

Achievers

Literature in English

For Rwandan Schools

Senior 2

Student's Book

Nobert Oluoch Ndisio



**East African
Educational Publishers Ltd.**

Kigali • Nairobi • Kampala • Dar es Salaam • Lilongwe • Lusaka

Published by
East African Educational Publishers Ltd.
Elgeyo Marakwet Close, off Elgeyo Marakwet Road,
Kilimani, Nairobi
P.O. Box 45314, Nairobi - 00100, KENYA
Tel: +254 20 2324760
Mobile: +254 722 205661 / 722 207216 / 733 677716 / 734 652012
Email: eaep@eastafricanpublishers.com
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East African Publishers Rwanda Ltd.
Tabs Plaza, 2nd Floor, Room No. 12. Kimironko Road,
Opposite Kigali Institute of Education, Kigali
P.O. Box 5151, Kigali, RWANDA
Tel: +250 787 309702 / 722 562101
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East African Educational Publishers also has offices or is represented in the following countries: Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Botswana and South Sudan.

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First published 2017

ISBN 978-9966-56-213-5

Printed in India by
Margdarshan Productions

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UNIT 1

Topic area: Prose

**Key aspects of prose:
plot, setting, character**



Key unit competency:

To be able to communicate personal opinion referring to the key aspects of prose.

Activity 1

Revision

In Senior 1, you learnt about **plot**, **setting** and **character** as aspects of prose.

Define,

- a. Plot
- b. Setting
- c. Character

1.1 Plot

Activity 2

Describe the plot of any short story or novella that you have read as your desk mate listens. Take turns to do this.

Types of plots

Linear plot

Activity 3

- a. Discuss the meaning of the word **linear**. You can refer to an English dictionary.
- b. Read the story below in your spare time. You will use it to discuss plot.

He was slow, but sure. He would not give up easily. That was the motto my father imparted to me when I left for Chipembi Girls' School. I was twelve years old when I went there. My mother was horrified at my being sent away so young, but my father had been told by one of the supervisors at his workplace that it was a "very good school". The supervisor had two daughters who were already in the school. He had been trying to convince my father that not every white person was bad. He told him that the missionaries who ran the school were dedicated people who treated the girls as if they were their own children. He also told him that most of the missionaries were not married and that they did not have children because they wanted to dedicate their lives to teaching the students and to bringing them up as the future leaders of the country.

My father decided then that it was what he wanted for me. My mother tried to talk my father out of sending me away. “What will happen to her if she becomes of age while she is at school? Who will show her what to do?” For my mother, that was a crucial question. She wanted me to go through the same traditional rituals of puberty, which she had experienced, way back in her village. There, at the onset of menstruation, a girl was placed in a secluded hut for a week or two, during which time she was told about the facts of life by older female relatives. They gave her lessons about what it now meant to ‘mature’, not only in terms of physical growth and development, but in terms of what was expected as a future wife and mother. At the end of the seclusion period, there was a feast, a ‘coming out ceremony,’ marked by much food, drink and dancing all night to the accompaniment of drums, until the early hours of the morning. But my mother’s wishes and her plans for me could not be indulged.

My father was determined that I should go, puberty or not. He brushed off her concerns by saying, “These missionaries are also women, so they’ll know what to do. Besides, these puberty ceremonies are only an excuse for people to get drunk and to rush girls into early marriages.” As soon as the letter of acceptance arrived from Chipembi, we rushed to buy the things that were on the list of requirements: six dresses, six underwear, two pairs of black or brown shoes, one pair of boots, two nightdresses, soap, a toothbrush, toothpaste, slippers and so forth. The list seemed to go on and on. After the shopping was completed, I had more things than I had ever owned before. It was only much later, when I was older, that I realised what a huge sacrifice it must have been for my parents to send me to that school and to pay the fees.

Activity 4

Get someone from your group to retell the story you read.

Continue reading the story.

The supervisor’s daughters were asked by my father to look after me on the train. I had many questions to ask them about the school, but as soon as Mwaba and Chibuye saw their friends, they forgot all about me. Well, that’s not exactly true. To be fair to them, I must admit that they did try to include me in their conversation, but I still felt out of place. How could I discuss things and people I didn’t know? They were mentioning names of people I hadn’t met and places I didn’t know. One of the girls they were talking about was Mukando. But what did I care whether or not she was going back to school? The rumour was that she

was pregnant and would not be returning to school. Apparently, Mukando was often in trouble and had been called to the principal's office for trying to sneak out of the school grounds to meet her boyfriend. After discussing Mukando, the conversation drifted to how they had spent their school holidays. The chattering of the girls, each trying to get their story heard, was deafening. The train was heading towards Broken Hill, so named after a place in Australia. It was also a mining town, producing mostly lead and zinc. It was renamed Kabwe after the country became the Republic of Zambia. As the train slowly pulled out of the station and gathered speed as it moved on, Chibuye told me that the next major stop would be Chisamba, where we would disembark.

I looked out of the window and let my eyes move with the savannah landscape that seemed to be racing with the train. I felt as if the large farms of corn, orange groves, and grazing cattle were speeding along with us. But the constant change of scenery of course, meant that it was the train moving and not the whole landscape. I knew when I heard the delighted shouts of "Chisamba" that we had arrived. Otherwise, the place looked small and insignificant. There was a simple plaque that read, 'CHISAMBA.' A stampede followed as the girls grabbed their things and tried to rush off the train. I stayed close to Chibuye and Mwaba and later got onto the same bus as the girls were climbing onto any transport that was available, including lorries and other trucks. There were teachers trying to organise the students so that they did not rush in all directions or overload one or two vehicles. The bus trip took us through more farmland with maize fields, potatoes, orchards of tropical fruit and cattle farms. The farmhouses were huge and far between, surrounded by large tracts of land. Every now and then, we spotted a farmer on a tractor or farm hands picking fruit. When we finally arrived at the school, Mwaba offered to take me around and help find my dormitory.

Activity 5

Make notes of the main points of the story and then compare with what your classmates come up with.

Continue reading the story at home.

After we found out that I was in House 5, she accompanied me as far as the entrance and then said, "I'd better go now. Both Chibuye and I are in House 14. Let us know if you need anything." "Thank you very much for everything,"

I said quietly, as I watched her go away. It was then that homesickness and an intense feeling of loneliness hit me. I stared at the door, one hand firmly gripping my suitcase, while the other clutched my handbag. I don't know how long I would have stood there, if the door hadn't suddenly swung open. Two girls came rushing out, and after making faces and nudging each other, one of them said, "Another *puku*!" Then off they went, laughing and giggling. I swore under my breath. How I hated that word, *puku* – a derogatory term for 'New Girl!', which they used to taunt new girls on the train! I had seen and heard new girls being taunted on the train and had wondered how people could be so cruel and insensitive. Since the two girls left the door open, I dragged my weary and reluctant legs inside the dormitory. Once inside, I stood rooted to one spot, my hands still clutching my belongings.

A girl who seemed to be eighteen or nineteen saw me and came forward, her hand outstretched in greeting.

"Hello, welcome to House 5. My name is Nguza, and I'm the House Mother. What's your name?"

"Chilufya."

"Well, Chilufya, please come with me. I'll show you your bed and locker."

I followed her through the dormitory which was divided into several sections, with subdivisions containing beds, lockers and small closets for each girl. As I started unpacking my things and hanging my clothes, I felt a big lump in my throat and tears in my eyes. Why cry? I sternly reproached myself. What good will that do? Will it change the fact that I was all alone with these strangers, in the middle of nowhere? The best thing was to stop wallowing in self-pity and get on with the business of settling down in this new place.

I was almost done with my unpacking when another girl walked in. One could see from the noisy way she was dragging her suitcase and the deep frown on her face, that she was very angry about something.

Throwing the suitcase onto the bed, she muttered, "I'm sick and tired of this stupid word called *puku*. If anyone calls me *puku* again, I'll bash them up."

There was a deathly silence as everyone stopped what they were doing and stared at her.

The House Mother soothingly said to her, "I would just ignore them if I were you. We were all new once and were called *puku*."

A girl who was lying on the bed reading a novel said, “I wouldn’t go around threatening people if I were you, or you’ll be the one who will be bashed up.”

There was laughter from the others, but everybody soon got back to what they had been doing. I gave the new girl a furtive smile and she smiled back. Then she said, “Hi! Are you also new here?”

“Yes. Hi,” I said, as I stretched out my hand in greeting. But she ignored it.

“I’m Tengani,” she said, and started unpacking her things. I watched her in silence as she grabbed handfuls of clothing, shoved them into her locker, and hung others in the closet.

A few minutes later, she turned to me and asked, “What do you think of this place?”

“Er ... okay, I suppose. Too early to tell,” I stammered.

“It’s not okay for me. I wish I wasn’t here.”

But she did not say it as if she were nervous or worried about the new place, the way I was. There was an air of defiance and an ‘I don’t care’ attitude about her.

After dinner, we all met in the living room and were told about the house rules. The House Mother explained the duty roster for cleaning rooms, cooking and washing dishes. She told us that the younger, inexperienced girls would be placed with the older ones so that they could help with the cleaning, while the older girls would be responsible for preparing meals. She ended by saying that bedtime rules had to be “strictly adhered to”. Later, when the lights went off to indicate bedtime, I was already in bed. My eyes were heavy with exhaustion. It had been a very long day.

(From *Hearthstones* by Kekelwa Nyaywa)

Activity 6

Discuss whether the story you just read has a linear plot or not. Base your argument on whether the story progressed clearly from the beginning to the end.

Circular plot

Activity 7

- Discuss what is meant by ‘run around in circles’.
- Read the following paragraph as your desk mate listens. Take turns to do this.

A circular plot is the unfolding of events that begin and end in the same place. For instance, imagine that a character has been trying to resolve a conflict. When he or she finally thinks they have done it, they just realise that they haven't! They then decide that the only way they can solve this problem is by going back to the beginning. This goes on and on without the conflict being resolved. These non-conclusive events that unfold in a given story, making the character to go back where he or she started are called circular plot.

Activity 8

Read the story below during your spare time.

The first time Kagure wore a pair of shoes was the day she was admitted at Kibomet Girls High School. It was a cheap second-hand pair, but to Kagure, the shoes represented all the good things that education would help her achieve. Most days her family could only afford one meal a day. When things were really bad, they would sleep hungry.

Unable to face the children and tell them there was no food for the day, Kagure's mother would tell her to put a pot of water onto the fire to boil. She would say that someone was on the way with flour to make maize meal. Once the water came to a boil, she would tell one of the children to bathe with the water since the person with the flour had not yet arrived. She would do this again with a second pot of water, and on it went.

Wambui would make sure there was little firewood in the hearth so that each pot of water took a while to boil. As the evening wore on, the three younger children would doze off, leaving Kagure and her brother. Finally, they too would figure out there was no one coming with flour and go to bed. This grinding poverty had driven Kagure to work relentlessly hard and excel in school. She knew she was the ticket to her family's better future.

"Do you know what Lumanzi gave me?" Tracy asked Kagure mischievously.

Kagure had seen Lumanzi press something into Tracy's palm as they were parting.

"I don't know and I don't care," Kagure said, wishing they were already in school. She vowed she would avoid Tracy henceforth. The girl spelt trouble with a capital T.

"Come on, ask. I know you are curious," Tracy teased.

“No!” Kagure answered tersely. The new girl had already put her into more trouble than she had ever been in her two years in secondary school.

“Well, I will tell you anyway. He gave me his mobile phone number,” Tracy said, showing Kagure the slip of paper with the number. “He also gave me this,” she added, holding five hundred shillings in loose notes.

To Kagure who had never had as much as fifty shillings as pocket money, five hundred shillings was an absolute fortune for a student to have. The idea that Tracy had taken all that money from a man she hardly knew was in itself alien to Kagure. She still remembered the thrashing she had received from her mother when she was in Primary 6. She had come home from school hungry and found there was no food in the house. In the morning, she had only taken a cup of black tea before going to school and had had nothing to eat the whole day.

Kagure had sat on the steps outside their house enduring pangs of hunger. A neighbour, who made a living brewing illicit liquor, was passing by when he saw her sitting there forlornly, capping her chin.

“What is wrong, daughter of Wakapanga? Are you ill?” he asked her.

Driven by hunger, Kagure had answered she was not sick, just very hungry. The man, perhaps moved by the plight of the little girl, gave her some money.

“Go and buy some food,” he told her.

Kagure ran to the market place and bought a loaf of bread.

When she came back, she found her brother, Mburu, at home. The two of them started stuffing the dry bread into their mouths. That is how their mother Wambui found them – cheeks bulging with bread that was difficult to swallow without a drink.

“Where did you get this bread?” she asked, grabbing the few slices that were remaining.

“Baba Wairimu gave me the money to buy it,” Kagure said, struggling to swallow what was in her mouth.

“Why did he give you the money? Did you work for him?” Kagure’s mother demanded.

“I told him I was hungry,” Kagure answered, knowing from her mother’s demeanour she was in deep trouble.

Wambui, who had lived in Gituamba village for a long time, knew that there were no free things. She was trying to raise her children to know this and that

they had to work to get whatever they needed. If her daughter was to survive, she had to learn this lesson.

Wambui threw the remaining bread away and took a stick, which she kept handy for disciplining her children. And Kagure did learn the lesson. She received a thrashing she would remember for a long time to come.

“He gave you money and you took it?” Kagure asked aghast, remembering the thrashing.

“Why not?” Tracy asked her. “At least now I have some pocket money. Here, let’s share it,” she added, handing Kagure two hundred shillings.

Kagure regarded the money, thinking how much easier life at school would be with some pocket money. She had reported to school with one bar of soap, which she was using to bathe and to wash her clothes. Her small tube of toothpaste would hardly see her through the term. She polished her shoes once a week so that the tin of polish she had carried would last a little longer. During tea breaks, other students bought bread at the school canteen to have with their mid-morning tea. Kagure would take her tea quickly and head back to class.

The temptation to stretch out her hand and take the money was great. It would be enough to buy a small tube of toothpaste, a packet of sanitary towels and there would still be a little left for half a loaf of bread.

“Come on, take it,” Tracy urged her.

“No, thanks. I don’t take money from strangers.”

“Lumanzi is not a stranger. I told you we met last night,” Tracy said as she pocketed the money.

“You met last night, huh! How well do you know him?”

“Well, let’s see. Lumanzi is gorgeous. He took the trouble to see me safely to school, has bought us lunch and given me some money. I would say he is one stranger I would love to know,” Tracy said, waving the slip of paper with Lumanzi’s phone number.

“You are ...” Kagure began, searching for words to describe Tracy.

“Incorrigible, irredeemable, crazy, yeah, I am all that,” Tracy suggested, laughing.

“Just stay away from me in future,” Kagure said, exasperated.

(Adapted from *Beyond the Barricades* by Muthoni wa Gichuru)

Activity 9

Discuss whether the story you just read qualifies to be classified as one with a circular plot, or not. Base your reasoning on the main character's predicament and whether he ends up solving her problems or not.

Practice Exercise 1

- Outline the differences between a linear plot and a circular plot.
- Write a brief short story that has a linear plot.
- Research and write a brief short story that illustrates a circular plot.

1.2 Types of settings

Activity 10

Complete these sentences:

- Setting is
- The types of setting in prose are

Social setting

The events in any given story happen in an environment. It could be in a town or the countryside. The place where events in a story take place is what is referred to as **social setting**.

Activity 11

With your desk mate, carefully read the passage below and discuss its social setting.

Owuor, Tracy's father, a long-time civil servant had lost his job in a retrenchment exercise. With his source of income cut, it became difficult to pay fees for his two sons at private universities and one in a tertiary college. Tracy was not spared. She had to leave the high-cost Hekima High School in Nairobi. Her aunt had found a place for her at the fairly cheap Kibomet Girls High School in Kitale, more than three hundred kilometres from Nairobi.

Tracy had travelled to Kitale with her father two weeks before to get the admission letter and see the school. She had been disappointed with the shabby rural school and the small back-of-beyond town, Kitale. Her father

had taken her round the town; this two-main-street town seemed more like a shopping centre!

Now with each passing mile, Tracy felt she was moving further and further away from civilization. All she could see around were acres and acres of green maize.

(Adapted from *Beyond the Barricades* by Muthoni wa Gichuru)

In every story, events occur at a specific time, for example: in the pre-colonial era, the colonial era, post-colonial era, the Genocide period, post-genocide period, computer age or the ancient days. The historical period during which the events in a story occur is referred to as **historical setting**.

