**THE RIVER AND THE SOURCE**

**ESSAY QUESTIONS ENGLISH**

**1. ‘The River and the Source: Margaret A. Ogolla.** “In the traditional Africa Society, women suffer the effects of gender discrimination.” Using illustrations from, The River and The Source, validate the statement. (20marks)

**Answer:**

− Gender discrimination occurs when men show bias against members of the opposite sex. Women heroes in the novel have to struggle since the society treats them as lesser beings.

− Male chauvinism is seen when chief Odero Gogni contemplates “another rock for his sling since Akoko cried with a lot of gusto. Men do not recognize girls because they are passers-by unlike boys who stand for family continuity. Chief Odero Gogni has to disguise his love for Akoko because such love is unseemly.

− The society has low attitude towards girls. It does not consider important to seek for their opinion on their own marriages.

− Chief Odero with his sons turns away many suitors before they settle on chief Kembo. Details on marriage, bride price are settled in bride’s absence .She is only called in when the most critical issues have been dispensed with. She leaves soon after she has been introduced to her husband. Akoko chooses a husband for Nyabera.

− A man owns a woman’s “body and soul.” Akoko is scandalized when threatens to leave her husband.

− Otieno is bitter that his brother chief Kembo had never beaten his wife .Akoko describes relationship between husbands and their wives like that of cats and dogs or like the one between ravens and chicken. Akoko is grateful for her husband since he treated her well.

− Otieno grabs Akoko’s wealth soon after her husband dies. Believes that a woman does not deserve any wealth. Akoko felt the weight of injustice that women had felt in a male dominated world.

− It is a waste of time a girl to become educated. Her sole objective of existence being married and bringing up of children. Awiti ploughs her way through school despite difficulties encountered. All other girls drop out of school. When Pilipo is converted to Christianity, he thinks that catechism is too difficult for a woman to understand.

− The society expects a female to hide her intelligence. On Awiti’s graduation from primary school, the teacher refrains from mentioning that she has been admitted into a teacher training college; people would ostracize her for her brilliance or no man will take her for a wife.

− The women in the text are so good at what they do that they are able to overcome the barrier s that society has placed in their way.

Introduction 2 marks Expect developed points. Mark 3:3:3:3=12marks Conclusion = 2 marks Grammar and presentation =4mks. Total = 20 marks

**2.** A strong household is founded on strong family values. Making reference to Mark Sigu’s family in Margaret Ogola’s *The River and the Source*, write an essay to justify this statement.

**Answer:**

**Introduction:**

In the *River and The Source*, Mark Sigu meets, woos and marries Elizabeth Awiti in the rightand traditionally expected way. They start and develop a strong family that is founded on strong values such as love, respect and discipline among others. *Accept any other relevant introduction. (Up to 2 marks)*

**The body:**

F (i)I. Mark Sigu had the devoted love for his wife and the affection for all his children. (pg 192). He did things for Elizabeth that would never have even crossed the mind of a full blooded African man. He knew she was overworked both at home and in school and in spite of the House-help they had, he threw a helping hand round the house – especially in taking the kids off the hands of his wife. (pg. 173).This bond of love helps the family to remain united in the face of many challenges.

F (ii).In Mark Sigus house, Members are loyal to each other. For instance when Mark Sigu realizes that promiscuity would ruin his marriage he so forcefully dumps the girl and asks for leave to go and bring back his family from Aluor. (pg 170) He tells his mother off when the latter feels he is over protective to the wife. (pg 167).This clear demonstration of loyalty helps the two to remain together right into their sunset days.

F(iii). The Sigus have instilled a sense of hard work in the family. Mark keeps on studying to get promotions so that he can have his children live a decent life. (pg 166, 172). Mark felt very lucky about his hard working children. Vera had seven unbeatable records in school, Becky was not doing so badly, Aoro had maintained a continuous lead in school and Tony followed suit. (Pg 185, 186). Hard work defines the Sigus.

