



AL English Literature Resource

QUOTATIONS AND THE EXAMS

Closed Text Exams

- For the CAIE syllabus, all of the exams are **'closed-text'**. This means that you are **NOT** allowed to take your texts into the exams and that you **do therefore** have to learn a **range of quotations** for **EVERY** set text.
- It may seem annoying that you will not have access to your texts in the exam, but as the saying goes, 'it is better to have the book in your head than your head in the book' during the exam. Knowing quotations by heart means you can write more (and more quickly) in the exam and that your points will be anchored to the text.

Learning Quotations – Some Tips

- When it comes to learning quotations, a good way is to write them out on **flashcards**. You could put the quotation on one side, and some analytical points, including **relevant literary terminology**, on the back.
- If you are a **visual learner**, writing them out again and again will help you to remember them. If you are an **auditory learner**, hearing them will help. You should recite them to yourself and could even record them on your phone and play them back. Most people are a **combination** of both, so try each method and see what works best for you.
- Effective quotations are **frequent, brief** and **embedded** in the discussion. Sometimes **one word** or a **brief phrase** is enough. You can **highlight** the most important key words from your chosen quotations on your flashcards so that you will remember those first and foremost.
- You should begin learning quotations **as soon as you can**.
- Remember that 'little and often' is much more effective than trying to cram in a mass of information in one long revision session.
- If you spend **10 minutes per day** learning quotations, for **12 weeks**, you will spend 14 hours learning. But because this is spread out over a long period of time, rather than a few longer sessions of cramming, the quotations are more likely to end up in your long-term memory, making them effortless to recall, like your phone number.
- **At A Level, you will also need to learn some quotations from critics. You can use the same techniques listed above for these too.**