

Achievers

Literature in English

For Rwandan Schools

Senior 1
Student's Book

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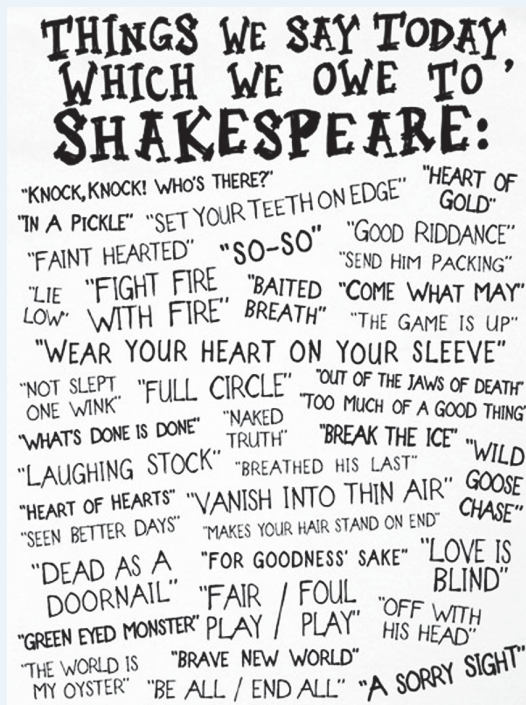
Unit 1

Introduction to literary genres

Definitions of literature

Activity 1

Study the picture below on your own. Discuss the writing with your desk mate. What are they?



Activity 2

- Discuss with your desk mate what you think literature is.
- Read the notes below as your desk mate listens. When you are through, let him or her read as you listen. Thereafter, discuss the notes with him or her.

Generally, literature refers to any written material. You may have heard people say ‘I do not like the literature on the notice board’ or ‘his T-shirt has very nice literature at the back.’ Your textbooks, school fee receipts or even the end of term report card can be referred to as literature.

Activity 3

Tell your desk mate about any novel, short story, or poem that you have ever read. What makes it different from a receipt or your end of term school report card? Discuss this with your desk mate.

Activity 4

Read the notes below as your desk mate listens. When you are through, let him or her read as you listen. Thereafter, discuss the notes with him or her.

Literature has a more technical and specific meaning. It refers to a kind of art, which uses language in a special way to comment on society. For example, poems and short stories use language in creative and artistic ways. They make observations and comments on human life and human society. Literature is an art that is created out of language. It refers to works of art, which appeal to our intellect. Literature appeals to our emotions in ways that make us enjoy reading. It includes novels, poems and plays.



*Ngugi wa Thiong'o,
a novelist*

Activity 5

In groups of four, discuss why it is important to read a novel, a play or a poem.

Why is literature important to us?

1. Literature educates and informs us about our world. We are able to understand ourselves as well as other people better through reading literary texts. Literature enables us to know about other people, places and time periods without having to travel there physically.

2. Literature is very entertaining. Reading a literary text is a very rewarding experience since we are able to share our emotions with the text.
3. Literature satisfies and stimulates our imagination. It makes us curious and critical thinkers who evaluate things from a deeper level and not just the surface. Literature challenges our minds. It enables us to grow both intellectually and socially.
4. Literature helps us to understand our history and our identities better.
5. Literature helps us to get an idea about other disciplines, for example, philosophy, religion, psychology, science and morality.
6. Literature humanises us. It helps us to develop sensibility and compassion towards other human beings. It helps us to appreciate what is good in human character and to reject what is bad. It makes us better people.
7. Literature enables us to better fit in other professions. Employers in all professions seek employees who can express themselves creatively in spoken and written forms. These are skills which we learn by reading literary works.

Activity 6

In groups of four, discuss how different African traditional literature was from European literature. Which words would you use to refer to the African traditional literature?

Literature exists in two forms: **oral literature** and **written literature**. In our traditional Rwandan society, we have poems, songs, proverbs, riddles, tongue twisters and fairy tales. These are examples of oral literature. We refer to them as oral literature because they are not written in textbooks. Instead, they are carried in the memories of members of different communities, and they are passed down from one generation to another.

The word genre refers to a kind or a category of literature. Written literature can be divided into three broad genres or categories: **prose**, **poetry** and **drama**

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 ...

(From *They sold my sister* by Leteipa ole Sunkuli)

The crack

by *Sheikha El-Miskery*

Crack the glass,
And the crack
Will always remain.
The human heart
Has veins;
It's just delicate
To the strain

TOP AND BOTTOM

A play by *Mark M. Chetambe.*

Act 1

Scene 2

CLEOPHAS: We all heard the announcement. Cleophas will be the Head Prefect, and Amani will be expelled. Simple. Prepare to pick your letter of expulsion. I am very sure it is now being typed. I can feel the fingers of the secretary as she types that letter. "Dear ...

Prose refers to literature which is written in continuous sentences and paragraphs. Poetry on the other hand is the kind of literature which is written in verse form. Lastly, drama is written in dialogue form. However, in all the three categories of literature, the writers create characters who represent human beings that exist in human societies.

Activity 7

Observe the following texts on your own. In your groups of four, discuss and identify them either as prose, drama or poetry. In each case, give reasons for your answer. Thereafter, you can read them and answer the questions that appear below each text.

Text (i)

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 as many gifts as I had never 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 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.

(From *They sold my sister* by Leteipa ole Sunkuli)

Practice Exercise 1

- From the above excerpt, make a list of the characters.
- What actions show that the adults were unfair to the children?
- In one sentence, summarise what happens in this excerpt.

Text (ii)

An African Thunderstorm

David Rubadiri

From the west
Clouds come hurrying with the wind
Turning sharply
Here and there
Like a plague of locusts
Whirling,
Tossing up things on its tail
Like a madman chasing nothing.

Pregnant clouds
Ride stately on its back,
Gathering to perch on hills
Like sinister dark wings;
The wind whistles by
And trees bend to let it pass.

In the village
Screams of delighted children,
Toss and turn
In the din of the whirling wind,
Women,
Babies clinging on their backs
Dart about
In and out
Madly;
The wind whistles by
Whilst trees bend to let it pass.

Clothes wave like tattered flags
Flying off
To expose dangling breasts
As jagged blinding flashes

Rumble, tremble and crack
Amidst the smell of fired smoke
And the pelting march of the storm.

Practice Exercise 2

- With your desk mate, discuss what is causing the commotion?
- With your desk mate, discuss and explain where these events are taking place.
- In groups of four, identify the phrases, which begin with the word 'like'. Discuss in your group, why you think they have been used.

Text (iii)

(Silence as the curtains rise. Sounds of cutlery only. Mr Bwenbya occasionally clears his throat. Ian has his earphones on. Lisa looks tense whilst Linda is oblivious to all the tension.)

MR BWEMBYA: So did everyone have a good day?

LINDA: Yes! The rehearsal went really well!

LISA: That's really nice Linda. Keep up the good work.

LINDA: Mrs Afumba says I'll definitely win the best actress award! She says that I act very well as a rich man's girlfriend.

IAN: *(mumbling)* Because you have a living example in this house.

MR BWEMBYA: what did you say ian?

IAN: Nothing.

LINDA: So Mummy, I need new clothes for the play because there are three different scenes and I must have an outfit for each scene. Mrs Afumba insists that I must look like an expensive high-class woman because I am the girlfriend of a very rich man. May I go shopping tomorrow Mummy?

LISA: Yes, we can, if Father gives us money. Maybe we can get Ian those sports shoes he's wanted for so long.

MR BWEMBYA: Let's buy Linda's clothes first since she needs them for the play soon and then we can buy Ian's shoes later.

IAN: *(mumbling)* Of course. Ian's needs are not that important! Did you say something young man?
(Silence)

MR BWEMBYA: So what about you Ian? Were you chosen to play in the school's rugby team?
(Silence)

MR BWEMBYA: (shouting) Ian, I am talking to you! Will you answer me!

IAN: What?

MR BWEMBYA: I asked you a question.

IAN: (looking defiant) What?

LISA: Ian! You cannot speak to your father like that!

IAN: And you cannot speak to me like that! You are not my mother.

MR BWEMBYA: Ian! Apologise to your mother right this minute!

IAN: She's not my mother. In case you have forgotten, my mother was packed out of this house and sent off to live in the village because of the girlfriend of a very rich man! In fact, I think I shall go live with my mother and leave this house to the girlfriend of a very rich man and her daughter.
(Ian walks off from the dinner table.)

MR BWEMBYA: Ian! Come back this minute! Ian ...!

(The family feud by Razwana Kimutai)

Practice Exercise 3

- From the excerpt above, you have noticed that some words are in brackets. What do you think is the purpose of these phrases? Discuss this in your group.
- What seems to be the problem in this family? Discuss this in your group.
- Do you think Ian behaved well? Discuss this in your group.
- In groups of four, discuss the message from this excerpt.

Activity 8

Dramatize this excerpt in your class.

Practice Exercise 4

- From the examples of prose, poetry and drama above, what differences can you identify between the three genres of literature? Discuss in groups of four and present your answers to the rest of the class.
- Select a passage from any newspaper and discuss whether it is fiction or non-fiction.

Activity 9

Below is an extract from Chinua Achebe's novel, *A Man of the People*. The author mixes direct speech (dialogue) with narration. Read it on your own.

Chief Koko, a fat jovial man wearing an enormous home-knitted red-and-yellow sweater was about to have coffee. He asked if we would join him or have some alcohol.

'I no follow you black white-men for drink tea and coffee in the hot afternoon,' said Chief Nanga. 'Whisky and soda for me and for Mr. Samalu.'

Chief Koko explained that nothing warmed the belly like hot coffee and proceeded to take a loud and long sip followed by a satisfied Ahh! Then he practically dropped the cup and saucer on the drinks table by his chair and jumped up as though a scorpion had stung him.

'They have killed me,' he wailed, wringing his hands, breathing hard and loud and rolling his eyes. Chief Nanga and I sprang up in alarm and asked together what had happened. But our host kept crying that they had killed him and they could now go and celebrate.

'What is it, S.I.?' asked Chief Nanga, putting an arm around the other's neck.

'They have poisoned my coffee,' he said, and broke down completely.

Meanwhile the steward, hearing his master's cry, had rushed in.

'Who poisoned my coffee?' he asked. 'Not me-o!'

'Call the cook!' thundered the Minister. 'Call him here. I will kill him before I die. Go and bring him.'

The steward dashed out again and soon returned to say the cook had gone out. The Minister slumped into his chair and began to groan and hold his stomach. Then his bodyguard whom we had seen dressed like a cowboy hurried in from the front gate, and hearing what had happened dashed out at full speed to try and catch the cook.

‘Let’s go and call a doctor,’ I said.

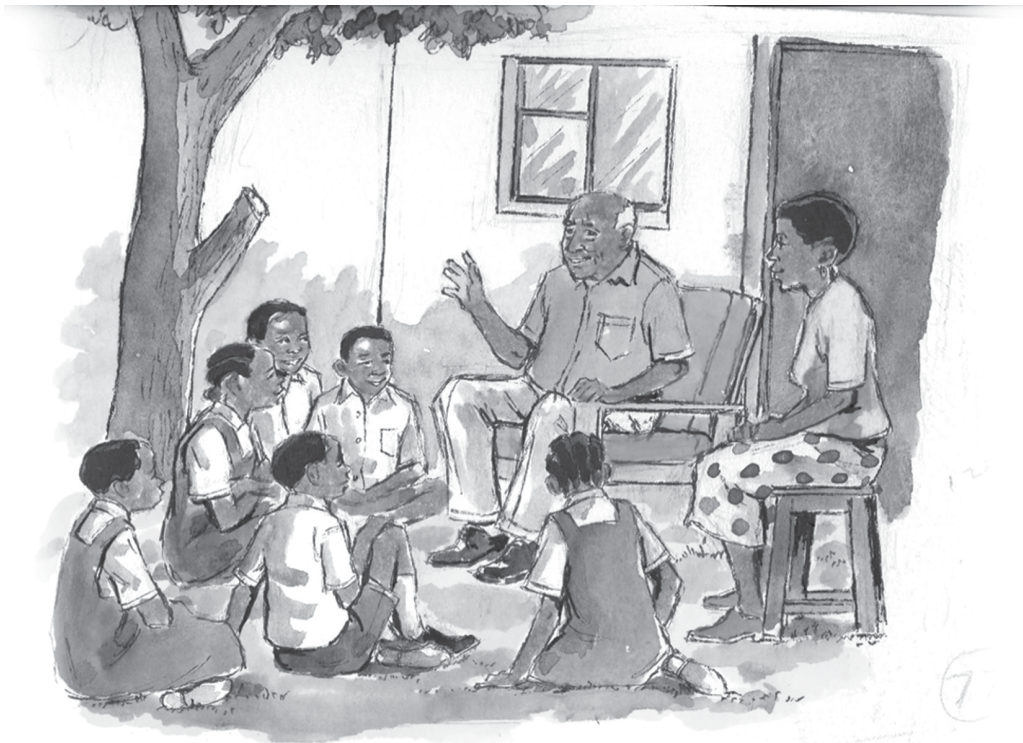
‘That’s right,’ said Chief Nanga with relief and, leaving his friend, rushed towards the telephone. I hadn’t thought about the telephone.

Practice Exercise 5

- In your words, write a definition of the word literature.
- Although dialogue is used primarily in drama, the excerpt above shows that it is also used in fictional prose. Examine the dialogue in this excerpt and suggest its function.
- Working in groups, dramatise the events in this extract as if it is a piece of drama.

Some types of literary genres: fairy tale, novel, autobiography, tragedy

A fairy tale is an imagined traditional story, which contains elements of fantasy or make-belief. In other words, the events in a fairy tale do not happen in the real world but they happen in the world of fantasy.



Activity 10

Below is an example of a fairy tale from Rwanda. Read it carefully and then respond to the questions after it.

There was a man, named Magorwa, who looked after his sheep and cultivated his fields. One day, while he was taking his sheep to graze, he noted that a rabbit in the bush had eaten some of his crops. When he came back the next day, the same small creature had eaten more of his crops. He took the rabbit back home and said, "I'm going to have to slaughter you for eating my crops."

The rabbit said, "Wait; please don't eat me. Forgive me and I will not eat your crops anymore."

Magorwa had a good heart; he forgave Rabbit and let him go.

On his way back to the field the next day, Magorwa was approached by Lion. Lion told him that he had to kill one of the sheep in the field and give it to him. Magorwa was scared and did as he was told. He went and killed one of his sheep and gave it to Lion. This kept happening day after day.

One day, on his way to his field, Magorwa met Rabbit. Rabbit said, "I see that you have less and less sheep. What has happened?"

Magorwa replied, "Lion comes every day and makes me give it one of my sheep. Now I have just a few of them left."

The little animal he had saved said, "The next time Lion comes I will be next to you, hidden in a bush. I will tell you what to say."

Magorwa took his sheep to the grasses and Lion once again came from the forest and told him it was time for him to give him another one of his flock. However, Magorwa said he would not give him any more. Rabbit was hidden next to Magorwa and spoke out loudly.

"Who are you talking to?" asked Lion.

Rabbit said loudly, "I am the king of heaven and earth who puts on the skin of lions."

"Who is that?" asked Lion.

"What are you looking for?" shouted Rabbit, hidden behind the bush.

Lion was scared and said, "I ... I'm just looking for firewood."

"Sit down and don't move!" shouted Rabbit, who then whispered to Magorwa to get the firewood rope and tie the hands and legs of Lion.

That is how Magorwa captured and killed the big ferocious Lion and saved his sheep, with the help of the little vegetable eating animal he had forgiven.

Practice Exercise 6

- a. What elements of this story belong to fantasy rather than reality?
- b. What lesson can you draw from this story?
- c. What evidence is there in this story that the community from which the story originates practices crop farming and animal husbandry?
- d. Rabbit is intelligent while Lion is cruel and foolish. Do you agree with this description?
- e. The animals in this story represent human values. What lessons can we draw from the behaviour of the small animal and the big animal?
- f. Think of any fairy tale you know and narrate it to your class in turns.

A novel is a long piece of narrative fiction. Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the*

People is a good example of a novel. *Animal Farm* by George Orwell is another example of a novel, which you will encounter soon. Which other novels have you come across?

An autobiography is an example of what is called non-fiction prose. This is a kind of prose that presents facts about a person's life but uses the style of fiction writing. In other words, the person's life is presented as a credible, interesting story with characters, setting and dialogue. A good example of an autobiography is Nelson Mandela's *No Easy Walk to Freedom*. Do you know any other autobiography? An autobiography is someone's life story written by the person himself or herself. A biography is someone's life story written by someone else.

Below is an excerpt from Bill Clinton's autobiography.

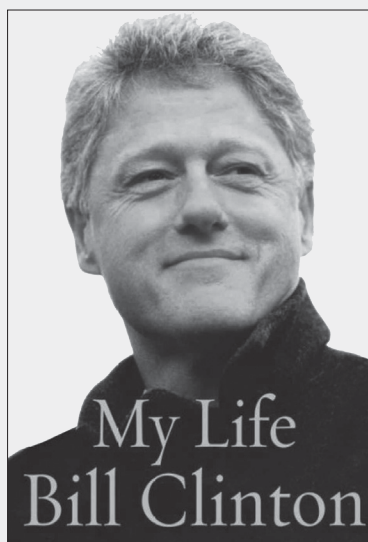
Early on the morning of August 1946, I was born under a clear sky. This was after a violent summer storm. I was born to a widowed mother in the Julia Chester Hospital in Hope. This is a town of about six thousand in south-west Arkansas. It is thirty-three miles east of the Texas boarder at Texarkana. My mother named me William Jefferson Blythe III after my father, William Jefferson Blythe Jr. My father was one of the nine children of a poor farmer in Sherman, Texas, who died when my father was seventeen.

According to his sisters, my father always tried to take care of them. He grew up to be a handsome, hardworking, fun-loving man. He met my mother at Tri-State Hospital in Shreveport, Louisiana, in 1943. She was training to be a nurse. Many times when I was growing up, I asked Mother to tell me the story of their meeting, courting, and marriage.

