

# Literature in English

For Rwanda Schools

Senior 3  
Student's Book

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**LONGHORN**  
PUBLISHERS LIMITED  
expanding **minds**

Published by

Longhorn Publishers (R) Ltd  
166 KG 13 off KG 11 Avenue  
P.o. Box 5910  
Kigali Rwanda

Longhorn Publishers Ltd.,  
Funzi Road, Industrial Area,  
P. O. Box 18033-00500,  
Nairobi, Kenya.

Longhorn Uganda Ltd.,  
Plot 4, Vubyabirenge Road,  
Ntinda,  
P. O. Box 24745,  
Kampala, Uganda.

Longhorn Publishers (T) Ltd.,  
New Bagamoyo/Garden Road  
Mikocheni B, Plot No. MKC/MCB/81,  
P O Box 1237  
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

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First published 2018

ISBN 978 9997 77 124 7

Printed by Ramco Printing Works Ltd,  
Unit 2, Ramco Industrial Complex,  
Before Imara Daima Turn off, Mombasa Road,  
P. O. Box 27750 - 00506,  
Nairobi, Kenya.

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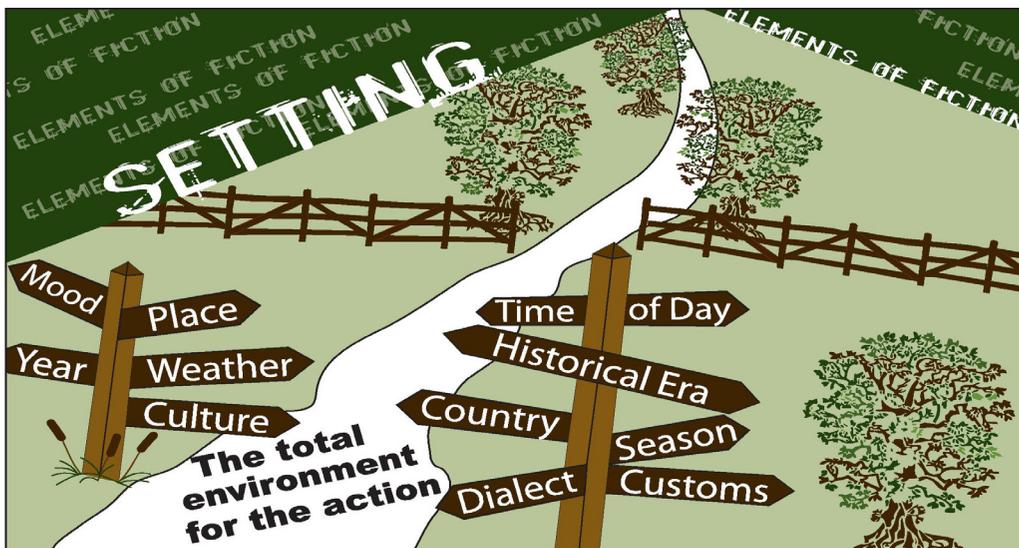
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# Unit 1

## Review of the Key Aspects of Prose

**Key unit competence:** To be able to compare and contrast key aspects of prose in two short stories.



### 1.0 The unit focus

Prose writing involves writing in a language similar to everyday speech, without such considerations as the metrical structure as it is often the case in poetry. When dealing with literary works in prose, it is important to understand those aspects that are particular to works written in prose. It is only after one understands these aspects that he or she can engage in meaningful analyses and comparisons of literary texts in prose. In order to visualise the subject matter of this unit, try to brainstorm on the answers to the following questions:

1. What are the key aspects of literary texts written in prose?

2. How can we use these aspects to compare and contrast different stories?
3. Are there other aspects that may also be useful in analysing texts in prose?

### 1.1 Selected age-appropriate texts from anthologies of short stories

In Senior 2, you were introduced to the key aspects of prose. In this unit, we are going to use various stories to analyse each of these aspects while citing their differences and similarities. We will also relate our experiences to the situations reflected in the stories.

#### Activity 1

**Read the following story silently then answer the questions that follow.**

#### The Bamboo Hut

The setting sun was ablaze and its angry rays coloured the waters on Lake Victoria. Mboga's heart beat fast. He had never seen the disc of the setting sun look so big and ominous. He moved towards the foot of the sacred Hill of Ramogi where his forefathers from, time immemorial, worshipped God and pleaded with the ancestors.



*The setting sun was ablaze and its angry rays coloured the waters on Lake Victoria.*

For many years, Mboga had beseeched Ramogi, the ancestor of the Luo people, to intercede on his behalf for a son, an heir to the beaded stool of the Kadipo people. He had decided to make one final plea on this sacred plot. He spat in the

direction of the setting sun, and then prayed.

Darkness was falling when Mboga reached home. In the inner compound of his homestead, his 'numerous daughters,' as he always referred to them, were busy helping their mothers prepare the evening meal. And although he loved all his sixteen daughters, they were like the birds of the air who, at the appropriate season, migrate to other lands. Who would comfort and succour him in old age?

The bamboo hut stood next to the chief's large hut. It looked beautiful in the morning. Achieng' took her eyes away from it. She was expecting her second baby and she knew it would be a girl. The chief, who had nine wives, had promised the bamboo hut to whoever bore him a son, an heir to the beaded stool.

Two months after Mboga's visit to the sacred hill, Achieng gave birth while she was out at the well. It was a baby girl! The long nursed desire for a son turned her heart against the baby, and she wept bitterly. "How do I break this sad news to my husband? Will the chief bear the thought of another girl! No, no, no. Let my mouth remain sealed for ever – the ancestors have wronged me."

But Achieng's weeping was interrupted by a sharp pain that stabbed her belly and back. It was like one of those miracles that occur once in a while. Achieng' gave birth again — it was a boy! The river bank was still deserted as most women did not fetch water at midday. Everything was quiet, apart from a few frogs who seemed to be rejoicing with her. She felt very tired, and for a few minutes different passions played a wild dance within her. Love, hatred, anger and happiness crossed and intermingled. The chief had waited for a son for over twelve years. Let the chief have only one child, a son, so that he might see the fulfilment of his life's dream. Achieng' made up her mind. She made a grass-basket and lined it with leaves

— there she laid Apiyo and hid the basket near the well. She gave a long, close and last look, and then ran a finger over her face, hair, lips and delicate fingers. She then walked home with her baby boy, and slipped into her hut unnoticed while people were having their midday meal.

The important news was conveyed to Chief Mboga by his eldest wife while he was resting in his hut.

“God of Ramogi has covered the nakedness of the father of the people. Achieng’ has given birth to a baby son.”

Mboga looked at his wife unbelievably. A joyous smile played on his lips, and then disappeared, leaving only muscles twitching at the



*A joyous smile played on his lips*

corners of his mouth. He eyed his wife and then got up to go to Achieng’s hut. But his eldest wife barred his way.

“The Great Chief should not be over-powered by emotion. Achieng’ is under the care of women for four days. Only then can the Great Chief see his beloved son.”

Mboga moved a few steps backwards and sat on his stool. “All right, tell Achieng’ that I have received the news.” Then the chief’s drum boomed out to announce the birth of a new baby. This time it boomed out four times instead of the usual three for a girl, and the family rejoiced. Envy mixed with bitterness in the minds of Achieng’s co-wives, but they did not show it. A sheep was slaughtered for the delivered mother and all good things were showered upon her.

Chief Mboga never laughed or shed tears in public, but on the fourth day, when he held his son at the naming ceremony, his close relatives saw big lumps of tears rolling down his cheeks as he called out the name of the boy.

“You will be called ‘Owiny’ after the second son of Ramogi. You will live long, and in my old age you will hold the staff of Ramogi in your right hand to rule your people.” Then the chief’s beaded staff was placed in Owiny’s right hand and the chief’s ornamental bracelet put on his wrist.

On that day, Achieng’ and Agiso, her daughter, moved to the bamboo hut. There, they were to bring up Owiny, heir to Mboga’s beaded stool. The chief offered numerous thanksgiving sacrifices at the foot of the sacred hill. His prayers always ended with the refrain:

“Now I know you did indeed choose me to be a ruler among these people. You have given me a son.”

### Questions

Discuss the following questions:

1. Who are the characters in this story?
2. Describe the setting of the story.
3. Explain the plot of the story.
4. Who do you think is the target audience for this story?  
Give reasons for your answer.
5. What is the theme of this story?
6. What message does this story communicate to you?

## 1.2 Review of key aspects of prose

### 1.2.1 Plot

#### Activity 2

**Arrange the following sentences that describe events in the story 'The Bamboo Hut' in the order of occurrence.**

1. He was named Owiny after the second son of Ramogi.
2. She was in a dilemma.
3. The chief shed tears of joy.
4. Four drumbeats were heard instead of the usual three.
5. The other wives were jealous of Achieng'.
6. The chief went to the hill to pray for a heir of the beaded stool.
7. She finally hid the baby girl in a grass basket and walked home with the baby boy.
8. Achieng' gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl.

From the activity above, you realise that the order of events in a story plays a great role in the meaning of the story. If events are mixed up, as in the activity above, then the reader cannot make sense out of it. The order of events in a story is called the plot. Plot can either be linear or circular.

## Differences between linear and circular plot

### Activity 3

**Study the narratives below.**

#### **Narrative A**

Molly kicked the ball, which rolled down the valley into the swamp. It floated on the swamp, scaring the fish from swimming to the surface, hence they all dived in. Kameo the fisherman waited with his bait for hours, but did not find any fish to trap. He went home angry that he would sleep hungry. The pangs of hunger kept him up all night, and through the sleepless night, he devised a plan to lift the ball off the swamp. The next morning, he set out early with a long stick and hurled the ball out of the swamp. After an hour, the fish were swimming all over the surface. Overwhelmed with joy, he cast his net and fished out a double load of fish.

#### **Narrative B**

When Victor took over his father's business, he was timid and immature. He would be ridiculed by the staff members that he owned a company that he could not even run. He was overthrown and his stepbrother, who was more aggressive and favourable, took over. Victor however kept a positive mind that his treasure lay elsewhere. Five years down the line, his stepbrother begun squandering the business's money and slowly by slowly, the business went down. By then, Victor had joined politics and was vying for a parliamentary seat, which he won. As fate would have it, his stepbrother came begging him for a job as his personal assistant.

Each of the diagrams below represents one of the stories above in terms of plot.



**A** represents a linear plot, while **B** represents a circular plot. In a linear plot, one event leads to the other and once a subject has been engaged, the story doesn't dwell on their actions. They only constitute part of the process as in story **A**. A circular plot on the other hand is a plot whereby subjects within a story are interconnected and the starting point always emerges to be the ending point, as in story **B**.

**Similarity:** The two are however similar in that they involve a conflict, climax and a resolution. Conflict is the bone of a story: without conflict, the plot would be flat and less interesting. Climax is the point where the characters involved in the conflict are either suffering or enjoying the most. Denouement or resolution is the gradual resuming of normalcy, when protagonists overcome the difficulties and villains get punished for their actions.

#### Activity 4

1. Identify the conflict, the climax and the denouement in 'The Bamboo Hut' in Activity 1. How do they contribute to the development of the plot?
2. What type of plot is used in this story?

## 1.2.2 Setting

### Activity 5

**Identify paragraphs in the story 'The Bamboo Hut' that indicate the period, historical or cultural context of the events as narrated.**

Setting refers to the time, place and the social environment in which the events of a story take place. Time may refer to the actual time, for example night or afternoon. It could also refer to the historical period such as colonial, post-colonial and the genocide period in Rwanda. The place could be a geographical setting such as urban or rural settings, or in a house, on the hill, in a prison among other settings. The social environment is the political and cultural contexts of the story. For example 'The Bamboo Hut' has a traditional setting.

The setting can be identified through the names of places, people or items. Some events are also historical and can guide in identifying the time setting of the story. For example, chieftdom was practiced in traditional African communities. This can be used to analyse the setting of the story 'The Bamboo Hut'. Some names are also exclusive to certain cultures. For example, Achieng' as used in the story 'The Bamboo Hut' is a name from the Luo community of Kenya.

### Activity 6

***Look at the words below and pick out the words that would be used to describe a social, historical, cultural or political context. Explain your answer.***

1. Nomadic community
2. Pre-colonial era
3. Colonial period
4. After independence
5. Patriarchal society
6. Metropolitan country
7. Traditional community
8. Francophone
9. African
10. Multiparty state
11. Monarchy

### Activity 7

***Compare and contrast the setting of these two novels: 'Things Fall Apart' and 'Parched Earth'.***

### 1.2.3 Character

#### Activity 8

##### ***Discuss the characters in the following story.***

Mulinzi is the class prefect in his class. One day, the teacher asked him to write a list of the brightest students in his class to participate in an interschool competition that was to take place at the regional level. Naomi, his longtime adversary, hatched a plan to set Mulinzi up and embarrass him. Once Mulinzi had made an honest list of the bright students in his class and placed the list in his desk to go for break,

Naomi reached for the list and replaced it with the wrong list of students who are talented in other fields but not Mathematics.

Immediately after break, Mulinzi rushed the list to the teacher

without going through it, and the teacher, in a rush, presented the list to the school head teacher. On the day of the competition the students selected to take part in the competition showed up, but Mulinzi's school performed very poorly. As a result of this, the teachers felt that Mulinzi could not be trusted with such duties and this led to his demotion. Mulinzi, however, took this positively. He was now able to concentrate on his studies having been relieved of the leadership duties. One quiet afternoon, he stood up in class to announce his pleasure to the person responsible for the incident. "I should have



*Mulinzi had made an honest list  
of the bright students*

thought of doing that, but it seems God used someone else to solve my problems.” This ached Naomi so much as her wish to make Mulinzi suffer turned out quite the opposite. She could barely concentrate in class, and instead of Mulinzi suffering, the burden lay on her. To set herself free, she had to confess what she had done and make up with Mulinzi.

### Questions

1. Name the people involved in this story.
2. Why did Naomi set Mulinzi up?
3. How did she set him up?
4. What was the result of Naomi's action?
5. What do you learn from this story?
6. Distinguish between major and minor characters in this story.
7. Identify the protagonist and the villain in this story.

A character refers to the person, animal or an object that the writer of a story or play uses to advance the plot or themes. There are major and minor characters.

A major character is the central person in the story. The events revolve around him or her. He or she is critical to the plot development.

The minor character's role is to support and complement the major character. He or she also plays a part in plot development.

### 1.2.4 Subject, theme and message

#### Activity 9

**Read the following statement and explain the subject, the theme and the message.**

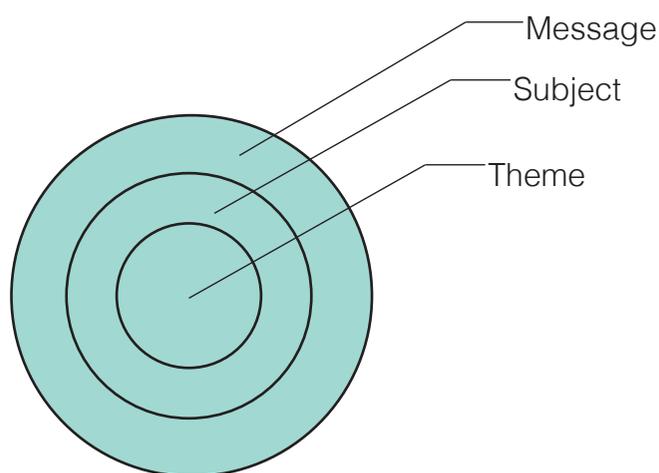
During a prize giving ceremony, the school head teacher, advising the parents on good parenting, mentioned the importance of discipline in the following words: "Shape a child while he or she is little, and they will take that path forever."

The theme is the broader topic in a literary text. The theme is never obviously stated but is implied through events, words and the actions of the characters.

The subject is the sub-topics that are discussed within the theme.

The message is the lesson being taught through the text. What do you learn from the story?

The theme, subject and message of the above statement can be represented in the following figure:



The theme is the overall topic, the subject matter originates from the theme and the message lies in the subject matter developed.

### 1.2.5 Audience

The reader who is targeted for a particular writing is the audience. It is the person whom the author expects will read the book. The audience targeted influences the theme, style and language, and the choice of characters to be used in a story. Therefore, before an author writes a story, he or she considers the age, education level and cultural setting among other factors.

#### Activity 10

How were the story books you read in Primary School different from the stories you are now reading in Senior School?

### 1.3 Techniques for comparison and contrast

Here, we will focus on what the two terms mean, and the techniques for comparing and contrasting.

#### Activity 11

Choose two towns in Rwanda. Write the positive and negative things about both towns. Give also the differences between the towns as well as their similarities. Share why you think one town would be better to live in than the other. Report to the class your findings to the class. What you have just been doing is comparing and contrasting the two towns.

### 1.3.1 Comparison

The term compare is used to discuss both the differences and similarities. When we compare similarities, we show that two people or things are similar.

### 1.3.2 Contrast

Contrast is used to discuss the differences only. It shows that one person or thing is better or worse than another.

Discussing the similarities and differences allows us to get a deeper understanding of the events, ideas and characters in a story.

### 1.3.3 Transitional expressions and phrases used to compare and contrast

In order for your essay on comparison and contrast to flow, you must use the following transitional expressions to indicate movement to another idea that is similar or different. The list is not exhaustive and you should add more examples.

Comparison (same)	Contrast (different)
similarly	however
in the same way	while
like	whereas
just like	unlike
likewise	on one hand...on the other hand
as well as	on the contrary
also	despite
as...as	although
both	yet

There are three types of comparing and contrasting:

- 1. Point by point** - Point by point comparison and contrast technique is where you take one aspect at a time and discuss it exhaustively before moving to the next aspect.

For example, you take the aspect of character; discuss the similarities and differences of both stories. In the next paragraph you discuss setting of both stories, explaining the similarities and differences as well.

- 2. Block method** - This technique involves discussing all the key aspects of one story exhaustively then move to the next story and do the same. For example in the stories below, you may discuss the plot, message, character and setting in 'Bindeh's Gift' and then move on to 'The Law of the Grazing Fields'. The aspects must be discussed in the same order for both stories.
- 3. Similarities to differences** - You discuss all the similarities in both stories first and then move on to discuss the differences in the stories.

## Activity 12

**Read the following two short stories.**

### 1. The Law of the Grazing Fields

This is the law of the wandering cattlemen of the savannas: that a man may elope with the woman of his choice, maiden or matron, wife or spinster. But woe betide him if he is caught on the run. Yet all is well if he can but get to his beloved's home without being caught. On the evening of this story, a brother and sister were quarrelling. Modio, the brother, had just pushed Amina, the sister, violently.

"*Kai!*" Amina shouted, struggling deftly. "Take your hands off me." Her lips were parted but in a smile. "Don't you dare touch me again!"

"By Allah," Modio raged, "I will teach you some sense." She glared at him. He was crouching before her, his hands curved like the claws of a hawk about to strike, his muscles tense. "You'll go nowhere!"

“You lie!” she cried. “This night I will be with Yalla. He is the husband I have chosen.”

“What of Jama, the husband our father chose for you? What of the cattle Jama is paying?”

“That is your affair,” she said. “Did you – Oh, let me go. Are you mad?”

She felt the stroke of his rough hand across her mouth. His arm tightened about her waist and she was struggling as he carried her out to his hut and locked her up. She let the tears flow freely. But there must be hope, she thought. No one, nothing, could shut her away from Yalla forever. She must go to him, she must.



*She let the tears flow freely.*

Hatred burned within her breast. Was it her fault that she did not like Jama? Her father had accepted the cattle first and told her about it later. Jama turned out to be a weak-kneed, effeminate man. He was a man who could not weave mats or take the cattle out to graze, a coward who had wept and begged as they flogged him at the sharo. It would be humiliating to marry him. Her father would not be present when the other maidens would taunt her for having married such a coward and a lazy man who stayed in bed till sunrise and was afraid to be soaked by the rain.

The mistake had been Yalla's for he had not honoured the arrangements in full. She and Yalla were to escape from the camp before Jama had brought the bulls that were the final instalment of the bride price. Yalla was to have come to the hut at the hour when the hyenas begin to howl over the grazing fields. He was to scratch in the manner peculiar to

the grey hawk that steals chicken and she would then know that he was waiting for her under the dorowa tree. As she waited for him, she had thought about her man – tall, wide shouldered, with a copper ring in his plaited hair, a man who could break a stubborn bull or calm the wildest pony in her father's stables. Yet when he smiled or held her hand, his face was so gentle and so sweet. When he irritated her, she would playfully threaten to go to Jama. Could Jama protect her home from the gales that swept the grazing fields? Could he outwit the wild dogs and the hyenas, the leopard and the lion, when they came to raid the herd?

## 2. Bindeh's Gift

At last the weeping woman came through the forest. The ranks of soldiers parted and made way for her. Two young warriors helped from rock to rock the other woman who followed her and though it was she who carried the basket, she was doubly bent over with her burden and age. Weeping all the time, the young woman at last jumped up the great boulder and threw herself prostrate at Kai Borie's feet.

"Ah, Kai Borie," she shrilled in agony, and circled her arms round his ankles. "I have at this last minute come to beg for my husband's life. My Bensali must not die. These five years he has served you well..."

"Stop, woman!" Kai Borie shouted. "You should not have come here. Do you think what you feel for Bensali can compare with the love I have for my sister's firstborn? You soft thing! What can a woman know of the agony I suffer this night?"

"If you truly suffer," the woman wailed and beat her hands on the rock, "then you must save him!"

"Foolish Bindeh! In war, men are nothing if they are not men. And manhood means courage, a willingness to sacrifice life itself for the common good. Tonight Bensali is not Kai Borie's

nephew but a soldier in his army. And what shall men say of Kai Borie tonight for a crime for which he has ruled death for other men's nephews, other women's husbands?"

"What do I care for wars or armies? I've hated them, as my mother and grandmother hated them, even before they made me suffer so." The

woman's words shrilled into the forest and men felt their blood turning into water, for Bindeh was speaking with the voice of all their mothers, all their wives. "Kai Borie, has war left no mercy in you? These six months I have been Bensali's wife. Only

six months! Ah, Kai Borie – you were young once – have mercy on me. Look!"

In an instant she tore off the small native cloth tied round her chest, leaving only the lappa tied at the waist, reaching down to mid-leg. Her breast deeply pigmented, gave proof that she was pregnant.

At this revelation, Kai Borie buried his face in his hands and burst into tears. A murmur rose eerily from the soldiers. They knew vaguely they had created in Kai Borie a monster whose rules each of them, as an individual hated, but they were powerless in its creed. Each one of them was sorry for Bensali, distressed for Bindeh, yet not one of them could raise his voice to save him.

Kai Borie was too strong a man to weep for long. With jerky angry movements he wiped his tears away. Firmly he told Bindeh, "Woman I cannot help it."

Though Bensali was not afraid of death, he trembled with horror to see his wife in such a scene. "Bindeh," he called



*Kai Borie was too strong a man to weep for long*

up to her, “Kai Borie is right. My uncle, see that my wife and child are cared for. And now Uncle, let Bindeh be led away – or she’ll unnerve... my wife – Oh, my dear! – God take care of you and our child. In God’s name, then, Bindeh... go!”

Bindeh continued to plead for the life of her husband, and when it was clear Kai Borie would not change his mind, she told him, “I have brought you a gift. Gifts move kings where prayer fails - Grandmother the basket!” With lightning movement, she tore the lid off the basket. She swung the basket in the air and, bringing it down swiftly, covered Kai Borie’s head like a hood. At once she turned to face the river, bent her knees, raised her arms above her head – and took a flying leap into the seething violence of the falls. For an instant, they saw the rush of water bear the woman down a few yards – heard her shout: “Bensali! Bensali!” Then she vanished from their view.

Kai Borie wrenched the basket off his head. Feeling something cold above his eyes, he raised a hand to his forehead. Kai Borie was turbaned with a brown deadly snake, a second snake was coiled round his neck and the largest of the three was spiralling up the forearm he had raised to his head. The moment he touched the coldness on his forehead, he felt two intense needle-stabs on his brow, and one in his arm. He grasped the snake and tore it off. He wrenched the second from his throat. The third reptile fell off from his forearm and without hesitation, Kai Borie stamped on its back. The snake looped back and struck back ten times with incredible swiftness at his leg. He grabbed it and crushed it to death between his fingers.

Unhurried, he sat down on the rock. “Kai Borie is dying,” he called loudly to his men below. “Unbind Bensali! Quick... I have little time to live...” The sweat was already pouring

profusely from his face. “Swear, soldiers, swear that Bensali shall be your King...”

Bensali, unbound, ran and held his dying uncle. “What do I want with a kingdom, Uncle?” Sobbing like a woman, his tears ran down his face. His father had died when he was young and Kai Borie had been more than a father to him.

“Swear, Bensali...quick...lad...swear!” Already Kai Borie was finding it difficult to breath. “I willingly – exchange my – life for yours, Bensali...” He had lived by violence, he died in violence.

At last, Bensali took the oath, crying, whereupon, sacred and moving, a prayer burst from the ten thousand throats:

“Long Live Bensali.”

Kai Borie nodded and leaned back heavily on his nephew's chest. In five minutes he was completely paralysed – in ten he was dead.

