

**KCSE  
REVISION  
ORAL LITERATURE  
AND  
POETRY**

## **POETRY.**

### **What is poetry?**

It is not easy to say what exactly poetry is. But poetry explores the possibility of language more vividly than prose. In poetry language is used in a powerful ways.

**ODAMO:** But then sir, what is poetry?

**TEACHER:** Why sir, it is much easier to say what it is not. We all know what light is, but it is not easy to tell what it is.

**Poetry expresses language more powerfully than prose. Poetry can be compared to a palace if prose is a house. So just as a palace is more than a house, but it must be a house at least so also poetry is more than prose but it must still be language at least.**

### **Attitude**

We can define attitude into two:

- i) The poets attitude towards his subjects (what he is writing about)
- ii) A poet may choose to write about attitudes that are not his. His subjects (characters in his poem) can have their own attitudes towards one another or towards a certain issue e.g in the poem, 'Building the Nation (9) what is the drivers attitude towards the PS? Sometimes a poet may show disapproval without using negative words. In the poem, 'Cow for breakfast'(16) the author disapproves his subject without using negative words instead he makes us laugh at him. This is called **satire**. **Satire** is the mocking or ridiculing or ridiculing people and their characteristics to expose their foolishness and weaknesses.

In the poem, cow for breakfast (16) greed is satirized without being mentioned. In satire the poet attacks indirectly.

### **Irony:**

Is the expression of the writers meaning by the use of language, which says the direct opposite of his thought. In the book 'Song of Lawino' when Lawino calls Clementine Beautiful, she in fact means that she thinks Clementine is very ugly. Beautiful is therefore used ironically.

**Sarcasm:**

Is a bitter or wounding remark, which is often ironically worded. Sarcasm just refers to the tone of voice in which a remark has been made e.g when Lawino calls Clementine beautiful she is being sarcastic because she is bitter and contemptuous. In the poem 'Building the Nation' (9) the whole tone of the poem is satirical. The title is ironic.

**ix) Mood and tone:**

Mood is the condition someone is in and mood is usually expressed by the tone of voice one uses. If you want to see somebody in authority eg. Headmaster for a favour, you will not go to him when he is in a bad mood but you will wait until the day when he is in a good mood. But in poetry we don't talk of bad and good mood. Instead we use words like happy, bitter, angry, violent, quiet, resigned, sad, pleasant, resentful, humorous etc. In the poem, "The woman I married"(19) the mood is humorous and resigned. This can be established by the words used in the poem. He does not

call her his wife but instead he calls her 'the Woman I married'. He does not say she is a typist but says she bangs the typewriter, and now she bangs the crockery so that the house sounds like a factory. In this poem we see that he is not planning to send her away or discipline her in any way but he has just given up (resigned).

The poem, "Grass will grow; (20) is sad, even desperate. Tone is the voice used in a poem. It refers to the words in the poem.

(x) Stanza. Is a paragraph of lines in a poem.

I ask for tears  
Do not send me moon hard madness  
To lodge snug in my skull  
I would you sent me hordes of horses  
Galloping  
Crushing.  
But do not break  
The York of the moon on me.

***Jonathan Kariara.***

**Poem no.21.** The Philosophers

'Those who speak know nothing;  
Those who know are silent'.  
These words, as I am told,  
Were spoken by Lao-Tzu.  
If we were to believe that Lao-Tsu  
Was himself one who knew,  
How comes it that he wrote a book  
Of five thousand words  
*To Chui*

### **TECHNICAL DEVICES IN POETRY.**

This includes: Rhythm, Rhyme, Alliteration, Assonance, Onomatopoeia, Deeper meaning and Symbolism; Imagery – metaphor – simile, Attitude – Satire, irony,

## **STUDYING ORAL LITERATURE.**

### **How we can be exposed to Oral Literature.**

Oral stories are told to us from a very early age. When we are old enough we start telling those stories ourselves. We attend various ceremonies where we listen to songs and experience various dances and other utterances and performances.

At funerals stories would be told to adults about spirits and the underworld.

In everyday conversation the elders use proverbs and imaginative language which qualify as Oral Literature.

Some samples of Oral Literature have been written in books which we can buy and read.

The mass media also present some programmes that are Oral Literature oriented. But sometimes we are hampered from being exposed to Oral Literature.

### **Why?**

The occasions of performance are irregular and unsystematic. Also some people move to urban areas and grow up in a sort of vacuum as far as the African background is concerned. So they remain culturally rootless and in most cases 'ape' foreign cultures. So, to rediscover ourselves, we should study Oral Literature. For us to understand ourselves in the present time we should discover our roots.

Taban Lo Liyong' says, 'just as we don't want the Africa of our fore fathers forgotten, we also want the Africa of our grand children realized as well as living meaningfully in our times. He says that, 'we are like a strange beast with three heads – one looks perpetually behind, one looks steadily under our feet and the other is poised to heavens dreamily.

In order to reach our rural people – who are the majority – and serve them effectively, we should have an understanding of oral literature which they still use to this day.

The study of oral literature is necessary as it is likely to expose us to some of the best creative productions of the human mind.

### **How to Study Oral Literature.**

For a successfully study of anything one must have a direct access to it. So we should have direct contact with Oral Literature, ready to watch and listen to performances of oral literature.

- i) When we have opportunity, we should be ready to seek out these performances, going out to places and occasions where such performances are likely to take place.
- ii) We should know how to classify our Oral Literature – as we have already done for you but remember that each society has its own classifications.
- iii) We should be able to analyse (dissect) some samples of Oral Literature in order to see how they are put together and how they work. We look at the content (subject matter and themes), organization and presentation (the structure, development and style used by composer and performers).
- iv) Lastly we interpret the Oral piece in terms of its significance to the society. What lessons it teaches the society.