F(iv) Children in their growing up must be brought up with high level of discipline. Mark and Elizabeth were firm on their children’s discipline and they never spared them any time they misbehaved. When Tony and Aoro almost made their twin drown they are heavily punished. (pgs 176-179). When Aoro is suspended from school, he is denied food and asked to start fending for himself. (pgs 187-191).This firm discipline instills hard work in the children.

F(v) A strong family is also built up on mutual respect. The parents extend a measure of respect to the children and vice versa. This is seen on various instances: on serious matters concerning the family, Mark and his wife consult before a favorable decision is made. When Vera wants to go out with Tommy Muhambe she requests for permission the father.(pg 206 – 208). This too builds a strong family. Mark any 4 well developed points 3: 3: 3: 3 (12 marks)

**Conclusion:**

In conclusion, looking at the Sigu family, one would say that the foundation of a strong family guided by good ethics depends on the husband and the wife, how close they are to their Children and how they develop acceptable values systems. *Accept any other valid conclusion*.(2 mks)

*Grammar and Presentation* 1-3 on the body award 1 mark

4-5 on the body award 2 marks

6-8 on the body award 3 marks

9-12 on the body award 4 mark

**3.** Drawing illustrations from Margaret Ogola’s The River and The Source, write an essay proving that Akoko is at the centre of the change process in the society of the River and The Source.

**Answer:**

**INTRODUCTION:**

**Change** is inevitable and cannot be preserved. In the River and the Source, Akoko becomes instrumental in spearheading the change. In the contemporary society, a lot of change has been initiated in a manner that transforms the people’s ways of living.

(a) Polygamy: - Otieno has several wives - Odero has several wives Monogamy: - Owuor Kembo does not marry a second wife for the first time in their history. He resists the pressure of taking on a second wife from his mother and council of elders because he finds fulfillment in his wife Akoko.

(ii) Solving disputes – Disputes were solved by the Council of Jodongo, Akoko goes home after the accusations by her mother-in-law that she had bewitched Owuor Kembo. Elders from both sides settle the dispute however, when Otieno plunders her property, Akoko makes history by taking a pioneering journey to Kisuma to seek justice from the Jorochere (the white man) through her, the whole of Sakwa experiences the impact of the white man’s rule.

(iii) Traditional worship, the community believed in were God of the eye of the rising sun. However, Akoko advises Nyabera to venture into the hitherto the unknown world of Christianity. This ushers enormous changes in Akoko’s lineage.

(iv) Marriage was mandatory in the traditional setting. However, with Akoko’s blessing, Owour Sino adapts celibacy which is unheard off traditionally. He becomes a catholic priest.

(v) Informal education was the order of the day but with Akoko’s encouragement, Awiti pursues education which she rightly believes is the direction that life is taking. She reprimands Nyabera who tries to resist Nyabera’s departure to a teachers training college.

(vi) Bride price was mandatory for any marriage to take place in the traditional setting. However, to the dismay of Oyange Silwal and Mark Sigu’s party Akoko asks for only a token bride-piece setting a precedent which is a clear break with tradition.

**Conclusion:**

Clearly, Akoko is among the few African women who embraced change without demur. She seems to understand that change is mandatory and people must keep pace with it.

**4.** A strong household is founded on strong family values. Making reference to Mark Sigu’s family in Margaret Ogola’s *The River and the Source*, write an essay to justify the above statement.

**Answer:**

**Introduction:**

In *The River and the Source*, Mark Sigu meets, woos and marries Elizabeth Awiti in the right and traditionally expected way. They start and develop a strong household that is ruled with strong values like love, respect and discipline among others/ accept any other relevant introduction. **(2mks)**

I. Mark Sigu had the **devoted love** of his wife and the affection of all his children. (**pg192**). He did things for Elizabeth that would never have even crossed the mind of a full blooded African ma. He knew she was over-worked both at home and in school and in spite the house-help they had, he throw a helping hand round the house – especially in taking the kids off the hands of his wife.(**pg 173**)

