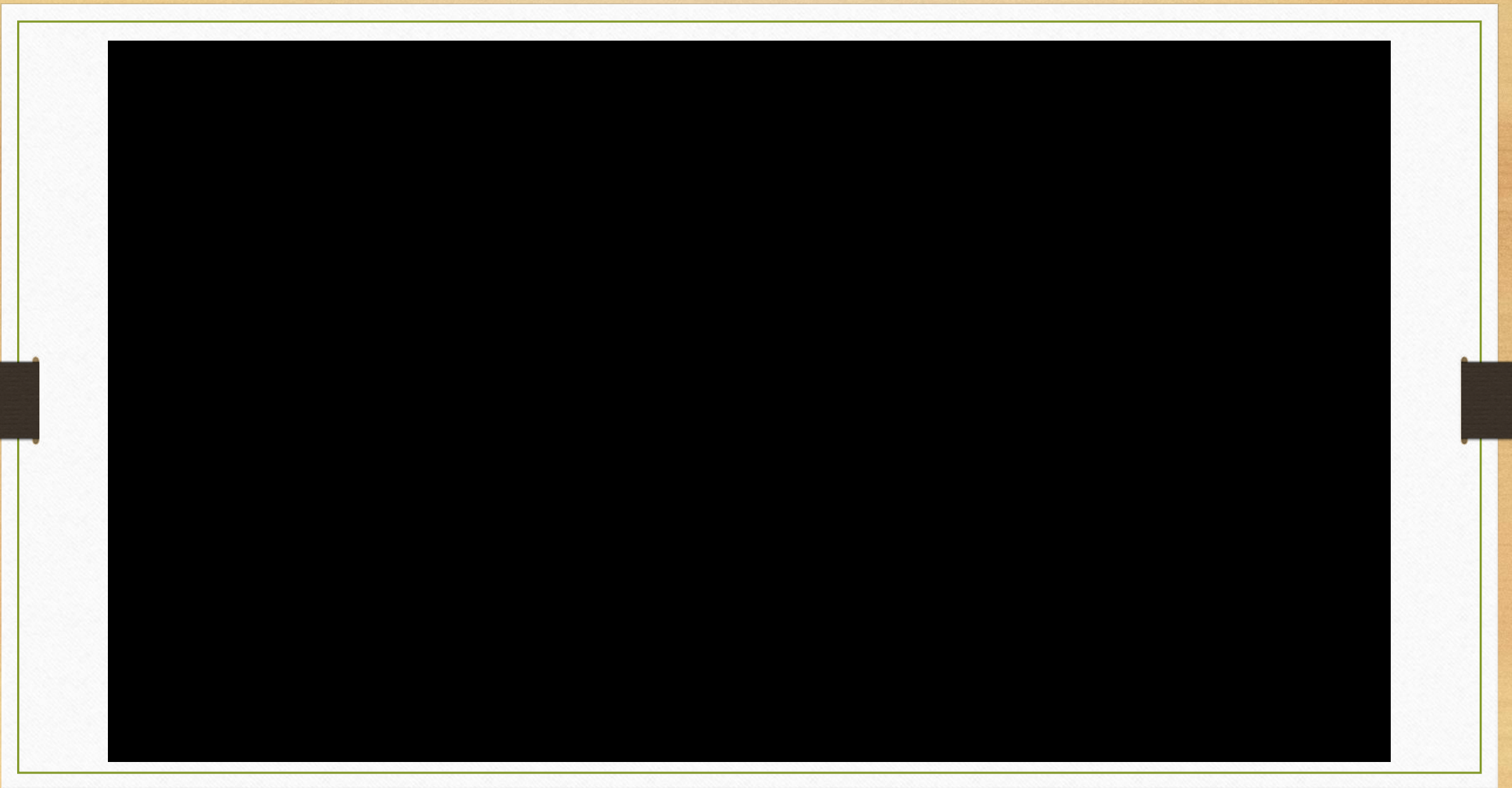


CLASS ACT

By Namhla Tshisana





Title



- The phrase 'class act' refers to an excellent performance, or someone who is well mannered.
- Looking at the narrator's life and experiences she doesn't lose her temper or even talk back when ridiculed, but stays calm throughout the story.
- Title linked to the movie, Sister Act, because of the long tunic the narrator wears to school.
- The narrator is ridiculed and called Sister Mary Clarence, one of the nuns in the movie.