### **How Oral Literature Relates to Society.**

Oral Literature cannot be seen as arts for arts sake. Whether narratives, song, proverbs or riddles, it relates to the culture of the people who create it; their beliefs, customs and accepted norms; their likes and dislikes.

A study of Oral Literature amounts to studying the society which creates it. This would involve field research. Children were brought up according to the norms of their society through narratives, songs, proverbs and riddles. Very young children (corresponding to our nursery kids today) were told.

There is a pot by the altar  
That they begun to mould;  
They finished the base  
But the neck remains undone...  
For they ran out of mud.

Mud! Mud!  
Who can find mud  
Maybe if it were gold  
Someone would.

***Maria Were.***

***Poem No. 19. The Woman I married***

The woman I married  
Is an out-right bone-shaker.

For a full decade  
She had banged a typewriter  
And now in substitution  
Bangs the crockery  
Until my house sounds like a factory.

The noise keeps her sane.  
They say  
***Edwin Waiyaki.***

The following are common oral literature and poetry asked questions. It is advisable to do the questions in groups:

1. Read the poem and answer the questions which follow.

**THE MARKET WOMAN**

***The market woman  
Strong sun  
and the market woman in the shade  
of the mulemba***

***- Orange, my lady  
a nice little orange!***

***Light plays in the town  
its burning game  
of brightness and shade***

*and life plays  
in worried hearts  
its game of blind-man's buff.*

*The market woman  
who sells fruit  
sells herself.*

*- My Lady  
orange, nice little orange!*

*Buy sweets oranges  
buy from me too the bitterness  
of this torture  
of life without life*

*buy from me the childhood of the spirit  
this rosebud  
that did not open  
start still impelled to a beginning.*

*Orange, my lady!  
I exhausted the smiles  
with which I cried  
I no longer cry.  
And there goes my hopes  
as did the blood of my children  
mingled with the dust of roads  
buried on plantations  
and my sweat  
soaked in the cotton threads.*

*As effort was offered to*



*the security of machines  
the beauty of tarmac roads  
of tall buildings  
comfort or ricy gentlemen  
happiness dispersed in towns  
and I  
became a part  
of the very problems of existence.*

*There go the oranges  
as I offered myself to alcohol  
to anaesthetize myself  
and stupefied myself to live.*

*I gave all.*

*Even my pain  
and the poetry of my naked breasts  
I gave to the poets.*

*Now I myself am selling me*

*Buy oranges!  
my lady!  
Take me to the markets of life  
My price is only one: - Blood.*

*Perhaps selling myself  
I posses my self  
- Buy oranges!*

*From Scared Hope by Agostino Neto,  
Tanzania Publishing House, 1974, 12 - 14*

## QUESTIONS

- (a) Identify the three voices in this poem. 3mks
- (b) What is the Poet's attitude to the market woman? 2mks
- (c) What is the theme of the poem? 3mks
- d) Describe the feeling of the market woman. 3mks
- e) Identify the lines spoken by the persona in his role as an observer. 3mks
- f) Explain the meaning of the following lines. 6mks
- (i) I exhausted the similes  
With which I cried  
I no longer cry
- (ii) Even my pain  
and the poetry of my naked breasts  
I gave to the poets
- .....My price is only one: - Blood

## Answers

The three voices

- The person who introduces the market woman
  - Market woman's voice calling to buyers
  - Market woman's inner voice of reflection
- b) Sympathetic / pities the market woman
- c) Suffering / exploitation / destitution
- d) Mood of anger, hurt feelings / defiant mood
- e) "The market woman/ ..... Mulemba"
- f) (i) The market woman has given up tactics of persuasion and self-pitying hope.  
She is now hardened person
- (ii) The market woman became the subject for poet's verses
- (iii) Her ventures are for survival.

**2. Read the following poem and answer the questions that follow.**

## **THE SMILING ORPHAN**

And when she passed away,  
They came,  
Kinsmen came,  
Friends came,  
Everybody came to mourn her.

Hospitalized for five months  
The Ward was her world  
Fellow patients her compatriots  
The meager hospital supply-her diet

When she was dying  
Her son was on Official Duty  
The State demanded his Services.  
Her only daughter, uneducated,  
Sat by her  
Crying, praying, waiting for an answer  
From God far above  
Wishing, she spoke the language  
Figures in white-coats do understand.  
They matched, the figures did  
Stiff, numb and deaf, to the cries and wishes  
Of her dying mother.

As she was dying  
Friends and kinsmen TALKED of her  
How good, how helpful: a very practical woman.  
None reached her: they were too busy, there was no money,  
Who would look after their homes?  
Was it so crucial their presence?

But when she passed away, they came,

Kinsmen came, friends hired cars to come,  
Neighbours gathered to mourn her,  
They ought to be there for the funeral  
So they swore.

The mourners shrieked out cries  
As they arrived in the busy compound of the dead.  
Memories of loved ones no more  
Stimulated tears of many.

They cried dutiful tears for the deceased  
Now stretching their hands all over to help.  
The daughter looked at them  
With dry eyes, quiet, blank.  
The mourners pinched each other  
Shocked by the stone-heartedness  
Of the be-orphaned.

She sat: watching the tears soak their garments  
Or in the soil around them; wasted.

That night, she went to her love,  
In the freshly made emergency grass hut,  
And let loose all ties of the Conventional Dress she wore  
Submitting to the Great Power, she whispered:

‘Now.....  
You and I must know Now....  
Tomorrow you might never understand  
Unable to lick my tears.....’

And there was light  
In the darkness of the hut

While outside  
The mourners cried  
Louder than the Orphan.

By Grace Birabwa Isharaza.

