Hello, Tom	Song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal growth	Tape-recorder
Alphabet	song	anonymous		contrived	3 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal growth	Tape-recorder
What's this?	song	anonymous		contrived	6 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal growth	Tape-recorder
Big or Small	song	anonymous		contrived	12 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal growth	Tape-recorder
My head, my nose…	song	anonymous		contrived	6 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal growth	Tape-recorder
Happy Birthday	song	anonymous		contrived	4 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal growth	Tape-recorder
Your head is green	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal growth	Tape-recorder
Dilly is a crocodile	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal growth	Tape-recorder
Five black cats	song	anonymous		contrived	7 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal growth	Tape-recorder
One snake in a T-shirt	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines		
Cars and buses		anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal growth	Tape-recorder
All	song	anonymo		contrived	7 lines	Linguistic (pronunciation) Personal	Tape-recorder

Text	Genre	Author	Period	Authenticity	Length	Purpose	Instructional Support
together, clap..		us				growth	
Second Grade							
Text	**Genre**	**Author**	**Period**	**Authenticity**	**Length**	**Purpose**	**Instructional Support**
Hello	song	anonymous		contrived	6 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Taper-recorder
Alphabet	song	anonymous		contrived	6 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
I'm Polly Parrot	song	anonymous		contrived	9 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Hello, Dilly	song	anonymous		contrived	6 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Where's polly?	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
One, two, three, four, five	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Where is the mouse?	song	anonymous		contrived	5 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Listen and point.	song	anonymous		contrived	5 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Clap and say	song	anonymous		contrived	6 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Blow a bubble	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Big, Small	song	anonymous		contrived	6 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
This is our flag!	song	anonymous		contrived	6 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder

Six short socks	song	anonymous		contrived	6 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
I have big, big, eyes.	song	anonymous		contrived	9 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Old Macdonald has a farm	song	anonymous		contrived	9 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Listen to the clock	song	Anonymous		contrived	5 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder

Third Grade

Text	Genre	Author	Period	Authenticity	Length	Purpose	Instructional Support
A little song for you…	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Do you like singing?	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Linguistic aesthetic	Tape-recorder
It's a sunny summer's day	song	anonymous		contrived	12 lines	Linguistic Aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Do you like ice cream…	song	anonymous		contrived	11 lines	Linguistic Aesthetic	Tape-recorder
Head, shoulders	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Linguistic Aesthetic	Tape-recorder

Fourth Grade

Text	genre	Author	Period	Authenticity	Length	Purpose	Instructional Support
One baby in a bed	song	anonymous		contrived	5 lines	Aesthetic (personal growth), Linguistic (pronunciation	Tape-recorder

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Ten men went to dig	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	Aesthetic, vocabulary reinforcement	Tape-recorder
Where Can I buy a sweater	song	anonymous		contrived	12	Aesthetic, vocabulary reinforcement	Tape-recorder
Father, brother	song	anonymous		contrived	6 lines	vocabulary reinforcement	Tape-recorder
I like playing the drums	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	vocabulary reinforcement	Tape-recorder
Long Live Dear Father	song	anonymous		contrived	8 lines	vocabulary reinforcement	Tape-recorder
Fifth Grade							
Text	**Genre**	**Author**	**Period**	**Authenticity**	**Length**	**Purpose**	**Instructional Support**
The Tortoise and the Hare	Fable	Anonymous		Summarized	15 lines	Linguistic (practice of all language skills)	Basis for all subsequent activities
The Wolf's Shoes	Fable	Anonymous		Summarized	22 lines	Linguistic (practice of all language skills)	Basis for all subsequent activities
The Princess and the Three Friends	Fable	Anonymous		Summarized	27 lines	Linguistic (practice of all language skills	Basis for all subsequent activities
The Cats and the Monkey	Fable	Anonymous		Summarized	23 lines	Linguistic (practice of all language skills	Basis for all subsequent activities
The Bear	song	Anonymous		contrived	10 lines	Linguistic (practice of all language	Basis for all subsequent activities