My father had brought a girlfriend with some kind of medical emergency into the ward where she was working. They talked and flirted while the other woman was being treated. On his way out of the hospital, he touched the finger on which she was wearing her boyfriend's ring and asked her if she was married. She stammered "no" – she was single. The next day he sent the other woman flowers and her heart sank. Then he called Mother for a date, explaining that he always sent flowers when he ended a relationship.

Two months later, they were married and he was off to war. He served in a motor pool in the invasion of Italy, repairing jeeps and tanks. After the war, he returned to Hope for Mother and they moved to Chicago, where he got his old job as a salesman for the Manbee Equipment Company. They bought a little house in the suburb of Forest Park. However, they couldn't move in for a couple of months. Since Mother was pregnant with me, they decided she should go home to Hope until they could get into the new house. On May, 17th, 1946, after moving their furniture into their new home, my father was driving from Chicago to Hope to fetch his wife.

Late at night on Highway Sixty outside of Sikeston Missouri. He lost control of his car, a 1942 Buick, when the right front tire blew out on a wet road. He was thrown clear of the car and landed in, or crawled onto, a drainage ditch. The ditch held three feet of water. When he was found, after a two hour-search, his hand was grasping a branch above the waterline. He had tried but failed to save himself. He drowned. He was only twenty-eight years old, married two years and eight months. He spent only seven months of the two years with Mother.



(Adapted from My Life, by Bill Clinton)

Practice Exercise 7

- Bill Clinton is a former President of the United States of America. In this excerpt, we learn that his father died at an early age. How did his father die?
- What was Bill Clinton's original name?
- What was Bill Clinton's mother's occupation?
- Bill Clinton's father had an interesting way of ending a relationship. Explain briefly how he used to do it.
- Autobiographies are highly personal in their tone. What details in this excerpt suggest that the author wants to reveal the deepest details of his life?

A tragedy is a kind of drama in which a heroic protagonist encounters a crisis and falls from grace to grass. Usually, tragedies involve serious events, and possibly death, especially the death of the main character. A good example of a tragedy is the play *Oedipus the King*, by an ancient Greek playwright called Sophocles. Another example of a tragedy is William Shakespeare's play called *Othello*. Do you know of any other tragic play?

Fiction and non-fiction

Activity 11

Discuss in groups the difference between fiction and non-fiction.

Characteristics of fictional and non-fictional literary works

Prose can be further divided into fictional and non-fictional prose. **Fictional works of art are imagined, or they originate in the mind of the writer.** For instance, when you write a short story, a novella or a novel, you will create characters and places that do not necessarily exist in real life. On the other hand, **non-fictional works are based on true accounts of people, events and places.** Examples of non-fictional works are biographies, autobiographies, essays and articles. These are based on the lives of real people existing in real places.

Activity 12

Homework

The two extracts below are examples of fiction and non-fiction. Read them on your own, your spare time. Discuss the differences between them with members of your group.

Fiction

Morrison Okoli (1955-2010)

by Jekwu Anyaegbuna

Morrison, my brother. You came in fifty-five and left at fifty-five. What a coincidence! The coffin has killed you. So this is the end of it all, Morrison. I warned you, didn't I? But you lied to me that everybody in America kept a coffin as household property for preserving valuables – things you do not want others to see. I could not argue with you because you resisted my point of view, saying I was rustic. I sealed up my mouth. After all, our people say a traveller is more knowledgeable than a white-haired old man sitting on an armchair. It's true I have never travelled beyond the map of Nigeria. I don't even have an international passport, to start with.

At the airport, customs were worried about the empty coffin you carried. When they opened it, they did not see a corpse. They saw dollars, and their faces migrated from sympathies to smiles. They rubbed their palms like starving squirrels, and flaunted their coconut teeth like precious stones plugged to their gums. They knocked on their stomachs. They were hungry. But you did not understand until I told you what they meant. Did I say it with my mouth? No, I didn't. I clicked my fingers, and you understood the sound and sign with your quick American brain. When you handed some crisp dollar bills to them, they let us go. They did not see the narcotics buried underneath the dollars. They did not even bother to check. If they had checked and found out, there could not have been any problems because a kilogram or two handed to them would have made them happier, and of course richer.

We are at the cemetery. Military cemetery. Jehoshaphat is here with us. You told us to address the dog as a fine gentleman. We've been doing that ever since. He has been wagging his tail around your coffin, and we do not know what to tell him. Nobody is educated enough to speak American English to

him, to tell him that you are dead, that you're now the one inside the coffin. Those things you used to tell him are very difficult to say with our own type of stiff tongues accustomed to our heavy Nigerian English: *Hey c'mon, darling. Ovurrr here, ovurrr there.*

When I asked you years ago to marry a woman, you told me that you were married to Jehoshaphat and had a marriage certificate issued for the union. I did not understand, but you made it clear to me. 'Jehoshaphat is a dog,' you said. A beautiful bulldog. Born and raised in Ohio. Women should be kept on invitations, you said. To kiss and let go. Never for a permanent keep. That was what Adam did to Eve after they ate the ominous apple. You argued, he kissed her on a bunch of green leaves on a cold winter morning, and then he went into the bush to hunt, and he never returned to her any more.

Now there is no woman to cry for you. It is always an honour to have women cry during someone's burial, but yours is too silent for comfort. No one is going to shave their hair to mourn your death. Nobody is going to be widowed. No children rendered fatherless. I cannot hire mourners for you; my civil service salary has no provision for that, although I managed to bribe one of the cemetery priests working here, to pray for your Americanised, non-transferable soul. If we died the way we came, I would have to die first because I am your elder brother, and I imagined your death would be more ceremonial than this, with expensive obituaries on radio and television announcing your departure. Or is it easy to acquire American citizenship with a valid green card? How many Nigerians can achieve that without engaging in a dehumanising job or a ruse in America? Well, I cannot outline the jobs here, but I understand that there are some jobs in America that turn a man into a breastfeeding nanny. I am afraid to tell you that we will kill Jehoshaphat any moment now and destroy the marriage certificate since we cannot keep either. He does not recognise any of us; he doesn't even consider us humans worthy of his plays. We will give him a befitting burial; I can assure you of that. We will ensure that his grave sits very close to yours. I know you will miss him. In fact, we ought to have killed him and buried both of you together in one coffin because you both arrived in Nigeria together, as a couple. You should die and depart together. I blame myself for not recognising this logic earlier on.

Up till now I could not understand why you chose to consider a purchase receipt as a marriage certificate. Is that how they interpret things in America? Over-education can be counterproductive sometimes. Too much science spoils common sense. It seems in America small things are big, and big things are bigger. If you had died in America, your students at Ohio State University would have opened a beautiful condolence register and written heartfelt poetry for you. Can you compare poetry to a real woman, a real wife crying and screaming for you? Handwriting can never be equal to tear-soaked handkerchiefs. Your students would have sold the condolence register to major libraries, to immortalise you. That had been your wish because you never expected to die at home, to die in Nigeria. Who is interested in condolence registers here? I am sorry I have not opened one for you. Accept my apologies, but nobody would write anything meaningful on it because they did not know you, did not know I had a younger brother who was an Associate Professor.

Morrison. You spent years harvesting American degrees like vegetables, one PhD after another. From Columbia to Harvard to Yale to Princeton. Some time ago, I fantasized about having my name, Edward Okoli, written on one of the PhD certificates. Yes, people do it here. One could go to school in America and have another's name written on the certificate. The acquisition of knowledge is different from the ownership of certificates. Certificates are among the things immigrants in America send back to their native countries. They say Americans don't value certificates that much, but they value knowledge.

Here in Nigeria, we value certificates more than life itself. People enrol in a school and come back years later for their certificates. A certificate wins you a government contract, connects your mouth to some source of power, and makes you a demigod. It is a meal ticket here. That's what we call it. The name sounds crisp, certificate, like the paper on which it is printed. But I did not ask you, Morrison, to send me one of your PhD certificates. I did not because I know my conscience has a peppery fire that burns whenever I think a bad thought. I am approaching retirement from the civil service, you know, and I don't want the ghost of a PhD certificate to haunt me, to torment me in retirement.

And I must recognise your stardom. For the few months you spent here, you were a star, in fact a celebrity. People copied your lifestyle. Americanism is attractive, addictive, infectious. Once you're infected, there is no cure. One man cancelled his wedding because he saw you return from America without a wife. So he thought it unnecessary, too, to marry because an American citizen like you, educated and exposed, did not marry.

Morrison, it is unfortunate you still wore jeans trousers at fifty-five, and kept your belt halfway on your buttocks to reveal your white underwear. You called it 'sagging'. Wearing jeans this way is a fashion destroyer, a disaster. I wish you could stand up and watch young boys and girls 'sagging' on the street, their buttocks exposed as they walk like turkeys and tortoises. Well, they will remember you for bringing 'sagging' to Nigeria. You said people in America wore solid jeans even when they had broken legs and arms, and needed to wear something more comfortable. And that's why you're dressed in jeans trousers today and an Ohio State University branded T-shirt.

You did not return with your PhD certificates. I would have loved to bury you with them. Perhaps my people would copy that, too, whenever they want to bury educated relatives. We copy a lot here in Nigeria. Neighbours bought coffins and kept them in their houses because you came back with one. I did not really notice the emulations until a boy, thirteen years old, ran into my flat one day shivering, asking me to protect him. When I asked what the problem was, he told me this story, which I taped with my recorder:

'My father now keeps our yams in a coffin to preserve them, to protect them against the invasion of rats and other rodents. He detests rats, their snotty mouths. They devour our loaves of bread and abandon them in crumbs. They eat our yams in haphazard attacks.

'The evening he hauled the coffin home, sweating, a chill froze our entire house, but he smiled as though he had brought with him a big box of progress. It was a revelation, he said. A dream. An instruction. The coffin is his size, tall, beige and befitting. Glossy. A mahogany coffin. A rich man's coffin. A respectable coffin.

'My mother carried herself like democracy and opened the door so wide that he and the coffin entered without a scratch. He ducked, the coffin balanced on his head, when he got into the hallway. Then he stowed the coffin away in our storeroom. I imagined he was getting ready to die. I am

told that rich men prepare for their own deaths in advance, dig their own graves, decorate them and sculpt suitable words on the marbles.

‘When he opened the gold-rimmed coffin to place our yams inside it, my mother and I gaped at him, cringed to our bones.

‘Freddy, aren’t you bringing death home to wipe off the rest of us?’ my mother asked him. I grabbed her skirt and tried to hide behind her, shuddering. ‘Freddy, our Owen is about to convulse. Does this not portend a bad omen?’

‘Owen and Omen. Twin names with separate identities. I saw death lurking everywhere. The omen pursued me that day. It punched my head, mortally. I guessed it lay inside my mother and her skirt, so I abandoned her and ran into the bedroom. I imagined death was on the pillows, so I rushed back to my mother for protection.

‘Oh darling, there’s nothing maleficent about the coffin,’ my father said. ‘It’s a device to protect our yams.’

‘You can see it’s already affecting our son, badly. He can’t bear the sight of this coffin, Freddy.’

‘He will get used to it,’ he said. ‘Pronounce it backwards so it doesn’t scare him. Call it a niffoc instead of a coffin.’

‘He came and wanted to touch me, to calm me down. I shouted and avoided him. I didn’t want his coffin-niffoc hand to touch me. He smiled and told my mother how ingenious it was to carry a coffin in an expensive car, a Toyota Prado Jeep. Policemen never harassed him on the highway, he enthused. They accosted him and said sorry, thinking he had lost a loved one. When he met a traffic jam, other motorists made way for him to pass because they thought the jeep was an ambulance. It was so clever, he said.

‘My mother got used to the coffin, and days later she suggested he should buy a small baby coffin, too, and keep it permanently in his backseat, to send the wrong signals to the police. He praised her for the novel suggestion and kissed her, dearly.

‘She invents strange perversions and makes hideous discoveries, my dear mother. She told every woman on the street that old hair attachments had another use and should not be thrown away any longer. She melted her old attachments with a chemical and told everyone who cared to listen that she had invented a hair dye.

‘Yesterday, my mother gathered all our family photos and kept them inside my father’s coffin, beside the yams. It was to direct death to kill the photos, instead of killing any of us. She shut the coffin and said things with similar purposes went together.’

When the young boy finished his story, I told him to see the coffin as powerless furniture. Morrison, can you now see the influence your presence here has had on the people who copied you? If a finger conveys red oil to the mouth, the rest of the alimentary canal will turn red and excrete red. That’s exactly what you did.

Morrison Okoli (1955-2010). I almost sing it like a song these days. Morrison Okoli (1955-2010). It rings like a bell in my head, even now. But do you know how devastating it is to see your name written this way, the years enclosed in disquieting brackets? Does it mean you cannot come out of these brackets? Does it mean nothing can be added to these brackets, like (1955-2010) +1 or 2 or more? Does it mean they are the brackets of finality? I cannot believe that the sign between 1955 and 2010 is a subtraction. It’s not; otherwise we would have a negative number (-55), according to the laws of arithmetic. So, you’re not dead. The symbol is only a concatenation, a hyphen, a waiting sign showing you’re coming back, coming back to marry a woman and take traditional titles like me.

Morrison, how can I bury you without a single traditional title? It’s unthinkable. I wrote you some years ago that our village king wanted to bestow on you a suitable title. You wrote me back saying the king should rather confer the title on a rat. When I persisted, you said I should inherit the title; but it was most adequate for you, for someone educated like you. I have nine titles already. I acquired the latest during the New-Yam festival last year. You could consider them my own PhD achievements. It was during that festival that a stinking maggot, a frustrated freak, who had just returned from Germany for the event, foolishly wrote down my name as Edward Okoli (1948-). I charged at him and deposited two slaps on his temples.

‘Are you expecting my death soon? 1948 to what?’ I asked him. Writing a name this way has always seemed for me some sort of disturbing impermanence, a blinding expectation, a questioned uncertainty.

‘No. No . . . Chief,’ the maggot stammered. ‘I’ve written it that way as a mark of respect for an elder.’

‘An elder you expect to die soon?’

‘Not at all. It is how we write it in Germany where I live and work.’

‘Go back and tell them it is wrong. Would you have written your own name like that? You’ve written my name this way because you don’t see me living longer than a few years more. You want to invite death and invoke calamity on me, so you will quickly fix in my year of death in the space you’ve already provided behind the hyphen. I don’t court death.’

‘I am very sorry, Chief,’ the maggot said.

I let him go.

Maggoty idiot! He did not see the wisdom in the tufts of white hair clustered near my forehead, by the right. People love this so much that some have tried to copy it. One man once poured a white powder near his forehead and attended an occasion that I attended too. When the rains came, his powder was washed off, but mine remained intact. If it is not Edward’s, it cannot be the same as Edward’s. Never. The copycat does not even have a single traditional title, like you, Morrison. A life without titles is a wasted one. Without titles I would not have been able to secure a place in this esteemed military cemetery to bury you. My titles made it possible for me the day I came here to make an inquiry. I wore my *akwanze* chieftaincy dress, a befitting traditional red hat (embellished with two spotless eagle feathers) on my head. I held a walking stick emblazoned with a lion’s head, my neck surrounded with pricey beads and cowries. Top military personnel filed out and started to prostrate before me as though I were a king. I swaggered like a crowned peacock, as if I had never visited a toilet. They hailed me, ‘Chief, Chief, Chief,’ and took me to the officer in charge of the cemetery. They offered me a bottle of aromatic schnapps, and I prayed for their promotions with it.

Morrison, I am going to give you a military burial today without paying a farthing, except the bribe I paid to the hungry priest. It is a rare honour to be granted to a complete civilian like you. You will be buried without parades, without guns, without boots stomping on wet grounds, but in a military environment where war veterans are buried. All your neighbouring graves have military ranks inscribed on them: General Timothy Danjuma (1930-1989); Colonel Musa Abubakar (1960-2000); Captain Sunday Adebisi (1945-1982); Brigadier John Obasi (1967-2009); Major-General Robert Nengi (1933-2002), to mention a few. Beautiful graves they have here. Immaculate graves

in white coats, as if the occupants neither killed nor held a gun. How many civilians get buried this way? I wish I could inscribe all the PhDs you acquired on your grave, too.

Morrison, the atrocity you committed should not take you to hell – the place white people have told us of where fire burns sinners forever. Ha, what a wicked God they have brought here to torture us? A God that throws his children into a mysterious fire, without giving them a second chance to make amends. We are told this same God is the most merciful. What a contradiction? Well, contradiction or no contradiction, I will continue to be a Knight of St Mulumba and accept more traditional titles from my community.

Heaven must have been full by now – too many people dying and praying for a space there. Hunger and frustration and unemployment here. Genocides in Rwanda. Terrorist attacks in Iraq and Afghanistan. Hurricanes with exotic names in America. Earthquakes in Haiti and elsewhere. Tsunamis in Japan. Just name it. It is a mass departure to heaven, because nobody wants to be trapped in a wild, eternal fire.

Please, ask Jesus Christ to allow you a space on his left hand; I am sure his right hand must be filled up with the people gone before you. I have never heard anyone asking that a departed relative should stay on the left. Let me be the first to ask for this. Be the first to stay on his left because I cannot bear to imagine your lustrous beard melting like plastic in the conflagration. One day Jesus Christ might turn around to examine what is happening behind his back, a sort of U-turn, and those on the right now find themselves on his left. Imagine only you being on the right, after the U-turn of our Lord.

Lest I forget, if Jesus Christ refuses (which I doubt very much), you should turn your search for an eternal home to the Islamic section of heaven. Ask Holy Prophet Mohammed, peace be unto him, to save you from the impending fire. Who knows if he has a place for people like you? We are told he is merciful, too. After all, it is Ramadan, the peak season of mercy and atonement for sins. If these options fail, search for your own ancestors and forget these foreign saviours. Foreigners should favour their own people and save them first, I know, before considering a black sinner like you. I am very sure that the foreign messiahs lobby the Almighty God to give their own people the most comfortable portion of heaven. It is most unfortunate we do not have home-made saviours. All the saviours we have in Africa are

imported. But your forefathers should be somewhere around the perimeter of heaven; I know. Morrison, seek them out. Let them know you are around. Let them know your mind. Ask them to lead you to the Almighty God for the forgiveness of your sins, just to avoid hell fire – if it really exists.