1. What is the poem about? (3mks)
2. Comment on the title of the poem. (2mks)
3. What is the attitude of the persona towards the mourners? Explain your answer.(4mks)
4. Paraphrase the message in the fourth stanza. (3mks)
5. Explain the following lines as used in the poem (2mks)
  - (i) They cried dutiful tears for the deceased.
  - (ii) And there was Light in the darkness of the hut
6. Comment on the tone of the poem (2mks)
7. Identify and illustrate two stylistic devices used in the poem. (4mks)

## Answers

1.
  - A woman who was sick and hospitalized
  - Was never visited by her relatives who claimed they were busy✓
  - Later the woman dies and ironically the relatives come in large numbers vowing that they cannot miss the burial✓
  - During the funeral her only daughter (who had stayed with her in hospital) seems unmoved and the relatives start backbiting her ( Total 3 mks)
2. "The smiling orphan" has been used in reference to the illiterate daughter who had stayed in hospital with the mother but now is perceived as not being in mourning by the other mourners.
3. Sarcastic  
"They had initially said that:-  
Stanza 4 lines 3-5 how good .....

Stanza 7- line 1 mourned dutiful tears

He can see through their hypocrisy, initially they were not bothered but after her death they come in droves

- (Student must cite examples and explain their relevance to the altitude identified

*Mark 1 mark for identification, 1 for example and 1 for illustration*

4. While the woman is in hospital suffering her relatives never bothered to visit her they pledged lack of time and money and they also said that there was no need for them to visit her at the hospital
5. i) Their tears were not genuine  
ii) She felt relieved- she had unburdened her grief (with her lover there's no condemnation)
6. Sarcastic/ satirical
  - The mourners are satirized- they mourn louder than the bereaved  
(Illus) stanza 8 last line 1 and 2

OR

Reproachful

- The persona condemns the mourners for assuming a self righteous attitude. They condemn the daughter who seems not to be mourning. The persona feels that their concern is rather belated

7. Repetition

----- they came

----- came

- To illustrate the fact that the mourners arrived for the funeral in large numbers

Rhetoric questions

- Would look after their homes?
- Was it crucial their presence?

Reveals the attitude of the mourners at the beginning; that they were not bothered

Symbolism

- there was light in the darkness

Light to symbolize the relief she feels after unburdening herself to the lover

Hyperbole

- Stanza 8..... their tears soak their garments. Enhances the satire – that the mourners cry much and we know that their grief isn't genuine

## Ellipsis

2<sup>nd</sup> last stanza (10)

Enhances suspense, allows imagination, and reveals the feelings of the orphan the strain she's been under e.t.c.

3. 3. Read the poem below and then answer the questions that follow. (15mks)

**TO JAMES**

*Do you remember  
How you won  
That last race .....?  
How you flung your body  
At the start.....  
How your spikes  
Ripped the cinders  
In the stretch.....  
How you catapulted  
Through the tape.....  
Do you remember .....?  
Don't you think  
I lurched with you  
Out of those starting holes....?  
Don't you think  
My sinews tightened  
At those first  
Few strides....  
And when you flew into the stretch  
Was not all my thrill  
of a thousand races in your blood....?  
At your final drive  
Through the finish line  
Did not my shout  
Tell of the  
Triumphant ecstasy  
Of victory....?  
Live  
As I have taught you  
To run, Boy \_  
It's a short dash*



*Dig your starting holes  
 Deep and firm  
 Lurch out of them  
 Into the straightaway  
 With all the power  
 That is in you  
 Look straight ahead  
 To the finish line  
 Think only of the goal  
 Run straight  
 Run high  
 Run hard  
 Save nothing  
 And finish  
 With an ecstatic burst  
 That carries you  
 Hurtling  
 Through the tape  
 To victory .....*

- |  |        |
|--|--------|
| a) What event is the speaker describing? Illustrate.               | (2mks) |
| b) Explain how the person gets involved in the event he describes. | (4mks) |
| c) What is the relationship the persona and the 'you'? Illustrate. | (4mks) |
| d) Identify and illustrate any 2 stylistic features in this poem.  | 4mks)  |
| e) Explain 'you catapulted'  | 1mk    |

## Answers

- |    |  |       |
|----|--|-------|
| a) | A race, running competition<br>Illustration: - How you won that race<br>How you captured through the tape e.t.c. |       |
| b) | 1 mk for identification 1 mk for illustration  | 2 mks |

- i) He's a physically involved e.g. "lurched with" "As I have taught you" you"  
- "My sinews tightened"

2 mks

He's emotionally involved  
e.g. "Was not all my thrill"

"Did not my shout tell of the triumphant ecstasy"

2 mks

c) **The relationship is that of:**

- Instructor - Learner "The thrill of a thousand races in your blood"
- Father - Son
- Teacher - Student

"As I have taught you to run boy"

"Think only of the goal"

"Dig your starting holes deep and firm" e.t.c.

4 mks

b) **Features of style:**

i) Repetition

- Do you remember?
- Run

ii) Rhetorical questions

Do you remember?

How you won

That last race.....?

iii) Exaggeration

- A thousand races

***Any two styles. 1 mk for identification 1 mk for illustration***

- c) You catapulted \_\_\_\_\_ accelerated/ shot through

4. Read the following oral poem and answer the questions that follow

*The Timi of Ede.*

*Huge fellow whose body fills an anthill*

*You are heavily pregnant with war.  
All your body except your teeth is black.*

*No one can prevent the ape  
From sitting on the branch of a tree.*

*No one can dispute the throne with you.  
No one can try to fight you.*

*One who shakes a tree trunk shakes himself.  
We do not try to resist you.*

*The seeds of the Ayo game  
Do not complain of being shoved about.  
You are like death,  
Who plucks a man's eyeballs suddenly.  
You are like a big ripe fruit  
that falls on a child at midnight.*

*Fighting a battle in front  
You mark out the next battlefield behind.  
My lord, please give the world some rest.  
If one greets you there is also trouble.  
The fire of destruction is part of your baggage  
Wherever you go.*

