

# LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

## INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE (ENGL 263)

Literature is the work of art that uses the language creatively to portray the message to the intended audience.

Literature is a work of art that uses the language creatively to express human realities to the society.

### 1. Types of literature

- i. **Oral literature:** This is a type of literature that presents the message through words of mouth.
- ii. **Written literature:** This is a type of literature that presents the message through/ in written form.

### 2. FICTION AND NON-FICTION

**A. Non-Fiction:** This is a kind of literature that deals with factual materials or events. The people written about in non-fictions are real. Literary non-fictions are written to be read just the same way as fictions. These include;

**Autobiography:** This is an account of someone's life and experiences written by himself/herself. The person may choose to tell about an important event from his/her life or tell the whole life story up to the time when it is written. Autobiographies are almost always written in the first-person I.

Example; "Gifted Hands" by Ben Carson and "The Narrative of Frederick Douglas: An American Slave. Written by himself.

**Biography:** This is a story of someone's life and experiences written by another person. In biographies the author may choose to interview the biographical subject and also gather information from other sources. The subjects of Biographies are often famous people. E.g. Lincoln: A Photo biography.

**Essays:** This is a short piece of writing in which the writer shares his/her point of view about a certain subject. Essays usually deal with a single subject.

**Informational articles:** These are articles that present factual materials about a specific subject. They appear in newspapers, magazines, and in reference books like Encyclopaedias, almanacs, and atlases.

#### Forms Of Non-Fiction.

Nonfiction is broken down into four kinds of writing.

- i. **Exposition:** This is a writing that explains something or gives information about a topic.
- ii. **Persuasion or argumentation:** This is a writing that attempts to convince you of something by showing you that the statement is true or false.

- iii. **Description:** Is a writing that helps you to form a clear mental picture of something. Writers use specific details such as shapes, tastes, sounds and textures to help you form the picture.
- iv. **Narration.** A writing that tells a story of an event or series of events.

## ORGANISATION OF NON-FICTION

There are three parts to most nonfiction writing.

- I. Introduction.** It tells you the main ideas of what the piece is about. It may also give background material or state a problem.
- ii. The body.** It develops the main idea through the details that support the main idea.
- iii. Conclusion.** It shows that the work is ended. The conclusion may restate or summarize the author's main ideas, it may answer the question raised in the work or it may urge the reader to future actions.

## FICTION

It is a kind of literature that deals with non factual materials or events. Characters, setting and events are the product of imaginations from the author. It can be inspired by the actual events or completely made up.

### 3. GENRE OF FICTION LITERATURE.

#### PROSE FICTION.

A prose is any kind of writing that is not poetry or that is **not presented in verse form or stanza**. It is a specifically imaginative work that includes short stories, novella and novels.

#### SHORT STORY

This is a story usually about imaginative characters and events that is short enough to be read from the beginning to the end without stopping. It is also a brief work of fiction that can generally be read in one sitting. It usually focuses on one or two main characters that face a single problem or conflict. Eg. The voter by C. Achebe, Ajaiyi and the Witchdoctor by A. Tutuola, Mabala, the Farmer by R. Mabala.Etc.

#### ELEMENTS OF A SHORT STORY.

There are **four basic elements of a short story**. These are; **Setting, plot, characters and theme**. Short stories differ from the novel in its treatment of these four elements. The main difference is partly dictated by length. **In short stories characters are usually not fully developed and usually centre on one idea**. Other minor elements include *conflict, point of view, symbolism, flashbacks, fictitious quality etc.*

**NOVELLA:** This is a fiction work that is **longer than a short story but shorter than a novel**. It is longer than a short story but the **characters are not fully developed as in novels**. EXAMPLE. Samuel Beckett's novella *First Love*. In this episode the unnamed narrator, who spends most of the time lying prostrate on a park bench, begins to feel his privacy threatened by the visitations of a woman to the same bench.

**NOVEL:** is a work of fiction that is **longer and more complex than a short story**. In novels, setting, plot, characters and theme are **fully developed in great details**. Like a short story the novel has four main elements, setting, plot characters and theme. A person who writes novels is called a novelist E.g. *Passed like a shadow* by B. Mapalala. *The Interview*, by P. Ngugi, etc.

### **DRAMA/PLAY**

It is a literary genre that tells a story through **actions and dialogue** and is written to be performed on stage by actors. Drama has the same elements as those in novels and short stories. i.e. *setting, plot characters, theme, climax, conflict, symbolism*, etc. An **element that is unique** to drama is **DRAMATIC TECHNIQUE**. This includes:

- Ø **Dialogue.** These are the words that the characters speak in a play. It is a **conversation between characters**. It is the dialogue that reveals the character's qualities, personality traits, and reactions to other characters.
- Ø **Soliloquy/monologue.** This is a speech made by a character when he/she is **alone on stage**. Or it is a speech in which a character alone on stage, expresses her thoughts and feelings aloud for the benefit of the audience, often in a revealing way (Druce & Tyson; 2007:280).
- Ø **Aside.** This is a **direct address of the audience by a character**. The **other characters do not hear what is** being said.
- Ø **Stage direction.** These are the **instructions/notes** included in a play/drama which **describe how the work** is to be **performed** or staged. They indicate areas of the stage in which actors sit, stand, move, speak, exit, enter, and so on, lighting, music, sound effect, costumes, emotional state, etc.

These are usually type in italics and enclosed in the parentheses or brackets.

### **TYPES OF DRAMA**

#### **Tragedy**

It is a serious drama/play with **a sad ending** especially one that in which the **main character dies**. The events in a tragic plot are set in motion by a decision that is often an error in judgment. Succeeding events are

linked in a cause-and-effect relationship and lead inevitably to a disastrous conclusion, usually death. E.g. Oedipus the King, by Sophocles. Julius Caesar by W. Shakespeare, Mfalme Juha by F Topan etc.

A person who writes tragedies for the theatre or an actor in a tragedy is called a **tragedian**. E.g. Sophocles, Shakespeare, etc

## Comedy

It is a dramatic work that is intended to be funny, humorous and usually **ends happily** with a peaceful resolution of the main conflict. To achieve a comic effect sometimes the playwrights, use Mistaken identity. Sometimes certain characters are mistaken about their surroundings. They say or do things that would be appropriate in a different social situation but are inappropriate in their surroundings. The resulting confusion results to a silly series of events. The confusion of characters causes a ridiculous conflict. The climax arrives when the characters learn the truth. E.g. Juliette and Oko or Atangana and Abessolo in Three Suitors One Husband. Other examples of comedies are The trials of Brother Jero and The Loin and the Jewel both by W. Soyinka

An entertainer who makes people laugh by by telling jokes and funny stories is called a *comedian/comedienne*

## Tragic comedy

It is a dramatic work that combines the elements of tragedy and comedy but here the hero/heroine does not end in danger or death. A comic relief is a technique used to achieve this effect. This is a humorous scene that is inserted into a serious work of drama to provide relief from the seriousness felt by the audience. Examples

### Melodrama

- i. A play that is full of **exciting events** and in which the characters and emotions seem **too exaggerated** to **be true/real**. Example.
- ii. **Historical drama**

This is a type of drama that expresses the **history** o a particular society but usually contains some elements of tragedy and comedy. E.g Dedan Kimathi by Ngugi, Kinjeketile by E.Hussein

## Other Important Terms In Drama.

- o **Act**: This is a **major** unit/part of action in a drama or play.
- o **Scene**. This is a **smaller** section of a **subdivision** of **one act**. So a scene is a section presenting events that occur in one place at one time.
- o **Costume**. The **clothes** worn by actors in a play or film/movie or worn by somebody to make them look like somebody or something else. E.g. a student, a housemaid, a judge, etc.