Themes



Bullying

- The narrator is continuously teased by her schoolmates.
- Her bullying is not physical, but it kills her spirit which makes her hate school.
- A class repeater, Renato, starts the bullying by making her stand in front of the class.
- She is then called names and everybody laughs at her.

Appearance and Character Adjectives

www.EngDic.org			
a plain face	Filthy	Homely	Medium height
tidy	Casually dressed	Lovely	Tall
nice	Nicely dressed	Unattractive	Little height
pretty	Handsome	Untidy	Short
a neat person	Dirty	Cute	Average height
a pretty girl	Well-dressed	Neat clothes	Weak
good-looking	Elegant	Beautiful	Thin, quite thin
regular features	Neat	Delicate features	A stout woman
poorly dressed	Plain	Fashionable	Overweight
ugly	An ugly fellow	Clean	Skinny
Attractive			Muscular
www.EngDic.org			

Themes



Identity/Acceptance/Appearance

- The narrator faces a difficult time because of her appearance.
- She doesn't feel accepted by other learners at school.
- She accepts the identity given to her and does not challenge it.
- She is only 12 years old and too young to challenge some of her older classmates.

Themes

Conflict

Two forms of conflict in story:

1. Internal – She must spend time in the place she hates (school). She has to find a way around her unfavourable situation and environment. So she has conflicted feelings.
2. External – The narrator is being teased by other learners, a girl who looks down on her and a boy who constantly teases her about her appearance.





Themes

Helplessness

- The narrator is being bullied and is too young to fight back.
- She is bullied by a boy who has failed Standard 6, three times.
- The narrator can't tell her mother because she is always busy.
- The narrator can't change her appearance/tunic because she relies on her mother and aunt to fix it for her. She feels helpless.



Setting

- Narrator's homeland (Ciskei) – Now part of the Eastern Cape.
- Takes place in the early 1990's.
- The story shifts between the narrator's home and school.

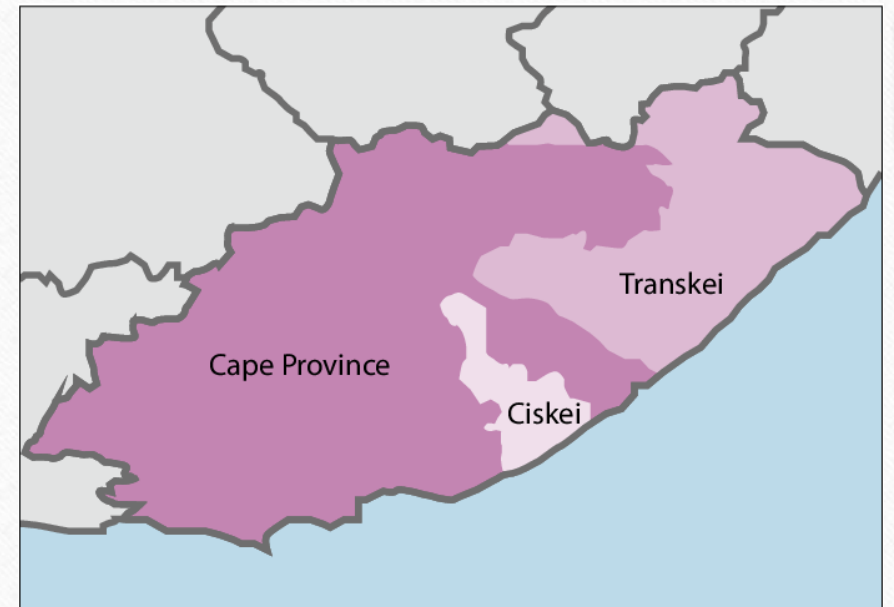


Fig. 2. The Bantustans of the Ciskei and Transkei.