*You kill your opponents gently,  
Like cutting a calabash in two.  
When the leopard kills,  
Its tail trails gently on the ground.  
Whenever you open your mouth wide,  
You swallow a hero.*

*(Source: Ulli Beier(ed), African Poetry, Cambridge University Press, 1966)*

- (a) Classify the above poem. 1mk
- (b) What images does the poet use to build up the character of Timi? 6mks
- (c) What is the attitude of the speaker towards Timi? 2mks
- (d) Identify the themes of the poem. 4mks
- (e) Describe the mood of the poem. 2mks
- (f) Mention any three aspects of performance that can be lost if this song is written down. 3mks
- (g) State any four functions of this song. 2mks

### Answers

- a) A praise poem  $\frac{1}{2}$  it seeks to extol the military ✓  $\frac{1}{2}$  virtues of the leader or a political poem  
1 mk
- b) ..... metaphors..... Whose body fills an anthill ✓ 1 ..... you are heavily pregnant with war  
.... no one can prevent a peacock for sitting on the branch of a tree ✓ 1 .... Show how invisible Timi is.  
.... Fire of destruction is part of your baggage showing how ✓ 1 destructive his ventures are  
Similes..... you kill your opponents gently, like cutting a calabash in two..... he's discrete in his  
deals..... ✓ 1  
  
Similes..... you are like a big ripe fruit..... You are like death ✓ 1  
  
.....Proverbial streak..... one who shakes a tree trunk ✓ 1 shakes himself" ..... he's invincible
- c) The attitude of the speaker.
- d) ..... Fear..... my lord, please give the world some rest..... awe..... ✓ 1  
..... Mystery..... Fighting a battle in front ✓ 1 ..... mark next behind  
Any two 2 mks
- e) Themes: - Timi's gallantry and efficiency in war
  - i) Subjugation of the citizens to the leader ✓ 1  
"We do not try to resist you"
  - ii) Fear - "you are like death....." ✓ 1

- |      |   |                          |
|------|---|--------------------------|
| iii) | Terror inherent in the leader. ✓  | Any two 4 mks            |
| f)   | Mood: Humorous awe e.g. Comparing Timi to an ape,<br>-Apprehensive/ fear..... you kill your opponents gently...."<br>Any one illustrated mood | 2 mks                    |
| f)   | Facial expression<br>Tonal variation<br>-Gestures<br>-Dramatization   | 4 mks<br><br>1 mk each   |
| g)   | Functions: Praise<br>Worship<br>Education<br>Entertainment  | 2mks<br><br>1½ mark each |

5.

## ORAL LITERATURE

### NJABALA

Once upon a time, a man and his wife had a daughter. The girl's name was Njabala and she was stunningly beautiful. But she was badly brought up, that girl. She was spoilt. She did not want to do any work in the shamba or around the house. All through her childhood, it was her mother who cooked for her, washed and ironed her clothes for her, did everything for her. But Njabala's beauty was beyond words.

Anyway, Njabala grew up and was soon ready for marriage. She married a young man who took her to his home. But of course she couldn't do any work. When the time came for her to go and work in the shamba, she didn't know what to do. She put both her hands on her head and cried out:

Mamma, mother-of-twins!

It's you who used to spoil me

Come and dig.

Whereupon the skeleton of her mother, who had died, suddenly appeared. It took the hoe and started clearing the shamba as it sang:

Njabala, this is the way women dig,

Njabala!

Njabala, this is the way women dig,

Njabala!

Don't let me be caught by my in-laws.

And it cleared a large patch of the shamba, from here to way, way out there. Then it disappeared back to the grave.

This went on for quite some time. Every time Njabala went to the shamba, she would call out:

Mamma, Mother-of-twins!

It's you who used to spoil me

Come and dig.

Then the mother's little skeleton would come and clear the shamba, singing;

Njabala, this is the way women dig,

Njabala!

Njabala, this is the way women dig,

Njabala!

Don't let me caught by my in-laws.

One day, however, a relative of Njabala's husband saw what was happening. She went and said to the husband. "You know what? The food we eat in this house is grown by skeletons".

The husband said, "Oh dear, Oh dear!" The next day, he went and hid in the shamba. When Njabala arrived, she called out as usual.

Mamma, Mother-of-twins!

It's you who used to spoil me

Come and dig.

The skeleton came and began to dig as it sang:

Njabala, this is the way women dig,

Njabala!

But suddenly, the man leapt out of his hiding and dealt his mother-in-law's skeleton a big blow with his stick. The skeleton disappeared immediately. Njabala was almost fainting with shame and shock. Her husband said to her angrily, "So this is what's been happening? You've been feeding us on food grown by skeletons?"

From that day on, Njabala learned to work saying, "What else can I do now that my mother has been beaten and driven away?" And so she became a hard-working woman.

I left her happy with her husband and the rich crop she was harvesting from her shamba, and I came back here. That is what I saw.

- i) Which audience would this narrative be most appropriate for? Justify your answer. 2mks
- ii) State and explain three functions of song as an aspect of style in this narrative. 6mks
- iii) Apart from the song, identify three typical features of oral narratives evident in this narrative. 6mks
- iv) Using at least two expressions from the narrative, show evidence that the recorder remained true to live performance of the narrative. 4mks
- v) Cite and explain a proverb from any community you are familiar with that comments on either beauty or work.