II. (ii There is **protection** offered to family by the Sigus. When he realizes that promiscuity would ruin his marriage he so forcefully dumps the girl and asks for leave to go and bring back his family from Aluor. (**pg 169-170**) He tells his mother off when the latter feels he is over protective to the wife. (**pg 167**)

III. The Sigus have instilled a sense of **hard work** in the family. Mark keeps on studying to get promotions so that he can have his children live a decent life. (**pg 166, 172**). Mark felt very lucky in his hard working children. Vera had seven unbeatable records in school, Becky was not doing so badly, Aoro had maintained a continuous lead in school and Tony followed suit. (**Pg 185, 186**)

V. Mark and Elizabeth were always concerned about the **welfare** of their children. Tony falls sick at night on the groin. The whole family is concerned. (**pg 179-182**). Elizabeth also falls sick in pregnancy. (**pgs 192-194**)

VI. Children in their growing up must be brought up with high level of **discipline**. Mark was firm on his children’s discipline and they never spared them any time they misbehaved. When Tony and Aoro almost made their twin drown they are heavily punished. (**pgs 176-179**). Aoro is suspended from school. He is denied food and asked to start fending for himself. (**pgs 187-191**)

VII. on heavy matters concerning the family Mark and his wife consult before a favourable **decision** is made. Vera decides to forgo her chance at a national school and join Becky’s. (**pg 175**). When Elizabeth falls sick (**192-194**). Vera wants to go out with Tommy Muhambe (**pg 206-208**)

VIII. The Sigus let their children **follow their own paths in life**, marriage and career. Vera joins Opus Dei Aoro becomes a doctor and marries from another tribe. And Tony joins the priesthood.

**Mark any 4 well developed points 3: 3: 3: 3** (**12mks**)

**Conclusion:**

In conclusion, looking at the Sigu family, one would say that the foundation of a strong family guided by good ethics depends on the husband and the wife, how close they are to their children and how they develop acceptable values systems./ Accept any other valid conclusion. (**2mks**)

**5.** The River and the Source is an exploration of African traditions as was bombarded by irresistible **winds of change**. Using the novel for your illustrations, write an essay to show the truth of this statement.

**Answer.**

**Introduction:**

The River and the Source presents African cultures that are in conflict / clashes / with the White man values that are unavoidable

The community clings to traditions until Europeans make their first contact with the community.

− The whiteman with his new form of government and Christianity / present alternatives for the harsh community’s culture as dictated by Chik e.g. Otieno vs Akoko.

− Institution of wife inheritance with all its social high sounding reasons does not really cater for the widow. Nyabera rebels and joins Christianity (God) which made meaning out of sorrow and suffering of the orphan, poor and widow e.g. Nyabera Akoko.

101/1,101/2,101/3 English Top grade predictor publishers Page | 66

− Society’s obsession with the continuity of the family and clan through children. Women who are unable to conceive are neglected. They, however, get solace from Christian mission in Aluor e.g. Nyabera, the barren woman.

− Traditionally, in marriage, one had to dig as much about one’s partner’s relatives. Change comes and marriage becomes a bond between two people e.g. Akoko, Nyabera vs. Awiti and Mark Sigu.

− Bride price previously seemed as a source of wealth is reduced to a mere token of Awiti’s time e.g. Awiti, Mark vs. Oyange Silwal, Mark Sigu’s relatives.

− Traditionally, marriages across the boundaries of religion, race or tribe were disapproeved. Later the resistance changes e.g. Rebecca vs Courtney, Aoro vs. Wandia.

− For a woman to remain unmarried was unheard of. However, Vera joins the opus dei as a single woman.

− At death, a woman was traditionally buried in her husband’s ancestral home. Akoko is however buried in a Christian way.

− Strictly defined role and place of the woman at home changes though with resitance e.g. Mark Sigu assists Elizabeth.

**Conclusion:**

− The traditions are gradually overwhelmed by the Whiteman’s values and taken up by this community.