Characters

The Narrator

- Misfit (She doesn't fit in at her high school because of her appearance.)
- Reserved (She doesn't have a voice at home and they decide what is good for her.)
- Courageous (She doesn't give up on her schooling career, despite all her challenges.)



Characters

Ayanda

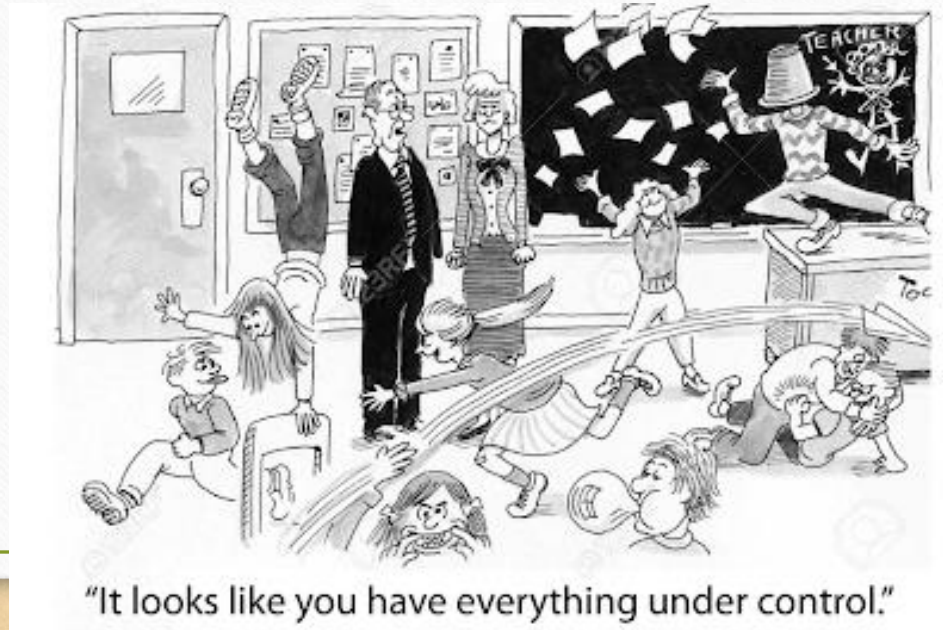
- She is friendly to her sister. (Fixes her tunic when everybody else is too busy)
- She is understanding. (She understands her sister's problems and assists in trying to solve them.)
- She is caring. (She fixes the tunic, but unwillingly adds to the narrator's problems.)



Characters

Mr Sauls

- He is inexperienced. (He can't control his class, he lets the learners do what they want in class.)



Characters

Aunt Connie

- She is pushy. (She accuses the narrator of being angry when she is not. She seems to push her around the house.)
- She is untrustworthy. (She makes empty promises to the narrator and the other members of the family.)



Characters

The narrator's mother

- She uncaring. (She does not prioritise the daughter's needs.)



Characters

Khanyisa

- She is a pompous (overbearing/domineering) girl who looks down upon the narrator.





Characters

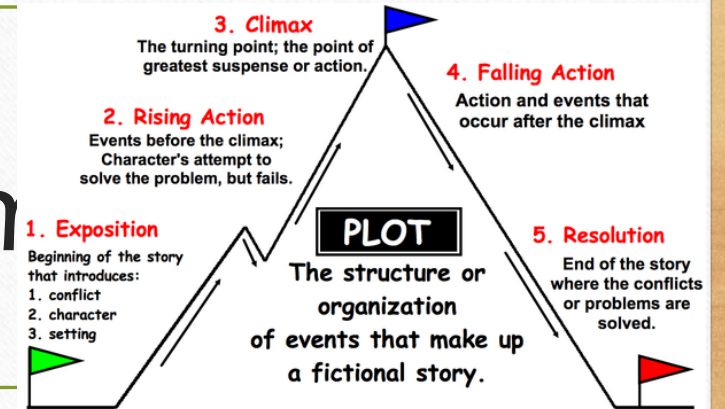


Renato

- He is a bully that does not care about other learners' feelings. (He says anything to spite the narrator. He always taunts her by calling her names.)