My daughter's wedding is over, but I have lost you. I did not want you to come home for the wedding, but you insisted on coming. You wanted to see Geraldine decorate her husband's finger with a ring because you considered her your own daughter, too. You used to send her some biochemistry textbooks when she was in the university. My wife is here with me. She has been restraining herself from crying aloud because I have told her to reserve her tears for the day I will die and join my ancestors. That day she may cry as loud as she wants. But I can still see some residual tears trickling down her cheeks. Anyway, when one remembers how you died, it becomes impossible not to feed the soil with tears.

Morrison, how could you do this to yourself? Why? Did you ever have the premonition that you would not go back to America? I cannot even imagine a Morrison-less America. Why did you return from America with unimaginable items: a coffin, a bulldog, cocaine, cannabis? Such things should not be associated with the educated. Perhaps, they thought you brought a foreign coffin to bury a loved one who had died here. If you had returned with a gun, I would not have bothered myself this much. I would have assumed you wanted to protect yourself.

You could have shot those boys first. Uncouth boys, especially that one, fire-eyed, who chewed a cigarette like a piece of chewing gum, who smelled like domestic cooking gas, and helped to convey the coffin to the taxi the day you returned. But you had known them before returning and never predicted they were so deadly. All of you had been in this drug business for a long time, making me wonder if the only PhD you got from an American university was a narcotics-infested PhD: Packaged.

Heinous. Drugs.

I cannot tell what really transpired between you and them at the hotel, but the call from there still rings loud in my head. It was a terrible call in a terrible night in this terrible Lagos. I was in bed with my wife when it came. I answered the call and what I heard wrapped my whole body in goose bumps.

As I pay this tribute to you and grab a handful of sand, to perform the dust to dust rite, let me call your name for the last time and close your memory: Morrison Okoli (1955-2010).

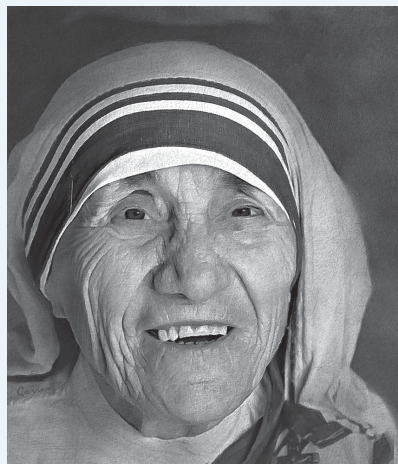
Non-fiction

Read the following speech, by Mother Teresa of Calcutta, in your spare time, on your own.

Dear Friends,

I am praying for God's blessing on all who are taking part in the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. I hope that this Conference will help everyone to know, love and respect the special place of women in God's plan so that they may fulfill this plan in their lives.

I do not understand why some people are saying that women and men are exactly the same, and are denying the beautiful differences between men and women. All God's gifts are good, but they are not all the same. As I often say to people who tell me they would like to



Mother Teresa

serve the poor as I do, "What I can do, you cannot. What you can do, I cannot. But together we can do something beautiful for God." It is just this way with the differences between women and men.

God has created each one of us, every human being, for greater things - to love and to be loved. But why did God make some of us men and others women? Because a woman's love is one image of the love of God, and a man's love is another image of God's love. Both are created to love, but each in a different way. Woman and man complete each other, and together show forth God's love more fully than either can do alone.

That special power of loving that belongs to a woman is seen most clearly when she becomes a mother. Motherhood is the gift of God to women. How grateful we must be to God for this wonderful gift that brings such joy to the whole world, women and men alike! Yet we can destroy this gift of motherhood, especially by the evil of abortion, but also by thinking that other things like jobs or positions are more important than loving, than giving

oneself to others. No job, no plans, no possessions, no idea of “freedom” can take the place of love. So anything that destroys God’s gift of motherhood destroys His most precious gift to women - the ability to love as a woman.

God told us, “Love your neighbour as yourself.” So first I am to love myself rightly, and then to love my neighbour like that. But how can I love myself unless I accept myself as God has made me? Those who deny the beautiful differences between men and women are not accepting themselves as God has made them, and so cannot love the neighbour. They will only bring division, unhappiness and destruction of peace to the world. For example, as I have often said, abortion is the greatest destroyer of peace in the world today, and those who want to make women and men the same are all in favour of abortion.

Instead of death and sorrow, let us bring peace and joy to the world. To do this we must beg God for His gift of peace and learn to love and accept each other as brothers and sisters, children of God. We know that the best place for children to learn how to love and to pray is in the family, by seeing the love and prayer of their mother and father. When families are broken or disunited, many children grow up not knowing how to love and pray. A country where many families have been destroyed like this will have many problems. I have often seen, especially in the rich countries, how children turn to drugs or other things to escape feeling unloved and rejected.

But when families are strong and united, children can see God’s special love in the love of their father and mother and can grow to make their country a loving and prayerful place. The child is God’s best gift to the family and needs both mother and father because each one shows God’s love in a special way. The family that prays together stays together, and if they stay together they will love one another as God has loved each one of them. And works of love are always works of peace.

So let us keep the joy of loving in our hearts and share this joy with all we meet. My prayer for all of the delegates, and for every woman whom the Beijing Conference is trying to help, is that each one may be humble and pure like Mary so as to live in love and peace with one another and make our families and our world something beautiful for God.

Let us pray.

From the two examples above, you will notice the following:

1. Fiction is created by an author from the imagination but non-fiction is based on true events and facts.
2. Fiction deals with imagined details but non-fiction deals with real people and places.
3. Fiction is a story with a series of connected events but non-fiction is not necessarily a story.
4. Fiction contains imagined characters and dialogue but non-fiction may not have dialogue.

Activity 13

In groups of four, discuss, what you think are the similarities of fictional and non-fictional literary works. Use the examples you just read as references

Activity 14

- a. Write a short piece of 100 words that would qualify as non-fiction and read it to your class.
- b. Write a short piece of fiction of 100 words and read it to your class.

Activity 15

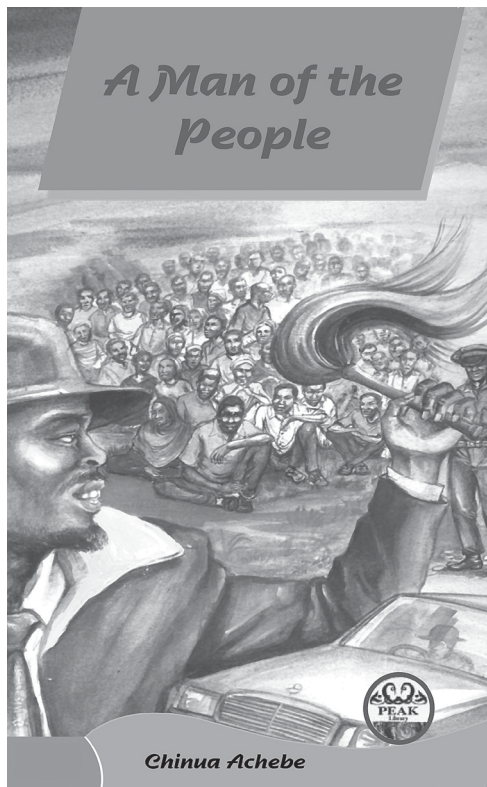
- a. On your own, select and read either a prose, drama or poetry text from your school library and retell it to your class.
- b. In groups of four, discuss the reasons for reading literature. Thereafter state at least five reasons for reading literature, on your own.

Unit 2

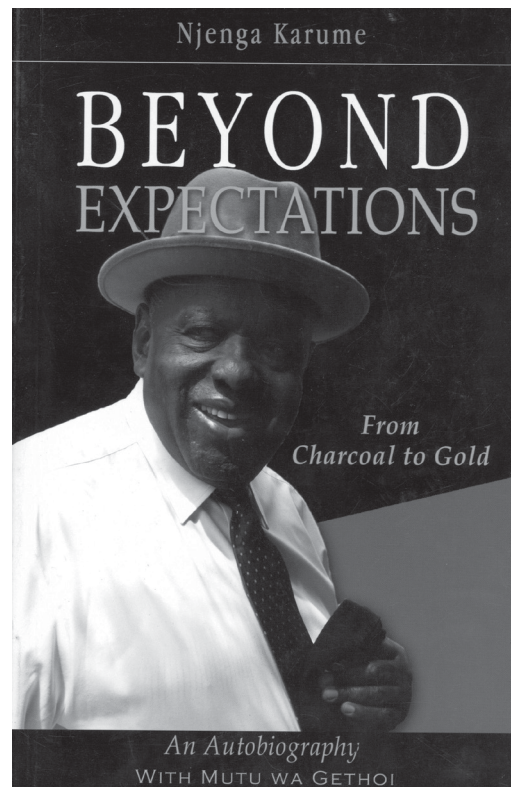
Introduction to prose: plot, setting and characters

Definition of prose

In Unit 1, you learned that prose is one example of a literary genre. You also learned that prose can be divided into two subgenres: fiction and non-fiction prose.



A novel by Chinua Achebe



An autobiography of Njenga Karume from Kenya

In this Unit, you will be introduced to the aspects that make up prose. These are plot, setting and character.

Aspects of prose

Plot

Activity 1

Tell your desk mate what an event is. Give him or her an example of an event.

Plot refers to the way events or actions of a story are arranged. This arrangement takes into account the way in which one action causes another. In short, plot is the cause and effect arrangement of the actions or events of a story. Consider the flowing list of events.

1. Laurent quarrels with his boss at the office.
2. Because Laurent is angry when he gets to his house, he shouts at his wife Maria.
3. Maria feels bitter and because of this, she pinches the ear of François, their first born son.
4. François is so angry that he kicks the family dog.
5. The dog is annoyed and it chases after the hen.

The events above are all related, since event 1 causes event 2, event 2 causes event 3, and so on. All the events put together form a story. If we connect the events in terms of how one event causes another, we arrive at the plot of the story.

Activity 2

Read the following short story. Take note of how the events affect each other.

Weak mind

by Joe Chinguo

The mortuary was completely deserted. There were only ten of us, ready to collect the body. The mortuary attendant had not returned from his lunch. We all questioned how a normal mortuary attendant would refuse to release a body just because we were late by three minutes.

We had arrived at the mortuary three minutes past noon and he bluntly told us he would not attend to us until after lunch break. We tried to reason with him, to sympathise with us but, he simply said, 'No.' He locked the mortuary

and went away for his lunch. Now he was late. This was 13.30 and we were impatient and annoyed.

The body we had come to collect was that of my old college friend. He had died in prison while serving a seven-year jail sentence. His name was Moses. I met Moses at the University of Salford in the United Kingdom. He was studying for a Bachelor of Science degree majoring in Economics. I was doing Msc. in Environmental Resources. The fact that we came from the same country made us good friends. We, in fact, occupied the same flat at the Castle Inwell Student Village.

Moses had one problem, though. Each time we discussed family affairs at home, he always remarked that he was homesick. He kept on saying he missed his dear wife so much. This was despite my constant reminder that we forget women at home and concentrate on our studies. After all, we had only eight months remaining. He always hated it when I joked that our wives were seriously unfaithful. I went on and said they knew we were very far away! He always said his wife could not dare do such a thing.

Then there was this day when all the students were invited to a beer bash at the Lawry's bar. It was an event to mark the beginning of the Annual Student Sports Festival. I asked Moses if we could go. We would enjoy the very best tunes of the 60s, 70s and 80s. Surprisingly, Moses told me he would stay indoors. He said he had received a bad letter from home. His friend had written informing him that someone was dating his wife!

I concurred that it was a bad letter but advised him not to take it seriously. I said that such things do happen and that there was nothing to worry about. I reminded him that he was lucky. He had learnt of his wife's infidelity at an early stage. This would give him a chance to remarry a prettier young girl. However, this did not cool his heart.

The following day, Moses told me that he had made up his mind to return home. He said he had to find out what his wife was up to. He said he would not just keep quiet when his wife had crossed that line. I reasoned with him that going home to 'guard' his wife would not help solve matters. I repeated that there were only eight months before we wound up. He asked me how I would feel if that kind of thing happened to me. I told him I would have loved it most. I joked that it would give me a wonderful opportunity to marry a prettier girl. I would start life afresh. I could even find this catch right here in the UK!

However, Moses could not look back. He went ahead to cheat his sponsor that his mother was seriously sick. He told him his services were urgently needed at home. The sponsor was kind enough to provide him with a return ticket. In addition he gave him some cash for eventualities. But later, the sponsor through the High Commission in London discovered that Moses had gone to see his unfaithful wife. His sponsorship was terminated; he lost his place at Salford University.

Returning home, I found Moses still staying with his adulterous wife. I asked him why and he told me he had decided to forgive her. He said that there was no sin that was not forgivable. That I agreed with but rebuked him that he had just lost his sponsorship for nothing. But he said it was not a degree that mattered to him but money. He happily informed me that money was not a problem to him. He was now employed by a well-paying company as a truck driver and salesman.

But more misfortunes followed him. After working for seven months, he stole K1 million from the company and fled to Mozambique. There he stayed for only two months. His disease of his 'trusted' wife followed him. He wrote to his wife to meet him at Mwanza boarder. He did not know that the police were monitoring the movement of his 'trusted' wife.

Moses was arrested in one of the guest houses at Mwanza. Later, he was sentenced to seven years imprisonment with hard labour. Immediately, his 'trusted' wife married a prominent businessman, leaving poor Moses to rot in prison.

Prison life was too harsh for him. He eventually fell sick and died. Because he had no relatives in town, I just decided to take charge of this funeral...

I saw the mortuary attendant coming lazily. He did not show any slight concern that he had left mourners waiting. I asked my friends to get closer to the door of the mortuary. We took the body away for burial.

Practice Exercise 1

- a. Arrange the main events of the short story *Weak Mind* in order. Show cause and effect.
- b. Using the events listed in 1 above, write a short paragraph on the plot of *Weak Mind*.

Setting

In prose, setting refers to a number of things:

1. The historical period in which the events of the story occurred. For example, a story or novel can be set in the pre-colonial era, the colonial period, the post independence era, the post genocide period, the computer age, or the ancient era.

Activity 3

Read the short story below on your own. Thereafter, discuss its historical setting with your desk mate.

Uncle Nicholas came back from England after the war in January 1981. He spent the entire fourteen hours that the journey lasted trussed up in a straight jacket between two burly cabin crew. On arrival at the airport, he was met by a four-car police escort and taken to a psychiatric unit at Harare hospital. For his waiting relatives, most of whom had not seen him for twenty five years, it was a traumatic homecoming.

I had been born in his absence and only knew him from a sepia-edged black and white photograph which he had sent to my father on his arrival. It was of him and a friend standing ankle-deep in fresh snow with pigeons on their heads and arms. Throughout most of my childhood, my memory of him consisted of that hazy unsatisfactory likeness that was twenty years out of date. Yet it told me nothing of his behavioural quirks; how he talked, how he walked, how he laughed; whether he drank or smoked. In short, I could not visualise the whole without the parts.

When he killed himself in March 1982 by cutting his wrists, all I was left with were confused memories of weekly visits to the hospital bed of a druggy and pathetic old man, who soiled himself and had to be chained to the bed posts to curtail intermittent orgies of self-inflicted violence provoked by deep thoughts of melancholy. It was an inescapable yet poignant irony that he had gone overseas to better himself, not to come back in disgrace to swell the ranks of burned-out unhinged 'been-tos' with minds contaminated by too much learning.

For the last eight years of his exile, he had stopped writing all together. My father wrote to him regularly but stopped in the end because all the letters were returned saying there was no such a person at that address. Nobody

knew what uncle Nicholas was doing or where he was doing it. Eventually, it seemed nobody cared much. We knew he was still alive because he sent the occasional Christmas card, and sometimes we went to the post office to collect boxes of second hand clothes he bought at street markets. When my paternal grandmother died, he did not know about it until my father sent a letter with a woman who had won a British Council scholarship to study Pharmacy at the same college that was Uncle Nicholas's last known abode.

Upto this day, nobody knows why he went mad, or why in the end he thought it wise to take his own life. His madness gradually got worse and in the end, out of sheer desperation, Father had to take him out of hospital and put him into the care of a traditional witchdoctor. At night he hardly slept, consumed as he was by terrifying nightmares in which he was persuaded by the demons that had taken up residence in his unhinged mind and so corrupted his language that all he was capable of was a dialect of carnal profanities. He slept a lot and ate very little and soon managed to reduce himself to a gaunt mass of bones.

The witchdoctor left one rainy night, never to come back.

(Adapted from *Wasted Land* by Daniel Mandishona)

2. The geographical place where the events in the story occur. For instance, a story could be set in Rwanda, Nigeria or America.
3. The social and cultural context in which the events of the story are set. For instance, a story can be set in an urban environment such as Kigali, or it can be set in a traditional African society.

Activity 4

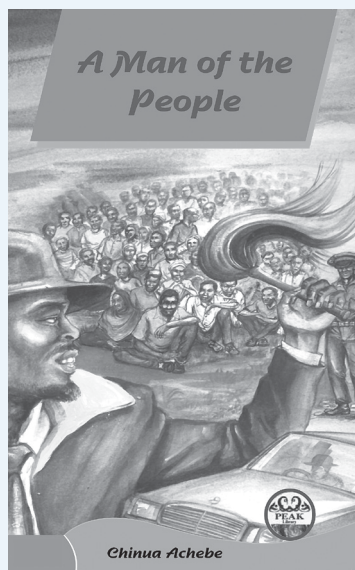
Discuss the geographical setting of the short story, *Wasted Land* by David Mandishona.

