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Grade 12

MIND THE GAP!

English First Additional Language

VOICE OF THE LAND

B Walter

Study Guide

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Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) Grade 12 English First Additional Language Mind the Gap study guide for the Poetry: Voice of the land by B Walter.

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222 Struben Street, Pretoria, South Africa
Contact persons: Ms C. Weston and Dr S. Malapile
Email: Weston.C@dbe.gov.za / Malapile.s@dbe.gov.za
Tel: (012) 357 4183 / 012) 357 3811
http://www.education.gov.za Call Centre: 0800202933

Acknowledgements

The extracts from the poems in this study guide are from Voice of the land by B Walter.

Mind the Gap Team

Senior Project Leaders: Dr S. Malapile, Ms C Weston
Production co-ordinators: B. Monyaki, B. Ras, M. Phonela, M. Nematangari
Authors: Mr Norman Fumba, Ms Renske Pieterse, Mr Harold Takalo, Mr Emmanuel Mpumelelo Thobela, Ms Nonhlanhla Mzila, Ms Thembeka Mtolo, Ms Thokozile Joyfull Sabelo, Ms Monica Mamakara Karabo Seitei, Ms Elizabeth Marianne Meyer, Ms Doreen Mpho Mongale, Ms Vuyelwa Gladys Mnguni, Ms Pila Masakane and Mr Moses Nkosi.
Critical reader: Monyaki BS
Designer and editor: Page82 Media
Onsite writers' workshop support: J. Mphidi, V. Magelegeda, P. Hlabiwa, R. Maboye and N. Malope

ISBN 978-1-4315-3365-7.

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Ministerial Foreword

The Department of Basic Education remains steadfastly committed to innovative strategies aimed at enhancing learner attainment. Consistent with the government's commitment in promoting the indigenous languages that form the tapestry of our democratic landscape, this Mind the Gap Self study guide is a concrete demonstration of this commitment.

The release of this self-study guide incorporates all the official African Home Languages focusing on the novel genre at this stage. Not only does the study guide incorporate the African languages, but it also incorporates South African Sign Language Home Language, Afrikaans Home Language and English First Additional Language.

The Mind the Gap Literature Self Study Guide is responding to the broader sectoral reading challenges that the country is experiencing. It seeks to strengthen the following strands of the National Reading Sector Plan: Teacher Development and Support; Direct Learner Support; and Provisioning and Utilisation of the Learning and Teaching Support Materials. Its interactive nature will make it easier for both teachers and learners to read, to learn or study. It is hoped that through this Study Guide, the reading and learning outcomes will be achieved.

Key terminologies are explained or illustrated in a simplified manner and examples of the types of questions as a learner you may expect to be asked in an examination, are included in this study guide. In order to build your understanding, specific questions and possible responses forms part of the study guide package.

The study guide is designed to appeal to any learner offering Grade 12, whether as a part-time or a full-time candidate. Educators in the field will also find it an invaluable resource in their practice.

Every learner is a national asset, all you need now is to put in the hours required to prepare for the examinations and excel!
We wish each and every one of you good luck and success.

Matsie Angelina Motshekga, MP
Minister of Basic Education

MRS AM MOTSHEKGA, MP
MINISTER
DATE: 14 NOVEMBER 2019

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Table of contents

Dear Grade 12 learner 6
How to use this study guide 6
Top 7 study tips 7
On the exam day 7
Overview of the English First Additional Language Paper 2: Literature exam 8
What is a contextual question? 9
What are the examiners looking for? 9
Question words 10
Literary features found in poems 12

Poetry 1
Poem 1: Sonnet 18 by William Shakepere 13
1. Words to know 13
2. Type and form 15
3. Analysis 15
4. Tone and mood 19

Poetry 2
Poem 2: Everything has changed (except graves) by Mzi Mahola 21
1. Words to know 23
2. Type and form 24
3. Analysis 25
4. Tone and mood 29

Poetry 3
Poem 3: Spring by Gerard Manley Hopkins 31
1. Words to know 32
2. Type and form 33
3. Analysis 33
4. Tone and mood 36

Poetry 4
Poem 4: Poem by Barolong Seboni 38
1. Words to know 39
2. Type and form 40
3. Analysis 40
4. Tone and mood 42

Poetry 5
Poem 5: Mid-term break by Seamus Heaney 44
1. Words to know 45
2. Type and form 45
3. Analysis 45
4. Tone and mood 48

Poetry 6
Poem 6: To learn how to speak by Jeremy Cronin 50
1. Words to know 51
2. Type and form 52
3. Analysis 52
4. Tone and mood 56

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Poetry 7
Poem 7: Still I rise by Maya Angelou 60
1. Words to know 62
2. Type and form 62
3. Analysis 62
4. Tone and mood 66
Poetry 8
Poem 8: Captive by Francis Carey Slater 68
1. Words to know 70
2. Type and form 70
3. Analysis 70
4. Tone and mood 73
Poetry 9
Poem 9: Death by Anonymous 74
1. Type and form 75
2. Analysis 75
3. Themes 76
Poetry 10
Poem 10: Alexandra by Mongane Wally Serote 78
1. Words to know 79
2. Type and form 79
3. Analysis 79
4. Tone and mood 82

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Dear Grade 12 learner

This Mind the Gap study guide helps you to prepare for the end-of-year Grade 12 English First Additional Language (EFAL) Literature exam. There are three exams for EFAL: Paper 1: Language in Context (80 marks); Paper 2: Literature (70 marks); and Paper 3: Writing (100 marks).

There are eight great EFAL Mind the Gap study guides which cover Papers 1, 2 and 3.
Paper 2: Literature includes the study of novels, drama, short stories and poetry. A Mind the Gap study guide is available for each of the prescribed literature titles. Choose the study guide for the set works you studied in your EFAL class at school.

This study guide focuses on the 10 prescribed poems examined in Paper 2: Literature. You will need to study all 10 poems for the exam:

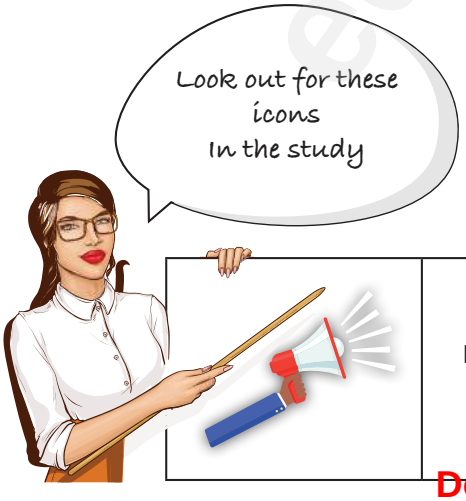
1. Sonnet 18 by William Shakespeare
2. Everything has changes (except graves) by Mzi Mahola
3. Spring by Gerard Manley Hopkins
4. Poem by Barolong Seboni
5. Mid-term break by Seamus Heaney
6. To learn how to Speak by Jeremy Cronin
7. Still I rise by Maya Angelou
8. Captive by Francis Carey Slater
9. Death by Anonymous
10. Alexandra by Mongane Wally Serote

How to use this study guide

Each poem analysis includes a copy of the poem and information about:

- The poet;
- The themes;
- Words you need to know to understand the poem;
- Type and form;
- Line-by-line analysis; and
- Tone and mood.

All the above information is contained in a one-page summary. Use the 10 summaries to help you hold the 10 poems clearly in your mind.
You can test your understanding of each poem by completing the activities, then use the answers to mark your own work. The activities are based on the kinds of questions you will find in the exam.



	Pay special attention		Hints to help you remember a concept or guide you in solving problems		Activoties with questions for you to annswer

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Top 7 study tips

1. Break your learning up into manageable sections. This will help your brain to focus. Take short breaks between studying one section and going onto the next.

2. Have all your materials ready before you begin studying a section – pencils, pens, highlighters, paper, glass of water, etc.

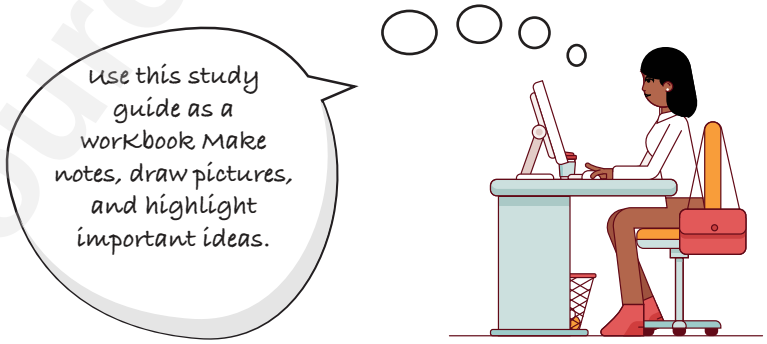
3. Be positive. It helps your brain hold on to the information.

4. Your brain learns well with colours and pictures. Try to use them whenever you can.

5. Repetition is the key to remembering information you have to learn. Keep going over the work until you can recall it with ease.

6. Teach what you are learning to anyone who will listen. It is definitely worth reading your revision notes aloud.

7. Sleeping for at least eight hours every night, eating healthy food and drinking plenty of water are all important things you need to do for your brain. Studying for exams is like exercise, so you must be prepared physically as well as mentally.



On the exam day

i. Make sure you bring pens that work, sharp pencils, a rubber and a sharpener. Make sure you bring your ID document and examination admission letter. Arrive at the exam venue at least an hour before the start of the exam.

ii. Go to the toilet before entering the exam room. You don't want to waste valuable time going to the toilet during the exam.

iii. You must know at the start of the exam which two out of the four sections of the Paper 2 Literature exam you will be answering. Use the 10 minutes' reading time to read the instructions carefully.

iv. Break each question down to make sure you understand what is being asked. If you don't answer the question properly you won't get any marks for it. Look for the key words in the question to know how to answer it. You will find a list of question words on page xii of this study guide.

v. Manage your time carefully. Start with the question you think is the easiest. Check how many marks are allocated to each question so you give the right amount of information in your answer.

vi. Remain calm, even if the question seems difficult at first. It will be linked with something you have covered. If you feel stuck, move on and come back if time allows. Do try and answer as many questions as possible.

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vii. Take care to write neatly so the examiners can read your answers easily.

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Overview of the English First Additional Language Paper 2: Literature exam

In the Paper 2 Literature exam, you need to answer questions from two sections. Choose the two sections that you know best:

- Section A: Novel
- Section B: Drama
- Section C: Short stories
- Section D: Poetry

A total of 70 marks is allocated for Paper 2, which means 35 marks for each section you choose. You will have two hours for this exam.

Here is a summary of the Paper 2 Literature exam paper:

Question number	Title	Type of question	Number of marks
Section A: Novel - If you choose Section A, answer ONE question. Choose the question for the book you have learnt.			
1	Cry, the Beloved Country	Contextual	35
2	The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde	Contextual	35
Section B: Drama - If you choose Section B, answer ONE question. Choose the question for the play you have learnt.			
3	Macbeth	Contextual	35
4	My Children! My Africa	Contextual	35
Section C: Short stories - If you choose Section C, answer BOTH questions. You will not know exactly which short stories are included until the exam. TWO stories will be set. Answer the questions set on BOTH short stories.			
5.1	Short story	Contextual	17 or 18
5.2	Short story	Contextual	17 or 18
Section D: Poetry - If you choose Section D, answer BOTH questions. You will not know exactly which poems are included until the exam. TWO poems will be set. Answer the questions set on BOTH poems.			
6.1	Poem 1	Contextual	17 or 18
6.2	Poem 2	Contextual	17 or 18

NB

* You don't have to answer all the sections in Paper 2.
* Before the Exam starts you must know which two sections you are to answer.
* When the Exam starts, find your two chosen sections.
* Make sure to number answers correctlty-according to the numbering system used in the exam paper- for the two sections you've chosen.
* Start each section on a new page.

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POETRY

What is a contextual question?

In a contextual question, you are given an extract (about 220-250 words) from the play. You then have to answer questions based on the extract. Some answers you can find in the extract. Other questions will test your understanding of other parts of the novel: its story, characters, symbols and themes. Some questions ask for your own opinion about the novel.

What are the examiners looking for?

Examiners will assess your answers to the contextual questions based on:

• Your understanding of the literal meaning of the play. You need to identify information that is clearly given in the play.
• Your ability to reorganise information in the play. For example, you may be asked to summarise key points, or state the similarities or differences between two characters.

• Your ability to provide information that may not be clearly stated in the text, using what you already know about the play. This process is called inference. This may include explaining how a figure of speech affects your understanding of the play, explaining themes or comparing the actions of different characters.

• Your ability to make judgments about aspects of the play, and make your own opinions based on information given in the play. This process is called evaluation. For example, you may be asked if you agree with a statement, or to discuss a character's motive for doing something.

• Your ability to respond to the characters in the play and how it is written on an emotional level. This is called appreciation. For example, you may be asked how you think a certain character feels, or what you would have done if you were in their situation. You may be asked to discuss how the writer's style helps to describe what a character is feeling.

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Question words: Here are examples of question types found in the exam.

Question type: Literal. Questions about information that is clearly given in the text or extract from the text	What you need to do
Name characters/places/things ...	Write the specific names of characters, places, etc.
State the facts/reasons/ideas …	Write down the information without any discussion or comments.
Give two reasons for/why …	Write two reasons (this means the same as 'state').
Identify the character/reasons/theme …	Write down the character's name, state the reasons.
Describe the place/character/what happens when …	Write the main characteristics of something, for example: What does a place look/feel/smell like? Is a particular character kind/rude/aggressive …
What does character x do when …	Write what happened – what the character did.
Why did character x do …	Given reasons for the character's action according to your knowledge of the plot.
Who is/did …	Write the name of the character.
To whom does xx refer …	Write the name of the relevant character/person.
Question type: Reorganisation. Questions that need you to bring together different pieces of information in an organised way.	What you need to do
Summarise the main points/ideas …	Write the main points, without a lot of detail.
Group the common elements …	Join the same things together.
Give an outline of …..	Write the main points, without a lot of detail.
Question type Inference.	
Questions that need you to interpret (make meaning of) the text using information that may not be clearly stated. This process involves thinking about what happened in different parts of the text; looking for clues that tell you more about a character, theme or symbol; and using your own knowledge to help you understand the text.	What you need to do
Explain how this idea links with the theme x …	Identify the links to the theme.
Compare the attitudes/actions of character x with character y …	Point out the similarities and differences.
What do the words … suggest/reveal about /what does this situation tell you about …	State what you think the meaning is, based on your understanding of the text.
How does character x react when ….	
Describe how something affected …	
State how you know that character x is …	Write down the character's reaction/what the character did/felt.
What did character x mean by the expression …	Explain why the character used those particular words.

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Is the following statement true or false?	Write 'true' or 'false' next to the question number. You must give a reason for your answer.
Choose the correct answer to complete the following sentence (multiple choice question).	A list of answers is given, labelled A–D. Write only the letter (A, B, C or D) next to the question number.
Complete the following sentence by filling in the missing words …	Write the missing word next to the question number.
Quote a line from the extract to prove your answer.	Write the relevant line of text using the same words and punctuation you see in the extract. Put quotation marks inverted commas ("") around the quote.
Question type: Evaluation. Questions that require you to make a judgement based on your knowledge and understanding of the text and your own experience. Questions that require you to make a judgement based on your knowledge and understanding of the text and your own experience.	What you need to do
Discuss your view/a character's feelings/a theme ...	Consider all the information and reach a conclusion.
Do you think that …	There is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer to these questions, but you must give a reason for your opinion based on information given in the text.
Do you agree with …	There is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer to these questions, but you must give a reason for your opinion based on information given in the text.
In your opinion, what …	There is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer to these questions, but you must give a reason for your opinion based on information given in the text.
Give your views on …	There is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer to these questions, but you must give a reason for your opinion based on information given in the text.
Question type : Appreciation Questions that ask about your emotional response to what happens, the characters and how it is written.	What you need to do
How would you feel if you were character x when …	There is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer to these questions, but you must give a reason for your opinion based on information given in the text.
Discuss your response to …	There is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer to these questions, but you must give a reason for your opinion based on information given in the text.
Do you feel sorry for …	There is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer to these questions, but you must give a reason for your opinion based on information given in the text.
Discuss the use of the writer's style, diction and figurative language, dialogue …	To answer this type of question, ask yourself: Does the style help me to feel/imagine what is happening/what a character is feeling? Why/why not? Give a reason for your answer.

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Literary features found in poems	
Diction	The poet's choice of words and how he/she organises them.
Euphemism	A mild or vague expression in place of a word that is more harsh or direct.
First person	The poem is written from the point of view of 'I' or 'we'.
Hyperbole	A deliberate exaggeration. For example, 'a big' plate of food is described as 'a mountainous' plate of food
Irony	A statement or situation that has an underlying meaning that is different from the literal meaning.
Metaphor	A figure of speech that uses one thing to describe another in a figurative way.
Mood	The emotions felt by the reader when reading the poem.
Oxymoron	A combination of words with contradictory meanings (meanings which seem to be opposite to each other). For example, 'an open secret'
Personification	Giving human characteristics to non-human beings.
Pun	A play on words which are identical or similar in sound. It is used to create hmour.
Rhyme	Lines of poetry that end in the same sound.
Rhythm	A regular and repeated pattern of sounds.
Sarcasm	An ironic expression which is used to be unkind or to make fun of someone.
Simile	Comparing one thing directly with another. 'Like' or 'as' is used to make this comparison.
Symbol	Something which stands for or represents something else
Theme	Themes are the main messages of a text. There are usually a few themes in each poem.
Third person	The poem is written from the point of view of 'he', 'she' or 'they'.
Tone	The feeling or atmosphere of the poem.
Sound devices:	
Alliteration	A pattern of sounds that includes the repetition of consonant sounds. The repeated sound can be either at the beginning of successive words or inside the word.
Assonance	The vowel sounds of words that occur close together are repeated.
Consonance	A sound that occurs at the end of words that are close together is repeated.
Onomatopoeia	The use of words to create the sounds being described.