Text	Genre	Author	Period	Authenticity	Length	Purpose	Instructional Support
Went over the Mountain		us				skills	
Hey, We are Lost	song	Anonymous		contrived	20 lines	Linguistic (practice of all language skills	Basis for all subsequent activities
I Love to Row…	song	Anonymous		contrived	12 lines	Linguistic (practice of all language skills	Basis for all subsequent activities
A Kite on the Ground	song	Anonymous		contrived	4 lines	Linguistic (practice of all language skills	Basis for all subsequent activities
Good, Better, Best	song	Anonymous		contrived	7 lines	Linguistic (practice of all language skills	Basis for all subsequent activities
Hands up High	song	Anonymous		contrived	12 lines	Linguistic (practice of all language skills	Basis for all subsequent activities
Sixth Grade							
Text	**Genre**	**Author**	**Period**	**Authenticity**	**Length**	**Purpose**	**Instructional Support**
Someone to talk with	Poetry	Susan Schutz	Post modern	unabridged	11 lines	Linguistic, personal growth	**Two Activities:** a. multiple choice: Listen and Answer. b. Open questions (discussion and personal opinion)
The Oxen and the Lion	Fiction	Samer Khaldi		translated	Half a page	Linguistic (comprehension) +didactic	Open questions (information)
Let's talk	Poetry	Telcine Turner	contemporary	authentic	12 lines	Linguistic (comprehension) +didactic	**Four questions:** a. listing and gap filling(body parts) b. Short answers

							c. Recitation d. Creative writing (write a poem)
The Seashell	Poetry	anonymous	contemporary	authentic	20 lines	Linguistic (comprehension) +didactic	**Two questions:** a. labeling b. open questions c. recitation
Stone , Wind (two juxtaposed poems)	Poetry	Tony Mitton	contemporary	authentic	8 lines each		**Three activities:** a. Listen and answer (weather diagrams) b. Listen and see (vocabulary) c. Fill in the blanks (rhyme)
Can I come along	Poetry	anonymous	contemporary	authentic	20 lines		**Three activities:** a. short answers b. Listing vocabulary c. Poem Recitation
Seventh Grade							
Text	**Genre**	**Author**	**Period**	**Authenticity**	**Length**	**Purpose**	**Instructional Support**
My Pen Friend and Me	Poetry	Anonymous	Contemporary	authentic	12 lines	Linguistic, Personal growth culture	**Five Activities:** a. short answers (prediction) b. gap filling, (vocabulary) c. Line completion (sentence construction) d. Recitation e. Open question (writing and critical thinking.
Othman the Honest	Fiction	anonymous	Contemporary	authentic	25 lines (1/2) page	Linguistic (comprehension+vocabulary) Personal growth (didactic0	**Two activities** 1. Vocabulary explanation (prereading)

							2. Short answers (T/F) and open questions.
There is not time	poetry	Eleanor Farjeon	Contemporary	authentic	12 lines		**Four Activities**: a. prelistening discussion (critical thinking) b. Listing (vocabulary c. Multiple choice (planning a visit)
A Bridge	poetry	Stanley Cook	Contemporary	authentic	10 lines		**Four Activities:** a. Open question (vocabulary) b. Matching (rhyme) c. Poem recitation d. Open question (planning an adventure holiday)
A Green Prayer	poetry	Jane Whittle	contemporary	authentic	12 lines		**Four Activities:** a. Open question (prediction) b. Completing lines c. Poem recitation d. Open questions (discussion about importance of nature.
I asked the little boy who cannot see	poetry	Anonymous	contemporary	authentic	10 lines		**Six Activities:** 1. Pre-listening open questions, discussion, vocabulary 2. Gap filling (color vocabulary) 3. Line completion (sentence structure) 4. poem recitation 5. Open question (imagination)