### Questions

1. Use the two stories you have just read – ‘The Law of the Grazing Fields’ and ‘Bindeh's Gift’– to compare aspects of prose: setting, plot, character, subject, theme and message.

Draw the following chart in your exercise book to make it easy for you to pick out the similarities and the differences.

	The Law of the Grazing Fields	Bindeh's Gift
Setting		
Plot		
Message		
Theme		
Characters		

2. Once you complete the table, use the point by point technique to write a four-paragraph essay to compare and contrast the stories.

## 1.4 Further aspects of prose

### 1.4.1 Flashback and plot

An author may decide to use a non-linear plot. The events do not follow a chronological order. The current events may be interrupted by an episode from the past that a character remembers. This is called flashback. Flashback is a literary style that the writer uses to take the reader back in time to a past experience or event. This is done to explain why a character behaves the way he or she does, why he or she is in the current predicament or what led to the events in the present moment.

There is a difference between a memory and a flashback. You must be careful not to confuse them. A memory is where a character recalls a past experience or event. It is usually brief and does not interrupt the flow of the story. In the story of 'The Law of the Grazing Fields', Amina remembers how strong Yalla is and how she jokes with him that she will go off to Jama each time Yalla irritated her.

### 1.4.2 Dynamic and static character

#### Activity 13

From the story of 'Bindeh's Gift', which characters would you say change as the story develops? Which ones do not?

There are two types of characters.

#### a. Dynamic (round) characters

The dynamic characters in a story are well rounded. They develop as the story progresses. They change according to circumstances. They portray different emotions and traits. In 'Bindeh's Gift', Kai Borie is portrayed as ruthless and rigid but there are moments when he cries, which shows he is also caring.

### b. Static (flat) characters

Static characters, also called flat characters, do not show change throughout the story. Only one trait is evident and the character may lack emotional depth – the writer does not tell the reader what the flat character is feeling or thinking. In 'The Law of the Grazing Field', Jama may be such a character as he is portrayed only as lazy and cowardly.

#### 1.4.3 Point of view

Point of view refers to the angle an author uses to tell the reader about the happenings in a literary text. It is the method the author uses to narrate his or her story.

They are three kinds of point of view:

- a. First person point of view
- b. Second person point of view
- c. Third person point of view

#### Activity 14

Share your most memorable childhood incident with a classmate.

You must have used the personal pronoun 'I' as you narrated the incident above. This is because you were telling a personal experience from your own standpoint. This is what is called a first person point of view.

- a. **The first person point of view** – the author tells the story from the 'I, me, we, us' perspective. The narrator of the story is a character in the story but not necessarily the main character. You get to hear the thoughts of the narrator and feel his or her emotions.

**Read the following example.**

I sat down on the cold floor – lost in thought but very alert to my surrounding – if you could call the small hole of a prison a surrounding. This was going to be my home for the next five years. Every day I regretted disobeying my parents' warnings. My mother had been especially adamant that she did not like Harriet – the girl I was hanging out with and who I thought was an angel. (Note the use of pronoun 'I' and the possessive adjective 'my')

**b. The second person point of view**

This type of narration is told from the 'you, your' perspective. It is not a common way of narration and when it is used, the author's purpose is to draw the attention of the reader to the story. It can also be used to make the reader feel like he or she is part of the events happening in the story.

**Read the following example.**

You are quietly working on your assignments. Your classmates are chatting and shouting at the top of their voices. You are trying really hard to concentrate and you wish something would happen to shut the noise out. Then suddenly the class is quiet. You look around to find out why the class is quiet but you see nothing unusual. You notice everybody is seated at their desk pretending to be busy. You are perturbed and scan the class – your eyes meet with Mr Ndayikunda's – the disciplinary master. He is watching the class from the back window. You hurriedly go back to your assignment.

**c. The third person point of view** is also called the omniscient point of view. This type of story is narrated from a 'he or she, they or it' or a person's name perspective. The narrator is not

a character in the story but is all knowing. He or she knows every move made by the characters, their motive, thoughts and feelings. He or she can move with characters from place to place. This point of view has been used in all the three short stories found in this unit.

### Activity 15

Read the story 'The Law of the Grazing Fields' and 'Bindeh's Gift' again. What points of view have been used in telling these stories?

#### 1.4.4 Major and minor themes

As has already been discussed, a theme is an idea or an area of concern that motivates the author to share it in a story. In this unit we focus on the two types of themes:

- a. Major themes** are the dominant ideas in a story and are recurrent throughout the story. For example, in the story at the beginning of this unit, 'The Bamboo Hut', the major theme is gender inequality. The boy child is favoured over the girl child. Chief Mbogo goes to seek his god's intervention for him to get a son. He refers to his daughters as 'numerous' to show he is not happy. He cries with joy when Achieng' presents him with a son.
- b. Minor themes** appear once or very briefly. For example, going back to 'The Bamboo Hut', religion is a minor theme. Chief Mbogo goes to the hills to pray and after he is presented with his son, he shows gratitude by offering numerous thanksgiving sacrifices at the foot of the sacred hill.

## 1.5 Unit summary

### Key aspects of prose

1. Plot
2. Setting
3. Character
4. Subject
5. Theme
6. Message

### Techniques for comparison and contrast

1. Use of transitional words and expressions
2. Point by point approach
3. Block method
4. Similarities to differences

### Further aspects of prose

1. Flashback
2. Character
  - i) Dynamic characters
  - ii) Static characters
3. Point of view
  - i) First person point of view – the story is told from the 'I' perspective
  - ii) Second person point of view – the 'you' perspective is used
  - iii) Third person point of view – the use of 'he/she/they/it' perspective
4. Themes
  - i) Major theme – the idea or issue that is recurrent in the story
  - ii) Minor theme – an idea that appears once or very briefly

**1.6 End of unit assessment****1. Analyse the story below using the following aspects of prose: point of view, characters (dynamic and static) and themes (major and minor).**

My mother only had one eye. I hated her... She was such an embarrassment. She cooked for students and teachers to support the family.

There was this one day during elementary school when my mother came to say hello to me. I was so embarrassed. How could she do this to me? I ignored her, threw her a hateful look and ran out. The next day at school, one of my classmates said, "Eeee, your mom only has one eye!"

I wanted to bury myself. I also wanted my mother to just disappear. I confronted her that day and said, "If you're only going to make me a laughing stock, why don't you just die?"

My mother did not respond... I didn't even stop to think for a second about what I had said because I was full of anger. I was oblivious to her feelings. I wanted to be out of that house and have nothing to do with her. So I studied real hard and I got a chance to go abroad to study.

Then I got married. I bought a house of my own. I had kids of my own. I was happy with my life, my kids and the comforts. Then one day, my mother came to visit me. She had not seen me in years and she had not even met her grandchildren. When she stood by the door, my children laughed at her and I yelled at her for coming over uninvited. I screamed at her, "How dare you come to my house and scare my children! GET OUT OF HERE! NOW!!!"

And to this, my mother quietly answered, "Oh, I'm so sorry. I may have got the wrong address," and she disappeared out of sight. One day, a letter regarding a school reunion came to my house. I lied to my wife that I was going on a business

trip. After the reunion, I went to the old shack just out of curiosity. My neighbours said that my mother had died. I did not shed a single tear. They handed me a letter that she had wanted me to have.

*“My dearest son,*

*I think of you all the time. I’m sorry that I came to your house and scared your children. I was so glad when I heard you were coming for the reunion. But I may not be able to even get out of bed to see you. I’m sorry that I was a constant embarrassment to you when you were growing up.*

*You see, when you were very little, you got into an accident and lost your eye. As a mother, I couldn’t stand watching you having to grow up with one eye. So I gave you mine.*

*I was so proud of my son who was seeing a whole new world for me, in my place, with that eye.*

*With all my love to you,*

*Your mother.*

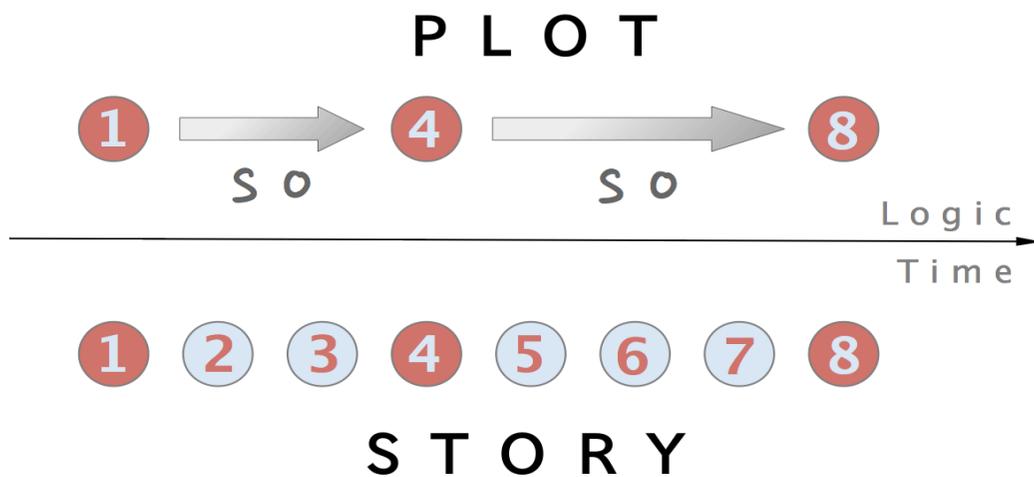
After reading this letter, I was confused. I shed all the tears there were to be shed. I cursed myself. How could I have been so stupid, so ignorant? I wished my mother were alive for me to apologise.

**2. Read the story ‘Bindeh’s Gift’ and ‘The Bamboo Hut’ given in this unit. Compare and contrast the key aspects of prose in these two short stories.**

## Unit 2

# Plot Development

**Key unit competence:** To be able to compare and contrast two short stories based on plot development.



### 2.0 The unit focus

Plot development is at the core of writing a story. This is because it establishes the reasons and motivations for characters to do certain things and shows the connections between actions of different characters at different settings. This justifies the conflict in a story. However, this has to be done in a careful process of plot development. This unit answers the following questions. Try to answer these questions before studying the unit.

1. What are the main stages of plot development?
2. Describe what happens at every stage of plot development.

3. Compare different stories on the basis of their plot development. Are there some stories with better-developed plots? Explain your answer.

## 2.1 Selected age-appropriate texts from anthologies of short stories

As discussed in Unit One, plot is the order of events as narrated in a story. In this unit, we will break down the elements involved in developing an interesting plot that keeps the audience reading the story to the end, with curiosity about the next turn of events.

### Activity 1

Narrate an interesting story you read or movie you watched. From the movie or story, identify the following:

1. The characters involved
2. The setting
3. The challenges the characters face
4. The most exciting point in the story
5. How the story ends

Plot development refers to how the events and actions are arranged or structured in a story. The structure of the plot is determined by the following elements:

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

## 2.2 Plot development

### 2.2.1 Exposition

#### Activity 2

***Read the following story then identify the information the reader is given in the first four paragraphs of the story.***

#### **The Last Laugh**

Dennis looked around proudly at his new office. He was feeling extremely good about his achievements. He felt he deserved and was entitled to everything good happening in his life. He had worked really hard to attain his current status. He was the Chief Executive Officer of the leading mobile company in the country, his top of the range Mercedes Benz was parked in the parking bay



*His top of the range Mercedes Benz was parked in the parking bay.*

and his four-wheel drive was parked at home. He had bought a house in one of the most affluent neighbourhoods in the city. He was courting the daughter of one of the leading politicians and soon he would marry her. What more could a man want? From here on, things could only get better.

But despite all his success, Dennis harboured bitterness in his heart. In his years growing up, he had been ridiculed by his peers because of his poor background. His mother tried to prolong the life of his uniforms and clothes by patching them up; she would turn out the collars of his shirts whenever they wore out on the inside. They had continuously harassed

him and humiliated him for this and he could never forgive them. He was determined to show them that he had the last laugh. He smiled as he remembered the look on Juliana's face when they met at one of the plush hotels in the outskirts of the city. She had greeted him condescendingly as she had done when they were in high school.

"Dennis! You also know this place? What brings you here?" Without waiting for him to answer, she had looked over his shoulder at the Mercedes Benz he had just alighted from.

"Which Boss did you bring here?"

"Myself," Dennis replied, watching her face to see her expression. "The car is mine, Juliana. Long time since I last saw you!"

Juliana looked at him incredulously. She was momentarily embarrassed because she had assumed Dennis was the driver but not the owner! That was impossible. Suddenly she wanted to talk to him, but he was in a hurry. She asked for his contact. Dennis gave her his business card. Juliana stared at the card. 'Chief Executive Officer of Titan' the card read. Dennis was the CEO, Titan Mobile! Unbelievable! Dennis walked away with satisfaction. He had made his point. He was no longer the poor boy everyone ignored. He had been attracted to Juliana while they were in high school, but she had completely acted like he did not exist. He was surprised that she had remembered his name.

The following weekend, Dennis decided it was time he paid his little village a visit. He would take his fiancée with him so that his former classmates and all those who had mocked him would see how fortunate he was to have got such a beautiful woman. All the girls who had rejected him would be green with envy. He was determined that everyone would notice his presence. They would beg to greet and talk to him, he

thought. He timed his arrival in the village in such a way that his entrance would be memorable. He made his entrance into the small town when most men were relaxing on the terrace of one of the more popular clubs. His car caused a stir. Everything came to a standstill as the people waited to see who the occupants of the four-wheel drive machine (because his was not an ordinary car) were.

When he alighted from the car, there was no sign of recognition from Njedi and Okwame – but Dennis recognised his two former classmates. The waiters were overly eager to welcome them to their club. Dennis ignored them and walked straight towards Njedi and Okwame. “Hey guys! Remember me?”

“Your face is vaguely familiar,” replied Njedi looking lost.

“Dennis, the poor boy in the class, remember?” Realisation hit the two men. They stood to greet him but he ignored their extended hands, instead preferring to put his hands in his pockets. “What are you still doing in this god forsaken land? How do you even survive in this place? You look beaten by life. Have a drink on me.” Dennis spoke these words with a lot of arrogance. “Meet my fiancée Linda. I am getting married to her in two months’ time. She is the daughter of Mr Ndukui. You know him? Of course you must. He is the Minister for Cultural Affairs,” he said proudly.

Without waiting for their reaction or even bothering to bid them farewell, he left the club, Linda in tow. He had proven his point. Shock was written all over their faces. He could feel their envious eyes on him and his fiancée. He drove for twenty kilometres looking for accommodation that befitted his status but finding none, he decided to go back to town.

Two months later, Dennis was ready to walk his fiancée

down the aisle. He had decided to wed at his village just to show them the extent of his wealth. The villagers were not invited but he could not stop them from watching. So they watched from afar, but not because they liked Dennis, after all he had become so arrogant. The last time he had visited, he had splashed muddy water on pedestrians intentionally. He had also refused to carry a villager in his car because he was dirty and smelly. The list of his misdemeanors was endless. The villagers also hoped to catch a glimpse of the bride – they had been told she was a beauty to behold. They had heard it was going to be the wedding of the century. And of course the food. The food was the motivation for their attendance.

So the day finally came. The décor was beautiful. As for the guests, the villagers had never seen these kinds of visitors. They came in all manner of expensive and luxurious cars. Their clothes – the villagers agreed – were out of this world.



*The décor was beautiful*

Everyone was now settled in the beautiful garden – the villagers had never witnessed a garden wedding. ‘How could people wed outside instead of inside the church?’ they wondered aloud. The groom was resplendent in a grey tuxedo coat, matching trousers and a beige shirt. A white bow-tie completed the elegant look.

The bride was running late – the guest observed. Signs of impatience were visible after another hour of waiting. Two hours... The bridegroom and his best man were frantic. Earlier on, Dennis had tried to call her but his calls went unanswered. Then a woman drove into the venue at great

speed and drew to an abrupt halt. She rushed towards the pastor and Dennis and whispered something. Dennis and his best man left hurriedly. Then, the shocking announcement from the pastor: “The wedding has been cancelled, but we request the guests not to leave immediately. A lot of food has been cooked and it needs to be eaten.” The guests were shocked but curious to know what had led to the turn of events. No answers were given. The guests, most from the city, were not interested in the food and soon left. The villagers invaded the grounds and feasted until late in the evening. It emerged later that the bride had eloped with another man.

The wedding had flopped in the most humiliating way possible. This experience left Dennis distraught. He had received a blow that he could not easily recover from. He realised that he had been so arrogant and so hell bent on hitting back and this was the price he had to pay. The villagers had the last laugh. He would look for an opportunity to apologise for his mean and arrogant behaviour. He had learnt his lesson: revenge is the worst way to deal with challenges.

Exposition refers to the background information that is given at the beginning of a story. The reader is introduced to the characters and the setting is given. The conflict, problem or the complication the character is faced with is introduced. A conflict is a struggle between two opposing characters or forces.

In ‘The Last Laugh’ we are introduced to the main character, Dennis, and we are given some background information about his current success. We also get to know about his poor background and difficult childhood. The conflict is his bitterness with his former classmates and the people of his village and his desire to teach them a lesson for humiliating him.

## 2.2.2 Rising action/ complication

### Activity 3

**Read the story below. Discuss where the rising action in the story starts.**

#### Gahigi and the Snake-woman

Once upon a time, there was a man who had a son called Gahigi. Gahigi loved to hunt. When he reached the age of marriage, his father wanted to look for a wife for him but the boy refused. He said that a wife would take him away from his job. One day, while going to hunt, he found a beautiful girl sitting under a tree. They talked for some time and he realised he liked her. Gahigi decided to take her home and make her his wife. He decided not to tell his father about it until a later time and try to balance hunting and having a wife. On reaching home, he took her directly to his small house where his parents wouldn't see her. Gahigi's parents woke up very early every day to go to work in the fields. Gahigi spent the whole day hunting. He therefore would come back home late in the evening. His bride, who was mostly in the house alone, would wake up and do all the house work. After finishing her work, she would enter her house and change herself into an enormously long snake. Then she would coil herself on the house pillar and begin to sing:

*"They just marry not knowing whom they are marrying; they just marry not knowing whom they are marrying."*



*She would enter her house and change herself into an enormous long snake.*

One day, when the neighbour's children were playing in the home compound, they heard someone singing and went to see who it was. They were shocked to find it was a huge snake. They ran away very terrified.

When Gahigi's mother came home, one of the children narrated the story to her. "There is a huge snake in our brother's house. When you are all out, it coils itself around the house pillar and sings," she said. The mother could not believe what she had heard. She decided to investigate on her own. The following morning, the mother went and hid herself where she could see clearly her son's house. That morning, the bride did as usual. Gahigi's mother could not believe it when the bride turned into the snake! When Gahigi returned home in the evening, his mother told him of what she had seen. The boy did not believe her. His mother suggested they wait again together the following day. In the morning, Gahigi left as usual, but when he had got far enough from the house, he tiptoed back and came to the place his mother was hiding to see whether what she said was true. Gahigi

could not believe what he saw. His beautiful bride was now a long scary snake coiled around a pillar. Unable to control his fear, he jumped from his hiding position and ran away screaming. The noise attracted the neighbours out in the fields who came to see what the noise was about. When they got to the house, the bride was nowhere to be found. Since that day, Gahigi heeds to his parent's advice.

Rising action is what happens immediately after the exposition. The events are triggered by the main conflict. The main conflict begins to deepen, which is what leads to a rise in action in a story. The main characters have to struggle with the challenges that they come face to face with. The events in the story begin to get exciting and suspense begins to build up.

In the story you just read above, the rising action starts when Gahigi decides to take home the girl he meets while going to hunt and does not tell his parents about it. He takes the girl to his house where he is sure no one will see her. We know that it is important for one's family members to know when you decide to get married, and therefore this act makes us want to know what happens now that the strange woman has come silently into the compound.

#### Activity 4

Identify the rising action in the story, 'The Last Laugh'.

### 2.2.3 Climax

#### Activity 5

**Read the story below. Identify the climax in the story.**

#### The Story of Mugisha

Long time ago, there was a boy and a girl who loved each other very much. The boy's name was Mugisha while the girl was called Mutoni. They grew up together, in neighbouring villages, and would take their cows to graze together. One day, they took a vow to never part, and sealed it with a blood pact, promising to live together as husband and wife. After some time, famine struck the girl's village, and her family had to migrate to a distant land. This separation affected both the boy and girl equally as their happiness seemed to have come to an abrupt end. It was difficult and even painful to separate them on the departure day of the girl's family.

They say that time heals all wounds. But this was not the case with the two young people. The boy grew up a recluse; and when he was of age to marry, his father told him: "Son, now that you have grown into a young man, I am going to look for a wife for you to marry."

But the boy refused. The same thing was happening in the far away land where Mutoni's family had migrated to. There, the girl was being asked to get married to some rich cattle owner's son. She too refused him and all other suitors who came for her hand in marriage. One day, Mugisha left his family and went in search of his best friend, Mutoni. By God's grace, he was well received everywhere he went. After going from village to village in search of his childhood friend, he

finally came to her home. He was surprised to find Mutoni a fully grown beautiful young woman. Their embrace appeared to take ages! They would release each other for a moment, only to start all over again. People in the village watched in amazement at them wondering what was happening. It appeared to everyone, especially to the girl's parents, that the reunion of these two would this time be forever. This was later confirmed when Mugisha and Mutoni told Mutoni's parents how they had taken a blood pact, promising to live together forever as husband and wife. That is why Mugisha had refused to get married back home and had come in search of his 'one and only wife'.

After some time, negotiations for the marriage between the children were concluded according to the traditions and the two were happily married and lived a blissful prosperous life.

Climax is the part of the story that comes immediately after the rising action. Climax is usually the turning point in a story. In this element, the events in the story reach their peak. Things begin to move in a different direction than had been anticipated. The events in this part may change a character's destiny for better or for worse. There is a lot of tension.

In the story above, the climax is when the two characters, Mugisha and Mutoni, refuse to get married to any other person except to each other. This situation is difficult because they got separated and now live far from each other. This climax also builds as Mugisha decides to leave his home and go in search of the girl he had made a lifetime pact with. We are not sure if they will find each other or whether they will keep their vow, to live together as husband and wife.

### Activity 6

Identify the climax in the story 'Gahigi and the Snake-woman'.

## 2.2.4 Falling action

### Activity 7

**Read the following story in pairs. Identify the falling action in the story.**

#### The Mirror

And there I was. A mirror, in other words, it was just my reflection in a mirror. There had been no mirror there the night before, so they must have put one in between then and now. Man, was I startled. It was a long, full-length mirror. Relieved that it was just me in a mirror, I felt a bit stupid for having been so surprised. "So that is all it is," I told myself. How dumb. I put my flashlight down, took a cigarette from my pocket, and lit it. As I took a puff, I glanced at myself in the mirror. A faint streetlight from outside shone in through the window, reaching the mirror. From behind me, the swimming pool gate was banging in the wind.



*I glanced at myself in the mirror.*

After a couple of puffs, I suddenly noticed something odd. My reflection in the mirror was not me. It looked exactly like me on the outside, but it definitely was not me. No, that is not it. It was me, of course, but another me. Another me that never should have been. I do not know how to put it. It is hard to explain what it felt like.

The one thing I did understand was that this other figure loathed me. Inside it was a hatred like an iceberg floating in a

dark sea. The kind of hatred that no one could ever diminish.

I stood there for a while, dumbfounded. My cigarette slipped from between my fingers and fell to the floor. The cigarette in the mirror fell to the floor, too. We stood there, staring at each other. I felt like I was bound, hand and foot, and could not move.

Finally, his hand moved, the fingertips of his right hand touching his chin, and then slowly, like a bug, crept up his face. I suddenly realised I was doing the same thing. Like I was the reflection of what was in the mirror and he was trying to take control of me.

Wrenching out my last ounce of strength I roared out a growl, and the bonds that held me rooted to the spot broke. I raised my kendo sword and smashed it down on the mirror as hard as I could. I heard glass shattering but did not look back as I raced back to my room. Once inside, I hurriedly locked the door and leapt under the covers. I was worried about the cigarette I had dropped on the floor, but there was no way I was going back. The wind was howling the whole time, and the gate to the pool continued to make a racket until dawn. "Yes, yes, no, yes, no, no, no ...."

I am sure you have already guessed the ending to my story. There never was any mirror. When the sun came up, the typhoon had already passed. The wind had died down and it was a sunny day. I went over to the entrance. The cigarette butt I had tossed away was there, as was my wooden sword. But no mirror. There never had been any mirror there.

What I saw was not a ghost. It was simply myself. I can never forget how terrified I was that night, and whenever I remember it, this thought always springs to mind: that the most frightening thing in the world is our own self. What do you think?

You may have noticed that I do not have a single mirror here in my house. Learning to shave without one was no easy feat, believe me.

Falling action occurs as the climax begins to wane. The tension eases and the main character looks for a way to try and resolve the conflict or problem.

In the story above, the falling action is when the narrator smashes the mirror then runs to the room. He has ended the tension because he has broken the mirror that shows his reflection. The fact that he runs away from the place the mirror is also reduces the tension in the reader and of the story.

