

# Book Review of British Literature by Christopher Swann

Dear Teachers:

The members of the National Association of Laboratory Schools Academic Review Board for High School English, named below, have reviewed the material presented in Christopher C. Swann's British Literature curriculum and have agreed that it meets the standards and incorporates best practices for the subject area. In addition, it is certain that any student who takes the course as Mr. Swann has structured it will emerge more highly educated. Swann offers a wealth of information that will undoubtedly be of great value as a resource to experienced, new, and out-of-field teachers alike. Specific comments from the review process are posted nearby.

Sincerely, Laboratory School Assn. Academic Review Board

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## Excerpts from the review process

"The overall structure of the course is excellent in several regards. The chronological, new historicism approach conceptualizes the literature in an intelligible way for students who have little knowledge or interest in Britain or British lit. The repeated cycling from prose to poetry in short units maximizes student interest without losing the continuity that allows lessons to be built one upon the other. Plenty of historical information and analysis is given to guide the new teacher."

"The reading and viewing selections are, for the most part, excellent. They are high in student interest inventories, while at the same time being representative of the eras being studied. Hamlet and Heart of Darkness are so rich that they reward the students' stretch to understand them. Both Hamlet and Heart of Darkness, while difficult, are vital components of the curriculum as a whole. Swann also avoids an overly scrupulous adherence to the work of a single era when broadening the study would be profitable. In this regard, Achebe's Things Fall Apart is a wonderful choice."

"Swann gives excellent background information, particularly historical, along with numerous "nuggets" that are designed to stimulate student interest. His use of other media, particularly film, is exemplary."

"Swann's teaching emphasis, as reflected in his comments to the teacher and by exploring works from various eras as representative of a changing set of cultural values set against larger issues of continuing humanity, reveal him to be focused on the "right stuff". Above all else, this admirable focus on the humanist elements in the literature makes this a course worth taking for his students and this study guide one worth reading for teachers."