**6.** “A woman is the driving force in the society.” Prove the validity of this statement basing your argument on the text The River and the source by Margaret Ogolla.

**Answer.**

**Introduction:**

(Should be able to tell that the student had understood the question and he knows what he is going to write). (2 mks)

**Sample:**

The driving force in the text The River and the Source is the woman kind. The woman is a source of inspiration, influence and power in the society. This is exhibited in the following ways. From the moment Akoko is born, she is a big influence in her surrounding. She becomes the focal point of her family. Her father and brothers are stolen by her charm. She changes her father’s attitude towards the girl child when he says “A home without a daughter is like a river without a source.” Akoko affects her generation. She is a source of inspiration for her daughter Nyabera, her grand daughter Elizabeth and Elizabeth’s children notably Aoro. Wandia says that Aoro keeps saying that he is not a great grandson of Akoko for nothing. This is to mean that even after her death, she is still influenced. She allows Nyabera to join Christianity and Peter to become a priest. She is influenced in the lives of the people she interacts with.

Vera takes after her great grandmother. She is an influence. She is so determined to become an electric engineer and she becomes. She chooses to become celibate and joins the Opus Dei. After Becky’s death she takes over her children though they stay with Aoro and Wandia.

Nyabera was a source of inspiration to her children and grandchildren. She takes charge of Peter after the death of her brother Owing Sino. She is embodiment of strength, determined and patience. She goes through a lot of pain as a woman and she becomes the focal point from where Elizabeth gets her strength. She is a big influence to her generation.

Wandia is another source of inspiration for her society. She beats Aoro in an anatomy class and that is the beginning of what they share later in life. She is a source of inspiration for her husband and children. She later becomes a pediatrician. This is because of Daniel’s condition. Any other well explained capturing the character and the role of the woman in the text.3 x 4 = 12 mks

**Conclusion:**

This must summarize the prints above. A relevant conclusion. (2 mks) Marks distribution 2 marks- introduction 12 marks – the content ( the prints) 2 marks – conclusion 4 marks - - language use.

**7.** “The River and the Source highlights the **virtue of courage**.” Using Akoko, justify this statement .

**Answer.**

**Introduction:**

The River and the Source portrays Akoko as a woman of courage which helps her overcome some of the various challenges she faces.

(i) Akoko draws the attention of the village and defends herself against her mother-in-law Nyar Alego and brother-in-law Otieno Kembo’s allegations for using witchcraft to prevent Owuor Kembo her husband from marrying other wives. She leaves her matrimonial home regardless of the absence of her husband, to show that she could not take the accusations anymore. This helps her to protect the image of her family which had been questioned and to stamp her position so that her in-laws would respect her.

(ii) Akoko shows courage when she makes the legendary journey to Kisuna to go and report Otieno Kembo to the D.O. She faces the DO and later the DC as she lodges her suit against Otieno and wins the case. She has the courage to take the long journey, whose virtue lies in the fact that Otieno is ousted from being the chief and with it comes the end to oppression and heavy-handedness Otieno had visited on the people for the short time he was chief.

(iii) Akoko confronts Otieno when he threatens to whip her because of reporting him to the “sirkal”. She tells him “you may be twice my size, but I have three times your courage. This stops Otieno from continuing to insult her at that moment since he does not proceed. It also prevents him from physically beating her up.

(iv) Akoko leaves Yimbo for Aluor when she decides to join her daughter, Nyabera, in pursuing the new way of life (Christianity). She agrees to take on a completely new culture; thereby, abandoning what she has always known

to be the way of life. This helps her, together with her daughter, to find peace which eventually paves way for the success of her grandchildren.

**Conclusion:**

− Expect the candidate to briefly summarize the topic of discussion.

− They may also give a proverb summarizing the content.

**8.** “Despite good parenting, children can sometimes be a disappointment”. Using Elizabeth and Mark children, write an essay in support of this statement.