### 2.2.5 Resolution/ denouement

#### Activity 8

***Read the following story. Discuss how the story ends.***

#### **The Boy who Cried Wolf**

A boy called Peter lived with his parents in a village on the hillside. His parents, like most of the other people in the village, were sheep farmers. Everybody in the village took turns to look after the sheep, and when Peter was 15 years old, he was considered old enough to take his turn at shepherding.

Peter was however easily bored, and he found it very tiresome being on the hillside with only sheep for company. So he'd find ways to amuse himself: running up rocks, climbing trees, chasing sheep, but nothing really kept him amused for very long. Then he hit upon a brilliant idea. He climbed to the top of the tallest tree, and started shouting towards the village: "Wolf! Wolf! Woolf! Woohoolf!"

One of the villagers heard him, and got all the other men together, and armed with axes, hoes and forks, they ran out of the village to chase away the wolf and save their herd. Of course when they got there, they merely found Peter perched high up in his tree, laughing, and the sheep grazing peacefully. They were very annoyed with him. That night Peter got a spanking from his mother and was sent to bed without any supper.

For a while life went on as normal, and people forgot about the incident. Peter managed to behave himself whenever it was his turn to mind the sheep, until one day, he got really bored again. He picked up some sticks, and running through where the sheep were grazing, he started hitting the sticks together and shouting: "Wolf! Wolf! Woolf! Woohoolf! Woohoooolf!"



*He found it very tiresome being on the hillside with only sheep for company.*

Sure enough, somebody in the village heard and before long, the men all come running up the hill armed with their sticks and axes and hoes and shovels, ready to chase away the big bad wolf and save their sheep and the poor shepherd boy. Imagine their consternation when they arrived in the field to see their herd grazing peacefully, and Peter sitting on a big rock, laughing uncontrollably.

That night, Peter got a good telling off, an even better spanking from his mother, and was again sent to bed without any supper. For a few days people in the village went around moaning about Peter and his tricks, but before long things settled down again, and life resumed its normal uneventful course. Peter had to do his turn at shepherding again every now and then. He decided he would behave himself; he really didn't want to upset everybody all the time, and he especially didn't want another one of his mother's spankings!

One afternoon when Peter was in the fields with the sheep, he noticed some of them were getting nervous. They started bleating and running hither and thither. Peter didn't know what was the cause of this strange behaviour as the sheep were running all over and making an ever louder racket. He got worried and decided to climb a tree so he could see what was going on. He balanced on a sturdy branch and looked around. What he saw almost made him fall off the tree. There was a great big hairy wolf, chasing the sheep, biting at their legs and snapping at their tails. For a few seconds Peter was speechless. Then he started shouting: "Woolf! Woolof! Woohoooolooof!"

In the village, an old man heard the shouting. "Oh no, not that Peter again," he said, shaking his head.

"What's going on?" enquired another villager.

"It's that Peter again, he just can't help himself."

"That boy needs to be the centre of attention all the time," said another.

"Wait till his mother gets a hold of him," added yet another. Nobody believed that this time there really was a wolf, and nobody got their hoe out, or their axe, or their shovel. All the sticks were left in the sheds and nobody rushed up the hillside. It wasn't until much later that afternoon that the boy sent to take over the shepherding from Peter found dead sheep's bodies strewn all over the hillside, and Peter still up there in the tree whimpering, that the villagers found out there really had been a wolf this time.

At last Peter learnt his lesson: that if you always tell lies, people will eventually stop believing you, and then when you're telling the truth for a change, when you really need them to believe you, they won't.

Resolution or denouement is how the story ends or is concluded. The main character decides on how to progress after the action they have decided to take, and how to deal with the events that have affected him or her. The resolution also helps us see the lessons learnt by the main character, which are the lessons the reader of the work is also supposed to learn.

### Activity 9

***Identify the five elements of plot development in the story below.***

#### **When the Sun Goes Down**

It was now dark. Steve stood at the window. A smattering of stars was barely visible in the sky. He switched on the lights and blinked against the sudden brightness that flooded the room.

Maureen was like the sun; the way the pendulum of her moods swung these days, shining bright one moment and hiding behind dark clouds in the next. Now she lay on the bed, the little boy asleep in her arms, looking forlorn, woebegone.

Steve went to the kitchen and started preparing supper. As he fell to work, he smiled to himself with a new remembrance. According to the people, Steve's woman had bewitched him. See how he goes shopping in the market, and I hear he even cooks for her...Now what's that if not medicine? A man cooking for a woman? That woman, she's ruined a fine man just so that she can reach his money! Such talk used to enrage Steve. Now he just savoured it indulgently, remembering many years ago when his mother traded clay pots at the Murang'a market. He would help her sometimes. But on many days, he would be left at home to take care of

his sisters – washing for them, cooking for them. “So what was the big deal? Let those who must speak because they have mouths to speak. Yes, let them talk.”

The food was ready. Mwea pishori served with kunde, lentils, spinach and fried liver. The little boy gobbled up the food happily but Maureen would not eat no matter how hard Steve tried to coax her. “It was a waste of good food, seeing that she was dying anyway,” she argued. “You can’t hold your health if you don’t eat,” he pleaded. “You just must eat and take your drugs every day.”

“Oh Steve, you don’t know how weary I am. I just wish to rest.”

Steve tried to jostle with Maureen and managed to force some food into her mouth. She gave in but after she had eaten just a few spoonfuls, she started to gasp as if she would throw up. Nausea. “I just wish to rest,” she repeated.

Steve knew very well what she meant by rest. “I have told you many times that you should banish thoughts of death from your mind,” he admonished.

“Knowing that every sun that sets brings me closer to the grave?”

“But it does that for everybody.”

“Well, yes. Life is a fatal disease. But with AIDS coursing through my veins, I am the living dead already,” Maureen declared.

“That’s the wrong way to look at it and you know it,” Steve retorted with a tinge of impatience. “Why is it when we agree that we must fight this thing together, you keep on retracting? Why?” he asked angrily.

“But I am just a woman you know. The mind agrees with you but the spirit is weak,” Maureen said.

“You insult yourself. You insult all womanhood. What on earth do you mean, the mind is willing but the spirit is weak?” Steve demanded. But maybe she was right, he mused. Maureen had simply allowed the virus to kill her spirit to live. On second thought, he concluded that this was not even true. This had nothing to do with the fact that she was a woman. It had nothing to do with the virus either. It had to do with her deep-seated sense of guilt. The feeling that she was somehow responsible for his illness. It was an idea that loose-speaking mouths had so rooted in her unconscious mind that it was always lying somewhere just below the surface, ready to bubble up any moment at the least excuse. Like a refrain in a dirge or a stuck gramophone record, those idle words repeated themselves so regularly in her heart that she too had come to believe them. That woman, she’s ruined a fine man just so that she can reach his money! No matter how much you loved them, how did one uproot a thorny thicket that grew inside another person’s heart? Without Maureen, Steve knew that there should be no sunshine in his world, but for the first time ever, he allowed himself to contemplate the terrible possibility of her death.

\* \* \* \*

“I was a faithful woman...faithful to my husband...faithful to this other man, the only man who ever truly loved me and treated me like a woman should be treated. With love. Respect. I was a faith...”  
“Maureen, are you alright?” Steve asked, roused from his sleep by her rumbling. He switched on the lights. Maureen coiled away to the far end of the bed, her back against the wall and a dazed expression on her face. She was trembling like somebody who had

just woken up from a nightmare. A burst of panic sent spasms of fear cascading down Steve's spine. Gently, he touched her brow. It was scalding hot. Was this the moment he had dreaded?

"Though I walk through the valley of death ... thy rod and thy staff ... comfort me!" Though she sounded coherent, Maureen's eyes had a glassy and empty look.



*I was a faithful woman ... faithful to my husband*

Steve jumped out of bed and started to dress. His mind was in a turmoil.

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies ...," Maureen mumbled on.

Steve shook her, trying to snap her out of her reverie.

"... my cup overflows..."

"Maureen!"

"I-I sha-ll dwe-ll in the hous-e of the Lo-r-d for ever!" She was losing coherence.

"No Maureen, please! Please don't leave me Mama Kimotho," Steve cried. He held her in his arms and felt her go limp as she lost consciousness. They say a man's tears flow into his stomach – not to be seen. Steve felt his drip like rain drops. He stormed out of the house to where he parked his pick-up truck in the corner. It had been a long while since he used it but when he turned the ignition, it started readily. He drove it up to his door. He saw a neighbour peeping through the window and gestured to him to come out. He was a young

teacher at the local primary school. “Tom, Maureen is very ill. I want to rush her to the hospital. Please help me carry her into the truck.”

“The truck cannot be comfortable if she is so ill,” Tom pointed out.

“That’s true but ... .”

“Mr Kabia’s house is just behind the shops. I will see if he can lend me his car,” Tom explained and dashed off before Steve could say anything. He came back almost immediately without the car. Steve did not ask what had transpired. They carried Maureen out and sat her in the front seat. She was limp and heavy but her pulse was okay. The hospital was only twenty minutes away and they arrived within no time. Steve explained what had happened. “She is HIV-positive and lately she has refused to take her drugs.”

“That’s dangerous,” the doctor said. He examined her for a while and had her admitted right away. As the nurses wheeled her to the ward, with Steve and Tom trotting beside them, Maureen regained her consciousness.

“Steve dear...What’s happening? Where are they taking me?” Then realising that she was in hospital, she screamed. “Hospital!” She spat out the word like a bitter pill. “I don’t want to die in a hospital, Steve.”

“You’re not dying, Sister,” one of the nurses said soothingly.

“I am dying ... . Why don’t you just tell me I am dying!”

Even as she protested and pleaded with Steve not to leave her in the hospital, the two nurses eased Maureen into a bed. When it was obvious nobody was paying any heed to her protests, Maureen coiled up in bed in her familiar manner. “Steve, bring your mother to see me. I’ve an important

message for her. Please do not fail.” After that, she did not speak any other word – not even to Steve.

The following morning, Steve was up early. After making breakfast and feeding the boy, he left him in Tom’s house and went to the hospital. He went to the ward. One of the nurses who had attended to them the previous night was at the report desk. Was she avoiding his eyes? With a sense of trepidation, Steve glanced towards the bed in which Maureen had lain. It was empty.

“I’m so sorry, Steve,” the nurse said. “Please come with me.” He followed her into a small office. “She passed on at around four this morning,” she informed him.

Steve was in a daze. “Did pass on mean die? How? Why?”

“Pneumonia,” he heard the nurse speak from far, far away.

Opportunistic diseases, Steve thought. The doctor had warned that those were the main threats to a person living with HIV and AIDS. He felt as if his legs would give in under him. He sat down. A bout of dizziness overwhelmed him. Around him everything went dark.

They buried her within the week. A great crowd of people turned up that Saturday for the brief ceremony. Many stood in small groups conversing in whispers. “What will he do with the child now? Maybe Maureen’s daughters will take care of him. You know, a child once born is never thrown away.”

Throughout the ceremony, Steve stood by the grave. He could feel the hundreds of eyes drilling into him, but he did not mind. They could stare till their eyes popped out. Soon the grave was a mound with freshly planted flowers. The people retreated to the perimetres of the farm, talking, whispering and staring.

Steve started looking around. Where was Kimotho? He saw the boy leaning against a banana tree. He walked towards him. "Boy!" he called when he was within ear shot. "Time to go home, Daddy."

The boy came running.

Steve hoisted the boy up, like a flag, and sat him spread-eagled across his shoulders. He could feel the tears dripping into his stomach but he was determined that they should never flow down his face. And in his sadness, the words he had always spoken to Maureen in her moments of depression now spoke to him with a meaning so profound. When the sun goes down, do not cry because the tears will not let you see the stars. Maureen might be dead but she had left him with this boy, their son, to always remind him of she who once lit up his life so brightly.

As Steve walked away, people cleared the way before him, and the boy waved at them. Bye!

### 2.3 Unit summary

**Plot development:** How events are arranged and structured in a story.

#### Steps in plot development

1. Exposition – the background information on characters, setting and the conflict or problem.
2. Rising action – the events that happen as a result of the conflict
3. Climax – the turning point of the story
4. Falling action – the attempt to resolve the conflict
5. Resolution – the conclusion where matters are sorted out.

## 2.4 End of unit assesment

***Read the following stories. Answer the questions that follow.***

### **Elizabeth's Story**

Elizabeth's parents were drunk so often that she had a harsh and terrible childhood. In them she saw the ugly, selfish and cruel side of parenthood and she developed a bitter resentment against the drink that had changed them from loving, caring parents into an irresponsible, fighting and disgusting couple.

Elizabeth therefore grew up with a fierce hatred for alcohol. Not a drop would she taste. As time passed by, she also developed a sense of fear and emptiness too deep for words to describe. The mad struggle of modern life; the competition for attention with other girls; the battle for an education; the yearning for a feeling of self esteem; all these gnawed at her soul continually – as though a leopard was chewing a part of her.

She became a career woman working for an advertising agency in a big city. Successful and well liked by her colleagues, she seemed, at thirty-five to have pretty well conquered the obstacles to her happiness and success. Security and fulfillment at last appeared to be within her grasp. It was then that a mysterious illness struck her, causing numerous trips to the doctor.

"I am sorry, Elizabeth," the doctor told her one morning. "We must perform a major surgery. The tumour in your left breast is cancerous and we will need to do a mastectomy. If we do not do it soon, the cancer may spread and it will be harder to manage."

Elizabeth was horror-stricken at the news. For weeks, she

prepared for the operation. She felt sick at heart. Nightmares filled her sleep and her inner restlessness increased by the day. No one seemed to understand, let alone share her pain. In desperation, she turned to a friend and asked her how she could deal with the turmoil within her.

“Oh!” said Jessica. “That’s easy. Take a small drink before bed time. It will relax you and enable you to have a good night’s rest. Once you rest well at night, you will be able to face the day!” she suggested.

“You think so?” Elizabeth asked, remembering her aversion to drinking. “I am so desperate – I can’t take it anymore. I must get some help. Maybe I should try,” Elizabeth rationalised.

“Try a little sweet wine to start with. It is not altogether unpleasant. Buy a bottle. Drink a small glass after dinner or with your dinner. You will feel better,” Jessica suggested.

“Okay, I will try that. Thanks Jessica.”

“You are welcome,” Jessica responded.

That evening, Elizabeth bought a bottle of Martini and took it home with her. Though she did not feel like eating, she prepared a light dinner and ate with her glass of wine. Before long, as she stared uncomprehendingly at the nine o’clock news on the television, she dozed off. After about an hour, she stumbled off to bed, glad to rest at last.

Elizabeth slept through the night. She woke up with a start. She could not easily remember the events of the previous evening. She went to the bathroom to get ready for work. As she splashed cold water on her face, she slowly remembered what she had done. Looking at herself in the mirror, she half-smiled. “Not bad, not bad at all. At least I did not spend the evening and the night haunted by missing breasts!” she thought. “Jessica may have had a point after all. The little

glass of wine could tide me over this period.”

Elizabeth went through the surgery. It was not as bad as she had feared. However, she was constantly dogged by a terrible sense of loss and kept on drinking. To her, alcohol meant instant relaxation. She drank more and more often. The alcohol did not seem to affect her work, so she thought she could control it.

One evening, as Elizabeth waited for a friend who was coming to see her, she took a little more wine than usual. She enjoyed the mellow feeling it triggered and she felt special. Bubbly and light headed, Elizabeth tried to put things straight in her apartment but she passed out, hitting her head on the side of the table. When her friend arrived, he found her drunk and passed out. He took her to hospital. After she recovered from her drunken stupor, Elizabeth was too ashamed to face her friend. Her friend did not spare her. He told her she had to do something about her abominable habit.

She realised that she had become an alcoholic. She knew that unless she found help, her life was ruined. What had looked like a solution had become an impediment and potential danger to her life: a terrifying captor.

At the hospital, one of the doctors helped Elizabeth start a rehabilitation programme. She was able to escape her alcoholic prison. Looking back, she says, “Mine was a terrible binge and I consider my sobriety precious. I wouldn’t do anything to jeopardise it.” She was indeed fortunate to escape.

## The Guilt

Lillian Thurgood was busy picking guavas at the side of the house when she heard the growling of the Alsatians on the stoep. Just a low growl telling her that someone had stopped at the gate. Perhaps it was the postman, she thought, dropping something into her box. She reached the front of the house and saw Tembi and Tor like sentinels at the gate. Fierce and powerful dogs, they had been trained by her late husband to follow specific commands. It is the man's calmness that held them back.

"Can I help you?" Lillian asked.

"I am looking for work, Madam."

"I don't have work any work."

He reached into a brown envelope and lifted out a plastic-wrapped sheet of paper. "I am from the Transkei, Madam. I have here a letter." He was young and persistent. Lillian had seen these letters before. As she suspected, a letter on a home-made letter-head – saying William Sidlay was collecting donations on behalf of some organisation. The man, there was no doubt, was prepared. If he could not find work, he would ask for a handout. The letter made it easier to beg. She handed the letter back through the grill of the gate. The gate was locked, the wall round the property was ten feet high.

"Wait here," she said.

"Thank you, Madam."

She fished around in her purse for loose change. There was only a five-rand coin and twenty-three cents. Five rand was a lot of money for a pensioner to give away but she could not give him twenty-three cents. What could a grown man do

with twenty-three cents? She went out and gave him the five rands. He took and then vigorously nodded his head.

“I can’t take this five rand.”

“What do you mean?”

“I can’t just take Madam’s five rand. Let me do some work for it. I see Madam has many leaves from the tree on the grass. I can clean it up for Madam. I want to work for it.”

“It is all right. Take it. It’s a donation, isn’t it?”

“Yes Madam, but I insist. Look over there, look at all those leaves.”

Lilian looked at the carpet of leaves covering half of the garden. She did not have the stamina to argue. “All right,” she said, knowing herself to be foolish to open the gate. William stepped in and the dogs moved forward, pink tongues idling in readiness. Lilian made a signal and they relaxed. “Your name is William?” she remembered the name on the letter.

“Yes, Madam.”

“William, just those leaves.”

“Does Madam think I am a skelm? That I want money? Those leaves are not even two rand.”

“Well just do five rand’s worth. Really, you don’t have to do anything. I gave you the money. I’ve got to go out in a few minutes.”

“Don’t worry, Madam. I’ll be finished now, now.”

Lilian remained at the gate and watched him remove his coat as if he was to tackle the whole garden. She knew that he knew she was not going anywhere, that opening the gate was more a show of trust than a display of fearlessness. The telephone rang and Lilian excused herself. The dogs followed

her into the house. She would not lock the door behind her, she told herself. She trusted him. She would show him that she did. She would not make him feel like a criminal. Black people knew that the white people were afraid of them. She would show by her action that she was not one of them. But what if she was wrong? The old revolver was in a box at the back of the wardrobe, she would not even know what to do with it.

Lilian reached the phone, but the caller had hung up. She became aware of her pulse. Racing. Frantic. She stood for a minute to calm down. The dogs growled. She turned. William was at the door.

“Madam?” he said nervously.

“Yes?”

“I’ve raked the leaves and cleaned up the guavas.”

“Thank you, William. I will open the gate for you.”

“I’ve worked one hour, Madam. That’s ten rand.”

The effrontery shocked her, but lasted only seconds. Lilian did something with her hand and the dogs rose. “I’ll ask my husband for the money,” she said.

“There is no husband,” he said in a calm voice. “Madam lives alone. Why’s Madam afraid? I am not a thief. Madam will give me the money?”

Lilian’s purse was on the mantelpiece and she reached for it. In front of him she took a tenrand note. The tone of his voice had changed and somewhere deep inside her, a terrible chill. She was painfully aware that the only thing between her safety and his will, was the dogs.

“I only have this ten rand note. You can give me back the five rand I gave you.”

“Madam wants change? I thought the five rand was a donation. Madam owes me ten rand for the work I did.”

Lilian looked at him. The smile on his face told her that he thought her a stupid old woman. That she had no choice. Still, she could not get herself to give him the money. “Leave my house, please,” she said.

“The ten rand, Madam.”

“Now, or I’ll call the police.”

He came forward.

“*Sa!*” Lilian commanded the dogs.

The bitches leapt – Tembi at William’s wrist, Tor at his collar – and knocked him to the floor. William screamed at the top of his lungs as the dogs ripped at his clothes and nipped with their sharp teeth at his hands and arms. Lilian looked at him squirming under the canines. The Alsatians had their snapping mouths dangerously close to his face, slopping saliva all over him. They would terrorise, but not draw blood, not until the other command. She did not know what the dogs might do if she gave the last signal.

“Please, Madam, please!” William shouted. “I will leave!”

Lilian left him struggling under the dogs and went to her bedroom. In the wardrobe, she found the little brown box and drew out the revolver. It was heavy, smooth and she stroked it with her fingers. She was strangely calm. Gripping her hand tightly about the weapon, she limped out. There was a tremendous surge of something pumping through her veins. She was not Lilian Thurgood. She was a woman possessed of only one thought: to come out of the situation alive. In that moment, she understood that it took very little to pull the trigger.

“The law says I can shoot for trespass on my property,” she pointed the gun down at him.

William’s eyes danced around in his head like cherries in a slot machine. His jacket was in shreds, the front of his shirt and face wet with snot and dog spit. “Please, Madam, don’t shoot.”

Lilian loomed over him. She snapped a command, and the dogs took their paws off his chest. “Get up and put the five rand I gave you on the table,” she said. William struggled up on his feet. He felt his jacket, but there was no pocket left.

“It is in your pants.”

William did as he was told.

“Now walk backwards out the door so I don’t have to shoot you in the back.”

With the dogs nipping at his knees, William reversed gingerly out the door, tiptoeing backwards down the stone path to the gate. Lilian had the gun pointed at him the whole time, her eyes never leaving his face.

“I am going to report you to the police, William. I’m going to give them your description and tell them about the scar under your left ear, about the letter you walk around with, about your evil little scheme to get yourself on someone’s premises. I am going to report you not because I think they’re going to catch you, but because I’m going to shoot you if you come here again.” She unlocked the gate and watched him edge nervously out. William was wide-eyed, still expecting her to pull the trigger. Without a backward glance he ran down the main road when he turned the corner and vanished from sight.

Lilian took a deep breath, then went inside. She made a cup of

tea and sat down at the kitchen table listening to the laughter and shouting of the children in the school yard across the road. The voices were reassuring. They told her that there was life outside the ten-foot walls, that there was hope.

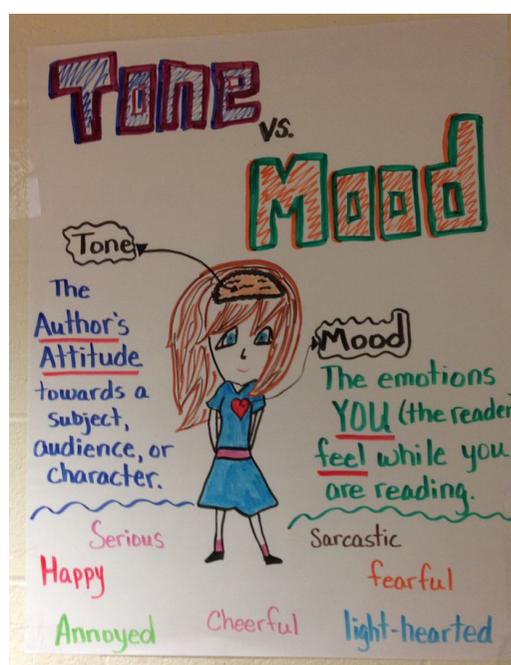
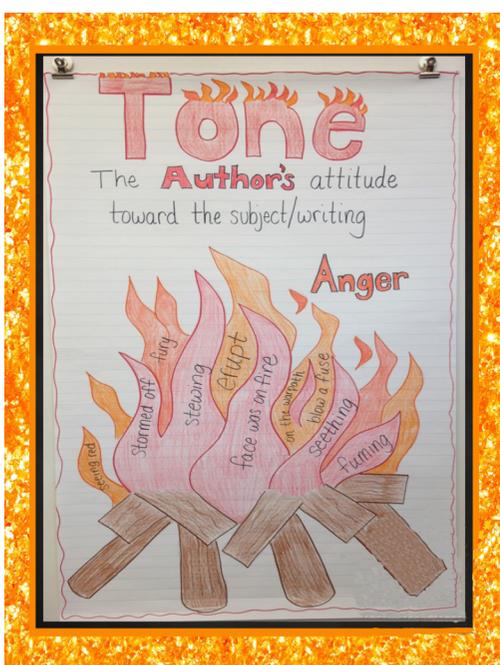
### Questions

1. Compare and contrast the two stories above in terms of the five stages of plot development (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution).
2. Among these stories, which one had a more intense climax?
3. In each of these stories, identify the step of the story that was the longest.

# Unit 3

## Tone, Atmosphere and Purpose

**Key unit competence:** To be able to compare and contrast two short stories based on tone, atmosphere and purpose.



### 3.0 The unit focus

Authors of literary texts employ different literary techniques when writing to create the desired effect. To help you understand how this works, answer the following questions:

1. Mention five different literary techniques employed by authors in their writing.
2. How do these techniques affect the tone, mood and purpose of the story?
3. What is tone in a literary text?

