

LITERATURE SYMPOSIUM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

'O' LEVEL QUESTIONS

Read the poem below and answer the questions that follow.

The Dry Season

The year is withering; the wind
Blows down the leaves;
Men stand under eaves
And over hear the secrets
Of the cold, dry wind,
Of the half-bare trees.

The grasses are tall and tinted,
Straw-gold hues of dryness,
And the contradicting awryness,
Of the dusty roads a-scatter
With pools of colourful leaves,
With ghosts of the dreaming year.

And soon, soon the fires,
The fires will begin to burn,
The hawk will flutter and turn
On its wing and swoop for the mouse,
The dog will run for the hare,
The hare for its little life.

Kwesi Brew

Questions:

- (a) How truthful is the poet's portrayal of the dry season?
- (b) What do you find interesting in the poem?
- (c) Explain the meaning and significance of the last stanza.

(Aduku S.S)

OKOT P'BITEK: Song of Lawino

- 2. In what ways has Ocol uprooted the pumpkin from the old homestead? What are the results of his action? **(St. Mary's College, Aboke)**
- 3. What sharp issues does Lawino raise on religion and politics in Song of Lawino? **(St. Joseph's Seminary, Aboke)**

JOHN RUGANDA: The Burdens

4. What is the relevance of the play The Burdens to your society?
(Comboni College)
5. Comment on the appropriateness of the title The Burdens.
(St. Katherine Girls' S.S)

WOLE SOYINKA: The Lion and the Jewel

6. Show how Sidi's and Lakunle's views on marriage differ. How does Lakunle finally pay for not agreeing with Sidi? **(St. Theresa Girls' S.S)**
7. Name three things that Sadiku promises Sidi if she marries Baroka and three that Lakunle promises Sidi if she marries him. What do the promises suggest about what the two men stand for? **(Lango College)**

NGUGI WA THIONGO: The River Between

8. Was Nyambura and Muthoni's rebellion against their father justified? Support your answer with examples from the text. **(Aduku S.S)**
9. How does Waiyaki influence the life of the people in the ridges?
(St. Theresa Girls' S.S)

CAMARA LAYE: The African Child

10. There are two forms of education in Camara Laye's novel The African Child. Mention and briefly discuss each of them with reference to the text.
(St. Joseph's Seminary Aboke)
11. How does Camara Laye portray the position of women in society according to his novel The African Child?
(Comboni College)

‘A’ LEVEL QUESTIONS

(PROSE)

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

AMERICA’S PULL-OUT OF IRAQ STILL A DREAM.

General Richard Myers, chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, in mid-May said: “One thing we know about insurgencies is that they last from, you know, three, four years, to nine years.

These are tough fights, and in the end its going to have to the Iraqis that win this” All quite true, and much franker than what usually comes out of the pentagon but he didn’t say which Iraqis were going to win in the end. Perhaps because he doesn’t know.

The insurgency is on the upswing again.

About 750 Iraqis died in May as a result of bomb attacks that mainly targeted prospective recruits and serving members of the US-trained army and police, and more American soldier were killed than in any month since January but that doesn’t necessarily mean a crisis is approaching.

Insurgent activity peaks and falls off again in Iraq in a well established rhythm, but only four times in the past two years have more than 100 American soldiers been killed in a single month. This level of casualties is unlikely to force an early American pull-out. All recent opinion polls show that a clear majority of Iraqis want US forces to leave at one or very soon—two thirds of Shia Arabs (60% of the population) and practically all Sunni Arabs (20% O—with only the Kurdish minority wanting them to stay. But that doesn’t have much to do with how long they actually remain. That depends on two things: Washington’s assessment of the likely final out-come and the Iraqi government’s judgment about whether or not it can survive without American troops.

The present government of Iraq, finally installed last month after three months of haggling over cabinet posts between the United Iraqi Alliance (Like the Shia religious parties) and the Kurds, is not just an appointed puppet government like its predecessor.

However, the whole US-supervised political exercise is so suspect that only 185 of the 275 National Assembly members bothered to show up to ratify Ibrahim al-Jaafari as prime minister on May 3, and the Kurdish-Shia Arab coalition is a shot-gun marriage that hides deep and fundamental disagreements about the future of the Iraqi state. Moreover, the Sunni are still frozen out.