- **Prop.** A small object used by actors, during the performance of a play or in a film/movie
- **Audience.** Is a group of people sitting in a room, auditorium or in the theatre listening to and watching a performance.
- **Theatre.** This is a special building or an outdoor area where plays/movies/films and other entertainments are performed.

#### 4. ELEMENTS OF LITERATURE.

##### CONTENT

##### THEME

This is a writer's central idea, concern, or purpose in a literary work. (Glawoka 2001:886) a theme can usually be expressed as a generalization or a general statement about human beings or about life. Although a theme may be directly stated in the text, it is more often presented indirectly. When the theme is presented indirectly the reader must figure out what the theme is by looking carefully at what the work reveals about people or about life. Common themes in literature include classes, poverty, unemployment, oppression, exploitation, corruption, marginalization, hypocrisy, love, identity, betrayal, racial segregation/discrimination, effects of colonialism/neo-colonialism, humiliation position of women in the society. Etc.

##### MESSAGE/MORAL

This refers to the lesson taught by a literary work. (ibid:883). A poem, novel, short story or play often suggests a lesson/moral that is not directly stated. The lesson must be drawn by the reader based in the other elements of the work. e.g.

United we stand, divided we fall.

What goes around comes around.

##### CONFLICT

A conflict is a struggle between opposing forces. A conflict is one of the most important elements of stories, novels and plays because it causes the actions. There are two kinds of conflict:

**Internal conflict:** This takes place within the **mind** of a character. The character struggles to make decision, take action, or overcome a feeling. For example, THONI in The back hermit has this kind of conflict.

**External conflict:** This is the one in which the character struggles against some **outside forces**, such as another person. In this category we can get further subdivisions of conflicts such as, economic conflict, political conflict, family conflict, social conflict, cultural conflicts, etc.

## RELEVANCE

This is the **applicability** of a literary work in contemporary societies. We assess whether or not the author has been successful in addressing the issues that are relevant to our lives currently. That is why we believe that literary works do not develop in a vacuum but they usually address issues in societies they evolve.

It is interesting however to note that a literary work may not necessarily be relevant across time and across space. In one case, a literary work might be relevant in one society but may be irrelevant in another. In another case, a literary work that was once relevant in one society might be irrelevant in the same society as time passes by. E.g. most literary works that were about struggle for independence in Africa have now fallen out of favour.

## FORM

### CHARACTERS/CHARACTERIZATION

Characterization is the act of **creating and developing** a character. It is the way the writer reveals the personality of a character. A *Character* - Is a **person or an animal** that takes part in the action of a literary work.

Authors use two major methods of characterization; Direct and Indirect.

Ø **DIRECT CHARACTERIZATION:** When using the direct characterization, a **writer tells** the character's traits or characteristics. E.g. brave, corrupt, weak etc.

Ø **INDIRECT CHARACTERIZATION:** When using indirect characterization, a writer depends on the reader to draw conclusions /judgments about the character's traits by **using the evidence** the writer gives:

- Through the words of the character.
- Through the description of the character's look and clothing.
- Through the description of the character's feelings and thoughts.
- Through comments made about a character by another character in the story.
- Through the character's behavior.

## CLASSIFICATION OF CHARACTERS.

There are different ways of classifying the characters.

### **Major/main character and minor character.**

The main or major character is the one that is the **most** important in the story poem or play. Usually the main character appears from the beginning to the end of the story. While a minor character is the one that takes part in the action of a story but is not the focus of attention. These help the main character to accomplish his mission.

### **Flat character and round character.**

**Flat** character is usually **one**-sided and often stereotypical while **round** character on the other hand is **fully** developed and exhibits many traits- often both faults and virtues.

### **Dynamic character and static character.**

**Dynamic** character is the one who **changes or grows** in the course of the story like Remi in The Black Hermit. While a **static** character is the one who does **not change**. Like Mbarga in Three Suitors One Husband.

### **Protagonist and antagonist.**

A **protagonist** is the main character in a literary work. Often a protagonist is a **person** but sometimes it **can be** an **animal**. An **antagonist** is a character or a force that is in conflict with the main character or protagonist.

## **SETTING**

The setting of a literary work is the **place and time of the action**. Stories can be set in the present, past or future. What happens in the story and how characters look and act often depends on the time when the event took place. It may include the year, time of the day, even weather. The place may be a specific country, state, region, community, neighbourhood, building, institution, or at home. Details such as dialects, clothing, customs, and modes of transportation are often used to establish the setting. The setting can be real as in passages like a shadow or imaginary as in Kusadikika.

## **STYLE**

This is the **way the writer uses the language**. It is also understood as the individual way in which a writer has used the language to express his or her ideas (Druce & Tyson; 2007:280). Style results from diction (word choice), sentence structure and tone. One writer may choose to use many figures of speech another may prefer to use straightforward language with few figures of speech.

## **PLOT**

This is a **sequence/arrangement** of events in a literary work. In most novels, dramas, short stories and narrative poems, the plot involves both the characters and a central conflict. Plot may be chronological or flashback.

A *chronological plot* is one that the incidents are arranged in the order they occur. The plot usually begins with **EXPOSITION** that introduces the setting, the characters and the basic situation. This is followed by the introduction of the central conflict. The conflict increases during the **RISING ACTION** until it reaches the highest point of interest or suspense, **THE CLIMAX**. The climax is followed by the **FALLING ACTION** or the end of the conflict. Any events that during the falling action make up the resolution or Denouement. (Glawka 2001:884)

The plot can also employ a **flashback**. This is an interruption of the current action of a plot to show events that happened at an **earlier** time. It **breaks** the normal forward movement of a narrative. Although flashbacks often appear in the **middle** of the story it can also be placed at the **beginning**. They give background information the audience needs to understand in order to understand the present action.

**Foreshadowing** can also be used. This is the use of **clues/hints** to suggest events that will **occur later** in the plot. Foreshadowing is used to **build suspense or anxiety in the reader or viewer**. (Beers, K et al, 2003:709) E.g. the character prepares his gun and hides it somewhere; this may foretell violence later in the story.

## LANGUAGE USE/DICTION

This refers to the writer's or speaker's **choice of words**. People use different types of words depending on the audience they are addressing, the subject they are discussing and the effect they are trying to produce. Diction is an essential element of a writer's style and has a major effect on the tone of the piece of writing (Beers, K et al, 2003:709).

## FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

This is writing or speech that is not meant to be taken literally. One has to **dig deeper and uncover** the underlying meaning. The many types of figurative language are known as figures of speech.