4. Explain what is meant by the atmosphere and the purpose of a short story.
5. How does tone affect the atmosphere reflected in a short story?
6. Compare and contrast two short stories considering how their tone and atmosphere contribute to the purpose of the story.

### 3.1 Review of literary techniques using selected age-appropriate texts

When an author writes a story, he or she must have an intended message that they wish to put across through the text. In order to achieve this, one has to choose the setting, the characters, the words they use and the actions they take intentionally, so that the overall meaning of the story is brought out as intended. To do this, authors use different literary techniques. The choice of these literary techniques sets the tone, the mood and the purpose of the story. Some of the literary techniques used by authors include:

Literary technique	Explanation
1. Flashback	General term for altering time sequences, taking characters back to the beginning of the tale.
2. Foreshadowing	Implicit yet intentional efforts of an author to suggest events which are yet to take place in the process of narration.
3. Allegory	A symbolic fiction story.
4. Alliteration	Repetition of a letter or consonant sound at the beginning of an adjacent or closely connected word.

5. Hyperbole	Exaggeration used to evoke strong feelings or create an impression which is not meant to be taken literally.
6. Imagery	Forming mental images of a scene using descriptive words, especially making use of the human senses.
7. Paradox	A phrase that describes an idea made by concepts that conflict.
8. Satire	The use of humour, irony or exaggeration to criticise.
9. Metaphor	Use of a figurative language to evoke an imagination.
10. Personification	Giving human characteristics to a non-living object or an animal.

### Activity 1

**Read the story below then answer the questions that follow.**

#### The Last Hour

Knowing that Mrs Ishimwe was suffering from a heart disease, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences; veiled hints that revealed the truth in bits. Her husband's friend, Olivier was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when intelligence of the road disaster was received, with Peter Ishimwe's name leading the list of "killed". He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second text message, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralysed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself, she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were all shaking with the blowing wind. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was hawking his wares. The notes of a distant song which someone was singing reached her faintly, and countless birds were whistling on the roofs.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled one above the other in the west facing her window.



*There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds.*

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair, quite motionless, except when a sob came up

into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines portrayed repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather

indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching towards her through the sounds, the scents and the colour that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell tumultuously. She was beginning to recognise this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will—as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been. When she abandoned herself, a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: “Free, free, free!” The vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulse beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She did not stop to ask if it were or were not a monstrous joy that held her. A clear and exalted perception enabled her to dismiss the suggestion as trivial. She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked save with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending hers in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him—sometimes. Often, she had not. What did it matter? What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in the face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognised as the strongest impulse of her being?

“Free! Body and soul free!” she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. “Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door—you will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven’s sake open the door.”

“Go away. I am not making myself ill.” No; she was drinking in a new breath of life through that open window.

Her fancy was running riot along those days ahead of her. All sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister’s importunities. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of victory. She clasped her sister’s waist, and together they descended the stairs. Olivier stood waiting for them at the ground floor.

Someone was opening the front door. It was Peter Ishimwe who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his travel bag and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of the accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine’s piercing cry; at Olivier’s quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease - of the joy that kills.

## Questions

1. Identify the literary techniques used in the story.
2. How do these literary techniques affect the tone, the mood and the purpose of the story?

### 3.2 Tone (formal, informal, comic, sad)

The tone is the attitude an author employs towards his or her subject. It is the manner of writing about the subject, characters and theme by careful choice of words. The choice of words creates the tone. For example, if an author wants us to admire a character, he or she will use a tone of admiration, such as Jessica is an angel, she is as graceful as a swan. However, if he or she wants the reader to dislike the character, the author may use expressions such as Jessica is as bitter as a gall. Tone is used to express different emotions.

Tone may be described as being sentimental, approving, appreciative, sad, comic, condescending, sarcastic, critical among others.

#### Types of tone

##### 1. Formal tone

This kind of tone is objective and factual. The words are written as you would find in textbooks and academic writing.

##### 2. Informal tone

It is also called casual tone. It is very similar to a normal conversation. The author may use slang, incorporate non-standard English words like the pidgin spoken in Nigeria, or use figurative expressions such as proverbs. Some of the words may also be contracted.

##### 3. Comic tone

This involves use of a funny or humorous tone in writing. Satire as a literary technique may invoke a comic tone.

#### 4. Sad tone

This involves using words that trigger feelings of sadness in the reader.

#### Activity 2

**Read the following letter sent by a rebel group to a school owner. Describe the tone of the letter.**

We have warned you many times to close your disgusting school and to stop poisoning God's children with your filthy ideas. But you have refused. We know that you are a government agent and a tool of the devil. Above all, we know that you are proud of standing in the way of God's work. Who will come to your aid when your hour comes? Remember, nobody spits at our warnings with impunity. The Most High, who gave us the Ten Commandments to guide in all manners, sent us to cleanse the entire land with fire. God's Victorious Brigades are watching you day and night. Your punishment will be both heavy and harsh. The War of Ears had begun. And as the ancient saying goes, ears which don't listen to their master must get chopped off. You are next.

For God and our Revolution.  
Colonel Kalo, Chief of Operation

### 3.3 Atmosphere/ mood (Gloomy, happy, tense)

When you read a story, it arouses certain emotions in you. These emotions create the atmosphere or the mood. Therefore, the atmosphere refers to the emotions invoked in you, the reader, as you read a piece of writing. The feeling could be sad, afraid, happy or amused.

## Types of atmosphere/ mood

### 1. Gloomy mood

This is an atmosphere of sorrow and anger within a text.

### 2. Happy mood

This is an atmosphere of joy within a text.

### 3. Tense mood

#### Activity 3

***Discuss the feelings you get as you read the story below. Explain the reason for these feelings. Pick out words that have helped to enhance the mood.***

It had been four years but the events of that atrocious and frightful day were still vividly fresh in Norpisia's mind. It was late in the evening, after her mother had finished milking and began preparing their evening meal, when the hideous men struck, shooting at the fleeing villagers indiscriminately, while herding off the livestock. She was about fourteen years old then and she could recall her family fleeing. Her mother running holding the hand of her youngest brother who was about ten years old at that time. Her older siblings, a brother and a sister, ran faster than the rest. They disappeared into the bushes while she ran after her mother, fearfully tugging at her *shuka*. Her father, Messopirr, who limped badly from an earlier injury caused by the same bandits, hobbled behind everyone else holding his spear, ready to defend them when it became necessary.

Norpisia recalled how chilling the atmosphere became especially when the sound of gun fire exploded in their ears. The horrendous sound had sent everyone hurtling into the bushes as the evening turned from dusk into darkness. None followed the other as they scattered in all directions.

*(Extract from Vanishing Herds by Ole Kulet)*

### 3.4 Purpose (Inform, entertain, explain)

The author is driven to write by many reasons or motives. The reason or motive that makes them write is the purpose of the fictional work. The purpose may be placed in the following categories:

1. **To inform** – the author’s aim is to enlighten the reader about an important societal concern or issue. In literary works, the author will mainly give the information in form of a story. The issues could range from the destructive human activities on nature to the importance of taking a HIV and AIDS test.
2. **To explain** – the author may write to explain the reason why certain things are the way they are. For example, myths from different societies explain why man must work or why death came into the world.
3. **To entertain** – a major goal of literature is to entertain. Plays, stories and poetry are meant to entertain. If you have read a story that is so interesting that you cannot put it down, then it thoroughly entertained you.

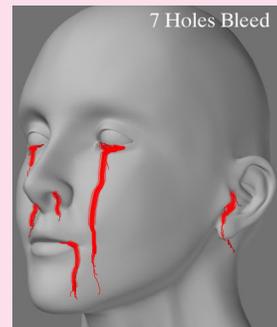
#### Activity 4

**Read the following story then answer the questions after it.**

#### The Hero

Children playing in the dust-blown streets of Gulu used to sing a song. In the song, they dared each other to jump from a high place. A broken leg would not be a problem because Dr Matthew Lukwiya was well known, loved and respected. He was a hero.

Dr Matthew, as he was known, was committed to his work and the people he served. One day rebels raided his hospital and they threatened to take hostage some Italian nuns. Dr Matthew



*The symptoms included bleeding from the mouth, nose, ears, gums and other body openings.*

persuaded them to take him instead. They took him and marched around the bush with him for a whole week. When they finally released him, he went back to serve his people. Dr Matthew, as it was known, would give his life for his people.

In October 2000, the hospital staff at Lacor Hospital were attacked by a strange disease. The symptoms included bleeding from the mouth, nose, ears, gums and other body openings. The victim would cough, vomit and become feverish. From earlier, it had been established that Ebola was very infectious. It was contracted by coming into contact with fluid from an infected person. It also killed its victims very quickly. When the hospital staff at Lacor Hospital received the news that there was an outbreak of Ebola, they took all the necessary precautions. This included keeping all the infected people in isolation and wearing protective clothing when attending to patients. In Lacor Hospital only doctors, nurses and nursing assistants were allowed near the patients. In other hospitals, relatives of the patients were requested to look after them. Dr Matthew led by example. He would go to the Ebola ward every morning at seven and would always be there till late in the evening.

One morning in November, a nurse known as Simon Ajok, who had contracted the virus, started bleeding profusely. He started moving around the ward smearing the walls with blood as he moved. The nurses were alarmed. They called Dr Matthew. He put on the protective clothing but forgot to put on the goggles or a plastic shield for the face. He went to the ward to help clean up Ajok, calmed him down and put him back to bed.

Unfortunately, Ajok died soon afterwards. Within 24 hours, seven more people died. The seven included two nurses. The hospital staff panicked. They went to the assembly hall and

told Dr Matthew they wanted the hospital closed. They were afraid that they would catch Ebola and die.

Dr Matthew said that if the hospital closed down, he would leave and never return. He urged the hospital staff to remember the principles that had brought them to nursing. He told them the story of how he had volunteered to be kidnapped by the rebels. He challenged the staff to live and maybe even die by the values that had brought them to nursing. Finally, he vowed to fight on even if he was left alone. The staff were convinced. They all stayed.

Two days later, Dr Matthew had a flu. He started vomiting, had a fever and was very weak. The sister-in-charge gave him anti-malaria drugs but the fever did not reduce. Dr Matthew kept praying. He prayed that if he were to die, he may die serving his people. The sister took a blood test. The results were positive; Dr Matthew had contracted Ebola.

Dr Matthew's wife, Margaret, went to see him. She was not allowed to move close to him or touch him. She had to wear protective clothing. Dr Matthew encouraged her to remain strong and to avoid being infected so that she could look after their children.

Dr Matthew died on 5th December, 2000.

## Questions

Discuss the following questions about the story, 'The Hero'.

1. The purpose of the story
2. The tone
3. The atmosphere created

### 3.5 Unit summary

#### Literary techniques

1. Flashback
2. Foreshadowing
3. Allegory
4. Alliteration
5. Hyperbole
6. Imagery
7. Paradox
8. Satire
9. Metaphor
10. Personification

#### Types of tone

1. Formal tone
2. Informal tone
3. Comic tone
4. Sad tone

#### Types of mood / Atmosphere

1. Gloomy mood
2. Happy mood
3. Tense mood

#### Purpose of literary texts

1. To inform
2. To entertain
3. To explain

### 3.6 End of unit assessment

**Read the following two stories and answer the questions that follow.**

Chebet gently pushed away the torn bedsheet that covered the three of them. She stared at her brothers who slept on unperturbed beside her. Dennis, thumb in mouth, was sprawled on the rickety wooden bed, sound asleep. On the other side, her cousin was equally sound asleep. He licked his lips before smiling broadly; the smile visible despite the faint light of dawn. He must have been dreaming because the smile was followed by mumbling. His brown stained bedsheet was spread out on the ground, leaving his dusty feet uncovered. The feet were very dusty, probably carrying all the dust he had gathered while out with their livestock the previous day.

Chebet tiptoed to what was the sitting room. Not a sound was heard when she entered the sitting room since only a *leso* separated the two rooms. It would have been a totally different case with a squeaky door. She surveyed the room, trying to pick out anything useful. She was not sure what she wanted, but studied the whole room, cautious not to wake her uncle and aunt who slept in the adjacent room. She moved towards an old kitchen cabinet that stood at the corner of the house. She opened the drawers and almost screamed when a rat jumped out of the drawer. She hopped back. Her heart beat faster.

She bit her right-hand pointing finger as if remembering something, before tiptoeing back to the bedroom. She pulled her dress from the hanging line and walked back to the sitting room. It was then she saw her aunt's handbag.

“Do I take this? Do I leave it?” she thought as she looked

at the handbag. She moved towards it but stopped abruptly when she heard her uncle's voice from the bedroom. He was mumbling something. She thought she heard soft sobbing. Her aunt was sobbing.

"Could they have heard me move?" she wondered. She hastily took the handbag and quietly opened the main door. She walked out of the house.

It was quiet outside. The cattle lay on the ground chewing their cud a few metres from the house. Her uncle, unlike many in Marigat, still had some livestock. Chebet broke into a run, away from the house.

"Where am I going?" she asked as doubt threatened to slow her down. She got to the main rough road, but continued running, the handbag and the dress still in her hands.

She recalled the heated conversation with her uncle the previous night:

"Tomorrow, Nicholas will take you away. He will marry you at a later date. In the meantime, he will take care of you and your brothers. I do not want to hear any nonsense from you. He will have the permission to discipline you accordingly." she winced as she recalled her uncle's words. "If you act childish, he will beat you up."

"Uncle, I'm still young," she pleaded but with no success.

"Chebet, you will have to learn to respect culture. Through culture, you show respect for the community and your family too. Your mother respected this. Remember, Nicholas will take care of you, but first, you must be circumcised. Your aunt will escort you to the rite tomorrow morning. Several girls and women will accompany you. From there, you will learn how to talk like an adult. People will come in the morning to prepare for the feast that will take place in this homestead. We have to put everything in place. I do not expect and will not entertain any

letdown. The feast will be held in the evening. I want discipline. Your mother failed to instil this discipline in you. I will," her uncle retorted.

"I will never get circumcised. Never," she shot back.

"You are going to be circumcised and I will see to it that you are circumcised. It's not what you say but what the community dictates."

"But the community is wrong. What the community dictates is not necessarily true or correct. I will not get circumcised. I will not get married," she had vowed in front of her aunt before marching off to the bedroom. No one followed her but she was sure she saw a hint of approval in her aunt's face. She did not know what her uncle and aunt resolved but she was sure her uncle would forcefully implement his plan. She could not wait for that to happen.

She spent the whole night wondering what to do and where to run to. She had initially thought of reporting the matter to the chief but changed her mind because the chief supported community practices. He participated in celebrations involving circumcision of girls. He did not even oppose the marriage of young girls. She could not, therefore, run to the chief for help. She stopped on the way and opened the handbag to put in the dress. She noticed a handkerchief that was tied into a knot. She removed the handkerchief and untied the knot. There was money in the knot.

"It is wrong to run away with someone's money. I need to return it," she thought.

She counted the money; it came to nine hundred shillings. She squeezed the notes into her palm, wondering what to do with the money.

"No, I will use this money and one day I will return it," she concluded.

She folded the notes into a nice bundle and put them in the pocket of her dress only to realise her pocket was torn. She put the money back in the handbag but looked further to see what else was inside. She noticed her aunt's identification card in one of the inner pockets. She could not run away with the identification card.

The roar of a motorcycle engine startled her. She wanted to hide but it was too late. She had been so engrossed in her thoughts that she didn't hear it from a distance. She stood there startled, trembling with fear; either her muscles had stopped aching or she was too busy to think of the ache.

"What if the rider stops and rapes me?" she thought with a shudder.

It was not yet daytime and the road seemed clear of people. There was a thicket on either side of the road. The dying engine of the motorcycle sent a cold chill down her spine. The rider stopped next to her.

"Are you going to Marigat Town?" he asked. She shook her head.

"Okay," he answered but before he set off, Chebet changed her mind and called out.

"Wait! How much?"

"Fifty only."

Chebet sat on the motorcycle awkwardly and injured her hand.

"Where are you going this early?" the rider asked over the roar of the engine. He was not wearing a helmet. Chebet did not know what to say.

"Nairobi?" he persisted.

"Yes," she responded.

A silence descended between them. Chebet's mind wandered from one thought to another. The man concentrated on his

riding on the rough road.

It took over forty minutes to get to Marigat Town. The last time she was in the town was a year before. She had come with her mother to sell ten of their cows. She took out a fifty-shilling note and paid him.

“Do you ply that route?” Chebet asked before the man left.

“Can I ask for a favour?”

“Sure, you can.”

“Would you mind to drop this ID at any home near the place you picked me? It is my aunt’s but I took it by mistake.” He took the ID and studied it.

“Why not take it back yourself?”

“I’m travelling and won’t be back soon...” she said.

“Okay,” he finally responded to Chebet’s great relief.

She remained rooted to the spot wondering where to go. She had never gone beyond Marigat Town. She remembered her brothers and guessed that they had woken up. She had not told them about her plan to run away. Sorrow gripped her. She fought back tears. She had cried enough the previous night. What will happen to my brothers? Will we ever meet again? Who will take care of them? Why not just get married and live with them, she thought with discomfort.

She wiped the thin mucus streaming from her nostrils with the back of her hand. Just then she felt some trickle down her thighs. Had she urinated on herself in the excitement to get away? She put her hand inside the torn pocket of the dress. She touched a sticky liquid and was extremely shocked at what she saw. It was blood.

“What just happened?” she asked aloud. She did not feel pain but something had seriously hurt her. She started trembling with fear and worry. She checked again and confirmed it was blood.

“Did anyone do something bad to me? Did the motorcycle hurt me?” she thought, putting her legs together in a bid to stem the flow of blood.

“Aren't girls supposed to ride on a motorcycle?”

Just then, the blaring of a matatu horn brought her back from her thoughts. She hastily stepped back, almost dropping the handbag.

“Nairobi! Nairobi!” the conductor shouted. “Four hundred shilling only.”

The matatu left her even more confused. The driver stopped the vehicle and the conductor alighted.

She started walking towards it.

“Where are you heading to?” she asked the conductor.

“I said Nairobi,” he responded. “Are you going to Nairobi?”

Chebet nodded unsurely and immediately boarded the matatu. She sat at the back, close to the window.

**(Extract from *The Delegate* by Edward Mwangi)**

### **The Last Breath**

We watched Eva walking firmly back to her dormitory. I glanced sideways at Dad. He was watching her with a strange, tense look in his eyes. I hesitate on the word ‘tense’, doubtful as to whether Dad was ever tense in his life. But the look in his eye was very strange as he watched her walk away.

I wondered what he was thinking. Whatever it was, it made no difference. I loved Eva and would marry her as soon as I possibly could. Suddenly, without warning, Dad started the engine and drove furiously down the road towards the gate of the Blind School.

“What will you do? You can't marry her like that!” he shouted above the roar of the engine.

I looked at him swiftly. His eyes were steady on the road. Anger

flowed through me. So the visit had been in vain. So he had seen nothing of the inner Eva. “We’ve gone through all this before,” I said. “Now you have seen her. My last word on the subject is this, when I come of age next August, I’m going to ask Eva to marry me.”

“But she is blind...”

I sank back in my seat. This was hopeless; for how long would Dad keep on beating home the fact? As if it wasn’t home already – and what was more, accepted!

“Then give her eyes!” My voice was hoarse with anger.

A look of surprise momentarily came to Dad’s face. Then he looked grim. Though he didn’t seem to realise it, he increased his speed. I thought I knew what had got hold of Dad and the thought brought a faint smile onto my lips.

Dad was confused and angry with himself for it. He had until now thought of Eva as a blind, helpless creature who had stolen my heart. Now he had seen her and perhaps caught a glimpse of the angel in her and had even seen, perhaps, how very far from helpless Eva was.

“What are you going to do?” I asked in a shout. For now the mad roar of the car would have drowned anything else.

Dad didn’t reply. A terrible cough shook his frame and the car swerved dangerously to the edge of the road. He corrected this just in time too and settled comfortably in his seat. Neither of us talked again until we got back home. I left the car silently and entered the house. I went to my room and sank onto my bed with a sigh. I wondered bitterly when father would start to understand me and my feelings.

It seemed to me that our ideas had always clashed ever since I had been a kid. There seemed little in my past life that I could heartily thank him for. Time and again he had interfered with my plans. Only a year before he had ruined a plan I had to study music. Thus I ended up in a bank and was likely to remain there for a long time.

That he always meant well, I never doubted. But I was equally sure I knew what was best for me. Dad would make no more decisions for me; I loved Eva and would marry her in the near future and take care of her. Mother entered the room cautiously and interrupted my rather impassioned line of thought. “Well, how did it go?” she asked in an attempt to sound light hearted. But I could tell that she was very serious, deep inside. Mother understood me. She had met Eva some weeks back and had liked her very much. Although she hoped I would change my mind about it all – marriage, that is – she understood my feelings and never tried to argue me out of it.

“He met her,” I said heavily. “It made little difference to him.” I paused to consider this. “At least he is still very stubborn. But I’ll show him I have a mind of my own!” I finished a little savagely.

“Yes, but be careful!” Mother looked alarmed. “He looked so dark – and troubled...”

“What does he say, Mother?” I pleaded, suddenly seized by a wave of feeling and passion. “Why don’t you say you understand? Of course I wish Eva could see, but just because she can’t, through no fault of her own, it shouldn’t make Dad regard her as an outcast. She says I have brought sunshine into her life. Think of that, Mother. If I left her, I would plunge her back into darkness...” For some reason I was near to sobbing. “And she has brought sunshine into my life too,” I continued bitterly. “Of all the people, she seems to understand me best.”

Silence followed this outburst. I couldn’t bring myself to look at Mother in case there were tears already in my eyes. But her eyes I knew were fixed on my face.

“We all understand you,” Mother said at last. “But we do not want you to be unhappy...”

What empty words. I could not even reply. My happiness was in Eva's hand. They were denying me that hand in marriage, thus plunging me into depths of misery.

"Your father cares for your happiness more than you know," Mother went on. "Do not forget that... He looked so dark and troubled when you came in. It is bad for his health."

Something in her voice made me turn and look at her. Her hand was on the door knob and its movements were nervous, I thought. But what struck me most was the urgent, pleading look that had come into her eyes. "Your father is a sick man," she said in a voice that chilled my heart. "I'll have to tell you this now. You are not a child anymore. Your father is very sick!" "Sick!" I stammered. Our eyes held. Hers were wide and staring.

She leaned forward. Her voice was almost frightening as she said in a hoarse whisper, "Your father has got lung cancer. You are old enough to be told... You have heard him cough. So be careful what you do!"

She turned and left the room, leaving me stunned, not quite comprehending.

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June passed away and with it most of the sunshine. Most of the time the weather was bleak and the sky dark grey. And a dark shadow lay on our home. Sunshine seemed forever gone from my mother.

The grass was wet on a July afternoon as Eva and I sat on a block of stone near the school. She seemed excited, as though she had something to tell me.

I also had lots to tell her. I felt for the ring to make sure it was still there. She looked at me as if she could see through her dark glasses. She lay a little tender hand on my knee. "You look sad," she said.

How pretty she was! She had a smooth oval face and a dimpled little cheek. I often wondered what colour her eyes would have been without the whiteness of her opaque cornea.

“Sad?” I said with a smile, “but you can’t see me!”

“Yes – but I can feel you are sad,” she said. “What is wrong? Please tell me.”

My voice was serious as I said, “Dad is worse...We saw him again yesterday and I could –,” I checked myself. “The doctor didn’t look happy. I know Dad hasn’t much of a chance.” Eva sat still. I looked at her and felt happy. As always she understood. She turned her face away.

“How terrible!” she said.

How could I ever leave this angel? To me she was perfect – I wanted her as she was.

‘Dad forgive me,’ I thought as I took out the ring, looked at it for a while thoughtfully. A wry smile came on my face. Wasn’t life queer? Things turn out so different from the way we picture them in our childish dreams.

A shiny diamond ring...the girl’s shy eyes looking up at me as I slipped it on her finger...

That had been my dream. I took her hand and slipped the cheap copper ring onto her finger. One or two imitation jewels gleamed. It didn’t look too bad.

Her surprised face looked up.

“Wh-what is that?” she asked breathlessly.

“A ring,” I said. “Don’t you know? You and I are getting married.” My voice was calm but there was a lump of excitement in my throat.

With her other hand she felt the ring. Suddenly, she pulled it off and put it on my knee.

“No!” she said, “Let’s wait a while!” Her voice was shaking and

low, almost to a breathless whisper.

“Wait?” I asked. “What for?”

A small smile lit up her face and she looked up to the sky. I had never seen her looking like this – happy and bright as an angel.

“Eva!” I said, holding her hand to replace the ring. “I don’t want to wait. I need you now. What do you want us to wait for?”

“Till I can see the ring,” she said. “I want to see the ring!”

I stared at her. It was chilly but I felt sweat on my neck.

“What do you mean?” I asked.

I saw a tear creep down her cheek, underneath her dark glasses.

“That’s what I wanted to tell you,” she said. “I’ve got my bags packed!”

“Packed?” I didn’t quite...see...

“Yes,” she said. “I’m going to the hospital to receive a new cornea from...from someone else...Someone who is about to...to cross over.”

