

Chapter # 1

THE USE OF AHARON APPELFELD'S *ADAM AND THOMAS* IN LITERARY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the pedagogical potential of Aharon Appelfeld's *Adam and Thomas* (2013) for Literary Education and specifies implementation across three schooling levels: early primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary. Using qualitative literary content analysis, we evaluate the novel against explicit criteria: (1) developmental fit (linguistic demands, cognitive load, scaffolding); (2) thematic accessibility and complexity; (3) ethical and historical sensitivity when teaching traumatic literature, particularly Holocaust-related content; and (4) curricular alignment with reading comprehension, literary concepts, intercultural competence, and values education. We conceptualise the text's "spaces of indeterminacy" as structured invitations for learner interpretation, drawing on a reader-response perspective that acknowledges diverse cultural and historical backgrounds. Although the Second World War provides the setting, the narrative foregrounds agency, care, and moral growth, offering entry points for plot oriented as well as philosophically inclined students. We model grade-banded adaptations of the same passage to show progression in task complexity and sensitivity, and we outline safeguards (pre-teaching of context and vocabulary, informed choice, and debrief routines). The study provides transparent criteria and concrete pathways for age-appropriate classroom integration.

Keywords: Aharon Appelfeld, *Adam and Thomas*, literary education, content analysis, reader-response, Holocaust education

1. INTRODUCTION

"We will be able to talk about what we went through in the forest years later."
(Appelfeld, 2014, p. 108)

This chapter investigates the pedagogical potential of Aharon Appelfeld's *Adam and Thomas* (2013) and specifies how it can be integrated into Literary Education at three schooling levels - early primary (Year 1), lower secondary, and upper secondary. We selected this text because it offers multiple, developmentally varied points of entry: for younger pupils, an engaging survival narrative with clear plot lines and relational care; for more experienced readers, philosophical and ethical questions concerning faith, agency, responsibility, and the making of meaning after rupture.

Our approach is grounded in qualitative literary content analysis and a reader-response perspective. We treat the novel's well-known "spaces of indeterminacy" as intentional invitations for learners to co-construct meaning, while also attending to differences in cultural and historical knowledge. To support methodological transparency, we evaluate the text using explicit criteria - developmental fit, thematic accessibility/complexity, ethical and historical sensitivity (with particular attention to Holocaust-related content), and curricular

alignment - operationalised in the Methods section and applied in the analysis through grade-banded tasks that adapt a single passage across levels.

Appelfeld's oeuvre emerges from lived catastrophe. Born in 1932 in what is now Ukraine, he survived the Holocaust; his writing persistently explores trauma, loss, and the afterlives of violence. Scholarship highlights his focus on the impossible mourning of his murdered mother and the inscription of suffering on the body (Bannasch, 2023; Xia, 2024). Critics further note the tension his work stages between Jewish diasporic pasts and a Zionist present, blending fiction with autobiographical resonances to interrogate memory and identity (Coppel-Batsch, 2005). Langer (1995) underscores Appelfeld's poetics of the unsaid - avoidance, silence, and portent - which invites readers to infer historical horror without sensationalising it. His protagonists often grapple with reconciling past and present, a dynamic that resonates with survivor experiences within Israeli society (Shillony, 2014). Through spare yet evocative narration, Appelfeld preserves the cultural-historical episteme of Central European Jewry, illuminating how the Holocaust continues to shape individual and collective memory (Krausz, 2011).

In line with trauma-informed practice, we frame the Second World War as the historical setting rather than the spectacle of instruction. Classroom work is structured to maintain psychological safety: preparatory context and vocabulary, clear learning intentions, opt-in participation, and debrief routines. This enables age-appropriate engagement with ethical complexity without overwhelming learners, and it foregrounds care, solidarity, and moral growth as central interpretive threads.

The paper (i) situates *Adam and Thomas* within debates on teaching traumatic literature; (ii) articulates criteria for level-appropriate use; and (iii) demonstrates progression via adaptations of one passage across Year 1, lower-secondary, and upper-secondary classrooms. We conclude with practical guidance and considerations for inclusive facilitation.

Research questions:

1. RQ1: What literary features of *Adam and Thomas* afford age-appropriate engagement at different schooling levels?
2. RQ2: How can reader-response structures leverage indeterminacy while accommodating diverse cultural and historical backgrounds?
3. RQ3: What safeguards and scaffolds support ethically responsible discussion of Holocaust-related content in literature lessons?