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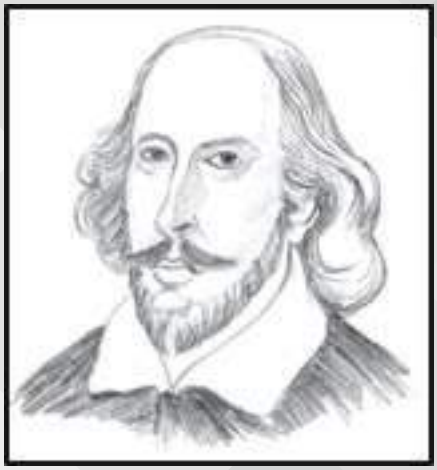
Poetry 1

Sonnet 18

by William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare (23 April 1564 – 23 April 1616) was born in Stratford-upon-Avon. English poet and playwright –Shakespeare is widely considered to be the greatest writer in the English language. He wrote 154 sonnets and 37 plays, which are still performed worldwide today. However, there are six additional sonnets that Shakespeare wrote and included in the plays Romeo and Juliet, Henry V and Love's Labour's Lost. By the early Seventeenth Century, Shakespeare had begun to write plays in the genre of tragedy. These plays, such as Hamlet, Othello and King Lear, often hinge on some fatal error or flaw in the lead character and provide fascinating insights into the darker aspects of human nature. These later plays are considered Shakespeare's finest achievements.



William Shakespeare

Sonnet 18

[Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?]

by William Shakespeare

1 Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
2 Thou art more lovely and more temperate.
3 Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
4 And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
5 Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
6 And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
7 And every fair from fair sometime declines,
8 By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed.
9 But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
10 Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
11 Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
12 When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.
13 So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
14 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

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Summary of the poem

The speaker begins by asking whether he should or will compare "thee" to a summer day. He says that his beloved is more lovely and more calm or stable. He then runs off a list of reasons why summer is not all that great; winds shake the buds that emerged in Spring, Summer ends too quickly, and the sun can get too hot or be hidden by clouds.

He argues that everything beautiful eventually fades by chance or by nature's inevitable (unavoidable) changes; however, his beloved's beauty will never fade away. Moreover, death will never be able to take the beloved; since the beloved exists in eternal poetry. The speaker concludes that as long as humans exist and can read, the poem he is writing will live on, allowing the beloved to keep living as well.

Words to know

Word	Basic definition
(line 1) compare	liken/ equate (make one equal to)/ match up /contrast
(line 1) thee	you
(line 2) thou	you
(line 2) art	are
(line 2) temperate	mild, gentle, calm
(line 3) darling	gorgeous, lovely, adorable, precious,
(line 4) lease	temporary contract
(line 5) eye of heaven	sun
(line 6) complexion	skin colour/tone
(line 7) fair	beauty
(line 7) declines	lose (beauty in this case)
(line 8)untrimmed	to take away beauty
(line 9) fade	disappear/diminish/wane
(line 10) ow'st	own
(line 11) wand'rest	walks/strolls/meander
(line 12) grow'st	grow

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1. Type and form

'Sonnet 18' is an Elizabethan sonnet. It consists of three quatrains followed by a rhyming couplet. The poem is written in fourteen lines in iambic pentameter. It's rhyme scheme is abab cdcd efef gg.

'Sonnet 18' also has qualities of an Italian sonnet. The first 8 lines (octave) make a statement which is illustrated in a variety of ways, explaining how the speaker's lover is more beautiful than a summer's day. The word 'But' introduces the sestet; it suggests a shift in the argument ('volta').

2. Analysis

First quatrain
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;

The speaker poses a rhetorical question: the speaker asks whether he should compare his beloved (addressed directly as 'thee') to a summer's day.

Line 1

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
'thee' refers to the speaker's beloved. The speaker starts to praise his beloved by asking whether he should compare his beloved to a summer's day.

Line 2

Thou art more lovely and more temperate.
The poet identifies two positive features of 'a summer day', i.e. lovely and temperate. The speaker suggests that his beloved is constant and calm, not unpredictable and moody. The speaker suggests that his beloved is milder and calmer.

Line 3

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
Darling buds symbolise beauty. The beloved is not rough, i.e. harsh, and destructive in the way that the winds that damage the May buds are 'rough'. A summer's day is not always perfect. The stormy winds that sometimes blow in May sway the trees so heavily that the buds of the early summer are shaken off.

Line 4

And summer's lease hath all too short a date.
The beauty of Summer is not everlasting. It takes a short period for the season to change; also nature, fate (chance), and time destroy ('every fair') beauty as nature pursues its course.

OR

The period (lease) of time that summer lasts is much too short; time is beauty's enemy.

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Second quatrain

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And every fair from fair sometime declines, By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed.

Line 5

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines, At times; the sun becomes unbearable, as it is too hot.

Line 6

And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
Sometimes the sun cannot be seen because it is cloudy.

OR

Sometimes the sun's rays are blocked by the clouds.

Line 7-8

And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed;

In the end all beauty/beautiful things will end; either by accident or by natural causes or as a result of the unavoidable laws of nature.

These lines emphasise that beauty is temporary- all beauty fades eventually. Time is beauty's enemy.

Third quatrain

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,
Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.

Lines 9-10

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,

The conjunction 'But' sets the tone of the next quatrain.
The speaker suggests that his beloved's beauty is eternal; it will never change nor fade. The speaker's beloved will never lose her wonderful qualities.

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Lines 11-12

Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.

Line 11

Death is personified – portrayed as a person who boasts (brags) about his power over people or brags about his power to destroy life and beauty. He is portrayed as an unpleasant, over-confident person. The use of the phrase 'death brag,' evokes the feelings of dread, disgust and horror.

Line 12

Eternal lines: the speaker refers to lines of poetry. He states that because these lines of poetry will be read forever, the beloved's beauty will live forever. The speaker's poetry eternalises her youth and her beauty.
Couplet

Lines 13-14

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

The beloved will continue to live through this poem the speaker has written (to immortalise the beloved).

OR

As long as there are people that are alive on this planet (earth) and as long as people can read, this poem will live on forever. As long as this poem is read in future and in years to come, the poem itself will be the carrier of the eternal life of the speaker's beloved. This poem will make the beloved immortal (eternal) and give life to her beauty. The beloved will live forever in the hearts of the people who read this sonnet (poem). The poem itself is the life-giving force of the speaker's beloved.

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3. Themes

Love/Time

The speaker's beloved beauty will never fade because he is putting it into verse which will last forever. Everything is subject to the passage of time and change, even the beauty of the speaker's beloved.

4. Diction and Figurative Language

Rhetorical question/Metaphor (line 1)
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
The rhetorical question emphasises the difficult task the speaker is faced with.

Apostrophe
The speaker uses apostrophe when he addresses his beloved; whom we never see responding at any point in the poem.

Metaphor/Personification (line 3-4)
'…darling buds of May'
'And summer's lease hath all too short a date'

The wind is portrayed as having human qualities; it is violent towards the small, dear, delicate buds, whose vulnerability is contrasted with the harsh destructiveness of the wind.

Metaphor/Personification (lines 5-6)
'Eye of heaven' is a metaphor for sun – at times, the sun is too hot.
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;

Metaphor (line 6)
'…his gold complexion…'

Metaphor (line 9-10)
'…thy eternal summer shall not fade'
'Nor lose possession of that fair…'

Personification/metaphor (line 11)
The speaker personifies Death which falsely boasts – that it will claim the speaker's beloved.

Alliteration (Sound Device) (line 7)
'fair from fair' – emphasising that the beauty of everything beautiful fades eventually.

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5. Tone and mood

Endearing/adoration/affection/devotion

The tone of this poem changes between pessimism and optimism. On the one hand, the speaker talks about how nothing is permanent. On the other hand, the speaker also asserts the immortality of his beloved; the speaker knows that long after he is gone, this poem will continue to be read and appreciated.

Activity 1

Read the poem, Sonnet 18, and answer the questions below.

1.1 Identify the type of poem and discuss its structure. (3)

1.2 Refer to the FIRST quatrain:

(a) Discuss the meaning of the word 'temperate' in the context of the poem. (2)

(b) Name the figure of speech used in line 4. (1)

(c) Discuss the significance of the image mentioned in 1.2 (b). (2)

1.3 Refer to the SECOND quatrain:

(a) Name TWO negative qualities of summer referred to in these lines. (2)

(b) State what the words 'fair from fair' mean in your own words. (2)

(c) According to the speaker, there are TWO things we cannot prevent.

Use your own words to explain what he means. (2)

1.4 Refer to the THIRD quatrain:

(a) Quote ONE word in this quatrain to prove the following statement TRUE.

The beauty of the speaker's lover will be there forever. (1)

(b) Rewrite line 11 in your own words. (2)

1.5 Refer to the couplet:

In your opinion, what is the speaker's message in these lines? Discuss your answer (2)

1.6 What does the word 'this' in the final line refer to? (1)

1.7 Identify the tone of the poem by choosing from the options below.

Write only the question number and the letter of the answer you choose:

A. Nostalgic
B. Mournful
C. Humorous
D. Endearing (1)

1.8 The speaker in the poem exaggerates the beauty of his beloved.
Discuss your view. (3)

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Suggested Answers for Activity 1

1.1 English/Shakespearean Sonnet. ✔
It consists of 14 lines, divided into three quatrains and a couplet. ✔
It is written in iambic pentameter. ✔
The rhyme scheme is abab, cdcd, efef, gg. ✔
Any THREE answers. (3)

1.2 (a) Even-tempered / less changeable / more constant.
It means that the person addressed person's beauty or nature is more constant than a summer's day which changes all the time. ✔✔ (2)

(b) Metaphor/personification. ✔

(c) It emphasises that summer will, at some stage, come to an end.
Just like a 'lease' (rental contract) exists for a limited period, summer only lasts for a limited period. ✔✔ (2)

1.3 (a) Sometimes is too hot. ✔
Sometimes the sun doesn't shine brightly enough. ✔ (2)

(b) The beauty (fair) of everything beautiful (fair) will fade/wither/die ('declines'). Nothing lasts forever, not even summer, the perfect season. The inevitable mortality of beauty is emphasised. ✔✔ (2)

(c) We cannot stop fate / accidents scarring a person's beauty. ✔
We cannot stop old age which affects beauty. ✔ (2)

1.4 (a) 'eternal'. ✔ (1)

(b) Death is personified – portrayed as a person who boasts (brags) about his power over people or brags about his power to destroy life and beauty; however, death can never claim the life of the beloved. ✔✔ (2)

1.5 As long as there are people that are alive on earth and as long as people can read, this poem will live on forever. As long as this poem is read in future and in years to come, the poem itself will be the carrier of the eternal life of the speaker's beloved. This poem will make the beloved immortal (eternal) and give life to her beauty. The beloved will live forever in the hearts of the people who read this sonnet (poem). The poem itself is the life-giving force of the speaker's beloved. ✔✔ (2)

1.6 This poem/Sonnet. ✔ (1)

1.7 D/Endearing. ✔ (1)

1.8. Open-ended
Provide any relevant response which shows an understanding of the following viewpoints, among others:

Yes.
- The beauty of the speaker's beloved cannot last forever; she is not immortal.
- The lasting beauty is only implied in the speaker's memory.
- Everything is subject to the passage of time and change. ✔✔✔

OR

No.
- Her personality makes her beautiful (she is not moody). If he really loves his beloved not even time (wrinkles) will change his opinion about her beauty.
- Her beauty will remain with him in his memory – he will always remember her, even after her death. ✔✔✔

NOTE: NO mark is awarded for YES or NO only. For full marks, the response must be well-substantiated. You can score 1-2 marks for a response which is not well-substantiated. Your interpretation must be grounded in the poem. (3)

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[24]

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Poetry 2

Everything has changed (except graves)

by *Mzi Mahola*

Mzi Mahola (Mzikayise Winston Mahola) was born in 1949. He grew up in Lushington, beneath the Amathole Mountains in the Eastern Cape. He lived from infancy to the age of twelve with his grandparents in Lushington in the Eastern Cape before, in 1962, joining his parents in Port Elizabeth. Schooling at Lovedale College and at Healdtown (where he began to write poetry), followed by an interrupted period of study at Fort Hare University, kept him in touch with his region and with family and friends. He started writing while he was at school. After 1989 he started writing again, submitting work successfully to national and international journals, magazines and publications. His name is also inscribed at the New Brighton Library Wall of Fame for his contribution in community development.

He attributes that to his childhood in the farming communities that broadened his mental horizons by exposing him to nature, hardships and moral values. His poems celebrate aspects of the post-apartheid country, but frequently points to areas of disappointment with the present, because it is supposed to be a time of freedom and happiness after a terrible past.

Mzi Mahola

Summary of the poem

The speaker returns to his childhood town and school that has been abandoned and has fallen into disrepair. He acknowledges the patience and care his teachers displayed. The state of affairs depresses him, the windows and roofs are either damaged or stolen. The speaker is wondering where they disappeared to. In contrast to the ruins of the school, the church next to the school has been renovated. Things have changed; even the church, a Dutch Reformed which was previously frequented by white people has since became a Methodist church, which welcomes people of all races.

The speaker again indicates the fact that nothing is the same except the graves that are sometimes cleaned by the whites.

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Everything has changed (except the graves)

by Mzi Mahola

1. I stood at the ruins
2. of my former school
3. where I was patiently moulded;
4. wild plants own every space now;
5. my soul was paralyzed.
6. What happened to the roofs
7. the doors and the windows?
8. Can these dumb lonely walls
9. still recognize me?
10. Everything has changed;
11. the ground where we ran and laughed
12. and the corner of the playground
13. where I pummelled a schoolmate almost to pulp
14. are scarfed with wattle
15. to conceal my shame.
16. A short distance away
17. stands a renovated Church
18. a Dutch Reformed formerly,
19. now a Methodist)
20. embraced by a mute little cemetery
21. that claims the past
22. (the dividing fence has vanished)
23. though growth strangles it to near extinction;
24. cold names of departed whites
25. who were part of this community
26. and made monumental contributions
27. are etched on the headstones.
28. Sometimes whites come here
29. to clean and put flowers
30. on their family graves;
31. a voice whispers next to me
32. but I do not recognize its face
33. because Lushington has changed
34. except the graveyard.

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Words to know

Word	Basic Definition
(line 20) embraced	Embraced means hugged.(The speaker means that there are wattle trees everywhere. Wattle is usually wild and grows very quickly).
(line 20) mute	characterised by an absence of sound (silent) if you are mute you are unable to speak. (The graves in the poem do not give the poet any information about why the surroundings have changed).
(line 13) pulp	when something (fruit /paper) is turned into mush or is destroyed. (The speaker means that he damaged his classmate's face during a fist fight).
(line 13) pummelled	to punch over and over again. (The speaker means that he could not stop punching his classmate).
(line 14) wattle	a kind of hard tree with thin branches. (In the poem, the wattle's presence means that the grounds are not being cared for).
(line 17) renovated	rebuilt or made new. (The speaker is talking literally about fixing up buildings).

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1. Type and form

This poem is written in free verse (free style) and consists of two stanzas. The first stanza is written in a narrative form, switching between the present and the past tense as the speaker tells about his visit to his old school in Lushington, and shares his experiences at the school and then tells about his visit to the cemetery.

The second stanza is written in the present tense and the speaker portrays what he hears and what he feels when he looks around in the cemetery.

Interview with Mzi Mahola on questions regarding the poem.

1. Did you write the poem after a visit to Lushington, or was this an imaginary visit?

I started drafting it after sight-seeing the ruins of what used to be my former school. This was my first visit after 53 years.

2. You say in the poem that your soul was paralyzed? Could you please elaborate on the feelings you experienced when standing at the ruins of the school?

I cried. Fortunately, I was on my own. Teachers from the school I was visiting had allowed me to make the tour on my own and be alone. Probably they understood.

I found it hard; no, impossible to join together those remaining pieces so as to get a mental picture of what part of the building each represented. They were too small to give me a picture of what, to me as a child, was a reasonably large church building. The playground had also shrunken into the size of a garden plot. The overgrowth of vegetation had taken over everything. My landmark was the Dutch Reformed Church and its cemetery; otherwise everything had almost disappeared. This was too much for me. I went away to compose myself before facing the class.

3. You sound as if you were very happy at school and with the education you received. Please tell me more.

I never knew happiness while I attended here. But I also find it strange how time and maturity heals our emotional and physical scars. It dawned in me that no matter what or who I am, it all started there, at that school. Dancing With Hyenas narrates in detail my sad experiences, as a child, in that school. Despite those childhood experiences, my emotional attachment with that community can never be severed. If I could help it, I'd make a noticeable contribution to those schools, so as to make a difference to those rural children. I only enjoyed school life after I left Lushington. But I'm sure life would have been wonderful even there if I had continued staying with my grandparents. But again, I've talked about all that in my novel.

4. You speak about a schoolyard fight that you were ashamed of. Was this an isolated incident, or were you a bully (as some resources say)?

I don't know which source talks of my bullyish nature. I wish I was that kind of person, really. The fight that I had at that school was the only one in a schoolyard. Of course I was a boxer, after I came to Port Elizabeth. I really loved boxing and I became a South African Flyweight Champion in the amateurs. I later became a Provincial Bantamweight Champion as a professional.

My dream was to become a national champion and then a world champ, but the unrests ended those dreams when sport was suspended in P. E. Maybe I was a bully in the ring, because throughout my boxing years (from the age of 13 till I was 32) I lost only once.

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5. I gather that the Dutch Reformed Church closed down because of dwindling numbers of white people in the community. Is that why the Methodist Church took over the building?