### FIGURES OF SPEECH/ literal devices

Definition:

- Figure of Speech is a word or group of words that describes one thing in terms of another and is not meant to be understood as literally true.
- A figure of speech is a word or phrase that departs from everyday literal language for the sake of comparison, emphasis, clarity, or freshness.
- Also known as, rhetorical figure, metaphorical language/ literary devices

Used well, figures of speech greatly enhance your fiction, and can be a very economical way of getting an image or a point across, but used incorrectly, they will confuse the reader. The special emphasis is



typically accomplished by the user's conscious deviation from the strict literal sense of a word, or from the more commonly used form of word order or sentence construction. From ancient times to the present, such figurative locutions have been extensively employed by orators and writers to strengthen and embellish their styles of speech and composition. A number of the more widely used figures of speech, some of which are also called

- 1) **Metaphor** is a figure of speech that makes a direct **comparison** between two unlike things **without** using the words 'like or as'. A metaphor suggests that one thing is another thing, or is equal to another thing. It uses a word or phrase denoting one kind of idea or object in place of another word or phrase for the purpose of suggesting a likeness between the two. Metaphors create vivid descriptions with few words, as the subject of the comparison takes on the qualities of the thing with which it is compared.

- i. 'He was a lion in the fight'.
- ii. In the biblical Book of Psalms, the writer speaks of God's law as
- iii. A light to his feet and a lamp to his path.
- iv. "The LORD is my shepherd".

- 2) A **simile** is a figure of speech that makes a **comparison** between two unlike things and uses the words "like," "as," "than" or "resembles". Or Simile is specific comparison by means of the words 'like', 'or', 'as' between two kinds of ideas or objects. Similes make descriptions vivid by comparing their subjects with known events or things. Effective similes help readers visualize what is being described. Examples

- i. As cool as a cucumber',
- ii. 'As white as snow',
- iii. 'Life is just like an ice-cream, enjoy it before it melts',
- iv. "Christianity shone like a beacon in the black night of paganism".

**Irony:** It is the expression of ideas which are exactly opposite to the implied meaning.

- 3) **Or Irony** is a **disagreement or incongruity** between what is said and what is understood, or what is expected and what actually occurs. Irony can be used intentionally or can happen unintentionally. Authors can use irony to make their audience stop and think about what has just been said, or to emphasize a central idea. The audience's role in realizing the difference between what is said and what is normal or expected is essential to the successful use of irony.

- i. 'A student of psychology going insane', a quote such as,
- ii. 'A bank lends you money provided you show that it's not needed'
- iii. Or the warning found on every cigarette pack is injurious to health' is an irony!

There are three scenarios in which irony occurs.

- a. **Verbal irony** is when the intended meaning of the statement or work is different (often the opposite of) what the statement or work literary says. For Example, Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* is ironically used since Dr. Stockman who is declared an enemy, is in really sense, and is a friend of the people.
- b. **Situational Irony** occurs when what happens is contrary to what is expected; or the actual outcome of a situation is the opposite of what is expected. For example
  - i. The son of the English teacher fails the English Exam.
  - ii. The daughter of a rich merchant is expelled from school for lack of school fees of 20,000.
- c. **Dramatic Irony** occurs when events or facts not known to the character on stage in a fictional work, are known to another character and the audience or reader. E.g.

4) **Personification:** It is a representation of **abstract ideas or inanimate objects** as having **human** attributes or qualities. Or is the representation of inanimate objects or abstract ideas as living beings. Personification connects readers with the object that is personified. Personification can make descriptions of non-human entities more vivid, or can help readers understand, sympathize with, or react emotionally to non-human characters.

- i. 'Death laid its icy hands on kings',
- ii. 'Necessity is the mother of invention'.

5) **Apostrophe:** It is a **direct address to the dead or an inanimate object** creating an emotional surge. In Apostrophe, an actor turns from the audience, or a writer from readers, to address a person who usually is either absent or deceased, an inanimate object, or an abstract idea. As in John Donne's 'Death Be Not Proud'.

- i. 'Caesar, only if you were alive'
- ii. 'O stone, O might, O heart of man-made God, Thou art the emblem of our hope',

6) **Rhetorical question** is the act of asking questions **not to gain** information but **just for emphasis**. No answer, in fact, is expected by the speaker. The device is illustrated in the following series of sentences:

'Did you help me when I needed help? Did you once offer to intercede in my behalf? Did you do anything to lessen my load?'

7) **Hyperbole/overstatement** is a figure of speech in which the truth is **exaggerated** for emphasis or for humorous effect. In exaggeration a person or thing is depicted as being better or worse, or larger or smaller, than is actually the case. It is, used often to ridicule, create humor or any drastic emotional appeal.

- i. 'The waves rose as high as the mountains,'
- ii. 'I am so hungry that I can eat a whole cow'
- iii. 'She wept and wept until there was a sea of tears'.

8) **Litotes/ understatement:** It is an **understated** expression when the **actual idea** to be expressed is **quite** significant. It is like downplaying an idea when it seems to be the best possible course of action or description. Statements such as,

- i. 'I was not feeling unhappy'. Meaning I was feeling happy
- ii. 'The English poet Thomas Gray showed no inconsiderable powers as a prose writer', meaning that Gray was in fact a very good prose writer.
- iii. I am not unmindful- meaning I mindful.

9) **Euphemism** this is the **substitution** of an **offensive/unpleasant** term or phrase by the one that has **pleasant** associations, as in the use of 'lavatory' or 'rest room' for 'toilet,' and 'pass away' for 'die'.

10) **Metonymy** is a figure of speech **associates** the name of one thing with that of something else. This is a word that substitutes for an object, the name of an attribute or concept associated to that object. The use of 'crown' for 'king' or for the government ruled by a king is an example of a metonym.

- i. 'We waited hopelessly for two sunsets', 'Sunsets' here implies two days,
- ii. 'He has a good name in our society'. Or,
- iii. 'They spoilt his name'. 'Name' refers to reputation.
- iv. 'A press conference by the Statehouse' refers to the officials of the Statehouse who will be holding the press conference.

A metonym is not necessarily one word. As in a hotel - 'needs a bottle of champagne', 'Room 44' here refers to the customer who is in that room. 'The hostess kept a good table,' when good food is implied.

11) **Synecdoche:** is a figure of speech in which the **whole** is **represented** by a **part** or a part by the whole is called as synecdoche. Example;

- i. 'He has several mouths to feed'. Here mouths represent people.

- ii. '50 head of cattle,' 'head' is used to mean whole animals.
- iii. 'The president's administration contained the best brains in the country,' 'brains' is used for intellectually brilliant persons.

**12) Onomatopoeia**, imitation of natural **sounds** by words. Examples in English are the italicized words in the phrases

- i. 'The humming bee,'
- ii. 'the cackling hen,'
- iii. 'the whizzing arrow,'
- iv. 'The buzzing saw.'
- v. Hiss,
- vi. splash,
- vii. bang.

**13) Oxymoron:** This is a figure of speech which includes words or ideas **opposite** in meaning placed one after the other. combines two seemingly contradictory or incongruous words.