The new cabinet contains some token Sunni Arab ministers, but they represent practically nobody but themselves. The Sunni Arab minority, the main support of the current insurgency, overwhelmingly boycotted the election of January 30 and holds only 17 seats in the 275-member national assembly—and only two Sunni Arabs were appointed constitution yet member committee that is to write Iraq’s permanent constitution yet

there is no hope of ending the insurgency unless the Sunni Arabs as a whole are reconciled to the new dispensation.

Now the Sunni Arabs do not have a credible collective leadership with whom the government could negotiate even if it would wanted to, and there is not much point in trying to negotiate with the insurgents, either: some 38 different groups have claimed attacks against US troops. Another election might ease some of the strains if substantial numbers of Sunni Arabs chose to participate next time but it is far from clear that they would and in any case the timetable is slipping fast. Current deadlines foresee completion of the new constitution by August, 15 a referendum on it in October, and new elections in December (assuming that the referendum says “Yes”), but three months were lost in haggling between Kurds and Shias over government jobs and now that schedule is most unlikely to be met. Infact, it will be surprising if, they can even agree on a new constitution by the end of the year and Sunni Arabs’ views will scarcely be represented at all.

So the violence will probably continue at around the current level for the next six to nine months at least, and beyond that, the future is simply unforeseeable. Whether you choose to call this a civil war or not, the fact is that almost all of the insurgents are Sunni Arabs, while the new Iraqi army and police forces are overwhelmingly Shias and Kurds.

So long as the insurgency continues, the Shia leadership is unlikely to demand the immediate departure of American troops-and so far, the US still seems determined to say.

It is a long time since the early days of the occupation, when US officials spoke airily about prolonged occupation of Iraq and only very gradual moves towards putting power back into Iraqi hands, but they have (deliberately or accidentally) created a situation in which key Iraqi players depend on their continued presence. Nor is there any sign that Washington has yet given up its plans for “enduring bases” in Iraq as the strategic centre from which it can perpetuate its military domination of the oil-rich gulf region. This is going to be a long war.

Questions:

- (a) Comment on the subject matter of this passage.
- (b) Describe the tone that the author uses in the passage.
- (c) Comment on external structure of the passage.
- (d) How does the author achieve his intention in the passage?

(King James Comprehensive S.S)

1. *Read the poem below and answer the questions that follow:*

With snort and pant the engine dragged
Its heavy train up hill
And pulled, these words the while she puffed
And laboured with a will:

“I think – I can – I think – I can,
I’ve – got – to reach – the top,
I’m sure – can – I will – get – there
I sim –ply must – not stop”

At last the lop was reached and passed,
And then – how changed the song!
The wheels all joined in the engine’s joy,
As quickly she tore along!

“I know I could do it, I know I would win!
Oh rickety, rackety, rack!
And now for a roaring, rushing race
On my smooth and shinning track!

By Worsely Benison

Questions:

- (i) What is the poem about?
- (ii) Comment on the structure of the poem.
- (iii) What poetic devices has the poet used and how effectively are they in bringing out the message?
- (iv) Suggest a suitable title for the poem.

(Amuca SDA. S.S)

PLAYS

SHAKESPEARE: TWELFTH NIGHT

1. ***Read the extract and answer the questions that follow.***

Malvolio: [Within] who calls there?

Feste: Sir Topas the curate, who comes to visit Malvolio the lunatic.

Malvolio: Sir Topas, Sir Topas, good Sir Topas, go to my lady!

Feste: Out, hyperbolical fiend! How vexest thou this man! Talkest thou nothing but of ladies?

Sir Toby: Well said, Master Parson.

Malvolio: Sir Topas, never was man thus wronged. Good Sir Topas, do not think I am mad. They have laid me here in hideous darkness.

Feste: Fie, Thou dishonest Satan! (I call thee by the most modest terms, for I am one of those gentle ones that will use the devil himself with courtesy). Say'st thou that the house is dark?

Malvolio: As hell, sir Topas.

Feste: Why it hath bay-windows transparent as barricades and the clerestories toward the south-north are as lustrous as ebony: and yet complainest thou of obstruction?