No, it was not because of the dwindling numbers of white people. The South African and Ciskeian Governments were responsible. Whites were forced to sell their farms in order to create a black corridor and Lushington was a farming area, so without land, where would white people live? Unless they squatted on farms owned by blacks.

6. Can you please explain lines 24-27 ("cold names…headstones")?

Death is said to be cold. Names of the dead, etched on cold stones must be cold when we touch them. Gloomy as this may sound, etching the names of the departed on headstones is like etching them on monuments, so that they should never be forgotten for their contribution.

7. It is unclear who the voice is you mention in the second stanza. I interpret it that it might be a physical person who accompanied you to the school or a voice in your head. Can you please clarify?

Obviously I was curious for some explanation so as to fill the gaps that were opened during my absence. The voice was that of a self-appointed tourist guide, an elderly SGB member who found me curled up on a log, crying. Apparently he had followed from a distance. Maybe he thought he would earn himself a few rands if he answered any question that I might ask about Lushington, because I was a stranger to that place, as far as he was concerned.

8. Why did you write lines 29 and 30 in italics?

I wrote them in italics so that the reader may understand the difference, that this is a new voice speaking.

9. Please explain why the graves play such a significant role in this poem?

They signify and represent a living past, a permanent existence, because no one can deny their unchanging presence in that cemetery, in spite of all other changes taking place around them.

2. Analysis

Title: The speaker goes back to Lushington, the place where he grew up. He is disappointed; his mental picture of his childhood village has been shattered, because his old school is in a very poor condition as a result of neglect. The cemetery and family graves are the only things that have not changed – family members sometimes still come to clean up the grave site.

Lines 1-5

I stood at the ruins
of my former school
where I was patiently moulded;
wild plants own every space now;
my soul was paralyzed.

The speaker returns to his former school that has been abandoned and is in a poor condition due to neglect. The word 'moulded' literally means to be cut carefully with a sharp instrument, in the context of this poem, the speaker means that teachers used patience to educate him. He was treated kindly (with kindness), therefore; he looks back to his schooling with appreciation.

The school yard is overgrown with weeds and alien plants. The speaker feels sad at the total neglect he is witnessing. The speaker is also in a state of shock/disappointed.

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Lines 6-9

What happened to the roofs
the doors and the windows?
Can these dumb lonely walls
still recognize me?

The speaker uses rhetorical questions in these lines to emphasise that the school building is in ruins; with doors, windows and roofs either damaged or stolen. The speaker is wondering where they disappeared to. The walls are referred to as 'dumb'; they cannot speak.

Lines 10-15

Everything has changed;
the ground where we ran and laughed
and the corner of the playground
where I pummelled a schoolmate almost to pulp
are scarfed with wattle
to conceal my shame.

The speaker had fun during his school days; everything was uncomplicated and cheerful. The speaker vividly remembers the specific place where he aggressively punched his school mate. The place where the fight took place is now hidden by a tree.

At the time of the fight, the speaker might have felt justified in order to defend himself. Now his older self is ashamed of the incident. The big tree hides the evidence of what he now sees as shameful.

Line 16-27

A short distance away
stands a renovated Church
(a Dutch Reformed formerly,
now a Methodist)
embraced by a mute little cemetery
that claims the past
(the dividing fence has vanished)
though growth strangles it to near extinction;
cold names of departed whites
who were part of this community
and made monumental contributions
are etched on the headstones.

In contrast to the ruins of the school, the church next to the school has been renovated. Note the use of the capital letter in the word 'Church' (this suggests that the church stands out from the rest of the ruins around).
Another sign that times have changed is the fact that a church, previously frequented by Whites (a Dutch Reformed), has now become a Methodist church that welcomes people of all races (church is now more liberal). This means even the church has changed.

The dividing fence has vanished' (line 22) - this implies that there is no racial divide anymore. This shows how things have really changed.

The speaker uses personification to emphasize the quietness at the cemetery; suggesting that the cemetery has no voice to speak about the white people who have made contributions to their community, they are remembered through the tombstone.

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Lines 24 -27

Death is said to be cold. Names of the dead, etched on cold stones must be cold when we touch them. Gloomy as this may sound, etching the names of the departed on headstones is like etching them on monuments, so that they should never be forgotten for their contribution.
(SEE Mzi Mahola's interview)

Lines 28-30

Sometimes whites come here
to clean and put flowers
on their family graves;

The white people, who are now outsiders to this community visit the graves of their departed. They clear the area of weeds and put flowers on the graves. The graveyard is the only place that is looked after. Lines 29 and 30 are written in italics so that the reader may understand the difference, that this is a new voice speaking.

Lines 31-34

a voice whispers next to me
but I do not recognize its face
because Lushington has changed
except the graveyard.

The speaker hears the voice, but could not recognise the face of the person speaking. Previously he had known everybody, now this person is a stranger. According to the poet (Mzi Mahola), the voice was that of a self-appointed tourist guide, an elderly SGB member who found him curled up on a log, crying. Apparently he had followed him from a distance. Maybe he thought he would earn himself a few rands if he answered any question that he (Mzi) might ask about Lushington, because the elderly man thought he was a stranger to Lushington.

The speaker again indicates the fact that everything is in ruins, except the graves that are sometimes cleaned by the whites.

3. Themes

Past versus Present

In the poem the speaker seems to be nostalgic as he goes back to a place he grew up in and visits his school. He shares some of his childhood memories as he reflects on his childhood life. He then speaks of the present condition of the school, its surroundings and how things look like as he looks at the place.
He is upset that the past has not been preserved and looked after. On his return to Lushington, everything had changed-not all for the better.

Change (Change is inevitable)
The speaker visits his former childhood school and hometown after many years and reflects on the change he sees. The school building and the playground are unrecognizable because they are overgrown with wild plants. The speaker has also changed. At the time of the fight with his schoolmate; the speaker might have felt justified in order to defend himself, now his older self is ashamed of the incident. The big tree hides the evidence of what he now sees as shameful. Lushington has changed so much that the speaker no longer has a sense of belonging.

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4. Diction and Figurative Language

Language

Repetition [everything has changed (except the graves]

The speaker wants to say very clearly that things have changed to the worse, except for the graves that are cleaned (by the whites).

Metaphor/Personification

Line 4

There are wild plants everywhere which highlights the neglect of the area or the school.

Line 5

The speaker feels nothing except shock and horror about the state in which Lushington is – the state of ruin.

OR

The speaker is so shocked/disappointed when he sees the neglected state of the school, that he cannot express his feelings.

Line 14

The speaker compares the wattle trees to a scarf (around someone's neck). This implies that at the time of the fight, the speaker might have felt justified to punch the school mate in order to defend himself, now his older self is ashamed of the incident. The big tree hides the evidence of what he now sees as shameful.

Rhetorical Question Lines 6-9

The speaker captures his shock and surprise by asking a question that needs no answer.
The speaker emphasises the fact that the school building is in ruins; there are no doors, windows and roofs, they are either damaged or stolen. The speaker is wondering where they disappeared to. The walls are referred to as 'dumb' – they cannot speak.

Personification

Lines 8-9

The walls are given qualities of loneliness.

Line 20

The cemetery is mute, i.e. the cemetery's quietness is compared to a person who cannot talk. The word 'mute' means silence/quietness; it describes the cemetery which is associated with death/a state of not being able to speak.

Hyperbole Line 13

The speaker exaggerates a fist fight ('pummelled… pulp') with his schoolmate.

Euphemism Line 24

Instead of using the word dead (or deceased) the speaker refers to the deceased as the departed.

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5. Tone and Mood

Sombre (sad).

The speaker feels desponded (depressed) as he sees the state of neglect in his old school and childhood town. He feels as if he no longer belongs to Lushington; he does not even recognise the voice whispering next to him (line 31)

- 'I stood at the ruins' (line 1).
- 'dumb lonely walls' (line 8).
- 'mute little cemetery' (line 20).

Nostalgic (yearning for the past).

The speaker is reminded of his school days; he is shocked because the school is in ruins.

Melancholic (low spirited).

Indifferent – last stanza
The speaker does not even acknowledge the person whispering to him.

Activity 2

Read the poem, Everything has changed (except graves, and answer the questions below.

2.1 Explain why '(except graves)' has been placed between brackets. (2)

2.2 The poet uses the phrase 'patiently moulded' in line 3. What do these words tell us about the way in which children were educated at his old school? (2)

2.3 Describe the speaker's viewpoint on the following:

(a) The school (2)

(b) The church (2)

(c) The grave (2)

2.4 Refer to lines 11-15 ('the ground where… conceal my shame)

Quote TWO words to show that the speaker has experienced joy as well as embarrassment at school. (2)

2.5 Refer to line 5.

The speaker states that his soul was 'paralysed' by what he saw. What do these words tell us about his feelings? (2)

2.6 Refer to line 20.

Why are the graves referred to as 'mute'? (1)

2.7 Identify and explain the theme of the poem, based on what the speaker feels when he revisits the school of his childhood. (2)
[17]

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Suggested Answers for Activity 2

2.1 The poet adds it to qualify his statement that everything has changed in the community except (the) graves. ✔✔ (2)

2.2 They were treated kindly ✔; no harsh words or punishment is suggested. ✔ (2)

2.3 (a) The school building is in ruins, with doors, windows and roofs either damaged or stolen. The yard is overgrown with weeds and alien plants. ✔✔ (2)

(b) The church has been rebuilt and upgraded. People often attend services there, so the garden is also kept clean. ✔✔ (2)

(c) There are a number of graves with etched gravestones. ✔ The fence is missing, in its place there are shrubs and weeds. ✔ (2)

2.4 'laughed' ✔
'shame' ✔ (2)

2.5 The speaker feels sad ✔ at the total neglect he is witnessing. The speaker is also in a state of shock/disappointment. ✔ (2)

2.6 The speaker uses personification to emphasize the quietness at the cemetery. ✔ (1)

2.7 The past is deeply engraved within us (past versus present). ✔

The speaker seems to be nostalgic as he goes back to a place he grew up in and visits his school. He shares some of his childhood memories as he reflects on his childhood life. He then speaks of the present condition of the school, its surroundings and how things look like as he looks at the place. He is upset that the past has not been preserved and looked after. On his return to Lushington, everything had changed- not all for the better. ✔✔ (2)

[17]

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Poetry 3

Spring

by *Gerald Manley Hopkins*

Hopkins was a very spiritual man. He converted (changed) from being an Anglican Christian to a Catholic priest when he was an adult. Hopkins did most of his work as a priest in industrial (factory) communities, where people were poor, hard-working and suffering.

He became very depressed. His poetry was a way to cope with his sadness about the world. Hopkins's poetry was only published thirty years after he died in 1889.

Gerald Manley Hopkins

Summary of the poem

In this sonnet, the speaker celebrates the beauty of nature and the glory of God. In the octave the speaker addresses the season of Spring as the best season out of all the seasons as it is the season of productivity and life. He then offers a description of spring's features, qualities, and activities that leads him to believe his claim. Spring is the time, 'When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush.' (line 2).

The speaker loves how nature rises newly every spring: even the weeds look lovely, the birds sing, the trees grow new leaves that touch the sky, and lambs are born. Everything in spring is exciting, fresh, and new. The speaker sounds very certain that the natural happenings are happy and good.

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Spring

by *Gerald Manley Hopkins*

1. Nothing is so beautiful as Spring –
2. When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;
3. Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush
4. Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring
5. The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;
6. The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush
7. The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush
8. With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.
9. What is all this juice and all this joy?
10. A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning
11. In Eden garden. – Have, get, before it cloy,
12. Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning,
13. Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,
14. Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning.

Words to know

Word	Basic meaning
(line 2) lush	flourishing growth / growing luxuriantly
(line 3) Thrush	a small or medium-sized songbird
(line 4) wring	to twist or squeeze – the bird's song is so loud and clear that it seems to pierce human ears and makes us pay attention
(line 8) fling	quick, energetic dance.
(line 10) strain	a sound of a piece of music
(line 11) Eden	paradise
(line 11) cloy	To sicken with excess of sweetness
(line13) Mayday	Spring day (Europe) / The first day of May
(line 14) maid	a maid in this poem means Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ
(line 14) maid's child	Jesus Christ

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2. Type and Form

The poem 'Spring' is an Italian/Petrarchan sonnet; it comprises of 14 lines. The first eight lines are referred to as the octave – the octave describes the beauty of Spring and nature; the octave also describes the speaker's joy, wonder and appreciation. The last six lines are referred to as the sestet – the sestet offers a change in tone and imagery. There are no more descriptions of the beauty of nature but instead a reflection on religion.
The rhyme scheme is abba abba cdcd cd.

3. Analysis

Octave (the first 8 lines)

Nothing is so beautiful as Spring
When weeds in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;
Thrust's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring
The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;
The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush
The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush
With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.

Line 1

The speaker asserts that Spring is beautiful; nothing compares to it/ Spring is the loveliest season.

Line 2

The use of alliteration gives a sense of speed and growth of weeds. Weeds are parasites and are generally not viewed in a positive light; however, the speaker describes them as 'lovely and lush' which are terms of admiration.

Lines 3-5

Thrush's eggs are blue in colour and therefore resemble the colour of the sky which is associated with the heavens. The sound (song) is compared to the powerful sound of lightning. The bird's song is so loud and clear that it seems to pierce human ears.

Lines 6-8

A peartree grows leaves and then its flowers blossom; in the distance it is compared to a paintbrush colouring the sky.

Sestet (the last six lines)

What is all this juice and all this joy?
A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning
In Eden garden. – Have, get, before it cloy,
Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning,
Innocent mind and Mayday in girl and boy,
Most, O maid's child, thy choice and worthy the winning.

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Line 9

The rhetorical question in this line simply means:
What does all of this beauty of nature actually signify? / What is the significance of beauty? It can also be about where this beauty and happiness originate.

Lines 10-14

(Line 10) – the speaker already has an answer to the question in line 9 that; beauty and happiness are holy, spiritual, and they are from God. The speaker also indicates that Spring is a lot like the good old times in the biblical Garden of Eden; its freshness (Spring) and innocence is compared to the garden of Eden, before mankind's sinning corrupted it.

OR

The poet asserts that springtime is an image of what the world would have been like in the beginning, before the sin of mankind corrupted it.

Lines 11-14

The speaker suggests that people have a little memory of what the paradise of Eden must have been like. He proceeds to use different images of innocence ('Christ', Mary') to present his image of the beautiful, peaceful and innocent world he would like to see. Finally, the poet wishes for a return of that world of innocence.

OR

He prays that God preserves beauty before it loses its purity. he appeals to Christ and asks him to protect beauty from sin.

He is referring to childhood innocence. He appeals to Jesus as the child of Mary to win innocent children to his side and save them from sin.

4. Themes

Innocence

The speaker admires and loves springtime, as it is a time for renewal. Spring is innocent and free from guilt and sin, whereas humans deliberately disrupt and destroy these peaceful and productive cycles.
Humans need to be as innocent (well-behaved, kind and loving) as lambs (line 8).
The speaker believes that spring is like when God created the world; he imagines it was a hopeful and innocent time.
He thinks back to Eden, the paradise that was supposed to exist before humans were on the earth (line 11).

The unique and special nature of the universe

Everything, no matter how small, is meant to be on earth. Each object and action has purpose. e.g.
(line 2) The weeds are patterned in 'wheels'. They have their own purpose.
(line 3) The thrush's eggs are little versions of 'heaven'– perfect and new each time, even though there are so many of them.
(lines 2-3) The thrush's song 'wrings' our ears and reminds us of how beautiful and wonderful nature is.

Human's physical and spiritual needs

Humans must change their attitudes so they can appreciate all the wonderful things on our planet.
Humans form part of a species that must live peacefully with other species. Everything in nature has a place (even weeds) – and humans need to understand and enjoy the earth. Instead, humans often damage and destroy beautiful places.

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5. Diction and figurative Language

Hyperbole

(Line 1) 'Nothing is so beautiful as Spring –'
Alliteration
(Line 2) weeds-wheels
(Line 2) long-lovely-lush
(Line 8) fair-fling
Alliteration
(Line 9) juice-joy

Simile

(Line 3) The 'eggs of a thrush' are compared to the speckled/spotted and cloud patterned sky. However, the word 'like' is omitted. The line can also be classified as a metaphor.
(Line 5) The song of the thrush is compared to lightning.

Metaphor

- The speaker compares spring time to the Garden of Eden from the bible.
- The peartree in the distance is compared to a paint brush colouring the sky.

Personification

Line 6
The 'glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush.'

Lines 7-8
The sky is personified as if it just cannot hurry down fast enough to share its beauty. This makes the beauty sound like a gift ('richness') being given from up above, to man here on earth.

Rhetorical question

Line 9
'What is all this juice and all this joy?'

Contrast

The poet uses contrast between sinning and innocence.
There is also contrast between the joyful praising nature (in the octave) and the anxiety, worry about sin and praying to God (in the sestet).

Images

Images to capture beauty and energy:
'What is all this juice and all this joy?' and 'weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush' [these all have an appealing sound due to alliteration].

- 'weeds', 'eggs', 'thrush', 'lambs' and 'peartree'.

Images from the bible:

- 'in the beginning in Eden garden'
- 'Most, O maid's child, thy choice' (prayer).

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6. Tone and Mood

In the octave
The tone is **cheerful** and **celebratory**:
'Nothing is so beautiful as spring'
In line **9** the tone is **questioning**:
'What is all this juice and all this joy?'
Sometimes, also as in line nine, the tone is **enthusiastic** (full of energy)
'What is all this juice and all this joy?'

In the sestet
The tone changes and becomes **urgen**t and **anxious** and **pleading (line 11**) 'Have, get, before it cloy, before it cloud.'
(Line 12) the tone is r**egretful** – 'Before it cloud, Christ, lord, and sour with sinning'
This is in contrast with the joyful tone in the octave.
(Line 14) the tone is **prayerful**
'Most, O maid's child, thy choice'

ACTIVITY 3

Read the poem, Spring, and answer the questions below.

