Open Resources For English Language Teaching

Module 5 - Language Through Literature

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Open Resources for English Language Teaching

Module 5 – Language Through Literature

COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING

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About this module manual

Module 5 — Language through Literature has been produced by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL). All module manuals produced by COL are structured in the same way, as outlined below.

How this module manual is structured

The module overview

The module overview gives you a general introduction to the module. It will help you determine:

- if the module is suitable for you,
- what you need to know,
- what you can expect from the module, and
- how much time you will need to invest to complete the module.

The overview also provides guidance on:

- study skills,
- where to get help,
- module assignments and assessments,
- activities and units.

We strongly recommend that you read the overview *carefully* before starting your study.

The module content

The module is broken down into units. Each unit comprises:

- an introduction to the unit content,
- unit objectives,
- unit outcomes,

- new terminology,
- core content of the unit with a variety of learning activities,
- a unit summary,
- assignments and/or assessments, as applicable, and
- answers to assignments and/or assessments, as applicable.

Resources

For those interested in learning more on this subject, please see the list of additional resources at the end of each unit of this module. These may be books, articles, websites or audio/video files that can assist in the teaching of the unit, and so on.

Your comments

After you have completed **Module 5 — Language through Literature**, we would appreciate your taking a few moments to give us your feedback on any aspect of this module. Your feedback might include comments on:

- Module content and structure.
- Module reading materials and resources.
- Module assignments.
- Module assessments.
- Module duration.
- Module support (assigned tutors, technical help, etc.)

Your constructive feedback will help us to improve and enhance this module.

Module overview

Welcome to Module 5 — Language through Literature

Children's literature is an important means of creating opportunities for communication and language development through listening, speaking, reading and writing activities. It exposes students to real-life values and stimulates sustained interest in literature. This module presents collaborative and interactive activities to promote literature appreciation and language proficiency at the JSS level. Perhaps the most challenging part of teaching literature is developing the critical and creative potential of the students. The activities in this module will give you strategies to connect literature to students' lives and the world at large.

Is this module for you?

This module is intended for teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) at the JSS level, and especially for teachers who teach English language and literature courses.

Module objectives

Objectives

The objectives of this module are to:

- create opportunities for your students to communicate effectively in English through exposure to children's literature,
- enable you to help your students absorb the values expressed in literature,
- help you identify and use effective strategies to stimulate students' interest in the extensive reading of literature,
- help you organise collaborative and interactive tasks around children's literature, and
- use literature to develop a critical and creative use of language.

Module outcomes

Outcomes

Upon completion of **Module 5 — Language through Literature** you will be able to:

- teach language through literature using diverse strategies,
- stimulate interest in the extensive reading of literature,
- organise collaborative and interactive tasks that facilitate language learning through literature, and
- develop critical thinking and creative writing skills in students through exposure to a variety of literary texts.

Time frame

How long?

You will need approximately 15 weeks to finish this module — eight weeks for formal study and seven weeks for self-directed study — to complete all the activities recommended.

This is a distance learning programme, thus the time frame is flexible and largely self-directed.

Study skills

Study skills

As an adult learner your approach to learning will be different from that of your school days: you will choose what you want to study, you will have professional and/or personal motivation for doing so and you will most likely be fitting your study activities around other professional or domestic responsibilities.

Essentially you will be taking control of your learning environment. As a consequence, you will need to consider performance issues related to time management, goal setting, stress management, etc. Perhaps you will also need to reacquaint yourself with such things as essay planning, coping with exams and using the Web as a learning resource.

Your most significant considerations will be *time* and *space*; that is, the time you dedicate to your learning and the environment in which you engage in that learning.

We recommend that you take time now — before starting your self-directed study — to familiarise yourself with these issues. There are a number of excellent resources on the Web. For example:

- http://www.how-to-study.com/

  The "How to study" website is dedicated to study skills resources. You will find links for tips on study preparation (a list of nine essentials for a good study place), taking notes, strategies for reading text books, using reference sources and coping with test anxiety.

- http://www.ucc.vt.edu/stdysk/stdyhlp.html

  This is the website of Virginia Tech's Division of Student Affairs. You will find links to tips on time scheduling (including one called "Where Does Time Go?"), a study skill checklist, basic concentration techniques, how to take control of your study environment, note taking, how to read essays for analysis and tips on developing memory skills ("Remembering").

- http://www.howtostudy.org/resources.php

  Another "How to Study" website with useful links to learning about time management, efficient reading, questioning/ listening/observing skills, getting the most out of putting your knowledge into practice, memory building, staying motivated and developing a learning plan.

The above links are our suggestions to start you on your way. At the time of writing these Web links were active. If you want to look for more go to www.google.com and type "self-study basics," "self-study tips," "self-study skills" or a similar combination.

Need help?

Help

Contact your Google Group support email, SMS number or your tutor.