## Answers

Young women ripe for marriage ✓ 1. The narrative teaches young ladies to prepare themselves well to handle marriage responsibilities before they get married

**OR**

Young men ready for marriage ✓ 1. They should choose well before marrying ✓

- i) Breaks the monotony of pure narration thus making the story interesting.
  - ii) Brings out the character traits of the mother, Njabala e.t.c. E.g. mother as irresponsible person/ "It is you who used to spoil me"
  - iii) Plot development -join one episode to the other.
  - iv) Entertainment/ in live performance. The song would entertain audience
  - iii) -The opening formula -Once upon a time  
 -The closing formula -I left her happy-----  
 -Fantasy- skeleton digging  
 -Timelessness- Once upon a time.
- Simple plot
- Dialogue between husband and wife
- iv) It cleared a large patch of the shamba, from here to way, way out there.  
 ----- I came back here  
 ----- That is what I saw  
 You reap what you sow  
 Beauty is skin deep  
 Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder  
 All that glitters is not gold  
 Unity is strength

**Read the following proverbs and answer the questions after each.**

- (a) No cleverest person ever saved his own head.
- (i) Explain the meaning of the above proverb and give an example of a situation in which it could be used.  
 (2mks)
- (b) Authority is the tail of a water rat.
- (i) What type of audience would be suitable for the above proverb and why? (3mks)
- (ii) Identify and explain the image used in this proverb. (3mks)
- (iii) Under what category would you place this proverb? (1mk)
- c) Give four characteristics of proverbs
- d) Give four functions of proverbs. (4mks)



- e) If you were to carry out field work to collect proverbs, cite three main problems you would encounter.  
 f) Give two similarities between proverbs and oral narratives. (2mks)

## Answers

- a) No cleverest person ever shakes himself (2marks)
- i) It means: No one person can be self sufficient ✓<sup>1</sup>  
 - I can apply in a situation where one does not want to co operate with others, he feels he doesn't need their assistance eg a head teacher in a school will need teachers, workers, and student etc. ✓<sup>1</sup>
- b) Authority is the tail of a water rat.  
 What type of audience.....( 2marks)
- i) Leaders ✓<sup>1</sup>  
 Why ? to tell them that leadership is slippery if mismanaged, can fail to lead well.....✓<sup>1</sup>
- i) Image : metaphor✓<sup>1</sup>.... Authority refers to as a tail of a water rat✓<sup>1</sup>
- ii) Cautionary proves✓<sup>1</sup>
- c) - Characteristic of proverbs ( 4 marks)  
 - Brief  
 - Use of images....metaphors  
 - Contradictory in nature  
 - Hyperbole/ exaggeration  
 - Neither negative nor positive  
 - Fixed in nature ( any 4 x 1 mk each= 4marks)
- d) Four functions of proverbs  
 - Used in oratory to embellish or enrich speech  
 - Transmit education  
 - Comment on social experiences eg praise or ridicule  
 - Carry people's culture  
 - Used to warn ( any 4 x 1 = 4 marks)
- e) - Translation  
 - Lack of informants  
 - Shortage of proverbs because of cultural change ( 3 x 1 = 3mks)
- f) Similarities between proverbs and oral narratives.....  
 - Use of figurative language

Both are educative

### **3. THE CRUEL STEP – MOTHER**

Once upon a time, there was a man and wife who had a baby girl. Unfortunately, the wife died and so, the man married again. He got another girl with the second wife.

The two girls became extremely close, so close that whenever the mother sent one on an errand, the other was sure to accompany her. The mother, however, did not like the child of the deceased. She would always show her dislike by denying her certain favours. Her feelings became so bad that she decided to get rid of the girl. To do this, she dug a hole in her bedroom on a day when the husband was absent and covered the hole with a cow's hide. She then called her daughter and sent her to the house of a friend some kilometers away. As usual, the two girls wanted to go together but the woman refused, giving the excuse that she wanted to send the other one elsewhere.

After the departure of her daughter, she called the other girl and sent her for her snuffbox in the bedroom. Unaware of what lay ahead, the girl eagerly rushed into the room only to fall into a hole! The mother very quickly filled the hole with soil, completely disregarding the girl's screams for help.

When the daughter came back, she merely assumed that the absence of her dear companion was justified. After hours of waiting, she, however, became impatient and questioned the mother.

'Where is my sister?' she asked.

‘But she followed you. As soon as she did what I wanted, she ran after you. Now stop bothering me,’ the mother retorted.

Time passed and the now anxious girl went round calling out the name of the other one, but all in vain. Alas.... She cried the whole night and the next day and refused to touch any food. The father helped in the search but to no avail.

After three days, the girl still cried and called the other one. She then heard a very weak voice responding in song:

*Maalya Maalya*

*Maalya Maalya*

*Na mwenyu niwe mwai iiee malya,*

*Ekwinza muthiko iiee malya,*

*Wakwisa kunthika iiee malya*

*Wakwisa kunthika iiee malya*

*(Maalya Maalya*

*And your mother is the wise one iiee malya,*

*She dug a grave iiee malya,*

*For interring me in iiee malya.)*

The girl dashed towards the direction of the voice, repeated her cries and again got the same response. She came to the conclusion that whoever was responding was definitely underground somewhere in the house. Immediately the

father came that day (before the arrival of the mother), she told him what had happened After hearing the song, the father dug up the place and pulled out an extremely weak and disfigured daughter. All three wailed and wailed. Eventually, the father gave her a mixture of blood from a goat and milk to drink after which she vomited all the soil she had eaten. He gave her some more of the mixture on after which he hid her.

When the wife eventually came back, the man did not let her get into the house but sent her for a cow in a far off place. He explained away his action by telling her that he had decided to host a feast for relatives (including his in-laws). In the meantime , he sent for all of them. When the woman came back with the cow, she found everyone waiting for her. Uneasy now, she sat down in the place she was shown by her husband.He then stood up and after welcoming all, reminded them of the lost daughter. He then called upon the wife to explain the circumstances leading to the sad episode. She hauntingly repeated the now commonly known story. When she sat down, the husband told this woman's daughter to repeat her earlier wails after which all heard:

*Maalya Maalya*

*Maalya Maalya*

*Na mwenyu niwe mwai iiee malya,*

*Ekwinza muthiko iiee malya,*

*Wakwinsa kunthika iiee malya.*

All were surprised to hear the words of the other girl's song and at that moment, the 'dead' girl joined them. The woman was as though paralysed by shock.