Activity 5

In groups of four, discuss the social and cultural setting of *Wasted land* by David Mandishona. Write down the setting on your own.

Activity 6

Read the following excerpt from Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People* on your own.



I began to wonder whether Jean actually enjoyed driving through these places as she claimed she did or whether she had some secret reason, like wanting me to feel ashamed about my country's capital city. I hardly knew her but I could see she was that kind of person, a most complicated woman.

We were now back in the pleasant high-class area.

'That row of ten houses belongs to the Minister of Construction,' she said. 'They are let to different embassies at three thousand a year each.'

So what, I said within myself. Your accusation may be true but you've no right to make it. Leave it to us and don't contaminate our cause by espousing it.

'But that's another Chief Nanga Street,' I said aloud, pointing to my left.

'No. What we saw near the fountain was Chief Nanga Avenue,' she said and we both burst out laughing, friends again. 'I'm not sure there isn't a Road as well somewhere,' she said. 'I know there is a Circle.'

Then I promptly recoiled again. Who the hell did she think she was to laugh so self-righteously? Wasn't there more than enough in her own country to keep her laughing all her days? Or crying if she preferred it?

'I have often wondered,' she said, completely insensitive to my silent resentment, 'why don't they call some streets after the many important names in your country's history or past events like your independence as they do in France and other countries?'

'Because this is not France but Africa,' I said with peevish defiance. She obviously thought I was being sarcastic and laughed again. But what I had said was another way of telling her to go to hell. Now I guessed I knew why she took so much delight in driving through our slums. She must have taken hundreds of photographs already to send home to her relations. And, come

to think of it, would she – lover of Africa that she was – would she be found near a black man in her own country?

‘When do you expect John back?’ I asked, burning with anger.

‘Wednesday. Why?’

‘I was wondering whether I could see you again.’

‘Do you want to?’

‘Sure.’

‘Why not? Let me call you tomorrow?’

Activity 7

Discuss the above story in groups of four and then answer the questions below on your own.

- a. Write down details that suggest that the story is set in an urban centre.
- b. Chief Nanga is a rich politician. Explain how the urban setting helps the reader to understand Chief Nanga’s wealthy background.

Character and characterisation

All prose texts contain characters. A character refers to the fictional human being, animal or thing in a story.

Types of characters in prose

In prose, authors use different types of characters to tell their stories. Some of the characters include:

1. **Major or central characters:** These are the main characters in a story. Most of the action, in the story, happens around this character. In most stories, we have the protagonist and the antagonist. The protagonist is a major character who is faced with a problem or conflict the he or she must resolve. The antagonist is the major character who usually challenges and tests the protagonist. Main characters are well developed. In other words, we get to know them more and can relate to them.
2. **Minor characters:** These are the characters that do not play a big role in the story. They are not given much attention as events in the story do not revolve around them. They are not as well developed as the main characters. In other words, we may not know much about them apart from the little roles that they play. As a reader, you must get to know the importance of the minor

character and relate them to the events in the story. Ask yourself, What role does this character play?

These characters fulfill different roles in the story. For instance, major or central characters are vital to the development and resolution of the conflict. In other words, the plot and resolution of conflict revolves around these characters. Minor characters serve to complement the major characters and help move the plot events forward.

Activity 8

Read the excerpt below and in your small groups discuss it. Then on your own,

- a. Say who you think the main character is. Give reasons for your answer.
- b. State who the minor character is. Give reasons for your answer.

Trouble loomed, serious trouble. Yogi felt it in the pit of his stomach. It was 5.30 p.m.; he had to be home by 6.00 p.m. Home was at least an hour and a half away. No matter which way Yogi did his maths, he was going to get home late. But he had to wait for Shaka, who was on the pitch playing football.

“Go! Go! Go!” Yogi crossed his fingers and urged Shaka on from the touchline of the sandy pitch. He stood alone, away from the cluster of boys who were also watching the match.

The ball was hidden behind a cloud of red dust rising off the ground, thanks to the stomping, kicking and knocking of limbs. Sinewy legs, feet of different sizes, some booted, most bare, intertwined in determined pursuit of the ball. Although the sun had mercifully started its descent, its orange rays now peered hazily through the clouds. They trapped the heat in, covering the atmosphere like a hot, damp, towel.

Yogi pulled off his glasses and wiped the steam off them with the hem of his extra large, once white, T-shirt. He placed them back on his nose, glanced at his wrist and gasped. It would have to be the back route home. The one through tall, densely grown trees, that guaranteed darkness, no matter what time of the day. The route Yogi always found himself promising God he would never take again; vowing he would be good forever, if God saw him safely through it one last time.

Definitely the back route, Yogi decided. He couldn't bear the thought of getting home after dark and having to deal with his grandparents. Yogi pictured their reactions. His grandfather would sit him down and lecture him in that I-expect-better-from-you tone that always left Yogi not only feeling guilty but also feeling like a big fool. His grandmother, on the other hand, would not ask any questions. She would grab her cloth, wind it tightly around her waist and march to Shaka's house, shouting and waving her arms about as she walked. Once she got to Shaka's house, she would ask him to stay away from her grandson. Then as if that wasn't embarrassing enough, Yogi knew his grandmother would keep the incident alive for weeks. She would tell everyone she came across that Shaka was leading her grandson astray. Yogi shuddered at the thought of his grandmother's reaction.

The ominous feeling in the pit of Yogi's stomach stirred and snuggled into place.

The ball shot out from behind the brown puff of dust. Shaka raced after it. He tore away from the rest, tapping the ball just enough to keep it rolling ahead of him at a constant pace. When he was within a few strides of the lanky goalkeeper, Shaka sent the ball rocketing through the goalposts.

"Yes!" Yogi punched the air, almost screamed, then stopped himself. He glanced around to see if anyone was watching. He needn't have worried. The boys with red ribbons around their wrists and calves ran onto the pitch cheering. A few cart-wheeled, a number lifted Shaka into the air, while the rest formed a circle in the centre of the pitch, singing and dancing. Their opponents, donning yellow ribbons, collapsed to the ground, despair and exhaustion etched in their faces.

(Adapted from *Yours Faithfully, Yogi* by Ellen Banda-Auku)

Activity 9

Read the following extract from *Confessions of an Aids Victim* by Caroline Adallah on your own and then say who the main character is. Thereafter, list the minor characters.

I completed my university education at about this time and surprised myself with a Second Class Honours, Upper Division. Upon graduation, my parents could not contain their pride.

That evening while we were relaxing at a city hotel, Mother revisited the issue of Brian.

"I did not see your friend at the graduation?" she had started.

"Which friend?" I asked for the sake of it.

"Jimmy's father," she said.

"I thought you had said you never wanted to meet him," I answered accusingly. "We are no longer friends. Besides," I added, "he is already in America."

Father looked up from the newspaper. We hardly involved him in our conversations partly because he was always disinterested. He was the kind of male chauvinist who believed nothing good could come out of a woman. Why then the sudden flicker of interest? Had the mention of America done the trick?

"What is he studying?" he asked.

Father asking about Brian? Good heavens.

"I am not sure. All I know is that he is doing his second degree, probably in Agriculture."

"Does he know about Jimmy?" Mother asked again.

"I haven't communicated with him since Jimmy's birth," I lied.

The truth is that I had written to Brian immediately after the baby's birth. He had only sent a card congratulating me on the baby's birth and that was it. He had failed to correspond again despite the flow of my letters to his Stanford address.

After a while I had stopped writing too, since I could not keep up with the postal expenses.

"Are you thinking of getting married to him?" Mother continued the dry run questioning.

"You said no, and I guess it is just that."

End of the dry run. Father picked up his paper again and shuffled through its pages, suddenly looking disinterested again. Mother resumed drinking her cup of tea with an expressionless face.

I looked across the hotel and at the same time, a young man seated at the far end smiled at me. I smiled back. He wasn't bad looking, was he? I looked past him to the clock on the wall. It was some minutes to six in the evening. Aunt Alice would be expecting us for the dinner celebration at her place any time from then. I had been staying with her in Buruburu since I had finished my University examinations.

I finished my drink, excused myself and headed for the ladies. My move secured the anticipated result - the young man followed seconds later. We met in the corridor.

“Congrats,” he said looking at my graduation gown.

“Thanks,” I said with a big smile.

“My name is Alex, and yours?”

“Cathy,” I said.

“Those over there are your parents?”

I answered with a nod.

“Here is my card,” he said producing a white gold-printed business card. I could see he worked as a sales representative with IBM.

“Do I expect your call tomorrow morning, say, at eleven?”

“That is fine with me.”

“Please, don’t forget to phone,” he called to my back as I walked into the ladies.

That is how Alex entered my life - as a graduation package, three years ago. Was this a suicidal move? I wonder. Through his well known connections, he got me this job in Eldoret and we have been lovers since then.

I have seen the better days of my life with Alex. Candle lit dinners, buffet lunches and on some occasions, cocktails. Alex has been gentle and loving, and generous if I may add. He has been paying my house rent, helped furnish my house and occasionally brings me breathtaking gifts. We have been content to have an open relationship, without any mention of marriage. It is impossible to imagine how AIDS got into such tranquillity.

But I am no angel. I will be damned if I fail to mention that despite this tranquillity, Alex has not been my sole lover. Within these three years, I have had a short lived affair with a university don, spent one weekend out of town with a prominent businessman, and had a sexual experience with a gynaecologist and a secret affair with a manager in a leading textile factory here in Eldoret. The big question still remains – who could have passed on the infection to me? All these people are respectable and in dignified positions. Doesn’t AIDS care about this?

I had written to Brian again after settling into my new job. This time he was good enough to write back. He indicated he had moved in with a white American girlfriend by the name of Denise who he said, was crazy about

him. They were thinking of marriage. That, I guess, partly explained why he had kept me at bay. In a recent letter he mentioned that he had secured a fellowship for his doctorate studies and would not be home for another four years.

We still communicate at a snail-paced frequency, which means only three letters a year from either end. He has been kind enough though, to guide me in applying for a scholarship in American universities.

This letter starts less than four months after I succeeded in winning a scholarship from a Texan University. Little did I know I had already won a place on the list of AIDS victims!

And the nightmare continues...

While talking about characterisation, we should note that:

1. Dynamic character is the character who changes over time. This change is a result of resolving a central conflict or facing a major crisis. As such, most major characters tend to be dynamic characters.
2. A static character is one who does not change over time.
3. A rounded character is anyone who has a complex personality. Such a character is often viewed as a conflicted and contradictory person.
4. A flat character is the opposite of a round character. He or she is neither conflicted nor contradictory.

Activity 10

Read the short story below on your own during your spare time. Thereafter, discuss it with members of your group. Finally, answer the questions that follow on your own.

Civil Peace

by Chinua Achebe

Jonathan Iwegbu counted himself extraordinarily lucky. 'Happy survival!' meant so much more to him than just a current fashion of greeting old friends in the first hazy days of peace. It went deep to his heart. He had come out of the war with five inestimable blessings - his head, his wife Maria's head and the heads of three out of their four children. As a bonus he also had his old bicycle - a miracle too but naturally not to be compared to the safety of five human heads.



Chinua Achebe

The bicycle had a little history of its own. One day at the height of the war it was commandeered 'for urgent military action'. Hard as its loss would have been to him, he would still have let it go without a thought had he not had some doubts about the genuineness of the officer. It wasn't his disreputable rags, nor the toes peeping out of one blue and one brown canvas shoes, nor yet the two stars of his rank done obviously in a hurry in biro, that troubled Jonathan; many good and heroic soldiers looked the same or worse. It was rather a certain lack of grip and firmness in his manner. So Jonathan, suspecting he might be amenable to influence, rummaged in his raffia bag and produced the two pounds with which he had been going to buy firewood which his wife, Maria, retailed to camp officials for extra stockfish and maize meal, and got his bicycle back. That night he buried it in the little clearing in the bush where the dead of the camp, including his own youngest son, were buried. When he dug it up again a year later after the surrender all it needed was a little palm-oil greasing.

'Nothing puzzles God,' he said in wonder.

He put it to immediate use as a taxi and accumulated a small pile of Biafran money ferrying camp officials and their families across the four-mile stretch to the nearest tarred road. His standard charge per trip was six pounds and those who had the money were only glad to be rid of some of it in this way. At the end of a fortnight he had made a small fortune of one hundred and fifteen pounds.

Then he made the journey to Enugu and found another miracle waiting for him. It was unbelievable. He rubbed his eyes and looked again and it was still standing there before him. But, needless to say, even that monumental blessing must be accounted also totally inferior to the five heads in the family. This newest miracle was his little house in Ogui Overside. Indeed nothing puzzles God! Only two houses away, a huge concrete edifice some wealthy contractor had put up just before the war was a mountain of rubble. And here was Jonathan's little zinc house of no regrets built with mud blocks quite intact! Of course the doors and windows were missing and five sheets off the roof.

But what was that? And anyhow he had returned to Enugu early enough to pick up bits of old zinc and wood and soggy sheets of cardboard lying around the neighbourhood before thousands more came out of their forest holes looking for the same things. He got a destitute carpenter with one old hammer, a blunt plane and a few bent and rusty nails in his tool bag to turn this assortment of wood, paper and metal into door and window shutters for five Nigerian shillings or fifty Biafran pounds. He paid the pounds, and moved in with his overjoyed family carrying five heads on their shoulders.

His children picked mangoes near the military cemetery and sold them to soldiers' wives for a few pennies, real pennies this time, and his wife started making breakfast *akara* balls for neighbours in a hurry to start life again. With his family earnings, he took his bicycle to the villages around and bought fresh palm-wine which he mixed generously in his rooms with the water which had recently started running again in the public tap down the road, and opened up a bar for soldiers and other lucky people with good money.

At first he went daily, then every other day and finally once a week, to the offices of the Coal Corporation where he used to be a miner, to find out what was what. The only thing he did find out in the end was that that little house of his was even a greater blessing than he had thought. Some of his fellow ex-miners who had nowhere to return at the end of the day's waiting just slept outside the doors of the offices and cooked what meal they could scrounge together in Bournvita tins. As the weeks lengthened and still nobody could say what was what, Jonathan discontinued his weekly visits altogether and faced his palm-wine bar.

But nothing puzzles God. Came the day of the windfall when after five days of endless scuffles in queues and counter-queues in the sun outside the Treasury he had twenty pounds counted into his palms as *exgratia* award for the rebel money he had turned in. It was like Christmas for him and for many others like him when the payments began. They called it – since few could manage its proper official name, egg-rasher.

As soon as the pound notes were placed in his palm, Jonathan simply closed it tight over them and buried fist and money inside his trouser pocket. He had to be extra careful because he had seen a man a couple of days earlier collapse into near-madness in an instant before that oceanic crowd because

no sooner had he got his twenty pounds than some heartless ruffian picked it off him. Though it was not right that a man in such an extremity of agony should be blamed yet many in the queues that day were able to remark quietly on the victim's carelessness, especially after he pulled out the innards of his pocket and revealed a hole in it big enough to pass a thief's head. But of course he had insisted that the money had been in the other pocket, pulling it out too to show its comparative wholeness. So one had to be careful.

Jonathan soon transferred the money to his left hand and pocket so as to leave his right free for shaking hands should the need arise, though by fixing his gaze at such an elevation as to miss all approaching human faces he made sure that the need did not arise, until he got home.

He was normally a heavy sleeper but that night he heard all the neighbourhood noises die down one after another. Even the night watchman who knocked the hour on some metal somewhere in the distance had fallen silent after knocking one o'clock. That must have been the last thought in Jonathan's mind before he was finally carried away himself. He couldn't have been gone for long, though, when he was violently awakened again.

'Who is knocking?' whispered his wife lying beside him on the floor.

'I don't know,' he whispered back breathlessly.

The second time the knocking came it was so loud and imperious that the rickety old door could have fallen down.

'Who is knocking?' he asked then, his voice parched and trembling.

'Na tief-man and him people,' came the cool reply. 'Make you hopen de door.' This was followed by the heaviest knocking of all.

Maria was the first to raise the alarm, then he followed and all their children.

'Police-o! Thieves-o! Neighbours-o! Police-o! We are lost! We are dead! Neighbours, are you asleep? Wake up! Police-o!'

This went on for a long time and then stopped suddenly. Perhaps they had scared the thief away. There was total silence. But only for a short while.

'You done finish?' asked the voice outside. 'Make we help you small. Oya, everybody!'

'Police-o! Tief-man-o! Neighbours-o! we done loss-o! Police-o! ...'

There were at least five other voices besides the leader's.

Jonathan and his family were now completely paralysed by terror. Maria and the children sobbed inaudibly like lost souls. Jonathan groaned continuously.

The silence that followed the thieves' alarm vibrated horribly. Jonathan all but begged their leader to speak again and be done with it.

'My frien,' said he at long last, 'we don try our best for call dem but I tink say dem all done sleep-o... So wetin we go do now? Sometaim you wan call soja? Or you wan make we call dem for you? Soja better pass police. No be so?'

'Na so!' replied his men. Jonathan thought he heard even more voices now than before and groaned heavily. His legs were sagging under him and his throat felt like sandpaper.

'My friend, why you no de talk again. I de ask you say you wan make we call soja?'

'No'.

'Awrighto. Now make we talk business. We no be bad tief. We no like for make trouble. Trouble done finish. War done finish and all the katakata wey de for inside. No Civil War again.'

'This time na Civil Peace. No be so?'

'Na so!' answered the horrible chorus.

'What do you want from me? I am a poor man. Everything I had went with this war. Why do you come to me? You know people who have money. We...'

'Awright! We know say you no get plenty money. But we sef no get even anini. So derefore make you open dis window and give us one hundred pound and we go commot. Orderwise we de come for inside now to show you guitar-boy like dis...'

A volley of automatic fire rang through the sky. Maria and the children began to weep aloud again.

'Ah, missisi de cry again. No need for dat. We done talk say we na good tief. We just take our small money and go nwayorly. No molest. Abi we de molest?'

'At all!' sang the chorus.

'My friends,' began Jonathan hoarsely. 'I hear what you say and I thank you. If I had one hundred pounds ...'