3.1 Describe the structure of this poem fully. (3)

3.2 Refer to line 2 ('When weeds…and lush.')

Identify the sound device in this line. (1)

3.3 Identify a songbird mentioned in the poem. (1)

3.4 Identify and explain the effectiveness of the figure of speech used in line 3. (2)

3.5 Refer to line 4 ('Through the echoing…wring.')

Choose the correct answer to complete the following sentence:

The word 'wring' is an example of a/an …

A alliteration.
B oxymoron.
C onomatopoeia.
D pseudonym. (1)

3.6 Quote one word from the passage indicating that the flowers are young, lively and bright. (1)

3.7 Explain the tone displayed in lines 1 to 8 (octave) (2)

3.8 What do you associate the Garden of Eden with in the poem? Give two words. (2)
3.9 To whom does 'maid's child' (line 14) refer? (1)

3.10 One of the themes of the poem is innocence.

Discuss this theme in the context of the poem. (3)

3.11 The speaker succeed in convincing the reader about the beauty of Spring.

Discuss your view. (3)

[20]

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Suggested Answers

3.1 This sonnet is an Italian/Petrarchan sonnet. ✔
It comprises of 14 lines. ✔
The first eight lines are referred to as the octave. ✔
The last six lines are referred to as the sestet. ✔
The rhyme scheme is abba abba cdcd cd. ✔

NOTE: Any THREE answers (3)

3.2 Alliteration ✔ (1)

3.3 Thrush ✔ (1)

3.4 Metaphor/Simile (like removed√): Thrush's eggs are compared to the heavens. ✔ (2)

3.5 C / onomatopoeia ✔ (1)

3.6 Bloom ✔ (1)

3.7 It is a celebratory tone showing happiness and excitement. ✔ ✔ (2)

3.8 Any TWO from the following responses: Innocence ✔, freshness, ✔ purity ✔, uncorrupted ✔ (2)

3.9 It refers to Jesus. ✔ (1)

3.10 The explanation of the theme of innocence, should include the following points, among others:
- Spring is innocent and free from guilt and sin and humans deliberately disrupt and destroy these peaceful and productive cycles.
- Humans need to be as innocent (well-behaved, kind and loving) as lambs.
- The speaker believes that spring is like when God created the world; he imagines it was a hopeful and innocent time.
- The speaker thinks back to Eden, the paradise that was supposed to exist before humans were on the earth. (3)

3.11 Open-ended.
Provide a relevant response which shows an understanding of the following viewpoints, among others:

Yes.
- The speaker's use of figures of speech and words like 'beautiful', 'lovely' and 'lush' convey the idea of the splendour of Spring.
- The descriptions of Spring, create a pleasant picture of nature, new life, bliss/happiness in the mind of the reader.
- Through his descriptions the speaker convinces the reader to feel the way that he does about Spring.

No.
- The preference of readers as to their favourite season will differ.
- Other seasons also have a unique beauty, not just Spring.
- Not all readers will understand the language/diction/comparisons that the speaker uses.

NOTE: NO mark is awarded for YES or NO. Responses where a combination is given will be credited. For full marks, the response must be well-substantiated. You can score 1 or 2 marks for a response which is not well-substantiated. Your interpretation must be grounded in the text of the poem. (3)

[20]

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Poetry 4

Poem

by *Barolong Seboni*

Barolong Seboni was born in Botswana in 1957. He has lived in America and England. He is a teacher and university academic, and has published a few collections of poetry. Besides having his poetry published in various journals and newspapers, Seboni was also responsible for a satirical weekly newspaper column, 'In the Nitty Gritty' in Botswana Guardian and he wrote scripts for a radio soap opera on HIV/AIDS ('Makgabaneng'). 'Protest poetry' as it was labelled, characterised the first five or so years of Barolong's writing as a student at the University of Botswana and Swaziland, up to 1980. He wrote his first published poem when he was 18 years old.

Poem by Barolong Seboni

We do not need
these jaggered words
that dig a trench between us
each time they are uttered

those epithets
sharp like spokes
that pierce the heart when spoken

there is no room in my cup
for these acidic words of sarcasm
that corrode my sensitivity

these cold and icy terms tossed
to deaden the heart
venomous words
from your serpentine tongue
that infect the feeling …

Let us speak, love
in gentler tones
timid as the lamb
is soft
woolly words
worn to stand strong against the
cold-bitterness of the world.

Better still
let us search in our speech
for words deep as the soul is still
that will spell our thoughts
in the silence of our smiles.

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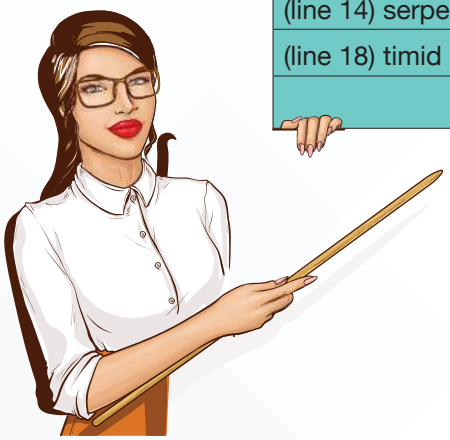
Words to know

Words	Basic definition
(line 1) jaggered	torn, with sharp edges.
(line 3) trench	a ditch
(line 5) epithets	name calling or insult/ curse.
(line 7) pierce	stab
(line 10) corrode	damage, eat away, crumble.
(line 11) tossed	flung/thrown out/hurled
(line 13) venomous	poisonous.
(line 14) serpentine	like a snake.
(line 18) timid	shy



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1. Type and Form

This poem is written in free verse. 'Poem' deals with the tone, intent and consequences of verbal communication and specifically hurtful and abusive words. The first four stanzas deal with nature and painful consequences of negative or hurtful communication while stanzas 5 and 6 offer a solution and paint a picture of how gentle tones and words can heal and comfort.

2. Analysis

Title

This poem is about the power of words. The speaker wants to convince the reader that words should not be used to divide and destroy people, but rather to support and inspire them.

Lines 1-4

The pronouns 'We' and 'us ' – are used collectively; and includes everyone. By using 'we' and 'us' the speaker conveys a personal and universal message. The speaker shows that victimisation through words is not isolated. The advice and recommendations that are given are also universal and not limited to one person. Hurtful words are compared to zig-zagged or sharp, pointy objects. Both these objects inflict painful injuries, physically or emotionally. Words are compared to a barrier between people, kind words keep people together; yet, hurtful words creates a distance, and make communication difficult.

Lines 5-7

The word 'epithet' means cursing (insulting words). Insultingly descriptive words are compared to spokes/spikes from a wheel used as a weapon, stabbing the heart. words can destroy someone's feelings or hurt someone's feelings. Sharp words cat cut/tear into one's heart and mind, thus making them almost difficult to forget.

jaggered knife

Lines 8-10

These lines show the comparison of the words spoken during the argument to acid, that eats away something in contact with. This shows how sarcastic, bitter and hurtful words are, they can make one insensitive. Harsh words are destructive.

Lines 11-15

During the argument there is an exchange of harsh and destructive words which drain the heart of all emotions and makes it weaker. In line 13 the speaker refers to the words as 'venomous' meaning that the hostile and unfriendly words are poisonous. Vicious words are compared to the tongue of a venomous snake. Words inflict as much pain and damage as a physical snake attack would do and are just as harmful. The use of ellipses (line 15) creates a pause and prepares a reader for a shift in tone. The first four stanzas deal with the nature and painful consequences of negative or hurtful communication while stanzas 5 and 6 offer a solution and paint a picture of how gentle tones and words can heal and comfort. The mood changes from negative complaint to positive resolution.

sharp like spokes

Lines 16-22

The speaker requests that people should use words gently and carefully by speak love instead of hatred, which would be a contrast to the words that were used in stanzas 1- 4.
The speaker uses the image of a lamb '…soft woolly words….' which symbolises warmth and protection, which is in contrast with 'cold and icy terms' in line 11.

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Lines 23-27

The speaker persuades the people to use healing words that are not harmful to others. A smile speaks volumes; all that is needed is to be silent and smile to avoid hurting others and end up causing problems.

3. Themes

The power of words

Words can have a positive or negative influence. The tone and intention of the speaker determine whether the impact will be negative or positive. Sarcasm and stereotyping can destroy people. Words should be carefully selected so that they can be used to comfort people. A smile is unspoken communication which indicates love and friendliness.

Love and hate

Love and hate are shown by the type of words we choose when speaking to people. Hurtful words destroy relationships; whereas kind words comforts people.

4. Diction and Figurative Language

Metaphor/Personification (Lines 1-4)

Hurtful words are compared to serrated knives or sharp, pointy objects which both inflict painful injuries, physically or emotionally. Words are also compared to a trench; which means saying hurtful words can cause a division between people.

Simile (Line 5-6)

An epithet is a curse. Insulting or hurtful words often damage one's feelings ('the heart') when spoken. Words can figuratively stab and harm others.

Metaphor (extended metaphor) (Lines 8-10)

The speaker suggests that he does not have time to listen to unkind and hurtful words in his life ('no room in my cup' for ugly words); all he needs are positive and kind people. A cup is figuratively the speaker's life.

Metaphor (extended metaphor) (Lines 11-15)

The speaker means that cruel words have the power to harm people and destroy relationships.

Simile (Lines 16-18)

In the same way that a lamb is associated with innocence or kindness, so too should words be used in a gentle, uplifting and encouraging manner.

Metaphor / Alliteration (Line 20)

'woolly words' – a sense of comfort and protection is experienced when people use kind and soft words. The repetition of the 'w' sound suggests the warmth that the speaker is yearning for.

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5. Tone and Mood

Some examples of tone found in the poem

Frustrated/upset

'these jaggered words/that dig a trench between us' (lines 2-3) and 'that pierce the heart when spoken' (line 7) suggests that the speaker feels distanced from and hurt by the insults and sarcasm. He is frustrated because his feelings are continually being hurt or disregarded (ignored).

Persuasive and hopeful

'Let us speak, love' (line 16) and 'let us search in our speech' (line 24-27), people are urged to work together in improving their communication skills with one another. He is proposing that they speak pleasantly and tenderly, or just keep quiet and smile.

ACTIVITY 4

Read the poem, Poem, and answer the questions below.

4.1 Complete the following sentence by using the words provided in the list.

Write down only the word next to the question number in the ANSWER BOOK.

The figure of speech used in lines 2–3 ('these jaggered words … trench between us') is …

A alliteration
B apostrophe.
C personification.
D assonance. (1)

4.2 What is being compared in lines 5 and 6 ('those epithets sharp like spokes')? (2)

4.3 Refer to line 14 ('from your serpentine tongue').

(a) When the speaker refers to 'serpentine tongue', does he mean it LITERALLY or FIGURATIVELY? (1)

(b) Give a reason for your answer to QUESTION 4.3 (a). (1)

4.4 Refer to stanzas 1–4.

Using your OWN words, state THREE effects that negative words can have on a person. (3)

4.5 Refer to line 18 ('timid as the lamb').

(a) Identify the figure of speech in this line. (1)

(b) Explain the effectiveness of this figure of speech in the context of the poem (2)

4.6 Identify the tone used by the speaker in stanzas 5 and 6. (1)

4.7 One of the themes in 'Poem' is the power of words.

Discuss this theme. (3)

4.8 Discuss why the speaker uses the words 'we' and 'us' in the poem. (3)

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[18]

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Suggested Answers for Activity 4

4.1 C/personification ✔ (1)

4.2 Hurtful/insulting words ✔ are compared to the sharp spokes of a wheel. ✔ (2)

4.3 (a) Figuratively ✔ (1)

(b) One's tongue can be like a venomous snake when using hurtful words. ✔ (1)

4.4 Negative words can cause division/distance/separation between/ among people. ✔
Sharp words can cut/tear into one's heart and mind, making them almost difficult to forget. ✔
Sarcasm/hurtful words can make one insensitive. ✔ (3)

4.5 (a) Simile ✔ (1)

(b) In the same way that a lamb is associated with innocence/kindness/ not being harmful, ✔
so too should words be used in a gentle/uplifting/encouraging manner. ✔ (2)

4.6 Positive/comforting/kind/uplifting. ✔ (1)

[18]

4.7 Provide a relevant response which shows an understanding of the theme of the power of words, among others:

- Words can have a positive or negative influence.
- The tone and intention of the speaker determine whether the impact will be negative or positive.
- Sarcasm and stereotyping can destroy people.
- Words can be used to comfort/support/build people.
- Words should be carefully selected.
- A smile speaks volumes/is unspoken communication which indicates love/friendliness/positivity.

NOTE: For full marks, the response must be well-substantiated. You can score 1 or 2 marks for a response which is not well-substantiated.
Your interpretation must be grounded in the poem. (3)

4.8

- 'We' and 'us' are used collectively.
- By using 'we' and 'us' the speaker conveys a personal/universal message.
- The speaker includes everyone/his beloved.
- The speaker shows that victimisation through words is not isolated.
- The advice and recommendations that are given are also universal and not limited to one person.

NOTE: For full marks, the response must be well-substantiated. You can score 1 or 2 marks for a response which is not well-substantiated. Your interpretation must be grounded in the poem. (3)

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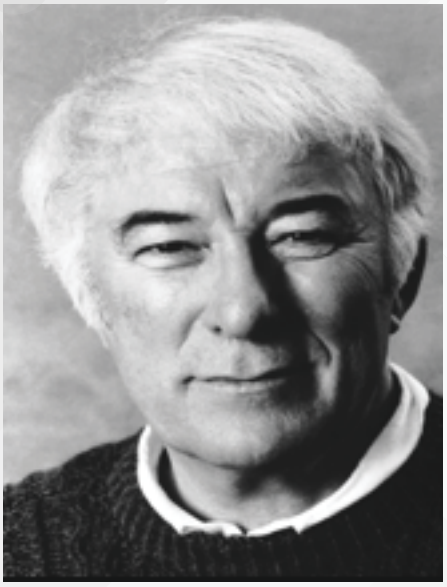
Poetry 5

Mid-term break

by *Seamus Heaney*

Seamus Heaney was born in County Londonderry, Northern Ireland, on April 13 1939. He wrote many famous poetry collections. He was a professor at Harvard and Oxford universities. He won the 1995 Nobel Prize in Literature. He died in Dublin, Ireland, on August 30 2013, at the age of 74.



Seamus Heaney

1. I sat all morning in the college sick bay
2. Counting bells knelling classes to a close.
3. At two o'clock our neighbours drove me home.

4. In the porch I met my father crying –
5. He had always taken funerals in his stride –
6. And Big Jim Evans saying it was a hard blow.

7. The baby cooed and laughed and rocked the pram
8. When I came in, and I was embarrassed
9. By old men standing up to shake my hand

10. And tell me they were 'sorry for my trouble'.
11. Whispers informed strangers I was the eldest,
12. Away at school, as my mother held my hand

13. In hers and coughed out angry tearless sighs.
14. At ten o'clock the ambulance arrived
15. With the corpse, stanched and bandaged by the nurses.

16. Next morning I went up into the room. Snowdrops
17. And candles soothed the bedside; I saw him
18. For the first time in six weeks. Paler now,

19. Wearing a poppy bruise on his left temple,
20. He lay in the four-foot box as in his cot.
21. No gaudy scars, the bumper knocked him clear.

22. A four-foot box, a foot for every year.

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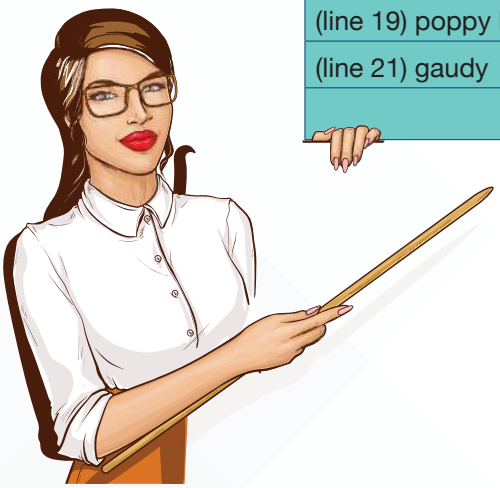
Words to know

Words	Basic definition
(line 1) sick bay	a room where pupils go when they are ill.
(line 1) knelling	slow steady strokes of a bell at a funeral
(line 7) cooed	soft murmuring sound of a young baby
(line 15) stanched	stopping the flow of blood
(line 16) snowdrops	beautiful, white, early spring flower
(line 19) poppy bruise	A bruise which resembles the poppy flower
(line 21) gaudy	extravagantly bright or showy



1. Type and Form

This is a lyric poem which is about the death of Heaney's infant brother (Christopher) and how people (including himself) reacted to this.
The poem is written from the point of view of a young Heaney (the speaker) who is summoned from school after his brother died.
The poem is divided into seven (3 line) stanzas and the final stanza is only 1 line.

2. Analysis

Lines 1-3

I sat all morning in the college sick bay
Counting bells knelling classes to a close.
At two o'clock our neighbours drove me home.
The speaker in the sick bay waiting to be picked up by his neighbours. The speaker sits in the sickbay all morning, only to be driven home at two o'clock.

Lines 4-6

In the porch I met my father crying –
He had always taken funerals in his stride –
And Big Jim Evans saying it was a hard blow.

When the speaker gets home, his father is standing in the porch crying. The speaker's father is overcome with grief and he is crying; the neighbours say he is finding it difficult to cope or to hide his sadness. The little boy was hit by a car. The child was killed literally by a hard blow, while the family are metaphorically hurt.

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Lines 7-9

The baby cooed and laughed and rocked the pram
When I came in, and I was embarrassed
By old men standing up to shake my hand
Baby is innocent and unaware of the events that are taking place, ('… cooed and laughed…'). Although the speaker has taken on the role of an adult, he still has the feelings of a child. He is shy when old men stand up to shake his hand.

