

# The Use of Literature in English Language Teaching

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**ABSTRACT.** Educationalists and scholars have tried to devise ways of making literature a more significant part of English language teaching programme and using it in such a way as to further the learner's mastery in the four basic areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Many of the activities and the ideas behind them can be successfully adapted across different levels of English language proficiency.

The perennial problem of how to teach English language has in recent years become increasingly guided by the dominant aim of promoting the learner's communicative competence. Each novel, short story or play can spark off a wealth of different activities. Tasks and exercises based on a literary text can provide valuable practice in listening, speaking, writing as well as improving reading skills.

Moreover, from the teacher's point of view, literature, which speaks to the heart as much as to the mind, provides material with some emotional colour that can make fuller contact with the learner's own life, and can thus counterbalance the more fragmented effect of many collections of texts used in the classroom.

One of the main reasons might be that literature offers a bountiful and extremely varied body of written material which is 'important' in the sense that it says something about fundamental human issues, and which is enduring rather than ephemeral. On the positive side, literature provides a rich context in which individual lexical or syntactical items are made more memorable. Above all, literature can be helpful in the language learning process because of the personal involvement it fosters in readers.

The main objective of this paper is to explain some ideas, approaches and techniques that have been used in English language teaching and the use of literature in the English language teaching classroom. The paper analyses the benefits of literature in the English language learning process. The methodology includes observations, and interviews with English teachers and scholars. Such an attempt would definitely motivate and promote the students to learn the English language through literature. One of our aims in teaching literature is to encourage learners to feel that they can read and enjoy books on their own. Language enrichment is one benefit often sought through literature.

**Key words:** English Language, Literature.

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