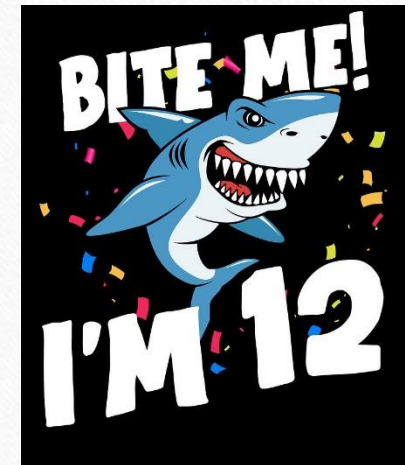


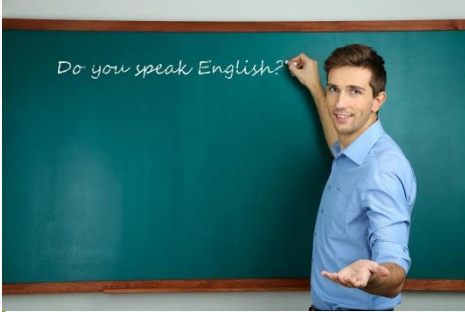
Structure and Plot Developn



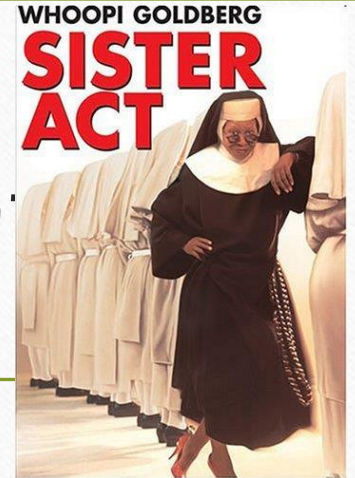
Exposition

- The narrator is a young girl (12 years old) who has just started high school.
- She has 2 main challenges:
 - ✓ She hates Afrikaans
 - ✓ She is teased by other learners about her looks.
- The narrator is home with her mother and aunt. They are preparing her new school uniform.





Structure and Plot Development



Rising Action

- Mr Sauls, the narrator's English teacher can't control his class and the learners do as they want in his class.
- Renato forces the 'freshers' to stand in front of the class so he can inspect their uniforms.
- The narrator's uniform is long and goes below her knees and Renato calls her Sister Mary Clarence.





Structure and Plot Development



Climax

- The climax is reached as the narrator tells her sister, Ayanda about the teasing.
- Ayanda offers to adjust the blue tunic and decides to use the only available white thread.
- When the narrator wears the tunic, she realises that it is shorter than she requested and it will make other learners see her thighs and knock knees.
- She is teased by the other learners about the white thread and her black knees. They even commented about her yellow bloomers.



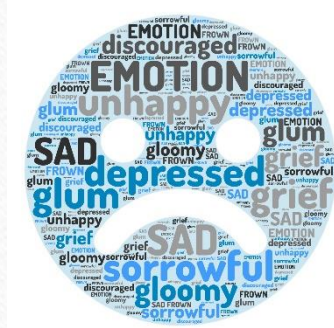
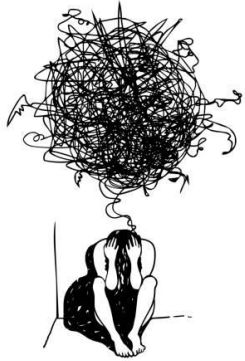
Structure and Plot Development

Resolution

- She resolves that she is better off as Sister Mary Clarence.
- If she wears a long tunic, people will not see her bloomers, knock and black knees.