Lines 10-12

And tell me they were 'sorry for my trouble'.
Whispers informed strangers I was the eldest,
Away at school, as my mother held my hand
Inside the house the speaker is met by people who are sympathising with his situation. They express their condolences as his little brother has passed on. He hears strangers (he doesn't know these people because he goes to a boarding school) whispering to each other about who he is.

Lines13-15

In hers and coughed out angry tearless sighs.
At ten o'clock the ambulance arrived
With the corpse, stanched and bandaged by the nurses.
For comfort and reassurance, the speaker's mother holds his hand. The mother seems to have been crying for some time but now she just has tearless sighs. The ambulance arrives at 10 o'clock. When the body finally arrives, the speaker refers to his brother's body as a corpse; this removes the sense of humanity (being alive) from the body and the speaker gives the idea that they tried to stop the blood - 'stanched' (line 15)

Lines 16-18

Next morning I went up into the room. Snowdrops
And candles soothed the bedside; I saw him
For the first time in six weeks. Paler now,
The next morning the speaker goes to the bedroom which is now a place of mourning. The room is calm and relaxing because of the candles and the atmosphere in the room. The speaker sees his brother for the first time in six weeks; this tells the reader when last the speaker visited home (from boarding school). The speaker has a memory of his brother prior to this (he sees the difference in complexion) – he is now light in complexion ('paler').

Lines 19-21

Wearing a poppy bruise on his left temple,
He lay in the four-foot box as in his cot.
No gaudy scars, the bumper knocked him clear.

The only sign of the fatal injury is the 'poppy bruise' on his temple, the bumper of the car knocked him and didn't cause any visible damage. The speaker compares the coffin to the cot.
The speaker sees his brother for the last time and faces death for the first time.

Line 22

A four-foot box, a foot for every year.
This line signifies the shortness of the child's life; the speaker's brother was only four years old.

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3. Themes

Death/ Grief

The entire poem clearly shows how death affects people and how people act when there is a death in the family. In this poem the speaker paints a clear picture of how the father – who is usually a very strong person – is badly affected by his son's death. The respect that the speaker gets from the adults as he enters the house and the atmosphere in the bedroom are clear indications of how death affects people.

Frailty (delicacy)of Life

A four-year old's life has been untimely snatched. In the poem it is evident that the child was knocked by the car and this was a sudden death.

Growing up

Though the speaker is still young in age, the society has certain expectations from him as he is the eldest child in the family. The speaker finds himself confronted with this situation that forces him to grow up. His father is weak and overcome with grief, the adults in the house treat him as an adult as they even stand up to shake his hand and the strangers are whispering to each other that the speaker is the eldest. His first encounter with death makes him to grow up quicker than he realized.

4. Diction and Figurative Language

Language
Onomatopoeia

Line 2 - knelling – idea of funeral bells
Line 7 - baby cooed… – shows innocence and happiness in contrast to what is going on.

Pun
'it was a hard blow' – cruel. The child was killed when the car literally hit him hard – which is a hard blow/knock to the body. It is again a sad and tragic event for the family.

Line 6

Euphemism

'sorry for my trouble' – they respectfully refer to the death of the speaker's brother as trouble. **(Line 10)**
Enjambment
Suggests that she is only sighing as she has cried too much and has no more tears to shed, except for the angry sighs.

Line 13

Alliteration

Lines 12-13 - 'held my hand in hers' – gives the idea/ feeling of reassurance.
Line 20 - 'four-foot box' – description of the coffin from the speaker's point of view.

Metaphor

Line 19 - a poppy is red in colour; therefore the bruise on the deceased is red like the colour of the poppy.

Personification

Line 17 - 'candles soothed the bedside'.

Simile
Line 20 - This line suggests the feeling of safety; the child looks at peace as if sleeping.

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Irony
A mid-term break is usually associated with time off school, holidays and fun. The poem's title suggests a holiday but this "break" does not happen for pleasant reasons as we find out that there is a death in the family.

5. Tone and Mood

Sombre/solemn/mournful/serious

Activity 5

Read the poem, Mid-term Break, and answer the questions below.

5.1 State TWO feelings experienced by the speaker in stanza 1. (2)

5.2 Choose the correct answer to complete the following sentence.

'He had always taken funerals in his stride – (line 5), suggests that the father…

A is still walking as usual at funerals.
B is always crying at funerals.
C is unable to attend funerals.
D is capable of dealing with funerals calmly. (1)

5.3 Refer to line 6 ('And Big Jim … a hard blow').
(a) Identify the figure of speech in this line. (1)

(b) Explain why this figure of speech is appropriate. (2)

5.4 Why is the speaker embarrassed when the old men shake his hand?

(lines 8-9)? (1)

5.5 Why is the following statement FALSE?
The candles mentioned in line 17 are meant to provide light. (1)

5.6 Explain the simile in line 20. ('He lay in the four foot box….') (2)

5.7 Explain the irony in the title of the poem? (2)

5.8 Discuss the theme of grief evident in this poem. (3)

5.9 The speaker seems to be detached from the event.

Discuss your view. (3)

[18]

Suggested answers

5.1 sad, anticipation, confused. (any 2) ✔ ✔ (2)

5.2 D - is capable of dealing with funerals calmly. ✔ (1)

5.3 (a) Pun. ✔
(b) The little boy was hit by a car. The child was killed literally by a hard blow, ✔ while the family is metaphorically hurt. ✔ (1)
(2)

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5.4 The speaker is young and is embarrassed when adults treat him like an adult. ✔ (1)

5.5 The candles are part of the bereavement mood, they are lit during the day and it is not dark. ✔ (1)

5.6 The coffin is compared to a cot. ✔ This shows how peaceful and safe the child looks / The child seems to be at peace /sleeping. ✔ (2)

5.7 A mid-term break is usually associated with time off school, holidays and fun. The poem's title suggests a holiday but this "break" does not happen for pleasant reasons as there is a death in the family. ✔✔

OR

The title suggests a holiday of some sorts/ a time of enjoyment but in reality the poem deals with a time of grief and emotional upheaval / struggle ✔✔ (2)

5.8 The sombre mood of the poem emphasizes the theme of grief. ✔ As the speaker arrives home the father is standing in the porch and crying, the speaker is treated as an adult, as he enters the home and they stand up to greet him and to offer their sympathies. The room upstairs that is lit with candles show and the arrival of the coffin enhances the grief. ✔✔ (3)

5.9 Open-ended.

Provide a relevant response which shows an understanding of the following viewpoints among others:

Yes.

- The speaker shows no emotion or grief while he waits in the sick bay.
- The poem is narrated as if he is describing an event; he is not showing any involvement.
- He does not refer to 'my' brother, he refers to 'the corpse' and 'he' (remains impersonal). ✔✔✔

OR

No.

- He relates the event from the point of view of a young child; he does not yet understand the implication of what has happened.
- He is in shock and denial. ✔✔✔

NOTE: For full marks, the response must be well-substantiated. You can score 1 or 2 marks for a response which is not well-substantiated. Your interpretation must be grounded in the poem.

[18]

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Poetry 6

To learn how to speak

by *Jeremy Cronin*

Jeremy Cronin was born in Durban in 1949, and grew up in Cape town. He went to university both in Cape Town and Paris. He was arrested for his activities against apartheid government, and spent seven years in prison. His first book of poems, *Inside*, reflects life in prison, and is also a looking inwards, and looking into the land. He has been involved in worker politics for most of his life

Jeremy Cronin

To learn how to speak…

by Jeremy Cronin

1. To learn how to speak
2. With the voices of the land
3. To parse the speech in its rivers,
4. To catch in the inarticulate grunt,
5. Stammer, call, cry, babble, tongue's knot
6. A sense of the stoniness of these stones
7. From which all words are cut.
8. To trace with the tongue wagon-trails
9. Saying the suffix of their aches in –kuil, -pan, -fontein,
10. In watery names that confirm
11. The dryness of their ways.
12. To visit the places of occlusion, or the lick
13. in a vlei-bank dawn.
14. To bury my mouth in the pit of your arm,
15. In that planetarium,
16. pectoral beginning to the nub of time
17. Down there close to the water-table, to feel
18. The full moon as it drums
19. At the back of my throat
20. Its cow-skinned vowel.
21. To write a poem with words like:
22. I'm telling you,
23. Stompie, stickfast, golovan,
24. Songololo, just boombang, just
25. To understand the least inflections,
26. To voice without swallowing
27. Syllables born in tin shacks, or catch
28. the 5.15 ikwata bust fife
29. Chwannisberg train, to reach
30. The low chant of the mine gang's
31. Mineral glow of our people's unbreakable resolve.
32. To learn how to speak
33. With the voices of this land.

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Words to know

Word Basic definition

line 3 - parse - to describe grammatically... Do this consistently throughout the this section.
line 4 - inarticulate - unable to express one's ideas of feelings clearly. Tongue-tied
line 4 - grunt - a low, inarticulate, gruff or guttural sound often made by an animal or used to express effort or exertion. When you reluctantly agree to something and just make a low animal sound in your throat to something and just make a low animal sound in your throat to signify this.
line 5 - babble - to utter a meaningless confusion of words or sounds: Babies babble before they can talk. To talk foolishly or idly; chatter.

line 8 - wagon - trails

- literally means the marks made by the wheels of a wagon in the sand.
- in the context of the poem it means the movement of the tongue (figuratively).

line 9 - kuil - pool, e.g. Rondekuil - a place in Cape Town

line 9 - pan - lake, e.g. Brakpan – Town in Gauteng

line 9 - fontein fountain, e.g. Buffelsfontein. The Voortrekkers gave watery name to towns because they were always short of water, and were always short of water, and were looking for it on their dry routes.

line 12 - occlusion - refers to a blockage in a stream, or in the throat, when speaking.

line 13 - vlei - bank marsh bank – an area of low lying land which is flooded in wet seasons. Swamp/ quagmire.

line 14 - pit of your arm a hollow under the arm at the shoulder.

line 15 - planetarium - a domed building in which images of stars, planets, are projected.

line 16 - pectoral relating to the breast of chest. May also mean proceeding from the heart or inner consciousness.

line 17 - water - table underground water

line 20 - cow - skinned the top part of an African drum on which the player's hands beat

line 23 - stompie - cigarette butt/short person(Afrikaans)

line 23 - stickfast – to get stuck (conjecture, from Afrikaans steek vas?)

line 23 - golovan - small cart

line 24 - songololo - millipede (long black insect which curls up into a spiral when in danger.

line 25 - inflections - slight changes in expression.

line 28 - ikwata bus fife - a quarter past five

line 29 - Chwannisberg Johannesburg

line 30 - chant - a repeated rhythmic phrase, typically one shouted or sung in unison by a crowd.

line 31 - resolve - firm determination to do something; purposefulness, resoluteness, single-mindedness, strength of will.

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1. Type and Form

'To learn how to speak' is a free verse poem with 33 lines it does not have a division of stanzas).

This poem examines the connection between languages and culture. The poem celebrates and recognises the diversity of culture in South Africa. The poem looks at the need to learn to communicate using the varied languages.

The first two (2) lines and the last two (2) lines are the same. The poet has used this refrain to emphasise a certain point or idea. The first two lines ('the land') emphasise the need to understand one another/language. In the last two lines the speaker is more specific and refers to South Africa ('this land')

2. Analysis

Title

The infinitive verb (To learn) adds to the ongoing nature of learning. The use of verbs, especially the infinitives (to + verb), this might suggest that the unending possibilities of learning and communication. In this case to learn the language of black and white people in South Africa.

The ellipsis in the title indicates that learning is an ongoing process.
This poem focuses on the progression and the similarity in acquisition of speech, transport, stages of a river and time periods. Each of these celebrates the progression, diversity and growth of South Africa.
References to 'land', "rivers", 'stones' and 'wagon-trail' create a connection of language to land, movement of people from one place to the next, and the diverse cultures, and heritage in South Africa.

Line 1

'Voices' refers to the different people/cultures and to the different languages used in South Africa.

Lines 1-2 and 32-33 (first 2 lines and last 2 lines)

The first two lines ('the land') emphasise the need to understand one another/language. In the last two lines the speaker is more specific and refers to South Africa ('this land').
'Voices of the land' might also refer to different ways that the different languages use to express themselves. These ways can be through tone/accent.

Line 3

'To parse the speech in its rivers,'

'To parse' – is an infinitive verb; in the study of language, is to divide a sentence into syllables (grammatical parts)/to analyse the words in a sentence. The speaker wishes to explain the way of speaking of other people in the country; especially the blacks and whites, in particular the Afrikaners. The rivers; from 'its rivers' refers to the flow of language from the person speaking the language.

Line 4

To catch in the inarticulate grunt,

'To catch' – is infinitive and means to grasp.

'inarticulate' – means to be tongue-tied.

'grunt' – is to mumble.

In this line the speaker is picking up bits of speech while other are speaking their language; no one is teaching him.
In the process, he tries to interpret what he hears.

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Lines 5-7

Stammer, call, cry, babble, tongue's knot
A sense of the stoniness of these stones
From which all words are cut.
'Stammer' – is to stutter in speech – speak with sudden involuntary breaks and pauses of syllables or sounds

'babble' – (gibberish) means to speak words or sounds imperfectly or without meaning. For an example; babies babble before they can actually talk.

'tongue's knot' (tongue-tied) – inability to say anything/communicate because the tongue is almost tied to a knot.

It is difficult to learn a new language, just as is to untie a knot. The words used in these lines represent the beginning of a person learning a new language.

Learning a language is a lengthy and difficult process that needs one to be patient – as is the crumbling of a stone. The process is compared to the way in which a stone is cut or weathered.

The speaker acknowledges that all languages or "tongues" come from one hard stone and are cut as seen fit by different nationalities.
The cutting of these stones can be seen as the difficult process that a person has to go through to be able to communicate well in a newly learnt language.

Line 8

To trace with the tongue wagon-trails

'Wagon-trails' – is a path made by the wheels of a wagon in the sand (literal meaning). In the poem it refers to the movement of the tongue. In South Africa; Afrikaners used wagons as their transport with which they made 'The Great Trek.'

Literally – this line refers to a journey of language (in the tracks of the language the Voortrekers used).

Figuratively – this line refers to the movement of the tongue in the mouth when words are formed. This process is compared to the movement of a wagon moving.

Lines 9-11

Saying the suffix of their aches in –kuil, -pan, -fontein,
In watery names that confirm
The dryness of their ways.

The Voortrekkers used watery names for towns or places because they were always trying to find water in the dry areas through which they travelled. These names were in many difficult to pronounce by other groups of people.
'aches' could refer to the struggle that they had to find water. 'ache' could refer to the struggle (in the context of the poem). to learn how to speak a new language is not easy. The pronunciation of a word/suffix may prove difficult, e.g. kuil and fontein.

Lines 12-13

To visit the places of occlusion, or the lick
In a vlei-bank dawn.

In dentistry; 'occlusion' – is the act of occluding; it means the obstruction of the breath passage in the articulation of a speech sound OR is the bringing of the opposing surfaces of the teeth of the two jaws into contact.

In Geography, 'occlusion' means plane occurring where the cold front of a depression has overtaken the warm front, raising the warm sector from ground level. This can bring strong winds and heavy precipitation.

In the context of the poem, some aspects of language require thorough involvement and understanding.

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Lines 14-16

To bury my mouth in the pit of your arm,
In that planetarium,
Pectoral beginning to the nub of time

'pit of your arm' refers to the hollow under the arm at the shoulder. The speaker may refer to burying his mouth in the armpit of the land. This act might be speaker's expressing of his desire to embrace the language/this land in spite of its hardships.
These lines refer to a person experiencing a closeness to his country and its languages and brings him to a better understanding of its unique qualities.

Lines 17-19

Down there close to the water-table, to feel
The full moon as it drums
At the back of my throat

The 'water-table' is underground water. When you are close to the water-table you are close to the earth, in touch with the heart of your country.
'drums' represent the sounds of the African continent. The reference to the drums may be the start of revealing the location of the land, Africa/South Africa.
If the moon and the sounds of Africa are familiar and dear to you, then you are "learning how to speak" in the language of the land.
'full-moon as it drums my throat' – The full moon at the back of the throat is a reference to the tongue – it makes deep consonant sounds like the drum. The word 'drums' is used as a verb here.

Line 20

The speaker compares the cow-hide drum of Africa culture with a vowel formed at the back of the throat. This is to show that words are formed differently in the various languages or cultures just like the different sounds that are produced by an African drumbeat.

Lines 21-24

To write a poem with words like:
I'm telling you,
Stompie, stickfast, golovan,
Songololo, just boombang, just

The use of the colon introduces a list of typical South African lingo (the local dialect).
'I'm telling you' is a typical slang used in South Africa.

Lines 22-24 point our attention to the language used by the people he is trying to communicate with.

'Stompie' – is an Afrikaans word which refers to short person; it can also refer to a cigarette butt.

'stickfast' –means to get stuck – this is a direct translation from the Afrikaans word 'steek vas'.

'golovan' – is a mine trolley which is a small tip truck. The word has a close association with Fanakalo which is a simplified language based primarily on IsiZulu, with English and a small Afrikaans input. It is used as a lingua franca, mainly in the mining industry. Mine workers use different modes of transport when going underground, for an example;

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- 'Underground cage' – a big elevator that is used to carry people and material underground (earth).
- 'Mary Ann' – a small elevator that carries a maximum of ten (10) underground.
- 'Skip' (golovan) – carries rock and people from underground.
- 'Songololo' – is a millipede.
- 'just boombang' – refers to something that happens fast/quickly.

Line 25

To understand the least inflections,

'inflections' – refers to a change in the form of a word (typically at the ending) to express a grammatical function such as tense, mood.