I stared at her. I licked my lips. “You mean that someone has...?”

She nodded. “I have no idea who it is,” she said. “But I’m going to see again! God bless him...!”

I just stared. I couldn’t find any words to say. My heart was beating hard and loud with unspeakable joy. But sorrow was equally great.

\*\*\*\*

July passed and a great grey blanket seemed to have been lifted back to let the sun smile again. It was August and life was once more brisk and lively.

I walked down the garden path whistling to myself. The oranges, for which I was aiming with my basket, looked beautiful and

yellow in the sun.

Suddenly I stopped, the smile dying on my face. I stood still. Then I walked towards the mound of earth a little way off.

I stood there looking at the grave. I swallowed hard. He was seeing me! I knew he was.

“I must say thanks,” I said with a sudden burst of feeling. “You always had a kind heart and you really showed that with your last breath. Each time she looks at me with those lovely eyes...”

I broke off. How stupid to stand talking to a mute grave. It was like talking to oneself. There was no time to waste, on a fine morning like this—especially with Eva and Mother back in the house waiting for oranges.

### Questions

1. In groups, compare and contrast the two short stories. Identify the tone used and the atmosphere created. Using illustrations, show how they contribute to the purpose of the writer.
2. Explain how the tone and atmosphere change as the story progresses.

# Unit 4

## Types of Poetry and Poems

**Key unit competence:** To be able to compare and contrast different types of poetry and poems.



### 4.0 The unit focus

Poetry is a genre of literature characterised by the use of a distinctive style and rhythm to express feelings and ideas with special intensity. There are different ways of doing this. This gives rise to different types of poetry. In addition, the products of poetry exist in different forms. There is need to differentiate the various forms of these products, which are usually poems. To understand these distinctions, answer the following questions:

1. Identify three different forms of poetry.
2. Describe the distinguishing features of every type of poetry.
3. Mention two major types of poems.
4. Illustrate with examples the characteristics of each type of poem.

## 4.1 Selected poems

In Senior Two, you learnt about various genres of literature, which included poetry. In this unit, we will learn about different types of poetry and their characteristics as well as the different types of poems.

### Activity 1

**Identify the differences and similarities in the following pieces of writing.**

#### Wind

Wind blowing my face  
 Making my cheeks rosy red  
 It's biting my nose  
 And chilling through all my bones  
 It is pushing me along

#### Wind

Whenever it rains it comes with much wind. This disadvantages me; it blows my face and my hair. At the end of the day, I find that the colour of my face is affected too by the wind; it blows across it and this makes my cheeks turn red. My nose too is affected for the wind bites it, causing such discomfort. My bones become stiff due to the wind, they become numb and weak. The wind thus pushes me along.

## 4.2 Types of poetry

Poetry is distinguished by the structure it takes (the verse form as opposed to paragraphing) and the strong feelings the poet expresses using concise language. It is marked by the economy of language; words are not wasted. This helps build on the emotions expressed.

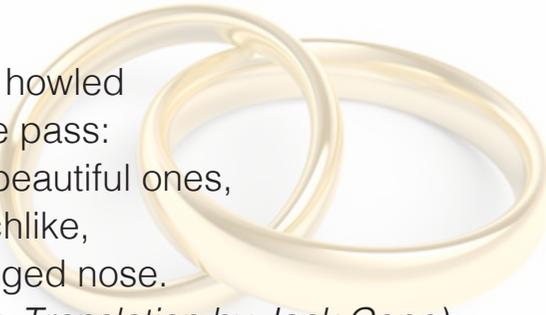
## Activity 2

**Read the poem below. Describe how the poet has used language to express feelings.**

### Song of the Unloved

I could have wept and howled  
Seeing the bridal cattle pass:  
Not for me but for the beautiful ones,  
For Thathalasi and suchlike,  
Lovely with a high-bridged nose.

*(Traditional Sotho song. Translation by Jack Cope)*



The persona in the above poem is moved by the people passing with cattle to go pay dowry for some girl. This makes her react instantly to express the deep feelings of envy she experiences. This further helps to bring out the spontaneous feelings that result as a reaction to an observation or experience. The poet has used very few words to express his or her feelings.

There are many types of poetry. Poetry can be grouped according to the content and subject matter. Here we shall focus on the following three types: narrative, descriptive and lyric poetry.

#### 4.2.1 Narrative poetry

This is a type of poetry which tells a story about an experience or event. It is derived from the verb 'to narrate', which means to tell. We can tell our own stories in narrative poems, ensuring the story is told in the structure of a poem.

**Activity 3**

**Read the following poem aloud. Identify the unique characteristics of this poem.**

**My Wound**

I can't believe he is doing this to me  
I feel like losing him too  
Telling me he is going to sleep  
But after an hour he is online  
Or maybe he didn't quit  
I see his last seen when I wake up.

Yes! He is lying to me  
Isn't he?  
I feel like bleeding that wound again  
Yes! The one I had long time ago  
While I was pushing so hard to satisfy my other half  
But I can't handle this anymore  
Sleeplessness, headache, migraine begin again today.

What haven't I done?  
Am I gaming or am I a game?  
The second one I think  
When I give my all, so hard to win  
But can't understand what's going on  
Just to learn the lesson  
I feel betrayed.

I never learn, because I have much love  
And empty, hapless  
I was born to satisfy your shortcomings  
But I sure forget myself  
I see them coming and leaving  
The more I try to help, the more I open my wound.

Whatever happens, know this!  
As always am not regretting  
I am just trying.

(By Alice Uwihoreye)

## Characteristics of narrative poetry

1. The poems tell a story.
2. It may or may not rhyme.
3. It could be short or long.
4. It has a beginning, middle and end.
5. There is a strong sense of narration, characters and plot.

### 4.2.2 Descriptive poetry

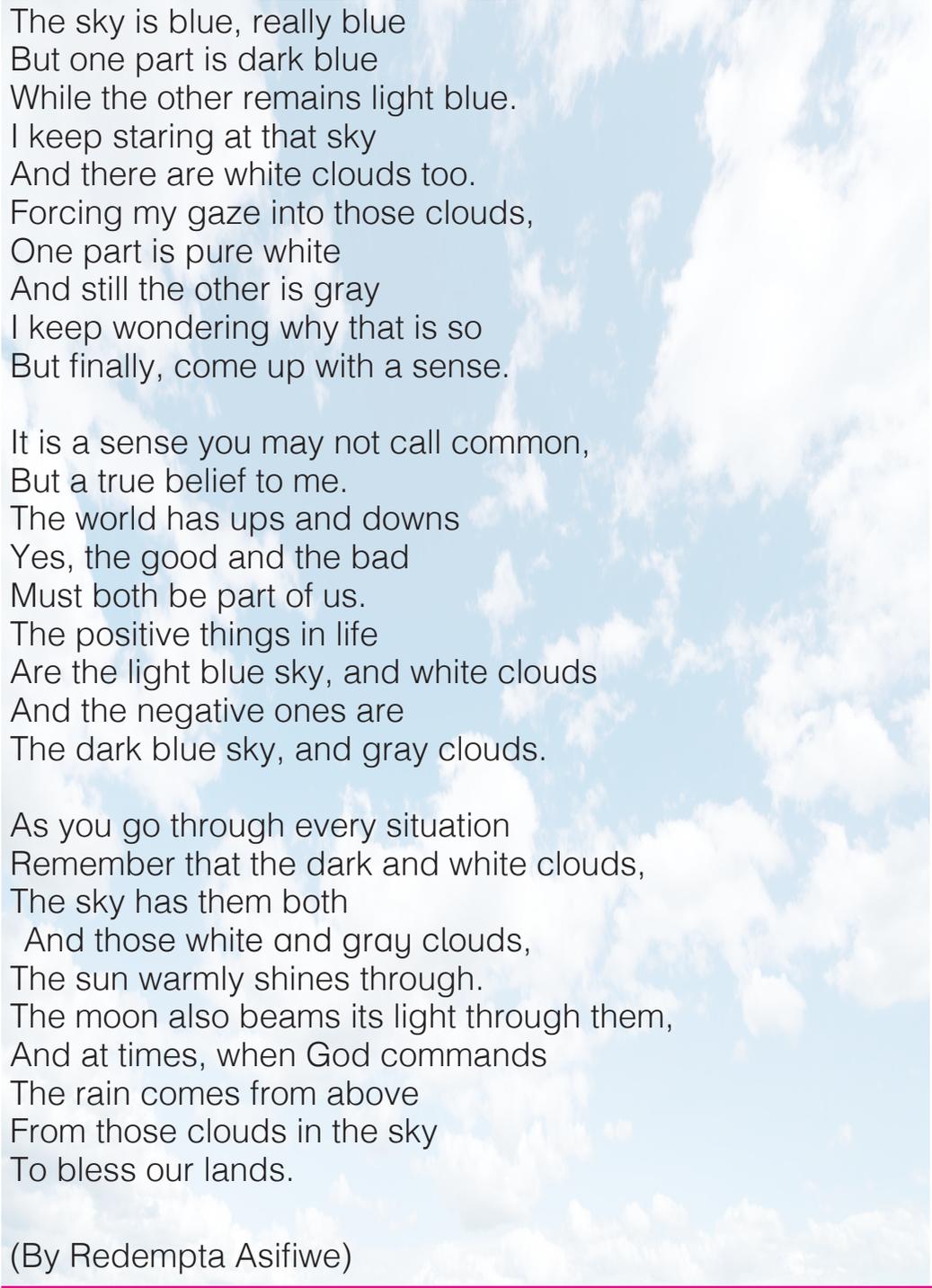
This type of poetry describes as it explores the sensory experience of a moment by evoking our senses: the sight, the hearing, the smell and the taste. Descriptive poetry has been compared with a portrait or a landscape painting. This is because it is realistic and does not have to use imagery like metaphors to intensify emotions. Much as other types of poems use description too, in descriptive poetry the poet deliberately sets to appeal to the senses. Descriptive poetry may include topics to do with many common subjects, both natural and human. For example, a poem describing your dress, house, your journey and what you observe as you are on your journey or your actions.

#### Activity 4

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

#### **Sky**

Here in my room  
Lying on my bed  
With the windows closed  
But curtains open  
So I can clearly see  
I can see the sky without any distractions  
Such as the sunlight that kills the eyes.



The sky is blue, really blue  
But one part is dark blue  
While the other remains light blue.  
I keep staring at that sky  
And there are white clouds too.  
Forcing my gaze into those clouds,  
One part is pure white  
And still the other is gray  
I keep wondering why that is so  
But finally, come up with a sense.

It is a sense you may not call common,  
But a true belief to me.  
The world has ups and downs  
Yes, the good and the bad  
Must both be part of us.  
The positive things in life  
Are the light blue sky, and white clouds  
And the negative ones are  
The dark blue sky, and gray clouds.

As you go through every situation  
Remember that the dark and white clouds,  
The sky has them both  
And those white and gray clouds,  
The sun warmly shines through.  
The moon also beams its light through them,  
And at times, when God commands  
The rain comes from above  
From those clouds in the sky  
To bless our lands.

(By Redempta Asifiwe)

## Questions

1. The poet has developed some words that refer to different senses. Pick out these words and the senses from the poem above.
2. Explain what the poet describes in the poem.
3. Compose a poem about your journey to school, describing a few details of what you observe, feel, smell or touch.

## Characteristics of descriptive poetry

1. The poems use language that creates images and feelings in the reader.
2. Most descriptive poems are long.
3. They are deep in depicting the person, animal, object or the idea being described in the poem.
4. They are less imaginative but more didactic or preachy.
5. They are realistic and do not delve into emotions and metaphors.

### 4.2.3 Lyrical poetry

This type of poetry derives its name from the musical word 'lyre', an ancient Greek musical instrument with strings. It is therefore poetry closely linked to music. It is poetry usually recited or even sung in the accompaniment of a musical instrument. Lyrical poetry expresses intense personal emotion in a manner suggestive of a song. This kind of poetry expresses the thoughts and feelings of the poet and is sometimes contrasted with narrative poetry, which relates events in the form of a story.

## Activity 5

**Read the following Lyric by Elizabeth Barrett Browning and answer the questions that follow.**

### How Do I Love Thee

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.  
 I love thee to the depth and breadth and height  
 My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight  
 For the ends of being and ideal grace.  
 I love thee to the level of every day's  
 Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.  
 I love thee freely, as men strive for right.  
 I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.  
 I love thee with the passion put to use  
 In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith  
 I love thee with a love I seemed to lose  
 With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath,  
 Smiles, tears, of all my life!; and, if God choose,  
 I shall but love thee better after death.

### Questions

1. What strong emotion does the poet express? Give words or phrases that illustrate the feeling.
2. In terms of emotions expressed, how does this poem differ from the poem 'Building the nation'?

### Characteristics of lyrical poetry

1. It expresses personal feelings or thoughts.
2. It has a musical quality.
3. Most lyrical poems are short.
4. They are mostly written in first person and include the writer in the poem.

5. They mostly express intense emotions.
6. The emotions expressed tend to lean towards the extremes in life such as love, death or loss.

### 4.3 Types of poems

#### 4.3.1 Concrete poems

##### Activity 6

*Read the poem below. Explain why it is a unique poem.*



Apart from the content, the form or structure of a poem will also determine which type of a poem it is. Concrete poetry, also called pattern or shape poetry, has a visual appearance that matches the subject matter of the poem. The emphasis is on form which distinguishes it from other types of poetry. By selecting an object to focus your poem on, you can easily write your own concrete poem.

## Characteristics of concrete poems

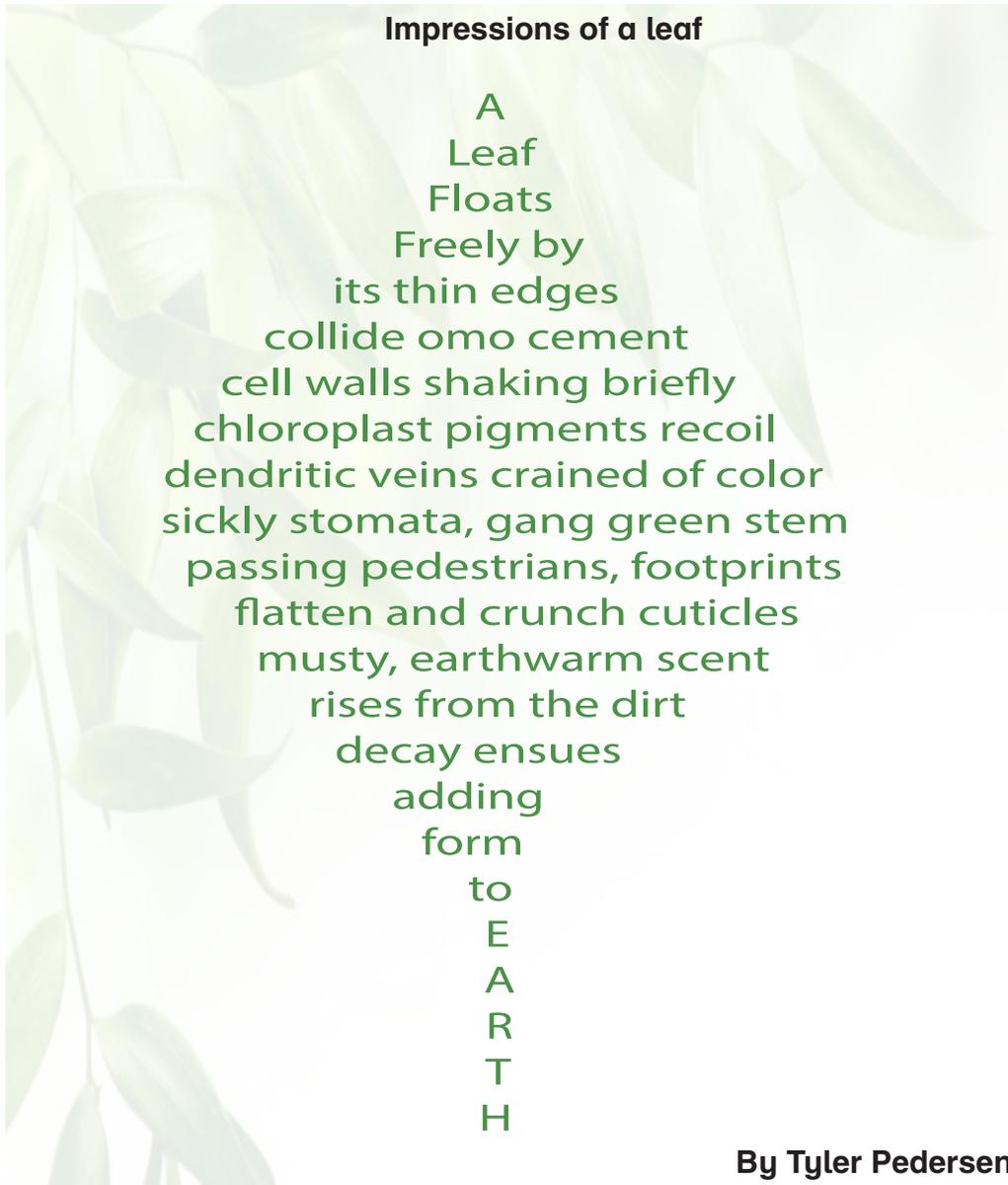
1. The shape of the poem on the page symbolises the content of the poem.
2. The arrangement of letters and words creates an image that offers the meaning visually.
3. If you remove the form of the poem, you destroy or weaken the poem.
4. The physical arrangement of the poem can provide a cohesion that the actual words lack. This allows the poem to ignore standard syntax and logical sequencing.

## Examples of concrete poems

### Example 1



**Example 2**



**Impressions of a leaf**

A  
Leaf  
Floats  
Freely by  
its thin edges  
collide omo cement  
cell walls shaking briefly  
chloroplast pigments recoil  
dendritic veins crained of color  
sickly stomata, gang green stem  
passing pedestrians, footprints  
flatten and crunch cuticles  
musty, earthwarm scent  
rises from the dirt  
decay ensues  
adding  
form  
to  
E  
A  
R  
T  
H

**By Tyler Pedersen**

### Activity 7

1. Identify which shape the following poem takes and discuss if the shape helps explain the content.

Orange  
I just love  
the juicy orange  
just can't resist the  
juicy, juicy orange  
give me any orange  
any time anywhere  
just an orange.

2. Compose your own concrete poems with the following forms or structures:
  - Human head
  - A cross
  - Cell phone (mobile phone)
  - Star
  - Heart
  - Sun/Moon

**NB.** When you've decided on the object to write about, you need to choose a shape to represent this object. For example, if you've decided to write about a star, you can choose the shape of a star. You can use several shapes if it helps you depict your object. For instance, if you write about the moon, you can have several moon shapes that get bigger on the page to show the full moon and creating different emotions. Your shape can also contrast the meaning of your poem where a poem about the phone might be in the shape of a tombstone. A poem about hate could be in the shape of a heart. Be creative to allow the

shape and the words of your poem to create a whole picture that has more meaning than either would individually.

### 4.3.2 Acrostic poems

#### Activity 8

*Read the poem below then identify its unique characteristics.*

#### Monsters

**M**any different creatures walk around  
**O**n a night like tonight  
**N**ot because it's Christmas  
**S**o lets all stop singing jingle bells  
**T**is because it is Halloween so  
**E**veryone beware  
**R**eal monsters walk around  
**S**aying trick or treat everywhere



In acrostic poems, the subject content is often built around the first word or sentence. The first word or sentence is written vertically, then using the first letter of the word or the first word of the line a poem is composed.

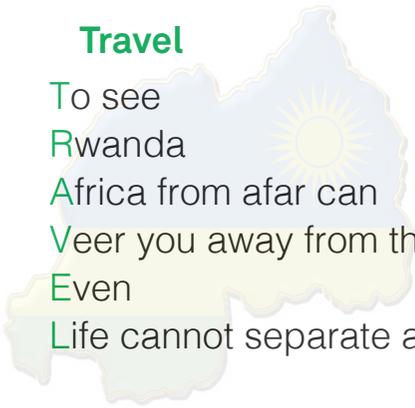
#### Characteristics of acrostic poems

1. They spell out words using the first letter of each line of poetry.
2. The word spelt is the name of a person or an object that is being described by the poet.

3. Each word usually has its own verse and the verses can be separated by a line.
4. Usually, acrostic poems do not have to rhyme.

### **Example 1**

#### **Travel**



To see  
Rwanda  
Africa from afar can  
Veer you away from the troubles they faced.  
Even  
Life cannot separate any of us now.

### **Example 2**

#### **Best teacher**

**B**rilliant

**E**xcellent

**S**uper

**T**errific

**T**remendous

**E**ntertaining

**A**mazing

**C**lever

**H**appy

**E**xceptional

**R**emarkable

### Activity 9

Use the following words to write a full poem. Remember to write the word vertically then compose your poem from the initial letter.

- PEACE
- AFRICA
- LEADER
- PARENT

### 4.4 Unit summary

#### Types of poetry

1. Narrative poetry
2. Descriptive poetry
3. Lyrical poetry

#### Characteristics of narrative poetry

1. The poems tell a story.
2. It may or may not rhyme.
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### Characteristics of lyrical poetry

1. It expresses personal feelings or thoughts.
2. It has a musical quality.
3. Most lyrical poems are short.
4. They are mostly written in first person and include the writer in the poem.
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6. The emotions expressed tend to lean towards the extremes in life such as love, death or loss.

### Types of poems

1. Concrete poems
2. Acrostic poems

### Characteristics of concrete poems

1. The shape of the poem on the page symbolises the content of the poem.
2. The arrangement of letters and words creates an image that offers the meaning visually.
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### Characteristics of acrostic poems

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2. The word spelt is the name of a person or an object that is

being described by the poet.

3. Each word usually has its own verse and the verses can be separated by a line.
4. Usually, acrostic poems do not have to rhyme.

#### 4.5 End of unit assessment

1. Study the following poems. Compare and contrast them in terms of the types of poetry they represent.

##### Poem 1

##### **I Still Love You, You're My Big Brother**

##### **By Jade**

You were always a risk taker,  
Especially in the car, you liked to burn rubber,  
My mates thought it was funny, it was cool,  
When you gave them a lift and played the fool.  
Driving with no hands, hanging out the sun roof,  
Shutting your eyes and generally being a goof  
Thinking you were some Evil Knieval.  
Did you know you'd cause this upheaval?  
You raced round the area flying over speed hills,  
Didn't you realise that sort of drivin' kills?  
Gemma and Chloe, they screamed with excitement,  
You forgot we were the kids, you were the adult.  
We banged our heads on the car roof,  
And laughed ourselves silly, the truth?  
Every time we got in the car with you,  
We risked our lives, sounds bad but it's true.

One day, August 7th, you were drivin' me home from Judo  
Did your usual stunts then crashed into a Peugeot.

Killing a 17-year-old woman, Abigail Davis  
We escaped with nothing but bruises.  
How is that fair?  
Police came round nicked you for a drivin' offence.  
The prosecution stacked, no defense,  
A 32-month jail sentence

I'll try to visit you inside,  
I am angry and sad, that I can't hide,  
It's all your fault you can't excuse it  
You were the one that revved it.  
I know you're punishing yourself, having trouble sleeping  
I told you and told you to stop your reckless driving  
This was the only way you'd learn you'd never hear sense,  
But it's too late for "If only," this story's past tense.  
(Source: <http://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/reckless-driving>. Published on December 2007)

## Poem 2

### Gisenyi, Rwanda

One day, I will fly to the most beautiful hills  
Where all will be as green as natural  
Where the wind will run through my face  
In a welcoming hymn just to put me at ease.  
I will sit in the sand looking to the sky  
The one full of stars just near the beach  
Feeling the breeze and hearing the sound of the lake  
As it moves, calling me to embrace it.

But I will sit still, waiting to see the dawn  
The one that tears the sky apart  
Calling up a new day,

And if by chance I'm holding ur hand,  
We shall name the place Gisenyi.

(Source: [https://www.poetrysoup.com/poem/gisenyi-rwanda\\_882312](https://www.poetrysoup.com/poem/gisenyi-rwanda_882312). Posted in 2017 by junky poet)

2. Read the following poems then answer the questions that follow.

### Poem 1

#### Water

Wait until night to water your garden  
Always use a bucket when you wash the car  
Turn off the tap when you brush  
Every leak wastes water – fix them  
Rain gutters save water.

