

## Teaching Pack

Unseen Prose – Using quotations from *Birdsong* by  
Sebastian Faulks

**Cambridge IGCSE™**  
**Literature in English 0475**



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## Introduction

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This *Teaching Pack* focuses on supporting learners to select apposite quotations from unseen prose texts to demonstrate their use in Paper 4 Unseen, where they are required to write a critical commentary on a prose extract from a novel or short story. In the examination, candidates have to demonstrate the knowledge of the content of the text through reference to detail and use of quotations from the text (AO1). We have chosen *Birdsong* by Sebastian Faulks to demonstrate how to prepare learners to do this, and this lesson plan and worksheets may be adapted for other prose texts.

The lesson presented here is designed for learners that already understand that they will need to have a personal response to the effects created in the extract in the Unseen exam element.

They should know what the term ‘quotation’ means and possibly have read the mark scheme criteria from a past paper in a previous lesson.

When asking learners to identify the word class (noun, verb, and adjective) it may help to have the definitions and dictionary forms displayed or to have taught them in a previous lesson.

The learners should also know that they will need to define words within the quotation in order to justify their own opinions about the effects created.

It would be useful if the text has been read by your learners before this lesson so that they are familiar with the content of the text, and can focus on the application of their skills.

In this *Teaching Pack* we have suggested resources and online links you may like to use as well as some worksheets to print off and use in the classroom with your learners.

## Lesson plan – Using quotations from *Birdsong* by Sebastian Faulks



### Resources

An image of a peaceful scene along a river with peaceful sounds of a river flowing, e.g.

[www.rgbstock.com/photo/nyj67ne/Peaceful+river](http://www.rgbstock.com/photo/nyj67ne/Peaceful+river)

- Copies of an Unseen extract which evokes a sense of peace (e.g. the first two paragraphs of *Birdsong* by Sebastian Faulks on PowerPoint for whole class annotating and copies for the learners to highlight)
- **Worksheet 1:** Levelled criteria for selecting apposite quotations
- **Teacher notes**

### Learning objectives

By the end of the lesson:

- **all** learners should be able to: Select quotations with 'some thoroughness'
- **most** learners should be able to: Select a range of 'careful' and 'relevant' references
- **some** learners will be able to: Select apposite and concise quotations that are considered 'well selected' and concise.

## Timings

## Activity

**Starter/Introduction**

Display a peaceful image, ideally of houses on a river. A suggested image is [www.rgbstock.com/photo/nyj67ne/Peaceful+river](http://www.rgbstock.com/photo/nyj67ne/Peaceful+river)

You could support this discussion by playing some peaceful sounds of a river flowing.

Give learners one minute to think and then one minute to discuss the following question:

**What would it be like to live here?**

Elicit words and phrases that evoke a sense of peace.

Give learners the synonym challenge:

- they have one minute to find as many synonyms of their answers using the thesaurus at [www.thesaurus.com](http://www.thesaurus.com)

Their most obscure and complex synonyms should be recorded in their books under the heading: 'Peace'.

Challenge learners to identify the word class (noun, verb, adjective, etc.) of each of their 'best' synonyms.

Choose a learner 'leader' to list these on a large piece of paper and keep them displayed for referring to later on in the lesson.

**Main lesson**

Hand out, display and read two paragraphs of an unseen text which has a peaceful atmosphere, e.g. the first two paragraphs of the opening of *Birdsong* by Sebastian Faulks.

Ask learners to highlight any words they cannot define and list them on the board.

Divide the unknown words amongst the class. Give learners one minute to look up and define a word each, or in pairs, making a note of the whether the word is a noun, verb, adjective as well.

Ask one or two learners to share the definitions of words they have looked up.

**Task**

Give learners the levelled criteria for using quotations (**Worksheet 1**) and ask them to number them on a scale from the simplest skill (1) to the most complex skill (7).



Display the correctly levelled criteria for using quotations. (See **Teacher notes**). Learners should check their answers.

Annotate the text whilst the learners copy your notes with the differences between the words highlighted in red. (See **Teacher notes**).

Ask the question:

**With this much text, how many quotations would learners need to find in order to move beyond 'some thoroughness'?**

Give learners thinking time and then agree on a reasonable numerical target. Make a note of this on the board to refer back to and tick off

Timings	Activity
	<p>when achieved.</p> <p>Ask the question:</p> <p><b>How does the writer create a sense of peace in the opening?</b></p> <p>Divide the class into small groups and give the learners a couple of minutes to highlight as many words as they can that can be linked to peace.</p> <p>Share their answers as a class. Accept all answers to ensure you exceed the numerical target as set by the learners. Tick the number that you have displayed and get learners to tick their mark scheme to show they have already met the levelled criteria for ‘some thoroughness’.</p> <p>Emphasise that it is not just about quantity but quality in their selection of quotations. Model the concept of being ‘careful’ and ‘relevant’. For instance, ‘grass’ is not a careful quotation, but the idea of ‘damp grass’ – undisturbed dew – evokes an image of uninterrupted peace. This would work best if you used a quotation selected by a learner in the class that was not carefully chosen or relevant.</p> <p><b>Task</b></p> <p>In pairs ask the learners to rank order their quotations, eliminating those that have not been ‘well selected’ as they cannot be linked to the list from the starter activity / concept of peace as shown in the extract.</p> <p>Learners should eliminate unnecessary words from their quotation. Model this process by choosing one of the learner’s quotations and removing the unnecessary words.</p> <p>Praise learners as they have completed the thought process which will ensure that they have ‘much well supported reference’ in their answers once they have written these up.</p>
	<p><b>Plenary</b></p> <p>Ask learners to summarise the thinking process for their exams for ensuring they have well-chosen references to support their answer.</p> <p><b>Homework</b></p> <p>Ask learners to write up their analysis in the style of an Unseen past question:</p> <p><b>How successfully does the opening create a sense of peace for you?</b></p>