1.1. Shortly about Book *Adam and Thomas*

Appelfeld's *Adam and Thomas* is best approached not as a direct memoir but as a literary reworking of experiences and imaginaries shaped by the Holocaust (Shoah). The Second World War functions as a historical backdrop rather than the explicit subject: a setting that confers moral gravity while allowing the author to probe affect, memory, and ethical commitment through understatement. This stance is consistent with Appelfeld's poetics of implication, in which silence, inference, and the unsaid invite readers to participate in making meaning rather than confront graphic depictions of atrocity.

The primary storyline is deliberately simple. Two Jewish boys, Adam and Thomas, are taken by their mothers into the forest in the hope of survival. During their concealment, they discover that Mina - a girl they know - has been hidden by a nearby farmer whose land borders the boys' makeshift shelter. The narrative concludes on a note of cautious consolation: Adam and Thomas are reunited with their mothers, and Mina - who has lost her family - is adopted. This clarity of action, focused on resourcefulness, friendship, and care, sustains engagement while avoiding sensationalism.

Such a pared-back plot affords age-appropriate entry points across cohorts. Beginning readers, many of whom may have little prior knowledge of the Second World War, can follow the text as an adventure of children in the woods, attending to problem-solving, mutual support, and hope. As Lobel (1998) notes, stories filtered through children's immediate experience can render complex events comprehensible to novices. For more experienced readers, the same scenes sustain discussion of transcendence, agency, trust, and responsibility, enabling progressively richer interpretation. To align with trauma-informed practice, classroom work should frame the war as context rather than spectacle, introducing historical background gradually and with care. Practical safeguards include pre-teaching key vocabulary and context, offering informed choices about participation, employing reflective and dialogic reader-response activities that acknowledge diverse cultural and historical backgrounds, and building in debrief routines. In this way, the novel's "spaces of indeterminacy" become structured invitations for learners to explore ethical complexity without being overwhelmed, while teachers maintain psychological safety and developmental fit.

1.1.1. Implementation of Philosophical Ideas

Beyond its pared-back adventure plot, *Adam and Thomas* stages a sustained meditation on faith, doubt, and pragmatic survival, allowing readers to consider the meaning of life, the (non-)existence of God, and the human place in a damaged world. These philosophically inflected passages - while not required for a basic grasp of events - offer fertile ground for reader-response work that acknowledges diverse cultural and historical backgrounds and invites pupils to test interpretations against textual evidence. For younger learners (early primary, Year 1), the focus can remain on ethical dispositions embodied in action - care, trust, and mutual aid - supported by teacher-led questioning such as: "What helps the characters keep going?" and "How do they look after one another?" At lower-secondary level, the same moments can open structured dialogues on practical wisdom versus belief (e.g., "What do the boys trust when food is scarce - skills, other people, or something beyond themselves?"), with short reflective journalling to surface multiple viewpoints. In upper-secondary classes, learners can interrogate the text's spaces of indeterminacy directly, contrasting pragmatic reasoning with the language of transcendence, and composing brief position papers that articulate and defend an interpretation using close quotation and contextual knowledge.

To ensure trauma-informed practice, the Second World War remains the historical setting rather than the spectacle: teachers pre-teach essential vocabulary and context, offer informed choice in participation, and provide debrief routines that normalise mixed emotional responses. Assessment across levels can be aligned with transparent criteria used in this study - developmental fit, thematic accessibility/complexity, ethical and historical sensitivity, and curricular alignment - for example, by evidencing comprehension (retelling or sequencing at primary), dialogic reasoning (accountable talk at lower secondary), and argumentation grounded in textual analysis (upper secondary). In this way, Appelfeld's philosophical layer becomes teachable without presupposing prior theological knowledge: younger pupils encounter ethical meaning through character and action; adolescents practise balancing pragmatic problem-solving with metaphysical questioning; and older students develop disciplined literary inquiry that links interpretation to historical awareness and civic reflection. Consequently, the text serves as a robust vehicle for Literary Education at multiple stages while modelling safe, age-appropriate engagement with Holocaust-related literature.