### Poem 2

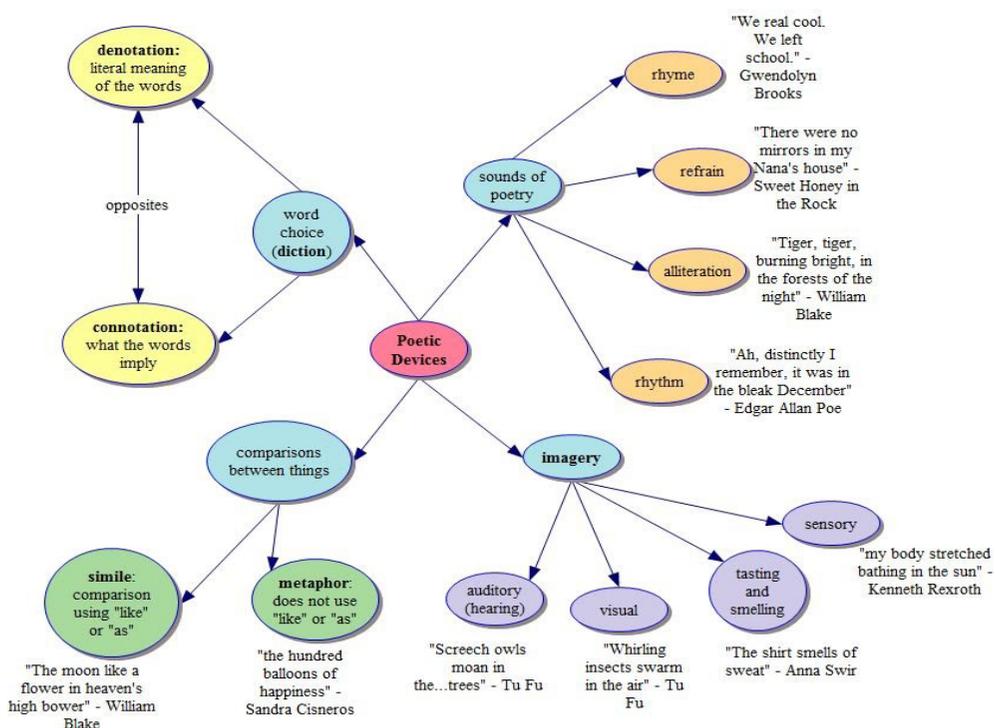
Love is not a thing to feel  
Love is not a thing to understand  
Love is not a thing to become  
And eternally be.  
Love is not a thing to give and receive  
Love is not a thing to feel  
Love is not a thing to understand  
Love is not a thing to become  
And eternally be.

- a. What type of poem is each of these poems?
- b. Compare and contrast the characteristics of the two types of poems.

Unit  
5

## Poetic Devices

**Key unit competence:** To be able to compare and contrast poems according to the poetic devices, the point of view and the context.



### 5.0 The unit focus

Poetic devices are stylistic techniques that a poet employs in order to influence the way a poem sounds when read aloud and the overall mood created by the sound patterns. There are various poetic devices that a poet can use. By analysing different poems, one can identify the use of these poetic devices. This unit explores the use of such devices. Answer the following questions to help you predict the content of the unit.

1. What are poetic devices?
2. Describe the following poetic devices:
  - a. Repetition
  - b. Rhythm
  - c. Rhyme
  - d. Alliteration
  - e. Assonance
  - f. Simile
  - g. Personification
3. Read the following poem then answer the questions that follow.

### **A reply to a needles' salesman**

I need not your needles,  
They're needless to me,  
For kneading of needles,  
Were needless, you see;  
But did my neat trousers,  
But need to be kneed,  
I then should have need of your needles indeed.

(Source: <http://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-alliteration-poems.html#whMysgljqestwbgi.99>)

### **Questions**

- a. What poetic devices are used in this poem? Cite examples from the poem in your answer.
- b. In what point of view is the poem written?
- c. Explain the context of the poem.

## 5.1 Selected poems

Poets choose their language carefully for them to pass the message in the fewest words possible. To achieve this, they deliberately apply certain forms of style or poetic devices. In this unit, we will discuss these devices using examples in poems.

### Activity 1

***Read the following poem and identify the words that have been deliberately used to create an effect.***

During Christmas  
 We gather as a mass  
 Boom! Boom! Boom!  
 The drums go as we hum.

Like a wild hyena  
 We laugh in the dance arena  
 The children graceful as Mary  
 And together we make merry:

In the poem above, styles such as repetition of words have been used. The poet has also created words that have the same sounds in an organised way. Sound patterns in poetry are deliberately created to give the poem a musical touch and also, in some cases, to help emphasise the subject matter. By using repetition and sound pattern rhythm - the regular beat or sound is achieved in the poem. Other devices that have been used in the poem include simile and personification.

### Activity 2

Identify the lines with the stylistic devices mentioned above in the poem in Activity 1.

## 5.2 Review of poetic devices

### 5.2.1 Repetition

#### Activity 3

**Read the following poem aloud and then answer the questions that follow.**

Late, Late, So Late

Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!

Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.

Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

No light had we: for that we do repent;

And learning this, the bridegroom will relent.

Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

No light: so late! and dark and chill the night!

O, let us in, that we may find the light!

Too late, too late: ye cannot enter now.

Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?

O, let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!

No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now.

(Alfred Lord Tennyson)

#### Questions

1. Identify the repeated words and lines in the poem.
2. Explain which idea(s) the repeated words and lines help to highlight.
3. Compose a short poem that makes use of repetition as a device.

### 5.2.2 Rhythm

Rhythm is what we dance to in a song. It is the regular beat that defines the song. In poetry, rhythm is created by:

- Repetition
- Sound patterns or repetition of certain sounds in a poem
- Length of lines – if of the same length

#### Activity 4

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

#### The Stem of the Branch

None on earth is like her,  
She that made me breathe.

None on earth is like her,  
She that filled my stomach.

None on earth is like her,  
She that knew why I cried.

None on earth is like her,  
She that protected me.

None on earth is like her,  
She that gave me my first lessons.

None on earth is like her,  
She whose death orphans me.

**L. M. Asiedu**



## Questions

1. Suggest what causes the rhythm in the poem above.
2. How does the rhythm help highlight the subject of the poem?
3. Show why the 'She' is important to the speaker in the poem.

### 5.2.3 Rhyme

#### Activity 5

*Read the following poem then answer the questions after it.*

The gaze of beauty

When I look at **Rwanda,**

I can't help it but **wonder**

How like a phoenix, from ashes this nation is **rising**

When I look at **Rwanda,** I can't help it but start **praising.**

However, when I look at **Rwanda**

I don't look at it from the lens of a **dreamer**

nor even those of an **unbeliever**

I look at it with the eyes of a **man**

I look at it with the smile of the **one**

I look at it with the conviction of a **child**

Who knows better than to just let go of an opportunity to  
make a **change**

Because change is never by **chance**

It is a choice we **make.**

The choice to carry on a **dream**

The choice to let the light within me **beam**

The choice to carry on and accomplish the dreams of  
those who walked this path before us

The choice to be courageous and attempt what no one  
else has ever had the courage to do

The choice to walk through the rockiest of roads in order  
to leave tracks that will one day be followed

The choice to believe in the power of **togetherness**  
 The choice to walk hand in hand even through the  
**darkness**

The choice to trust the good in **others**  
 And the choice to work heart to heart with **others**  
 Because we are a summation, one **nation**  
 And never shall we betray the **foundation**

Change is never big or **small**  
 It is not a personal attribute of any great **figure**  
 Change can never be measured  
 But the beauty of liberation will be **declared**  
 Will be felt, will be remembered  
 The sound of the stomps will echo through the **streets**  
 A sound of liberty and freedom, a sublime corrosion of  
**residents**  
 The inspiration for everyone to have the charisma like that  
 of our **president**  
*Ishimwe Dustin*

## Questions

- Look at the following pairs of words at the end of the lines. They have similar sounds:
  - Rwanda and wonder
  - rising and praising
  - dreamer and believer
  - man and one
 Find any other three pairs of words at the end of the lines that have similar sounds.
- In Stanza 2, the poet refers to choices one has to make to bring change in Rwanda. Choose any four lines with 'choices' at the end of the line and replace the word with your own. The line should still make sense and the word should still rhyme.

**Note** that the vowel sound of the pairs of words is the same though the initial consonant sound is different. This sound pattern is referred to as rhyme which is the repetition of the same sound at the end of lines in a stanza. When words rhyme within a line, they are referred to as internal rhyme. For example: 'All as white and all as small'

### 5.2.4 Alliteration

#### Activity 6

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



#### Betty Botter

Betty Botter bought some butter,  
 But, she said, the butter's bitter;  
 If I put it in my batter  
 It will make my batter bitter  
 But a bit of better butter  
 Will make my batter better.  
 So she bought a bit of butter  
 Better than her bitter butter  
 And she put it in her batter  
 And the batter was not bitter  
 So 'twas better Betty Botter bought a bit of better  
 butter.



*Anonymous*



#### Questions

1. Pick out which letters are repeated most.
2. Identify which position the repeated letter takes within the line – initial or last position? Write all the words to illustrate

the repeated words at the initial and underline the letter.

Alliteration is the repetition of the initial consonant sounds within a line. Like rhyme, alliteration is used to create rhythm; it brings a note of music to the poem.

### 5.2.5 Assonance

This is a sound pattern where similar vowel sounds are repeated within a line although the neighbouring consonants are different. For example if within a line there are words 'night', 'might' and 'site' all have similar vowel sound /ai/.

#### Activity 7

**Read the following poem then answer the questions that follow.**

#### **The Verdict**

He took a good look  
 At the nuisance tooth  
 And in awe exclaimed  
 'Tis the food and the mood  
 To blame for the maim!  
 Large loomed his tools on the mouth  
 And off came the tooth with its roots.

***Njoki Gitumbi***

#### Questions

1. In the first line, the vowel sound /u/ is repeated in three words. Identify the words and explain how the words relate.
2. The sound /u:/ (prolonged) has been repeated in the 4th, 6th and 7th lines. Which words contain the sound?
3. Find any other use of assonance in the poem.

4. How does the use of assonance help emphasise the message the poet is passing in the poem?

### 5.2.6 Simile

We use simile when we make direct comparison of one thing to another different one using words 'like' or 'as...as'. For example, when we liken a person to a bird: Marion is like a little bird, it may suggest Marion is harmless. A poet will use a simile to create an image in our mind and hence make us understand the subject under comparison.

#### Activity 8

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

#### The Face of Hunger

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.  
The skin was pale and taut  
Like a glove on a doctor's hand.  
His tongue darted in and out  
Like a chameleon,  
snatching a confetti of flies.  
Oh! child,  
your stomach is a den of lions  
roaring day and night.

*Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali*

## Questions

1. Identify the use of similes in the poem.
2. How does the use of similes help us to understand the subject?
3. Write a short poem describing your friend. Use similes.

### 5.2.7 Personification

A poet may make non-living things behave like human beings in a poem, for example, make things talk or feel pain, or react to certain situations just the way human beings do. This is referred to as personification, and helps to make abstract things become more alive and easy to understand. When identifying use of personification, clearly state which aspects of human beings are given to the non-humans and the effect it creates.

## Activity 9

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

### **Kilembe Mines**

Bruised face,  
 Cracked ribs,  
 Intestines frantically harrowed out  
 By machine-dislocated men  
 Sweating in subterranean cells  
 Deep as the grave of mankind –  
 The projected havoc  
 Of the frenzy in human blood.  
*(Timothy Wangusa)*

## Questions

1. Explain the three instances of personification in this poem.
2. What feeling does personification help invoke in us?
3. Why does the poet refer to the Kilembe mines as 'the grave of mankind'?

## 5.3 Point of view

### Activity 10

#### ***Narrate the following stories:***

- i. A story about yourself. (Use 'I')
- ii. Tell one member of your class about something he or she did. (Use 'you')
- iii. Tell a story about a member of your family. (Use he, she, they)

As learnt in Unit 1, there are three points of view in literature.

- (i) The first is called the first person point of view. It uses the persona 'I' or 'we'.
- (ii) The second is called the second person point of view. It uses 'you'.
- (iii) The third is called the third person point of view. It uses the pronouns 'he, she, it or they'.

The speaker in a poem is not necessarily the poet. In most poems the poet will speak from different points of view, for example in the poem 'Kilembe Mines' it is an observer, a third person who has visited the place and seen what the place looks like that talks. Another poet may also take the point of view of a child or a mother. Thus the person who speaks in a poem is referred to as the persona and can be the 'I' or the 'we' depending on the context. In the earlier learnt poem 'How Do I Love Thee' by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, the persona is

singular, takes the 'I' view.

Note that identifying the speaker in the poem is important in discovering the overall intention of the poem; it helps bring out the feelings and the attitude being shared.

### Activity 11

***Read the following poem and identify the point of view used in the poem.***

#### **No, Not yet, Lord**

If you must take my child, Lord  
 take him before I get used to that  
 incessant crying  
 Which with midnight insistence  
 Must wake me;  
 Or teeth have grown on his boneless gum;  
 or mama  
 he has learnt to mumble.  
 But, Lord, if into hope and promise  
 YOU let him toddle  
 Take him when bent and toothless  
 the end of day  
 has come  
 and into the night let him  
 look for me.  
 M. Kiruhi



## 5.4 Context

### Activity 12

***In Unit 1 we discussed the meaning of context in a literary text. Using this knowledge, analyse the context of the following poem.***

#### **Pills and Violence**

Popping pills in the morning,  
Popping pills at night.  
Cutting deep into my skin,  
holding my blade tight.

Dressed up to look my best,  
When I actually looked my worst.  
I thought all this alcohol  
would refresh my troublesome thirst.

I wanted kids when I was older,  
I wanted good news to tell.  
But who tells their children,  
that they wanted to go to hell?

I had a lot of problems.  
Sexually abused and bashed.  
Both my arms, wrists, and legs,  
Had been both bruised and gashed.

I thought of myself,  
As a strong girl.  
I wasn't strong at all.  
This is what made my toes curl.

I had decided to stop,  
And get my life on track.  
Because I realised the life I wasted  
I was never getting back.

So I stopped the hurting,  
For once it was pretty easy.  
I stopped looking like an easy target,  
and I stopped dressing sleazy.

I'm a better person now.  
And I'm turning 16.  
I can't believe how young I was,  
And how I was so keen.

All the drugs and the alcohol,  
The cutting and pain.  
Have all disappeared,  
Now I'm one step ahead in this game.

(Source:<https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/pills--violence-but-im-ahead-of-the-game>)

## 5.5 Unit summary

**Poetic devices:** The stylistic techniques that a poet employs in order to influence the way a poem sounds when read aloud and the overall mood created by the sound patterns.

### Examples of poetic devices

1. Repetition
2. Rhythm
3. Rhyme
4. Alliteration
5. Assonance
6. Simile
7. Personification

### Types of point of view in poetry

1. First person point of view
2. Second person point of view
3. Third person point of view

**Context:** The circumstances forming the background of an event, idea or statement, in such a way as to enable readers understand the narrative or a literary piece.

## 5.6 End of unit assessment

**Read the following poem then answer the questions that follow.**

### **All That You Have Given Me, Africa**

All that you have given me, Africa  
 Lakes, forests, misted lagoons  
 All that you have given me,  
 Music, dances, all night stories around a fire  
 All that you have etched in my skin  
 Pigments of my ancestors  
 Indelible in my blood  
 All that you have given me, Africa  
 Makes me walk  
 With a step that is no other  
 Hip broken under the weight of time,  
 Feet large with journeys,  
 All that you have left to me  
 Even this lassitude bound to my heels,  
 I bear it with pride on my forehead.  
 My health is no more to be lost  
 And I go forward  
 Praising my race which is no better  
 Or worse than any other.  
 All that you have given me, Africa,  
 Savannahs gold in the noonday sun  
 Your beasts that men call wicked,  
 Your mines, inexplicable treasures  
 Obsession of a hostile world  
 Your suffering for lost paradises,  
 All that, I protect with an unforgiving hand  
 As far as the clear horizons  
 So that your heaven-given task  
 May be safe forever.

**Anoma Kanie**

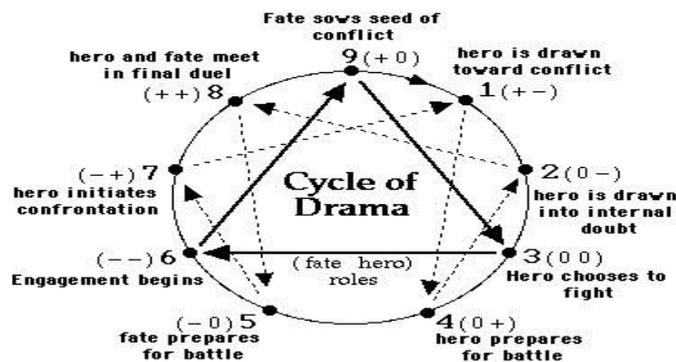
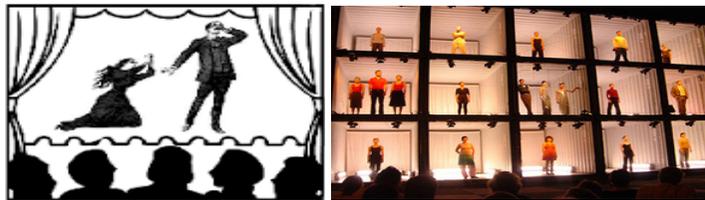
## Questions

1. Who is the persona in the poem? Explain.
2. List down the good and the bad things that Africa has given the poet.
3. Do you think the poet is grateful to Africa? Give evidence of your answer from the poem.
4. Identify repetition and the effect it brings out in the poem.
5. As you earlier learnt, personification is giving human characteristics to inanimate objects. These include characteristics like movements, action, speech or feelings. Show in what ways Africa has been personified in this poem.

# Unit 6

## Context and Plot Development

**Key unit competence:** To be able to compare and contrast the context and the plot development in two selected plays.



### 6.0 The unit focus

Plays, like all other literary works, are written within a particular context. For successful analysis of plays, it is important to clearly understand the context in which they were written. In addition, their plot involves certain elements. This unit will explore context and plot development in plays. To understand the whole picture of the unit, answer the following questions:

1. Describe four types of context that can apply in a play.
2. How does context influence the meaning of a play?
3. Explain five elements of the plot of a play.

## 6.1 Selected plays

In the previous units, we discussed context and plot development in prose and poetry. In this unit, we learn the various aspects of context using plays, and stages of plot development in drama.

### Activity 1

**Read the following plays then answer the questions which follow.**

#### Play 1: The Incorruptible Judge

**Chief:** It is about one of my sons. He is in trouble and it is you alone who can save him. He has been accused, falsely of course, of taking a bribe and will be brought before you next Wednesday. If he is ...

**Judge:** Why not wait till he gets to court and makes his case there?

**Chief:** (*frowning*) Please don't interrupt me. Let me finish first.

**Judge:** All right.

**Chief:** He is Agbalowameri, the son of Chief Kaleko, himself the son of Ogboluefon of the famous Kiriji Wars. How are we to bear it if this illustrious son of such an illustrious family is sent to prison? Take his position in his family, his office and in society. What would happen to his family if he were jailed? Who would feed, protect and clothe them? He has just started building his second house and his enemies have conspired to bring him trouble. Would they not laugh at him if you allow those malicious enemies to succeed in ruining him?

Think of the number of blameless years during which he has served the government faithfully. Now that the time has almost come for him to retire from service

and begin to enjoy his pension rights and gratuity, will you allow his enemies to snatch the fruits of twenty years of hard work from his mouth? Please judge, save him. Don't laugh. He is a Yoruba man like yourself. He is our son. Please don't send him to prison.



*The incorruptible judge*

**Judge:**

Thank you for all you have said. As one of the people who encouraged my father and helped to finance my law studies in England, you know that I have always shown you by word and deed that I shall forever be grateful to you. But you will agree with me that in this matter there is nothing I can do about it until I have heard all the evidence in court. It is very difficult to promise not to imprison an accused before I have even heard the case. It is not only wrong, but also immoral. Surely, having helped me so much in life, you would not like to ruin me or my reputation? I advise you sir to keep off this matter. The law is no respecter of persons. Be they high or low, rich or poor; it makes no difference. You are Chief yourself. You sometimes try cases. Do you ever imprison somebody who is not guilty simply because he is not rich or set free a guilty man simply because he is rich?

**Chief:**

No I don't do that.

**Judge:**

There you are sir, I don't do it either.

**Chief:** I understand everything, but before I leave you, let me deliver his message to you. He has asked me to give you these fifty guineas to buy drinks with.

**Judge:** (*Very angry*) Me! Fifty guineas! Did that man send you to give me money again after I had rejected it and warned him against such a course? That shows that bribery is in his veins and he thinks that everyone else is like himself. Father, this matter is becoming very serious. It is clearly wrong to offer a bribe to try and influence the course of justice. I advise you to steer clear of this if you yourself don't want to be involved in this trouble.

**Chief:** Well, I told him what the possible consequences of this appealing to a judge would be, but if I had refused to deliver his message, he would have concluded that I did not like him. (*He rises*) I am going.

**Judge:** All right, sir.

**Chief:** Where is your wife?

**Judge:** Darling! Darling! (*No answer*) She is probably busy.

**Chief:** Give my greetings to her. Sorry to have given you so much trouble.

**Judge:** (*With a broad smile*) Not at all. Good night, sir.

**Chief:** Good night, my son.

### Questions

1. Where and when does this incident take place? Give evidence of your answer.
2. Do you think the chief is corrupt?
3. Discuss what kind of a community the play is set in.

## Play 2

**Female Voice:** *(With the arrogance of a seasoned helper. There's pride in her tone.)* A lot my dear. The weird ghosts come with gold and silver. More gold than can be exhausted at a single-family breakfast table. Do you want a gold breakfast or a silver breakfast? I sweat to have either. The input-output costs are different you know!

**Jayne:** *(Like one wounded. It's the moment of revenge.)* Crass nonsense! I won't have any of your rotten gold or silver help. And I won't be your neighbour anywhere; not in heaven, not in hell – all the yelling and yodelling at night. And you sing in the church choir!

**Female Voice:** *(Carelessly)* To soothe my seared conscience. I'm the choir leader – mark you. And I have never ever heard God closing the heavens and smacking up my sonorous mouth. He enjoys my singing. Praise and worship and my proper noun are synonyms.



*I'm the choir leader – mark you*

**Jayne:** *(Hands akimbo, like one who could easily correct the situation physically)* Praise and worship indeed. Hades is what finances your singing. No wonder the persistent droughts and joblessness. Our scarcity is your overflowing cup of blessings.

**Female Voice:** *(Definitely quoting Jayne deliberately to annoy or distract her)* Blame it on environmental

degradation. The water catchment zones all deforested, trees beheaded, tycoons sinking shafts to the core of Mother Earth for gold and silver. Blame it not on Angel Bait. How many seedlings have been planted ever since our leaders declared war on deforestation? None!

**Jayne:**

*(With abandoned self-censorship, now at par with the opponent.)* Ask your many ghosts who finance your choir leadership in the ghost - buster church.

### Questions

1. Describe the plot of the excerpt.
2. Where does this excerpt take place?

## 6.2 Context in a play

### Activity 2

**Read the following play and answer the questions that follow.**

#### Science Experiment

**Kojo:** You know what Bandele, It is said that it is hotter inside a flame than on its surface; I wonder who ever got inside the flame to test it?

**Bandele:** Ha! Good idea. Why don't we try it?

**Kojo:** Eh! How?

**Bandele:** Well, it is simple; we just take the temperature inside the flame.

**Kojo:** *(Taking the thermometer)* Oh! Here is the thermometer. Why don't you go ahead and do it. *(Bandele holds the thermometer forward to the flame as Kojo cranes to see, but within a moment the mercury in the thermometer rises so fast that it breaks suddenly into pieces and the mercury spills on the table.)*

**Kojo:** *(Whispers hoarsely)* Oh my God! It's broken.

**Bandele:** *(Staring at Kojo with a serious face)* Shut up! Let's clear up quickly. *(Bandele sweeps the pieces and the spilled mercury into the bin and they both move immediately to a side of the stage as if to the laboratory door. They pretend that they had been waiting for the arrival of other students. Off stage, voices of approaching students are heard.)*

#### Question

Identify and explain the immediate setting and wider context of the play.

Context of a play is defined by the setting, which is basically the time and place of the events. The 'time' idea can refer to a prolonged period, for example, to a historical time of major events or the immediate date. The 'place' too can refer to the immediate surrounding like the sitting room, court room, school and market place, or include a wider setting like the rural area, town or in a region. Sometimes the playwright may merely imagine the place of the events.

The setting helps bring out the social, cultural, historical or even the political contexts and hence aids in making it easy to understand the message in the play. As a reader, one may identify with the setting of the play and then connect with the events, and this will make the play more attractive than if it was more abstract. The following are types of context in a play:

### **6.2.1 Social context**

Social context is an aspect of setting that pertains to the human environment among which events occur and among which characters live or interact. A social setting is a condition of existence. Literary characters perceive their social context through all of their senses. Social context involves the characters' interactions in all levels of life, that is, religiously, spiritually, educationally, legally, politically, economically, technologically, emotionally, ethnically, demographically, musically and cosmetically.

Social context can refer to the employment status, the gender practices or the injustices of the society.

### **6.2.2 Historical context**

Historical context is an aspect of setting that pertains to when events occur and when characters live or interact. A historical setting is a point in time. Literary characters cannot see nor touch their historical setting because historical setting pertains to time which is intangible, but all human actions must occur in

time. Historical settings might be described as specific spans or moments in time, such as an era, century, year, season, month, week, day, phase of day, hour, minute or even second.

### 6.2.3 Political context

Political context refers to the leadership characteristics and dynamics of a society. It includes such aspects as the type of leadership in the society (like democracy, monarchy, kingdom, chiefdom etc), the role of the people in determining their leadership, the freedoms and rights of the people or their lack, the exercise of power by those in authority and the laws that govern the people.