Historical setting

Activity 12

- Discuss the meaning of the term 'historical' and relate it to setting in prose.
- Read the excerpt below. Then discuss its historical setting.

The only man he had resisted the efforts of his wife to have sacked was Ngotho. Not that Mr Howlands stopped to analyse his feelings towards him. He just loved to see Ngotho working in the farm; the way the old man touched the soil, almost fondling, and the way he tended the young tea plants as if they were his own . . . Ngotho was too much of a part of the farm to be separated from it. Something else. He could manage the farm-labourers as no other person could. Ngotho had come to him at a time when his money position was bad. But with the coming of Ngotho, things and his fortune improved.

Mr Howlands was tall, heavily built, with an oval-shaped face that ended in a double chin and a big stomach. In physical appearance at least, he was a typical Kenya settler. He was a product of the First World War. After years of security at home, he had been suddenly called to arms and he had gone to the war with the fire of youth that imagines war a glory. But after four years of blood and terrible destruction, like many other young men he was utterly disillusioned by the 'peace'.

He had to escape. East Africa was a good place. Here was a big trace of wild country to conquer. For a long time England remained a country far away. He did not want to go back because of what he remembered. But he soon found

that he wanted a wife. He could not go about with the natives as some had done. He went back 'home', a stranger, and picked the first woman he could get. Suzannah was a good girl – neither beautiful nor ugly. She too was bored with life in England. But she had never known what she wanted to do. Africa sounded quite a nice place so she had willingly followed this man who would give her a change. But she had not known that Africa meant hardship and complete break with Europe. She again became bored. Mr Howlands was oblivious of her boredom. He believed her when she had told him, out in England, that she could face the life in the bush.

(Adapted from *Weep Not, Child* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o)

Cultural setting

Activity 13

Discuss the meaning of the terms 'culture' and 'cultural' and then relate 'cultural' to setting in prose.

A people's literature exemplifies their culture. African literature therefore advances African cultural values while European literature on the contrary espouses European cultural values. Further, African literature reflects the culture of the community in which the events in the story happen. The community in which a story is based forms what is referred to as the **cultural setting of the story**. To tell the cultural setting of a story, one needs to look out for the lexical items the writer employs in his work and the cultural activities the characters in the story partake.

Activity 14

Read the extract of the story below and then, discuss its cultural setting.

That was the end of school for Nyamalo. My father brought her home that weekend. The situation was explained to her and I saw a flood of tears run down her sweet cheeks. She screamed, sobbed and writhed painfully on the floor. "I am not going," she said. "I am not going."

My mother also shed a tear. I don't know why Mother shed a tear when she had accepted a blanket, drank beer and smiled when Father was given money.

"You will go, my daughter. You are not your own daughter," Father said resolutely.

“I’m not going,” Nyamalo insisted. “What wrong have I done you? Mother! Mother! Why do you forsake me?”

Mother shed more tears and only said between sobs. “It ... is ... finished ...”

Two days later the bride was prepared for the ceremonial departure from her parents’ home. She was dressed in a loincloth, a lessa which went under her right arm and was knotted above her left shoulder. A beaded belt went round her waist. Around her neck she wore several strings of beads and one beaded ornament whose bead suspension flowed down to her knees. Her feet were shod in green rubber shoes. On her back she carried a gourd full of milk. A real bride!

The bridegroom’s father and mother came to escort her.

My father, mother and clan all anointed her with milk cream. They told her to multiply like a pumpkin. May her children fill the world. But they also reminded her that she was now somebody’s wife. She must live like one. That would bring great honour not only to herself but to all her people. I was asked to accompany her and to stay with her for two weeks to keep her company.

We walked in a single file. My sister’s father-in-law walked ahead, followed by his wife, followed by Nyamalo and, lastly myself. Although customarily the bride was required to promenade along, she defiantly walked clumsily and fast. I heard my father say from behind me when we started off, “This girl will bring us shame.”

(Adapted from *They Sold My Sister* by Leteipa ole Sunkuli)

Activity 15

Discuss the similarities and differences between the culture depicted in the above excerpt and your own culture.

Political setting

Events in a story can take place in a political environment. We refer to this as **political setting**. It has to do with the prevailing political situation around which a story revolves. A story could condemn bad governance or unequal distribution of national resources.

Practice Exercise 2

- a. Write a summary of the political setting or context of any book you have read. Visit a library or use the Internet to help you gather as much information as possible.
- b. Discuss the definitions of the following terms then write down the definitions:
 1. Linear plot
 2. Circular plot
 3. Social setting
 4. Historical setting
 5. Cultural setting
 6. Political setting
- c. Assignment:

Read, discuss, and describe the plot, setting and the context of a short story from an anthology in your library. Alternatively, use the internet if you have access to it.

1.3 Types of characters

Activity 16

Based on what you learnt while in Senior 1, discuss with your desk mate and define,

- a. Character
- b. Main or central character
- c. Minor characters

Apart from being classified either as main or minor, characters are also generally split into two groups, namely:

- a. Simple or flat characters
- b. Complex or round characters

Activity 17

Discuss and attempt to arrive at the definitions of **simple** or **flat** and **complex** or **round** characters.

Flat and round characters

Characters are described according to how they develop in a work of literature.

Flat characters are those that are relatively uncomplicated. They do not change throughout the course of a story.

Round characters are complex and undergo development or change. A round character is a major character in a story. He or she encounters conflict, which changes them.

Round characters tend to be more fully developed and described than flat or simple characters. Think of the characters you most love in fiction – they probably seem as real to you as people you know in real life. These are the round characters.

Activity 18

Below is the complete short story, *They Sold My Sister*, by Leteipa ole Sunkuli. Read it in your spare time. Analyse the character of the narrator. Say if she is a flat or round character.

They sold my sister

Leteipa ole Sunkuli

I was only ten years old when my sister was sold away. That was two years ago. A few days before, the suitors had come.

Three ugly women and four men. One of the four men wanted to be the husband of my sister. I disliked the way he looked, but my father and the clan liked him very much. They said he came from a rich family. His father had many herds of cattle and a large flock of sheep.

It was true they were rich. They brought more gifts than I had ever seen before. They brought beer; the local *busaa* and the other type sold in bottles. It was called *Libuma*. They brought four thick blankets. One for my father, one for my mother, one for my uncle and one for my aunt. Nothing was brought for us children. In fact they did not want children in the house where my sister was sold. I hid myself behind a standing bag of maize. They could not see me. They thought that I was playing with the other children outside. I saw ... with my

own own eyes. I saw the father of my sister's husband-to-be pull out a wad of red hundred-shilling notes. He gave them to my father.

My father's hands quaked as he took the money. My mother smiled. I rubbed my wet eyes. They sold my sister.

One day, much later, my mother beat me up thoroughly when I used the word 'sold', to refer to my sister's marriage. She said 'dowry' was a much kinder and civilised word.

Nyamalo was away in a boarding school. She did not know that at home she had been sold to a man she had seen only once, but never talked with. She did not know that Father and Mother had drunk beer; the beer of the sale. She did not know that Father, Mother, Uncle and Auntie, each had a new thick blanket. She did not know that Father had received, with hands trembling for joy, a fat wad of notes. Cattle would be sent the following day. Nyamalo did not know she was not a member of our household any longer. She was the wife of an ugly man; a man with big eyes and dilated nostrils, like those of a chimpanzee I had seen in a picture. She did not know.

Two days later my father told my brother, Tumuka, to go and bring Nyamalo from school. She had no more reasons to continue schooling when a man had come home for her. After all, which other girls from the neighbourhood attended secondary school? My father used many proverbs to show that it was proper that a Maasai girl of Nyamalo's age should go to her own house. She was already circumcised and her breasts were round enough. My brother, Tumuka, said no. He would not go.

Nyamalo was only in her first year of junior secondary school and she must be allowed to finish. "The world has changed," he told Father.

My father's mouth was agape with astonishment. How could a son challenge his father about his own daughter?

"Tumuka!" my father called.

"Yes, papa," Tumuka answered.

"Are you or are you not going?"

"I am not going, papa, and Nyamalo must be let to finish her schooling. She must not be married off at such a tender age. She must be allowed to choose her own man when the time comes." My brother spoke politely but firmly.

"You are not going!" my father retorted. "Alright, you may stay. But Nyamalo will go to her husband whether you like it or not. She is my daughter,

not yours. Wait, my dear son, until such a time as you have your own daughter; then you may be listened to. What insolence!”

That was the end of school for Nyamalo. My father brought her home that weekend. The situation was explained to her and I saw a flood of tears run down her sweet cheeks. She screamed, sobbed and writhed painfully on the floor. “I am not going,” she said. “I am not going.”

My mother also shed a tear. I don’t know why Mother shed a tear when she had accepted a blanket, drank beer and smiled when Father was given money.

“You will go, my daughter. You are not your own daughter,” Father said resolutely.

“I’m not going,” Nyamalo insisted. “What wrong have I done you? Mother! Mother! Why do you forsake me?”

Mother shed more tears and only said between sobs. “It ... is ... finished ...”

Two days later the bride was prepared for the ceremonial departure from her parents’ home. She was dressed in a loincloth, a lessa which went under her right arm and was knotted above her left shoulder. A beaded belt went round her waist. Around her neck she wore several strings of beads and one beaded ornament whose bead suspension flowed down to her knees. Her feet were shod in green rubber shoes. On her back she carried a gourd full of milk. A real bride!

The bridegroom’s father and mother came to escort her.

My father, mother and clan all anointed her with milk cream. They told her to multiply like a pumpkin. May her children fill the world. But they also reminded her that she was now somebody’s wife. She must live like one. That would bring great honour not only to herself but to all her people. I was asked to accompany her and to stay with her for two weeks to keep her company.

We walked in a single file. My sister’s father-in-law walked ahead, followed by his wife, followed by Nyamalo and, lastly myself. Although customarily the bride was required to promenade along, she defiantly walked clumsily and fast. I heard my father say from behind me when we started off, “This girl will bring us shame.”

I could not stay the two weeks I had been asked. I could not stay because of what I saw and heard. After the four days during which the bride stayed with her mother-in-law, we were transferred to the house of Nyamalo’s husband. His name, I came to learn, was ole Sirayo. There was no peace between Nyamalo and her husband from the start. She refused to talk to him unless she was asked

a question. The first night, instead of going to her husband's bed, Nyamalo came to sleep with me. I felt safe with her sleeping by me, because I was afraid of ole Sirayo. He came to call her. He thought I had slept. I was listening.

"Come to my bed," he said.

"No, I'm not coming," my sister said firmly.

"You are my wife."

"No."

"I paid the whole dowry." He grabbed her hand and started pulling her out of bed. "I don't care about dowry. You didn't pay it to me ..." She was screaming aloud.

"Don't be stupid! Since when did the Maasai pay bride price to the bride herself?" he went on, towing her away.

"Uuuu! Uuuu! Uuuu!" she screamed at the top of her voice.

I also screamed.

"You girl, what are you screaming about?" I did not answer him. My sister went on crying.

"Hey, you in this house, what is happening?" That was the father of my sister's husband. He had come to find out what was happening. "Sirayo!" he called from outside where he stood.

"Are you fighting the first night?"

"Papa, we are not fighting. It was a small issue."

"What small issue causes all the screaming? Or do you want hyenas to know you are married? Heh! That is not how we treat brides."

My sister's husband kept quiet and his father walked away mumbling something I could not get. As soon as he went ole Sirayo used all his muscle to lift my sister out of bed and carried her to his bed. I covered my head not to see what was happening.

The following morning I told my sister that I must go away. She wept bitterly. She held me to her bosom and let her hot tears flow on to my head. Tears ran down my face. When both of us had no more tears to shed she told me yes, I could go. She said she did not want to see me suffer. I knew she did not want me to see her suffer.

"What are you going to do?" I asked her.

"Learn to love my husband," she said. She led me until we could see our parents' home and she turned back. Before she left, she embraced me and

told me, “Tell Father and Mother that may the wealth they have accepted choke them to death.”

I looked into my sister’s eyes. I loved my father and mother, but for the first time I wished them dead.

It is now two years since all these happened. And now I fear it is my turn. I am only twelve years old, but I fear. Today I heard something. Ole Timau, the man with a big round stomach and a white beard like one of my father’s billy-goat’s, came to see my father this morning. They sat on stools in the sitting room and my mother asked me to take tea to them. I served them tea and went to sit under the eaves of the house. I sat near the window that opens into the sitting room. I could hear the two men talk.

“How is everybody in your place?” my father asked.

“They are all fine,” Ole Timau answered. “Mm.”

“We haven’t heard anything offensive to the ear.”

“Mm.”

“Only the ordinary common colds of the nostrils.”

“Mm.”

“That is the news of the land.”

“That is the news of the land,” my father tied up the loose end of the traditional Maasai exchange. After the formal exchange of ‘news’ my father and the man talked about many things. I found the eavesdropping quite interesting. I prayed Mother did not call me to send me somewhere as she was fond of doing. I heard ole Timau tell my father: “I am soon coming for your heifer.”

“A human or animal heifer?”

“Human.”

“Which one?”

“There is only one left in your homestead. I speak about the girl, Naliki.”

At the mention of my name I froze against the wall.

“For which of your sons will you come?” my father inquired.

“I’ll come for myself. I am still young enough to take another wife ...”

I did not hear the rest because my mother called me.

“Why are you shivering,” she asked me.

“I am afraid,” I said in a tremulous voice.

“What of?”

“Nothing,” I said.

“Nothing?”

“Nothing!” She slapped me. I did not cry.

Now I am afraid. I know soon my father will call for my circumcision. Then I will be sold off like my sister. I will be sold off to an old man with a beard and a big belly. I am afraid.

The only person who can save me is Tumuka, my brother. He now works in Nairobi. I must write to him. I must tell him that Father plans to sell me to ole Timau. I am in primary school and I want to finish school. I must be the first Maasai girl to read to the last stage of reading. Tumuka himself told me that.

I don't want to marry. But my father will sell me to ole Timau by force.

I will run.

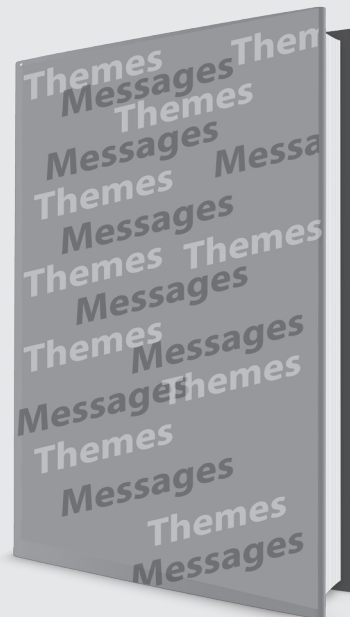
Practice Exercise 3

Discuss and then write down the plot and setting of the above story.

UNIT 2

Topic area: Prose

Subject, Themes and Messages



Key unit competency

To be able to communicate personal opinion of literary texts referring to the subject, themes and messages.

Activity 1

Discuss these statements:

- a. Subject is a topic, which acts as a foundation for a story
- b. A theme is an opinion expressed on the subject.
- c. A message is the lesson the writer wishes to convey to the society through his story.

Use examples and evidence from short stories, novellas or novels you have read to explain each statement.

Activity 2

- a. Below is an excerpt from a novella, *Sunrise after Midnight*, by Florence Mbay. Read it and say what its topic is, state its theme and finally the message of the story.
- b. Practise and role-play the parts of Abigail and her mother.

“Mama, I know I have failed you, but when you get to know what happened, I know you will be more forgiving...”

“Failed me?” her mother asked, looking quizzically at her. “You completely let me down, Abigail. I did not expect you to have a baby before you completed school and was able to fend for yourself, and your baby! I can only hope that you have learnt your lesson. Though a baby is a blessing from God, it comes with responsibilities which will become even bigger and more complicated as Benji grows,” she said.

Abigail accepted her mother’s reprimand without bitterness. She was right. Indeed the responsibilities currently were already exhausting. ‘Anything more will destroy me though,’ she thought. ‘Everyday brings new challenges! I wonder if I will ever manage to do anything else.’ Loudly she said, “Mama, I want to defer school until Benji is older.”