**Better
Off!**





Tone and Mood



Tone

- Depressed (The narrator begins the story with a strong depressing statement) ('I hate high school')
- Gloomy (She uses a powerful word 'hate' in describing her feelings about school. She emphasises that fact by using, 'Really, I do.')

Mood

- Sad

OTHER WAYS TO SAY: **"SAD"** 😞

★ Blue

He'd been feeling blue all week.

★ Cheerless

This is a cold, cheerless place.

★ Dejected

★ Gloomy

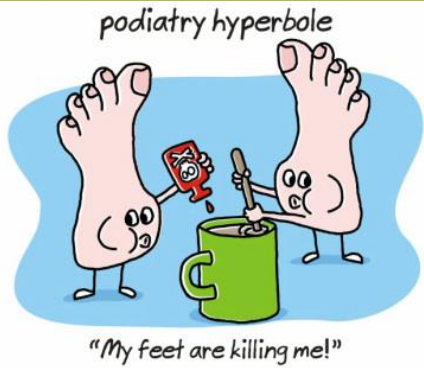
We sat in gloomy silence.

★ Despondent

I feel despondent when my work is rejected.

★ Heartbroken





Literary Devices



Hyperbole (Exaggeration)

- **‘I keep thinking it is going to hit the floor’ (Page 82)**

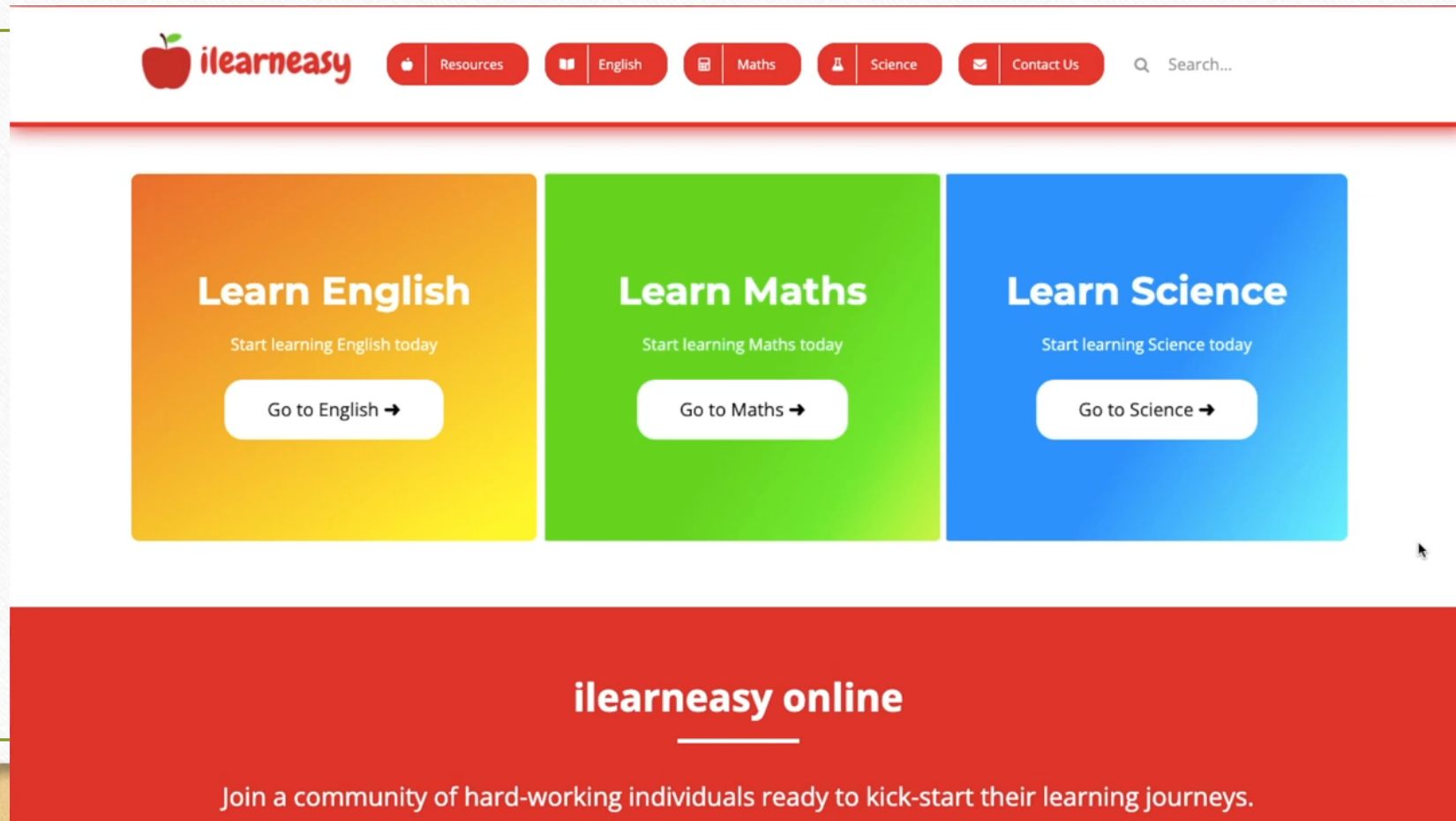
The narrator exaggerates the size of Aunt Connie’s tummy which has grown bigger.