'Lookia my friend, no be play we come play for your house. If we make mistake and step for inside you no go like am-o. So derefore ...'

'To God who made me; if you come inside and find one hundred pounds, take it and shoot me and shoot my wife and children. I swear to God. The

only money I have in this life is this twenty-pounds egg-rasher – they gave me today ...’

‘OK. Time de go. Make you open dis window and bring the twenty pound. We go manage am like dat.’

There were now loud murmurs of dissent among the chorus: ‘Na lie de man de lie; e get plenty money ... Make we go inside and search properly well ... Wetin be twenty pound? ...’

‘Shurrap!’ rang the leader’s voice like a lone shot in the sky and silenced the murmuring at once. ‘Are you dere? Bring the money quick!’

‘I am coming,’ said Jonathan fumbling in the darkness with the key of the small wooden box he kept by his side on the mat.

At the first sign of light as neighbours and others assembled to commiserate with him he was already strapping his five-gallon demijohn to his bicycle carrier and his wife, sweating in the open fire, was turning over *akara* balls in a wide clay bowl of boiling oil. In the corner his eldest son was rinsing out dregs of yesterday’s palm wine from old beer bottles.

‘I count it as nothing,’ he told his sympathizers, his eyes on the rope he was tying. ‘What is egg-rasher? Did I depend on it last week? Or is it greater than other things that went with the war? I say, let egg-rasher perish in the flames! Let it go where everything else has gone. Nothing puzzles God.’

Questions

- Identify the main character in this story.
- Identify the minor characters in this story.
- Would you describe Jonathan Iwegbu as a static or dynamic character? Give reasons for your answer.

Activity 11

Imagine you were looking for someone you have been told about. Explain to your group how you will identify this person.

How to identify characters

A story tells us about the hopes and aims of characters. In studying a novel, we need to identify and to know the characters very well. In order to identify a character we look at:

- The physical description of the character in terms of size, colour and general appearance.

- What the character says about himself or herself and about other issues affecting society.
- The actions of the character in his or her interaction with other characters in the story.
- What other characters say about the character.
- The character's thoughts, desires, dreams and wishes.

Positive and negative characters

Activity 12

Discuss why some people are usually said to be evil while others are seen as being good. Do this in your group.

How to describe and explain character behaviour

A character may be described in many ways such as good, bad, funny, lazy, ugly, rude, or hardworking. It is important to remember that all events in a novel are deliberately arranged to bring out the meaning of the story. Good characters have **positive** character traits while bad characters have **negative** character traits.

The author has reasons for creating each character in the story. This means that the author has to show why characters behave the way they do. The author has to show what makes a character behave in a certain way and how this behaviour affects the character and the other characters.

Practice Exercise 1

Read the story below and describe the characters. Point out the positive and the negative character traits.

They sold my sister

by 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 as many gifts as I had never 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 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 left 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.

Unit 3 Introduction to poetry

Definition of poetry

Activity 1

Take turns to read this piece loudly to your group members. Discuss what it is. Give reasons for your answer.

The crack

by *Sheikha El-Miskery*

Crack the glass,
And the crack
Will always remain.
The human heart
Has veins;
It's just delicate
To the strain

Once hurt,
It is too hard
To fade the strain.
Though parts can fix together
You've just to touch the wound,
To make it drain again.

Activity 2

Read the poem below.

Dreams

by *Langston Hughes*

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird



Langston Hughes

That cannot fly.
Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

Poetry is not very different from music. In fact, the best music is usually poetic and the best poems are musical.

Activity 3

Write down the words of any song by a popular Rwandan musician. Study the song carefully. As you study the song, look out for the following features:

- The song uses very few words, unlike a story or a play.
- The words of the song are arranged in stanzas rather than paragraphs.
- Some lines, words and phrases are used repetitively.
- The words and the sounds of the song seem to have been carefully arranged.
- There are heavy emotions expressed in the song.

All the five characteristics above apply to poetry too. Just like music, poetry uses carefully arranged sounds and words, and it also expresses strong emotions. In addition, it is also condensed since it uses far fewer words when compared to other genres of literature.

The word **poem** comes from the Greek word **poiema** which means a thing made, composed or created. **Poems are works of literature in which words are arranged to sound pleasant to the ear and to express ideas, emotion and thoughts.** Poems are written in a specific style. The lines and the language of the poem must conform to certain rules. The writer of a poem is called a poet.

We can therefore define **poetry as a type of literature that is written in verses and which uses condensed language to express strong feelings.**

Poetry relies on the careful choice of words to relay the best possible meaning. In short, we should see poetry as the best and most precise way of saying something. A good poet selects, arranges and rearranges words until the words are able to say what he wants them to say as effectively as possible. Poetry appeals to our emotions as well as to our mind.

Let us imagine that Pierre and Ferdinand both love a girl called Juliet. Each of them sends Juliet an SMS on her phone. Let's examine the two texts:

Pierre: Juliet, you are a very beautiful girl, and I love you with all my heart.

Ferdinand: Juliet, you are a flower in the garden of my life, and my heart cries for you.

Who between Pierre and Ferdinand has expressed his love for Juliet in the best way possible? Give reasons for your answer.

Characteristics of poetry

Activity 4

In groups of four, study the poem below carefully. Discuss its structure and use of words and present your findings to the class.

The crack

by *Sheikha El-Miskery*

Crack the glass,
And the crack
Will always remain.

The human heart
Has veins;
It's just delicate
To the strain

Once hurt,
It is too hard
To fade the strain.
Though parts can fix together
You've just to touch the wound,
To make it drain again.

1. Poetry uses language in an economical way. It can say in a few words what a novel can say in hundreds of pages. In poetry, each word is very important and cannot be ignored. It uses heightened language which is full of connotation. Poetic language is very different from ordinary language. Poetic language relies more heavily on imagery than other genres.
2. Poetry expresses strong feelings and emotional expressions.
3. Poetry is arranged in stanzas rather than paragraphs. That is, it exists in verse form rather than in prose form.
4. Poetry is musical; it contains rhythms which are created by repetition and rhyme, among others.

Because part of a poem's meaning is contained in its sounds, it is advisable to read it aloud in order to enjoy its full meaning. The habit of reading poems aloud, whether in class or outside class, is very pleasurable and rewarding. Your class should take advantage of any available opportunity to read poems aloud. This can also be done during official functions in school such as Parents' Day. Poems should also be read several times.

Traditional poetry in Rwanda (folk songs, lullabies, wedding songs)

As we noted earlier, our African communities have their own poetry, which is not necessarily written in textbooks.

Activity 5

Below is a translation of a traditional Rwanda poem. Study it carefully, on your own. Afterwards, recite it loudly to your class.

My little rock
My little rock is very pretty
My little rock is very pretty
Take it, look at it
Look at it
It is very pretty

Activity 6

Below is an English translation of two common Rwandan lullabies. Take turns to sing them with your desk mate and then write down the repeated words.

1. Stop crying my child – Stop crying
Stop crying for I love you – Stop crying
Don't cry yourself hoarse – Stop crying
Stop crying, you immaculate – Stop crying
Stop crying, my cowry – Stop crying
Stop crying, listen to this lullaby – Stop crying
2. Stop crying
For your father is keeping you company
Stop crying
For your brother is keeping you company
Stop crying

For your sister is keeping you company
Stop crying
For your cousins are keeping you company
Stop crying – Stop.
Sing the folk song below in groups. What features make it similar to a poem?

Activity 7

Below is an English translation of a Rwandan folk song. Sing it in groups. What features make it similar to a poem? Write them down on your own.

Among them there is Ruti that aligns corpses
There is Rugurira in Minwi of Mugemanyi
The rooster of Mugenzi of Ngongo
Which was called while being anger-prone
And suddenly there was commotion everywhere.

There were two ashen cows: there was one I gave as a gift to Rwigema
And another I gave as dowry to get a young woman in marriage and
her family did not find it good enough
And when it got to our place it gave birth to a very strong and healthy calf.

Activity 8

Below is an English translation of a popular Rwandan wedding song. Sing it in groups. What features make it similar to a poem?

Go our dear
Love is good
The beautiful woman is taken away
The well-brought-up young woman
You've done your parents credit
The beautiful woman is taken away
Oh she is taken away
The beautiful woman is taken away
She goes to her lover's home
The beautiful woman is taken away

May you have children
May you be loved by the one you have loved
The beautiful woman is taken away
A home is the one which is visited
We will all visit you
The beautiful woman is taken away
Oh she is taken away
The beautiful woman is taken away
She goes to her lover's home
The beautiful woman is taken away

Activity 9

- Working in your small groups, collect and present poems and songs from your community to your class.
- Discuss the main features of the poems and songs that you collected with your classmates. What are the similarities?

Main features of poetry: rhythm, rhyme, line length

Rhyme

Activity 10

Look at the following poem. Discuss the endings of the sentences with your desk mate. What is peculiar about them?

Mama; do not worry
Your son's in no hurry
He will not rush to marry
And there make you sorry.

You must have noticed that every line ends with a word that sounds the same way. We can say that all the lines in the poem rhyme.

Rhyme occurs when two words sound similarly at their end. The rhyming sounds may be vowels or consonants.

Look at the following pairs of words and see how they rhyme.

share pair
book cook
school pull
learn earn

Usually, rhyme occurs at the end of lines in a poem, but it can also occur in the middle. If it occurs in the middle, it is called internal rhyme.

Patterns of rhythm

Activity 11

- a. Discuss with your desk mate why we usually tap our feet when a song plays.
- b. What is usually referred to as a beat in a song?

Rhythm is created by alteration. Look at the following pattern:

1234 1234 1234 1234

In this pattern, a digit appears, then disappears, then reappears at a regular interval. It is this process which creates a rhythm. Most things in life are rhythmical. For example, when we speak, we repeat stressed and unstressed syllables alternately. Eating is a repetitive process of picking food, putting it in the mouth, chewing and swallowing. Even walking is a rhythmical process.

Activity 12

- a. Read the poem below.
One potato, two potato,
Three potato, four,
Five potato, six potato,
Seven potato, more!
- b. Now replace the word 'potato' with say, cherry. Read the poem loudly to your desk mate. Does it sound the same?

Meter is rhythm that can be measured in poems. The process of marking a poem to show its metrical units is called scansion. The smallest metrical unit is the syllable. The first thing you do in scansion is learn to identify stressed and unstressed syllables. A group of two or three syllables is called a foot. For example, an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one is called an iambic. Hence, an iambic pentameter is a line containing five feet (five sets of unstressed-stressed syllables).

Activity 13

Study the following poem.

The Road Not Taken

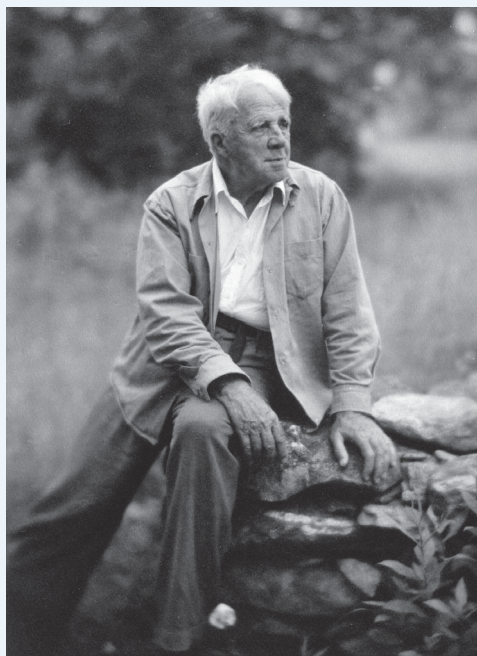
by Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-
I took the less travelled by
And that has made all the difference.



Robert Frost

By using numbers to denote sounds at the end of every line, we can arrive at the following pattern which describes the rhyme pattern.

Stanza 1: 12112

Stanza 2: 34334

Stanza 3: 56556

Stanza 4: 78778

Now, if we try to read out the numbers continuously and repeatedly, 'hear' the rhythm of the poem. Try reading the numbers several times and 'listen' to the rhythm of the poem.

12112: 34334: 56556: 78778

With this kind of regular pattern, it is possible to predict how the next stanza would have rhymed if Robert Frost had written it.

Line length

Poetry arranges words in a careful way so as to achieve rhythm. Therefore, lines in poetry tend to be much shorter than in prose. A line in a poem may not reach both ends of the page. The length of the line is determined by the rhythm which the poet wants to achieve.

Nursery rhymes

Nursery rhymes are meant to be enjoyed by young children. They are usually short, simple and repetitive. Most nursery rhymes are designed in such a way that they can be sang. Apart from the use of rhyme, they also heavily rely on word play. This creates a playful effect on nursery rhymes, hence giving an opportunity to young children to learn something new in a playful and enjoyable manner.

Activity 14

Read the following nursery rhymes loudly to members of your group. Thereafter, discuss what each of the rhymes is talking about.

Baa, baa black sheep

Baa, baa black sheep,
Have you any wool?
Yes sir, yes sir,
Three bags full.
One for my master.
One for my dame.
But none for the little boy,
Who lives down the lane.

Mary, Mary, quite contrary

Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells and cockle shells,
And pretty maids all in a row.

The cat and the fiddle

Hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon,
The little dog laughed to see such sport,
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

The fly has married the bumblebee

Fiddle-dee-dee, fiddle-dee-dee,
The fly has married the bumblebee.
Said the fly, said he,
“Will you marry me,
and live with me sweet bumble bee?”
Fiddle dee dee, fiddle dee dee,
The fly has married the bumblebee.

Hush-a-bye, baby

Hush-a-bye, baby,
In the tree top.
When the wind blows,
The cradle will rock.
When the bough breaks,
The cradle will fall,
And down will come baby,
Cradle and all.

Practice Exercise 1

Compare the two poems below. How does the length of the lines affect your reading of these poems?

1. Ibadan

by J.P. Clark

Ibadan,
running splash of rust
and gold-flung and scattered

among seven hills like broken
china in the sun.

The Face of Hunger

by Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali

I counted the ribs on his concertina chest
bones protruding as if chiselled
by a sculptor's hand of famine.
He looked with glazed pupils
seeing only a bun on some sky-high shelf
His tongue darted in and out
like a chameleon's
snatching a confetti of flies.
O! Child,
your stomach is a den of lions
roaring day and night.

Practice Exercise 2

Read the following poem aloud and then silently, on your own.

I Shall Return

by Claude McKay

I shall return again. I shall return
To laugh and love and watch with wonder-eyes
At golden noon the forest fires burn,
Wafting their blue-black smoke to sapphire skies.
I shall return to loiter by the streams
That bathe the brown blades of the bending grasses,
And realise once more my thousand dreams
Of waters rushing down the mountain passes.
I shall return to hear the fiddle and fife
Of village dances, dear delicious tunes
That stir the hidden depth of native life,
tray melodies of dim-remembered tunes,
I shall return. I shall return again
To ease my mind of long, long years of pain.

Questions

- a. Identify the rhyming words in the poem and arrange them in pairs. Why do you think the poet uses these rhyming words?
- b. Which lines in the poem are used repetitively? State two functions of this repetition.
- c. How does Claude McKay achieve rhythm in this poem?

Unit 4

Themes and messages in poetry

Activity 1

Read the following poem carefully. Thereafter, discuss it in your small groups.

The Weaver Bird

by Kofi Awoonor

The weaver bird built in our house
And laid its eggs on our only tree
We did not want to send it away
We watched the building of the nest
And supervised the egg-laying.
And the weaver returned in the guise
of the owner
Preaching salvation to us that owned
the tree
They say it came from the west
Where the storms at sea had felled the gulls
And the fishers dried their nets by lantern light
Its summon is the divination of ourselves
And our new horizon's limit at its nest
But we cannot join the prayers and answers of the communicants
We look for new homes every day
For new altars we strive to rebuild
The old shrines defiled from the weaver's excrement.



A weaver bird

(From *A Poetry Course for Schools* – Hargreaves and Robin)

You will notice that in this poem, Kofi Awoonor uses the metaphor of a weaverbird to say something about the introduction of colonial western influence in Africa. What exactly is Awoonor saying about colonialism? He is suggesting that colonialism was dangerous and destructive to African cultures. Although it was

introduced in a cunning manner, it soon replaced African ways of life. Hence, Africans were left looking for ‘new homes every day’; in other words, Africans were left with no culture of their own. Therefore, Awoonor is talking about the dangerous effects of colonisation and westernisation. This is the theme of the poem.

Definition of a theme

A theme is what a poet is saying about a certain subject. It is the poet’s opinion or perspective about a certain issue in society.

Definition of a message

A message is what a poet wishes society to learn from his or her poem. The message is a kind of lesson that the reader learns after reading the poem. For example, in the above poem, Awoonor’s message is that Africans need to have their own culture, and they should not cling to foreign cultures.

Types of themes: hidden and fully stated.

A theme could be stated clearly by the poet, or it could simply be implied (communicated indirectly). When the theme is implied, the reader is expected to use his own intelligence in order to understand it. For example, in *The Weaver Bird*, the theme is not stated clearly. By using our intelligence, we are able to interpret the meaning of symbols like the weaver bird, and hence, arrive at the thematic meaning of the poem. But in the following poem, the theme is stated more directly.

Activity 2

Read the following poem and discuss its theme.

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...

The theme of this poem is stated clearly: love.

Practice Exercise 1

Read the following poem and discuss it in your small groups.

Western Civilisation

by Agostinho Neto

Sheets of tin nailed to grass
driven in the ground
make up the house.
Some rags complete
the intimate landscape.

The sun slanting through the cracks
welcomes the owner
After twelve hours
of slave labour.
Breaking rock
shifting rock
breaking rock
shifting rock
fair weather
wet weather
breaking rock
shifting rock
Old age comes early
A mat on dark nights
is enough when he dies
gratefully
of hunger.

(From A Poetry Course for Secondary Schools - Hargreaves and Robin)

Questions

- a. What is the main theme of the poem?
- b. Is the theme stated clearly or is it implied?
- c. What is the poet's message?
- d. How does the repetition emphasise the theme and message of this poem?
- e. Why is the man in this poem happy to die?