### 6.2.4 Cultural context

Cultural context might be described as the sustained conditions, collective expectations and prevailing norms among a group of people or a social network.

Cultural context includes the values of a society, their beliefs, social and moral norms as well as the meanings people give to the human actions and behaviour. For example, the culture of genital mutilation or circumcision may influence a playwright to choose characters and actions to either discourage or promote the practices. A playwright may also choose to challenge or highlight a certain practice or belief in the society he or she is writing from.

### Activity 3

***Compare and contrast the contexts of the play 'The Incorruptible Judge' and 'Science Experiment'.***

### 6.3 Plot development in a play

#### Activity 4

*Read the following play. Answer the questions that follow.*

- John: I can't believe we lost this match.
- Hakuzimana: It was your fault you fool!
- John: What? Did you just call me a... *(Pouncing on him with a clenched fist.)*
- Hakuzimana: *(Turning to John with a thundering slap on the cheek.)* Yes I did! *(The two tear at each other in a wrestle.)*
- Mr Abwagire: What is happening here! *(Pointing at the two boys fighting.)*
- Mwenzza: John and Hakuzimana have been insulting each other after the football match.
- John: *(Scared to see the teacher and pulling away from Hakuzimana who has not seen the teacher yet.)* He has called me a fool, Sir.
- Mr Abwagire: And you decided to act like one? Both of you to my office! Now!
- Hakuzimana: *(Rising in panic.)* Am sor...y...
- Mr Abwagire: I will send you two home, for your parents. I don't tolerate violence in school. *(John and Hakuzimana run towards the office, blaming each other.)* The rest of you can continue playing.

#### Questions

1. What is the context of this play?
2. Discuss the sequence of events in the play.
3. Discuss how the plot development in this play is influenced by the context.

Plot development refers to the sequence of events in a play that make us follow what is happening. In a play, the words and actions of the characters are essential as this is what makes the story move from one point to the next. The stage directions also add to the direction the plot takes.

The following are the major elements (stages) of plot development in a play.

### **6.3.1 Exposition/ conflict**

This is the part of the plot where the writer introduces important background information to the audience. Such information includes the setting, events occurring before the main plot and characters' back stories. Exposition can be conveyed through dialogues, flashbacks or characters' thoughts through monologues.

### **6.3.2 Complication/ rising action**

At this stage, a series of events build towards the point of greatest interest. The rising action of a play is the series of events that begin immediately after the exposition (introduction) of the story and builds up to the climax. These events, which mostly involve the main conflict, are generally the most important parts of the play since the entire plot depends on them to set up the climax and ultimately the satisfactory resolution of the story itself.

### **6.3.3 Climax**

The climax is the turning point of the fate of the main character in the play. If the play is a comedy and things were going bad for the protagonist, the plot will begin to unfold in his or her favour,

often requiring the protagonist to marshal some hidden inner strengths. If the play is a tragedy, the opposite will happen, with things going from good to bad for the protagonist, and often revealing the protagonist's hidden weaknesses.

#### 6.3.4 Falling action

During the falling action, the conflict between the protagonist and the antagonist is exposed, with the protagonist winning or losing against the antagonist. The falling action may contain a moment of final suspense, in which the final outcome of the conflict is in doubt.

#### 6.3.5 Conclusion

This stage comprises events from the end of the falling action to the actual ending scene of the drama. The conflict is resolved and normality is restored for the characters. For the reader, there is a release of tension and anxiety. The way things are resolved may not be to our liking as the audience, but the conflict is resolved anyhow.

The comedy ends with a conclusion in which the protagonist is better off than at the beginning of the play while the tragedy ends with a catastrophe, in which the protagonist is worse off than at the beginning of the play.

**Note:** A conflict is what makes a play. It is the struggle between two opposing forces or between characters. The plot development has been aptly compared to the climbing of a mountain, where you start at the lowest point, move to the top point and when you cannot move any further up start to climb down back to some destination.

A good plot is the one that captivates by introducing twists and turns to the development of events. The plot should not

be obviously predictable; this kills the interest of the audience. In 'The Incorruptible Judge' note the twist of events when the chief at the end gives the expression that he had not wanted to introduce the bribe but that he would have been accused of not being ready to help.

### Activity 5

1. Read out again the first play 'The Incorruptible Judge' and state how the plot moves from the time the judge gets the visitor to the time the visitor is saying farewell to him.
2. Supposing the judge gave in to the corruption trap, suggest how you think the plot would end.
3. In the second play 'Science Experiment', identify the key events. Which is the climax of this short excerpt?

## 6.4 Unit summary

**Context:** The set of circumstances or facts that surround a play.

### Types of context in a play

1. Social context
2. Historical context
3. Political context
4. Cultural context

### Elements of plot development in a play

1. Exposition/ conflict
2. Complication
3. Climax
4. Falling action
5. Conclusion

### 6.5 End of unit assessment

Compare and contrast the context and the elements of plot development in the two selected plays given in Activity 1 of this unit.

For an overview of the entire unit, answer the following questions:

1. Identify two types of characters in a play.
2. Describe the qualities of each of the types of characters in a play.
3. What is subject matter in a play?
4. Describe themes as used in plays.

## 7.1 Selected plays

### Activity 1

**Read the play excerpts below then analyse the characters in each excerpt.**

#### Excerpt 1

*(Kayitesi enters the house. She is a beautiful 19-year-old girl whose demeanour shows she's aware of that fact. But her good looks are now diminished by the low spirits she is in. She throws the school bag she's carrying onto the now vacant folding chair and, without looking at her mother, heads to the bedroom.)*

**Mother:** Kayitesi!

**Kayitesi:** Mm?

**Mother:** Didn't you go to school?

**Kayitesi:** *(Cross)* I did.

**Mother:** Then what is this?

**Kayitesi:** What is what, Mama?

**Mother:** *(Cross)* Don't answer your mother with questions. What time is it?

**Kayitesi:** Three o'clock.

**Mother:** And when do classes end? *(Silence)* I'm waiting, Kayitesi. When?

**Kayitesi:** Four.

**Mother:** What are you doing here then at this time if classes end at . . .

# Unit 7

## Character, Subject Matter and Themes

**Key unit competence:** To be able to compare and contrast characters, subject matter and themes in two selected plays.



### 7.0 The unit focus

A play is brought to life by characters. The playwright communicates to the audience important messages in form of themes and subject matter which are contained within the play. This unit explores in depth the characters in a play and how they communicate the subject matter and the themes of a play.

- Kayitesi:** (*Interrupting, haughtily*) But I told you this morning, Mama. Have you forgotten again?
- Mother:** Tell me again.
- Kayitesi:** We were given the warning yesterday during the evening parade.  
The principal said I had no choice . . . Many of us had no choice. We had to pay or stay out of school.
- Mother:** (*Thunderstruck*) And it wasn't enough?
- Kayitesi:** Hardly enough, Mama.
- Mother:** One thousand shillings! And only yesterday morning!
- Kayitesi:** (*Giving her a typed piece of paper*) The balance has to be paid, Mama. And it wasn't just me. Three hundred of us were given that paper.
- Mother:** (*Reading*) Fees balance: two thousand, construction fund three thou . . ! My father! What are they constructing? Another palace?
- Kayitesi:** A second perimeter fence for the school.
- Mother:** Another fence! Against what? When did you become cattle to be fenced in like this?
- Kayitesi:** ....And for the new Computer Science Laboratory. We must keep up with the world.
- Mother:** (*Wildly*) Computer Science and no food, no water in this house! (*Continues reading*) Activity fee, one thou . . . what's this new fees again?
- Kayitesi:** Games.
- Mother:** You must now pay even to play games?
- Kayitesi:** Yes.
- Mother:** (*Continues reading, her shoulders progressively*

*droop. She has suddenly aged.) Examination fee: two thousand! (Looks at the daughter in bewilderment.)*

**Kayitesi:** It's . . . it's to pay for paper and ink and the officials who will mark our examinations.

**Mother:** Again! But what about the salaries they get?

**Kayitesi:** This is extra work, Mama!

**Mother:** *(Sighs, pause. With pathetic resignation)* Just tell them I can't pay. Every morning I wake up before cockcrow and pick those coffee beans until sunset. I walk all this distance, back home and nobody has paid me for extra work. *(She looks long at the paper, lost in thought, her brow in her left palm. Pause. The paper falls to the ground)*

**Kayitesi:** Mama.

**Mother:** Yes, child.

**Kayitesi:** What do we do?

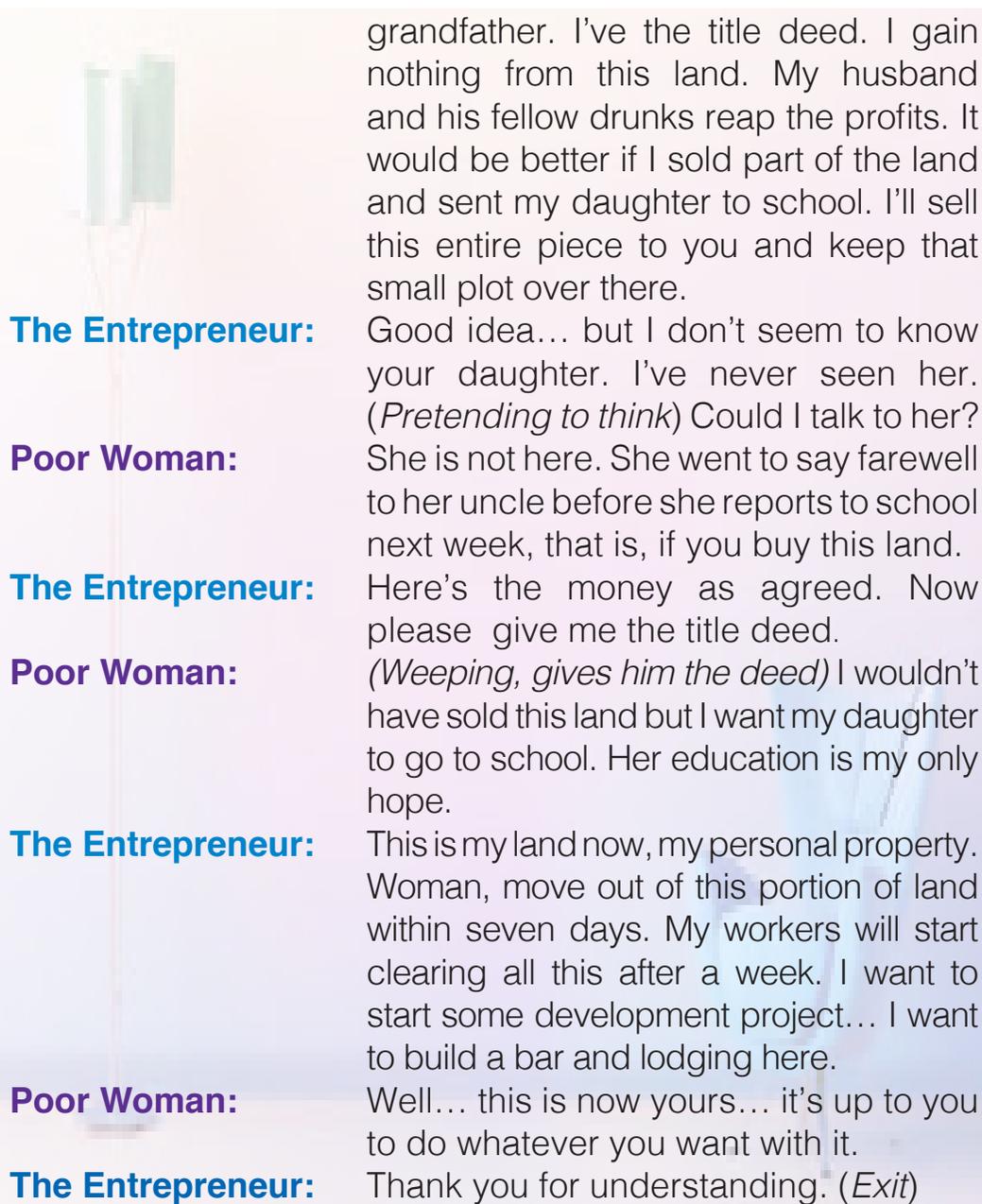
**Mother:** *(Barely above a whisper)* I don't know, child. I don't know. You heard what the men's leaders told us the other day: No free things any more. The holiday is over. We must also tighten our belts and contribute. It happens all over the world. *(Ray of hope)* Unless . . . couldn't we perhaps ask the principal to let you learn on credit? If I promised to work harder and pay later . . . in instalments of course . . .

### Excerpt 2

*(In front of a poor woman's cottage. Enter The Entrepreneur and workers. He examines the land.)*

**The Entrepreneur:** This is good land. *(Poor Woman enters.)* Is this the land you told me was on sale? How sure can I be that it is yours?

**Poor Woman:** Yes. It is mine. I inherited it from my



<b>The Entrepreneur:</b>	grandfather. I've the title deed. I gain nothing from this land. My husband and his fellow drunks reap the profits. It would be better if I sold part of the land and sent my daughter to school. I'll sell this entire piece to you and keep that small plot over there.
<b>Poor Woman:</b>	Good idea... but I don't seem to know your daughter. I've never seen her. ( <i>Pretending to think</i> ) Could I talk to her?
<b>The Entrepreneur:</b>	She is not here. She went to say farewell to her uncle before she reports to school next week, that is, if you buy this land.
<b>Poor Woman:</b>	Here's the money as agreed. Now please give me the title deed.
<b>The Entrepreneur:</b>	( <i>Weeping, gives him the deed</i> ) I wouldn't have sold this land but I want my daughter to go to school. Her education is my only hope.
<b>Poor Woman:</b>	This is my land now, my personal property. Woman, move out of this portion of land within seven days. My workers will start clearing all this after a week. I want to start some development project... I want to build a bar and lodging here.
<b>The Entrepreneur:</b>	Well... this is now yours... it's up to you to do whatever you want with it.
<b>Poor Woman:</b>	Thank you for understanding. ( <i>Exit</i> )

Plays are made of conversations and stage directions of characters. Within these conversations, the playwright puts across the intended themes, which are reflected by the topics of discussion. These topics of discussion are known as subject matter.

## 7.2 Characters in a play

### Activity 2

Share with your neighbour if you can remember the characters in a play you have watched on stage or read in a book. What type of role did they play – protagonist or antagonist. Give your reasons.

In a play, like in any literary item, it is the characters that will deliver the intended message. Characters should suit the roles they are chosen to act out within the play. Characters represent real people in life and so the more they are made to act real the more they attract the interest of the audience.

In a play, there is the protagonist and the antagonist character. The conflict in a play is built around these two types of characters. The protagonist is the central character in the story and is the good guy while the antagonist is the bad guy, placing obstacles in the path. Note that the protagonist can also be a bad guy at times, depending on circumstances and the message that the playwright wishes to highlight.

### 7.2.1 The protagonist

The protagonist will always be the chief character or one who plays the first part in a play. He tends to get caught in the struggle with the antagonist, but because the protagonist represents the good intention most of the time, he or she gets the sympathy of the audience. If he or she becomes a bad guy, the audience withdraws their sympathy though the audience still gets interested in the actions. The protagonist is but a human being with a cause which an audience can easily identify with. Note that when the central character is bad or an antihero, the audience may find it difficult to sympathise or identify with him or her. It also becomes difficult to call him or her a protagonist.

### 7.2.2 The antagonist

Antagonist is derived from a Greek word that means an opponent or rival. He or she places an obstacle in the path of the protagonist. Note that the antagonist can also refer to any circumstance or object that is anti the protagonist. The introduction of the antagonist helps build the conflict as the antagonist represents the resistance to change, even in the real life situations.

#### Activity 3

Identify the protagonist and the antagonist from excerpts 1 given in Activity 1.

### 7.3 Subject matter in a play

#### Activity 4

**Read the following play and answer the questions that follow.**

#### The Pure Home

*(Enter Veronica. She stands by the doorway, arrested by the agonised spectacle before her. Then she moves cautiously towards him.)*

**Veronica:** Joram? *(Pause. He looks at her with baleful, tear-ridden eyes)* You are Joram, aren't you?

**Makanga:** *(Sepulchrally)* I am he! He that was and will soon be ...hic ... something else when all this will be over...when I go through the final transition. *(Drinks)* And who are you? *(Peers at her, trying to focus)* ... seem to remember that voice. *(Drinks)*

**Veronica:** Put that bottle down! What are you trying to do? Kill yourself?

**Makanga:** Bull's eye! Who are you?

**Veronica:** Veronica.

**Makanga:** Veronica! (*As if in a far-away dream*) Veronica Mwendu Nzemeli? She who had the power ... to save me! Veronica Nzemeli wasting in the cold company of a ... the virgin headmaster my friend! (*Laughs bitterly*)

**Veronica:** Stop that!

**Makanga:** (*Unheeding*) ... at the beginning, remember? When I was good and upright. No ... not so upright ... when I came home, determined to be steady ... and our parents ... our parents clinching our marriage deal across the business table. And we children? Loving in absentia!

**Veronica:** (*Near hysteria*) Don't say that! We said that it must be forgotten ... that part of our life seven years ago! (*A slight cough*)

**Makanga:** But it's true, isn't it? The secret meeting-place after school out there ... in the woods behind the hill ... No one there except a few antelopes looking at us ...amused at our antics. (*Suddenly offering her the bottle of rum*) Have a sip! C'mon, this is not the first ... you drank it then to steel your nerves, hiding your face behind the tree...

**Veronica:** (*Remembering, somewhat unsettled*) No!

**Makanga:** (*Relentlessly*) At my suggestion ... I am a doctor at this game, I said ... you drank ...and then you began to talk! (*Bottle in hand he rises, walks towards the plant*) ... talked ...

**Veronica:** (*Shrilly*) I don't want to hear!

**Makanga:** You'll hear all the same ... because ... hic ... that moment is here again.

- Veronica: If you mean you will ... *(suddenly)* I am going!
- Makanga: No, you won't! We are married ... married to the death at this moment! Then and now!
- Veronica: You are mad! Stark raving mad! *(He walks towards her)* Don't ... Don't come near me!
- Makanga: *(Gently)* Then ... sit ... *(She slowly sits upon the sofa, trembling)* Ah, thass better. You see I am a good gentleman! *(Drinks)* Like that day in those woods. *(Suddenly)*. You got drunk and you talked!
- Veronica: No!
- Makanga: ... A young woman dying for life in the prison of a virgin man! What a joke! *(He laughs uproariously)* "Three years and he hasn't as much as pecked my cheek with a kiss ... even a holy one." Ha! Ha! Ha! Then you said, "Jo" You said ... *(Coming to her)*
- Veronica: *(Reliving the incident against her will)* Please, Joram, why...?
- Makanga: of your own free will ... "Jo" you said, "I want to know what it feels like to be a mature woman. Now!" And I rose to the occasion ... thoroughly!
- Veronica: *(Arising)* I have lived to regret it – every moment of my life. With Moses looking at me with those wide innocent eyes, trusting me utterly ... *(Suddenly firmly)* That's why I've come, Joram ... *(Urgently)* He must never know! Please promise that he'll never get a hint of that brief moment between us ... seven years ago! He is coming to see you ...
- Makanga: Oh, he'll know all right.
- Veronica: No! Please, please, please don't ruin my life, Joram, now that I ... we are settling down ... to make a

home – he knows I’m pure ... we’ll make a pure home!

**Makanga:** A normal home?

**Veronica:** Yes!

**Makanga:** Kids yowling around the compound?

**Veronica:** God willing – yes!

**Makanga:** Forget it!

**Veronica:** What?

**Makanga:** Pure homes are made of discipline.

**Veronica:** I know!

**Makanga:** And you let go ... when I came here for the holidays – those few weeks ... out in the woods ... sacrificed that home ... made another. With me ... The home that’s made of mud ... out of which we came ... *(Laughs hysterically)* Mud oozes out of the dark earth! And mud is swept into the depths of the sea. *(Shouting in her ear)* Our home!

**Veronica:** You beast!

**Makanga:** Worse! *(Walking away)* Do you get a cold? Ever?

**Veronica:** *(Mortified)* How did you know?

**Makanga:** Parents know their offspring – the fever starting from the seat of life and burning to the brain?

**Veronica:** Yes, I’ve had fevers all right, short severe bouts.

**Makanga:** The cough? – Like a little thread... knitting its way from deep within the lungs and up through the nose and the mouth ...? Persistent like the nee nee of the mosquito?

**Veronica:** *(Turning away)* Ah!

**Makanga:** Energy going down with each day ... weight

rushing fast towards vanishing point.

Veronica: *(Thoroughly scared)* But now...?

Makanga: And the bowels flying apart ... that hand rising out the intestines, insistent against all muscular effort? Ehh?

Veronica: *(Wildly)* Yes ... It's true! How do you know my life?

Makanga: *(With some finality)* That marriage will never be!  
*(He comes down to her – a mask of hate and desperation)*

Veronica: *(Recoiling from him)* ... Nno ... Stay away from me!

Makanga: I say it will never be! *(Nastily)* You with your little Sunday School morality... always evading me ... and always ... that goon waiting for you with a Bible in his hand! *(Shouting)*. Tell him it can never be ... because maturity taught you how to fall – how to obey the great master. Tell him it will never be!

Veronica: It will be!

Makanga: Bet?

Veronica: *(Heatedly)* Yes! You are jealous – jealous that another man could command such love from a woman ... a love you could never have ... I could have given you a chance, because I thought you were warm! Full of vitality – the thrill and beauty of life. Because our parents, those business partners, would have been overjoyed. And then I found out that you were just a butterfly, perching on every flower and moving on when the petals closed with age. You could never command that steadfast love even after that brief moment ... when ...

- Makanga:** The defences were down?
- Veronica:** God forgive me ... Yes. (Sneering) He believes you are a friend, that you would stand behind him as his best man. But hearing you through the alcohol that says the deepest truth, I now know. And I shall persuade him against you!
- Makanga:** You will?
- Veronica:** Yes.
- Makanga:** (Coming to her, slowly and deliberately unbuttoning his shirt) Then Vera ... tell him about this! (He rips open the shirt and stands there naked to the waist, his upper body a mass of lesions. Veronica recoils backwards to the farthest wall.)
- Veronica:** What ?
- Makanga:** Patience! (*In a thin sepulchral voice*) You and I signed the contract that day in the woods, seven years ago – that day when I broke your pride and haughty tongue – years of resistance ... and proved that you could fall after all... you know ... if you had stood your ground, I would have written a will and told all the men, the women and the children of our village, 'Follow her salvation.' But now all that's wasted, because you and I, my dear, will certainly die!
- Veronica:** No, it can't be...
- Makanga:** It must! We carry the death disease... the disease that eats slowly, wasting its victim while he still stands upon his feet, as the wolf wastes its prey... (spelling out) A-I-D-S! AIDS!
- Veronica:** (*Weeping*) Then it's true... I too am dying. Why? why did you do this to me...? To kill me so...

cruely... so deliberately...why?

**Makanga:** I didn't know – then. And you had trampled upon my love ... and told me to my face that another man was better ... just because he taught Sunday School – pride comes before a fall ... (*Going to lift her up*) Stand up and don't cry! What must be, must!

**Veronica:** No! Don't touch me! (*She stands and scurries away*)

**Makanga:** (*Bottle in hand. Looking at her vanishing through the open door.*) Then – goodbye! (*He gulps another mouthful from the bottle, totters and weakly falls into the chair behind the table as the lights fade*)

## Questions

1. Which character do you sympathise with in the play? Why?
2. Makanga refers to himself as worse than a beast. Do you agree? Explain.
3. In the play, distinguish who is the protagonist and who is the antagonist.
4. What is the subject matter?

## 7.4 Themes

Plays always tend to be about something that matters and hence will normally depict a theme to explore. Themes usually spring from society experiences and observations of the playwright.

The playwright will develop the themes from his or her personal values on contexts like moral, social or political issues. Themes are expressed through the plot and through the characters. In a sense, the theme is one's moral or ethical position about the story one is telling. The playwrights take it that what matters to them will also concern their audience, for example issues to do with relationships, education, unity, peace, success, integrity, HIV and AIDS, conflict between tradition and modernity, injustice, poverty among others.

Subject matter is sometimes confused with theme. Subject matter refers to the broad topic of a literary writing while theme is the statement about the topic. For example, the subject can be war while theme can be the consequences of war; where the subject matter is Christmas, the theme can be giving and being generous during Christmas.

However, in some cases, the two terms may overlap: for example, when the subject is love, the theme may also be true love. To discover a theme, ask the question: 'What does the playwright want me to learn after reading this play? What value does the playwright promote or discourage?' The difference between the theme and the subject matter lies in finding the point or the reason. The subject is what a piece of writing is about; the theme is what you are supposed to learn from the subject matter.

Hence, the subject is the broader topic the playwright chooses to write on, while the theme may be what the character has learnt.

### Activity 5

Using the play given in Activity 4, answer the following questions:

1. Explain the subject matter of the play.
2. Identify two themes of the play.
3. Explain how each theme is brought out in the play.