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							6. Open question (discussions)
My Hands	poetry	Jo Peters	contemporary	authentic	16 lines		**Four Activities** a. Open question (pre-listening discussion) b. Gap filling (guessing rhyming words) c. Line completion d. Poem recitation e. General Question about all poems (favorite poem in the book)
Eighth Grade							
Text	**Genre**	**Author**	**Period**	**Authenticity**	**Length**	**Purpose**	**Instructional support**
Music	Poetry	Ann Bonner	Post-modern	authentic	16 lines	Linguistic, Personal Growth (aesthetic) Musical appreciation	**Four Activities** a. Open questions Comprehension and critical thinking b. Multiple choice. Vocabulary c. Short answers, pronunciation of words d. Poem recitation
Football training	Poetry	Celia Warren	Contemporary	authentic	23 lines		**Four activities:** a. Open question (prediction) b. Short answers (vocabulary from context) c. Open questions (poem structure, ideas, moral) d. poem recitation
Thanksgivi	Poetr	Ivy O.	Modern	authentic	24	Linguistic+ Personal Growth	**Five activities:**

ng	y	Eastwick	1949			(aesthetic)	1. Multiple choice (prediction) 2. gap filling (identification) 3. Listing (vocabulary identification in a picture) 4. Multiple choice (vocabulary) 5. Poem recitation
Geography	Poetry	John Kitching	1838-1865	authentic	16	Linguistic (listening) aesthetic	**Seven Activities** a. Short answers (title, topic sentence) b. Short answers (scanning for geographical places) c. Short answers (identifying words in a picture) d. Multiple choice (vocabulary) e. Matching (rhyme) f. Open question (inference)
The World with its Countries	Poetry	John Cotton	modern	authentic	24	Linguistic (listening)	**Five Activities** 1. Listing (identifying vocabulary in a picture) 2. Multiple Choice (summary of a poem+vocabulary+scanning). 3. Matching (vocabulary, synonyms, parts of speech) 4. Recitation
Ninth Grade							
Title of Text	**Genre**	**Author**	**Period**	**Authenticity**	**Length**	**Purpose**	**Instructional Support**

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A School Creed	Poetry/ school anthem	Canadian	contemporary	authentic	11 lines	Linguistic (listening), Aesthetic (rhyme and rhythm), cultural (Canadian flag+ school creed)	**Six Activities**: a. Multiple choice (general idea) b. Multiple choice (meaning of conjunctions) c. Short answer (line identification) d. Poem recitation e. Open ended questions (school creed) f. Open ended question (comparing Canadian with local school)
In the Garden	Poetry	Philip Waddel	contemporary	authentic	13 lines	Linguistic (listening), Aesthetic (rhyme and rhythm), cultural (western Garden)	**Seven Activities:** a. Open questions (prediction) b. Short answers (character identification) c. Short answer (vocabulary identification from a picture) d. Matching (words that rhyme) e. Open questions (theme and symbolism) f. Poem recitation g. Open ended question (monologue/expressing opinion)
The Book of Life	Poetry	Margaret Curtis	1883-1962	authentic	14 lines	Linguistic, aesthetic, moral, cultural	**Six Activities:** 1. Multiple Choice (theme prediction) 2. Multiple choice (identifying

							words from context) 3. Open ended questions (poem interpretation) 4. Matching (rhyming vocabulary) 5. Poem recitation Open ended questions (critical thinking about poem meaning)
The News	Poetry	David Harmer	1962	authentic	30 lines		**Five activities:** a. Matching Pictures with verses b. Multiple choice (identifying words in context) c. Writing (making sentences) d. Poem recitation Open questions (discussion of opinion-critical thinkine.