“No!” her mother said emphatically. “You are going back to school. If you put your education on hold, you will end up giving up on it completely. Then, what will you do with your life? Get married?”

“I will never get married!” Abigail vowed. She surprised even herself by the strength of her voice. “And, I am done with this painful breastfeeding. I’ll feed Benji on cow’s milk and porridge from now onwards,” she added petulantly, her frustration becoming obvious.

“I know it is hard for you,” her mother told her gently.

“But, of all the things you can do for Benji, please... please, breastfeed him,” she added, almost as a plea. She looked at her daughter keenly, more as she would an equal than a child. Then she said, “As for school, Abigail, that is the place to take your fight to, in order to prove that having a baby doesn’t mean one’s life is over.”

For Abigail, motherhood had become a continuous physical and emotional pain. Her usually tiny breasts were now large and painful. She prayed that her mother could agree to the alternative way of feeding Benji, other than breastfeeding. The mere imagination of his lips on her nipple made her wince. Indeed, just thinking about the forceps and scissors that had been used during Benji’s birth still made her sweat. Now, it would take a good number of years to nurture Benji to the point where he could care for himself. In the meantime, what would she be doing with her life?

“Mama, I wish I had known what I was getting myself into. I cannot take care of Benji and think about school at the same time, can I?”

“You should have remembered my advice. But, as far as school is concerned, the sooner you go back, the better. It will be tough, yes; but I know you are strong enough to pull through,” she said, her mind obviously made up on the matter.

Activity 3

- a. Below is an excerpt from Meron Tekleberhan’s novella, *The Letters*. Read it in preparation for the group discussion.
- b. Discuss this story and identify its subject, themes and messages.

30 June 2006

Dear Father,

You must be wondering where I have gotten to! I can’t believe that I haven’t written to you for so long. But the whole of the past couple of weeks feel like a dream now! The day after I last wrote to you I decided to start looking over my revision notes and it completely freaked me out how much I had left to do!

Usually a couple of weeks before an exam my notes would be complete and I would be ready for the final stretch of memorising. This time though,

for the most important exam of my life yet, I had notes to complete for three, (THREE!) subjects. I was up almost the whole of that night trying to finish at least one subject, which I did by around 3 a.m!

I stayed up late every day till 2 a.m or 3 a.m until the day before the exam and I would go to school feeling like a zombie the next day. I couldn't even enjoy the attention I got for winning the Scholarship because I was half asleep almost the whole time. It's a good thing that our school gave us the last few days off for study break or I would have collapsed!

Yesterday when I came back from the exams I fell dead asleep and I only woke up at 11:30 this morning. *Immamma* Genet joked that she was getting ready to call *Abba Dina* when I finally appeared in the living room. I don't know how she does it! She had woken up at least twice, usually three or four times, during the nights I was studying, to make me cups of coffee or snacks or just to make sure that sleep hadn't gotten me, and yet every morning she wouldn't seem any different. Maybe you don't need as much sleep when you get older!

Well, the school year is officially over for me but I have the visit to my new school this coming week. International schools don't sit their year eights for the National exams, so they finish school with everyone else.

Immamma Genet wanted to buy me new clothes to wear to school because they don't have uniforms. I told her it was okay and that she could buy them for me for the new school year. I don't want her to start worrying about things like that. Anyway, I plan to surprise her with the five thousand *birr* for the New Year! Then she can buy me clothes as well as everything she buys every *Meskerem*.

I had to keep my mind away from all the things that were happening with my friends or I wouldn't have been able to concentrate, so I still haven't spoken to Melat and I have been avoiding Danny. Not that Melat has tried to contact me. She has been ignoring me and she must feel like that I have been too. As for Danny, he came around to our house a couple of times but I told him that I had to study for the exams and refused his offer to help me prepare. I guess I was somewhat rude to him, but he had really bothered me with the way he acted that day. Not having social skills is not enough of an excuse to be that mean. He had no right to interfere with our friendship, whatever his personal feelings about Melat!

I guess I should call her today and tell her that I would be coming to her school, (OUR SCHOOL, WOW!) on Monday. The next week will give us a great chance

to sit together alone and talk things through. I'm sure that when Melat sees me at the school she will finally believe that this is for real and she won't mind too much that I was *kelemish*! Plus, I won't be too much of a *kelem* at their school anyway. I can barely imagine coping with the curriculum let alone excelling.

The idea of being unable to cope with the International curriculum is starting to worry me. I have never been in a class where I wasn't one of the best, if not the best student. I always studied hard and got very good grades and everyone, especially *Immamma Genet*, expects it of me. I don't know how she would feel if I started getting bad grades. I guess I may have to work very hard until I get comfortable. Maybe Danny could help me. I really should stop avoiding him. He may not like Melat and he may have acted like an immature jerk but no one is perfect and he's usually a great person!

Immamma Genet said that Danny's father has offered to drive me to school with Danny on Monday. She is really praying that they would make it a permanent arrangement so that she won't have to worry about me taking a series of taxis on the way to school and back. I don't know how I would feel about driving to school with Danny every morning. It shouldn't be too bad, I guess. Unless, of course he is mad at me for ignoring him the past few days, which would be horrible!

I really need to find Danny and make sure that everything is okay or any number of taxis will be better to riding in a car with someone who HATES me. And *Immamma Genet* is cleaning the house and she's been throwing all types of things in my room all morning so I'd better get out before I'm completely blocked in!

Abba, I wish you were here to go to school with me on Monday too. *Imma* probably won't want to come so *Immamma Genet* would have to come with me. I don't mind having her there but she won't understand and I don't want her to feel uncomfortable with all the *ferenjjs*. You would be so great with them! I can't imagine how impressed they would be.

I'll tell you how it goes with Danny when I write to you tomorrow, but I need to give this to *Imma* so she can mail it this week. She must be surprised that I haven't given her anything two Saturdays in a row!

Love you always,
Ruth

Activity 4

- a. Share your ideas on the themes and messages of the story you have just read.
- b. Write down the similarities and differences of the views of the two groups.

Activity 5

Below is a short story. Read it carefully.

The town

by Eneriko Seruma

“The park is too crowded today. I wish I could afford to stay in bed on Saturdays,” the taxi driver said as he stopped the car in the Nakivubo car park, his eyes wandering over the crowd. “But of course the more crowded it is, the more money there is to be earned,” he added, laughing to himself.

None of his passengers said anything; he had had a quiet load this run. His caller started calling out for new passengers in a quick, hoarse voice. “Passengers for Wandegeya, Makerere, Bwaise, Kawempe; this way please. Makerere, Wandegeya...” His voice faded as he moved among the crowd.

The passengers got out of the cab, handing the fare to the driver. Each passenger, except the last one, disappeared into the crowd as soon as the change was handed back. The last passenger, a man who was from a village, stood some feet away from the car and watched the distant caller. ‘And they like the town!’ he thought. “Instead of owning a small place in the village and farming for a better living, look at what they do. How can a man spend a whole day barking like a crazy dog?” He wondered how much the caller earned and walked over to the driver who was sitting in his car whistling to himself as he waited for passengers.

“How much does the caller earn?” he asked the driver.

“Fifty cents per car load. That’s some money, you know. About eight, nine may be even ten shillings a day. And that’s earned without any labouring too.”

The man thanked the driver and moved away. ‘Yes,’ he thought, ‘that’s the trouble with town people: they are always afraid of manual labour. They don’t realize that because I dig from sunrise to midday I can sell five to six bags of coffee for a lot of money, and save because I don’t have to buy food like they do. They spend all their money buying villagers’ farm produce.’ He took his eyes from the caller and walked away, squeezing among people of all sorts. ‘What a

gathering of characters!’ he marvelled. ‘They are all like vultures over a carcass.’

The man wished he could shut off the noise of the crowd; it was maddening. Not even at weddings and feasts – or even drinking parties – had he heard so much noise. Everybody seemed to be shouting; the noise seemed as if a cloud was hanging over the park and was striking him with bolts of noise.

“Here, miss, over here! I have the latest style...”

“Over here, good lady! I have the latest fashion...!”

“Natete! Natete! Passengers for Natete over here!”

“Here’s a real nice cab. Over here passengers, quick! It is comfortable; It has a radio; listen to your favourite songs as you travel to Nakulabye.”

“This one is faster. You’ll be there in a few minutes.”

‘That is how they kill themselves,’ the villager thought, ‘driving fast as if bees were chasing them! Like that driver who brought me, how fast he had been driving – with one hand! One is safer in buses these days.’ The man concluded his thoughts about the fast cars as other shouts hit his exhausted ears.

“Handkerchiefs! Handkerchiefs! Only forty cents, two for eighty cents. From your shilling you will be left with twenty cents ... twenty cents for peanuts and popcorn. Two handkerchiefs for...”

“Here my lords, here! Pure woollen trousers for only thirty-five shillings. Only thirty-five shillings – cheaper than in the Asian shops. Here my ...”

“Katwe, Kibuye, Najja. Passengers for Katwe, Kibuye. The bus has just left, so don’t miss this chance of a faster arrival. Katwe ...”

The villager stood and stared in wonderment. ‘This is too much to believe! Do these men wake up in the morning to tell their wives they are going to work? Look at them, all shouting their heads off. What a way to earn a living!’ He shook his head at the men who rushed at him with yards of cloth on their arms. There were so many of them. ‘How can they make money with such competition?’

He looked out in the distance. All he could see were heads that bobbed and mouths that shouted. Here and there were some unfortunate travellers caught in a competition between callers, who were each shouting the experience of the driver they were working for. The poor travellers stood between them with worried looks on their faces, like prisoners standing in court while the defender and the prosecutor battle over their fate. Some travellers, caught between cloth-sellers, were entangled in rolls of cloth as the sellers showed off the quality of the materials.

The man turned his head and looked at the road and the entrance to the park. There was a traffic jam of cabs as they turned off the main street to

enter the park. Horns hooted from cars that were full of impatient bewildered people, who stared out of the windows just like the monkeys that stared at the man every morning he went digging. Some of the passengers got out of the cars and walked the rest of the way. Dwarfing the cabs, that were mostly the small cars the villager called tortoises but which the town people called Volkswagens, were the double-decker buses that had both decks full of people going to all corners of Kampala city. The bus depot was opposite the taxi park; the man could see people lining the platforms and others scrambling to get into the buses.

‘How man does produce!’ the man wondered. ‘What thousands and thousands of people! One would think that there are no people left in the homes.’ His heart missed a beat as he saw a young man run beside a bus and jump on to it. ‘The fool,’ he thought, remembering the man he once saw who missed when he tried to jump and got run over by the bus. ‘Why are town people always in haste?’ he wondered. ‘Is it because they are living and working with the white people who always hurry as if they are afraid they won’t make it to the outhouse?’

“Hear you, all people, hear!” a voice interrupted the man’s thoughts. “This is your chance to buy this incredible medicine. If your wife is unfaithful, if spirits troubles you, if your children are always sick, if you are impotent, if girls don’t fall for you, if you have constant headache, stomach ache, mumps, dizziness, if you want to pass your exams successfully – everything, ladies and gentlemen, anything you want to get rid of, this is the medicine. Buy this medicine, this rare *mumbwa*, and everything will be better.”

The villager looked towards the clear, booming voice. ‘That is some strong medicine’ he thought to himself, ‘curing all those ailments. I wonder if it is just another way for the town people to earn money, or whether it is true.’ He walked over to where the medicine seller was sitting on a leopard skin, with all kinds of assortments laid out in front of him. Everything that looked odd seemed to be there, from live things like an eagle, a hawk, a snake, a rabbit, and other little animals, to dead things like a hyena, an antelope and a jackal.

“Yes?” the medicine-seller was looking at him. He had bloodshot eyes that never seemed to blink.

“You were talking about a *mumbwa*...”

“Yes, yes. Are you impotent? Are you troubled by your in-laws? Or are you after your neighbour’s wife? She will be yours tonight if you buy this *mumbwa*.

And what's more, he won't do a thing about it. But perhaps you have spirits of your grandparents disagreeing with the way you are spending the family fortune, uh? Oh, I know! You would like to win over one of these white things clicking around the city, wouldn't you, huh?"

"No, sir. White girls are for students at Makerere, not for people like me. They don't know how to bend their backs to cultivate. How can I, a farmer, have a wife who doesn't dig? No, all I wanted ... you see, sir, I've had a lot of trouble with burglars, I thought ..."

"Oh, yes, of course, yes, yes, my friend," the medicine-seller said, without a smile. "This is the medicine for your troubles. Buy this and you are rid of them. If they ever ..." the medicine-seller stopped suddenly and cocked his head to one side. Then he sprang up with surprising speed and started running. Everybody was running and shouting except the villager, who stood there staring stupidly at the place where the medicine-seller had been sitting. 'What is happening?' he asked himself.

"Run, everyone, run! Tax!"

"Tax raid! Run everybody! It is the entire blasted police force!"

The villager started running. There were so many people, he kept bumping into fear-crazed people who seemed blind, unable to distinguish women from men. The noise cloud seemed to have burst into the ear-splitting fragment that whistled shrilly and shouted and cried hysterically. Among the crowd the villager could see the khaki uniforms of the policemen as they spread their huge arms wide apart to stop the fleeing tax-defaulters.

The villager ran because he had not paid his annual tax yet. 'What lousy luck!' he thought as he jumped over the abandoned spreads of merchandise. Of all days, the police had chosen to raid on this one, when he was in town! Back in the village, he could always avoid the less experienced village chief and his helpers. But here, with white officers commanding the policemen, they came so swiftly and silently like a dark cloud engulfing the sun. One never knew what was happening until the whole park was surrounded by policemen. They surrounded the park first, and then brought more truckloads of policemen armed with short, effective clubs.

Activity 6

Act out this story. Each one of you should take up a role. You can take turns to play different roles. Rehearse and finally make a presentation before your class.

Activity 7

- a. Discuss and identify the subject and central theme in the short story.
- b. Write a report about the themes and messages in this short story, in your exercise book.

Activity 8

Explain the message in the short story.

Practice Exercise

- a. Complete these sentences:
 - i. A subject in prose is
 - ii. A theme in prose is
 - iii. A message in prose is
- b. Which experiences in the story you read above are similar to the ones you have witnessed or experienced in your life?

Assignment

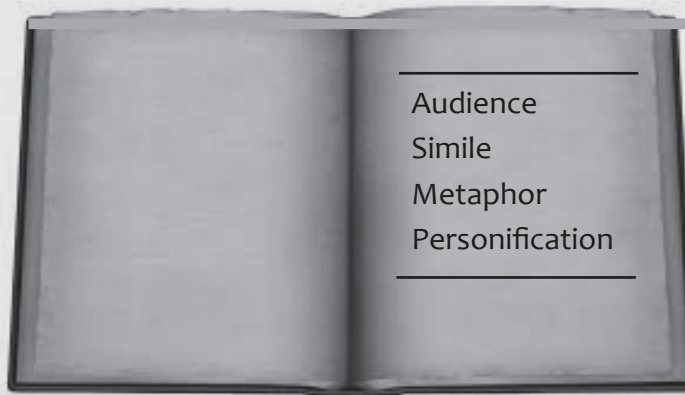
Visit the library, choose and read any short story of your choice. Upon finishing, write a report about the themes or messages in the story. You may also use the internet to help you gather more information on these themes or messages.

UNIT

3

Topic area: Prose

Literary devices and audience



Key unit competency

To be able to communicate personal opinion of literary texts referring to literary devices and the audience.

3.1 Definition of literary devices

Activity 1

Discuss the following:

- a. What makes a story interesting?
- b. The excerpt below is from Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. Read it while paying attention to the words in bold.

Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His **fame rested** on solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen he had brought honour to his village by throwing **Amalinze the Cat**. Amalinze was the great wrestler who for seven years was unbeaten, from Umuofia to Mbaino. He was called the Cat because his back would never touch the earth. It was this man that Okonkwo threw in a fight which the old men agreed was one of the fiercest since the founder of their town engaged a spirit of the wild for seven days and seven nights.

The drums beat and **the flutes sang** and the spectators held their breath. **Amalinze was a wily craftsman**, but **Okonkwo was as slippery as a fish** in water. **Every nerve and every muscle stood out** on their arms, on their backs and their thighs, and one almost heard them stretching to breaking point. In the end Okonkwo threw the Cat.