## Teacher notes



This lesson is about building confidence that all learners can achieve. Following this lesson, learners will need to move onto the process of integrating quotations and learning to comment.

Please note that this lesson could be used with either a poem or a set text. The mark scheme criteria for AO1 do not change between the units.

Learners are given ample challenge to develop their vocabulary throughout this lesson as this will enable them to broaden their ability to understand and comment on language which in turn is fundamental to success in the Unseen unit.

Learner leadership opportunities are provided to build confidence and opportunities for those learners whose success depends on a more active approach.

**What would it be like to live here?** Elicit words and phrases that evoke a sense of peace: 'restful', 'tranquil', 'secluded', 'idyllic', etc.

Learners can access synonyms quickly and easily with their own browser. This will encourage a broader range of engagement with the use of technology. Synonyms of 'idyllic' – 'blissful', 'picturesque', etc., will broaden the learners' vocabulary in preparation for the Unseen texts.

When starting the ordering of the levelled quotation criteria it may help to start by giving learners the most difficult skill, 'incorporate well-selected reference to the text skilfully and with flair' and defining any unknown words before they start.

Keep the discussion of the differences brief, with the basic summary as follows:

- **'limited'** = not much use of quotations
- **'a little supporting'** = perhaps one or two quotations
- **'some thoroughness'** = quotations from every part of the text
- **'careful and relevant'** = only quotations that link to the question
- **'well-selected'** = all quotations used will link to the question.

**With this much text, how many quotations would learners need to find in order to move beyond 'some thoroughness'?** In this particular extract there are about 20 quotations that evoke a sense of peace. Around 8–10 quotations would enable learners to thoroughly select their evidence but in the exam the extract will be lengthier and they must select quotations from across the entire text.

Emphasise that it is not just about quantity but quality in their selection of quotations. Model the concept of being 'careful' and 'relevant'. For example, 'grass' is not a careful quotation but the idea of 'damp grass' – undisturbed dew – evokes an image of uninterrupted peace. This process would work best if you used a quotation selected by a learner in the class that was not carefully chosen or relevant.



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## Teacher notes, continued

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Learners should eliminate unnecessary words from their quotation. Model this process by choosing one of the learner's quotations and removing the unnecessary words. For example, in the quotation, 'The town side of the boulevard backed on to substantial gardens which were squared off', when the unnecessary words are excluded you should be left with 'substantial gardens' 'squared off' that create a sense that nature is being quietly and carefully controlled. When modelling the process of creating concise apposite quotations by removing unnecessary words you can teach the learners to distil the core meaning by removing typically unnecessary 'syntax' words such as the definite/indefinite articles, prepositions etc.

When asking the learners to rank order their quotations, give them sticky notes that can be moved as part of a discussion in pairs to help to support learners and improve engagement. For example, 'small clearings, quiet pools and areas unvisited' is a quotation that creates more effects than 'rutted leafy road' so should be closer to the top and thus more important in the learner's full analysis.

Ask learners to summarise the thinking process for their exams for ensuring they have well-chosen references to support their answer. The plenary should form a resource for learners to refer back to at the start of the next lesson. The rough structure should be: read the text, identify the concept, identify all relevant quotations in the whole text, prioritise the most relevant, remove unnecessary words from the quotations (and then embed to be taught).

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## Lesson resources

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**Worksheet 1:** Criteria for using quotations

**Worksheet 2:** Criteria for using quotations (answers)



## Worksheet 1: Criteria for using quotations

Put the skills in order of 1 to 7 (7 being the highest level of skill).

Demonstrates knowledge by:	Order of skills (1–7):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>showing <b>some thoroughness</b> in the use of supporting evidence from the text.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>making <b>a little supporting</b> reference to the text.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>integrating much</b> well-selected reference to the text.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>supporting with <b>careful</b> and <b>relevant</b> reference to the text.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>limited</b> textual reference.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>incorporating <b>well-selected</b> reference to the text skilfully and with flair.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>making <b>a little reference</b> to the text.</li> </ul>	



## Worksheet 2: Criteria for using quotations (answers)

Demonstrates knowledge by:	Order of skills (1–7):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>showing <b>some thoroughness</b> in the use of supporting evidence from the text.</li> </ul>	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>making <b>a little supporting</b> reference to the text.</li> </ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>integrating much</b> well-selected reference to the text.</li> </ul>	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>supporting with <b>careful</b> and <b>relevant</b> reference to the text.</li> </ul>	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>limited</b> textual reference.</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>incorporating <b>well-selected</b> reference to the text skilfully and with flair.</li> </ul>	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>making <b>a little reference</b> to the text.</li> </ul>	2

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