Irony

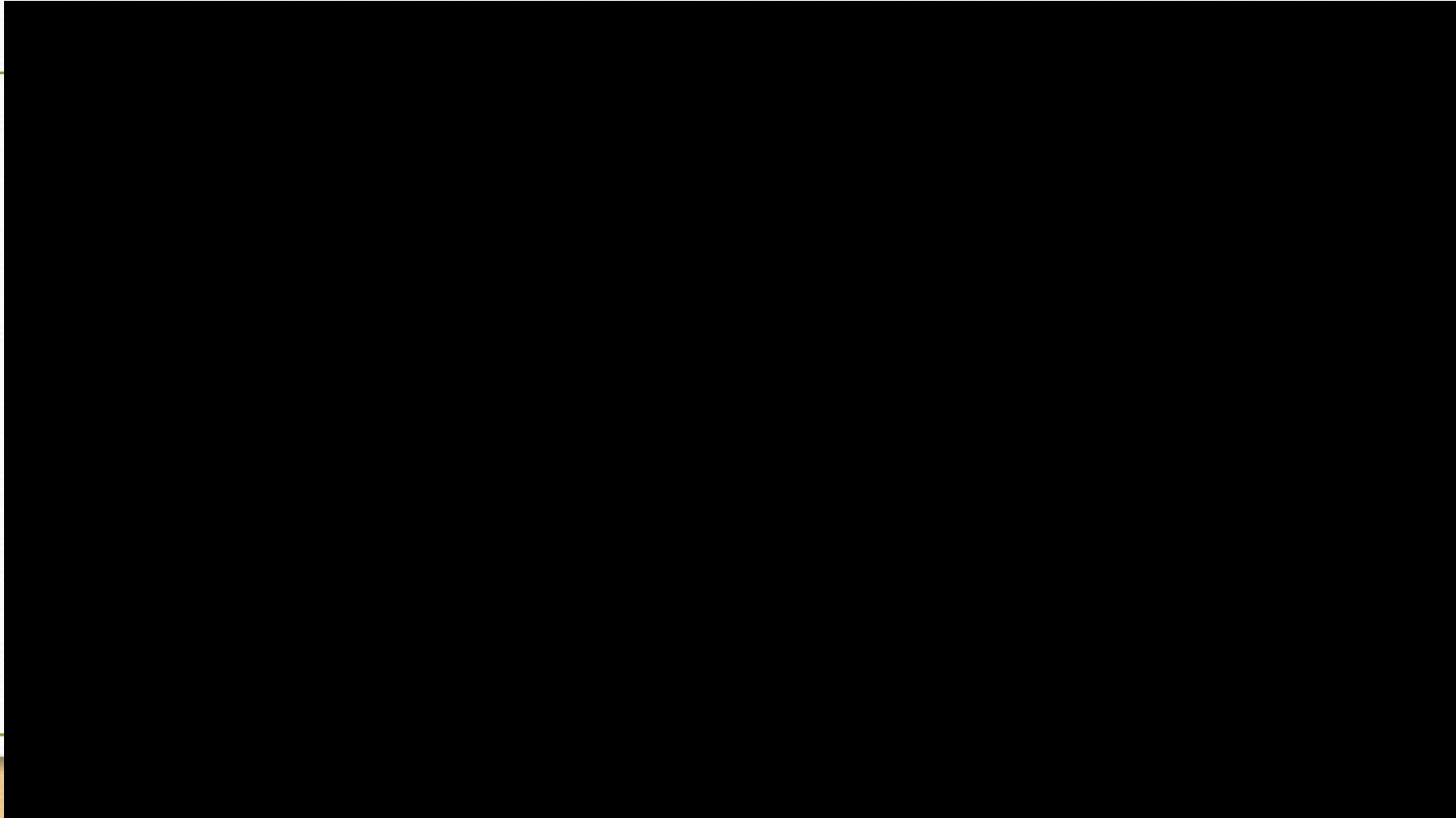
- **‘You’re starting a coloured school next week but you can’t speak Afrikaans’**