- o 'True lies',
- o 'Open secret',
- o 'Pretty ugly face',
- o 'Feeling alone in a crowd',
- o Living deaths,
- o Dear wounds,
- o Fair storms,
- o Silent noise
- o Freezing fires
- o Pain for pleasure



- o Clearly confused
- o Cruel kindness
- o Deafening silence
- o Only choice
- o Random order
- o Alone together
- o Awfully good
- o Dark light
- o Light darkness
- o Appear invisible
- o Goodbye reception.
- o Growing smaller
- o True myth
- o Unpopular celebrity
- o Worthless gold
- o Sad joy
- o Sweet agony
- o Daydream in the night



**14) Paradox**, this is a figure of speech which includes a statement or sentiment that **appears contradictory** to common sense **yet is true in fact**. Simply put it is a statement that seems to contradict itself but is, nevertheless, true. These statements or assertions, according to logic, cannot be true, yet the figure links them in a way that creates a new meaning, one that defies logic but works on situation. Examples of paradox is found in Martin Luther's speech 'I Have a Dream'

'..The Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land'

In the above sentence, logically speaking, one cannot be in exile while he is still in his own land, as the true meaning of the word exile is. But the situation described, is the one that makes us see as if the Negroes are in exile, since they have nothing to enjoy in their own land.

**15) Climax:** It is the **arrangement** of ideas in an **increasing order** of their importance. It emphasizes the meaning in a clear and effective way. Or it is the arrangement of words, clauses, or sentences in the order of their importance, the least forcible coming first and the others rising in power until the last, as in the following sentences:

'It is an outrage to bind a Roman citizen; it is a crime to scourge him; it is almost parricide to kill him; but to crucify him' what shall I say of this?"

'He came, he saw, he conquered, 'her village, her state, her nation was her pride',

'Eat, drink and sleep' and so on.

**16) Anticlimax:** it is a sequence of ideas that **abruptly diminish in dignity** or importance at the end of a sentence or passage, generally for satirical effect. The following sentence contains an illustration of anticlimax:

'Among the great achievements of Benito Mussolini's regime were the revival of a strong national consciousness, the expansion of the Italian Empire, and the running of the trains on time.'

**17) Antithesis:** is a **juxtaposition** of two words, phrases, clauses, or sentences contrasted or opposed in meaning in such a way as to give emphasis to contrasting ideas. An example of antithesis is the following line by the English poet Alexander Pope: 'To err is human, to forgive divine.'

**18) Conceit:** it is an **elaborate**, extended and sometimes surprising **comparison** between things that, at **first** sight, **do not** have much in common. It is also defined as an elaborate, often extravagant metaphor or simile (see below) making an analogy between **totally dissimilar things**. The term originally meant 'concept' or 'idea.' The use of conceits is especially characteristic of 17th-century English metaphysical poetry. An example occurs in the poem 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning,' by the English poet John Donne, in which two lovers' souls are compared to the legs of drawing compasses.

**19) Allusion** is a literary device in which the writer or speaker refers either **directly or indirectly to a famous** person, event, place or thing in history or to a work of art or literature. Allusion connects the content of a text with the larger world. Allusion calls to mind the ideas and emotions associated with a well-known event or published work. Those ideas and emotions then contribute to what the author conveys.

"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

**20) Parallel structure /parallelism / Parallel construction** is a repetition of the **same pattern** of words or phrases within a sentence or passage to show that two or more ideas have the same level of importance. Parallel structure helps to organize ideas, making a text or speech easier to understand. Parallel structure can also create a satisfying rhythm in the language an author uses. In this literary device, the idea to be stated is repeated in some other form to emphasize the articulation.

'She cried, she wept but he was unmoved',

'Show me your strength, your stamina, your energy only where it is needed'

Health centres

More schools

Clean water

**21) Anaphora:** Also called epanaphora, the **repetition** of a **word** or expression at the **beginning** of successive phrases for rhetorical or poetic effect, as in Lincoln's

"We cannot dedicate-

We cannot consecrate-

We cannot hallow this ground"

I am a true Acoli

I am not a half-caste

I am not a slave girl

**22) Imagery:** This is a figure of speech which creates **mental pictures** that appeal to readers, five senses.

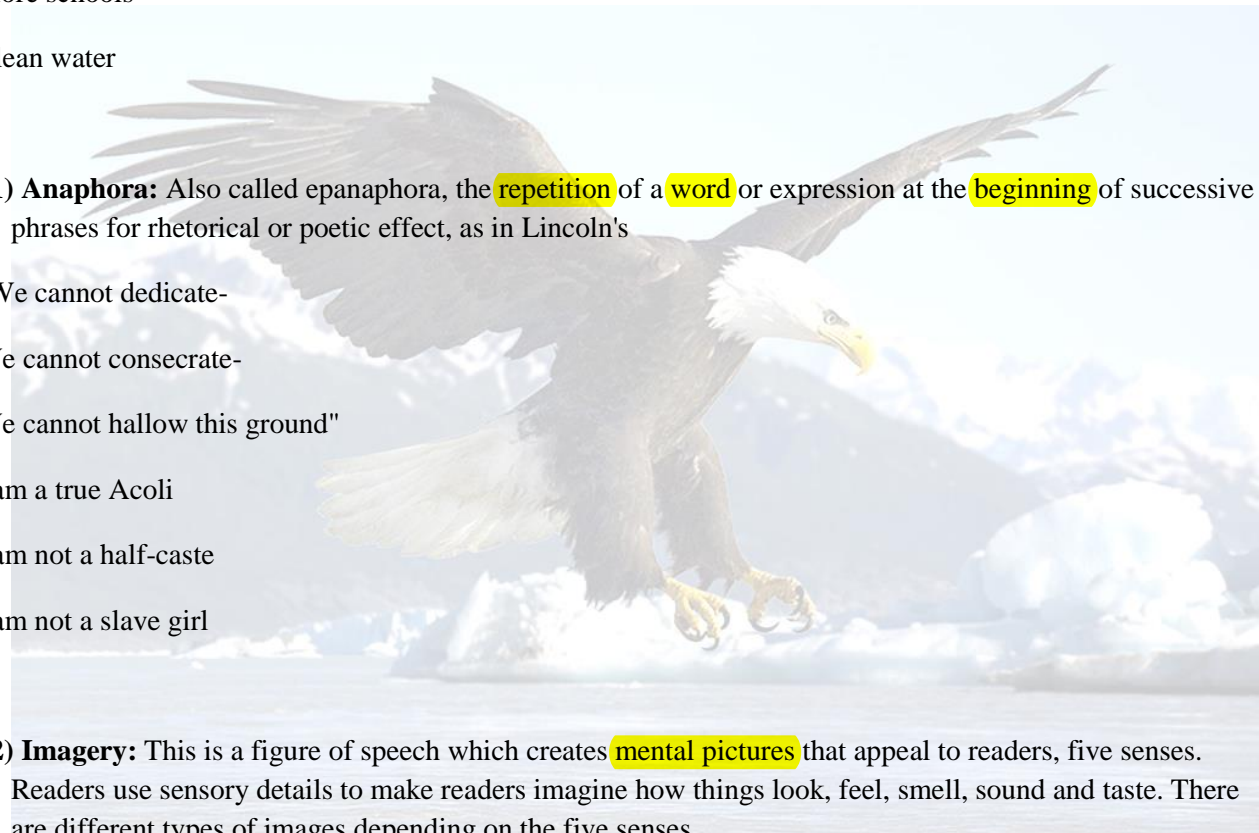
Readers use sensory details to make readers imagine how things look, feel, smell, sound and taste. There are different types of images depending on the five senses.

i. Visual image- this is an image of sight e.g.