Practice Exercise 2

Read the poem below and say whether the theme is stated directly or it is implied.

An African Thunderstorm

by David Rubadiri

From the west
Clouds come hurrying with the wind
Turning sharply
Here and there
Like a plague of locusts
Whirling,
Tossing up things on its tail
Like a madman chasing nothing.
Pregnant clouds
Ride stately on its back,
Gathering to perch on hills
Like sinister dark wings;
The wind whistles by
And trees bend to let it pass.
In the village
Screams of delighted children,
Toss and turn
In the din of the whirling wind,
Women,
Babies clinging on their backs
Dart about
In and out

Madly;
The wind whistles by
Whilst trees bend to let it pass.
Clothes wave like tattered flags
Flying off
To expose dangling breasts
As jagged blinding flashes
Rumble, tremble and crack
Amidst the smell of fired smoke
And the pelting march of the storm.

Questions

- a. What is the main theme in this poem?
- b. How do people in the said village react to what is happening in the poem?

Unit 5

Language use in poetry

Introduction

What do you think makes a poem interesting? In Unit 4, you learnt about themes and messages in a poem. What does a poet use to help put across a message or explain a theme easily? Poets use poetic devices to achieve all this. We shall learn about some of these poetic devices in this Unit, starting with repetition.

Repetition

Most poems use a lot of repetition. A word, phrase, line, stanza or an idea can be repeated in a poem. Repetition not only creates rhythm in a poem, but it also establishes unity in the poem as well as helping the poet to emphasise certain ideas. Do you notice repetition in the following poem?

Smile

by Mark Chetambe

They say she smiled at me
I will not slaughter my only cock
I will not throw a party
I will not bring down my flute
I will not compose a song
I will not change my walking style
I will not go to the barber for a box haircut
On my potato shaped head
I will not read *Song of Solomon*
I will not sell my father's land
I will not buy a big mirror
I will not buy any deodorant
I will not wash my shirt in the detergent
I will not buy new herbal toothpaste



I will not dig out the virility roots
I will not join a fitness club
It was not her first smile,
Nor the last.
Nowadays, girls smile all the time.

Figurative language

We usually use two different kinds of expression while speaking: the literal and the figurative. Literal statements mean exactly what they say. For instance, “I am tired”. Figurative statements on the other hand have another meaning beyond the literal one. For example, “I have an ocean of drinking water,” or “a dark cloud hangs over the school.” A statement becomes figurative when it contains one of these figures of speech:

1. Similes

A simile uses the words ‘as’, ‘like’ or ‘than’ to show a resemblance between two things which are different. If the two things being compared are alike, then it is not a simile. Sometimes the verbs ‘appears’ or ‘seems’ are also used to compare. Here are the first and second stanzas from the poem *An African Thunderstorm*. The similes in bold; the clouds are compared to a plague of locusts and a madman:

From the west
Clouds come hurrying with the wind
Turning sharply
Here and there

Like a plague of locusts

Whirling,
Tossing up things on its tail
Like a madman chasing nothing.

Pregnant clouds
Ride stately on its back,
Gathering to perch on hills
Like sinister dark wings;
The wind whistles by
And trees bend to let it pass.

Activity 1

- Write down another simile from these stanzas.
- What do you think the simile you have pointed out means? Discuss this with your desk mate.

Similes help a poet communicate feelings more effectively. For instance, the similes in this stanza help the poet express the furious and haphazard movement of the clouds.

2. Metaphors

A metaphor says that one thing is another. It says A is B; but a simile says A is like B. It compares two dissimilar things without using 'as', 'like' or 'than'. The two things which a metaphor compares are usually incomparable or dissimilar in real life.

Activity 2

Read the poem below. Two metaphors are in bold.

Love song

You lime of the forest, money among
the rocks,
Lemon of the cloister, **grape in the
savannah**.

A hip to be enclosed by one hand;
A thigh round like a piston.
Your back — a manuscript to read
hymns from.
Your eye trigger-happy, shoots heroes.
Your gown cobweb-tender,
Your shirt like soothing balm.
Soap? O no, you wash in Arabian scent,
Your calf painted with silver lines.
I dare not touch you!
Hardly dare to look back.
You mistress of my body:



Grapes

More precious to me than my hand or my foot,
Like the fruit of the valley, the water of paradise,
Flower of the sky; wrought by divine craftsmen;
With muscular thigh she stepped on my heart
Her eternal heel trod me down.
But have no compassion with me:
Her breast resembles the finest gold;
When she opens her heart —
The Saviour's image!
And Jerusalem herself, sacred city,
Shouts "Holy, holy!"

(Traditional – from the Amharic)

Questions

- Identify other metaphors and write them down in your exercise book.
- What do you think is the purpose of these metaphors used in this poem?

A metaphor can be implicit or explicit. Explicit metaphors are clear about the two things being compared. However, in an implicit metaphor, one of the entities being compared is merely implied. Example: John barked at the girl. (This compares John to a dog; however, this is only implied.) She flew at him. (She is compared to a bird.)

3. Personification

This is a figure of speech that gives human traits or qualities to things that are non-human. It compares the human with the non-human; it is a kind of metaphor in which one of the entities is always a human being. Animals, objects, natural phenomena or even ideas can be personified. Read the following stanza from *An African thunderstorm*. The personification is in bold.

Pregnant clouds

Ride stately on its back,
Gathering to perch on hills
Like sinister dark wings;

The wind whistles by

And trees bend to let it pass.

Activity 3

- a. Write down any other personification apart from the ones in bold.
- b. What human ability is in the personification you have written?

4. Paradox

Paradox is a statement which appears self-contradictory but which is actually expressing some truth when it is closely examined. It is some kind of word play. For example: the *ugly beauty* may seem contradictory; however it may be suggesting a person who is physically attractive yet whose behaviour is repulsive.

5. Apostrophe

This is where the absent is addressed as if it is present, the dead as if they are living, the inanimate as if they are animate. It is closely related to personification. If it is used well, it adds immediacy, excitement and intensity to a poem. Here is an example:

Happiness paid me a visit.

6. Metonymy

This is a figure of language where instead of using the actual name of something, we use the name of something else which is closely related to it or which resembles it. Metonymies are used to create a particular emphasis on a specific detail. For example, 'the crown' to mean the government. Someone might say, "The **chair** has called off the meeting." The chair in this case is not furniture but a person. The 'bench' usually refers to judges collectively.

7. Hyperbole (overstatement)

This is where a poet exaggerates deliberately, not to deceive but rather to create a special effect.

Activity 4

Read the poem below. Some of the hyperbole is in bold. Point out at least another case of hyperbole.

Sope

by Siriman Cissoko

Sope, when you are gay, when you are gay, my Sope
Your smile caresses my eyes.

Then I would become your joy, to unfold your tulip face,

Yes, die upon your lips, quench myself in your voice,
Yes, drown in your dark eyes.
When my dark lady walks, the desire takes me to be under her
feet.
That I might kiss her feet, that they might trample my heart,
ah! Lord!
When my dark lady adorns herself, she is Sogolon, the Malinke
Princess.
Would I wear boubou, jewels, golden slippers.

8. Symbolism

A literary symbol is something that stands for something else other than itself. It is a sign that does not exist for its own sake but rather points to something different from itself. Conventional symbols are symbols in everyday use which are understood by everyone.

For example, what conventional meanings are associated with the following?

- a) the cross
- b) road signs
- c) colours, such as white or red
- d) a ring on the finger
- e) a flag

In literature, darkness, dawn, dusk, roses, light, etc, are conventional symbols which have acquired specific meanings. What meanings are associated with these symbols?

A literary symbol is a thing or event or person or quality or a relationship which functions in two ways:

- as itself
- as a sign of something else.

E.g. blood may mean just that, blood; but it may also mean war.

Uses of figures of speech in poetry

1. They create images that make abstract statements appear real.
2. They communicate more concretely and vividly.
3. They convey judgments.
4. They communicate feelings so as to influence our attitude towards the subject.

Practice Exercise 1

Read the following poem aloud. Thereafter, answer the questions that follow.

A Freedom Song

by Marjorie Oludhe Mcgoye

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 the 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.

Questions

- a. From the poem, identify:
 - i) repetition
 - ii) simile
 - iii) metaphor
 - iv) hyperbole
- b. What do you think is the importance of these figures of speech in this poem?
- c. Who do you think Atieno symbolises?
- d. In a short paragraph, describe what is happening in the poem.
- e. What do you think should happen to the narrator and his wife?
- f. What is the theme of this poem?
- g. What is the message in this poem?

Unit 6

Introduction to drama

Introduction to drama



Masks

Activity 1

In groups of four, take turns to read the following conversation. Thereafter, discuss it. Do this during your spare time. You will answer the questions that follow during the lesson.

Synopsis

The examinations department at Masomo Academy is full of inefficiency, corruption and dishonesty. Will the tricks of Mr. Bramuel succeed?

Act 1

Scene1

(A school assembly for the release of Test 1 exams. The National Anthem is sung happily.)

PRINCIPAL: Teachers and pupils of Masomo Academy; today we release the results of Test 1 examinations. As is our tradition, the top pupil in senior 4 will be our new Head

Prefect. He or she will also take a trip to Mombasa on a Rwanda Airways flight. Now, let us welcome the senior examinations master Mr. Chris. *(Cheers)*

BRAMUEL: *(arriving late as he adjusts his tie)* Madam Principal, I also happen to be around!

PRINCIPAL: Of course you are also here, Mr. Bramuel.

BRAMUEL: *(Correcting him)* The assistant examinations master at Masomo Academy. I work in the same office with Mr. Chris. In fact, without my effort, the examinations department would die a natural death.

PRINCIPAL: *(Impatiently)* Of course Mr. Bramuel. Mr. Chris, please go ahead.

CHRIS: Thank you Madam Principal. The results of Test 1 are here with me. Remember, worst performers may lose their place at Masomo Academy. The examinations department works professionally, honestly and very transparently. We work like bees.

BRAMUEL: Yes, we work hand in hand ... as a team. The examinations master and the assistant examinations master are one ... !

PRINCIPAL: Save us the long stories gentlemen; we all want to hear the results.

PUPILS: *(chanting)* Results! Results! Results!

CHRIS: Sorry Madam Principal. Let me now open the results. As I was saying ... the examinations department believes in moulding our pupils into honest citizens. *(Impatient noises)*

BRAMUEL: Madam Principal, with all due respect ... let the assistant examinations master release the results. The senior examinations master has become a storyteller!

PRINCIPAL: Mr. Chris, this is not a drama festival. Spare us the long narrative and release the results.

CHRIS: Ok! Here now are the results. In Senior 4, the top pupil is Amani! *(Cheers as Amani steps forward)*

PRINCIPAL: Congratulations Amani!

CHRIS: The pupil who may lose his place at this school is ... Cleophas! Cleophas is not only lazy but also rude. He comes late to school and dozes in class. Such pupils do not belong to our well-performing school.

PRINCIPAL: Well done Mr. Chris. *(Calls Cleophas)* Son, you are a bad example to the rest of the pupils. If you don't change, we might as well ask you to leave this school. *(Teachers freeze, Cleophas walks towards Amani and the other pupils.)*

AMANI: *(To the other pupils)* Thank you all. My victory is your victory. Together we shall take Masomo Academy to greater heights of glory. *(Loud cheers)*

CLEOPHAS: Who said I am at the bottom? Ha ha ha. I am not bothered at all. I will just go home, get a bicycle and use it to ferry people. I will make money, ha ha ha!

AMANI: Test 1 was tough but I was equally tough. I am not surprised I performed well. *(Cheers)*

CLEOPHAS: I did not fail. They just brought the wrong questions ha ha ha!

AMANI: When I grow up I will be a great writer like Soyinka or Achebe or Ngugi wa Thiong'o.

CLEOPHAS: What is education? What matters is money. I will fetch my bicycle and make money. *(Sings I will ride my bicycle)*

CHRIS: It is now my duty to hand over the results of Test 1 to the principal. *(drumming as he walks towards the principal. Suddenly he notices a mistake)* Hey; wait a minute ... there is a mistake here. Madam Principal, pupils and teachers ... There is some confusion with these results. I am... I mean the examinations department is very sorry for ...

PRINCIPAL: What is it Mr. Chris?

CHRIS: Madam ... we read the wrong results!

BRAMUEL: Madam Principal I am not part of this confusion. You know how efficient I am.

CHRIS: This is a strange mix up. It has never happened before.

PRINCIPAL: Mr. Christopher!

CHRIS: I am sorry Madam Principal ... I am genuinely shocked. This is how my face looks when I am shocked.

ALL: Mr. Chris!

CHRIS: It is a small problem ... I mean a big mistake but we can sort it out.

ALL: Mr. Chris!

BRAMUEL: (*Aside*) As you can see, nobody is mentioning my name!

PRINCIPAL: The name of Masomo Academy is at risk. Our reputation is about to collapse. So what are the correct results?

CHRIS: Madam, the top pupil is Cleophas, not Amani!

CLEOPHAS: You see! You see! Ha ha ha. Where are those who laughed at me? Do not write me off yet. I am tough. Ish! He who laughs last laughs loudest, ha ha ha.

ALL: (*very shocked*) Cleophas? How?

CLEOPHAS: Yes, Cleophas! You can't believe it? Ki le o pha si! I am tough. When I grow up I want to be famous like Ngugi wa Achebe!

AMANI: Oh! Why me?

PRINCIPAL: Mr. Chris! Mr. Bramuel! I demand an explanation. What is happening in the examinations department? We have already congratulated Amani. What do we do for her now?

BRAMUEL: That is very easy Madam. You know I am not part of this confusion. I suggest that we de-congratulate Cleophas. We clapped for Amani, so we simply clap again. The second clapping will cancel the first one. Then we withdraw the condemnation and replace it with congratulations. We uncondemn or decondemn him!

PRINCIPAL: (*very angry*) Pupils dismissed! (*Pupils disappear*) Mr. Chris! Mr. Bramuel! I demand to know what exactly is going on!

BRAMUEL: It is ... is Mr. Chris!

CHRIS: No! It is Mr. Bramuel!

BRAMUEL: Mr. Chris!

CHRIS: Mr. Bramuel!

CHRIS/BRAMUEL: Chris/Bramuel!

BRAMUEL: It is you! While I was working hard, you were busy walking up and down, especially down.

CHRIS: Nonsense!

BRAMUEL: I have always worked up to midnight in the examinations office. You were busy moving here and there, especially there!

PRINCIPAL: Quiet you two! Quarrelling little kids! I am going to cancel the Test 1 results. The whole test will have to be redone! Mr. Chris, draw up a new examinations timetable.

BRAMUEL: With due respect Madam ... that will make all of us look very ugly. It will give all of us, including you, a bad name.

PRINCIPAL: Then give me the correct results!

BRAMUEL: Here Madam! These are the correct results.

CHRIS: No, Madam Principal. Here ... these are the correct results. *(Principal holds the two sets of results impatiently in her hand.)*

BRAMUEL: We must leave the results as they are sir. Cleophas becomes the Head Prefect. Amani must leave the school. That is the only way out.
(All exit)

Questions

- In pairs, discuss and say what type of literature this is. Give reasons for your answer.
- In pairs, discuss and describe the format of or the way this literature has been arranged.

Activity 2

In your groups,

- Discuss the meaning of acting and what can be acted on stage.
- Rehearse during your spare time, and present the conversation you read, in class.

What is drama?

The word drama is derived from a Greek word ‘*dran*’ that means “to do.” This is understandable because in a play, on stage, we are always presented with

dialogue and actions. A play is a story that is written for actors to perform on stage. A play usually has a dialogue that is spoken by the characters. Therefore, drama is a performance in which actors represent characters and act out a story.

Activity 3

- a. You took different roles while performing, in Activity 2. What name do we give people who take roles to perform a play? Discuss this in your groups.
- b. Discuss the use of the words in brackets in the play you read.
- c. What do you think is a theatre? Discuss this in your groups.

Theatre, audience, playwright, actors, script

You must know the meaning of certain terms in order to understand and appreciate drama. These include theatre, audience, playwright, actors, script and others.

Activity 4

Read the following definitions as members of your group listen. Take turns to do this until you are through.

1. **Theatre** refers to a building where performing plays and other performances are done.
2. **A playwright** is a person who writes a play or a piece of drama.
3. An **audience** refers to the people who watch a play when it is being acted performed.
4. A **script** refers to the written text of a play. Remember that drama can be experienced in two ways: it can be read as a scripted text or watched during performance.
5. An **actor** is a person who represents one of the characters in a play. He or she performs the actions of that character on stage.
6. Usually, the playwright provides a list of the characters in a play – this is called **cast of characters**. He or she also says who they are. Therefore, the actors are assigned roles using this list. For example, here is a list of the play you started reading in Activity 1:

Characters

Proprietor: the proprietor of Masomo Academy

Principal: the principal of Masomo Academy

Mr. Chris: the senior examinations master

Mr. Bramuel: the assistant examinations master

Cleophas: a pupil

Amani: a pupil

Inspector: a school inspector

Students

Teachers

Key elements of drama: act, scene, stage directions, dialogue

Plays are usually divided into acts and scenes. **An act is a major division of a play.** Most plays usually have between three to five acts. When a play is being acted on stage, the change from one act to another may be indicated by the drawing of the curtains or the switching off of the lights. Usually, moving from one act to another in a play may mean that the location of the action has changed, or that the time has shifted.

An act is normally divided into scenes. Therefore **a scene is a small division of an act.** A scene focuses on the actions of the characters at a specific time. A play can move from one scene to another without any change of place or time. However, a scene may also refer to the activities of a group of actors at a particular time. If one character leaves the group, or if a new character joins the group, a new scene is introduced.

Stage directions

You came across this in the excerpts you read earlier: (*standing still by the table*). Do you understand what it is? This is called a stage direction. What do you think is its use?