2. LITERARY EDUCATION AND PRESENTATION OF THE EVENTS OF WORLD WAR II

Literary Education offers distinctive affordances for introducing pupils to the Holocaust and the Second World War by combining narrative engagement with disciplined interpretative practice. As Bélanger (2024) argues, historical fiction can help young readers interrogate what literature reveals and what it withholds, thus cultivating a critical stance essential for grappling with the Holocaust's complexity. Literature also humanises history: by shaping personal experience into shared cultural forms, it enables new generations to encounter survivors' and victims' voices with ethical attention. In curriculum theory, memory and representation are not ancillary but constitutive; both historiography and the novel function as mediated memory that teachers must navigate with care (Morris, 2001). In parallel, cross-national pedagogical reforms increasingly foreground the Holocaust to counter hatred and intolerance, while adapting approaches to local cultural-political contexts (Schurster & Ramos, 2024).

2.1. Pedagogical Principles: Accuracy, Affect, and Agency

A central challenge is balancing historical accuracy with emotional engagement. Texts should not replace history but open routes into it. We therefore adopt four principles that align with the criteria used in this study:

- (1) Developmental fit: Select and scaffold texts so that language, cognitive demand, and themes are age appropriate.
- (2) Thematic accessibility/complexity: Begin with concrete experiences (friendship, care, resourcefulness) and build towards ethical and philosophical questions.
- (3) Ethical and historical sensitivity: Treat traumatic content with caution; centre dignity rather than spectacle.
- (4) Curricular alignment: Tie literary work to comprehension, interpretative strategies, intercultural competence, and values education.

In practice, literature lessons should contextualise narrative with concise historical framing, avoid sensationalised scenes, and include opt-in participation and debrief routines. Reader-response structures (think-aloud, reflective journals, structured dialogues) allow pupils to articulate interpretations while teachers monitor affective load and misconceptions.

2.2. Methods and Media: From Close Reading to Digital Storytelling

Alongside close reading, multimodal tasks can deepen understanding without diluting rigour. Carefully curated digital storytelling - e.g., short student-created audio narratives anchored in textual quotation and a verified historical detail - helps connect micro-stories to macro-history. Timelines, maps, and artefact galleries (constructed from approved resources) can be used to triangulate a scene from the novel with historical context, reinforcing accuracy while sustaining empathy. Such activities should include explicit source-evaluation prompts ("What does the text show? What must we verify historically? What remains uncertain?"), echoing Bélanger's (2024) emphasis on reading both revelations and omissions.

2.3. Attending to Diversity and Inclusion

Classrooms are culturally and historically diverse. Reader-response work should invite multiple perspectives while protecting students from presumption or disclosure pressure. Strategies include anonymous exit cards to surface questions, choice of modalities (writing, drawing, audio), pre-teaching vocabulary for newcomers, and small-group protocols that normalise "passing" on contributions. These moves recognise differing prior knowledge and personal proximity to trauma, aligning with trauma-informed practice.

2.4. Positioning *Adam and Thomas* within a Teaching Repertoire

Adam and Thomas complement, rather than replaces, other well-used texts in Holocaust education. For younger cohorts, it offers a clear, non-sensationalised plot through which to explore care, trust, and problem-solving, before extending to carefully framed context. At lower-secondary, its “spaces of indeterminacy” support dialogic enquiry into practical wisdom, dependence, and responsibility. At upper-secondary, the same passages sustain argumentation about inference, silence, and transcendence, and can be paired with non-fiction excerpts or survivor testimony to corroborate or complicate literary impressions. Comparative work with established classroom texts (e.g., age-appropriate historical fiction or testimony) can highlight how different genres handle voice, focalisation, and ethical distance, thereby making visible the trade-offs between emotional immediacy and historical precision often debated in the field.

2.5. Assessment and Safeguards

Assessment should evidence both understanding and ethical engagement. At early primary, focus on retelling, sequencing, and vocabulary linked to care and cooperation. At lower-secondary, prioritise accountable talk and short reflections that distinguish textual evidence from background inference. At upper-secondary, use argumentative mini-essays that mobilise quotation, contextual knowledge, and counterargument. Across levels, maintain safeguards: advance notice of sensitive content, clear learning intentions, opt-in alternatives, and structured debriefs. These measures uphold accuracy and dignity while enabling age-appropriate, critical engagement with the Holocaust through literature.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs qualitative literary content analysis to examine the pedagogical affordances of Aharon Appelfeld's *Adam and Thomas* (2013) for Literary Education across three schooling levels (early primary/Year 1, lower secondary, upper secondary). Content analysis is well suited to educational inquiry because it systematically identifies patterns of meaning and thematic structures beyond surface features, addressing the limits of impressionistic evaluation (Bingke et al., 2022). Thematic content analysis, in particular, foregrounds latent themes and value-laden motifs rather than frequencies alone (Vimal, 2021); in an educational precedent, Anagaw (2020) shows how content analysis can reveal the distribution of civic virtues and skills across curricular materials, underscoring its promise for assessing the instructional value of literary texts.