It is ironic that the narrator does not speak Afrikaans when the population of the school speaks Afrikaans.

Hyperbole

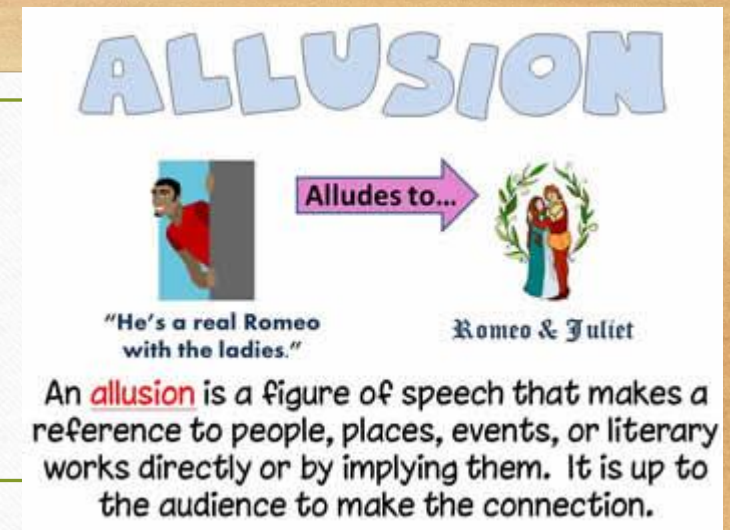


Irony





Literary Devices



Simile

- ‘The class’s laughter sounded like thunder in my ears...’ (Page 84)

