

# Writing multiple-choice questionnaires : group activity

**Collection:** Assessment

**Resource:** Computer-aided assessment

## Approximate duration

1 hour

## Learning outcomes

To appreciate the potential of online quizzes as an assessment tool for English Studies and to develop the ability to design them.

## Introduction

Because so much of an English Literature course is geared to encouraging students to come up with their own ideas about texts, it is sometimes easy to forget that the subject also requires them to learn a large and sometimes bewildering amount of concepts and facts. This is perhaps most obvious in theory modules where the understanding of complex philosophical arguments is a necessary prerequisite to the independent analysis and application of theorists' ideas. Any new literary topic, however (author, period, theme, geographical location) will bring with it an array of things that the students need to learn facts about: historical contexts, author biography, textual history, and so on. It is rare, though, for this sort of knowledge to be explicitly tested in English modules. Rather, it is more common for it to be assessed implicitly alongside the students' expositions of their own ideas, in coursework essays and in exams.

The aim of this exercise is to get you thinking about the use of a particular form of assessment--online multiple-choice questionnaires--that is usually associated with more 'scientific' subjects than English literature. We suggest that the sample questionnaires



**1** | *This resource is part of a set of professional development resources for Higher Education English (including English Literature, English Language & Creative Writing) called 'The Pool'. The resources were developed by the English Subject Centre in 2011 as part of a JISC/HEA Open Educational Resources (OER) Project.*

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compiled by Matthew Sauvage (University of Winchester) and by Mary McNally (University of Derby) shows that it is possible to use this assessment form to test some of the complex kinds of knowledge underpinning literary studies in a sophisticated and developmental way.

## The activity

This activity can be run in a classroom equipped with computers running quiz software. If you want to run it in this way, you will need to allow some extra time to familiarise the participants with the quiz software (probably a VLE such as 'Moodle') that will be used.

1. Show participants one or both of the sample quizzes. Links are below:
  - [Syntax and Morphology - http://humbox.ac.uk/1412/](http://humbox.ac.uk/1412/) (Matthew Sauvage, University of Winchester)
  - [Shakespeare's Sonnets](#) (Mary McNally, University of Derby) – Word Doc contained within this resource in HumBox.
2. Discuss with the participants in a plenary session the various different types of questions that appear in the quizzes and the sort of learning outcomes that they test.
3. Divide the group into pairs. Ask each pair to choose a module that one of them is currently teaching or a topic that one or both of them is/are interested in teaching.
4. Ask each pair to write down the learning outcomes for the module/topic they have chosen.
5. Ask each pair to design three quiz questions addressing the learning outcomes they have identified. (Because of circumstances such as the absence of primary texts, it will often be the case that questions are designed in outline rather than fully written out).
6. If you are using computers, each pair could create their own short online quiz.
7. In the final plenary session, discuss with participants the efficiency or otherwise of the way in which the quiz questions have addressed module learning outcomes. What sort of place might online quizzes find in English modules?



## Links & References

- [Teaching and assessing writing skills](http://www.english.heacademy.ac.uk/virtue/archive/mediaplayer/player.html?directPlay=jenkins_podcast). Audio interview with Dr. Alice Jenkins (University of Glasgow) about the design of an online quiz to test student writing skills.  
[[http://www.english.heacademy.ac.uk/virtue/archive/mediaplayer/player.html?directPlay=jenkins\\_podcast](http://www.english.heacademy.ac.uk/virtue/archive/mediaplayer/player.html?directPlay=jenkins_podcast)]

## Relationship to the Professional Standards Framework

- **Areas of Activity 3:** Assessment and giving feedback to learners
- **Core Knowledge 2:** Appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme
- **Core Knowledge 5:** Methods for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching
- **Professional Values 1:** Respect for individual learners
- **Professional Values 3:** Commitment to the development of learning communities
- **Professional Values 4:** Commitment to encouraging participation in higher education, acknowledging diversity and promoting equality of opportunity

More information about the Professional Standards Framework can be obtained from the summary factsheet in the *Subject & Pedagogy* collection in HumBox.

<http://humbox.ac.uk/2731/>

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## Resources in the Assessment Collection

- Assessment: introduction to the collection
- Assessment audit: resource overview
  - Auditing English: individual activity
  - Auditing English: group activity
- Designing and running innovative assessments: resource overview
  - Creative assessments in Literature: outcomes, criteria: individual activity
  - Creative assessments in Literature: outcomes, criteria: group activity
- Assessment SWOT analysis: resource overview



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- SWOT analysis: individual activity
- SWOT analysis: group activity
- Mix and match: resource overview
  - Matching assessment to outcome: individual activity
  - Matching assessment to outcome: group activity
- Creative assessment: resource overview
  - Creative criticism
- Feedback and marking strategies: resource overview
  - Marking exercise: individual activity
  - Marking exercise: group activity
- Computer-aided assessment: resource overview
  - Writing multiple-choice questionnaires: individual activity
  - **Writing multiple-choice questionnaires: group activity (\*you are here)**
- What is assessment for? : resource overview
  - Balancing the interest groups: individual activity
  - Balancing the interest groups: group activity