That was many years ago, twenty years or more, and during this time **Okonkwo's fame had grown like a bush-fire** in the harmattan. He was tall and huge, and his bushy eyebrows and wide nose gave him a very severe look. He breathed heavily, and it was said that, **when he slept, his wives and children in their houses could hear him breathe**. When he walked, his heels hardly touched the ground and **he seemed to walk on springs**, as if he was going to pounce on somebody.

Commonly, **literary devices** refer to the typical structures used by writers in their works to convey their messages in a simple manner to their readers. One of the literary devices often used by writers is imagery.

Imagery refers to the use of words and phrases to create “mental images” for the reader. Imagery helps the reader to visualize more realistically the author's writings. Imagery makes use of particular words that create visual representation of ideas in our minds.

Personification

Activity 2

Below is an excerpt from Sally Singhateh’s Novella, *Baby Trouble*. Read and discuss with your classmate why Christy is talking to the alarm clock as if it can hear what she is saying. What kind of style is this?

“Rrrrrrr!” Darn that alarm clock. Why should it ring when we are on vacation? Christy thought sleepily as she covered it with her pillow, but the clock continued to ring. She took it from under the pillow and fumbled with the knob to turn off the alarm.

Now I can go back to sleep, she thought, closing her eyes again, but sleep would not come.

“Just what I need,” she muttered, as she got up and sat on the edge of her bed. She took up the clock and looked pointedly at it then wagging a finger said: “This is all your fault. Why didn’t you shut up when I placed you under pillow?” She listened for a moment then nodded, “That’s what I thought you would say.” She then put it on her bed table and went to take a bath.

Personification is a figure of speech in which a thing, an idea or an animal is given human attributes. The non-human objects are portrayed in such a way that we feel they have the ability to act like human beings. The above sentences exemplify personification as an element of imagery. Personification helps us relate the actions of inanimate objects to our own emotions.

Activity 3

Write five additional sentences that illustrate personification.

Simile

Activity 4

Read and discuss the meaning of statement **a.** and **b.**

- a. Okonkwo was as slippery as a fish in water
 - i. What is Okonkwo being compared to?
 - ii. Which word is being used to do the comparison?

- b. That was many years ago, twenty years or more, and during this time Okonkwo's fame had grown like a bush-fire in the harmattan.
- What is Okonkwo's fame being compared to?
 - Which word is being used to do the comparison?

A **simile** is a literary device. It uses the words 'as ... as'; '... like...' or 'than' to show a resemblance between two things which are different.

Here are examples:

- He is as strong as a lion.
- She is beautiful like an angel.

Metaphor

Activity 5

Read and discuss these statements. How is Amalinze being compared to other things? Is he those things?

- Amalinze was a wily craftsman.
- ... he had brought honour to his village by throwing Amalinze the cat.

A **metaphor** is a literary device. It is when you say that one thing is another. You say X is Y. A metaphor compares two dissimilar things without using "as", "like" or "than."

For example:

- My father is a lion.
- She is an angel.

Activity 6

Write five additional similes.

Activity 7

Here is an excerpt from Camara Laye's novel *The African Child*. Read it.

My father's hut was near the workshop, and I would often play there beneath the veranda that ran round the outside. It was my father's private hut. It was built like all our huts, of mud that had been pounded and moulded into bricks

with water; it was round, and proudly helmeted with thatch. It was entered by a rectangular doorway. Inside, a tiny window let in a thin shaft of daylight. On the right there was the bed, made of beaten earth like the bricks, spread with a simple wickerwork mat on which was a pillow stuffed with kapok. At the rear of the hut, right under the window where the light was strongest, were the toolboxes. On the left were the *boubous* and the prayer rugs. Finally, at the head of the bed, hanging over the pillow and watching over my father's *dumber*, there was a series of pots that contained extracts from plants and the bark of trees. These pots all had metal lids and they were profusely and curiously garlanded with chaplets of cowrie shells; it did not take me long to discover that they were the most important things in the hut: they contained the magic charms, those mysterious liquids that keep evil spirits at bay, and, smeared on the body, make it invulnerable to black magic, to all kinds of black magic. My father, before he went to bed, never failed to smear his body with a little of each liquid, first one, then another, for each charm had its own particular property: but exactly *what* property I do not know: I left my father's house too soon.

From the veranda under which I played I could keep an eye on the workshop opposite, and they for their part could keep an eye on me. This workshop was the main building in our compound. That is where my father was generally to be found, supervising the work, forging the most important items himself, or repairing delicate mechanisms; here it was that he received his friends and his customers, so that the place resounded with noise from morning to night. Moreover, everyone entering or leaving our compound had to pass through the workshop, so that there was a perpetual coming and going, though no one ever seemed to be in a hurry: each one would pause to have a word with my father and spend a few moments watching the work in hand. Sometimes I would draw near the door, but I rarely went in, for everyone used to frighten me there, and I would run away as soon as anyone tried to lay hands on me. It was not until very much later that I got into the habit of crouching in a corner of the workshop and watching the fire blazing in the forge.

Activity 8

Discuss and point out the instances in which personification and similes have been used in the above excerpt.

3.2 Audience

Activity 9

The excerpt below is from Caroline Adalla’s novella, *Confessions of an AIDS Victim*. Read it and later, discuss it. Whom do you think the author had in mind when she wrote this story? Who should read it?

I was sixteen at the time I met Henry, that honey-tongued son of an illiterate tycoon. The adolescent flame in me was ablaze when, hardly a week after the outing, I wrote to Henry declaring I was all his. I can imagine the wide grin he might have developed upon reading those words. Within no time, we had exchanged photographs, letters with “lots of hugs and kisses”. This was a favourite way to conclude the letters. I guess it was the ‘in-thing’ those days.

In his first letter, Henry had indicated his hobbies as basketball, dancing, surfing and skating. Looking back, I can see that he would have been more convincing were he writing from some temperate continent, probably Europe or America. Skating in equatorial Africa? As for basketball, I soon found out that he had never been seen on the basketball court. I guess he did not even know the difference between a basketball and a football.

Then, Henry was seventeen and in Form Four. He did not try to hide from me the fact that it did not matter whether or not he passed his examination. Rather, as the examination period drew closer, he had a brighter idea. Could I possibly delay my going home for the Christmas holiday by one day so that we could have some time for ourselves? He promised he would not detain me a day longer.

This notice came early enough and so after weighing all factors, infatuation weighed heaviest and I decided this was the only chance I had to have fun.

As soon as our closing date was made known to us, I wrote confidently to Mother moving the date forward by a day. I thought myself very clever after this smart move. I then wrote to Henry confirming that I would be staying over and started the countdown to the closing date. I am sure in my fantasy, the idea of sex never featured. Maina had taught me that one could have a relationship with a boy without any sexual involvement, and I did not have the slightest inkling that the rest would be markedly different.

I did the end of year exams in a state of euphoria as the countdown narrowed down to one week, then a few days and finally wham! “Henry here we go!”

Never in the history of my schooling had I performed so dismally in my exams as I did that term. My class teacher wrote a terse remark, “Wake up Catherine!”

We modify what we say and how we say it depending on who our audience is. Our content, tone and language changes according to what we know about our audience.

In writing, **audience is whom you are writing for**. If you know whom you are writing for, you can make good decisions about the information to include, your tone and language in conveying it. The audience for which a story is meant is called the target audience.

A **target audience** could be children, the youth, adults, women or men.

Activity 10

The excerpt below is from Muthoni wa Gichuru’s novella, *Breaking the Silence*. Read it.

She had finally found her voice, but the shock on her face betrayed her attempt to remain calm. “Do you know the boys who have done this?”

“They are my classmates,” I replied, struggling to control the tears, which were now flowing freely. She left me in our room and went to find my father. When she came back, she told me we had to go to the local dispensary.

It was a short walk to the dispensary but I had to drag myself, half-carried by my mother. The clinical officer we found attended to me while he wrote down every detail. Once he had treated me, he advised us to report the matter to the local chief and to get a P3 form from the police. We could not see the chief that night because it was quite late. I hardly slept a wink. Every time I started to fall asleep, I would start seeing those boys again and I would jerk awake. I fell asleep briefly towards dawn but dreamt I was being raped all over again.

We were the first people to see the chief the following morning. When we related the case to the chief, he asked us whether we had told the village elder. I wondered what the case had to do with the village elder. What the boys had done to me was not a matter to be settled by the village elder.

The chief however told us that we should try to settle the matter with the village elder and the parents of those boys. I could not believe it. He was not even going to arrest them!

When we told the village elder about the rape, he was in complete agreement with the chief. He sent word to the parents of the boys and arranged that we all meet the following day.

On our way home, I tried to explain to my mother that what the boys had done to me was not a case for the village elder but a crime. She stopped walking and then asked me,

“Chiku, don’t you feel enough shame as it is? Do you want the whole village to know what has been done to you? If we take those boys to the police and press charges, who is going to pay for all the expenses of the trial? One of those boys, Mathenge, comes from a well-off family. You know that his uncle is the local councillor. Do you think he will let his nephew go to jail? We shall talk to the village elder tomorrow and maybe, arrange for some sort of compensation.”

Compensation! I was outraged. How could any amount of money compensate for what I had gone through? Could the money obliterate the shame, the pain, and the heartache? What if I was pregnant? Would it be enough to raise a child? In case those boys had infected me with HIV, would the money compensate for that too? I felt betrayed, especially by my mother.

Activity 11

Discuss and identify the target audience of the above story.

Activity 12

Discuss how the language used by the writer in the above excerpt contributes to conveying her message to the audience.

Assignment

Visit a library and read any book of your choice. After reading, write an analysis of the literary devices in the story.

Activity 13

The following words are from the excerpts you have read in this Unit. Using an English dictionary, find out their meanings and then use them to make sentences.

fiercest	vacation	illiterate	ablaze	temperate
involvement	euphoria	clinical	jerk	expenses

UNIT

4

Topic area: Poetry

Ballads

The ballad of the landlord

by Lungstone Hughes

Landlord, landlord,
My roof has sprung a leak.
Don't you 'member I told
you about it
Way last week?

Landlord, landlord,
These steps is broken
down.

Key unit competency:

To be able to understand that there are different types of poems and know of the characteristics of some types.

Activity 1

1. Research and find out what an **ode**, a **duet**, and a **sonnet** are.
2. Using your English dictionary, find out the meaning of the word **'ballad'**.

Activity 2

Read the poem below.

The ballad of a bachelor

by Ellis Parker Buttler

Listen, ladies, while I sing
The ballad of John Henry King.

John Henry was a bachelor,
His age was thirty-three or four.

Two maids for his affection vied,
And each desired to be his bride,

And bravely did they strive to bring
Unto their feet John Henry King.

John Henry liked them both so well,
To save his life he could not tell.

Which he most wished to be his bride,
Nor was he able to decide.

Fair Kate was jolly, bright, and gay,
And sunny as a summer day;

Marie was kind, sedate, and sweet,
With gentle ways and manners neat.

Each was so dear that John confessed
He could not tell which he liked best.

He studied them for quite a year,
And still found no solution near,

And might have studied two years more
Had he not, walking on the shore,

Conceived a very simple way
Of ending his prolonged delay –

A way in which he might decide
Which of the maids should be his bride.

He said, “I’ll toss into the air
A dollar, and I’ll toss it fair;

If heads come up, I’ll wed Marie;
If tails, fair Kate my bride shall be.”

Then from his leather pocket-book
A dollar bright and new he took;

He kissed one side for fair Marie,
The other side for Kate kissed he.

Then in a manner free and fair
He tossed the dollar in the air.

“Ye fates,” he cried, “pray let this be
A lucky throw indeed for me!”

The dollar rose, the dollar fell;
He watched its whirling transit well,

And off some twenty yards or more
The dollar fell upon the shore.

John Henry ran to where it struck
To see which maiden was in luck.

But, oh, the irony of fate!
Upon its edge the coin stood straight!

And there, embedded in the sand,
John Henry let the dollar stand!

And he will tempt his fate no more,
But live and die a bachelor.

Thus, ladies, you have heard me sing
The ballad of John Henry King.

A ballad is a poem that tells a story similar to a folk tale or legend and often has a repeated refrain. A ballad is often sung. It is a story in poetic form.

Activity 3

Read the following poem.

The ballad of the landlord

by Lungstone Hughes

Landlord, landlord,
My roof has sprung a leak.
Don't you 'member I told you about it
Way last week?

Landlord, landlord,
These steps is broken down.
When you come up yourself
It's a wonder you don't fall down.

Ten Bucks you say I owe you?
Ten Bucks you say is due?
Well, that's Ten Bucks more'n I'll pay you
Till you fix this house up new.

What? You gonna get eviction orders?
You gonna cut off my heat?
You gonna take my furniture and
Throw it in the street?

Um-huh! You talking high and mighty.
Talk on-till you get through.
You ain't gonna be able to say a word
If I land my fist on you.

Police! Police!
Come and get this man!
He's trying to ruin the government
And overturn the land!

Copper's whistle!
Patrol bell!
Arrest.
Precinct Station.
Iron cell.
Headlines in press:
MAN THREATENS LANDLORD
TENANT HELD NO BAIL
JUDGE GIVES NEGRO 90 DAYS IN COUNTY JAIL!

4.1 Characteristics of ballads

Activity 4

Based on the poems you have just read, identify the characteristics of a ballad.

Characteristics of ballads

- Ballads always make use of simple and easy to understand language.
- Usually, ballads comprise stories about hardships, tragedies, love and romance.
- Ballads usually have certain lines that recur at regular interval.
- Some ballads are made up of questions and appropriate answers to every question they ask.
- Ballads seldom offer a direct message about a certain event, character or situation. It is left to the audience to deduce the moral of the story from the whole narration.

Activity 5

Discuss the various occasions during which poems are recited.

Poems are written for specific ceremonies including weddings, funerals, graduations and birthdays, Valentine’s Day, mother’s day, or father’s day.

Activity 6

Study the following poems with your desk mate and identify the occasion for which each of them is possibly meant.

Poem 1

I love you my gentle one*by Ralph Bitamazire*

I love you, my gentle one;
My love is the fresh milk in the *rubindi*
Which you drank on the wedding day;
My love is the butter we were smeared with
To seal fidelity into our hearts.
You are the cattle-bird's egg,

For those who saw you are wealthy;
You are the papyrus reed of the lake,
Which they pull out with both hands.

And I sing for you with tears
Because you possess my heart:
I love you, my gentle...

Poem 2

An Elegy*by Laban Erapu*

When he was here,
We planned each tomorrow
With him in mind
For we saw no parting
Looming beyond the horizon.

When he was here,
We joked and laughed together

And no fleeting shadow of a ghost
Ever crossed our paths.
Day by day we lived
On this side of the mist
And there was never a sign
That his hours were running fast.

When he was gone,
Through glazed eyes we searched
Beyond the mist and the shadows
For we couldn't believe he was nowhere:
We couldn't believe he was dead.

Activity 7

Discuss the possible situations that might inspire someone to write or even recite these poems:

a.

Annabel Lee

by Edgar Allan Poe

It was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of ANNABEL LEE;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and she was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea;
But we loved with a love that was more than love-
I and my Annabel Lee;
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful Annabel Lee;
So that her highborn kinsman came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea.
The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me –
Yes! – that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we –
Of many far wiser than we –
And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.

For the moon never beams without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling- my darling- my life and my bride,
In the sepulchre there by the sea,
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

b.

Ballad of Bonnie and Clyde

by Kendall Thomas

Bonnie and Clyde
went out for a ride
with the Devil for a guide.
In a hot V-8 Ford
they took off with a roar
machine guns by their sides.

Bonnie was neat
and very petite
and Clyde was a handsome guy.

They robbed banks and stores,
and gas stations galore,
thumbing their noses at
a world they decried.

But the law was enraged
and made plans to engage
the infamous duo someday.

And on May twenty-third
they found a way
to put an end to Bonnie and Clyde.

It was as lovers they died
sitting side by side
in a bullet-riddled Ford.

And so then it came true as Bonnie well knew
that both of them surely would die,
for that's what she wrote,
expressing no hope, in the
Ballad of Bonnie and Clyde.

C.