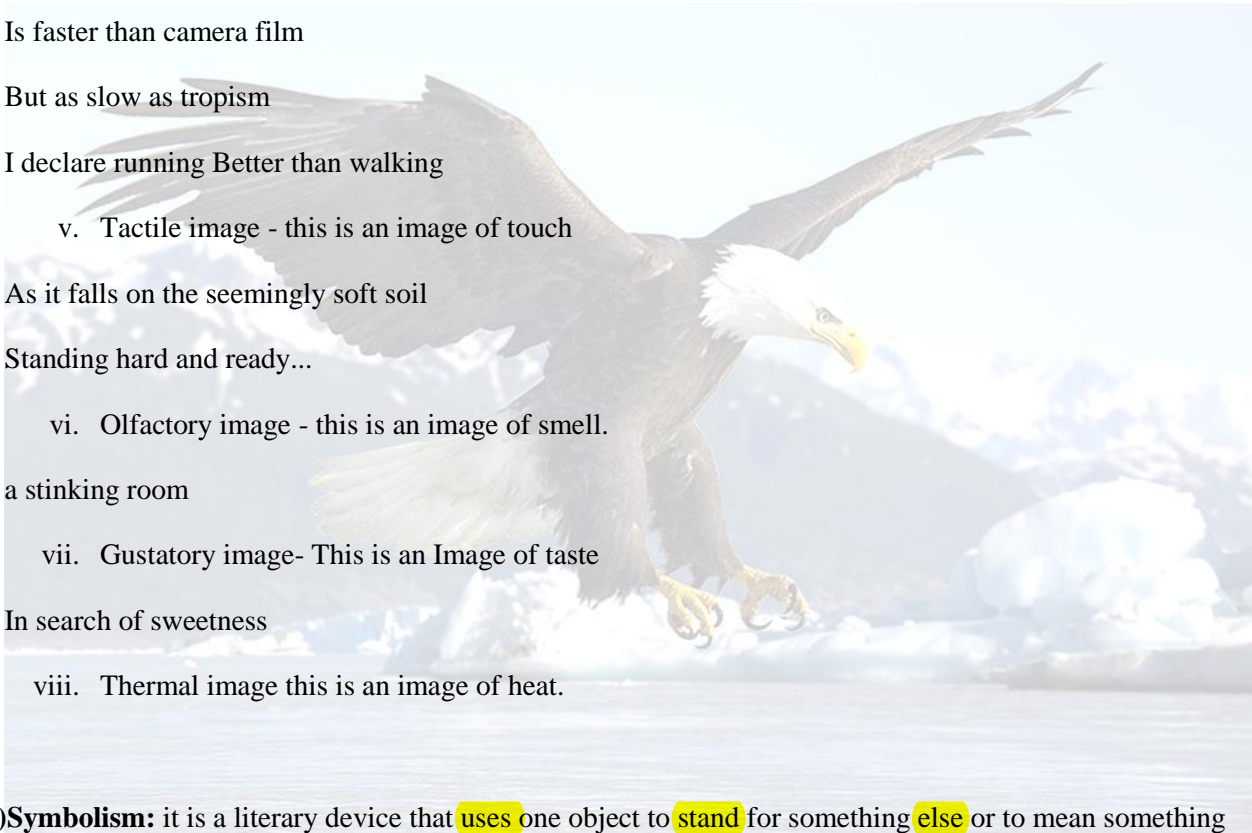
- o Greater than the Rift-Valley;
- o Camera film to light, coils of the greatest
- o Stronger than the blows of the sea

When the hurricane is at its height.

ii. Organic image -this is image of feeling



- o Dying in agony
- o More painful than the yell
  - iii. Audio image - this is an image of sound
- o The yell of a woman
- o I plead the cry of the nation
- o The screams of a man
  - iv. Kinetic image -this is an image of motion.
- o Is faster than camera film
- o But as slow as tropism
- o I declare running Better than walking
  - v. Tactile image - this is an image of touch
- o As it falls on the seemingly soft soil
- o Standing hard and ready...
  - vi. Olfactory image - this is an image of smell.
- o a stinking room
  - vii. Gustatory image- This is an Image of taste
- o In search of sweetness
  - viii. Thermal image this is an image of heat.



**23) Symbolism:** it is a literary device that **uses** one object to **stand** for something **else** or to mean something else. Actions can also be symbolic, such as washing hands to indicate non-involvement. Some symbols are universal, with generally accepted meanings, such as a crown to mean superiority or the color red to mean danger. Symbols, especially specific ones, often mean more than one thing.

Sunrise symbolizes the beginning of the struggle and symbolizes the end of the struggle in the poem 'Sunrise'

**24) Pun** - It is a humorous play on two or more **meanings** of the **same word** or on two different words with the same sound. It is also understood as a play on the multiple meanings of the word or on two words that sound alike but have different meanings. It uses words that have similar or identical sounds but very



different meanings. Quite often it is used to pass a witty remark or bring about a sarcastic effect. Examples are,

"It is better to have loved a short person and lost, than never to have loved A TALL."

'I KNEAD the dough so that I can eat',

Another good pun is found in the last but one line of Shakespeare's "When My Love Swears That She Is Made of Truth." He says;

"Therefore, I LIE with her and she with me" Shakespeare Sonnet 138

**25) Allegory:** is a form of **extended metaphor**, in which objects, persons, and actions in a narrative, are equated with the meanings that lie outside the narrative itself. The underlying meaning has moral, social, religious, or political significance, and characters are often of abstract ideas as charity, greed, or envy.

Thus, an allegory is a story with two meanings, a literal meaning and asymbolic meaning. A more modern example of allegory is George Orwell's Animal Farm, which on the surface level is about a group of animals who take over their farm but on the deeper level is an allegory of the Russian Revolution and the shortcomings of the Communism.

**26) Anastrophe:** Also known as **inversion**, it is a sentence or a poetic expression which reverses or changes the order of words for greater emphasis. The following are examples of anastrophic expressions

'Ten thousand saw I at a glance' instead of 'I saw ten thousand at a glance'

'Forward they go' which is not a normal English structure of SVA. 'They go forward'

'And away they go' instead of 'and they go away'

'While your hive they plunder' instead of 'while they plunder your hive'

**27) Satire:** It is mimicry; a **mockery**, a witty remark or ridicule related to a person, place, animal or a thing, generally for leisure and is completely wrong or absurd. Satire is any piece of writing that uses devices such as irony. It is a text or performance that uses irony, derision or wit to expose or attack human vice, foolishness or stupidity.