Malvolio: I am not mad, Sir Topas. I say to you, this house is dark.

Feste: Madman, thou errest. I say there is no darkness but ignorance, in which thou art more puzzled than the Egyptians in their fog.

Malvolio: I say this house is as dark as ignorance, though ignorance were as dark as hell; and I say there was never man thus abused. I am no more mad than you are – make the trial of it in any constant question.

Feste: What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wildfowl?

Malvolio: That the soul of our grandma might haply inhabit a bird.

Feste: What think'st thou of his opinion?

Malvolio: I think nobly of the soul, and no way approve his opinion.

Feste: Fare thee well: remain thou still in darkness. Thou shalt hold th' opinion Pythagoras ere I will allow of thy wits, and fear to kill a woodcock lest thou dispossess the soul of thy grandma, Fare thee well.

Malvolio: Sir Topas, Sir Topas!

Sir Toby: My most exquisite Sir Topas!

Nay, I am for all waters.

Maria: Thou might'st have done this without thy beard and grown; he sees thee not.

Sir Toby: To him in thine own voice, and bring me word how thou find'st him. I would we were well rid of this knavery. If he may be conveniently delivered, I would he were, for I am now so far in offence with my niece that I cannot pursue with any safety this sport to the upshot. Come by and by to my chamber. (Exit with Maria)

Feste: Hey Robin, jolly Robin, Tell me how thy lady does.

Malvolio: Fool!

Feste: My lady is unkind, perdie.
 Malvolio: Fool!
 Feste: Alas, why is she so?
 Malvolio: Fool, I say
 Feste: She loves another – who calls, ha?

Questions:

- (a) What events lead to this passage?
- (b) What aspects of Malvolio's character are highlighted in the extract?
- (c) What feelings does this extract arouse in you?
- (d) How is this extract relevant to the rest of the play Twelfth Night?

(King James Comprehensive S.S)

AUSTIN BUKENYA: The Bride

- 2. “The Bride is a play about children and youth rebelling against their parents and elders”. Discuss **(Iceme Girls’ S.S)**
- 3. Show how Namvua is the object of the central conflict in the play, The Bride. **(St. Mary’s’ College, Aboke)**

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: Twelfth Night

- 4. Discuss the relationship between Malvolio and Olivia in Twelfth Night. To what extent do you sympathise with Malvolio? Give reasons to support your answer. **(Atapara S.S)**

T.S ELIOT: Murder in the Cathedral

- 5. How does Eliot use the chorus as an instrument of dramatic appeal? **(Aduku S.S)**
- 6. Do you regard the nights in Murder in the Cathedral as murderers? Give reasons for your answer supported by evidence from within the play. **(St. Katherine Girls’ S.S)**

AISTOPHANES: LYSISTRATA

7. Lyistrata is basically a satirical play. How is this technique used to build up the themes in the play?
(Lira Town College)
8. Examine the role of the chorus in the advancement of the plot in the play Lysistrata.
(Skyland High School)

NOVELS

CHARLES DICKENS: Oliver Twist

1. How does Charles Dickens invoke your sympathy for Oliver Twist in Oliver Twist?
(Comboni College)
2. Discuss Dickens use of setting to advance the major themes in the novel Oliver Twist.
(St. Katherine Girls' S.S)

WILLIAM GOLDINGS: Lord of the Flies

3. Briefly describe Simon's encounter with the pig's head on a stick, and explain how symbolic this encounter is in the context of the novel.
(Amuca SDA S.S)
4. Is Lord of the Flies a mere account of children's adventures on an island? Illustrate your answer.
(Lango College)

ALBERT CAMUS: The Outsider

5. Examine the power of nature over man as presented in The Outsider.
(Lira Town College)
6. With close reference to the novel, show how Camus develops the theme of absurdity in The Outsider?
(St. Joseph's Seminary, Aboke)

JULIUS OCWINYO: Fate of the Banished

7. "For we lost all that was good and gentle and beauties upon the day of banishment". Discuss the meaning of the statement and show how it is born in the novel.
(St. Mary's College, Aboke)
8. Discuss the themes developed through Flo and the Priest in Fate of the Banished.
(Atapara S.S)