Our design integrates two complementary lenses: a thematic analysis that traces motifs (e.g., care, agency, responsibility, faith/doubt, resourcefulness) and structural features (e.g., focalisation, silence, “spaces of indeterminacy”); and a reader-response perspective that anticipates varied receptions among pupils with different cultural and historical backgrounds and translates textual affordances into level-appropriate tasks. The corpus comprises the English translation of *Adam and Thomas* (2013/2014); the units of analysis are scenes, narrative turns (problem–response–consequence), and short quoted passages that condense a motif or ethical dilemma.

To ensure methodological transparency, each unit was evaluated against four criteria aligned with our educational aims: developmental fit (linguistic demands, cognitive load, scaffolding potential), thematic accessibility/complexity (concrete entry points for younger pupils and layered meanings for older students), ethical and historical sensitivity (risk of distress, need for preparatory context, suitability for trauma-informed teaching of Holocaust-related content), and curricular alignment (links to reading comprehension,

literary concepts - characterisation, focalisation, symbolism - intercultural competence, and values education). Each criterion was rated on a three-point descriptive scale (emerging/appropriate/advanced) with brief analytic justifications to preserve qualitative depth. The procedure unfolded in three stages: open coding (inductive memoing of motifs, narrative functions, and pedagogical affordances at scene level); axial coding (grouping codes under the four criteria and mapping tensions such as ethical sensitivity versus task complexity); and pedagogical modelling (deriving grade-banded adaptations of the same passage - Year 1, lower secondary, upper secondary - to demonstrate progression in interpretative demand and affective safeguards).

Trustworthiness was enhanced through analytic memos, code–passage matrices, and peer debrief (a second reader audited a sample of coded units and challenged interpretations); dependability was supported by an audit trail documenting code changes and criteria applications; confirmability was pursued via reflexive notes on the researchers' positionalities (literature/education backgrounds) and their potential influence on theme selection. Where disagreements arose (e.g., on the suitability of a scene for early primary), they were resolved by specifying additional scaffolds or deferring the passage to an older grade band. Because the novel intersects with Holocaust history, all pedagogical recommendations are framed by trauma-informed practice: advance notice of sensitive content, pre-teaching of context and vocabulary, opt-in participation with alternatives, and structured debrief routines; historical framing is concise and age-appropriate, with the war treated as context rather than spectacle. As a text-centred analysis, our findings concern pedagogical potential rather than measured learning outcomes; classroom trials, learner feedback, and cross-cultural replications are needed to test transferability. Nevertheless, by making criteria, coding, and safeguards explicit, the method provides a transparent basis for integrating *Adam and Thomas* into literature classrooms at different educational stages.

4. IMPLEMENTING ADAM AND THOMAS ACROSS SCHOOLING LEVELS

In this section, we translate the above theoretical and methodological framing into level-specific pathways for classroom use. Our aim is to show how the same text can serve developmental fit, thematic accessibility/complexity, ethical and historical sensitivity, and curricular alignment across early primary (Year 1), lower secondary, and upper secondary.

4.1. Reception of the Primary Storyline

The novel introduces Adam with economical clarity: *Adam is nine years old and about to finish fourth grade... This made his parents happy, and they bought me a new soccer ball* (Appelfeld, 2014, p. 8). Thomas is sketched in sharper, scholastic relief: conscientious, academically strong, yet socially marginalised - *it was these efforts that compounded the hostility towards him* (p. 16). As foils, Adam and Thomas orient readers to contrasting dispositions that later inflect responses to faith, risk, and care. Character contrast is a well-established motivator for reader engagement (Alexandre, 2008) and can scaffold differentiated identification: pupils may *find themselves* in one boy's outlook while remaining curious about the other. In religious–moral character education, such contrasts offer accessible conduits to ethical inquiry (Efendi, Amelia, & Hayati, 2019).