Satire is a literary technique which principally ridicules its subject which includes individuals, organization or states often as an intended means of provoking or preventing changes.

## APPRECIATION OF POETRY.

Poetry is a literary genre in which ideas and feelings are expressed in **imaginative and musical language**.

Poems are meant to be **recited or sung** and words are arranged in such a way that they touch readers' senses, emotions and mind. Poetry is different from other literary genres and thus it should be appreciated on its own merit. Some common poetic terms are.

- Poem is a metrical composition in which ideas emotions and feelings are presented using **imaginative** and **creative** language.
- **Poet** is a person who **composes** poems.
- **Persona** this is a person who is **speaking** in a poem. The persona can be the poet himself or may use another person to pass his ideas.
- **Stanza** is a group of lines in a poem.
- **Verse**. This is just one line of a stanza in a poem.

In appreciation of poems there are different things to be considered in order to grasp the meaning and the intention of the poet.

### A. THE TITLE OF THE POEM.

The title of the poem may give a **clue of what the poem is about**. Think of the titles like 'Development', 'A freedom song', 'Lost Beauty' etc. they give preliminary information of what you might find in the poem. The history of the poet may also provide a clue to the content of the poem. E.g. David Diop in 'Africa'

Nevertheless, it is advised not to rely much on the titles or take them for granted. Some titles are ironical as they represent the opposite of what actually happens. Think of "Building the Nation" for instance. Were the two-people building the nation?

### B. THE TONE AND MOOD OF THE POEM.

i. Tone- refers to the **voice quality** which expresses the poet's emotions. The tone can be harsh, polite, scary, rude, happy lovely, romantic, etc.

ii. Mood/atmosphere- this is the feeling/attitude that the poem conveys to the readers/listeners. Descriptive words and phrases contribute to the mood of the poem. Understanding the poet's mood is very important in poems analysis. The mood can be serious, fearful, satirical, lovely, optimistic,

pessimistic, sorrowful, gloomy, amused, angry, happy, sad, sympathetic, humorous, joyful, ironical friendly etc.

### C. THE STRUCTURE OF THE POEM.

Here we look at the way the poem is structured by looking at;

Number and length of **verses**.

Number and length of **stanzas**

A stanza is a formal division of lines in a poem, considered as a unit. Many poems are made up of stanzas that are separated by spaces. Stanzas often function just like paragraphs in prose. Each stanza states and develops a single idea. Stanzas are commonly named according to the number of verses/lines found in them as follows.

1. **Couplet**: two-line stanza
2. **Tercet**: Three-line stanza.
3. **Quatrain**: Four-line stanza
4. **Cinquain**: Five-line stanza
5. **Sestet**: Six-line stanza
6. **Heptastich**: Seven-line stanza.
7. **Octave**: Eight-line stanza

v Rhyming scheme/pattern.

Rhyme is the repetition of similar sounds at the end of words in a stanza. The pattern of rhymes in a stanza is called **Rhyming scheme**. Rhyme scheme can be represented by different letters to show each rhyming sound. E.g. in Shakespearean "Let me not to the Marriage of Free Minds" and Claudie McKay "If we must Die" the scheme goes (ABAB CDCD EFEF GG).

- ✓ If the poem has a rhyming scheme that follows a particular consistent order we refer to it as a **REGULAR RHYMING SCHEME**
- ✓ If the poem has no particular consistent order we say it has **IRREGULAR RHYMING SCHEME**.
- ✓ Rhyming can occur in different ways.

Ø **Perfect/exact rhyme**: When the sounds match exactly mostly at the end. E.g. came and fame

Ø **Partial/imperfect rhyme**: when the sounds do not match exactly. E.g. hunger and plumber

Ø **Eye rhyme** - when words seem to rhyme but they are not e.g. Enough and through

Ø **Internal rhyme**- this is the rhyming that occurs within a line. E.g. They were singing, bringing the ring.

#### D. THE TYPES OF THE POEM

Broadly the poems are categorized into two types.

- i. **Traditional/closed poems** - these are the poems that follow strict ancient poetic principles. These include the balance in the number of words in each stanza, rhyming scheme, rhythm etc.
- ii. **Modern/free verse/ open poems** - these are poems that follow only some poetic principles and ignore others.

NOTE: it should be remembered that what makes the poem traditional or modern is never the time but the observance to the strict rules.

#### Further classification of poems.

- i. **Narrative poem.** This is a poem that tells a story. This is like prose fiction because it contains similar elements, a setting, characters, and a plot. The plot contains rising actions or the event that develop a conflict; a climax or a turning point and falling action when the conflict is resolved. E.g. Marjorie's 'A freedom song' or P. Bitek's 'Song of Lawino'.
- ii. **Lyric poem:** This is usually short and expresses the personal thoughts, emotions, and feelings of a single speaker. E.g. Mwaikusa's "When I Say I Love You" or Joe Corrie's "Eat More"
- iii. **Didactic poem:** This is a poem that instructs the reader. It gives lessons to the reader. They are mainly on political and social matters. E.g. Guebuza's 'Your Pain' it advises the reader to take part in the struggle.
- iv. **Epic poem:** This refers to a long poem that presents heroic actions of great men and women in history of a nation. E.g. 'the Epic of Sundiata' It has more than 3080 lines.
- v. **Ode poem:** This is a poem that addresses a person or a thing or celebrates an event like wedding, birthday, independence etc. e.g. 'I took my son by the hand' by Micere Mugo.
- vi. **Elegy:** Is a poem that expresses sorrow about someone who has died. E.g. Ewe's 'Lament for the dead mother'.
- vii. **Ballad:** Is a dialogue like poem in which there are two or more people speaking in turn. E.g. Langston Hughes's Ballad of the Landlord



viii. **Sonnet:** Is a lyric poem that contains 14 lines (verses) in one stanza. A sonnet has two parts; the first 8 lines are called octet and the last 6 lines are called sestet. E.g. 'If we must die' by Claudie McKay, 'Let me not to the marriage of true minds' by Shakespeare and 'Death be not proud' by John Donne.

## E. THE POETIC DICTION/CHOICE OF WORDS

1. **Choice of words.** This refers to the selection and arrangement of words in a poem. This is also done for economy. Very few words may be selected to convey a very strong and powerful message. E.g. 'Development' there are words like; corrupt, egoism, exploited, cheated, disregarded, privileged few, etc. these help to get the themes and the message across.

### 2. Literary devices/figures of speech.

We also look at the literary devices (figures of speech) such as simile, metaphor, imagery, personification, euphemism, paradox, symbolism, irony, hyperbole, anadiplosis etc.

3. **Poetic devices.** We also consider the poetic devices which include;

➤ **Poetic license.** This is the freedom/privilege by which the poet is allowed to violate/break certain grammatical rules to achieve a poetic effect. E.g. "Forward the go" instead of they go forward in 'Sunrise' by J. Mwaikusa, and "I too am America" instead of I am an American too in 'I too sing America' by L. Hughes.