Ballad of A Lonely Road*by Saurabh Jairath*

I walk a lonely road
Away from abode
A path not much taken
I fear its far away
I started to sway
Have I been mistaken

The bells are ringing
The birds are singing
But no one can hear the words I have spoken
The powerful words
The ballad of swords
The battle rages till the war is forsaken

The journey to wisdom
The legendary kingdom
The principle of truth has just awoken
I will tread till the end
Maybe find a friend
And just hope that I am not forgotten

Its lonely road I take
A journey to the beautiful lake
I will need all the wisdom
To take me to the end
Carry me through this bend
If only a friend can lend a hand

Practice Exercise

1. In your exercise book, list the types of poems you identified at the beginning of this Unit.
2. In your own words, define a ballad.
3. List the characteristics of a ballad.

Activity 8

Visit a library and search for examples of ballads. Use the Internet to help you gather as many examples of ballad as possible.

Activity 9

Master a ballad of your choice and recite it before your class.

Activity 10

Use a DVD or a CD player to listen to a recorded ballad in the classroom.

Activity 11

With your desk mate, discuss the role of poems in cultural setting.

Just like any other genre of literature, poetry establishes a people's cultural values. Every poem either advocates for or condemns certain societal practices. This is either done explicitly or in a hidden or veiled manner albeit beautifully.

Assignment

Visit a library and study as many poems as you can. Look at the cultural values the poems bear in their messages and draw the similarities between these cultural values to those of your own Rwandan people.

UNIT

5

Topic area: **Poetry**

Poetic devices



Key unit competency:

To be able to communicate personal opinion of poems referring to the poetic devices used in the poems.

Activity 1

In Unit 3, you learnt about literary devices. What do you think are **poetic devices**? Discuss this with your desk mate.

Poetic devices are the literary techniques that are used in poetry to create sounds and mental pictures within a poem. Poetic devices make poems pleasant to listen to.

5.1 Repetition

Activity 2

Read this poem. Pay attention to the last line of each stanza. What do you notice about it? What could be the reason for doing this?

Freedom song

Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye

Atieno washes dishes,
Atieno plucks the chicken,
Atieno gets up early,
Beds her sacks down in the kitchen,
Atieno eight years old,
Atieno yo.

Since she is my sister's child
Atieno needs no pay.
While she works my wife can sit
Sewing every sunny day:
With her earnings I support
Atieno yo.

Atieno's sly and jealous,
Bad example to the kids
Since she minds them, like a schoolgirl
Wants their dresses, shoes and beads,
Atieno ten years old,
Atieno yo.

Now my wife has gone to study
Atieno is less free.
Don't I keep her, school my own ones,
Pay the party, union fee,
All for progress! Aren't you grateful
Atieno yo?

Visitors need much attention,
All the more when I work night.
That girl spends too long at market.
Who will teach her what is right?
Atieno rising fourteen,
Atieno yo.

Atieno's had a baby
So we know that she is bad.
Fifty fifty it may live
And repeat the life she had
Ending in post-partum bleeding,
Atieno yo.

Atieno's soon replaced;
Meat and sugar more than all
She ate in such a narrow life
Were lavished at her funeral.
Atieno's gone to glory,
Atieno yo.

Note: Post-partum means after giving birth.

Repetition is a poetic device that is commonly used in poems. It refers to the deliberate use of a word or a group of words over and over again or recurrently in a poem.

When used in a poem, repetition has the following effects:

- Creates rhythm
- Lays emphasis on the theme and main idea in a poem
- Emphasizes the poet's message and keeps it constantly stuck in the mind of the reader or audience.

5.2 Personification

Activity 3

We talked about personification in Unit 3. Read this poem and identify instances of personification.

Pomegranate

by Rabiarivelo

The rays of the new-born sun
search under the branches
the breast of the ripe pomegranate
and bite it till it bleeds.
Discreet and shuddering kiss
hard and scalding embrace,
Soon the pure thrust
will draw purple blood.
Its taste will be sweeter,
because it was pregnant with desire
And with fearful love
and scented blossoms —
Pregnant by the lover sun.

Personification is a figure of speech in which a thing, an idea or an animal is given human attributes. The non-human objects are portrayed in such a way that we feel they have the ability to act like human beings.

In poetry personification is an important device that poets often employ in their works.

5.3 Simile

Activity 4

We talked about similes in Unit 3. Read this poem and identify similes.

My husband's tongue

My husband's tongue
Is bitter like the roots of the
lyonno lily,

It is hot like the penis of the bee,
 Like the sting of the *kalang*!
 Ocol's tongue is fierce like the
 arrow of the scorpion,
 Deadly like the spear of the
 buffalo-hornet.
 It is ferocious
 Like the poison of a barren woman
 And corrosive like the juice of the gourd.
 (From *Song of Lawino* by Okot p'Bitek)

A *simile* is a figure of speech that makes a comparison, showing similarities between two different things. A simile draws resemblance with the help of the words “like” or “as”.

5.4 Assonance

Activity 5

With your desk mate, read the following sentences aloud in turns. As you read, pay attention to the sounds in bold.

Fleet feet **swee**p them
Looting hoofers of **B**loomington
Blood and **bloo**ming
Footing and **gloo**ming

Did you realise the repeated sounds are ‘iii’ and ‘ooo’? This is what we call assonance.

Assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds within words in a line or lines of a poem. This repetition creates rhyme. Note that assonance is the repetition of vowel sounds, but not consonant sounds.

Assonance takes place when two or more words close to one another repeat the same vowel sound but start with different consonant sounds.

Remember: You must be very sure of the pronunciation of words. They may seem similar yet they are pronounced differently.

Activity 6

Read this poem and discuss its assonance with your desk mate. You can use your English dictionary to establish proper pronunciation of words.

Justice

by Nyambura Njuguna

Many are the times,
I see mean people seeking
To unjustly punish the righteous but
Justice almost always prevails.

Activity 7

Read the poem below. Point out the assonance used.

The Bells

by Edgar Allan Poe

Hear the mellow wedding bells –
Golden bells!
What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!
Through the balmy air of night
How they ring out their delight!
From the molten-golden notes,
And all in tune,
What a liquid ditty floats
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats
On the moon!

5.5 Alliteration

Activity 8

Read these lines while paying attention to the sounds produced by the words in bold. Discuss what is common about these sounds with your deskmate.

Part 1

On his watch,
Bleeds **black blood**

Brothers **b**roken **b**acks
Creatures **c**raving for **c**runches,
 They snarl.
Farewell for **f**ools
 He says.

Part 2

Plain **p**lan **p**ronounced
Sincere since **s**eventh **S**abbath
Sweet **s**mell of **s**uccess
Bigger and **b**etter.

Alliteration is a poetic device. It refers to the repetition of initial sounds in words in a line or lines of a poem. This makes the poem nice to listen to.

Sometimes alliteration includes repetition of initial sounds and interior sounds of words. This is seen in part 2 above. In other words, you may have alliteration in which, not only are the initial sounds repeated, but other sounds in the words are repeated too.

Activity 9

Read the poem below and point out elements of alliteration.

Junk food

by W. Lucas

Buyer beware!
 Fast
 Food, full of fats, for fools,
 Who meet to munch meats,
 Processed.
 World Health Organisation says,
 They cause cancer.

Activity 10

Read the poems below and point out the alliteration used.

Gorilla

by W. Lucas

Goats and gorilla,
One is tame, the other is game,
Tame or game take note,
Treat like treasure,
For both are gold.

Curious Cats

by Natasha Niemi

Curious cats crouch on the windowsill
Watching unwaveringly through the glass
As blue birds fly by.
Curious cats are
Almost two headed in a sensitive sense,
Still alert and aware
Of the running, rotten rats behind them.

Assignment

Visit the school library and study as many poems as you can. Try and identify the poetic devices that have been used in each of the poems. Use the internet to help you gather additional pieces of information on poetic devices.

As you study the poems, try and relate the messages they bear to your daily experiences.

UNIT

6

Topic area: Poetry

Subject, Theme and Context



Key unit competency:

To be able to communicate personal opinion on the subject matter, themes and the context in poems.

Activity 1

- a. You have already learnt about subject and theme (in Unit 3). Tell your desk mate what these words mean.
- b. What is the difference between subject and theme?

Activity 2

Read this poem.

- a. What is its subject?
- b. Write down its central theme.

Show me love

by O. J. Benson

I am a child
I am African
I am human

I was born out of genuine love
like all children in the world
I was desired, I was wanted, and expected

I am the nameless, faceless street child
homeless, harassed and unwelcome
the eyesore dotting urban streets
tho' constantly studied by scholars
and ever increasing in their statistics

I am the hard-working child labourer
blending, drying and picking coffee
while my sister's back, broken
carrying loads double her weight
mopping, cooking and washing
even feeding her Master's dog.

I have seen other boys tend camels
 going hungry as the camels get their fill
 yet happily whistling away the hunger
 hoping against hope too
 the rustlers won't arrive
 I am the child you desired
 yet the child you so defiled

You've heard their cries, our pleas
 cared less about their tears, our tears
 with exception of your whims, your lusts
 boosting your ego and secret accounts
 while blasting away our tomorrow
 Did you ever say 'yes to the children?'

I am human
 I am African
 I am a child.

In poetry, just like in prose, **subject is a topic**, which acts as a foundation for a poem. On the other hand, a **theme is an opinion expressed on the subject**. Thus, a poet might for instance have corruption as the subject of his or her poem. He or she might choose condemning this vice as his or her theme. So as to identify the theme of a poem, you must look at the subject of the poem. Pay attention to what the poet says about the subject. The poet will keep on repeating his views on the subject throughout the poem. This is what will make the theme to take its place as the central idea in the poem.

Activity 3

Read the poem below. State its subject and then explain its theme.

I Speak for the Bush

by Everet Stande

When my friend sees me,
 He swells and pants like a frog

Because I talk the wisdom of the bush!
He says we from the bush
Do not understand civilized ways
For we tell our women
To keep the hem of their dresses
Below the knee.
We from the bush, my friend insists,
Do not know how to 'enjoy':
When we come to the civilized city,
Like nuns, we stay away from nightclubs
Where women belong to no men
And men belong to no women
And these civilized people
Quarrel and fight like hungry lions!

But, my friend, why do men
With crippled legs, lifeless eyes,
Wooden legs, empty stomachs
Wander about the streets
Of this civilized world?

Teach me, my friend, the trick,
So that my eyes may not
See those whose houses have no walls
But emptiness all round;
Show me the wax you use
To seal your ears
To stop hearing the cry of the hungry;

Teach me the new wisdom
Which tells men
To talk about money and not love,
When they meet women;

Tell your God to convert
 Me to the faith of the indifferent,
 The faith of those
 Who will never listen until
 They are shaken with blows.

I speak for the bush:
 You speak for the civilized –
 Will you hear me?

6.1 Context

Activity 4

Using your English dictionary, find out the meaning of the word 'context'.

Activity 5

Read the poem below. Discuss what you think was happening when the poet wrote it.

July

Jotham Tusingiirwe

The thirsty earth gapes wearily at the heavens
 The limp dry grass droops to the earth
 Dry banana leaves rustle and crackle in the heat

Chaff, dust and paper swirl in the white wind
 Iron sheets clatter and clang, grass thatches scatter
 Skirts rise and flutter in the air
 Trees creak and screech and shriek.
 Fleeing monkeys chattering in lament
 The swamp papyrus their home on fire in ruins
 Papyrus-head embers fly in the smoky air
 Perching on and setting nuts and bushes aflame
 Hillsides black with fire, vast destruction
 Cows and sheep roving in vain for grass

Solitary eagles sailing high in the sky
Streams and wells deserted and lifeless
Mudfish and crabs dead and stinking
Ladies on verandahs sipping banana brew
Heaven blue with a few scattered white clouds
The glaring sun scorching and burning
Farmers clearing and ploughing the land
In preparation for the September rains.

In poetry, **context** refers to the prevailing conditions and circumstances that inspire a poet to compose a poem. Poets normally draw themes from the prevailing cultural trends, historical events and other experiences.

Activity 6

Below are two poems. Read them carefully.

Ngoma

by Yusuf O. Kassam

The drum beats,
And with bare feet and red earth,
Rhythm erupts,
Muscles and drums synchronized.
Bodies sweat,
Vigorously,
Glistening round the flickering fire,
Erotic.
The night is long,
Drums beat more furiously,
Moving the kaleidoscope of frenzied expressions,
And the pulse outruns the drum beat.
The drums inspired the dancers,
Now the dancers inspire the drummers.
No more.
Relax.
Wipe the dust and the sweat.
But the pulse still beats,

Muscles twitch,
And drums echo,
All in a hangover of rhythm,
African rhythm.

Their Civilisation

by Ochieng Orwenjo

Theirs is uncivilized civilization,
They have table manners –
Meals singly silently taken.
They love in church
And hate in court.
Their families, private and confidential –
No grandparents and extended uncles.
They love selfishly –
Polygamy is heathen; a mistress good.
They keep their dead in cemeteries –
A dead man is dead.
A child can have a mother
But no father
That is their civilization,
So dearly cherished.

Activity 7

Compare the two poems you have just read and answer the following questions:

1. Which culture does each of the poems talk about?
2. What is the likely period of time each of the poems was composed? What is the reason for your answer?
3. What possibly made each of the poets to compose the poems?
4. What is the central theme in each poem?
5. Who are the writers of the two poems?

The answers to the above questions will help you understand the **context** of the poems.

Assignment

Visit the school library and read a wide range of poems. After reading as many poems as you can, identify the themes and subjects that are often presented in poetry.

Though there are hundreds of different popular poetry themes, several concepts have endured across ages, forms, and cultural divisions. Love, nature, history, religion, and death are some of the most common poetry themes.

Activity 8

Read the following poem and describe its context. Use the internet to help you gather relevant pieces of information.

In memoriam: *Samora Machel*

by *Elias Manandi Songoyi*

He is gone
The valiant is gone
The burning flame is gone
The fire-brand is gone!

They say
His body was charred
Yet the flame
Kept burning in his eyes
His last sigh was a word
Cursing the Monster
His face turned southward
His burning eyes looked beyond the darkness

They say
He fell with a smile on his lips
Raising a clenched fist of victory
As the machine “crashed”
Up he threw his self

Letting his body fall into the abyss:
His spirit escaped
To join the militant gods
Inspiring those he left behind

We say
He is gone
We march towards Nkomati
With the melodious song
Dancing to the staccato rhythm
Of the fire spitting machine-gun
And the thunderous drumming of “saba saba”
The fire must be kept burning

UNIT

7

Topic area: Drama:

Dramatic techniques



Key unit competency:

To be able to communicate personal opinion of plays referring to dramatic techniques.

7.1 Key elements in a play

Activity 1

You learnt about plot, setting and character in Unit 1. Discuss and complete these sentences:

1. Plot is
2. Setting is
3. A character is

Dramatic techniques are the tools or devices used by playwrights to help the audience understand and enjoy a play. The key elements of a play are: plot, setting (including context) and characters.

7.2 Plot, setting and character

Activity 2

Below is a drama. Carefully read it during your spare time ahead of this lesson.

The Cooking Pan and Other Plays

by Emmanuel Basse-Ssentongo

CHARACTERS

GONGOLO:	Family head
KYATEREKERA:	His wife
TUSUUBIRA:	Their daughter
SEBEKU:	Their son
ODEDEKE:	Village Chief
APEMA:	Woman -friend to Kyaterekera

(Outside Gongolo's hut. A wooden chair and two stools. It is noon. Kyate – short form of Kyaterekera – is trying hard to light a fire under a leaky cooking-pan. The fire cannot light because of the water leaking constantly. She tries to plug the holes with little success. Gongolo returns from the fields. He puts down the hoe tiredly.)

UNIT A

- GONGOLO: *Mukyala*, is the food ready?
- KYATE: *Mwami*, how many times must I tell you to buy a new cooking-pan? See how this one leaks. See for yourself how it leaks like a pissing he-goat.
- GONGOLO: And how often must I tell you that cooking things are your concern. It is up to you to find what to cook with.
- KYATE: But where can I cook food if we have only one pan? The other one is too small for the family.
- GONGOLO: All I want is my lunch. Look, the sun is overhead.
- KYATE: Blow it on the horn. There is no lunch today.
- GONGOLO: I tell you I want my lunch before it is too late and you have the cheek to tell me that there is no lunch today. Who gives orders in this house? You or me?
- KYATE: Your work is not to give orders but to shoulder your responsibilities.
- GONGOLO: Which responsibilities have I not shouldered?
- KYATE: Buying cooking-pans for your wife.
- GONGOLO: Listen. My work is not in the kitchen and will never be. I married you to produce food, cook it and serve it to me. How you do it is up to you. Have I ever called you to go and bridge a river or hunt? This is because I know that you as a woman must deal with kitchen work. You hear?
- KYATE: You mean your work is only to eat?
- GONGOLO: I will not be threatened by your talk. *Mukyala*, be careful. Don't make me hot at this hour of the day.
- KYATE: I will not be threatened by your words.
- GONGOLO: What did you say?
- KYATE: I said I want a new cooking-pan.
- GONGOLO: Go to the *duka* and buy one.