**Answer.**

**Introduction:**

Can be general specific, general and specific (Don’t accept mere definition. Must be the first paragraph) Example Sometimes parent may bring up children according to the books. They have very clear vision of what their children should become in adult life but they end up deviating. Though not always painfully the parents feel disappointed. Elizabeth and Mark are such parents.

**Content:**

D (i) Vera – a promising girl, very educated, infact an electrical engineer. Her parents especially the father had hopes settle as a family but she ends up being a non-marrying member of Opus Dei.

(ii) Becky though pretty shows she will be a problem when she is a child. She is lazy, only an average student. At one time, she doesn’t want to proceed with education were it not for responsible father. Later she disappears from home to become an air hostess. She lives a promiscuous life and is an irresponsible mother. She painfully dies of HIV and Aids great disappointment to both parents. \

(iii) Aoro is a mad genius. At form one, he catches the attention of the headboy for being indisciplined. He is sent home and only goes back because of a disciplinarian father. Later he marries Wandia – a Kikuyu though a good the father had hoped he marry a nice Luo girl and even tries to advice him against the idea.

(iv) Tony is attracted to the church even when a boy. He is always in the company of his uncle who is a catholic priest. Though Mark admires Peter, he could not imagine his son becoming a catholic priest. This is because he would become a celibate. Tony becomes a catholic priest.

(v) Odongo is the first child to fail class seven. He wants to be taken to secondary school – The father stand his ground and is made to repeat class. He later becomes a successful farm manager. Expect four well illustrated points Mark 3 : 3 : 3 : 3 = 12 marks

**Conclusion:**

Must be the last paragraph Expect a recap of the content or a candidate’s opinion.

Language 4 marks.

**9.** “Akoko is the embodiment of change.” Discuss the validity of this statement, using illustrations from **The River and The Source**.

**Answer.**

**Introduction:**

It is true that Akoko is a true embodiment of change. This is shown by the following illustrations:

- E (i) When Maria Nyabera goes through several misfortunes including the loss of her children, she is at the point of despair, and she decides to seek a new way to console her. She consults Akoko who encourages her to join Christianity. She tells her “as for you it is better that you seek this new way. It may give you hope and rescue you from bitterness pg. 103. Again, after Nyabera is converted to Christianity, she still feels a vacuum for she does not have a son. Consequently, she goes to seek for a son from Ogoma Kwach, when things do not work between them, she comes back to the mission devastated and heart broken. The caring Akoko encourages her to seek forgiveness from God. Nyabera spends the whole night at the tabernacle praying after which she feels consoled. “Go to the church and talk to him there …. Pg. 123. It is after this experience that Nyabera realizes that when she was away looking for a son, there was one (Peter Owuor) who loved her dearly. From then she reconciles herself to the fact that she would live with only one child.

E (ii) Elizabeth Awiti excels in Primary school and she is offered a place at a Teacher’s Training College. Nyabera is so worried of releasing her child to the world “there was a vice-like band around her head and she thought she would faint … a sword shall pierce thy soul … pg. 130 – 131. Reasonable Akoko brings her back to her senses and tells her “you’re not wise my child, learn wisdom, don’t you see the world is changing pg. 132.Later, when Elizabeth informs her parents that her fiancé Mark Sigu, would be coming to seek for her hand in marriage, Nyabera wonders how Elizabeth can think of getting married to a man whose antecedents she doesn’t know. Akoko brings her back to her senses and tells her, “Accept it Maria, the world is changing pg. 143.” Also during betrothal, Mark Sigu’s light complexion causes fear among the hosts because they feared Elizabeth could have chosen to get married to a jamwa (foreigner). “Apart from Akoko who must have left her mother’s womb with a broad outlook all of them were strictly parochial … a catastrophe.” Pg.146. Meaning that it is only Akoko who would not have minded if Elizabeth had chosen a non-Luo. This change is reflected in Aoro and Becky who chose to marry spouses from a different race and tribe.