The husband then explained the truth of the matter and told his in-laws to take their daughter with them. They said that if that was what she had done to the girl, they couldn't have such a monster in their house. The woman was disowned by all and chased away.

## QUESTIONS

- (a) To which audience and when can such a story be told? (2mks)
- (b) Explain three features of style employed in the narrative . (6mks)
- c) Contrast the character of the mother and her blood daughter. (4mks)
- (d) Explain two problems you are likely to encounter when collecting materials for such a genre. (4mks)
- (e) What does the author mean by the following sentences as used in the passage?
- (i) "When the daughter came back, she merely assumed that the absence of her dear companion was justified." (1mk)
- (ii) And your mother is the wise one iiee Malya. (1mk)
- (f) What is the moral lesson of this narrative? (2mks)

## Answers

- (a) - The audience — Young women preparing to get married  
- when - when being prepared for marriage/being educated as the role of good wife. (2mks)
- (b) Features of style used.
- (i) opening formula  
- Once upon a time .....

- announcing the coming of the narrative or attracts the attention of the audience.
- (ii) Use of song
  - Maalya .....Maalya
  - Ironically emphasizing the wrongness of the mother's deed.
- (iii) Dialogue
  - Between/ mother and daughter
  - Character of sister brought out as loving/concerned/ character of the mother as being cruel comes\_out.
- c) The mother is cruel/callous as seen from the mistreatment she gives to the step-daughter whereas the daughter is kind/loving/ concerned as seen from the concern she has for the step sister when she goes missing. **(4mks)**
- (d) Problems you are likely to encounter when collecting materials for the given genre:
  - Suspicion by some members of the community from which-you do your research.
  - informants may demand cash payment
  - Language if research is carried out of ones community
  - Good informants and performers may not be available
  - Religious convictions
- (e) (i) It never occurred to her that her dear companion was being gotten rid of for no apparent reason\*
- (ii). It is an ironical reference to the mother's cruel character.
- (f) That we should show love to all irregardless of their relationship to us.

**. Read the oral Narrative below and answer the questions that follow**

### **THE WARRIOR WHO HAD EIGHT LOVERS**

A long time ago there was a warrior whose bravery and handsome looks made the girls of the village fall in love with him. Eight girls, at least, were known to want to marry the young warrior, for they had composed many songs in his praise.

Now, this warrior was one time getting ready to go on alone raid in faraway country. Before he set off for the raid, he called the youngest of his eight lovers and told her to put fresh milk in a small guard. He also instructed her to keep

checking on the colour of the milk every day.” Should the milk turn red, “ the warrior told the girl, ‘ it would mean that I have been killed or I am seriously wounded.’

The young girl was so touched by the departure of her lover that she composed the following song for him.

*My warrior whom I love  
For whom I open the sweet curdled  
Milk of my father's herd,  
And to whom I give fat rams  
Of my father to slaughter,  
To whom I give my slender  
Thighs to lie on,  
With whom are you going on a raid next?*

It happened that many days after the departure of the warrior, the girl noticed that the milk was turning red. She wept bitterly, for she knew that her lover was either dead or dying in a faraway country. Without telling anyone, the girl set off to look for her dying lover.

For many days she traveled, and as she walked through plains and forests she sang the song she had composed for her warrior. She travelled on and as she travelled she checked the colour of the milk in the gourd. Each day that she saw the milk turn a little more red, she traveled faster. And each day she hoped that she would find her lover alive.

On the ninth day the girl sang louder and louder as she traveled. Each time she sang she would listen to hear if there was any reply. Any as she listened at one time, she heard a faint voice. There was no mistake about it. It was her lover's voice. She ran and ran and after a while she found her lover. He was extremely weak and badly wounded. When the dying warrior saw her, he told her; ‘When I am finished, you take my attire and weapons home. When you get a son give them to him And with that the warrior seemed to be dying.

But the girl did not listen to him, she quickly looked for water and washed his wounds. And after that she began to look for food for him. It did not take long before she saw a deer passing by. With her lover's spear she killed it, and wasted the meat for her lover. For many months the young woman washed the wounds of her lover and fed him until he was well again.

Back at home everybody thought that the young woman and her lover were dead, and they insisted that their death rites be performed. However, the father of the warrior kept postponing the death rites. But at last the old man agreed to perform the rites because his youngest son was to be circumcised, and could not be circumcised before the rites were performed.

So preparations for the death rites for the lost warrior were made. But on the morning of the day that the rites were to be performed, and as people were gathering, one of the people in the gathering heard a war song coming from the other side of the valley. He asked other people to listen. The father of the warrior could not mistake his son's voice. He was almost crying as he gazed on the other side of the valley. The singing voice became clearer and before long the warrior and his lover emerged, driving a large herd of cattle. The bells that were tied around the necks of the oxen played to the tune of the war song.

There was great rejoicing as people ran to meet the lost warrior and his young lover. On their arrival back home a big bull was slaughtered and there was a great feast. People ate and drank. And the warrior and his lover were married. The two became man and wife and lived happily. And my story ends.