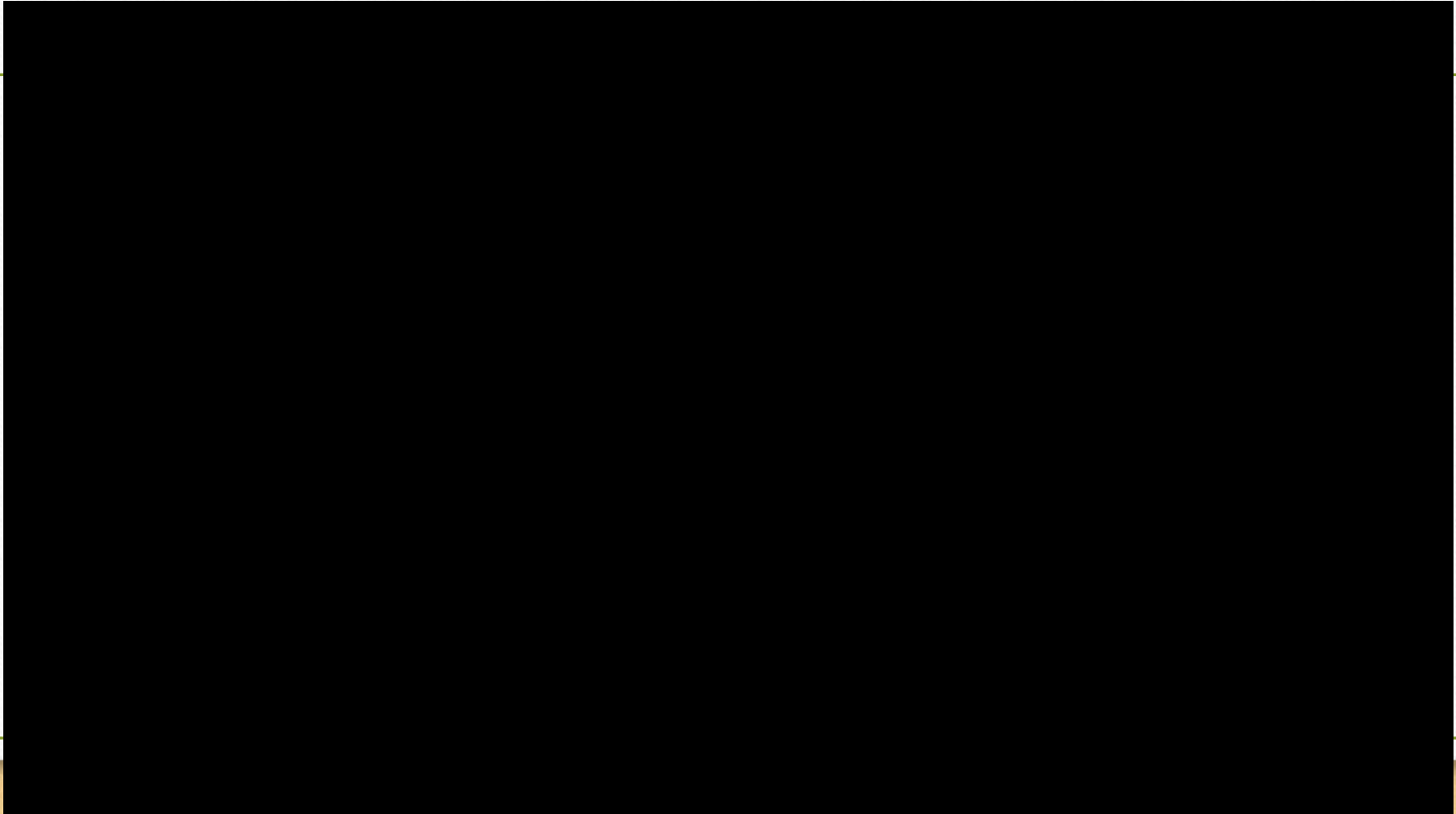
The loudness of the learners’ laughter in the narrator’s ears, sound like thunder.

Allusion

- ‘Sister Mary has undergone a makeover!’

Calling the narrator ‘Sister Mary Clarence’ means she looks like a nun. This makes reference to the movies titled ‘Sister Act’ and ‘Sister Act 2’, where one of the nuns is called Mary Clarence.

Simile



Allusion

What is Allusion?

Diction

- Aunt Connie uses township slang (Ukwateleni) to ask the narrator why she is angry.
- That confuses the narrator a bit because the isiXhosa version 'Uqumbeleni' is not very close in sound to the Afrikaans word 'kwaad' which means 'angry' in English.

Other phrases in isiXhosa:

- ✓ 'Girl, umgobo ongaka? (Page 85)
- ✓ Girl, such a big hem?
- 'Irhali emhlophe ke yone iyaphi?' (Page 85)
- Where is the white thread?
- ❑ 'Amadolo amnyama ke wona asisathethi ngawo.' (Page 85)
- ❑ We don't talk about black knees anymore