➤ **Sound /musical devices.** All the sound devices are looked at under the general term repetition. These are;

➤ **Refrain** - this is the repetition of words, phrases or lines at the end of every stanza in a poem. It acts as a chorus in the poem. E.g. Atieno yo. In Olupe's 'A freedom song'

➤ **Alliteration** - this is the repetition of consonant sounds mostly at the beginning of words which are nearby. Etymologically the word Alliteration is derived from the Latin word 'Latira' which means 'letters of alphabet' so it is a literary device in which a number of words having the same first consonant occur close together in a series. E.g. Darling Dearly or Feel free friend Fredy. Your beautiful black

i. Bare breast bouncing vigor and energy in 'Lost beauty'

ii. Delicate diplomatic duties you know in 'Building the Nation'

➤ **Assonance** - is the repetition of similar vowel sounds within words close to one another with different consonant sounds. E.g. Thill the wedding bells

- Consonance - this is the repetition of consonant sounds at the end of words in stressed syllables. Or is a sound device identified by the repetition of identical or similar consonant sounds in neighbouring words whose vowel sounds are different. E.g. tae it back,

i. I deed my kid to bed,

ii. You hurt my heart.

- Reiteration - this is the repetition of the same word for emphasis. E.g.

Africa my Africa, in "Africa"

My eyes oh my eyes in "Lost Beauty"

- Rhyme - is the repetition of similar sounds at the end of words in a stanza.

Samwiterson the artist,

The son of Christ

The real Adventist

The pure revolutionist

I've been chosen,

To represent Mara region,

When my sermon you listen,

Your heart is shaken

In the first stanza the rhyme is 'st' while in the second it is 'en'.

## **F. THEMES IN THE POEM**

These are the **general main ideas** of the poem. The common themes in most poems include; classes, poverty, unemployment, oppression, exploitation, corruption, marginalization, hypocrisy, love, identity, betrayal, racial segregation/discrimination, effects of colonialism/neo-colonialism, humiliation.

## **G. MESSAGES FROM THE POEM.**

These are lessons we learn from different poems. They show what the reader has to do after reading the poem. They show the way forward or give solutions to problems discussed in the poem. Mostly we get messages from themes. E.g.

Ø Corrupt leaders are obstacles to development they should be uprooted.

Ø We should be aware and proud of our African identity.

Ø True love is not based on money or material things.

## **H. RELEVANCE OF THE POEM.**

Ø This is the applicability of the poem's message in contemporary societies. We assess whether or not the poet has been successful in addressing the issues that are relevant to our lives currently. That is why we believe that poems do not develop in a vacuum but they usually address issues in societies they evolve.

Ø It is interesting however to note that the poem may not necessarily be relevant across time and across space.

o In one case, a poem might be relevant in one society but may be irrelevant in another. E.G. issues related to FGM, wife battering, bride price etc.

In another case, a poem that was once relevant in one society might be irrelevant in the same society as time passes by. E.g. most poems that were about struggle for independence in Africa have now fallen out of favour.

## **HOW TO RESPOND TO LITERATURE QUESTIONS**

It is very important to understand the skills for answering literature questions because, more often than not, most students fail to respond to literature questions not because they don't have the right answers for those questions but chiefly because they fail to interpret the questions appropriately and respond accordingly. Therefore, to successfully respond to literature questions, the following things should be taken into consideration at least as the first step to start with:

a) Read the question carefully.

It is advised to read the question more than once as it helps you to understand it. Re-reading the question twice or thrice may help you to gain some additional insights on the requirements of the question

b) Paraphrase the question.

At this point try to re-state the question in your own words. This helps you among other things to see if you have understood what you are asked to do. E.g.

‘With reference to two plays that you have read in class compare two female characters one from each play and show how they differ’.

**PARAPHRASE:** The question requires me to pick two female characters and show their similarities and differences

c) Pay attention to key words in the question.

Questions have key words that tell you what you are required to do. When you are reading the question note whether it requires you to;- discuss, list, mention, compare and contrast, verify, describe, comment, criticize, interpret, justify..etc.

d) Write an outline of your answer.

At this juncture try to frame how your essay will look like and what you are going to put in the introduction, the main body and conclusion. i.e. in the introduction you may show (i). The key words to be defined, (ii) the books you are going to use. In the main body you may jot down the points you are going to use from each reading. In the conclusion you may show how you are going to conclude.

## THE STRUCTURE OF YOUR ESSAY

### INTRODUCTION.

Remember that introduction is the key to your essay. It gives an impression on whether or not the reader should continue reading your essay or not. Here you are supposed to do the following.

i. Define key terms. For example in our question above; you may need to define: Character(s) this helps your reader to understand your working definition. E.g. Characters are animate or inanimate beings that play different roles in a literary work.

ii. Sometimes there are no key words to be defined. In such a case give some background information on the subject in question. E.g. 'Women occupy different roles in literary works. By using two readings you have studied in class show the roles of women in your society'. Here you may need to agree with the statement and show that women do really occupy different roles in different societies.

iii. List the readings you are going to use. Of course, you will have outlined them somewhere, but this is the right place to include them in your essay. A good choice of readings is also very important as it shows whether you are going to respond to the question correctly or wrongly. E.g. To prove the above statement my discussion will be centred on Juliette of Three Suitors One Husband and Wanjiro of This Time Tomorrow by Ngugi wa Thiong'o

In this essay references will be made to Juliette of Three Suitors One Husband by O Mbia and Wanjiro of This Time Tomorrow by Ngugi wa Thiong'o..

iv. Show the readings you are going to start with. In case of the questions that need each reading to be treated separately.

### MAIN BODY.



Here you need to be careful because it is this part that answers your question.

**a. Organization.**

Ø You should organize your essay in paragraphs whereby each paragraph carries one point. That is to say the number of points is determined by the number of paragraphs and vice versa.

Ø Each paragraph must contain a topic sentence. A topic sentence is the one containing the argument you are making. E.g. in our question you could begin each sentence by saying “Both Juliette and Wanjiro are.....”

Ø Provide supporting details. These are evidences from a literary work plus supporting examples. Example if you say;

“Both Juliette and Wanjiro are denied to marry men of their choices. Juliette is denied by her family to marry Oko since he is still a schoolboy and has no money compared to the other suitors like Mbia. Similarly, Wanjiro is denied by her mother to marry Asinjo on the ground that he is a man from another tribe, he is poor and has no job.”

**b. Citation**

Ø Your citation will largely depend on the nature of the question you are attempting. Different questions call for different responses. Questions on themes for instance have issues cutting across two or more readings. If that is the case it is possible to refer to two readings in one paragraph. However, this approach is used when the point is the same. For example, ‘Literature is the product of the society. It is used by artists to reflect social realities within their societies. Use two novels you have read to verify the above statement’. In such a case you may discuss a theme like HIV/AIDS which appears in both ‘Passed Like a Shadow’ and ‘The Interview. Your citation will be;

Ø One of the social realities portrayed is the plight of HIV/AIDS pandemic. In ‘Passed like a Shadow’ people like Adyeri, Amoti, Vicky, David and others die of AIDS due to ignorance of the ways it spreads and beliefs in superstition. Similarly, in ‘The Interview’ people like Georgina and the pastor die of AIDS or kill themselves due to Ignorance without even taking blood test to confirm whether they are infected.