Tenth Grade						
Title of Text	**Genre**	**Author**	**Period**	**Authenticity**	**Length**	**Purpose**	**Instructional Support**
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------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------
------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------
------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------
Eleventh Grade						
Title of Text	**Genre**	**Author**	**Period**	**Authenticity**	**Length**	**Purpose**	**Instructional Support**
Silas	Ficti	George	Victoria	Abridged	Summariz	Linguistic, Cultural,	**Chapter One**

| Marner | on | Eliot | n 19th century | and summarized | ed Parts chapters 1-12 Avge length of chapters 1-2 pages | Personal Growth (pleasure + aesthetic appreciation) Literary analysis (plot, information, + language teaching) | Two activities: a. Reading for pleasure/ Multiple choice (choose the best summary) b. short answers/ Tawjihi Preparation (comprehension) |

Chapter Two
Two activities
a. Reading for pleasure/multiple choice (comprehension) one item
b. Tawjihi preparation (comprehension)/ short answers, sentence completion.

Chapter Three
a. Reading for pleasure/ ordering events
b. Preparation for the Tawjihi, short answers and true false

Chapter Four:
a. Reading for pleasure- multiple choice/ characterization
b. Preparation for the Tawjihi:
1. multiple choice (comprehension)
2. short answers (quote analysis)

Chapters 5-12:
The same general activities (reading for pleasure and preparation for Tawjihi) with variation of activities (sentence order, sentence completion, multiple choice, true false, matching pictures, quotation

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							identification,)
					Twelfth Grade		
Title of Text	**Genre**	**Author**	**Period**	**Authenticity**	**Length**	**Purpose**	**Instructional support**
"I Had a Dove"	Poetry	John Keats	Romantic-19th century	Unabridged	10 lines	Linguistic Personal Growth (Aesthetic appreciation)	**Two activities** a. multiple choice (vocabulary) b. short answers (information+analysis)
"If"	Poetry	Rudyard Kipling	Modern	Unabridged	32 lines	personal growth (moral or didactic)	**Three activities** a. Multiple Choice (comprehension) /choose a summary/ b. Short answers (Comprehension) /what advice does the poet give/. c. Short answers (critical thinking) /what would happen –hypothetical situations
"War is Never Over"	Poetry	Cecil Harrison	Modern-post WW2 American	Unabridged	20 lines	Linguistic (vocabulary glossary) Personal growth (moral)	**Two activities** a. Multiple choice (critical thinking)/ which opinion would the poet agree with b. Short answers/(comprehension) /line interpretation.
"Solitude"	Poetry	Ella Wheeler Wilcox	Modern 19th-20th century American	Unabridged	24 lines	Linguistic (voc. Glossary)+connotations +denotations Personal growth (emotional impact of poem)	**Three activities** a. Multiple choice (comprehension) b. gap filling (vocabulary connotations) c. Multiple Choice (comprehension of information

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"Be Strong"	Poetry (hymn)	Maltbie D. Babcock	Modern	Unabridged	12 lines	Linguistic (voc. Gloss.) Personal growth (morality and morals)	**Three activities** a. Short answers (comprehension) b. Multiple Choice (vocab. From context) True/false comprehension/ inference
"King Lear"	Drama	William Shakespeare	Elizabethan	Abridged and summarized Original dialogue provided for some excerpts after paraphrase into simple prose	Acts 1-5 Avge length 2/3-1 page each (Act I in the original King Lear is 30 pages)	Linguistic (vocab. Glossary). Personal Growth	**Act I:** Two activities a. multiple choice (choose a summary b. short answers (comprehension) **Act II** Three activities a. multiple choice (characterization) b. multiple choice (comprehension) **c.** short answers (sentence completion) **Act III** Three activities a. gap filling (vocabulary) b. multiple choice (comprehension) **c.** sentence completion (comprehension) **Act IV** Three activities a. short answer (quote identification with explanation) b. multiple choice (comprehension) **c.** sentence completion (comprehension) **Act V**

							Three activities a. Open question (evaluation of play ending) b. Multiple choice (comprehension) Short answers (information, comprehension and critical thinking)
The Bet		Anton Chekov	Translated				