E (iii)Traditionally, women do not own wealth, Akoko has accumulated so much wealth, “for by now her mother’s wealth was staggering even by the standards of today pg. 68 After her husband’s death, her brother-in-law, Otieno Kembo, misappropriates her husband’s wealth and threatens to grab Akoko. She takes a drastic step and heads to Kisuma to seek redress from the sirikal. (The D.O and the D.C). Traditionally this case would have been dealt with at the clan level. “She knew that as a woman, a widow and a sonless mother … she was greatly disadvantaged. Pg. 73.

E (iv) Owuor Kembo on meeting Akoko, falls irrevocably in love. “Owuor experienced an indescribable sensation pg. 24.” It should be noted that traditionally, love was not a prerequisite to marriage. Consequently, Owuor Kembo remains strangely monogamous. Even the pressure to marry another wife, from his mother and the council of Jodongo can’t deter him” long have we pleaded with you to take another wife … adamantly refused pg. 38. Traditionally, a chief should be polygamous the fact that the chief remains monogamous is change that is attributed to Akoko’s admirable personality. “Owuor Kembo” treats his wife like a queen … pg. Owuor Kembo pays more than double the normal bride price that is thirty head of cattle. Traditionally he should have bargained to bring this number down but he doesn’t. “Let us shock them by accepting their offer without bargaining … your name will be repeated from mouth to mouth for years to come.” Pg. 23.

**Conclusion:**

From the above illustrations, it is clear that Akoko is truly an embodiment of change.

**10.** The Western culture has totally changed the African traditions. With reference to the “River and the Source,” show the validity of this statement.

**Answer.**

**Introduction:**

(i) Candidate should bring out the general understanding of the erosion / transformation of the African traditions. Candidate should also demonstrate that the meaning is applicable in the novel.

− Traditionally, spying ensured there was no consanguinity, the spouse was of good character as seen in the marriage of Akoko and chief Owuor Kembo. In Mark Sigu’s case there was to spying to the influence of formal education. Polygamous to monogamous, singlehood.

− Initiation opened doors to marriage e.g. Akoko’s vis-à-vis Wandia’s, Becky’s, Awiti’s.

− Tero (wife inheritance) ensured morality and continuation of family line. Gradually it was abandoned.

− Funeral and burial rites and ceremonies have also undergone transformation e.g. chief Owuor Kembo’s followed the traditions while Akoko’s was Christian.

− Political leadership / administrative systems change from chieftaincy helped by Council of Jodongo shifted to a colonial system (sirikal) eventually to an African Multi-party system.

− Naming system.

− Education system from informal to formal. (Any other relevant)

*Any 4 well illustrated points 4 x 3 = 12mks Conclusion Candidate should tag their conclusion to the body of the answer. 2:3:3:3:3:2 = 20 marks.*

11. Widowhood pushes women to a disadvantaged position in society. Write an essay in support of this statement basing your answer on The River and The Source by Margret Ogolla.

**Answer.**

**Introduction** Can either be general or textual giving allusion to the suffering widow undergo in the society **Content**

− Soon after her husband ‘s death ,Akoko finds it difficult to sustain her fight with her in-laws.Otieno ,in particular ,plunders her wealth deliberately because she is defenseless widow.

− Otieno sits on the chief’s stool with heavy arrogance secure in the knowledge that Akoko, a widow, cannot fight for it on behalf of Owour sino, her grandson.

− Her refusal to be inherited makes her vulnerable to abuse and despise .She flees Yimbo.

− In Oloo’s homestead, Akoko, now widowed, is derided by her sister –in –law who are looking for every opportunity to push her away.

− Nyabera‘s firm hold on Ogoma Kwach (her inheritor) provokes a protest from his wife and the council of Jodongo.

− Her re-union later with Ogoma Kwach does not last and the man is set on marrying a second wife.

− Owang’ sino’s wife Alando nyar uyoma, as a widow cannot defend her son and heir to the chieftaincy against Otieno .The son is taken from her by Akoko for protection in Yimbo.