In understanding the different 'voices of this land', people have to be mindful of what others are saying. Inflections can add new level of meaning to words.

Lines 26-27

To voice without swallowing
Syllables born in tin shacks, or catch

The speaker highlights the fact that we have to acknowledge different dialect/ different ways that people speak.

Lines 28-29

The 5:15 ikwata bust fife
Chwannisberg train, to reach

This is a time reference indicating the time when people go to work –

'ikwata bust fife' (a quarter past five) and 'Chwannisberg' (Johannesburg) is the way that some black people would pronounce some English words.

Line 30

The low chant of the mine gang's

This refers to the fact that the groups of miners (gangs) sing in low chants as they work underground.

Line 31

Mineral glow of our people's unbreakable resolve.

'our people's unbreakable resolve' – this may be a reference to the determination of the black people in South Africa to strive for freedom during the apartheid years. It may also refer to the unwillingness of the white people to learn black languages during apartheid years. It may also refer to the unwillingness of the black people to speak the white man's language during the apartheid years (in the context of the poem, Afrikaans)

Lines 32-33

To learn how to speak
With the voices of this land.

Lines 32 and 33 is a repetition of lines 1 and 2. The first two and last two lines are the same and form a refrain (a regularly recurring phrase or verse especially at the end of each stanza or division of a poem).
The function of the refrain is to emphasise a certain point or idea – in this case the desire to learn the different languages

'the land' (line 2) changes to 'this land'.

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The first two (2) lines emphasise the need to understand one another/language ('the land'). In the last two lines the speaker is more specific and refers to South Africa
('this land').

3. Themes

Understanding and appreciation of language
The speaker points out his struggles to learn the languages of other people in the country (South Africa), and the need to understand one another/language. He also emphasises the difficulty people have to undergo in trying to understand other people's languages. The poem is a celebration of the uniqueness of the languages (diversity) used in 'this land' (South Africa) and nowhere else.

Celebration of diversity (in South Africa)
Different racial groups use language to communicate with each other in South Africa.
(Journeys in) History
The speaker uses an extended metaphor suggesting that our ancestors (both black and white) migrated in groups to different parts of the country. As people move and settle, language also moves and changes.

Progression
Nothing is static in life; everything changes and progresses. Ways of communicating and learning change over time.
(Journeys in) Nature
The poet again uses an extended metaphor to show that all water sources are connected even if we cannot see them; in the same way, South Africans are a community even though we are from different cultural backgrounds. Human beings are also part of a journey, or cycle, like the natural elements.

4. Tone and Mood

Tone
(line 5) Incomprehension/confusion/uncertainty/frustration
(lines 32-33) Pride

5. Diction and Figurative Language

'lick' (line 12) and the 'vlei' (line 13) - a salt lick is a deposit of mineral salts animals that animals use to supplement their nutrition. Many farmers use a salt lick for their animals. The word 'lick' may also refer to a lick of the tongue.
These words connect with 'dryness' in line 11.

Lines 14-15

What is the connection between an armpit (line 14) and a planetarium (line 15)?

The connection is that an armpit's shape reminds the speaker of a planetarium, which is also dome-shaped.

Figures of Speech
Personification (line 2) - The speaker refers to the 'voices' of the land. (The) Land cannot speak. This means that he wants to understand the people who live there and their languages. The voices also refer to the different cultures/backgrounds

Metaphor
(line 3) – people's words flow from their mouths when they are speaking just as water is flowing in a river.
(line 5) – Just as it is difficult to untie a knot it is sometimes difficult to "untie" or learn a new language
(line 8) – 'to trace with tongue wagon trails. The movement of the tongue in the mouth is compared to the marks that wagon wheels leave. This could refer to the settlers, and the fact that he would like to understand ('trace') their language and understand their history.

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(lines 10-11) 'In watery names that confirm/ the dryness of their ways'.

(lines 14 – 15) 'To bury my mouth in the pit of your arm/ in that planetarium'; this means that the shape of an armpit's hollow is compared to a planetarium as they are both dome-shaped.

(line 20) – 'Its cow-skinned vowel.'
The speaker uses this metaphor to compare the cow-hide drum of Africa culture with a vowel formed at the back of the throat. This is to show that words are formed differently in the various languages or cultures just like the different sounds that are produced by an African drumbeat.

(line 31) – Mineral glow of our people's unbreakable resolve.
The mineral wealth of the South African mines is compared to the wealth of determination ("unbreakable resolve) of the people who work hard in the city/mines.

Poetic Devices (Alliteration)
Lines 6-7
A sense of the stoneness of these stones
From which all words are cut.
Lines 8-9
To trace with the tongue wagon trails
Saying the suffix of their aches in -kuil, -pan, -fontein

Activity 6

Read the poem, To Learn How to Speak, and answer the questions below.

6.1 Complete the following sentence by filling in the missing words. Write only the word next to the question numbers (6.1(a) to 6.1 (c)

Free verse; ballad; sonnet; length; land; no rhyme; progress

This poem is an example of (a) …. The poet wants to learn the language of the (b)….
and also celebrates the (c) …. of South Africa. (3)

6.2 Refer to lines 1-2
Give a reason why the following statement is FALSE?

'parse' (line 3) describes how quickly or fast something happens. (1)

6.3 Refer to lines 3-4
Choose the correct answer to complete the following sentence. Write ONLY the letter (A-D) next to the QUESTION 6.3
The word 'parse' means the same as ….

A. glance at.
B. pull down.
C. break down.
D. put together. (1)

6.4 Refer to lines 5-7 ('Stammer…words are cut.')

(a) Identify the tone used in this line (1)
(b) Why would the speaker use this tone in this line? (1)

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6.5 Refer to line 3. ('To parse the speech in its rivers').

(a) Identify the figure of speech used in this line. (1)

(b) Explain why this figure of speech is relevant in this poem. (2)

6.6 Explain the difference between the first two lines and the last two lines of this poem. (2)

6.7 Do you think the poem 'To learn how to speak' is still relevant today? (3)
[15]

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Suggested Answers for Activity 6

6.1 (a) free verse. ✔ (1)
(b) land. ✔✔ (1)
(c) progress. ✔ (1)

6.2 'Parse' means the way words are divided into syllable/ ✔ (1)

6.3 C / break down. ✔✔ (1)

6.4 (a) Incomprehension/confusion/uncertainty/frustration. ✔ (1)
(b) To indicate that the speaker is experiencing difficulty with speech. ✔ (1)

6.5 (a) Personification / Metaphor. ✔ (1)
(b) Personification: The land is said to have a voice ✔ with which it speaks. ✔

OR

Metaphor: People's words flow from their mouths when they are Speaking ✔ just as water is flowing from a river. ✔ (2)

6.6 The first two (2) lines emphasise the need to understand one another/language ('the land'). ✔
In the last two lines the speaker is more specific and refers to South Africa ('this land'). ✔ (2)

6.7 Open – ended.
Provide a relevant response which shows an understanding of the following viewpoints among others:

Yes.

It is still relevant in this democratic era which is characterized by 12 official languages. This is indicated in the poet's address where he includes words from Afrikaans, English, IsiZulu and IsiXhosa. People learn a new language more often.

OR

No.

It is not relevant because it does not talk about all languages that are spoken in South Africa. It only covers few languages like Afrikaans, English and IsiZulu.

NOTE: For full marks, the response must be well-substantiated. You can score 1 or 2 marks for a response which is not well-substantiated. Your interpretation must be grounded in the poem. (3)

[15]

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Poetry 7

Still I rise

by *Maya Angelou*

Maya Angelou (4 April 1928 – 28 May 2014). She was born in 1928 in America. She grew up poor and experienced first-hand racism and sexism. Even after slavery ended in the USA in 1865, America was still very prejudiced against black people. She was a poet and civil rights activist. She published seven autobiographies, three books of essays, several books of poetry, and was credited with a list of plays, movies and television shows spanning over 50 years.

Maya Angelou

Summary of the poem

The poem is directed towards those oppressors who would tie the speaker to her past and to a history that has been misrepresented and cannot be relied upon. Her ancestors were depicted unfairly and dishonestly in history, and she will rise above the cruelty and suffering they experienced. The speaker is both angry and confident throughout the poem. Initially, she is baffled by the way in which her oppressors – and specifically white people do not want her to succeed or become more than the sum of her history. She notes that her joy seems to make them miserable, and she questions why that is. At the same time, she taunts these oppressors, acknowledging the impact of her behaviours and personality and delighting in the fact that she bewilders them with her power and confidence. The poem as a whole is a declaration of strength and of determination.

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Still I Rise

by Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may have tread me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil well
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops.
Weakened by my soulful cries.

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise?
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.

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Words to know

Word	Basic definition
(line 5) sassiness	cheeky wit, feeling full of life and back chat
(line 6) gloom	depression or sadness
(line 16) soulful	full of sadness and suffering
(line 17) haughtiness	pride
(line 34) welling	slowly getting bigger or more

3. Type and Form

The poem 'Still I rise' is a lyric poem that comprise of 7 quatrains (4 lines) and two (2) end stanzas. This type of poem expresses the speaker's feeling about the subject at hand; in this instance, racial prejudice. All the lines are rhythmic with a range of 5-8 lines; however, there is a refrain: 'I'll rise and 'I rise'.
Repetition strengthens feeling, ideas and mood. It helps to reaffirm the speaker's resilience, resolution as well as defiance at the end with 'I rise'. It emphasises how much hope and confidence the speaker has despite the hardships.

4. Analysis

Title

The title of the poem 'Still I rise' suggests hope and confidence the speaker has despite the hardships she is facing. history is not necessarily factual – someone had to write it in the first place and they could be biased or racist

Lines 1-4

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may have tread me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise

The word 'You', refers to the oppressors. The speaker addresses the oppressors; who's history is not necessarily factual about her. The speaker's opinion of history is that it is not a true account of events because it is written from the historians'/ oppressor's point of view. The cruel lies are informed by racial prejudice.

The speaker gives her heart and soul to declare that nothing and no one could oppress her or keep her down. 'But still, like dust, I'll rise.' (line 4) The speaker says she will not let the lies bother her. She proclaims that if she is trodden in the dirt, that she will rise like dust.

Lines 5-8

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

In these lines, the speaker uses rhetorical questions (lines 5-6) to further express her emotions, she is confident. She notices that the oppressors are worried when she succeeds. They are obsessed with her, which blinds them from seeing her success. The words 'sassiness'

(line 5) 'oil wells' **(line 7)** 'pumping' (line 8), symbolise her value and success/ she walks with pride.

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Lines 9-12

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise

This speaker asserts that she will survive racial prejudice. The word 'certainty' expresses the speaker's willingness to triumph. This gives the reader the understanding that the speaker has no other choice but to rise up out of her condition.

Lines 13-16

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops.
Weakened by my soulful cries

The rhetorical questions used emphasise the speaker's awareness that her success is received with bitterness by the oppressors. The speaker uses the accusing tone.

Lines 17-20

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard.

The rhetorical question is sarcastic, to pretend as if the speaker cares for those who resent her success. The speaker continues to express her pride and to show off her success before the society that has always oppressed her.

Lines 21-24

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

The speaker outlines the various violent methods (shoot, cut, kill) adopted by her oppressors to bring her down – whether it is their harsh words, their cruel looks, or their hatred towards her. She lets oppressors know that no matter what they do to oppress her, they will not succeed. The strong verbs reveal extent of hatred.

Lines 25-28

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise?
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

The speaker continues to use rhetorical questions to celebrate her sexuality, she also reveals her incredible self-confidence despite the oppressors' view of her.

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Lines 29-34

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

The speaker finally refers to the past which is the reason that she is oppressed and resented to this day. She calls slavery 'history's shame' (line 29) and she proclaims that she will not be held down by the past, even if it is 'rooted in pain' (line 31).

Lines 35-43

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.

The speaker is taking a clear step forward, leaving behind the terrors of the past. The daybreak will bring sunshine and hope and clarity. The speaker affirms her intention to rise above the past and fulfil the dreams and hopes of her slave ancestors. Their pain and suffering drives her to meet her full potential in life, which they were unable to do themselves. The speaker has every intention of writing each chapter of her life and not letting oppressors write that history for her. She will not be held back by what the oppressors have done to her ancestors.

The repeated use of, 'I rise' (lines 41-43) maintains the speaker's pride and defiance.

5. Themes

Defiance/Resilience/Determination
The poem delivers the message of the human's incredible strength and ability to overcome hurt. The speaker retaliates against discrimination of races and gender; which offers hope for others who suffer from the same ordeal. Despite the lies, the hatred and criticism directed towards her, the speaker does not give up; she stands up against her enemies.

Hope
Although the speaker has been through pain and suffering in her past (night), she feels excited about the future (daybreak). She is a symbol of hope to other African women who have gone through pain of oppression.

Racial prejudice
The speaker's opinion of history is that it is not a true account of events because it is written from the oppressor's point of view. The cruel lies are informed by racial prejudice.

Confidence/Perseverance
Despite the hardship, the speaker is confident to rise above her circumstances (her racially marginalised).

History/ changes in times

The speaker is an African-American woman who is subjected to slavery, she is determined to fighting back against racial prejudice and the leftovers of slavery that black Americans have endured for many years.

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6. Diction and Figurative Language

The poet uses many similes and metaphors throughout the poem.

Imagery
(line 7) 'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells': an image of wealth
(line 9) 'moon, sun and air': imagery of nature to emphasize invincibility/strength.

Simile:
(line 4) '…like dust, I'll rise. '- No matter what the speaker's oppressors do to harm her, she will rise above the challenges, just as air rises.

(line 7) '…walk like I've got oil wells' – symbol of success and pride - The speaker is so confident in her demeanour that she walks with a swagger that suggests the wealth of a person who has struck oil.

(like 9) '…like moons and like suns,' – compares her ability to her rising above hatred and oppression to the moon and the sun that rise no matter what. / The speaker compares the certainty of her courage and persistent determination to the certainty and repetitive patterns of the lunar and solar cycles.

(line 11) '…just like hopes'

(line 15) '…falling down like teardrops,' – the downward movement of the speaker's shoulders (when sad) is compared teardrops that fall roll down. / The speaker refers to being sad to the point that one's shoulders droop down or collapse, just as tears fall.

(line19) '…laugh like I've got gold mines' – symbol of wealth. The speaker laughs with the confidence of someone who is wealthy, as if gold has been discovered in her own backyard. She may not be wealthy in a financial sense, but she possesses a great wealth of spirit and hope.

(line 24) '…like air, I'll rise.' – determination to succeed.

(line 27) '…I dance like I've got diamonds' symbol of wealth.

Metaphor
(line 3) 'you may tread me…' - The speaker states that even if her oppressor tries to trample on her as one might trample an object or living creature in the dirt, she will still rise. The speaker is not literally squashed by the oppressor, but the oppressor nonetheless tries to trample on her spirit.

(line 13)' …see me broken' - The speaker refers to a broken spirit (emotional suffering).

(line 21-23) 'You may shoot…hatefulness' - The speaker refers to the violence of shooting with a gun, but she uses the metaphor to illustrate instead the pain of her oppressor's hateful language.

(line 22) She will not be pierced by the harshness of his words.
The speaker refers to violence again, this time using the example of cutting, as with a knife. However, she refers to the oppressor's cruel looks as so painful.

(line 23) The oppressor's hatefulness could literally kill her, but in this line the speaker speaks of death metaphorically. The oppressor's hate toward her might kill her spirit, but she will still rise above the pain.

(line 33) 'I'm a black ocean' – tells us how mighty, powerful and uncontrollable the speaker feels. She compares herself to the ocean which has its own uncontrollable movement.

OR

The speaker refers to herself as a powerful force of nature. She is as strong and as majestic as the ocean, and the term "black" denotes her race. She is a powerful black woman.

(line 40) 'I am the dream and the hope of the slave' - the

Hyperbole
(line 40) 'I am the dream and the hope of the slave'

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7. Tone and Mood

Tone
Sarcastic, Pride, Triumphant ,Defiance, Optimistic, Accusatory, Provocative ,Certainty

ACTIVITY 7

Read the poem, Still I Rise, and answer the questions below.

7.1 Complete the following sentence by using the words provided in the list. Write down only the words next to the question number (7.1 (a) – 7.1 (c)) in the ANSWER BOOK.

This poem is an example of a (a)… which (b) …… how the speaker(c)….

fears; sonnet; lyric; feels; ballad; praises; expresses (3)

7.2 Refer to line 4 (But…I'll rise.)

(a) Identify the figure of speech in this line. (1)

(b) Explain what this figure of speech reveals about the speaker. (2)

7.3 Quote TWO consecutive words in stanza 1 to prove the following statement FALSE.

The speaker believes that history is a factual record of past events (1)

7.4 Refer to line 5 (Does…upset you?)

Choose the correct answer to complete the following sentence:

The speaker uses ….to show the poet's agony towards 'You'.