KYATE: Give me the money.

GONGOLO: Find it yourself. What have I sold these days that you ask money from me like that?

Activity 3

1. In your own words, retell this story to your desk mate. What is happening from the beginning to this point?
2. Where do you think these events are taking place?
3. According to you, when did these events take place? Is it in present day Uganda or during the colonial time? Give reasons for your answer.
4. Name the people who are taking part in this play – refer to the character list.

7.3 Dramatic techniques

Dialogue

Continue reading the play.

KYATE: Where did you put all the money we got from the ten sackfuls of coffee and from all the cotton we produced?

GONGOLO: We got that money in the month of seed buying and now it is the month of grasshoppers. I have been looking after the family. I paid all the school fees for both Tusubira and Sebeku without your help. You think we got millions from coffee and cotton? I don't know where to turn to for money.

KYATE: Otyo . . . You man, we got eight hundred shillings altogether from the cash-crops. Every month we brew Kiganda beer and sell at least ten tins of it. Where does all that money go?

GONGOLO: I'll tell you. There are taxes, there is sugar, there was the new *panga*.

KYATE: No, wait. Has it all gone into paying the school fees for these two Primary School children and these little things? You refused to put the money in the Bank. So how does it disappear?

- GONGOLO: Did I not buy that *busuuti* you are now wearing?
- KYATE: And it cost you three hundred shillings, sir?
- GONGOLO: Don't make me angry. The world can turn dark for you now, now.
- KYATE: (*laughs*) Heeee.
- GONGOLO: Repeat that.
- KYATE: (*silent*)
- GONGOLO: Listen. You have absolutely no say in money matters. I am the one responsible.
- KYATE: Do you sweat alone to produce those cash crops?
- GONGOLO: Don't nag me.
- KYATE: You unthinking, conservative, domineering bully. When will you realise that marriage means co-operation? Who will cure you of this horrible mental disease of bullying your wife when you cannot stand alone in this house even for a single day?
- GONGOLO: I can stand alone and do things independently of you. Who built this house? Can you sleep in it if I order you out? By whose name is this home known?
- KYATE: Huh ... Huh ... Only that.
- GONGOLO: When people are talking they say "I am going to Gongolo's for beer", "I met so-and-so near Gongolo's". Have you ever heard your insignificant woman name being mentioned when people refer to this home?
- KYATE: It is I who win you pride and honour. If I left this house, it would become a desert of unhappiness, an unattractive latrine resorted to for a call of nature, a house without foundation, a house in the last stages of disintegration and final collapse which your friends would avoid. Because a home is no home when there is no wife.
- GONGOLO: Don't be so proud. You are only the ... mouse that has broken an old woman's smoking pipe. Don't lift yourself

to the lofty heavens. I matter in this house first, then you second.

KYATE: If you matter, then buy the cooking-pan so that I can cook for you, your children, and the friends who frequently come here for beer-parties.

GONGOLO: I told you. Kitchen work is just not my concern.

KYATE: And eating is not your concern?

Activity 4

1. What distinguishes a play from poetry and prose?
2. From the beginning of the play to this point, Gongolo and Kyate are talking. We call this a d_____.

In drama, **dialogue** refers to a conversation between two characters on a particular subject.

- Dialogue makes a play enjoyable and lively.
- Dialogue reveals the characters to the audience through the characters' words, actions and thoughts.
- Dialogue creates the tone of the play.
- Dialogue presents the exposition or cause of conflict.

Monologue

Activity 5

Read the excerpt below. It is also part of the play, *The Cooking Pan and Other Plays*. Pay attention to Kyate's speeches.

UNIT F

KYATE: Sebeku, have you just come?

SEBEKU: No, I came long ago, Maama. Good evening, Maama.

KYATE: Don't waste time greeting me. There is not a single drop of water in the house and here you are with your sister gossiping, forgetting that darkness is setting in. Will you

wash with saliva? Or will you fetch water at midnight? I told you that as soon as you come back, you change your clothes and start fetching water. It's not only Sebeku, but you too, Tusuubira. Have you blocked your ears with big sticks? Or have you no ears in your head at all? The sun is almost down. The goats have not yet been brought back from the grazing grounds, there is no water, the courtyard is as dirty as if the head of this family is dead and we are mourning him. Has your father come back?

TUSUUBIRA: Not yet, Maama.

KYATE: Maybe he has gone to drink. He can't be spending so long visiting the traps and pits. He is drinking as usual. And when he comes back he will scold me as usual. Oh, married life is a cross from which only death can relieve us.

SEBEKU: But, Maama, father told me not to fetch water. He said a man must not fetch water from the well.

KYATE: (*stands up angrily*) Sebeku, how dare you speak to me like that? Don't you wash with water? Out of my sight. For saying that, you can fetch all the water by yourself. (*Sebeku goes out, picking up a water pot by the house*) (*to Tusuubira*) And you, what have you been doing? Are you a princess that you can't do anything on your own? Perhaps you are a bride married yesterday. He ... I have to laugh You, a grown up girl, and you can't even clean those plates.

TUSUUBIRA: I did not see them, Maama.

KYATE: Don't answer back. Have you no eyes in your head? Remember you are a woman. You can't change. When you get married what will you do for your husband? Even if you reach Makerere or go to Bulaya you'll get married and do the duties of a woman in the family. Don't think you will work in the office and order everything to be

done by a house girl. Don't be deceived by those women you see on the road driving cars like men, smoking like men, wearing trousers that make them look like strange moving animals with breasts. They have lost their femininity through claiming equality with men. I want you to grow up a real woman. You must listen to what I tell you because days don't end as they start. There is light in the morning but in the evening, it is darkness, which puts a close to the day. Have you eaten yet?

TUSUUBIRA: Not yet, Maama. I was waiting for you.

KYATE: (*wearily*) I told you not to wait for me. Go and let the hens in.

Monologue is many lines spoken by one character alone. It is the verbalisation of the character's thoughts. This speech is given by one character that is in the company of other characters. It helps the audience to know what a character is thinking.

Activity 6

The excerpt below is from Francis Imbuga's play, *Aminata*. Identify the monologue used.

JUMBA: That is where my brother went wrong. But we shall not ourselves stumble and fall just because our brother stumbled and fell. No, we shall stand firm and shield Membe from further shame. But if the elders of the stool shy away from their responsibility, then I shall protect the wishes of our forefathers single-handedly. Yes, the calf that is orphaned scratches its own back. (*Ababio's drunken voice can be heard singing a dirge, apparently, in honour of his late father.*)

NDURURU: He is coming.

JUMBA: Hmm?

NDURURU: He is coming.

JUMBA: Who?

- NDURURU: Listen. (*Pause.*) Is that not Ababio's voice?
- JUMBA: Yes, it is him alright. The crow is beyond salvation. (*Ababio staggers in. He stops singing and surveys the surrounding area suspiciously. Finally, he dismisses this environment with a tired wave of the hand.*)
- ABABIO: They can say whatever they want to say. Let them talk. So what? Land is not a degree. Degrees? Useless! They can collect all the degrees in the world, if they want, but let nobody touch my land. For as long as I am still steady on my feet, no woman will touch my father's land because that is my land! A will? What is a will? Zero! And that school fees nonsense is zero also. Zero! Did I ask her to pay my children's fees? No, never! Now let me tell you something. That school fees nonsense was an arrangement between two women, my wife Misiah, and Aminata. I don't meddle in women's affairs. No, I don't. Yaa, so what were those drunkards talking about? Zero! Aeeh, some people don't know how to talk when they are drunk. The wishes of the dead! Since when did the dead start having wishes? *Ghasia!* What do they know about our home? Zero, I tell you, zero! (*He has now moved close enough to notice Jumba and the masons. He is a little embarrassed.*) Uncle, Uncle, I told them to their face. Yes, drunkards, useless drunkards! I told them to head for hell. (*Laughs a little but stops suddenly when he notices the disgust on Jumba's face.*) Uncle, what is the matter? Do you think I am drunk? No, you are wrong. I only tasted. First Timothy, Chapter Five, verse Twenty Three: "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake." (*His attention is attracted by the grave.*) Hey, beautiful work, beautiful work! Now, now, now, now, wait a minute. Where, in the name of all Christians, is the cross facing? (*Silence.*) Uncle! Uncle! Headman!
- JUMBA: Speak.

- ABABIO: Have I offended you? I mean, I only asked, soberly, why the cross is facing this way.
- NUHU: Where do you want it to face?
- ABABIO: (*Embarrassed but determined to go through it.*) A good question! A very good question! (*To the audience.*) You see, never argue with a professional, people might notice the difference. Son of Rabala, I respect you. Ndururu, it's true, I mean it. Nuhu here is a great man. A jack of all trades. He can cement graves and things, go to church, sit with elders and drink a little, all in one stride!

Soliloquy

Activity 7

Continue reading this excerpt from *The Cooking Pan and Other Plays* by Emmanuel Basse-Ssentongo. Pay attention to the last part – the beginning of Unit B.

- GONGOLO: I can refuse to eat your food if you say that again. You think I can't get food from somewhere else?
- KYATE: Yes, I know. From the women where you drink. But you don't want food, only drink.
- GONGOLO: How can I afford it? Don't be absurd.
- KYATE: You think I don't know what goes on? Can't I smell your breath when you come home?
- GONGOLO: You are talking nonsense.
- KYATE: Ha ... When the sun goes to sleep and darkness covers this world, things happen. That is when the hare walks without fear, that is when the hippopotamuses leave the water to raid the peasant's blooming plants, that is the time a shy girl will meet her boy-friend at the cross-roads and talk freely with him about love. When men slip away from their homes and their duties to drink.
- GONGOLO: What does all this mean?

- KYATE: This is what drains your pocket. Your children are eating *doodo*, while you drown in drink.
- GONGOLO: Shut up ...
- KYATE: I can't keep quiet any longer.
- GONGOLO: *Mukyala*, some malicious people are misleading you. They want to make you hate me. Those are the rumours loud-mouthed people spread.
- KYATE: I won't say any more. But, *Mwami*, I want a cooking-pan.
- GONGOLO: Don't mention that again. Don't let me hear that word again. If I do, you are in for trouble. I am a man, not a woman who looks after cooking-pans.
- KYATE: You are not a child, *Mwami*. We have spent ten years together. Think again.
- GONGOLO: My ears are aching. All the time – cooking-pan, cooking-pan, cooking-pan.
- KYATE: Buy me the cooking-pan and that will show me how much you love me. Make your love clear to me.
- GONGOLO: I can't undertake responsibilities I am not supposed to shoulder.
- KYATE: You are more interested in torturing me.
- GONGOLO: Is it my fault that I was born a man and you the inferior, the woman? I can't change
- KYATE: Oh, the world is a filthy place to live in. Cruelty and indifference everywhere. Men are human beasts. Women: passive lambs.
- GONGOLO: I'm off before you make me sick. (*Exit Gongolo into hut. Sounds of washing.*)

UNIT B

KYATE: *(Alone, she takes the audience into her confidence)* You have seen, you have heard, you can draw conclusions. Who has not seen how my cooking-pan leaks? I have not a single cent in my purse. My mother taught me that a woman must entirely depend upon her husband. My aunt included it in her pre-marriage talks to me when Gongolo was courting me. Oh, then my breasts were sharp as a needle, seducing even the coldest man. I did not know that Gongolo would be like this. I have borne much in the past ten years. He has stubbornly refused to buy a cooking-pan. He says there is no money. But may I tell you the naked truth? All the money goes on his drink. And it's not as if he couldn't drink here. I brew beer. And it's good beer. Maybe there is a woman in it somewhere ... ? Oh, this pan! *(Tusuubira enters holding books)*

Activity 8

- Tell your desk mate the meaning of the word '**solo**'.
- What do we call the long speech that Kyate gave above? Discuss this with your desk mate.

Soliloquy is words spoken by a character and not meant to be heard by any other characters. It is only meant for the audience.

Activity 9

Continue reading the play. Identify soliloquy from this excerpt.

UNIT C

KYATE: Tusuubira, what's the matter?

TUSUUBIRA: The headmaster has sent me home for school-fees. *(crying)* I can't go back till they're paid.

KYATE: Don't cry, Tusuubira. It happens every year. Where is the letter?

- TUSUUBIRA: *(hands over the letter)* Here it is, Maama.
- KYATE: *(reads)* Oh, so it is fifteen shillings being demanded. Ha . . . trouble is heaping upon trouble. *(calls)* Mwami, Mwami. Will this man, your father, release a single coin?
- GONGOLO: *(from the hut)* Eeh?
- KYATE: Come.
- GONGOLO: What is it? Go on. I can hear from here.
- KYATE: Your daughter has been sent home because she has not yet paid the fees for this term.
- GONGOLO: How much? *(He comes to the door. He is putting on a clean shirt)*
- TUSUUBIRA: Fifteen shillings and the headmaster says I can't go back to school until I have the money.
- GONGOLO: Eeh? You had better sit at home and dig, or better still, get married. You are old enough. What have I sold these days?
- KYATE: Tusuubira, do you hear? No money.
- GONGOLO: Ask your mother to give you the fees. Why should I pay school fees for a girl? What will you do for me?
- KYATE: Mwami, how can you say that?
- GONGOLO: Why not? You pay school-fees for your daughter. I have no money to throw about – it is wasted money that pays school-fees for a girl.
- KYATE: Ha ... but I think, Mwami, you don't see where this world is going. If we don't give education to our children, shall we hide them under the black cooking-pan *(that leaks anyway)* when the wind of change blows? All reasonable people are sacrificing the little money they have to pay school-fees for their children. Do you prefer to remain behind in the march of progress?

GONGOLO: Oh, educate her up to Makerere if you like and let her even go to Bulaya in an aeroplane. I will not give any more money for her fees. Where did I, Gongolo, read? Have I no wife? Do I starve? Even you, *Mukyala*, did you read in the white man's schools?

KYATE: If we didn't it simply means we lived in an age when people had not yet realised the value of reading. This is a new age.

GONGOLO: Education is not for peasants' children but for those of rich people with Mercedes Benz, those whose mattresses are made of money.

KYATE: Peasants' children are often much brighter – don't underrate our children. There are thousands of peasants' sons and daughters at Makerere.

GONGOLO: Is Tusubira one of those who can climb up to Makerere and Bulaya?

KYATE: Why not? She is brighter than Sebeku and she works harder. Give her the fees.

GONGOLO: I will not.

KYATE: You are foolish, *Mwami*.

GONGOLO: If you are going to abuse me again, I'm going to visit my traps and pits. Probably I shall find a huge trapped buffalo or a bushbuck. That might mean meat at supper. Solve your own problems. (*Exit Gongolo*)

KYATE: (*to Tusubira*) Go now. (*Tusubira goes into the hut*)

UNIT D

KYATE: (*alone – again to the audience*) I am resisting the flow of hot tears. No ... no. I will not cry. I am a true mother of the Monkey clan – we are never soft. I must take practical steps to solve my problems. This domestic situation is worsening. Strength I have. From the age of three my

mother taught me digging. If only I could get work today. But men fear to employ married women because our husbands always suspect that the employer is eating the fruit in the process. *(calls)* Tusuubira! But you aged, unsuspected landlords, you wage-payers, don't you see my problem? We shall forget my husband's suspicion. We shall do it secretly. Employ me, please. There is no way out of this. It is you who have made the world rotate on the axis of money. *(Enter Tusuubira)*

When the food is ready, don't wait for me but serve yourself, and your father. When he asks you where I have gone, tell him I have gone for firewood. You hear?

TUSUUBIRA: Yes mama.

KYATE: I am going to collect firewood. I shall be back soon. After eating fetch some water from the well and when you see the sun going to eat the matoke peelings, then open the hut for the chickens to enter. You hear?

(Exit Kyate)

Body language (gestures, facial expressions)

Activity 10

Rehearse and act this section of the play, *The Cooking Pan and Other Plays*. Act exactly the way the three characters would act in real life. Use body movements to express what you are saying.