Stage directions are descriptions, which are made by the playwright **to indicate the actions of the characters or to describe the setting.** Stage directions help us realise the right mood for each scene. For instance, the playwright might suggest sombre music or lively drumbeats; each will create a different mood/atmosphere.

Stage directions are usually written in brackets. It would be near impossible to stage a play without stage directions. For example, the actors wouldn't know

when to enter or leave the stage. They wouldn't know whether to speak softly or shout. Stage directions help the actors make use of **non-verbal expression**.

Non-verbal expressions include gestures, frowns, smiles and **movement** on the stage. Actors communicate the playwright's message and to do this effectively, they make use of the non-verbal expressions too. Pacing around on stage could indicate impatience in a character. How about shouting or banging a table? What of tiptoeing across the stage? What of dancing? We should always look out for this non-verbal cues. They help us, as the audience or readers, to understand drama better.

Activity 5

Pick any set play and point out an act, a scene and stage directions.

Activity 6

Read the excerpt below. It is a continuation of the play you started reading in Activity 1. Thereafter, answer the questions that follow.

TOP AND BOTTOM

A play by Mark M. Chetambe.

Act 1

Scene 2

(Cleophas and Amani are quarreling over the CAT 1 results)

AMANI: Cleophas, you will never become Head Prefect of Masomo Academy. It will be a great shame. You know very well that you don't deserve it.

CLEOPHAS: We all heard the announcement. Cleophas will be the Head Prefect, and Amani will be expelled. Simple. Prepare to pick your letter of expulsion. I am very sure it is now being typed. I can feel the fingers of the secretary as she types that letter. "Dear parent, your daughter is not fit for a serious school like Masomo Academy!"

AMANI: You ... you doze in class! You never raise up your hand during lessons. You have never scored above 30% in any test. Your handwriting is so bad you cannot read it yourself. How can you be our Head Prefect? How?

CLEOPHAS: I simply believe in the Bible. Especially the verse that says the first shall be last and the last shall be first. Simple! The Bible says that in the book of Patrick.

AMANI: I will talk to the other pupils. We shall never allow you to become the Head Prefect. Never!

CLEOPHAS: If you do that you will regret the day, you were born.

AMANI: (*Charging at him*) I am warning you Cleophas! You struggler ...

CLEOPHAS: Yet I am now the Head Prefect!

AMANI: You always copy my answers!

CLEOPHAS: Head Prefect!

AMANI: Always cheating ...

CLEOPHAS: Head Prefect!

AMANI: You will never be the Head Prefect.

CLEOPHAS: Head Prefect! Head Prefect! Head Prefect! I am the new Head Prefect of Masomo Academy. Get that into your head little girl. Soon, I will be receiving prizes for performing well.

AMANI: You will never be the Head Prefect!

CLEOPHAS: You don't know who I am. The assistant examinations master is my cousin. I am related to the real stakeholders and the real stick holders of this school. You don't know me Amani. You will never win against me. Just give up.
(Exit)

Act 1

Scene 3

(*In the principal's office*)

PRINCIPAL: Mr. Chris, if I don't get a good explanation about what is going on in the examinations department, I am disbanding that department. There are many teachers who can run that office efficiently.

BRAMUEL: Madam Principal, there is only one problem in the examinations department.

PRINCIPAL: And what is that?

BRAMUEL: Mr. Chris

PRINCIPAL: Again?

BRAMUEL: Yes Madam. You see, I don't back bite people, but Mr. Chris is not a worker. He is extremely lazy. He just comes to the office and sits like a statue or a very tired cow.

PRINCIPAL: Tell me about the chaotic Test results.

BRAMUEL: Mr. Chris is not fit to be the senior examinations master. He is not hard working like me. I don't like bragging but I come to school at five every day. I teach all my lessons and assist all the pupils. I mark all the assignments, etc etc. On the other hand ... Mr. Chris, he he he ... he just comes and sits like a statue waiting for the tea and *mandazi* at break time. (*Enter Chris*) Oh welcome Mr. Chris, my dear boss. Welcome. I was just telling the principal that we work very hard in the examinations office.

PRINCIPAL: Mr. Chris, you are the senior examinations master. What is happening in your department?

CHRIS: Madam, there is something fishy in the examinations department. However, whoever it is or whatever it is, I am determined to find out very soon.

PRINCIPAL: We don't have time Mr. Chris. We are supposed to be crowning the Head Prefect today.

CHRIS: Madam, just give me a few hours to find out the truth. You see, our exam results just keep getting mixed up. I will find the person behind all this.

BRAMUEL: In my experience, the mix-up in the exam results is caused by a computer error.

PRINCIPAL: Computer error?

BRAMUEL: Yes Madam. In fact, for some time now, I have been fighting with a computer virus.

PRINCIPAL: A virus?

BRAMUEL: Yes Madam. A very complicated virus. It has two heads and three tails. It is called computer coccidiosis. A very bad virus Madam. Our computers need to be cleaned by a powerful pesticide.

PRINCIPAL: And why didn't you tell me about this before?

BRAMUEL: Protocol Madam. I am not the senior examinations master.

Answer the questions below on your own.

- a. Which act is this?
- b. How many scenes does this act have?
- c. How many actors would be required to act out this excerpt?
- d. What is the name of the playwright of this play?
- e. Write down the stage directions in these excerpts. In your own words, explain what each means. Demonstrate each in class.
- f. Using evidence from the play, explain what changes in the scenes in this act.

Activity 7

Homework

The following is a whole act from the play *Top and Bottom* by Mark M. Chetambe. Read during your spare time. Thereafter, discuss it in your small groups. Finally, answer questions that follow.

TOP AND BOTTOM

by Mark Chetambe

Characters

Proprietor:	the proprietor of Masomo Academy
Principal:	the principal of Masomo Academy
Mr. Chris:	the senior examinations master
Mr. Bramuel:	the assistant examinations master
Cleophas:	a pupil
Amani:	a pupil
Pupils	
Teachers	

Scene1

(A school assembly for the release of Test 1 exams. School anthem is sung happily.)

PRINCIPAL: Teachers and pupils of Masomo Academy; today we release the results of Test 1 examinations. As is our tradition, the top pupil in senior 4 will be our new Head Prefect. He or she will also take a trip to Mombasa on a

	Rwanda Airways flight. Now, let us welcome the senior examinations master Mr. Chris. (<i>Cheers</i>)
BRAMUEL:	(<i>arriving late as he adjusts his tie</i>) Mr. Principal, I also happen to be around!
PRINCIPAL:	Of course you are also here, Mr. Bramuel.
BRAMUEL:	(<i>Correcting him</i>) The assistant examinations master at Masomo Academy. I work in the same office with Mr. Chris. In fact, without my effort, the examinations department would die a natural death.
PRINCIPAL:	(<i>Impatiently</i>) Of course Mr. Bramuel. Mr. Chris, please go ahead.
CHRIS:	Thank you Madam Principal. The results of Test 1 examination are here with me. Remember, worst performers may lose their place at Masomo Academy. The examinations department works professionally, honestly and very transparently. We work like bees.
BRAMUEL:	Yes, we work hand in hand ... as a team. The examinations master and the assistant examinations master are one ... !
PRINCIPAL:	Save us the long stories gentlemen; we all want to hear the results.
PUPILS:	(<i>chanting</i>) Results! Results! Results!
CHRIS:	Sorry Madam Principal. Let me now open the results. As I was saying ...the examinations department believes in moulding our pupils into honest citizens. (<i>Impatient noises</i>)
BRAMUEL:	Madam Principal, with all due respect ... let the assistant examinations master release the results. The senior examinations master has become a storyteller!
PRINCIPAL:	Mr. Chris, this is not a drama festival. Spare us the long narrative and release the results.
CHRIS:	Ok! Here now are the results. In Senior 4, the top pupil is Amani! (<i>Cheers as Amani steps forward</i>)
PRINCIPAL:	Congratulations Amani!
CHRIS:	The pupil who may lose his place at this school is ... Cleophas! Cleophas is not only lazy but also rude. He

comes late to school and a dozes in class. Such pupils do not belong to our well-performing school.

PRINCIPAL: Well done Mr. Chris. *(Calls Cleophas)* Son, you a bad example to the rest of the pupils. If you don't change, we might as well ask you to leave this school. *(Teachers freeze, Cleophas walks towards Amani and the other pupils.)*

AMANI: *(To the other pupils)* Thank you all. My victory is your victory. Together we shall take Masomo Academy to greater heights of glory. *(Loud cheers)*

CLEOPHAS: Who said I am at the bottom? Ha ha ha. I am not bothered at all. I will just go home, get a bicycle and use it to ferry people. I will make money, ha ha ha!

AMANI: Test 1 was tough but I was equally tough. I am not surprised I performed well. *(Cheers)*

CLEOPHAS: I did not fail. They just brought the wrong questions ha ha ha.

ARISTO: When I grow up I will be a great writer like Soyinka or Achebe or Ngugi wa Thiong'o.

CLEOPHAS: What is education? What matters is money. I will fetch my bicycle and make money. *(Sings I will ride my bicycle)*

CHRIS: It is now my duty to hand over the results of Test 1 to the principal. *(drumming as he walks towards the principal. Suddenly he notices a mistake)* Hey; wait a minute ... there is a mistake here. Madam Principal, pupils and teachers ... There is some confusion with these results. I am ... I mean the examinations department is very sorry for ...

PRINCIPAL: What is it Mr. Chris?

CHRIS: Madam ... we read the wrong results!

BRAMUEL: Madam Principal I am not part of this confusion. You know how efficient I am.

CHRIS: This is a strange mix up. It has never happened before.

PRINCIPAL: Mr. Christopher!

CHRIS: I am sorry Madam Principal ... I am genuinely shocked. This is how my face looks when I am shocked.

ALL: Mr. Chris!

CHRIS: It is a small problem ... I mean a big mistake but we can sort it out.

ALL: Mr. Chris!

BRAMUEL: (*Aside*) As you can see, nobody is mentioning my name!

PRINCIPAL: The name of Masomo Academy is at risk. Our reputation is about to collapse. So what are the correct results?

CHRIS: Madam, the top pupil is Cleophas, not Amani!

CLEOPHAS: You see! You see! Ha ha ha. Where are those who laughed at me? Do not write me off yet. I am tough. Ish! He who laughs last laughs loudest, ha ha ha.

ALL: (*very shocked*) Cleophas? How?

CLEOPHAS: Yes, Cleophas! You can't believe it? Ki le o pha si! I am tough. When I grow up I want to be famous like Ngugi wa Achebe!

AMANI: Oh! Why me?

PRINCIPAL: Mr. Chris! Mr. Bramuel! I demand an explanation. What is happening in the examinations department? We have already congratulated Amani. What do we do for her now?

BRAMUEL: That is very easy Madam. You know I am not part of this confusion. I suggest that we de-congratulate Cleophas. We clapped for Amani, so we simply clap again. The second clapping will cancel the first one. Then we withdraw the condemnation and replace it with congratulations. We uncondemn or decondemn him!

PRINCIPAL: (*very angry*) Pupils dismissed! (*Pupils disappear*) Mr. Chris! Mr. Bramuel! I demand to know what exactly is going on!

BRAMUEL: It is ... is Mr. Chris!

CHRIS: No! It is Mr. Bramuel!

BRAMUEL: Mr. Chris!

CHRIS: Mr. Bramuel!

CHRIS/BRAMUEL: Chris/Bramuel!

BRAMUEL: It is you! While I was working hard, you were busy walking up and down, especially down.

CHRIS: Nonsense!

BRAMUEL: I have always worked up to midnight in the examinations office. You were busy moving here and there, especially there!

PRINCIPAL: Quiet you two! Quarrelling little kids. I am going to cancel the Test 1 results. The whole test will have to be redone! Mr. Chris, draw up a new examinations timetable.

BRAMUEL: With due respect Madam ... that will make all of us look very ugly. It will give all of us, including you, a bad name.

PRINCIPAL: Then give me the correct results!

BRAMUEL: Here Madam! These are the correct results.

CHRIS: No Madam Principal. Here ... these are the correct results. *(Principal holds the two sets of results impatiently in her hand)*

BRAMUEL: We must leave the results as they are Madam. Cleophas becomes the Head Prefect. Amani must leave the school. That is the only way out. *(All exit)*

Scene 2

(Cleophas and Amani are quarrelling over the Test 1 examination results)

AMANI: Cleophas, you will never become Head Prefect of Masomo Academy. It will be a great shame. You know very well that you don't deserve it.

CLEOPHAS: We all heard the announcement. Cleophas will be the Head Prefect, and Amani will be expelled. Simple. Prepare to pick your letter of expulsion. I am very sure it is now being typed. I can feel the fingers of the secretary as she types that letter. "Dear parent, your daughter is not fit for a serious school like Masomo Academy!"

AMANI: You ... you doze in class! You never raise up your hand during lessons. You have never scored above 30% in any test. Your handwriting is so bad you cannot read it yourself. How can you be our Head Prefect? How?

CLEOPHAS: I simply believe in the Bible. Especially the verse that says the

first shall be last and the last shall be first. Simple! The Bible says that in the book of Patrick.

AMANI: I will talk to the other pupils. We shall never allow you to become the Head Prefect. Never!

CLEOPHAS: If you do that you will regret the day, you were born.

AMANI: (*Charging at him*) I am warning you Cleophas! You struggler ...

CLEOPHAS: Yet I am now the Head Prefect!

AMANI: You always copy my answers!

CLEOPHAS: Head Prefect!

AMANI: Always cheating ...

CLEOPHAS: Head Prefect!

AMANI: You will never be the Head Prefect.

CLEOPHAS: Head Prefect! Head Prefect! Head Prefect! I am the new Head Prefect of Masomo Academy. Get that into your head little girl. Soon, I will be receiving prizes for performing well.

AMANI: You will never be the Head Prefect!

CLEOPHAS: You don't know who I am. The assistant examinations master is my cousin. I am related to the real stakeholders and the real stick holders of this school. You don't know me Amani. You will never win against me. Just give up.
(Exit)

Scene 3

(*In the principal's office*)

PRINCIPAL: Mr. Chris, if I don't get a good explanation, I am relieving you of your duties. There are many teachers who can run that office efficiently.

BRAMUEL: Madam Principal, there is only one problem in the examinations department.

PRINCIPAL: And what is that?

BRAMUEL: Mr. Chris

PRINCIPAL: Again?

BRAMUEL: Yes Madam. You see, I don't back bite people, but Mr. Chris is not a worker. He is extremely lazy. He just comes to the office and sits like a statue or a very tired cow.

PRINCIPAL: Tell me about the chaotic results of Test 1 examination.

BRAMUEL: Mr. Chris is not fit to be the senior examinations master. He is not hard working like me. I don't like bragging but I come to school at five every day. I teach all my lessons and assist all the pupils. I mark all the assignments, etc etc. On the other hand ... Mr. Chris, he he he ... he just comes and sits like a statue waiting for the tea and *mandazi* at break time. (*Enter Chris*) Oh welcome Mr. Chris, my dear boss. Welcome. I was just telling the principal that we work very hard in the examinations office.

PRINCIPAL: Mr. Chris, you are the senior examinations master. What is happening in your department?

CHRIS: Madam, there is something fishy in the examinations department. However, whoever it is or whatever it is, I am determined to find out very soon.

PRINCIPAL: We don't Have time Mr. Chris. We are supposed to be crowning the Head Prefect today.

CHRIS: Madam, just give me a few hours to find out the truth. You see, our exam results just keep getting mixed up. I will find the person behind all this.

BRAMUEL: In my experience, the mix-up in the exam results is caused by a computer error.

PRINCIPAL: Computer error?

BRAMUEL: Yes Madam. In fact, for some time now, I have been fighting with a computer virus.

PRINCIPAL: A virus?

BRAMUEL: Yes Madam. A very complicated virus. It has two heads and three tails. It is called computer coccidiosis. A very bad virus Madam. Our computers need to be cleaned by a powerful pesticide.

PRINCIPAL: And why didn't you tell me about this before?

BRAMUEL: Protocol Madam. I am not the senior examinations master.

Scene 4

(Amani leads the other pupils)

AMANI: Fellow pupils ... our teachers usually tell us hard work pays, right?

ALL: Yes!

AMANI: I have worked hard. I think something is amiss.

ALL: Yes!

PUPIL 1: Cleophas never raises up his hand in class.

PUPIL 2: He never joins in discussions. He never consults the teachers.

PUPIL 3: His favourite place in this school is the dining hall! *(Enter Cleophas as they sing)*

CLEOPHAS: As the new Head Prefect, I hereby order you to stop shouting and go to class.
(As he says this, Bramuel comes in and embraces him, and then disappears slowly. Pupils are very terrified.) Disperse at once!
(They dash off in fear)

Scene 5

(Enter principal and Chris)

PRINCIPAL: Mr. Chris, the results of Test 1 cannot be changed, again. It is too late now.

CHRIS: Madam; let us delay the official crowning of the Head Prefect. My investigations are almost complete. I highly suspect that the person is doctoring the exam results is Mr. Bramuel.

PRINCIPAL: Bramuel?

CHRIS: You see Madam ... why does he cook up funny stories about me? Did you know that Test 1 results were not kept on the computer?

PRINCIPAL: Is that so?

CHRIS: Yes Madam.

PRINCIPAL: You have exactly twenty minutes to get to the bottom of this.
(Exit Chris)
(Enter pupils and teachers)

PRINCIPAL: School; it is now time to crown the new Head Prefect. Cleophas, please step forward. *(He does)* I hereby pronounce you, Cleophas the new Head Prefect of Masomo Academy.
(Cheers here and there) And now Amani, step forward *(Amani steps forward; very sad)* *(Enter Chris suddenly)*

CHRIS: Wait a minute! Madam Principal, teachers and pupils! The

truth is out at last! My investigations reveal that Mr. Bramuel changed the results of Test 1.

BRAMUEL: It can never be true. I am an honest man.

CHRIS: He turned the results upside down.

PRINCIPAL: *(Very angry)* Mr. Bramuel, did you change the results?
(Flashback. In the examinations office, Bramuel is seen taking results from one file and changing them with others in a different file) Mr. Bramuel, this is unbelievable! Why did you do it?

