

We asked a French Teacher at Wycliffe College how she and her students use their A-level film and literature study guides and what they like about them...

“ I teach A-level French, following the new Pearson Edexcel specification. We use the Hodder Education Film and Literature Study Guides *La Haine* (film) and *Un sac de billes* (literature) and I would say that the guides have made a considerable contribution to my students’ success.

The study guides build my students’ knowledge in lots of ways! The structure of the books is excellent, with the synopsis acting as a quick consolidation of what they have just read/seen. The section on historical background provides clear, accurate information in one place and is slanted with the book/film in mind, so it is all relevant. The chapter/scene summaries are good at refreshing students’ memories when planning an essay.

The chapters on themes and characters sections act as good checklists for me to make sure I have covered everything! And they are also useful for the students to read on their own.

Understanding the writer’s/ director’s methods is the aspect which students tend to be less

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comfortable with, especially with film as it is normally the first time they have studied a film in detail. So, this chapter of the book is the one they use a lot. This section also helps students to grasp the specialist vocabulary used to analyse literature/film.

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When it comes to building students’ study and exam skills, the sections on themes, characters and methods, first of all, develop understanding and provide content which is useful for scaffolding their first few essays. The key vocabulary is in a format they can easily learn from and the activities encourage students to write about the text/film using exam-appropriate language. Then, the exam section with the sample questions is great for helping them to understand what makes a good essay and why.

We use the guides throughout the year, in the classroom, for homework and revision. The chapter/scene summaries are used as we go along, using the activities and vocabulary lists for homework.



Once we have read the book/ studied the film, we use the context and methods chapter for discussion and homework.

“The exam section ... is great for helping them to understand what makes a good essay and why.”

For revision, I set various class discussion and homework activities using the sample essays, the chapters on the themes and characters and the section on quotations. Students go back to the guides and revisit what they have done for final exam revision. They particularly like the pages which summarise the key aspects, finding them a quick and easy way to review content, using them rather as they might use revision cards.

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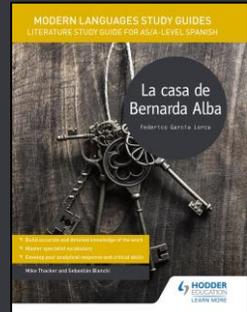
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