A. imaginary questions
B. symbolic questions
C. rhetorical questions
D. tricky questions (1)

7.5 What does the speaker hope to convey by using the simile in stanza 3? Explain fully. (2)

7.6 Identify the speaker's tone in line 13-16 (1)

7.7 Quote THREE separate words in stanza 6 which emphasise violence and the extent of hatred. (3)

7.8 Using your OWN WORDS, explain what is meant by the speaker in lines 29-32. (2)

7.9 Refer to lines 33-34 (I'm a black...in the tide) (1)

(a) Identify the figure of speech in these lines. (1)

(b) Explain how the speaker describes herself as having been through a difficult time. (2)

7.10 Identify and discuss a theme evident in the last stanza. (3)
[23]

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Suggested Answers

7.1 (a) lyric ✓ (1)

(b) expresses ✓ (1)

(c) fears ✓ (1)

7.2 (a) Simile ✓ (1)

(b) The self-confidence that the speaker has irrespective of hardships ✓ is compared to the dust that is so low on the ground but can still go up on windy days. ✓✓ (2)

7.3 'twisted lies' ✓ (1)

7.4 C/ rhetorical questions ✓ (1)

7.5 The speaker wants to show the inevitability ✓ that she'll survive prejudice. ✓✓ (2)

7.6 Pride / self-confidence ✓ (1)

7.7 Shoot ✓
Cut ✓
Kill ✓ (3)

7.8 Speaker refers to a painful past she had to endure and rising to become something greater. ✓✓✓ (2)

7.9 (a) Metaphor ✓ (1)

(b) The speaker compares the problems she has had to overcome ✓ to the image of a stormy and vast ocean. ✓ (2)

7.10 **Theme**
Perseverance ✓

Explanation
It depicts an individual who commits to persevering and triumphing over difficult conditions as a result of internal power. ✓✓

NOTE: 1 mark for the theme and 2 marks for the explanation. (3)

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Poetry 8

Captive

by *Francis Carey Slater*

Frances Carey Slater (1876-1958) was born in Alice in the Eastern Cape. He grew up amongst farms in Alice where he learned to speak Xhosa. He schooled at Lovedale in Alice. Slater wrote in English but was acknowledged as a poet who attempted to 'Africanise' the South African English idiom. He tried to portray the South African experience through poetry written in English.

Francis Carey Slater

Summary of the poem

The poem 'Captive' is a free verse, that can also be regarded as a monologue. The poem criticises the system of migrant labour – where the speaker is forced by changing economic conditions to leave his rural home to seek employment in the city. There in the city he is infected by the illness (TB) contracted in the unhealthy mineshafts.

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Captive

by Francis Carey Slater

(Lament of a sick Xhosa mine-labourer in a compound hospital)

1. As a wild bird caught in a slip-knot snare –
2. The plaited tail-hairs of a dun-coloured cow,
3. Almost invisible –
4. So, tethered in the toils of fever, do I lie
5. And burn and shiver while I listen to the buzzing
6. Of flies that flutter vainly
7. Against cold, hard, deceiving window-panes:
8. Like them would I escape, and escaping hasten
9. To my home that shines in a valley afar,
10. My home – brightest tooth in the jaws of distance.

11. There, now, the cows I love are feeding
12. In some quiet sun-washed vale;
13. Their lazy shadows drink the sunlight
14. Rippling on the grasses;
15. There, through the long day, girls and women
16. Among the mealies chant and hoe,
17. Their swinging hoes are like glitter
18. Of sunshine on water;
19. There, now, shouting, happy herd boys,
20. While they watch the cattle browse,
21. Are busy moulding mimic cattle
22. From clay moist and yellow.

23. There, when the sun has folded his wings that dazzle,
24. And has sunken to his hidden nest beyond the hills,
25. All shall group together gaily, around the crackling fires,
26. And chew the juicy cud of gathered day;
27. And greybeards shall tell stories of ancient battles,
28. And cattle-races of the days of old,
29. Of hunters, bold and fearless, who faced the lion's thunder
30. And stalked the lightning leopard to his lair.
31. - But here I burn and shiver and listen to the buzzing
32. Of flies against deceiving window-panes.

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Words to know

Word	Basic meaning
(title) captive	another word for prisoner, or someone who is in jail.
(line 1) snare	a trap for catching birds/mammals.
(line 4) tethered	tethered means tied up.
(line7) deceiving	to deceive means to trick or lie.
(line 21) mimic	to copy.
(line 30) lair	a creature's lair is its home or hiding place.

1. Type and Form

This poem is written in free verse. It can also be regarded as a monologue. There are 3 stanzas. Stanza 1 and stanza 3 have 10 lines, while stanza 2 has 12 lines. It has no definite shape as the length of sentences vary. The poem is a lament, which is a passionate expression of grief. There is no rhyme scheme. There is some internal rhyming with sound devices.

2. Analysis

Title

Title describes the feeling that the speaker in the poem has – he feels trapped, like a prisoner who cannot escape. He feels trapped as a result of both his illness and the fact that he works on a mine far from home.

Lines 1-10

The speaker is in a hospital ward due to fever.

Lines 1-3

The speaker uses clear images of entrapment. He compares himself to a bird that is caught in a trap. He is so tied ('tethered') in the net ('toils') of fever as he lies in bed.

Lines 4-5

The speaker introduces himself as a mine labourer who lies in a mine compound hospital ward and feels trapped by fever.

Lines 6-8

The speaker paints a picture of a hospital ward that is not clean, by referring to flies that the miner listens to. The idea of entrapment and an illusion of possible freedom is evident, as flies flap into the transparent window panes. The flies cannot see the transparent (invisible) window panes thus constantly hit it while they try to get out (escape).

Lines 9-10

The speaker's strong desire is to get out of hospital leads him to imagine what his home is like. He feels nostalgic as he thinks about his home in a positive way. The speaker uses a metaphor 'My home-brightest tooth in the jaws of distance'.

Lines 11-22

In these lines the focus of the poem shifts from the hospital ward to the miner's home. 'There, now...' refers to the miner's home and the activities that take place.

Lines 11-14

The miner reminisces/ has a recollection of cows that are feeding back in the valley. The speaker personifies the cows' shadows to emphasise the intensity of the miner's imagination.

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Lines 15-18

Shows the idea of girls and women of the village singing while removing weeds in the mealie-field adds to the positive thoughts that keep the miner optimistic despite being trapped.

Lines 19-22

The miner continues to visualize life back home by thinking about the shouting, happy herd boys. The boys keep themselves busy by creating toy-cattle from moist clay.

Lines 23-32

In these lines, the miner still imagines life outside the hospital ward but is quickly reminded that he is in a hospital ward.

Lines 23-30

The speaker details events that take place back home, which are being imagined by the miner. As the sun sets, the villagers sit around fires and share the day's experiences. The elders (grey beards) tell stories that happened back in their days about battles they fought, cattle-races and hunters who were brave to face lions and leopards.

Lines 31-32

The speaker thinks about the present reality as he is still burning with fever and continues to listen to the flies buzzing in the hospital ward.

3. Themes

Nostalgia (longing for the past)

The sick miner misses and longs for his home. He thinks about the old, familiar routines and wishes he was there. He misses the village life. Instead he is in hospital, fighting a fever.

Freedom and captivity

- The speaker feels trapped in the hospital of the mine compound. He has been sent there to be isolated. He is sick, and the mine owners don't want the illness to spread to the other workers.
- He is miserable in the present, and longing for his freedom.
- He is generally feeling trapped, too, because he has to work out his contract. He cannot go home until his con tract has expired.
- The speaker compares himself to a trapped bird: They both have no freedom. The bird would like to get out of the trap. The speaker would like to leave the hospital and return to his village.
- Then he compares himself to flies as he knows that he will not be able to leave the hospital, just like the flies will not be able to get through the glass.
- Finally, the speaker feels like he is a captive (prisoner). His illness is one reason for him to feel trapped. He wants to escape from feeling sick – to escape from the hospital. His contract is another reason for him to feel trapped. He cannot go home until he completes the work he is contracted to.

4. Diction and figurative Language

Metaphor

- The speaker compares his home to the 'brightest tooth in the jaws of distance', meaning his home seems very lovely to him in his mind. His home shines but it is also far away (distant) 'in the jaws of distance' (line10). The speaker wants the reader to imagine the long distance between his place of worker and his home, and how attached he feels to his birthplace.

Line 30

- 'lion's thunder' and 'lightning leopard' – The speaker compares these two big cats to a force of nature that can destroy a heavy storm. The lion's roar is as loud as thunder. The leopard has the same terrifying strength of lightning. Lightning is also very powerful.

Lines 23 – 24

- 'When the sun has folded his wings that dazzle…' the setting sun is compared to a bird settling

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down in its nest.

Lines 25 – 26 'All shall group…of gathered day' the speaker compares the conversations about the events of the day by villagers (remembering talk) to a cow chewing the cud.

Symbolism:

- A bird caught in a snare (trap) is a symbol of the sick man's lack of freedom. The speaker is being kept against his will. Because he is feverish (sick), he has no way of escaping.
- The sense of captivity is repeated in the image of the flies. They are unable to leave the hospital room. The flies keep trying to get through the window's glass. They see the outside world, and think they can fly there. The flies are a symbol of the man's captivity too.

Alliteration

Line 4 'tethered in the toils of fever' helps us to imagine how the speaker is struggling to escape the same thoughts, over and over.

Line 19 'happy herd boys' makes us imagine the singing and joking of the boys as they work and play. It sounds like a song or rapid speech.

Line 30 'Lightning leopard to his lair' mimics or copies the speed and strength of the leopard.
Onomatopoeia

Lines 5 and 31 Both in line 5 and line 31 the flies are 'buzzing'. They really do make a 'z' sound with their wings.

Repetition
'deceiving window-panes' is captured in both the first (line 7) and last (line 32) stanzas. The homesick worker feels that he should be able to see all the way to his village because the window is transparent. However, the window is a solid obstacle, preventing him from getting home. He cannot get home just by imagining the place.
Simile

Line 1 'As a wild bird caught in a slip-knot snare – 'the speaker compares himself to a wild bird that is caught and trapped in a snare. He feels trapped in a compound hospital ward.
Lines 17-18 'Their swinging hoes are like the glitter of sunshine on water,' – The hoes are compared to the glitter of sunshine in water.

Personification

Lines 13-14 'Their lazy shadows… on the grasses' the shadows of the cows are said to be drinking the ripples of sunlight in the grass.

5. Tone and Mood

Tone
Nostalgic
Regret – the speaker regretting that he is far from home.

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ACTIVITY 8

Read the poem, Captive, and answer the questions below.

8.1 Identify the figure of speech in lines 1-4? (1)
8.2 Identify the sound service in lines 6 ('I listen to the buzzing of files that 'flatter') (1)
8.3 Quote ONE word which shows that the flies were unable to fly out of the room. (1)
8.4 Give the evidence from the poem which shows that the man originates from a rural area? (3)
8.5 Refer to lines 23 – 24 ('There when the … beyond the hills,')

(a) Identify the figure of speech in these lines. (1)

(b) Explain the effectiveness of the image in this figure of speech. (2)

8.6 Is the title and the subtitle suitable for the poem? Give reasons for your answer? (3)
8.7 Do you feel sorry for the sick miner? Substantiate your answer? (3)
[15

Suggested Answers

8.1 Simile. ✔✔ (1)
8.2 Buzzing flies – Onomatopoeia √/ flies that flutter – Alliteration. ✔ (1)
8.3 'vainly'. ✔ (1)
8.4 He pictures the cattle at home grazing. ✔
The peaceful or quiet valley. ✔
Women working in the mealie fields. ✔
The herd boys play and model cattle. ✔
(any 3 of the above) (3)
8.5 (a) Metaphor ✔ (1)

(b) The setting sun beyond the hills ✔ is compared to a bird that is folding its wings and sitting in its nest. ✔ (2)
8.6 **Yes.** Captive means to be kept against your will.
The lament of a sick Xhosa mine-labourer in a compound hospital – The subtitle is giving us a reason why the poet feels that he is a 'captive

- Firstly, the migrant labourer is imprisoned by his illness.
- He is deprived of his freedom.
- His position as a migrant labourer also has him trapped beneath the earth working in a mine.
- He is confined in a hostel. (3)

8.7 Provide a relevant response which shows an understanding of the following viewpoints among others:

Yes.
I feel sorry for him because he is away from his home, he has no freedom and he is trapped in his sickness. He is far from the things he holds dearly.
No.
The mine-worker is receiving some medical attention. He is not held in the mine hospital against his will. He is the one who chose to work far from his home.

NOTE: For full marks, the response must be well-substantiated. You can score 1 or 2 marks for a response which is not well-substantiated. Your interpretation must be grounded in the poem. (3)
[15]

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Poetry 9

Death

by *Anonymous*

The poem 'Death' was originally a Welsh ballad. Anonymous musicians learned, played and handed down these traditional songs. The song was translated from the Welsh by Aneirin Talfan Davies. Welsh songs and poetry often deal with themes of death and doom. This song speaks of an old human fear. The narrative form is used to tell a story that is somewhat amusing and somewhat frightening.

Death
by Anonymous

1 One night as I lay on my bed,
2 And sleep on fleeting foot had fled,
3 Because, no doubt, my mind was heavy
4 With concern for my last journey:

5 I got me up and called for water,
6 That I might wash, and so feel better;
7 But before I wet my eyes so dim,
8 There was Death on the bowl's rim.

9 I went to church that I might pray,
10 Thinking sure he'd keep away;
11 But before I got on to my feet,
12 There sat Death upon my seat.

13 To my chamber then I hied,
14 Thinking sure he'd keep outside;
15 But though I firmly locked the door,
16 Death came from underneath the floor.

17 Then to sea I rowed a boat,
18 Thinking surely Death can't float;
19 But before I reached the deep,
20 Death was captain of the ship

Words to know

Word	Basic meaning
(line 2) fleeting	going fast or disappearing
(line 8) rim	edge
(line 13) hied	go or went
(line 13) chamber	bedroom.
(line 19) deep	a figurative, poetic way of saying the sea or ocean. It literally means not shallow

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1. Type and form

The poem is a Ballad - a narrative poem meant to be sung. It is written in quatrains (5 rhyming quatrains.)The song is light-hearted but teaches us a lesson. The speaker uses a 1st person to give us first-hand information and his thoughts.

2. Analysis

Lines 1-4

One night as I lay on my bed,
And sleep on fleeting foot had fled,
Because, no doubt, my mind was heavy
With concern for my last journey:

The speaker is tossing and turning, he is suffering from insomnia (cannot sleep). Without a doubt, he is anxious and troubled, for his thoughts are consumed by fear of dying (my last journey).

Lines 4-8

I got me up and called for water,
That I might wash, and so feel better;
But before I wet my eyes so dim,
There was Death on the bowl's rim.

The speaker wakes up and his eyes are tired/ they look lifeless because of sleepless nights. Death is personified (written with a capital letter) in this stanza and throughout the poem.

Lines 9-12

I went to church that I might pray,
Thinking sure he'd keep away;
But before I got on to my feet,
There sat Death upon my seat.

The speaker goes to church to pray so he can keep death away (or so he can stop thinking about death). Death (personified) accompanied him and sat with him at church. This suggests he cannot stop thinking about his death.

Lines 13-16

To my chamber then I hied,
Thinking sure he'd keep outside;
But though I firmly locked the door,
Death came from underneath the floor.

The speaker is anxious, running away from death. He hurries (hied) to his bedroom which he regards as a safe space, BUT death crawls underneath the floor as it has 'supernatural powers' and is part of every one's life.

Lines 17-20

Then to sea I rowed a boat,
Thinking surely Death can't float;
But before I reached the deep,
Death was captain of the ship

The speaker tries to convince himself that Death would not be able to follow him out to deep sea, however, he did not go far (into sea). The 'captain of the ship' (death) is in charge (full control) and his orders are to be followed. The speaker has nowhere to run and death cannot be held back (controlled).

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3. Themes

Death is omnipresent (everywhere) and cannot be avoided (inevitable) – one cannot escape death.

4. Diction and Figurative Language

Alliteration (line 2)
'fleeting foot' – repetition of the f-sound.
The repetition of the 'f' sound emphasises the quick disappearance of sleep.

Personification (line 2)
'…sleep on fleeting foot had fled.'
Sleep is given human qualities (characteristic), it can run/flee.

Metaphor (line 3)
'my mind was heavy' – this means that the speaker was apprehensive (fearful/anxious)

Euphemism (line 4)
My last journey – death
Personification (line 8)/ (line 12)/ (line 16)/ (line 18)/ (line 20)
Death is written with a capital letter (personified) throughout the poem as Death appears to follow the speaker everywhere and the subject of death is always on the speaker's mind.
(line 8) Death follows the speaker.
(line 12) Death sits on his seat.
(line 16) Death creeps underneath the floor.
(line 18) Death follows the speaker to sea.
(line 20) Death is captain of the ship

Irony (stanza 4)
Despite the speaker securely locking his doors he is unable to keep death away/death enters from under the floor.

Metaphor (line 20)

The ship is the speaker's final journey.

Repetition Line 10/Line 14/Line 18
The phrases 'Thinking sure/ Thinking sure/ Thinking surely' are repeated – the speaker tries to convince himself that he is in control but finally realises that he cannot escape death. Death is omnipresent and can happen at any moment.

Tone and mood
- Shock – the speaker is shocked to realise that Death follows him everywhere; Death crawls underneath the floor and even follows him to church.
- Fear/Anxiety – the speaker is fearful; he tries to avoid death by all means.
- Humorous – the speaker seems to play hide-and-seek with Death but Death finds him every time.
- Solemn – Death is a serious matter as it is a final goodbye to your (the speaker's) loved ones. The speaker ap pears to be close/near to death.

Activity 9

Read the poem, Death, and answer the questions below.