UNIT K

GONGOLO: *(thinking)* I see. Yes. ALL RIGHT. But it isn't easy. *(calls)* Mukyala? Mukyala?

KYATE: *(answers)* Wangi?

GONGOLO: Come, come.

KYATE: What is it, Mwami?

- GONGOLO: I don't want you to pick coffee any more.
- KYATE: But ...
- GONGOLO: No. That is my responsibility. The man is the breadwinner. I will work there instead.
- KYATE: I am happy, *Mwami*.
- GONGOLO: We must co-operate. I have been a fool in the past and you are right about the children too. Sebeku must be made to work and my ideas on the education of girls are changed. I want my daughter to read up to Makerere. She is doing very well in Science. She can become a nurse so that when we are sick she can treat us.
- KYATE: You will pay the school-fees?
- GONGOLO: All of them.
- KYATE: (*almost timidly*) Will you be buying the cooking-pans too?
- GONGOLO: Certainly. You see, *Mukyala*, Chief Odedeke has told me that things are changing and we men must shoulder our responsibilities in the family. The fact that you, my wife, went to work at the Chief's brought me shame. I must confess to you that I really did not think twice before refusing to buy the cooking-pan. I just did not think.
- KYATE: It is all right, *Mwami*. I understand. Let us forget the past and start afresh. (*Enter Sebeku, looking happy and carefree*)
- GONGOLO: (*taking Sebeku completely by surprise*) Sebeku, where have you been? School finished long ago. Change your clothes quickly and take a hoe and start breaking up the ground. We are going to plant cassava below the banana garden and I expect you to do your share.
- SEBEKU: (*evasively*) But ... homework, father?

- GONGOLO: After supper. Get going. There's no food for those who do nothing to help grow it.
- SEBEKU: *(Wondering what has hit him, looks at his mother. She nods. He exits into the hut.)*
- GONGOLO: I have to go to the Chief's now. Be quick, Sebeku. *(Takes a hoe and carries it on his shoulder. Puts on a hat made out of newspaper. His wife seeing him going out also takes up a pot and follows him)*
- KYATE: And I have to go to the well for water now. Tusubira can't bring it all. Sebeku, hurry.

(Exit)

Body language refers to **gestures, postures** and **facial expressions**. They help a person to manifest various physical, mental or emotional states. This way, he or she communicates non verbally with others. For instance, Kyate smiles when Gongolo agrees to buy the cooking pans.

Stage directions – the words in brackets in a play – help actors know how to express themselves. For instance: *(Enter Sebeku, looking happy and carefree)*

In theatre and drama, body language is used to convey the mood and emotion with subtlety. Rarely do you see someone in a drama say "I'm angry!" You'll just know from the way they behave.

Activity 11

Rehearse this excerpt and act it out. Use appropriate body language to express what the characters are saying.

- GONGOLO: You, Chief, how dare you employ my wife without my permission?
- ODEDEKE: The only thing to do. The right thing to do: to help her, to let her help herself.
- GONGOLO: *(bitterly)* So you've started taking away our wives? Chiefs! Kondos!
- ODEDEKE: Me, taking your wife Kyaterekera?

- GONGOLO: You have.
- OEDEKE: *(slowly, with mounting anger)* Have I slept with her? Is that what you mean? You think I slept with her?
- GONGOLO: How do I know?
- OEDEKE: You suspect me, your chief?
- GONGOLO: Leave my wife.
- OEDEKE: *(scornfully)* I have six wives. They are quite enough for me.
- GONGOLO: You want to add mine as a seventh. How greedy can you get?
- OEDEKE: Say that again.
- GONGOLO: I have said it.
- OEDEKE: Are you mad or drunk with *waragi*?
- GONGOLO: How dare you abuse me?
- OEDEKE: It is not an abuse. What you are saying is not what a man in his right mind would say. I am trying to find an excuse.
- GONGOLO: You had better stop loving my wife.
- OEDEKE: *(slowing and clearly)* Your wife is my employee. That's all.
- GONGOLO: *(with heavy sarcasm)* It is as clear as daylight. Those tales don't fool me. A husband has no rights when the Chief is around. *Kondo!*
- OEDEKE: That is too much. I will bring a charge against you in the next Village Council Meeting.
- GONGOLO: What charge?
- OEDEKE: Slander.
- GONGOLO: I have not slandered you.
- OEDEKE: That is the charge.
- GONGOLO: *(realising he has gone too far)* Sir, I was only joking.

- OEDEKE: Get your witnesses together . . . (*He appears not to hear anything that Gongolo says*)
- GONGOLO: Sir, I did not mean what I said ...
- OEDEKE: And don't forget to bring your wife Kyaterekera. She will be required to give evidence ...
- GONGOLO: Please, let this be the last time. Excuse me ...
- OEDEKE: And if I win the case ...
- GONGOLO: (*with increasing desperation*) Sir, let this stop here ...
- OEDEKE: You will give me a goat and two calabashes of beer as compensation for my loss of reputation ...
- GONGOLO: Sir, we have been friends for a long time. You know me.
- OEDEKE: You had better be ready to pay the compensation. I shall win the case. And ...
- GONGOLO: Please, Chief, I'm sorry. Forgive me. I didn't mean to offend you.
- OEDEKE: And it is possible that the case will go to the High Court before the Chief Justice ...
- GONGOLO: Reconsider, mercy, please.
- OEDEKE: You might spend years in jail.
- GONGOLO: Sir, let things stop here. Accept my goat now.
- OEDEKE: I want justice.
- GONGOLO: Sir, sir, you are the father of the village, we are your children. Pardon me. Pardon your son.
- OEDEKE: (*looking at Gongolo, his face relaxing*) Ah ... I see now you realise my position in this village. Let me warn you once and for all that your loose talk will one day land you in Luzira. If I were an alien in this village, things would go further. But I am an elder. Look at me. How long have I known you? I saw you as a baby and I watched you grow to manhood. Now you have the face to stand there and

say I love your wife. Didn't I watch her grow up too? Didn't I see you married?

GONGOLO: I am deeply sorry, sir.

OEDEKE: You had better be.

GONGOLO: I did not mean what I said, sir. I was angry.

OEDEKE: Will you say such a foolish thing again?

GONGOLO: Never, sir. Thank you for forgiving me.

OEDEKE: You have a good wife. You know you have. Why don't you work together now as you used to do when you were first married? Aren't you ashamed that she has to earn what you, her husband, ought to provide? It would serve you right if she did look elsewhere for comfort. Perhaps this will make you realise she is still an attractive woman.

GONGOLO: (*nods slowly, thinking deeply*) Umm.

Flashback

Activity 12

The excerpt below is from Okiya Omtatah Okoiti's play, *Voice of the People*. Read it. Look out for a situation where one of the characters takes on the character of another person who is not present. Discuss the reason for this.

INDONDO: ... I am obeying orders.

NASIRUMBI: Whose orders?

INDONDO: Those of my publisher. Mr. Dalang'i hardly comes here. He summons me to his office whenever he wants to talk to me. This time, however, on Wednesday, like a prey in flight, he burst in here ...

(FLASHBACK: During the above speech, INDONDO gestures and accidentally knocks over a document tray from his table scattering papers onto the floor. Lights change, triggering off the flashback. NASIRUMBI

picks up the papers. She gives him one of the sheets of paper, impersonating Mr. DALANG'I, the publisher. The changeover should be as seamless as possible.)

NASIRUMBI: Take a good look at this letter I have written you.

(INDONDO goes through the letter.)

INDONDO: Mr. Dalang'i, why write such a strong letter when you could simply call me over to your place?

NASIRUMBI: *(In panic)* Boss has been to my place.

INDONDO: *(Aware of the gravity of the situation)* We are an independent paper. The authorities have no business trying to direct our editorial policy.

NASIRUMBI: See to it that you do EXACTLY as Boss demands in that letter.

INDONDO: Mr. Dalang'i, what Boss is asking is totally against our editorial policy. We will not shirk our duty of protecting the public from his breach of trust ...

NASIRUMBI: I've walked a long treacherous road to get to where I am. I won't risk everything by fighting the system. Right there in your hands are orders from Boss. No. They are my orders. They draw a clear line on the ground. Don't cross it.

INDONDO: But we're only reporting the truth.

NASIRUMBI: What's the value of truth when history is written by one side – the victors! Just do what Boss demands.

INDONDO: Mr. Dalang'i, I cannot use The Voice of the People so recklessly. I cannot accept the demands of Boss because they exist in the logic of dictatorship – the warped logic of gross abuse of office.

- NASIRUMBI: The Voice of the People is an investment. It must justify its existence. It's not a platform for peddling lofty ideas.
- INDONDO: We must show some concern.
- NASIRUMBI: The number one concern for any businessman worth the name is good returns.
- INDONDO: We also have a duty to our readership – to the society that over the years has trusted and invested in us ... given us business, helped us grow from a backstreet publication to what we are today.
- NASIRUMBI: We pay taxes. We have created and continue to create jobs. We contribute to charity... What else do you want?
- INDONDO: I am not talking about pittance. Let's give back something that will touch everybody personally and radically change the way things are done in this country for the better.

Flashback is a technique in drama by which an event or scene that takes place before the present time in the play is inserted into the chronological structure of the play.

- Flashback gives insight into a character's current motivation and emotional state. It makes the audience understand why a character behaves in a particular manner.
- Flashback shows an event that happened years before the play began which is vitally important for the audience to know in order to fully understand the conflict or mysterious circumstances around which a play revolves.
- Flashback enhances suspense in a play which arouses interest and curiosity among the audience.

Asides

An aside is a short comment or speech from a character that is spoken directly to the audience. It is only meant for the audience. The other actors on set can physically hear the words but as their characters, they pretend as if nothing was said. On the other hand, the audience ‘understands’ that the message was meant for them alone.

Aside gives special information to the audience about the plot and other actors onstage. It is like a window into the thoughts of characters. Since aside is a comment about the characters without bringing into their knowledge, it gives better understanding to the audience about the essence of the matter. Asides also give enjoyable experience to the audience as an actor talks to them directly, drawing them closer to his/her actions and thoughts. They can enter into true thoughts and feelings of actors.

Differences between Aside and Soliloquy

Both Aside and Soliloquy are dramatic techniques that have some similarities and differences. The similarity between them is that a single character speaks directly to himself or audience and no other character can hear the speech. The difference between them is that an aside is a shorter, while a soliloquy is a longer speech and another difference is that Aside reveals hidden secrets or judgments, whereas the soliloquy reveals motives, inner thoughts or internal struggles going on in the mind of the character.

Entrance

Activity 13

Discuss the meaning and importance of this direction: (*Enter Tusubira*)

Exit

Activity 14

Discuss the meaning of: (*Exit*)

Props

Activity 15

Here is a list that is at the beginning of the play, *The Cooking Pan and Other Plays*. Go through it and discuss the meaning of props.

Props list

On stage at beginning:

In hut: Cooking-pan (covered as if shirt, trousers and sandals with matoke leaves) for Gongolo

Sticks, water, matches, wrapper for Tusuubira

Water pot, hat for Gongolo at Cooking stones at the end

Off-stage (mostly hand props for characters entering):

Hoe – Gongolo. He places it by the hut on his entry and picks it up for his final exit.

Books and letter – Tusuubira

Firewood – Kyaterekera

New cooking-pan – to be placed on stage when lights are lowered for Unit H.

Old cooking-pan – Kyaterekera, Unit H. (Preferably a different one from that removed immediately before her entry to avoid delay but the same size and blackness, though it could have a clean patch to show where it has been mended)

Water pot taken off by Sebeku at his exit in Unit F. Must be replaced on stage with the cooking pot before Unit H.

Spear and hunting net – Gongolo. Unit H.

Costumes

Activity 16

- Imagine you were Gongolo. How would you dress in order to bring out his character well?
- Imagine you were acting a priest or an Imam. How would you dress to look like one?
- Discuss the meaning of costumes.

7.4 Purpose

Activity 17

What do you think was the purpose of the play, *The Cooking Pan and Other Plays*? Why was it written? Discuss this with your desk mate.

Playwrights write plays to achieve particular ends. This is what is referred to as **purpose** in drama. The purpose of a play may for example include:

- a. Entertain
- b. Educate
- c. Re-enact history

Activity 18

Discuss and point out the purpose of the play 'The Cooking Pan.'

Practice Exercise

1. State the key elements of a play.
2. List the dramatic techniques you have learnt about in this Unit. Briefly explain what each of them entails.
3. What does purpose refer to in drama?
4. How do the issues highlighted in the play 'The Cooking Pan' relate to those that you have either witnessed or experienced in your own country?
5. Drawing evidence from the play, describe the character traits of Kyate.

7.5 Types of characters

Round character

Activity 19

From the excerpts that you have read from the play, *The Cooking Pan and Other Plays*,

- a. Which character reminds you of someone who behaves in a similar manner from your area?
- b. Which character grows and changes?

A **round character** is a complex and fully developed character. We may relate to this kind of character as a human being since we come to know so much about him or her. The **protagonists** develop with the story and we are able to account for the changes that occur in their lives.

Flat character

Activity 20

- Who do you think are the main characters in the play, *The Cooking Pan and Other Plays*? Give reasons for your answer.
- Sebeku is Gongolo and Kyate's son. What else do you think you know about him? Does the play reveal much about him?
- From the excerpts you have read so far, is Sebeku as interesting as his father or mother?

A **flat character** is unsophisticated or plain. The story may not reveal so much about a flat character. Flat characters are not central to the story. A flat character may only have 'two' sides, representing only one or two character traits.

Stock character

A **stock character** is one who is easily recognized by readers or audiences from recurrent appearances. He or she is easily recognisable because of his or her flatness. Stock characters tend to be easy targets for parody and criticism.

Assignment

Visit the library and read about entrance/exit, props and costumes. Use the internet to generate information regarding their contribution to the development of plot in a play. Make your own notes and present your findings before the class.

UNIT

8

Topic area: Drama

Subject Matter, Theme
and Message

Subject matter

Theme

Message

Key unit competency:

To be able to communicate personal opinion of plays referring to the subject matter, the themes and the messages.

Activity 1

The excerpt below is from *Voice of the People*, a play by Okiya Omtatah Okoiti. Read it and say what its subject and theme are.

- NASIRUMBI: Destroying Simbi Forest is neither right nor prudent.
- BOSS: Of course, it's not!
- NASIRUMBI: And it is unpopular.
- BOSS: Boss shuns popularity. I must do what is right.
- NASIRUMBI: Where I stand there's no second opinion to this madness.
- BOSS: As a private citizen you are free to say that. As Boss I cannot.
- NASIRUMBI: Put your foot down and simply say no.
- BOSS: I have neither the legal nor the constitutional authority to throw my weight about.
- NASIRUMBI: (*With force, closes in on him.*) You have the final word!
- BOSS: (*Firm as he paces past her*) Madam, we agree on doctrine; we only differ on method. Any day, anywhere, you win the argument. But you must be careful not to lose the war. The people want to be listened to – they must be heard. It'll be futile to try and intimidate people into doing the master's will. In a democracy, there are no masters. We must have consultations and work hard at consensus building with serious attempts at compromise.
- NASIRUMBI: Compromise over Simbi Forest?
- BOSS: We need time to digest what we have and to build consensus. (*Pause*) The million-dollar question is: will the project bring visible improvement in the people's material circumstance? If the answer is yes ...
- NASIRUMBI: No!
- BOSS: Yes!

- NASIRUMBI: Never!
- BOSS: If the answer is yes then, we must be ready to negotiate and compromise in the spirit of give and take.
- NASIRUMBI: No!
- BOSS: Whatever happens to Simbi is a prerogative of the people.
- NASIRUMBI: No. It will be your doing!
- BOSS: Simbi Forest's survival cannot be granted or denied by the Government. Simbi Forest doesn't belong to the Government; it belongs to the people. The people must decide its fate. Power resides with the people. The mandate is the people's to not only choose who but most importantly how it is exercised. The will of the people will be cheated if we don't hold a referendum on the issue.
- NASIRUMBI: A referendum?
- BOSS: Put Simbi Forest to a vote.
- NASIRUMBI: What?!
- BOSS: Let the people decide!
- NASIRUMBI: Where's the commitment to protect the environment which you always preach?
- BOSS: Boss will protect Simbi Forest.
- NASIRUMBI: If your aim is to save the forest, why disguise it?