Family backgrounds further deepen these profiles. Thomas's parents are teachers who valorise learning - *Education protects us... We must take care of the soul* (Appelfeld, 2014, pp. 22–23) - which frames Thomas's tendency to reason and to borrow his father's cadences. Adam's ghetto labour - helping in a public kitchen, rationing bread and soup

(p. 23) - foregrounds practical care and responsibility. For beginning readers, these details stabilise the primary storyline - two boys surviving in the forest - without requiring uptake of the philosophical layer. For more experienced readers, the same details prompt questions about what sustains people under pressure: skill, solidarity, or something beyond the self.

4.1.1. Classroom Moves

1. Year 1: picture-supported character cards (likes/skills/help received/help given); simple sequencing of events; vocabulary pre-teaching (forest, shelter, share, help).
2. Lower secondary: Venn diagram comparing the boys' dispositions and strategies; short response journals (*What does each boy rely on when things are difficult?*).
3. Upper secondary: close reading of two brief passages (Adam's kitchen work; Thomas's father's dictum) to infer worldview; mini debate on *What protects us: knowledge, community, faith, or luck?*

Safeguards across levels include advance notice of sensitive content, opt-in alternatives for speaking, and debrief routines.

4.2. Philosophical Passages

Philosophically inflected moments extend the narrative's interpretative reach without carrying the plot. Consider Thomas's imagined exchange with his mother - *I forgive you.../ Do not forgive me easily...* (Appelfeld, 2014, p. 31) - or the dialogue about the forest and human predation: *Sometimes the forest is better than people... So, it follows that humans are far worse* (p. 57). Such passages align with scholarship on children's literature of the Second World War as a site for exploring trauma, displacement, responsibility, and ethical imagination through implication rather than spectacle (Wróblewski, 2024; Franco, 2021; Sainsbury, 2017; Krongold, 2020). Within the novel, two currents meet: one boy shaped by orthodoxy, the other by rational pragmatism. As the relationship matures, these currents enrich one another; neither is definitive or rigid.

4.2.1. Classroom Moves

1. Year 1: Think-pair-share on care and fairness (*What feels kind in this scene?*); role-play with sentence stems (*I can help by...*).
2. Lower secondary: structured dialogue contrasting pragmatic reasoning and trust/faith; exit cards capturing a lingering question or doubt.
3. Upper secondary: Socratic seminar on the ethics of forgiveness and judgement under duress; brief position papers using quotation and contextual knowledge to defend an interpretation of the *forest vs. humans'* exchange.

Trauma-informed pedagogy here means the war remains context, not spectacle; teachers pre-teach historical basics and vocabulary, monitor affect, and normalise passing or writing privately.

4.3. Pathways for Integration in Literary Education

The novel's layered design supports repeated returns across the school career, with new meanings emerging on re-reading. Because the Second World War is implicit rather than graphic, age-appropriate work with younger pupils is feasible when framing and safeguards are in place. Literature can sensitise without sensationalising: handled carefully, it helps children process difficult emotions and taboo topics in bounded ways (Ungeheuer-Gołąb, 2024). In this sense, *Adam and Thomas* exemplifies how Second World War literature can illuminate the human consequences of conflict and clarify ethical stakes without imposing trauma (Ben-Tovim, 2022).

4.3.1. Progression Model Using One Shared Passage

1. Year 1: Guided read-aloud with images; identify who helps whom; draw-and-label shelter items; formative check via retell/sequence.
2. Lower secondary: Perspective-taking diary entry (Adam vs. Thomas); source-spotting of what is told, what is hinted, what needs historical verification.
3. Upper secondary: Comparative analysis - the same passage alongside a short non-fiction extract or testimony; evaluate how focalisation and silence shape ethical distance; mini-essay with counterargument.

Assessment aligns with our criteria: comprehension and vocabulary (developmental fit), reasoned inference (thematic complexity), ethical self-monitoring and respectful discourse (sensitivity), and explicit links to literary concepts and citizenship aims (curricular alignment).

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study has advanced a transparent, criteria-led framework for integrating Aharon Appelfeld's *Adam and Thomas* (2013) into Literary Education across early primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary classrooms, demonstrating how an accessible survival narrative, paired with a restrained philosophical layer, can sustain grade-banded adaptations that preserve psychological safety while cultivating increasingly sophisticated interpretation.