### 7.5 Unit summary

**Character** – a person speaking in a play.

#### Types of characters in a play

1. The protagonist: The main character who represents the good intentions.
2. The antagonist: The main character who is a rival and places obstacles or brings opposition to the protagonist.

**Theme:** The main message, derived from the broad topic, that characters and the events in a play communicate to the reader.

**Subject matter:** The broad topic or idea that the playwright addresses.

### 7.6 End of unit assessment

Compare and contrast the characters, subject matter and themes in the two selected play excerpts given in Activity 1 of this unit.

# Unit 8

## Style, Mood and Atmosphere

**Key unit competence:** To be able to compare and contrast two selected plays considering the style, mood and the atmosphere.

allegory 	metaphor 
allusion 	mood 
foreshadowing 	personification 
hyperbole 	simile 
imagery 	symbolism 
irony 	theme 

### Literary Devices



### 8.0 The unit focus

As learnt in Unit 7, a playwright writes to communicate certain preconceived ideas and messages to his or her audience. These messages relate to the society within which he or she and/or the target audience live. He or she borrows heavily from real life experiences within the society. However, the work is done creatively. This means that he or she employs numerous aspects of style to give a representation of the reality without just reporting the societal happenings.

This unit delves into such aspects of style. The following questions reflect what will be covered in the unit. Answer them before studying the unit to get an idea of what lies ahead.

1. Define style as used in plays.
2. What aspects of style does a playwright use to communicate his or her message creatively?
3. Explain how style influences the mood in a play.
4. Give examples of mood/ atmosphere in a play.
5. Describe how mood is created in a play.

## 8.1 Selected plays

### Activity 1

Read the play excerpts below then analyse the style used in each excerpt.

#### Extract 1

*Early evening. The scene opens on a well furnished house that depicts the trappings of wealth and good living – comfortable sofas, a thick carpet, a flat screen TV, hi-fi music system, nice sideboard full of a collection of drinks. Family photos grace the walls. Loud music is playing. Johnny is totally engrossed in a computer game and nodding to the music. His books lie open but abandoned on the table. Door opens, enter Serah, who walks straight to the corner and switches off the music. Johnny turns, suddenly aware of his sister's presence.*

**Serah:** *(Apparently cross)* When will you ever learn that this is a home, not a club, Johnny?

**Johnny:** For crying out loud, Serah! Can't I have some fun?

**Serah:** At whose expense? And when did such annoyingly loud music become fun?

**Johnny:** It is kind of fun and this is my life! You can't tell me what to do.

**Serah:** What? What is that you said? *(Walks up to Johnny, who stands up, defiantly)* Look at me, Johnny, look at me! *(Johnny looks away)* Aha! You don't even have the guts to look and you dare talk to me so rudely!

- Johnny:** For heaven's sake Serah, (*Convivially, playing down his rudeness*) is that what you call rude?
- Serah:** Now you want to pretend that you didn't know you were being rude! What cheek! Listen Johnny, next time you talk to me watch your tongue.
- Johnny:** (*Tactful retreat*) Okay. You have made your point.
- Serah:** You know what, Johnny, I am ten years your senior. Ten! Count that. That's why I take great exception with your behaviour towards me.
- Johnny:** (*Appealingly*) All I did was fight for my space. What is wrong with music anyway? And why should I ... (*His speech is interrupted by Numa's voice offstage*)
- Numa:** Hey, what's all that quarreling about? (He comes on stage) Johnny, you are at it again?
- Johnny:** I did nothing wrong ... I was just listening to music when Serah here ...
- Serah:** (*Cuts in*) Switched it off! That was not music, it was noise! This boy must become more responsible, Numa. I can't even think straight! My ears are buzzing.
- Numa:** Hey, Johnny, what Serah is saying is true. You are young I know, but who says young people cannot be responsible? Johnny, (*Pointing at Johnny's books*) are you done with your homework?
- Johnny:** (*Hesitating*) I ... I ... don't ... have a lot of homework, it will only take me twenty minutes.
- Numa:** (*Disappointed*) Work before play. Isn't that what we always say?
- Serah:** Johnny is not taking life seriously. He thinks that life is a straight line.
- Johnny:** (*Pleading*) Serah please ...
- Numa:** Johnny, what Serah is saying is very important. Fortunes change, and change again. When Serah and I were in high school, we all went through a hell of time. You were too young to remember.

- Serah:** Tell him, Numa. Tell him how we suffered. We used to plead with our teachers to let us remain in school because Mom and Dad could not afford school fees.
- Numa:** Johnny, you might not remember it but just three years ago our parents could barely afford the basic things such as food and soap. Look here boy, you are lucky you get that plus pocket money and a video game, to top it all up. And instead of taking your homework seriously, you stir up hell in the house with your crazy ...
- Johnny :** *(Johnny interrupts)* You two do not understand me ... No one in this house understands me!
- Serah:** *(Getting worked up; impatiently)* Don't try to blackmail us! You are not understood, so you bring the walls down with noise?
- Johnny:** No one ever listens to me ...
- Numa:** *(Cutting him short)* Because you never talk. All you do is play games and listen to music.
- Serah:** Instead of complaining, thank your lucky stars that you are growing up at a time of abundance, but don't let material things blur your vision for the future. You have your own fate to forge. Not mine, and definitely not Mom's or Dad's.
- Numa:** Now that you have mentioned them, it's getting late and they are not yet here?
- Serah:** *(Resignedly)* Numa, that's another story. Since Dad joined politics ...
- Johnny:** *(Only too glad for the change in focus)* ... we see little of them. Ever coming home late, and when they finally do, all Dad talks about is campaign, and Mom, the upcoming building. Never ask us how the day was, or what we learnt at school or anything else. Just politics, money and buildings. They no longer care about us!
- Numa:** *(Disapprovingly)* Those are harsh words to say of our parents, Johnny.
- Johnny:** But it's true. All Mom and Dad care about these

- days is politics and money. Full stop.  
**Serah:** *(Sharp reprimand)* Johnny!
- Johnny:** Just a while ago you said I don't talk to anyone! Now that I speak, you are uncomfortable with what I say. What do you want me to do? Hide what I feel?
- Serah:** It's not like that, Johnny. I expect you to say what you feel alright, only I don't agree with what you said. Mom and Dad care deeply about us, but they take care of business or we are going to lose all this ... *(Makes a gesture to indicate the house, and the expensive things in it)* My economics lecturer calls it 'opportunity cost'. You give up something for another...
- Johnny:** *(Shaking his head)* Doesn't make sense to me. Give up family in order to succeed in business? What kind of trade is that?
- Numa:** Tell you what, Serah, I feel their absence, too, especially now that I just arrived from campus. If it was in the past, Mom would be dotting all over me and probably slaughter a cock or two ...
- Serah:** *(Disappointed)* You too Numa! Would you trade off what we have today for yesterday's hunger and tatters? Let Mom work, whatever it takes.
- Numa:** Don't get me wrong, Serah. I understand and I am certainly not complaining.
- Serah:** The chicken is right there alright. I heard her ask Joash to prepare some for dinner. *(Cocks her ears)* Mm, listen ... *(The purr of a car engine is heard without)*
- Johnny:** That sounds like the pickup. I think Mom is finally here. *(Numa goes to the window to peep, while Johnny dashes off and settles quickly at his homework. Numa walks towards the door, speaking as he does so.)*

- Numa:** It is her, alright. Let me open the door to ... *(His speech is interrupted by a loud knock)*. A minute please. *(Opens door, Veronicah comes in)*
- Veronicah:** *(Excitedly reaches out to Numa)* Wow! Look who is here! *(Hugs Numa tightly)* Welcome home, my son! How have you been?
- Numa:** Very well thanks. And how about you? Have you been keeping well?
- Veronicah:** Oh yes, we have. Mmh, I am so glad you are home. *(Turns attention to the others)* Hello, Serah, Johnny!
- Serah & Johnny:** Hello, Mom! *(They shake hands and help her with the hand luggage.)*
- Veronicah:** I hope you welcomed Numa home warmly. So Numa, tell us, how is college?
- Numa:** College is ok. We are on a two months' vacation. And how about you? How is business?
- Veronicah:** Oh! Business is tough! The cost of everything has gone up, and we are all crying.
- Numa:** But at least you are hanging in there? That's the secret, I bet? I saw it written somewhere that tough times never last but ... *(Serah joins in)* but tough people do. *(Another knock at the door, then Nehemiah comes in. All are surprised.)*
- Veronicah:** Hey, you surprised us! We did not hear your car or your footsteps!
- Nehemiah:** *(Joking)* You were not supposed to. These days I walk like a cat. *(All laugh. Numa moves forward to greet his father.)* How are you, sonny? Welcome home. What time did you get here?
- Numa:** Late afternoon ... maybe four o'clock.
- Serah:** Oh yes. You got here at around four. Dad, now that Numa is here you can't even ...

**Nehemiah:** (*Cutting Serah short*) Say hello? I was coming to that really. So tell me, how was your day, Serah and Johnny?

**Serah&Johnny:** Fine,thanks.

## Excerpt 2

It is early in the morning. Ngabo arrives in class late and takes the back seat. Today he looks bright and less confused than other days. Without following the lesson, he thinks he has enough questions to ask in order to make the teacher fail to teach the day's topic.

**Ngabo:** (*Raising his hand confidently*) Excuse me Sir.

**Teacher:** Yes Ngabo.

**Ngabo:** Yesterday, while watching news, I heard that all the nations of the world are in debt. Is it true?

**Teacher:** Yes Ngabo. It is true.

**Ngabo:** Really! I don't think so teacher. If you say that, then tell us where the money has gone to? (*The whole class bursts into laughter.*)

**Teacher:** Find that out in your free time. Pay attention to what I am going to teach. (*Turning to the rest of the class*) And all of you, I want you to be quiet because this topic I am going to teach today is very important. (*Turning to the board, he writes the topic 'Past tense and present tense'.*) Now class, we all know that past tense describes events that happened in the past and present tense describes things that are happening or things that happen. Who will give us two sentences that differentiate the past tense from the present tense? (*One of the students in class raises her hand*)... Yes Uwase.

**Uwase:** Janet is eating in class. Janet ate yesterday in class.

- Teacher:** Very good Uwase. Who will give us another example? (*Another hand is up*) Yes Gasore.
- Gasore:** They are building a building. They built the building.
- Teacher:** Very good Gasore. Class, can you clap for Gasore and Uwase. (*Everyone claps except for Ngabo.*) Ngabo, why are you not clapping for them?
- Ngabo:** But Sir, what Uwase said is wrong.
- Teacher:** Why do you think so?
- Ngabo:** I think the person who has been eating in class is Janvier. If you think am lying, (*Shrugging his shoulders*) then check in his desk.
- Teacher:** (*Checking Janvier's desk*) Why are you eating in class? Don't you know it is against the school rules? (*He takes the packet of biscuits from the desk then turns to Ngabo.*) For once you have done something sensible Ngabo. Students, if you see anyone eating in class, bring their name forward.
- Ngabo:** Thank you sir. He is lucky that I left my common sense at home. Otherwise, I would have snatched the biscuits and eaten all of them myself! (*The students laugh out aloud at the comment. The teacher tries to raise his hands to silence them but it does not work. The bell rings and the teacher walks out of the classroom, leaving the students laughing.*)

## 8.2 Style in a play

Style is the manner in which a writer chooses his words, tone and the structure of his sentences in a story or play to enhance meaning and understanding. Style may also be called techniques or devices that the writer uses.

The dramatic devices that may be used include the following:

### 8.2.1 Monologue

A monologue is a speech made by a character in which he or she addresses himself or herself to the audience or to another character on stage. This style is effective as it makes the audience feel as part of the play because the characters involve them directly by sharing his or her thoughts with them.

### 8.2.2 Soliloquy

This is when a character speaks to himself or herself. The character thinks aloud and thus reveals his innermost secrets and thoughts. This technique is used to allow the audience know what is going on in a character's mind. The character is usually all alone on the stage.

## Activity 2

**Read the following two excerpts then answer the question that follows.**

### 1. Extract from the play 'The Government Inspector' – Nikolai Gogol

*The scene is a room at the inn; it is a poky little room, with only one small window; there is a table with an empty bottle on it, a bed, a travelling trunk, a pair of top-boots in the corner; two or three chairs; at curtain rise. Yosif, Hlestakov's servant, is sprawling on his master's bed.*

**Yosif:** Ouch! I'm so hungry my belly's rumbling like a regiment of drummers! And we're not going to get home at this rate! What's to be done? Two months since we left Petersburg! Well, we've chucked money away like water, we have and now we sit here with our tail between our legs. What's to do now? There'd have been enough and plenty for the

fares, but, you know everywhere we stop we have to show off. (*Scratches himself, imitating Hlestakov*). “Hey, Yosif. Run along and book me rooms. The best, remember! And order me the very best dinner they have! And him a junior copying clerk!” And of course, he makes friends with the other travelers, and then out come the cards, and play till he gets cleaned out! Eh! It’s a dog’s life. Better to live in the country. It’s dull but there’s not all this trouble. You spend your time lying over the stove and eating pies. Yet, when all is said and done there’s nothing to touch life in Petersburg. So long as you’ve got money to spend, it’s a fine life, a dainty life! Theatres! Dancing! Anything you’ve a mind to! Everybody speaks so nice and refined, pretty near as good as the gentry even! We go round the bazaars; the shopkeepers all call us “Honorable Sir.” We sit in the special seats on the ferry-boats. Sometimes there’ll be officers full of the regimental gossip, or another time a pretty lady’s maid may come tripping by (*Laughs and shakes his head*). E-eh! It is a fine life! Everybody treats you as if you were a gentleman. Now it’s different. Well it’s not my fault. My master never keeps a grip on money. Sometimes we live on the fat of the land and other times, like now, we fair shrink with hunger.

## 2. Extract from Julius Caesar – William Shakespeare

**Anthony :** Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears  
 I come to bury Caesar, not to praise.  
 The evil that men do lives after them;  
 The good is oft interred with their bones;  
 So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus

Hath told you Caesar was ambitious  
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,  
And grievously hath Caesar answer'd it  
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest—  
For Brutus is an honorable man;  
So are they all, all honorable men—  
Come I speak in Caesar's funeral  
He was my friend, faithful and just to me:  
But Brutus says he was ambitious;  
And Brutus is an honorable man  
He hath brought many captives home to Rome  
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:  
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?  
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest—  
When the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept  
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:  
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;  
And Brutus is an honourable man.  
You all did see that on the Lupercal  
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,  
Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?  
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;

But here I am to speak what I do know.  
You all did love him once, not without cause:  
What cause withholds you then, to mourn for him  
O judgement! Thou art fled to brutish beasts  
And men have lost their reason. Bear with me:  
My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,  
And I must pause till it come back to me.

### Question

Which of the two extracts above is a soliloquy and which one is a monologue? Give reasons for your answer.

### 8.2.3 Stage directions

Stage directions are usually written in italics. They give instructions to the characters and those who may direct the play on how the setting should be, the character movements and actions. They indicate what costume the character is wearing and also reveal the state of their feelings. Stage directions are also put before a character's utterances or within the utterances. In such cases they are enclosed within brackets.

### Read the extract from 'The Government Inspector' again

You will notice the beginning of the extract is in italics. These are the stage directions. They give us information about the setting. The events happen in a hotel. We can tell the room is cheap because it is described as poky and with only one window. What else do you learn from the stage directions?

### 8.2.4 Asides

In asides, the character momentarily steps out of character to gossip or share his or her thoughts with the audience but would not want the other character(s) on stage to overhear. The information he or she gives the audience in the aside is about the character. This technique makes the audience feel part of events on stage. It also helps the audience know the true feelings of the character speaking.

**Example:**

**Employer:** James, how many times do I have to tell you to dust the windows. Know that the next time I remind you, I will fire you!

**James:** *(Looking apologetic)* I'm sorry Boss. I was making lunch. The baby was crying so I had to sooth her first. *(Aside)* This woman! How many hands does she think I have? She sits all day and cannot raise a finger to help. Always complaining!

### 8.2.5 Dramatic irony

Have you ever watched a movie and you are aware who is committing all the crimes but the characters are struggling to find out who it is? At times it is someone they trust who is the culprit. In such scenes, the playwright has used dramatic irony. Dramatic irony is a situation where the audience knows something the characters do not. It is used to create suspense. The audience wonders what will happen should the truth be known.

### Activity 3

**Read the following skit. Be sure to use the appropriate tone of voice to bring out the meaning intended. Answer the question that follows.**

#### Helping a Friend

**A woman enters into her neighbour's house panting. She looks disheveled. A sleeve is torn off.**

**Woman in distress:** *(Sobbing)* Ntuli, help me! My husband is after me. He wants to beat me and is threatening to kill me. *(A noise is heard from without)*

**Ntuli :** *(Closes door. Holding her hand)* Quick this way! *(Leads her out through a back door)*

**Husband** *(Loudly knocking the door)* Open this door! I saw my wife get in here!

**Ntuli:** *(Calmly as she opens the door)* Why are you knocking so violently on my door. I thought we are friends and good neighbours Ncheke.

**Husband:** I want to see my wife. Where is she?

**Ntuli:** What are you talking about? You are the first person to come to my house today. *(Seeing the knife in his hand)* And by the way, why are you looking for your wife carrying a knife? Are you two fighting again?

**Husband:** Liar! My wife is here! *(Sarcastically)* And by the way, what I do with my wife is none of your business. *(Storms in)*

**Ntuli:** *(Moving out of the way)* You are free to search!

- Husband:** (*Comes back*) You are a witch. Where have you hidden her? I saw her enter – unless my eyes are playing tricks on me...  
I swear I will teach you a lesson if you are...
- Ntuli:** Please get out of my house now or I will report you to the police. I don't have your wife. (*He leaves muttering*) Don't you ever come back here!
- Woman in distress:** (*Emerging out of a back room. Quite shaken*) That was close. He came to the store and I thought he would find me.
- Ntuli:** I was confident he wouldn't. I am sure he thought you were just another sack. I had covered you so well. You must make a decision about your life. You can't always be on the run. If you keep going back to your husband, one day... Let us not even think about what he may do to you.
- Woman in distress:** I will not go back this time. I have had enough of this relationship. Besides, I don't see him changing. I will report this incident to the police. And Ntuli... I appreciate your help.  
(*Hugs Ntuli and leaves*)

### Question

What information do you have as the reader that the husband does not know?

### 8.2.6 Symbolism

This is something that stands for or represents something else. Playwrights may use symbolism to create a particular effect or meaning. A character who raises a white flag could symbolise surrender while another who wears a skull mask could symbolise death.

### 8.2.7 Body language

This is the use of the body to communicate how the characters feel. This is the information that we get from the stage directions. It tells us what kind of facial expression a character wears such as smiling or frowning; the gestures used, for example throwing hands in the air to show frustration and how one uses their body, for example the woman in distress pants, her husband storms in, etc.

### 8.2.8 Dialogue

The playwright uses the characters' conversations to develop the plot, to reveal the nature of his or her characters and their relation and also to develop themes.

## 8.3 Atmosphere/mood in a play

The mood is the feeling the audience gets as they read, listen or watch a play. In drama, the mood is enhanced through the use of stage directions, dialogue and monologues, dramatic irony, symbolism, images and body language – all the devices discussed above as well as the choice of words, use of punctuation and tone of voice.

The playwright may decide to use lighting and sound effects to create the mood. For example there can be drumming softly then it gets louder with the rising of action to create a mood of suspense or anxiety. In a funeral setting, the music can be soft and sad to capture the mournful feeling.

These words can be used to describe the mood – joyful, jovial,

excited, appreciative, friendly, humorous, sad, mournful, gloomy and depressing among many other words.

#### Activity 4

Read the skit given in Activity 3 again. Describe the mood of the skit and how it has been achieved.

### 8.4 Unit summary

**Style:** The manner in which a playwright chooses his words the tone and how he or she structures the sentences. May also be devices used.

Dramatic devices that can be used in a play include:

1. **Monologue** – a speech made by a character in which he or she addresses himself or herself to the audience.
2. **Soliloquy** – a character speaks to himself or herself as if thinking aloud
3. **Stage directions** – instructions written in italics and enclosed in brackets that give direction to the characters and directors.
4. **Asides** – the character briefly steps out of character to share his or her view or displeasure about another character with the audience.
5. **Dramatic irony** – the audience know something that the characters are unaware of.
6. **Symbolism** – something that represents something else.

### 8.5 End of unit assessment

1. Identify the dramatic devices and their effect in the two selected play excerpts given in Activity 1 of this unit.
2. Compare and contrast the mood/ atmosphere in the two play excerpts.

## Glossary

- Acrostic poem** – a poem in which certain letters in each line form a word or words.
- Alliteration** – the repetition of initial consonant sounds.
- Asides** – a short comment or speech that a character gives directly to the audience and the other actors on stage cannot hear.
- Assonance** – a close repetition of similar vowel sounds, usually in stressed syllables.
- Atmosphere** – the feeling, emotion or mood a playwright conveys to a reader through the description of setting and objects.
- Audience** – the assembled spectators or listeners at a public event such as a play, a movie or a concert.
- Character** – a person or an animal in a story, play or movie.
- Climax** – the turning point of the story where the events reach their peak, or where there is a turning point in the fate of the main character in a play.
- Comic tone** – a funny or humorous voice used by a writer.
- Complication** – the part of the plot where a series of events build towards the point of greatest interest.
- Conclusion** – the part of the plot where the conflict is resolved and normality is restored for the characters.
- Concrete poem** – a poem whose visual appearance matches the topic of the poem.

- Conflict** – a serious incompatibility between two or more characters in terms of opinions, principles or interests.
- Context** – circumstances forming the background of an event, idea or statement, in such a way as to enable readers understand the narrative or a literary piece.
- Descriptive poetry** – serving or seeking to describe.
- Dialogue** – a conversation between two characters.
- Dynamic character** – a character that undergoes changes throughout the narrative or play due to several conflicts that he or she faces.
- Entertain** – provide with amusement or enjoyment.
- Explain** – make an idea, situation or problem clear to someone by describing it in more detail or revealing relevant facts or ideas.
- Exposition** – the part of the plot where the writer introduces important background information such as the setting, events occurring before the main plot and the characters' back stories to the audience.
- Falling action** – the part of the plot where the conflict between the protagonist and the antagonist is exposed, with the protagonist winning or losing against the antagonist. This is where there is an attempt to resolve the conflict.
- First person narrator** – a point of view where the story is narrated by one character at a time, talking about himself or herself and/or the experiences he or she goes through.
- Flashback** – a scene in a novel or play which is set in a time earlier than the main story.

- Formal tone** – an objective and factual voice employed by a writer.
- Gloomy mood** – a depressing atmosphere that causes sadness.
- Happy mood** – an elating atmosphere that brings joy.
- ID** – identity card
- Inform** – give facts or information about something.
- Informal tone** – a casual and less factual voice employed by a writer.
- Lyrical poetry** – expressing the writer's emotions in an imaginative and beautiful way.
- Matatu** – privately owned public service vehicles in Kenya and neighbouring countries
- Message** – what a reader or audience member learns from a story, poem or play.
- Monologue** – a long speech by one actor in a play.
- Mood** – the atmosphere or pervading tone of a work of art.
- Narrative poetry** – in the form of a narrative.
- Persona** – the person who speaks in a poem.
- Personification** – assigning the qualities of a person to something that isn't human or, in some cases, to something that isn't even alive.
- Playwright** – one who writes a play.
- Plot** – the main events of a play, novel, movie or similar work, devised and presented by the writer as an interrelated sequence.
- Plot development** – how events and actions are arranged or structured in a story or play.
- Poem** – mostly rhythmical, usually metaphorical and often exhibits such formal elements as meter, rhyme and stanzaic structure.

- Poetry** – a genre of literature characterised by the use of a distinctive style and rhythm to express feelings and ideas with special intensity.
- Prose** – written or spoken language in its ordinary form, without metrical structure.
- Purpose** – the reason for which something is done or created or for which something exists.
- Repetition** – the style of repeating the same words or phrases a few times to make an idea clearer.
- Resolution** – the conclusion of the story which involves solution to the problem.
- Rhyme** – words that sound alike occurring at the end of lines within a stanza.
- Rhythm** – a series of stressed or accented syllables in a group of words, arranged so that the reader expects a similar series to follow.
- Rising action** – the events that happen as a result of the conflict introduced in the exposition.
- Sad tone** – a writer's voice that displays sadness.
- Second person narrator** – a point of view where the narrator tells the story to another character using the word 'you'.
- Setting** – the place and time at which play, novel or film is represented as happening.
- Simile** – a comparison between two things which are essentially dissimilar. The comparison is directly stated through words such as like, as, than or resembles.

- Soliloquy** – an act of speaking one's thoughts aloud when by oneself during the performance of a play.
- Stage directions** – instructions in the text of a play, especially those indicating the movement, position or tone of an actor, or the sound effects and lighting.
- Static character** – a character that does not undergo important change in the course of the story, remaining essentially the same at the end as he or she was at the beginning.
- Subject** – the idea or proposition that is discussed, described or dealt with in a story or play.
- Tense mood** – an atmosphere that creates anxiety.
- Theme** – the main idea that recurs in a work of art or literature.
- Tone** – the attitude or feelings of a writer towards the subject matter or the audience.

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