- Subject is a topic, which acts as a foundation for a story
- A theme is an opinion expressed on the subject.

Activity 2

The excerpt below is from *Big Muya and Small Muya*, a play by Christine J. Matenjwa. Read it and state its subject and its central theme.

LITTLE MU YA AND BIG MU YA

A One-Act Play based on a Gikuyu Folktale

SCENE I

UNIT A

Rhythmic beat of metal hitting metal for ten seconds. Curtain rises to reveal two boys, one seated, the other kneeling. The elder holds a hammer with which he bangs on a flat piece of metal, which the younger one holds firmly to the ground. Big Muya is about 17 years old – but is rather big for his age. Dark-skinned, kind, round-faced. He is seated, right. Little Muya is about 13 or 14, skinny, narrow-faced, light-skinned. He is kneeling down. Up stage, right, small hut (the boys). Upstage, centre left, a hill with bushes on top. Downstage right the entrance to a larger hut, the Woman's. Big Muya lifts the flat metal, examines it and nods with satisfaction. Places it on the ground but before he can go on, a loud, nasty, ugly voice is heard offstage, left.

VOICE:

MUYAAA! MU YA! MUYAEEEE! Now where could that rascal have gone to – Muya! *(The two boys look at each other in alarm. The elder rises as Woman enters. She is tall and big and carries a Kiondo, a hoe and a panga. Her forehead is lined with a frown. She is untidily dressed, with no shoes. Her mouth is perpetually twisted. The whole of her carries the dissatisfied, quarrelsome look. She places her things inside her hut with an angry thud and moves to the standing Muya.)*

WOMAN:

There you are, you good-for-nothing, worthless son of a bastard. *(louder)* Didn't those stupid ears of yours hear me calling? Or are they just decorations? *(pulling his ears. She is taller than the boy).* Why didn't you answer when I called? Or you thought I was doing it for exercise? *(Looking around)* Where is the water I sent you for?

Where is the firewood? Where are the *nirio* for the goats?
Eh?

BIG MUYA: But, mother

WOMAN: (*shouting*) Don't "but" me, you mad man! Who is your servant here, eh ... eh? Me? All you think of is eating, eating and sleeping and playing with these ... these toys (*she kicks the metal which goes clattering away*) Go now and fetch the water, and the firewood. Go! (*pushing him*) And don't let me see that ugly face of yours till evening. Go – What are you waiting for? (*screaming*) Go! I say! Go!
(*Exit Muya, head bowed, left, picking up pot from Woman's house as he goes. Woman turns to her own son who is bending to pick up the metal, dismay on his face. She moves to him. Speaks more softly, though her words are still hard*)

WOMAN: And you, stupid one. How many times must I tell you not to play with that one, eh? How many times?

LITILE MUYA: But, mother, Muya is my brother and he is always kind to me. He never beats me and daddy says . . .

WOMAN: Never mind what your daddy says ... I say Muya is a bad, wicked boy and you must – not – play – with – him. Understand? He will teach you bad ways.

LITILE MUYA: Is that why you beat him every day and call him names? Is that why you make him do women's work? Fetching water and all that? When my father comes I'll tell him.

WOMAN: (*sweetly and coaxingly*) Come on, my father, forget about Muya. You cannot understand these things. Come (*pulling him*) I have something nice I kept for you. Come. (*They enter the hut*)

8.1 How to identify a theme in a play

Activity 3

Below is an excerpt from a play. Do the following:

- Read and understand it.
- Write down the play's plot and characterization.
- Write down the conflicts in the play. Ask yourself, what was the most important moment in the work? Does the author resolve the conflict? How did the work end?
- Write down the topic of the play.

UNIT E

Two girls play downstage right. Woman peels potatoes outside hut. Son bangs metal with hammer, centre stage.

- LITTLE MUYA: Mother, it is getting dark and my brother is not here. Where did you send him? *(pause)* Mother, where is our Muya?
- WOMAN: *(angrily)* Am I the one who carries Muya on my back? You should know better. Muya is not a baby. He is a big man who knows what he is doing. He went by himself when he wanted and he will return when he wants. So don't bother me any more with questions. You have never seen him on this back.
- CIRU: Maybe he went to Nairobi. He always said he would run away.
- WAHU: Yes, I think he went to Nairobi.
- WOMAN: We don't care whether he went to Nairobi or Nakuru. So shut up, you fools, and come inside. It is getting dark. *(She goes into hut. Her daughters follow. Little Muya is left alone on stage)*
- LITTLE MUYA: How could he go to Nairobi and leave me? He always said he would take me with him: I am afraid. It is growing

dark and the hyenas prowl at night. I fear for my brother.
Muya my brother. Where are you? (*sings*)

(*Silence. Then a very faint voice is heard*)

BIG MUYA: (*repeats same song*)

LITTLE MUYA: (*surprised, tries to trace origin of song*) Did I hear right?
Was that a voice or am I dreaming? I heard a voice singing
back to me. (*sings first line again. Silence. Woman's voice
interrupts from inside, shouting*)

WOMAN: Muya, have you gone mad? Sitting outside in the dark
talking to yourself? Come inside quickly and eat!

LITTLE MUYA: (*in a soft gentle voice*) Mother, I do not want to eat.

WOMAN: All right, if you don't want my food, then go to sleep.
Stop babbling to yourself like one demented!

(*Little Muya goes into own hut. Lights darken completely.
Throughout light change, song heard faintly. A short
pause, then lights begin to dim up to sunrise effect. Little
Muya leaves hut and stretches himself. Silence. Pacing.*)

UNIT G

LITTLE MUYA: It wasn't a dream. No, it wasn't. I heard the voice singing
over and over again in the night. I wasn't dreaming. It
was my brother's voice. I know it was. But where did it
come from? From the skies? ... From the air? ... From the
earth? From where? (*song again from hole*)

LITTLE MUYA: (*excitedly*) There it is again! I heard it clearly. It came
from . . . from . . . there . . .

(*Pointing. Just then Woman emerges from hut carrying
kiondo, hoe and panga. Girls trail her.*)

WOMAN: (*laughs*) Now I see you are completely out of your mind.
All you heard is the wind singing through the leaves of
the tree like this (*sings*)uuuuuu. You heard NO voice – do
you hear? No voice at all. It is only the wind, my son.

- LITTLE MUYA: But my brother ...
- WOMAN: *(sweetly)* Forget about him. He has gone and left you. I told you he was bad. Think about us who are here. Me. Your sisters. Forget him ... Let me go now. Your lunch is beside the fire. Remember to do all I have told you, you two, and behave yourselves. *(exit, left)* *(Little Muya is left standing thoughtful. The two girls whisper to each other.)*
- CIRU: Mother says he is gone mad, he hears voices and all that ...
- WAHU: Yes, he looks mad. But where is Big Muya? He promised to make a little house . . . *(she is almost in tears)*
- CIRU: Shall we ask him? *(Louder)* Muya Munini!
(He jumps, startled, angry.)
- LITTLE MUYA: What is it? Why don't you go out and play? Don't disturb me ... *(Just then the singing voice is heard. Muya shouts excitedly)* There. Did you hear it?
- CIRU: *(cowering and backing in fear)* Hear what? We heard nothing.
- WAHU: No, nothing!
- LITTLE MUYA: *(viciously)* Listen. The voice came from there. *(all turn.)* Listen hard. *(he sings. Silence. Then voice is heard)*
- CIRU: *(excited)* Yes, I heard it! I heard it!
(They move in general direction of hole, not too near. Stop.)
- WAHU: Let's all sing. *(all sing. Voice answers)*
- CIRU: It came from here. *(points in one direction)*
- LITTLE MUYA: No, here. *(points to side)*
(They all crowd to edge of trap. Little Muya sees traces of hole. Removes top bushes. All talk at once)
- LITTLE MUYA: There is a hole here. A hole.

CIRU: There is somebody inside. It is my brother.

WAHU: He is in the hole.

LITTLE MUYA: Call the people. Muya! Muya!

UNIT H

They scream and shout for help, the girls running up and down. Background drums should beat fast to show confusion, excitement and chaos as neighbours, friends, pour in mass confusion. Everybody peering at hole, screaming. Enter Muturi, with bags, as the neighbours pull Big Muya out of the hole. Muturi runs to crowd.

MUTURI: What is happening here? Muya, what is the matter? What is happening? Where is your mother?
(All talk at once, interrupting each other.)

CIRU: Daddy, daddy, Big Muya was in the hole covered by sticks and stones.

LITTLE MUYA: My mother put him there.

WAHU: And we heard a song and followed.

MUTURI: (holds up his hand for silence) Tell me slowly what happened?

LITTLE MUYA: My mother put him (pointing to Big Muya) in the hole and we have just pulled him out.

MUTURI: (rushes to Big Muya and embraces him) Oh, my son, who did this to you?

UNIT I

Big Muya points at the Woman who has just entered. She drops all she is carrying. All turn to face her. Fear and panic, watching each face. All are silent as they mime the dance of condemning her. They move to her slowly in rhythm, the drum beating beat by beat. As they near her, rapid mixed-up fast drums. As they surround her, beating her, much movement and sound. They form a circle round her. She kneels in the centre, very scared. They dance two steps towards her, accusing fingers pointing at her. Two steps away, then they point at her, slow beat. After one round, the drums beat fast and confused as they punish her in rhythm. Then the slow beat as they

move away from her as if she was a leper. She begins to mime a dance of begging forgiveness, swaying left and right as she kneels. Raising her eyes and hands to heaven. When she stretches her hands to the crowd, they move back. She rises, still dancing forgiveness, grief and sorrow on her face. She runs to husband who turns away. She runs to Big Muya who does the same. In desperation she furiously unfastens her belt and makes as if to strangle herself. All run to her, begging her not to. Tears and real grief. Goes before her husband who embraces her in forgiveness and points to Big Muya. She goes to Big Muya who embraces her.

Lights lower. Transition music. Sound of metal being hit. Lights rise again. The Woman's angry voice is heard.

WOMAN: How many times must I tell you to bring me water? And where is the fire-wood, you lazy bones, eh ... ?

(Lights reveal Woman standing, hands on hips, looking down at Big Muya who is busy with his hammer and metal ignoring her) Do you think the food you eat comes from heaven? Answer me! I will not stand this disobedience! I won't! I won't ...

(BLACKOUT)

8.2 Messages in plays

Activity 4

You have learnt about messages in works of literature. Remind yourselves what is meant by 'message'.

The excerpt below is from *Voice of the People*, a play by Okiya Omtatah Okoiti

Read it and say what message the playwright is putting across.

NASIRUMBI: (Rises, ready to leave, smiling at great effort.) I am most honoured by your welcome.

BOSS: (Calls out to SIBUOR) Sibuur!

SIBUOR: (Offstage) Your Excellency ...

BOSS: Bring the envelope.

SIBUOR: (Offstage) Blue, green, yellow or red?

BOSS: Brown. (Directly to her) Anybody who takes a stand when it is easy and rewarding to simply cruise the middle deserves my total respect.

(SIBUOR enters and hands the envelope over to BOSS who reaches inside it to bring out a wad of notes. Surprised by the unexpected donation, she hesitates, and he literally has to put the money into her hand.)

NASIRUMBI: No, thank you.

BOSS: It's only a small token ... one hundred thousand ... my small donation to the Mothers' Front. I'll organise something more substantial soon.

NASIRUMBI: (*Genuinely grateful*) Oh, thank you very much!
(*Exit SIBUOR.*)

BOSS: It's nothing really. We are kindred spirits. Judge me on results.

NASIRUMBI: One hundred thousand will keep our lunch programme for street children going for some time.

BOSS: Boss will support you. Keep in touch.

NASIRUMBI: (*Puts the money into her handbag*) Our treasurer will send you a receipt for this donation.

BOSS: I don't need a receipt. When Boss gives to charity with his heart, it ends there.

NASIRUMBI: You will get an official acknowledgement from the Mothers' Front.

BOSS: Generosity is its own reward.

NASIRUMBI: (*Smiling*) Nevertheless, you have given the money to the Mothers' Front. It's public money and our treasurer must acknowledge receipt. We like to be accountable.

BOSS: You are a tough one, aren't you?

NASIRUMBI: The Mothers' Front is held together by trust. In the long run, it always pays to do things the correct way.

BOSS: We shouldn't let perfect be the enemy of good.

NASIRUMBI: At the very least we have to be the best we can be.

- BOSS: Your judgment is right, but I find the reasoning a bit askew.
- NASIRUMBI: That's how I do my things.
- BOSS: As you wish, Iron Lady.
- NASIRUMBI: (*Leaving*) Thank you for the compliment and thank you for everything.
- BOSS: (*As NASIRUMBI begins walking off*) Just a minute! (*Gets out a visiting card, scribbles his numbers on it and gives it to her.*) Those are my direct numbers. You can reach me at will. I'd like to know more about the Mothers' Front: your membership, your goals and objectives, your strengths and weaknesses – things that will enable Boss to support your projects fully. During Christmas this year, Boss will host a garden party for the Mothers' Front and the street families under your care. What do you think?
- NASIRUMBI: Not a bad idea.
- BOSS: We can do a lot together. Just keep me informed about your progress on this case. Should you need any help or favours my door is wide open. Call me at any time, day or night. If Boss is not around, the Hon. Sibuur will attend to you. You can get him on any of these numbers. (*He scribbles on the card.*) Sibuur is my man – trust him fully.
- NASIRUMBI: Thank you very much, Your Excellency.
- BOSS: Before you go, I'll take you on a brief tour of my botanical gardens at the back of that house and down the garden path to the main gate. I have beautiful trees and flowers from around the world. You won't believe the diversity. (*As they leave*) You will keep the limo and driver for the day. (*She does not respond*) Please, ensure we choose the road of dialogue. A society that's happy and healthy listens to itself. Keep me informed about your plans. Don't do anything; don't even issue a statement to the media, before you first clear with me.

(*They walk off and the lights fade out slowly.*)

(BLACKOUT)

A **message** is the lesson the writer wishes to convey to the society through a play. There will always be many messages in a single play.

Practice Exercise

- a. Define the following terms as used in drama:
 - i. Subject matter
 - ii. Theme
 - iii. Message
- b. Briefly explain the meaning of 'main theme'.
- c. Based on the play you just read, explain how the events in the play are similar to or different from the experiences in your society.

Assignment

Visit the school library and read a play. When you finish, identify the subject matter, themes and message(s) of the play.

Glossary

Act:	A large division of a play.
Alliteration:	The repetition of initial consonant sounds used especially in poetry to emphasize and link words as well as to create pleasing, musical sounds. Example—the fair breeze blew, the white foam flew.
Antagonist:	The person or force that works against the hero of the story. (See protagonist)
Assonance:	The repetition of a vowel sound in a line of poetry.
Character:	A person in a literary text.
Chiku:	The short form of the Kikuyu name Wanjiku
Dialogue:	A conversation between two or more characters.
Drama:	A genre of literature which uses dialogue and action to enact a story.

Figurative language:	The presentation of words which have alternative meanings other than the literal meanings.
Hyperbole:	Deliberate exaggeration.
Maasai:	a community living both in Kenya and Tanzania.
Metaphor:	A direct comparison of two dissimilar things without using “as” or “like.”
Mumbwa:	(Luganda) Clay and fine sand mixed with crushed medicinal leaves, shaped into small cylinders and dried. The <i>mumbwa</i> is grated into a little water and the mixture drunk to cure various kinds of ailments
Novel:	A sub genre of literature which takes the form of a long prose narrative.
Novella:	a short novel.
Personification:	The assigning of human attributes to non-human things.
Play:	A piece of drama in which a story/events are acted out.
Plot:	The arrangement of events in a literary text in terms of causality and interconnectedness.
Poem:	A genre of literature which exists in verse form
Prose:	A genre of writing in which language structures are presented naturally and in paragraphs rather than verse.
Protagonist:	The main character in a story, often a good or heroic type.
Scene:	A division of an act which shows a specific setting and actions.
Setting:	The time period or geographical place in which the events in a text occur.
Simile:	A comparison in which two dissimilar things are compared using “as” or “like.”
Stage directions:	Instructions in a play which indicate the actions of the characters as well as the setting. They are written in brackets.
Theme:	The main subject that is being discussed in a literary text.
Tragedy:	A sub-genre of drama in which there is a hero whose moral weakness leads him to fall to ruin.

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