9.1 Identify the sound device in line 2. (1)

9.2 In the context of the poem, do you think this sound device is effectively used?
Motivate your answer (2)

9.3 Quote TWO consecutive words from Stanza 1 to prove the speaker knows exactly why he cannot sleep. (1)

9.4 How would you describe the speaker's state of mind in Stanza 1? (1)

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9.5 Suggest a reason why the speaker wants water? State TWO points. (2)

9.6 Why is death personified throughout the poem? (2)

9.7 Why does the poet think he will be safe from Death in church? (2)

9.8 Quote an example of euphemism from the poem. (1)

9.9 Describes the action the speaker takes to defy Death in Stanza 4 and explain the irony. (3)

9.10 Why do you think Death is 'captain of the ship' in the last stanza? (2)

9.11 Death is something to be feared? Give a reason for your answer. (3)

9.12 Based on the theme and content of the poem, if you were to meet the speaker, what advice would you give him? (3)

[23]

Suggested answers

9.1 Alliteration of the f-sound: fleeting foot had fled. ✔ (1)

9.2 It is effective, the soft sound emphasises death's quick disappearance. ✔✔ (2)

9.3 'no doubt' ✔ (1)

9.4 He is very worried/ concerned/ troubled. ✔ (1)

9.5 To wash away the effects of sleeplessness, to refresh himself. ✔✔ (2)

9.6 Personifying death brings it down to our level. Seeing death as a person gives it human qualities, making it more manageable and less threatening. ✔✔ (2)

9.7 A church is supposed to be a place of sanctuary. He hopes he will be protected from death in God's house. ✔✔ 2)

9.8 'my last journey' ✔ (1)

9.9 He locks himself in his bedroom and thinks he will be safe there. ✔ The irony is that death comes from under the floor. Locked doors cannot keep out death. ✔✔ (3)

9.10 (Death is in the boat with him and) Death is in charge, death will decide whenit is time for the speaker to die, and he has no say in the matter. ✔✔ (2)

9.11 Provide a relevant response which shows an understanding of the following viewpoints among others:

Yes.

Although we know that we cannot escape death like the speaker in the poem, we are never prepared for our last journey, we normally think of the loved ones we leave will behind.

OR

No.

Death must not be feared as it is omnipresent and inevitable. One will die at anytime and anywhere.

NOTE: For full marks, the response must be well-substantiated. You can score 1 or 2 marks for a response which is not well-substantiated.
Your interpretation must be grounded in the poem (3)

9.12 I would tell him that death is inevitable and can happen at any time. You cannot hide from death. Do not spend your life fearing death, rather live each day as if it were your last. (3)

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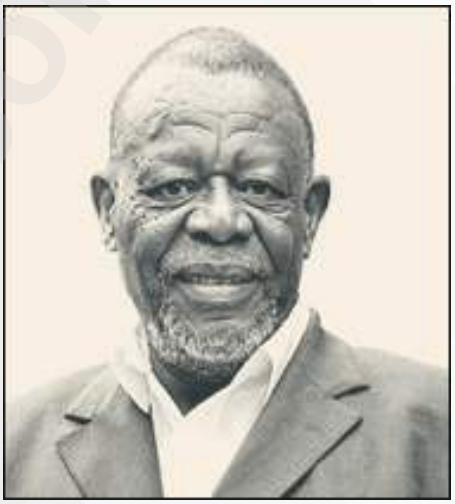
Poetry 10

Alexandra
by Mongane Wally Serote

Mongane Wally Serote Mongane Wally Serote was born in 1944 in Sophiatown, Johannesburg. He was educated in Alexandra, Leribe (Lesotho) and Soweto. He received a degree in fine arts from Columbia University, New York.

Serote's chief concern, as a poet, is to get to the 'root' causes of the social problems which affect the Black community, and in his pursuit of this goal he has been more penetrating, more profound and intense, more reflective and consistent than many of the poets to emerge from South Africa during the revival period of the late sixties.

Serote is not only a poet, but also a novelist, political activist and later a Member of Parliament.



Mongane Wally Serote

Alexandra
by Wally Serote

1 Were it possible to say,
2 Mother, I have seen more beautiful mothers,
3 A most loving mother,
4 And tell her there I will go,
5 Alexandra, I would have long gone from you.

6 But we have only one mother, none can replace,
7 Just as we have no choice to be born,
8 We can't choose mothers;
9 We fall out of them like we fall out of life to death.

10 And Alexandra,
11 My beginning was knotted to you,
12 Just like you knot my destiny.
13 You throb in my inside silences
14 You are silent in my heart-beat that's loud to me.
15 Alexandra often I've cried.
16 When I was thirsty my tongue tasted dust,
17 Dust burdening your nipples.
18 I cry Alexandra when I am thirsty.
19 Your breasts ooze dirty waters of you dongas,
20 Waters diluted with the blood of my brothers, your children,
21 Who once chose dongas for death-beds.
22 Do you love me Alexandra, or what are you doing to me?

23 You frighten me, Mama,
24 You wear expressions like you would be nasty to me,
25 You frighten me, Mama,
26 When I lie on your breast to rest, something tells me
27 You are bloody cruel.
28 Alexandra, hell
29 What have you done to me?
30 I have seen people but I feel like I'm not one;

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31 Alexandra what are you doing to me?
32 I feel I have sunk to such meekness!
33 I lie flat while others walk on me to far places.
34 I have gone from you, many times,
35 I come back.
36 Alexandra, I love you;
37 I know
38 When all these worlds become funny to me
39 I silently waded back to you
40 And amid the rubble I lay,
41 Simple and black.

Words to know

Word	Basic definition
(line 12) destiny	fixed fate or fortune
(line 17) burdening	a heavy thing to carry
(line 19) dongas	a deep cut or gorge in the earth, caused by erosion from running water
(line 20) diluted	mixed
(line 33) meekness	timid, weak or without violence
(line 40) waded	walking slowly because there is something in the way (like mud)

1. Type and Form

The poem 'Alexandra' is an example of protest poetry. It draws attention to inequality and social ills. It is also written in free verse that does not have a set rhyme scheme, pattern nor repetition in it. Lines and stanzas are uneven; they do not have the same length or number of words.

2. Analysis

Title
Alexandra is a black township outside Johannesburg. It is personified as a cruel mother. Alexandra is the main influence deciding the fate of the speaker, just like the child's biological mother.

Lines 1-5

Were it possible to say,
Mother, I have seen more beautiful mothers,
A most loving mother,
And tell her there I will go,
Alexandra, I would have long gone from you.

Alexandra (the place) is personified as a mother-figure. The repetition of the word 'mother' emphasises the bond that the speaker has with the place, Alexandra. The speaker says if it was possible to disown a 'mother, he would do that, but unfortunately he cannot do it. The speaker calls Alexandra 'mother' because he was born and raised in Alexandra (as a mother would give birth and raise a child)/It is a part of him. Alexandra will always be part of him. The township is forever tied to the speaker, just like a mother and child are tied.

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Lines 6-9

But we have only one mother, none can replace,
Just as we have no choice to be born,
We can't choose mothers;
We fall out of them like we fall out of life to death.

The speaker gives his reasons for not disowning his 'mother' – Alexandra. Alexandra (the place) is forever connected to the speaker, just like a mother would be forever connected to her child. A mother cannot be replaced; neither can children choose their mothers (children don't have a choice regarding their birth).

Lines 10-22

And Alexandra,
My beginning was knotted to you,
Just like you knot my destiny.
You throb in my inside silences
You are silent in my heart-beat that's loud to me.
Alexandra often I've cried.
When I was thirsty my tongue tasted dust,
Dust burdening your nipples.
I cry Alexandra when I am thirsty.
Your breasts ooze dirty waters of you dongas,
Waters diluted with the blood of my brothers, your children,
Who once chose dongas for death-beds.
Do you love me Alexandra, or what are you doing to me?

There is a biblical connotation in these lines – Psalm 139:13 (NIV) 'For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.'
The knot of the umbilical cord (line 11) has connected the speaker to Alexandra, 'the mother' all his life, and is also the 'knot' of his future (line 12). The speaker depends on Alexandra for a living, Alexandra (the place) will forever be connected to the speaker; it has shaped who he is and regardless of where he goes, he will carry the lasting impression of Alexandra with him.
Lines 13-14 Wherever the speaker goes, he carries the heartbeat (throb) of Alexandra deep within him. Alexandra has made him who he is.
Line 19 'Your breasts ooze the dirty waters of your dongas' .'dongas' are ditches formed by the eroding action of rain water suggests the poor socio-economic conditions in Alexandra.
Lines 20-21 The speaker indicates that there is dirty water mixed with blood running on the dusty streets. The water is mingled with blood, suggesting killings and death in the township
Line 22 The speaker seeks validation and reassurance by asking a question: 'Do you love me Alexandra, or what are you doing to me?'.

Lines 23-31

You frighten me, Mama,
You wear expressions like you would be nasty to me,
You frighten me, Mama,
When I lie on your breast to rest, something tells me
You are bloody cruel.
Alexandra, hell
What have you done to me?
I have seen people but I feel like I'm not one,
Alexandra what are you doing to me?

Lines 23 and 25 There's a repetition of 'You frighten me, Mama'. This signifies a sense of uneasiness in being a resident in Alexandra.
Lines 27- 31 The cruelty that ordinary citizens experience makes them fearful and even lesser human beings.

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Lines 32-39

I feel I have sunk to such meekness!
I lie flat while others walk on me to far places.
I have gone from you, many times,
I come back.
Alexandra, I love you;
I know
When all these worlds become funny to me
I silently waded back to you

Line 32 The speaker feels that he has now become compliant to the rules of the country – 'I feel I have sunk to such meekness!. The question mark expresses his disbelief on how he has accepted what is going on as his reality.

Lines 33- 34 the speaker is aware that people of other race groups are advancing in life, but he has reached a point of stagnation where he cannot advance in life – 'I lie flat while others walk on me to far places.' The speaker has tried to move away many times, but he comes back home to Alexandra – his 'mama'. When people in other countries ('worlds') mistreat him ('became funny'), he silently comes back home. The walk back home is not easy – he 'waded' (line 39) back.

Line 40- 41

And amid the rubble I lay,
Simple and black.

- In the last 2 lines of the poem, the speaker has accepted that in the end, he will always find his way back to Alexandra to lie among the ruins.

3. Themes

Neglect and cruelty

The speaker uses an extended metaphor to compare the township with a mother. He uses contrast (opposite) because mothers are expected to be nourishing, kind and patient. Instead, he describes Alexandra as a mother who cannot care for her child.

There are not enough resources for Alexandra to properly care for everyone who lives there. The speaker asks if Alexandra can 'love' him. He answers his own rhetorical questions and says Alexandra cannot love him but still he loves it. He is attached to this place even though it is cruel.

Children are often attached to their parents, even if their parents do not treat them in the kindest ways.

Poverty/Squalor/Destitution

Alexandra is barren and covered in dust ('my tongue tasted dust'). The township has no enough resources to properly care for everyone who lives there ('dirty waters of your dongas'). Crime and violence are the order of the day; they have taken over the township ('bloody cruel/hell'). Water is also polluted by blood of residents who die.

Attachment

The speaker is attached to his township, Alexandra, even though it has been a difficult place to grow up. He feels comfortable with the terrible conditions in the township. Other countries do not make him feel at home. He always returns. Despite all the hardships of Alexandra, it is still home.

Black people's quest for identity

Wherever the speaker goes, he carries the heartbeat (throb) of Alexandra deep within him. Alexandra has made him who he is.

Alexandra is extremely dirty and unpleasant to the site (line 19). The speaker and the people of Alexandra are poor and lack the means to provide for themselves.

Violence/Death

People in Alexandra are dying violently (lines 20-21).

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4. Diction and Figurative Language

Imagery
Knot – The speaker uses an image of a knot. The word 'knotted' signifies attachment.
Apostrophe
'Alexandra' – addressing Alexandra as if it is person.

Metaphor/Personification
Line 17 'Dust burdening your nipples.': the shacks compared to nipples.
Lines 18-19 'I cry Alexandra … of your dongas.' the streets are compared to breasts that can quench the speaker's thirst. Breastfeeding image – to emphasise natural nurture and care, he knows that what should be the nurturing breast of his mother will only leave the taste of dust in his mouth.
Simile

Line 9 'we fall out of them like we fall out of life to death': The lack of choice when one is born is compared to the lack of choice when one dies. People cannot choose their mother in the same way they cannot choose how and when to die.
Line 24 in the context of the poem, the speaker is afraid of Alexandra he suspects that 'she could be cruel.'

Repetition
The speaker repeats the words 'mother' and 'Mama', showing that the township has 'brought him up' or raised him to believe that he is worthless. He blames Alexandra for his difficult life. Sometimes children blame their mother for the things that are wrong in their own lives.

Rhetorical questions
Line 22 'Do you love me, Alexandra, or what are you doing to me?'. He wants to show the difference between a mother who shows love and care (affection and nourishment) and Alexandra's uncaring nature.
Line 29 The speaker feels he has been disempowered by his upbringing in Alexandra. He does not feel that his humanity is realized. He is frustrated with his 'mother' for the hardships he has endured.

Oxymoron
Line 14 – silent/loud Alexandra is loud, yet, the speaker cannot hear her heart-beat, this suggests that Alexandra will always be part of him – he will carry her with him forever.

5. Tone and Mood

Tone
Accusing/ judgemental/ rebuking.
Lamenting

Mood
Sombre/sad

ACTIVITY 10

Read the poem, Alexandra, and answer the questions below.

10.1 Give one reason why the speaker refers to Alexandra as mother. (1)

10.2 Quote a line from stanza 1 which proves that the following statement TRUE.

The speaker sometimes wants to leave Alexandra for good. (1)

10.3 In stanza 1, the speaker paints an image of his ideal mother.
Use your own words describe this image. (2)

10.4 Quote 6 consecutive words from stanza 1 which proves that the speaker Is disappointed in Alexandra as a mother. (1)

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10.5 Refer to stanza 2.

Give TWO reasons why the speaker cannot leave his mother. (2)

10.6 Refer to lines 8-9

(a) Identify the figure of speech in line 9 (1)
(b) Mention the TWO contrasting life events that are compared in line 9. (2)

10.7 Explain the symbolism that is expressed with the image of a knot in lines 11-12. (2)

10.8 Using your OWN WORDS, explain how lines 11-12 emphasises that the speaker's life is shaped by Alexandra. (2)

10.9 Refer to lines 13-14

(a) What does the word 'throb' suggest about Alexandra? (2)
(b) Explain the paradox in these lines. (2)

10.10 Refer to line 17.

What is the figurative meaning of 'nipples'? (1)

10.11 Refer to line 18.

Give the literal and the figurative meanings of 'thirsty'. (2)

10.12 Lines 20-22 suggest that Alexandra is not a safe place to be in.

Using your OWN WORDS, discuss the predicament that the youth of Alexandra finds themselves in. (2)

10.13 Refer to line 23.

In your opinion, why does the speaker ask Alexandra if she loves him? (2)

10.14 Give ONE word for the speaker's tone in lines 24 and 26. (1)

10.15 Explain the image the speaker paints in line 27 ('When…rest') (2)

10.16 Using your OWN WORDS explain the metaphor in line 27. (2)

10.17 Provide ONE word for the speaker's tone in lines 29-30. (1)

10.18 Quote a line in stanza 3 which proves that the speaker has low self-esteem and feels less of a human being. (1)

10.19 Refer to Stanza 5

Quote six consecutive words which show that the speaker has Accepted what he is going through as his reality. (1)

10.20 Refer to Stanza 5 (line 39-42)
Discuss the speaker's reaction when he was mistreated in other countries. (3)
[36]

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Suggested Answer

10.1 Alexandra is a place where he must get love, protection and care from. ✓ (1)

10.2 'Alexandra. I would have long gone from you.' ✓ (1)

10.3 A beautiful mother who is most loving and caring to her children. ✓✓ (2)

10.4 'Mother, I have seen more beautiful mothers'. ✓ (1)

10.5 We cannot choose our mothers. ✓ Mothers are irreplaceable. ✓ (2)

10.6 (a) Simile. ✓ (1)
(b) birth ✓ and death ✓ (2)

10.7 A knot is tied on tightly so it symbolises his attachment to Alexandra. ✓✓ (2)

10.8 The speaker was born in Alexandra, (his beginning), as an adult he lives in Alexandra and he feels that Alexandra is shaping his future. ✓✓ (2)

10.9 (a) 'Throb' suggests that Alexandra is part of the speaker's being, just like his heartbeat or pulse. ✓✓ (2)
(b) Although Alexandra throbs like a heartbeat, she seems silent to the speaker because she is not offering any care and protection. The speaker only feels the throbbing pain. ✓✓ (2)

10.10 Shacks/ shanties (1)

10.11 Literal: needing/wanting to drink. ✓
Figurative: needs help/ protection. ✓ (2)

10.12 They are killed and their bodies are hidden in the dongas. ✓
The blood that is spilled in the streets of Alexandra is the blood of the youth. ✓ (2)

10.13 The speaker has suffered and he wants validation and reassurance that Alexandra (as a mother) still loves him. ✓✓ (2)

10.14 Scared/ fearful. ✓ (1)

10.15 An image of a child resting on the mother's breast. ✓✓ (2)

10.16 The speaker compares sleeping in his shack (resting) to a child sleeping on a mother's breast. ✓✓ (2)

10.17 Angry/ confrontational. ✓ (1)

10.18 'I have seen people but I feel like I'm not one'. ✓ (1)

10.19 'I have sunk to such meekness'. ✓ (1)

10.20
- When he was mistreated in other countries he came back home.
- The walk back home was not easy – the journey was difficult.
- He has now accepted the lies of the apartheid government and he believes that he does not deserve a better life.
- He has accepted that he is simple and black as the apartheid government would want him to believe. ✓✓✓ (3)

[36]

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Suggestion for improvement in the EFAL literature paper

1. Read the texts you have been TAUGHT extensively, DO NOT read superficially.
2. REMEMBER: Extracts are just scaffolds; therefore, DO NOT treat the question paper like a comprehension exer cise, offering all your responses based on the given extracts.
3. Read and adhere to the instructions and mark allocation. Take a careful look at your table of contents and the checklist.
4. You must be able to identify /discuss the purpose of stylistic devices and how they contribute to the text.
5. You must be able to identify and discuss tone questions. It not acceptable to say the tone is 'high' or 'low'.
6. Characterisation must be studies in context – a character trait cannot be attributed to a character without referring to the behaviour to substantiate it.
7. Themes should not merely be memorised without insight. You must be able to identify and discuss a relevant theme in the given extract or the text as a whole, and also gain the skill of isolating events which support a certain theme from a text.

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Poetry EFAL- **ISBN 978-1-4315-3365-7**

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