Our findings operationalise key theoretical strands: following Bélanger (2024), we turn the novel's *spaces of indeterminacy* into teachable moments that invite pupils to interrogate both revelation and omission; consistent with Morris's (2001) account of literature and historiography as mediated memory, our comparative tasks triangulate literary inference with historical verification, foregrounding how focalisation and silence shape ethical distance; in line with Krongold's (2020) observation that youth Holocaust narratives move from factual recounting towards metaphor, our close readings leverage implication without sacrificing accuracy; and, echoing Wróblewski (2024), Franco (2021), and Sainsbury (2017), we recast philosophically inflected passages as age-appropriate ethical enquiries - ranging from care and fairness in Year 1 to argumentation about judgement under duress in upper secondary.

The criteria we apply - developmental fit, thematic accessibility/complexity, ethical and historical sensitivity, and curricular alignment - offer a portable quality standard that can be adapted to local contexts in the spirit of Schurster & Ramos (2024), while our trauma-informed stance aligns with Ungeheuer-Gołab's (2024) and Ben-Tovim's (2022) insistence on sensitisation without sensationalism.

Conceptually, the paper contributes a bridge from theory to practice by linking reader-response, memory studies, and ethics of representation to concrete classroom routines; methodologically, it replaces impressionistic text selection with a documented content-analytic protocol and descriptive ratings; pedagogically, it provides reusable task archetypes (shared-passage progression, comparative corroboration, structured dialogue) that support inclusion and dignity.

We acknowledge tensions between accuracy and affect, safety and challenge, and universality and specificity; these require careful teacher preparation and culturally responsive facilitation. As a text-centred inquiry, our conclusions speak to pedagogical potential rather than measured outcomes; future research should include classroom trials with learning and affective measures across diverse settings, and comparative studies pairing *Adam and Thomas* with other age-appropriate texts to examine how genre, focalisation, and ethical distance mediate understanding and empathy. By aligning theoretical insights with developmentally staged practice, this work offers a coherent route for using *Adam and Thomas* to humanise historical understanding and cultivate disciplined, compassionate literary enquiry.

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KEY TERMS & DEFINITIONS

Literary Education: Teaching and learning that develop pupils' literary understanding (e.g., interpretation, genre, form, ethics of reading) through sustained engagement with texts.

Holocaust education: Curriculum and pedagogy concerned with learning about the Nazi genocide, its histories and legacies, taught with historical accuracy and ethical sensitivity.

Second World War (as context): The historical setting against which a narrative unfolds; in this chapter, war is framed as context rather than spectacle.

Reader-response: A pedagogical and theoretical approach foregrounding learners' meaning-making, recognising diverse backgrounds, experiences, and affective responses.

Spaces of indeterminacy: Purposeful gaps, silences, or ambiguities in a text that invite inference and multiple interpretations.

Focalisation: The vantage point or perspective through which narrative information is filtered (e.g., a character's viewpoint).

Ethical distance: The degree of proximity a text creates between readers and represented suffering, shaping empathy without sensationalism.

Developmental fit: Alignment between task/text demands and learners' linguistic, cognitive, and socio-emotional readiness.

Thematic accessibility/complexity: The availability of concrete entry points for younger pupils and layered meanings for older students.

Ethical and historical sensitivity: Careful treatment of traumatic content (e.g., Holocaust-related material) to protect dignity and minimise harm.

Trauma-informed practice: Teaching that anticipates potential distress, offers choice, scaffolds context and vocabulary, and provides debrief routines.

Intercultural competence: The ability to engage respectfully with cultural difference, perspectives, and histories, including Jewish experience before, during, and after the Holocaust.

Values education: Structured opportunities to reflect on and practise dispositions such as care, responsibility, fairness, and solidarity.

Close reading: Slow, text-centred analysis of language, structure, and form to ground interpretation in evidence.

Dialogic teaching: Structured talk (e.g., seminars, accountable discussion) that elicits, connects, and extends pupil ideas.

Grade-banded adaptation: A single passage or task redesigned with progressive demands for early primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary cohorts.

Digital storytelling: Short, carefully curated audio/visual narratives created by students, anchored in textual quotation and verified historical detail.

Historical verification (triangulation): Corroborating literary inference with reliable historical sources (e.g., testimony, archives, scholarly summaries).

Opt-in participation: Participation by informed choice, allowing pupils to pass, write privately, or engage through alternative modalities.

Debrief routine: A planned reflective closure to process learning and emotions, clarify misconceptions, and signpost support if needed.

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