*From Oral Literature. A Junior Course  
By A. Bukenya and M. Gachanja,  
Longhorn Kenya.*

## Questions

1. **What** kind of a narrative is this? (2mks)
2. **Identify two** instances of repetition in the passage (2mks)
3. **What** are the character traits of? (4mks)
  - (i) the warrior
  - (ii) the youngest lover
4. **Give two** functions of the song. (2mks)
5. **Show** instances of irony in the passage (2mks)
6. **What** are the economic activities of this community? (2mks)



7. **Which** devices have been used to start and end this story? **What** are their functions? (4mks)
8. With one proverb, **summarize** the teaching or moral lesson in the story. (2mks)

### Answers

1. Dilemma 1mk (Identification)  
Warrior's choices going to bring cows and risk being killed or stay and marry wonderful lovers and remain poor. 1mk ( Explanation)  
- No mark if identification is missing.
2. Sang louder and louder (1mk)  
- She ran and ran (1mk)
3. (ii) The warrior  
- Brave (1mk) went for a lone raid (1mk)  
(iii) the youngest lover  
- loving (1mk) risked her life going to look for her lover (1mk)  
(Any other correct trait and illustration) Total 4 mks  
No mark if trait is missing.
4. (i) Expresses the girl's love for the warrior (1mk)  
(ii) Helped the girl trace her warrior lover (1mk) Total 2 mks
5. (i) The warrior was ready to die but instead he recovered (1mk)  
(ii) Everybody thought the young woman and her lover were dead and insisted their death rites be performed. (1mk) Any other relevant irony
6. (i) Pastoralists (½ ) – bull, cows (½ )  
(ii) Hunting ½ - she killed a deer with lover's spear ½ mks
7. (i) Opening formula  
- to call for attention  
- alert audience for start of narration

- Removes the audience from the world of reality and takes them into the world of fiction

(ii) Closing formula

- to mark the end of the story.

8. A friend in need is a friend indeed

- the girl was willing to risk her life to serve her lover

## **LITERATURE IN ENGLISH**

### **1. POETRY**

**Read the poem below and then answer the questions that follow.**

#### **THE BEARD                      *By Proscovia Rwakyaka***

**In the pulpit he swayed and turned**

**Leaned forward, backward**

**His solemn voice echoed,**

**Lowly the congregation followed;**

**“Do you love your neighbour?”**

**Meekly they bow at his keen eye**

**Now examining a grey head**

**Hearing under her sobs.**

**His heart kept assured-**

**“Her sins weigh on her”**

**So with her he chats outside;**

**“Weep not, child you are pardoned,”**

**“But sir, your beard conjured up**

**The spirit of my dead goat!”**

**a) Identify and describe two speakers in this poem. Illustrate your answer with evidence from the poem.**

**(4mks)**

**b) Relate the title of the poem to what exactly happens in this poem, supporting your answer with specific examples from it.**

**(4mks)**

**c) Referring closely to the poem, identify and explain how the poet develops any two moods in the poem.**

**(8mks)**

**d) Comment on the lines**

**‘His heart kept assured**

**“Her sins weigh on her”.**

**(4mks)**

## **2. ORAL LITERATURE (20 mks)**

**Read the following oral narrative and answer the questions that follow.**

### **JACKAL AND HEN**

**This is a story that the old people tell. They say that hen flew to the top of a stack of wheat one day to find food. From where she stood on the stack she could see far out over the fields. She could see far and she**

saw Jackal coming from afar. She saw him coming towards her, she saw him out of the corner of her eyes, but when he came closer she did not look up at all. She went on hunting for food.

“Good morning, mother of mine,” Jackal greeted her.

“Yes, I greet you,” she replied.

“Are you still living?” He asked, according to the correct way in which one person greets another.

“Yes, I am still living. And you? Are you still living also?”

“Yes, I too am still living, mother,” he replied. And then he asked as the custom was, “Did you wake well this morning?”

And she answered, as it is proper, “Yes, I woke well.”

And all the while he was talking, talking, talking, Jackal was looking closely at her and saw that she was young and that her flesh would taste sweet. He thought of how he would get at her. But now she was standing on top of that stack of wheat, where he could not reach her. He could not get hold of her at all, not while she was on top of the stack of wheat, and would have to think of a way to get her down.

Jackal had many plans. He was a man who was not just a little bit clever. No, he was very clever. He asked her. “Mother, have you heard of that there is peace among everybody on earth? One animal may not catch another animal any more, because of that peace.

“Peace?” She asked.

“Yes, mother, peace. The chiefs called together a big meeting, and at that meeting they decided this business of peace on all the earth.”

“Oh yes,” said her. But she wondered about it. She wondered whether this Jackal could be telling the truth. He was a man with many clever stories, and many times those clever stories were nothing but lies.

“You say there is peace now?”

**“Yes, mother. The big peace. There has never been such a big peace. You can safely come down from that stack of wheat. Then we can talk about the matter nicely. We shall take snuff together. Come down. Mother! Remember the peace!”**

**But hen was not quite as stupid as Jackal thought she was. She wanted to make sure first that Jackal was telling the truth and that he was not telling her lies again. She turned around and looked far out over the fields behind her. Then she went to stand on the highest point of the stack and kept staring out over the fields until Jackal asked: “What is it that you see from up there that you stare so: me?”**

**“What do I see? Why do you want to know what I see? It does not matter what I see, for there is no danger anymore for any animal on earth. Is it not peace among the animals? It is only a pack of dogs that are running towards us.”**

**“Dogs! A pack of dogs!” he cried. And his fear was very great. “Then I shall have to greet you, mother. I am a man who has a lot of work waiting.”**

**“Kekekeke!” hen laughed. “I thought it was peace among all animals on earth? Have you forgotten it? The dogs will do nothing to harm you. “Why do you want to run away, grandfather?” I don’t think this pack of dogs came to the meeting on peace!” and jackal ran so fast that the dust rose in great clouds from the road behind him.**

**“Kekekeke!” laughed hen, for then she knew the story of the peace was just a big lie. And she knew that if she had taken snuff with that fellow he would have caught her so she made up a story herself and with it she had caught him beautifully.**