BRAMUEL: I am sorry. All I have ever wanted is to be the senior examinations master in this school. I also wanted to help my cousin, Cleophas to be the Head Prefect.

ALL: Mr. Bramuel!

BRAMUEL: I am sorry Madam Principal.

PRINCIPAL: Amani, Masomo Academy is very sorry. Please come back. Climb the podium ... come and receive your crown. You are the new Head Prefect of Masomo Academy. *(Cheers as Amani is crowned)* As for you, Cleophas, you will accompany your cousin out of Masomo Academy forever. *(Bramuel and Cleophas begin to walk away sadly)*

ALL: And that was *Top and Bottom*, our play!

Activity 8

In you groups,

- Discuss how do stage directions help the reader to understand the play better.
- Practise during your spare time and then dramatise this excerpt in your class.
- Discuss and point out the elements of drama in excerpt above.

Unit 7

Key aspects of drama

Activity 1

In groups of four, discuss the meaning of plot, setting and characters. You have come across these terms before. Choose one member of the group to present your findings to the class.

Introduction

As we noted in Unit 6, drama, is presented through dialogue. Like a short story or novel, drama is made up of certain elements. It has a plot, setting and characters. However, the way in which they are presented to the audience is different. The reason for this is that unlike short stories or novels that are intended to be read, the play is meant to be performed in front of an audience. We shall study these elements in this Unit.

Activity 2

In Unit 6, you read Act 1 of Mark M. Chetambe's *Top and Bottom*. This was towards the end of Unit 6. Read it again and explain what happens from the beginning to the end of this act.

Plot

Plot is the author's arrangement of the **events** of the play in terms of cause and effect. (The story of the play is all the events of the play without worrying about cause and effect.) Plot is how the events are connected, leading to conflict. Plot is about what caused what; that is, the interconnectedness of the events.

Plot leads to conflict which is either internal (in the mind of the character) or external (between individuals). In a play, the conflict usually has a protagonist (a character who fights for something) and an antagonist (a character who opposes the protagonist). As we noted earlier, the plot of a play unravels through dialogue.

Structure of a play/plot patterns

Generally, a play will follow the following three stages:

1. Exposition/introduction: This brings out everything the audience/reader needs to know in order to follow what will happen in the play. The main characters, the setting and the conflict are introduced. It may involve some foreshadowing, which is a hint of what is likely to happen.
2. Complication/development/conflict: This is where the action rises; conflict rises and subplots are woven in the main plot. This stage is also called the rising action.
3. The crisis/climax: This is the culmination of the play's conflicts and complications; it is the high point or the turning point – it is the moment where the main character/s has to make a decision that must resolve the main conflict of the play. This where the uncertainty in the play must end; a decision must be made.
4. The falling action: This is the point where events begin to lead to the conclusion of the play.
5. Resolution/denouement/conclusion: This is where the conflict is resolved or concluded. The play ends at this point.

Activity 3

In groups of four, discuss and identify the events in the play *Top and Bottom* by Mark Chetambe, which make up the following:

- a. Exposition
- b. Complication
- c. Climax
- d. Falling action
- e. Resolution

Setting

Activity 4

The statement below is at the beginning of Mark Chetambe's play *Top and Bottom*. In your small groups, discuss its importance to the reader of this play: (*A school assembly for the release of Test 1 exams. School anthem is sung happily.*)

Setting refers to the social circumstances in which the events of a play occur, the historical time period and the geographical location of the events. In a play, setting is established in several ways:

1. Notes from the playwright. The playwright might state clearly the setting. An example is the statement you just read. Another example: The action takes place in a coastal town in southern Norway.
2. Through the character's dialogue, costume and behaviour. Characters might say where they are. We might also know who and where they are from what they wear.
3. The stage sets: This is what the set designer arranges on stage, for example, the set may suggest that the characters are poor; or that it is a palace; or that it is at seashore; or that it is an ancient African society. During performance, the set may also include props, and stage lighting.
4. Through the stage directions. The playwright may use stage directions to let the readers or audience know where the action is taking place.

Activity 5

In the following excerpt, from the play *Voice of the People* by Okoiti Omtatah, there are details in the stage directions. The names of the characters and their dialogue suggest that the setting of the play is at the residence of the leader of an African country. Look out for these details and list them down. Do this on your own.

(BOSS, in his early sixties, casually dressed in immaculate white complete with a matching broad-rimmed Stetson hat and looking athletic, sits alone reading newspapers under a large umbrella in a garden at his official residence. He exudes confidence. An aura of "cowboy toughness" hangs about him like a discernible scent. In fact, he is a cowboy. Next to him are empty chairs and a small table on which are a teapot, cups, etc. His mobile phone rings.)

BOSS: *(On phone)* Hello! Oh, Mr. Fix It! How's London? I'm the very image of health! Thank you. Sunny as usual. A bit humid today though. What's the good news? *(Upbeat. Listens. He is now on his feet, pacing about, totally immersed in the conversation, takes mental notes.)* The villa is a large cluster of luxury homes dominating a small hill leading down to the sea. The main home occupies 82,186 square metres, has 12 bedrooms, and a 14,000-bottle wine cellar, with many bottles containing

65-year-old vintage port. (Laughs) That's good. I don't drink wine that's younger than me. (Laughs) Oh no. Not the women. I don't touch women older than half my age. (Laughs) What's the asking price? Ten million US dollars? It's reasonable. The First Lady will love it when I present it to her on her birthday. (He speaks with some alarm after a longish pause) No! Not those Swiss accounts!

They are my lifeline. Nobody touches them. I will pay for the villa from this year's tea export earnings. (Enter SIBUOR in an expensive faultless business suit, brown leather briefcase in hand and stops at a distance. BOSS sees him and moves farther away, still on phone)

Fax me details of the company in whose name I will buy the villa. All I have are a 16th-century castle in Valencia, Spain ... a townhouse in Paris, an Oceanside villa in Nice, France ... and a 32-room chateau in Lausanne, Switzerland. Get more European properties. Office blocks, chateaux and mansions in exclusive districts

... especially those associated with historical figures like Napoleon. Okay. Bye. Take care.

(Puts off the phone and takes his time to turn and face SIBUOR)
What do you want?

SIBUOR: Your Excellency!

BOSS: (Some anger) Don't you Excellency me! Can't I have some time to myself?

SIBUOR: I am sorry, Your Excellency!

BOSS: What's it?

SIBUOR: The woman is here.

BOSS: Which woman?

SIBUOR: Nasirumbi.

BOSS: Who is she?

SIBUOR: I'd like you to meet her.

BOSS: Boss does not like to be ambushed!

Activity 6

- Write a short essay on the setting of the above excerpt. Do this on your own.
- The setting of this excerpt helps us to understand that Boss is very rich. Which details bring out this information? Discuss this with your desk mate.

Characters

Activity 7

We came across this list earlier. Tell your desk mate the word we used to refer to these people:

Proprietor:	the proprietor of Masomo Academy
Principal:	the principal of Masomo Academy
Mr. Chris:	the senior examinations master
Mr. Bramuel:	the assistant examinations master
Cleophas:	a pupil
Amani:	a pupil
Pupils	
Teachers	

Characters are the people, animals or things that play a part in a play. Characterisation is the playwright's presentation and development of the characters in a text. Character development is the key element in drama.

Activity 8

In your groups of four, research and find out the following:

- The other word that is used to refer to the main character.
- The name given to the character that opposes the main character.
- The word used to refer to the characters who support the main character.
- Is the antagonist a major or main character in a play?
- Who is a round character?
- Who is a flat character?

Characterisation in drama is made better by use of suggestive/symbolic/revealing costume, suggestive names, manners of walking, dialect etc. Sometimes masks are used to enhance characterisation. For example, when we watch a play and we see a character dressed in police uniform, we immediately know that he or

she is a police officer. When a character or actor dresses as a priest, a politician or a street child, the dressing helps the reader or audience to understand exactly who that character is.

The most important tool for the development of characters in drama is dialogue – what the characters say and what is said about them. In the excerpt you read earlier, we know that Boss is an immoral, rich and corrupt dictator from the following details: his name, his dressing and appearance, and his dialogue and actions. Can you point out some other details, which help us to know Boss' character better?

Activity 9

Homework

Read the excerpt below on your own and answer the questions that follow. Do this during your spare time.

Scene Two

Outside BOSS's Palace. BOSS sits in an arm chair, he holds a small mirror which he uses as he pulls out grey hairs from his head.

BOSS: Grey hair signifies wisdom, but it is a sad reminder. A kind of constant pointer to the passing of time. A leader should not grow grey; people begin to lose confidence in you. *(He is about to remove a grey hair when MULILI walks in.)* Hey you, I hate people who move quietly – do you hear? Next time, let some noise accompany your movement.

MULILI: Yes cousin; but why you sits out without bodyguard?

BOSS: Why have you come? Another tender problem, is it?

MULILI: No, no tender problem. They all fears when you spoken to them on the telephone box.

BOSS: Why have you left the meeting then?

MULILI: Honest to God, I don't know how to begins. I have no tongue to talk.

BOSS: Come on, get on with it.

MULILI: Boss, you are cousin and I tells you this. Things have spoil. Don't trust anybody, not even me.

BOSS: You talk straight or go back to the meeting. I put you on the committee for obvious reasons and I expect

you to report directly to me if something should seem to be going wrong. What is the matter?

MULILI: I can't believe it even now. It is a big ugly matter I tells you. Do you know Kabito? He be like Jere.

BOSS: I know many Kabitos.

MULILI: I am saying the one on the entertain committee.

BOSS: What about him?

MULILI: That one, he be a green grass in the snake.

BOSS: Watch what you say, Kabito is one of my most loyal subjects.

MULILI: Oho! That what you thinks. You thinks I just leave meeting for little reason? He colour your name in blood in front of whole committee. You see, in first place, he come to meeting full of alcoholism.

BOSS: Drunk, is he?

MULILI: Completely finished. He shout to everybody and say you rob him milk tender.

BOSS: He can't have possibly said that.

MULILI: One God in heaven! He say you ruins the economic of Kafira. That you hides million in foreign country.

BOSS: Who? Kabito?

MULILI: A green grass in the snake, I tells you.

BOSS: I keep money in foreign lands? Who gave him the information? (*Grabs MULILI*) Just how much does Kabito know about my private life? No, perhaps he was only joking. A kind of trick to lure the others into speaking their mind.

MULILI: Joking? Boss you jokes yourself. That man even say you try to get that Regina by force.

BOSS: Tumbo must have a hand in this.

MULILI: No. Tumbo himself tell him, "Hey, Kabito, that is high slandering," but Kabito just shout louder. It was alcoholism.

BOSS: That is no excuse. He must be the one who poisoned Mercedes's mind. That woman has never been so rude to me before. Who told her about that girl?

MULILI: I can't know. But I suspects Kabito.

BOSS: When a man plays with fire, he gets burned. He will serve as an example to others that may have hot mouths like him.

MULILI: I looked at him and said to myself: "This man is fit to go mental."

BOSS: Go get him. Take two guards with you and bring him to me. No, wait a minute. I shall not set my eyes upon him. Mulili!

MULILI: Cousin!

BOSS: Come here. I shall not allow small people to sow seeds of discord among the people. You know what must be done?

MULILI: I am old hand at everything.

BOSS: Come report to me that he is silent.

MULILI: That be small. You remembers that old couple...?

BOSS: (*Shouting*) Clear out of my sight and get on with it.
(*exit MULILI.*) (*Fade lights*)

Questions

- a. From the above excerpt, make a list of all the characters, and then state how the author presents their character using:
 - i) Their names
 - ii) Their appearance
 - iii) Their dialogue
 - iv) Their actions
- b. From this excerpt, what kind of person is Mulili? Give reasons for your answer.
- c. Why does Boss hate his greying hair?
- d. Find evidence in the excerpt that suggests that Boss is dictatorial and gullible.
- e. Why do you think Mulili uses broken English in this excerpt?
- f. Boss hates people who walk stealthily. Why do you think this is so?
- g. Mulili is Boss' cousin and spy. From the way he behaves, do you think it is wrong for African leaders to appoint their own relatives as government officials?
- h. What do you think Mulili means by saying "I am old hand at everything"?

Activity 10

In the following excerpt, from Henrik Ibsen's play, *An Enemy of the People*, Doctor Stockmann has a quarrel with his brother, Peter Stockmann. Read it carefully.

PETER STOCKMANN: *(after a short pause)* You are an extraordinarily independent man, Thomas. Have you given no thought to the consequences this may have for yourself?

DR. STOCKMANN: Consequences? — for me?

PETER STOCKMANN: For you and yours, yes.

DR. STOCKMANN: What the deuce do you mean?

PETER STOCKMANN: I believe I have always behaved in a brotherly way to you — haven't I always been ready to oblige or to help you?

DR. STOCKMANN: Yes, you have, and I am grateful to you for it.

PETER STOCKMANN: There is no need. Indeed, to some extent I was forced to do so — for my own sake. I always hoped that, if I helped to improve your financial position, I should be able to keep some check on you.

DR. STOCKMANN: What! Then it was only for your own sake —!

PETER STOCKMANN: Up to a certain point, yes. It is painful for a man in an official position to have his nearest relative compromising himself time after time.

DR. STOCKMANN: And do you consider that I do that?

PETER STOCKMANN: Yes, unfortunately, you do, without even being aware of it. You have a restless, confrontational, rebellious disposition. And then there is that disastrous propensity of yours to want to write about every sort of possible and impossible thing. The moment an idea comes into your head, you must go and write a newspaper article or a whole pamphlet about it.

DR. STOCKMANN: Well, but is it not the duty of a citizen to let the public share in any new ideas he may have?

PETER STOCKMANN: Oh, the public doesn't require any new ideas. The public is best served by the good, old established ideas it already has.

DR. STOCKMANN: And that is your honest opinion?

PETER STOCKMANN: Yes, and for once I must talk frankly to you. Hitherto I have tried to avoid doing so, because I know how irritable you are; but now I must tell you the truth, Thomas. You have no conception what an amount of harm you do yourself by your impulsiveness. You complain of the authorities, you even complain of the government — you are always pulling them to pieces; you insist that you have been neglected and persecuted. But what else can such a cantankerous man as you expect?

DR. STOCKMANN: What next! Cantankerous, am I?

PETER STOCKMANN: Yes, Thomas, you are an extremely cantankerous man to work with — I know that to my cost. You disregard everything that you ought to have consideration for. You seem completely to forget that it is me you have to thank for your appointment here as medical officer to the Baths.

DR. STOCKMANN: I was entitled to it as a matter of course! — I and nobody else! I was the first person to see that the town could be made into a flourishing watering place, and I was the only one who saw it at that time. I had to fight single-handed in support of the idea for many years; and I wrote and wrote —

PETER STOCKMANN: Undoubtedly. But things were not ripe for the scheme then — though, of course, you could not judge of that in your out-of-the-way corner up north. But as soon as the opportune moment came I — and the others — took the matter into our hands.

DR. STOCKMANN: Yes, and made this mess of all my beautiful plan. It is pretty obvious now what clever fellows you were!

PETER STOCKMANN: To my mind the whole thing only seems to mean that you are seeking another outlet for your combativeness. You want to pick a quarrel with your superiors — an old habit of yours. You cannot put up with any

authority over you. You look askance at anyone who occupies a superior official position; you regard him as a personal enemy, and then any stick is good enough to beat him with. But now I have called your attention to the fact that the town's interests are at stake — and, incidentally, my own too. And therefore, I must tell you, Thomas, that you will find me inexorable with regard to what I am about to require you to do.

DR. STOCKMANN: And what is that?

Questions

- a. List down the words that Peter Stockmann uses to describe the character of Doctor Stockmann.
- b. From this excerpt, describe the character of Peter Stockmann.
- c. Peter Stockmann says 'Oh, the public doesn't require any new ideas. The public is best served by the good, old established ideas it already has.' Do you agree that old ideas are always the best?
- d. Dramatise the excerpt in your class and then, in your groups, discuss if there is anything in it that is better understood by dramatising rather than by reading.
- e. Write a short paragraph to summarise what happens in this excerpt. Your title should be 'The Quarrel of the Brothers.'

Glossary

Act:	A large division of a play.
Apostrophe:	Where the absent are addressed as though present, and the dead as though living.
Autobiography:	An account of somebody's life written by the person himself.
Character:	A person in a literary text.
Climax:	The highest point in the conflict of a play.
Complication:	The middle part of a play.
Dialogue:	A conversation between two or more characters.
Drama:	A genre of literature which uses dialogue and action to tell a story.
Exposition:	The introductory part of a play.
Fairy tale:	A fantasy story involving animals.
Fiction:	A genre of literature which is written in continuous prose
Figurative language:	The presentation of words which have alternative meanings other than the literal meanings.
Folk song:	A traditional song which belongs to a particular community.
Genre:	A kind or type of literature
Hyperbole:	Deliberate exaggeration.
Lullaby:	A kind of traditional song which is sung to soothe a baby to sleep.
Metaphor:	A direct comparison of two dissimilar things without using "as" or "like."
Metonymy:	Where instead of referring to something, we refer to something else which is its attribute.
Nonfiction:	A genre of literature which is based on real events and characters
Novel:	A genre of literature which takes the form of a long prose narrative.
Oral literature:	A spoken or acted art which uses word of mouth as its medium.

Paradox:	An apparent contradiction which holds some truth.
Personification:	The assigning of human attributes to nonhuman things.
Play:	A kind of drama in which all dialogue is spoken.
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:	The kind of writing in which language is presented naturally and in paragraphs rather than verse.
Rhyme:	The similarity of sounds at the end of words in successive lines in poetry.
Scene:	A smaller division of a play 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.
Symbolism:	Where something stands for something else or has meaning outside of itself.
Theme:	The topic of a literary text.
Tragedy:	A subgenre of drama in which there is a hero whose moral weakness leads him to fall from grace to grass.
Verse:	Poetry

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