Ø If the readings contain different points it is advisable that you deal with one reading at a time and then move to another.

Ø If the question requires you to compare and contrast two aspects in two readings you make references to both readings at the same time using words like; whereas, while, on the other hand, by contrast, or comparing by using words like also, similarly, likewise.

Ø **NOTE:** Answering a question is not the same as narrating a story. You should avoid narrating what is taking place in the story but rather analyze and make arguments.

## CONCLUSION.

This is the final part of your essay. You are expected to write your position. Don't conclude by saying;

- ✓ What I have said/written above are/is...
- ✓ The above points are....

It is advised that you conclude your essay with expressions like;

Ø In conclusion..,

Ø To conclude.,

Ø In summary..,

Ø By the way of conclusion..,

Ø To sum up ,

Ø Generally it can be said that...,

Ø To capitulate..... etc.

Eg. 'Generally, it can be concluded that, different characters from different readings may be alike or different depending on the experiences they face in the societies they live. If the experiences are the same the characters are likely to behave the same way and vice versa.'

## EXAMPLE OF A WELL-WRITTEN LITERATURE ESSAY.

Qn. With reference to two plays that you have studied in this course compare and contrast two female characters one from each reading.

Characters are animate or inanimate beings that perform different roles in literary work. Female characters occupy different roles in different literary works which make two different characters from two different readings to have similarities or differences respectively. To verify the above statement references will be made to 'Juliette' of 'Three Suitors One Husband' by O. Mbia and 'Wanjiro' of 'This Time Tomorrow' by N. Thiongo. To start with their similarities;

Both Juliette and Wanjiro are denied to marry men of their choices. Juliette on one side is denied to marry Oko the person she loves because he is still a schoolboy and has no money compared to other

suitors like Mbia. Similarly, Wanjiro is denied by her mother to marry Asinjo because he is a man from another tribe and has no job.

Both Juliette and Wanjiro show true love to their fiancés. Juliette on one side shows true love to Oko and does all it takes to ensure that they get married. She steals the money paid by other suitors and gives it to Oko who in turn pays it as a bride price and they get married. Likewise, Wanjiro decides to stand on the side of Asinjo despite her mother's warnings that she cannot marry a man from another tribe and has no job, but she insists that she loves him.

Both Juliette and Wanjiro finally get married to men of their choices. Juliette on one hand succeeds to marry Oko after playing a trick and stealing the money paid by other suitors. She presents Oko as the rich and greatest man than the civil servant. The family accepts Oko and the two get married. Also, Wanjiro on her side, decides to escape with Asinjo and the two go together to the city leaving behind the poor Njango in a demolished homestead.

Both Juliette and Wanjiro leave their parents frustrated. Juliette on one side leaves her parents frustrated because of the stolen money. Though they are able to pay back the previous suitors, they remain as poor as before. Likewise, Wanjiro leaves her mother in full frustration as she wonders where she "will be this time tomorrow" because her slum is demolished by the city council and Wanjiro has eloped.

Both Juliette and Wanjiro come from poor families. Juliette on one side comes from a poor extended family that expects to get rich through her marriage to a rich man. They all prefer Mbia to other suitors since he is capable of making them rich. Juliette wonders whether she is a shop or some other source of income. The same applies to Wanjiro who comes from a poor family that earns a living by selling soup to slum dwellers.

Both Juliette and Wanjiro represent young generation that opposes outdated customs. Juliette refuses to conform to the wishes of her parents to marry a man they choose for her and claims her freedom of choice, expression and decision making and finally marries a man of her choice. Similarly, Wanjiro refuses the wishes of her mother to abstain from Asinjo whom she loves, just because of tribalism, finally she elopes with him.

Turning to their differences, the two characters differ in the following ways.

Juliette is educated while Wanjiro is not. Juliette studies at Libamba secondary school and because of the education she gets she is able to defend her rights unlike other women like Matalina, Makrita and Bella who have never gone to school that conform to everything men say. Wanjiro on the other side, is not educated but remains at home helping her mother with domestic chores. Only her bother attends school.

Juliette marries legally but Wanjiro elopes/escapes. Juliette plays a trick and steals the money paid by other suitors and handles it to Oko who in turn pays the dowry. The procedures are followed and the marriage is settled legally. They get all the blessings from her parents. Wanjiro on the other hand leaves her home while there is no agreement/consensus between her and her mother thus she decides to escape with Asinjo.

Juliette comes from an extended family while Wanjiro comes from a single parent family. Juliette on one side belongs to an extended family in which even the marriage decision is not a personal matter. It involves grandparents, parents, uncles, bothers, cousins and many others. Unlike Wanjiro who lives with

only her mother after her father's death and even her marriage is the issue between her and Njongo her mother.

Juliette loves Oko for who he is, but Wanjiro loves Asinjo for what he has. Juliette marries Oko knowing that he is poor, and cannot even afford to pay the bride price and she helps him to get the money to pay the dowry. Wanjiro on the other hand, marries Asinjo because now he has a job as a taxi driver and a house in Old Jerusalem. Additionally, he promises her a better life in the city. So, she hopes to get decent clothes, high-heels shoes and a handbag that she may look modern.

Lastly, Juliette does not run away from problems but Wanjiro runs away to avoid problems at home. Juliette comes back from school and finds problems at home especially those facing her directly. She is forced to marry the suitors she doesn't love. She becomes stable and solves the problems and succeeds to get what she wants. Wanjiro on the other side, runs away as a solution to her poor situation at home, hoping to get a better life with Asinjo in the city.

Generally, it can be concluded that different characters from different readings may be alike or different depending on the experience they face in their societies. Most characters in African literature behave almost the same way; however, education seems to be the main influence in the way different characters behave.

## HOW TO ANSWER POETRY QUESTIONS

Poetry questions may appear in two different ways thus calling for different approaches.

1. Essay type questions
2. Short answers type questions.

### ESSAY-TYPE QUESTIONS.

In this type of questions you may be asked to refer to two of four poems that you have read in class. These questions are answered just the same way as novels and plays. The only difference is the way we quote the poems. Remember poetry is different from other genres among other things because of its pattering. Words in poetry may be effective because they are arranged in a certain way. So, if you quote more than one line of a poem it is advised to write them just the same way they appear in the poem.

E.g. Do you plead incapable

To bring about development?

Also points that cut across different poems should be discussed in one paragraph citing those poems in the same paragraph. Additionally, when the points are different, reference has to be made in each poem



individually. What is important is to be sure that by the time you are done each of the four poems has been used at least once.

### **SHORT-ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS.**

These do not require an essay. More often than not, you may have the poem printed and questions that guide you to appreciate that poem. Here do the following:

- o Read the poem and understand it.
- o Give the answers to the questions briefly and to the point.
- o Give examples/evidences from the poem and if possible quote some verses from the poem.

**NOTE:** In answering both poetry and prose questions we use simple present tense.

Like other forms of art, poems reflect social realities. They try to make us see in a new light and by seeing we are inspired to change. Use four poems you have studied to verify the above statement.

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