**“Kekekeke!” she laughed. “I caught the story teller with another story.” And that is the end of this story**

**a) State the category of this Oral narrative and give a reason for your answer. (2mks)**

- b) What does the conversation between the Jackal and Hen in the first part of the narrative reveal about the social conduct of the community in which this story originated? (2mks)
- c) Compare and contrast the character of Hen and Jackal. (4mks)
- d) Quoting examples from the story to support your answer, identify four features that are characteristic of oral narratives. (4mks)
- e) List and illustrate two techniques of narrative more interesting if it were told orally.
- f) Give two problems you are likely to encounter when collecting this type of oral literature genre. How would you solve these problems? (4mks)

### **Answers**

- (a) - A preacher / pastor / priest / evangelist. (1)
- Stands in the pulpit, preaching on love/against sin. (1)
  - An old woman / member of the congregation. (1)
  - Addresses the preacher after the sermon / service / giving reason for her weeping. (1)
- 1 mark for identification and, 1 mark for illustration ; Illustration alone doesn't score.*
- (b) - The preacher has a beard.
- The old woman /gray-haired lady is reminded of her dead goat that had a similar beard.
  - Hence it is the beard that brings misunderstanding and the irony in the poem.

*Any two relevant explanations; 2 marks each.*

**(c) Mood of joy**

- The poet presents the preacher preaching laboriously, so he is pleased to see the results-
- One “sinner” repentant crying. Hence his joy.

**Serious/solemn mood**

- Prevails in the church as a result the preacher’s dramatic preaching;
- “--- he swayed and turned, leaned forward, backward ---“ so they “meekly” follow him.

**Humiliation/embarrassment mood**

- On the part of the preacher after realising / knowing why the woman weeps i.e she is still thinking of a completely different thing – her dead goat.

*Identification of mood – 1 mark each ; Explanation – 3 marks*

**(d) “ His heart leapt assured”**

- Expresses the speaker’s mood of joy (1)
  - That his message is reaching home / has created deep impact / communicating effectively.
  - He thinks his message makes the old woman sob (1)
- “Her sins weigh on her” expresses the speaker’s thoughts / attitude towards the old woman (1)
- that she is repentant and that her sins weigh on her, i.e oppresses her heart. (1)

*Any four relevant explanations: 4 marks*

## **2. ORAL LITERATURE**

### **(a)(i.) Trickster narrative (1mk)**

*Reason:*

- Jackal attempts to trick Hen about the existence of peace among all animals with the hope that Hen will come down from the stack of wheat in order for him to eat her tender flesh. Or
- Hen tricks Jackal by pretending she has seen a pack of dogs running towards them prompting jackal to flee.

**OR**

### **(ii) Fable**

*Reason:*

- The use of animal characters like Hen and Jackal.

*Any one of the above 1 mk for categorizing, 1 mk for reason.*

- (b) -** Members of the community greet each other with respect and humility.
- There is concern for the welfare of each member of the community.
  - There is an established convention of greeting a member of the community.

*Any two of the above, 1 mk each.*

### **(c) Comparison:**

- Both Hen and Jackal are cunning / tricky (1mk)
- e.g – Jackal attempts to Hen into believing that there is peace among all animals on earth.



- Hen tricks jackal that a pack of dogs is running towards them prompting jackal to flee. (1mk)

*Note: A candidate must bring out the two illustrations to be awarded a mark.*

**Contrast:**

- Hen is courageous / brave while Jackal is cowardly (1mk)
- e.g Hen is not scared of the jackal when the latter comes towards the stack of wheat where Hen is hunting for food especially given that she is not aware of “peace” among all animals on earth.
- -Jackal on the other hand is cowardly when he runs away upon hearing that a pack of dogs is running towards them. (1mk)

**OR**

- Hen is intelligent / wise Jackal is stupid / gullible (1mk)
- e.g Hen suspects that Jackal is telling lies and she goes ahead to test the Jackal’s allegation
- -Jackal is stupid / gullible when he is easily taken in by Hen about imaginary pack of dogs running towards them and he takes to his heels. (1mk)

*Note: 2 mks for comparison + illustration; 2 mks for contrast + illustration.*

**(d) Features of oral narratives in the story:**

- (i) Convention of beginning / opening formula e.g This is the story that the old people tell.
- (ii) Dialogue e.g “Good morning mother of mine” Jackal greeted.

**“ Yes, I greet you,” she replied.**

**(iii) Repetition e.g talking / she could see / kekeke etc.**

**(iv) Personification e.g Hen and Jackal talk to each other like human beings. / Jackal described as a “man” / Animals are said to have come in a big meeting where they decided on peace among all animals on earth.**

**(v) Ideophones e.g kekeke.**

**(vi) Convention of ending / closing formula e.g and this is the end of the story.**

**(vii) Moral lesson – we should choose our friends wisely / Friendship should be genuine.**

***Any 4 of the above plus illustrations; 1mk each x 4.***

***No mark for feature without illustrations.***

**(e) Techniques of narration:**

**(i) Use of gestures; demonstrating / communicating using hands.**

**(ii) facial expressions; showing the mood**

**(iii) Tonal variation of voice – changing from low/high to high/low pitch/tone**

**(iv) Imitation / mimicry; attempt to do an act/speak as it is actually done by the real thing/person.**

**(v) Involvement of audience through asking questions, comments etc.**

***Any two of the above, 2 mks each.***

*Note: each of the above must be explained / illustrated from the story 1 mk for technique, 1 mk for explanation and 1 mk for illustration.*

**(f) Problems likely to be encountered:**

- (i) Communication problems in terms of language barriers if one doesn't come from the community where the story is taken.**
- (ii) There may be hostility from the community / performer.**
- (iii) Recording / filming equipment may fail to work.**
- (iv) Communication problems in terms of physical terrain and impassable roads.**
- (v) Wrong timing / season.**

*Any 2 of the above 2 mks Solution to the above problems*

- (i) Have a reliable translator.**
- (ii) Mix and identify with the local.**
- iii) Collect the narrative at convenient time / season.**