Group email: orelt_tutors@googlegroups.com

Assessment

Assessment

- Each unit of this module consists of a self-assessment activity. The assessments are for self-development purposes and need not be submitted to anybody. The goal of the module is to develop your teaching-learning skills, not to test you.

- Assessment is also meant to encourage you to think about and devise some innovative teaching practices that could make your teaching more exciting and relevant to your students.

- All assessments are to be completed at the end of every unit. You may cross-check your answers with your colleagues.

Getting around this module manual

Margin icons

While working through this module manual you will notice the frequent use of icons in the margin. These icons serve to "signpost" a particular piece of text, a new task or change in activity; they have been included to help you to find your way around this module manual.

A complete icon set is shown below. We suggest that you familiarise yourself with the icons and their meanings before starting your study.

Activity	Assessment	Assignment	Case study
Outcomes	Summary	Objectives	Feedback
Terminology	Reading	Reflection	Study skills
Help	Time	Audio	Video

Unit 1: Analysing Literature: Introduction to the Language of Literary Texts

Introduction

This unit focuses primarily on how to create diverse opportunities for students at the JSS level to develop their English language skills through exposure to the language of literature. This will involve engaging students with various genres of literature such as poetry, fiction and drama to develop their vocabulary and mastery of grammatical structures. The unit also aims to help you introduce to your students the different stylistic forms of literary texts. The objective of this unit is to enhance language use through familiarity with a range of vocabulary and structures as used in literary texts. This approach to the study of literary texts, leading to language-literature integration, sees literature classes as laboratories or practical workshops for the development of students' language and communicative competence.

Unit outcomes

Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit you will be able to:

- enable your students to enhance their vocabulary with interactive tasks using poetry,
- familiarise students with the special uses of language in drama by converting a prose text into a short play, and
- analyse children's literature using students' language resources.

Terminology

Terminology

Discourse patterns:	Text arrangements beyond the sentence level, including paragraphs, connectors, etc.
Genres:	Types of literature such as poetry, drama and prose.
Language competence:	Language proficiency that includes the ability to communicate effectively in a language.

Communication skills:	The ability to use the language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing to effectively perform various language functions such as greeting, agreeing, requesting, exchanging social niceties and so on.
Communicative competence:	The ability of speakers of a language to know what to say to whom, and when. In other words, communicative competence includes the knowledge of the vocabulary and structures of the language as well as the social norms of speaking.
Integrated approach:	This suggests using literature to teach language skills and the resources of language (words, collocations, sentence structures, paragraph connectors, metaphorical expressions, etc.) to teach literature.
Literacy skills:	These include the ability to read and write in a language.
Critical thinking:	This involves the ability to reflect on a piece of spoken or written discourse (of at least one paragraph) and to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses in terms of both conceptual and language clarity.

Teacher support information

The aim of this unit is to use strategies and resources to enhance the language competence of your students through literature. In this unit, you will be able to use your familiarity with the literary devices used in prose, poetry and drama to help your students to communicate more effectively and eloquently. You will also find ideas to encourage your students to explore the interesting uses of words, phrases and sounds in literary texts. This should increase students' awareness of literary language and help them understand literature better.

Case study

Case study

In Mr David Ilemede's English class at Demonstration Secondary, students worked on a play called *The Wives' Revolt* by J.P. Clark. As part of the project, the students were asked to focus on different aspects of language demonstrated in the play.

The students began by reading and acting out excerpts from the play with their teacher. For the performance, they were encouraged to choose the sections that they found most interesting. Mr Ilemede followed up on this

enjoyable experience by encouraging the students to look more carefully at the sections they had chosen, to see how the grammatical structures of the sentences and word groups made the play more interesting. Working in groups, the students selected sentences, nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs and their combinations in phrases and clauses. With Mr Ilemede's help, they began to identify the special meanings that these combinations of literary expressions brought to the play.

After this activity, Mr Ilemede prompted the groups to use the interesting structures in their own stories. They were encouraged to illustrate their stories with pictures, charts, diagrams and drawings.

The students greatly enjoyed this experience as it gave them an opportunity to use grammar in interesting and creative ways. They were also happy to see how the same language resources (sentences, clauses, phrases and word combinations) could be used in interesting ways in different literary genres such as plays and stories.

Points to ponder

1 Do you agree that we can teach grammar fruitfully through literature? Why or why not?

2 Do you feel literary texts should be explained to students in the class so that they understand the real meaning? Or should students be allowed to work together and discover the meaning of a text by themselves? Which of the above procedures do you follow in class, and why?

Activities

Activity 1: Using poetry to develop vocabulary in context

Activity 1

In this activity students work collaboratively to familiarise themselves with expressions specific to poetry, and to see how these create interesting meanings in English.

Divide the students into five or more groups and give them a variety of short poems to read. Ask each group to identify at least one expression (a word or a group of words) in the poem that they think is used in an interesting or unusual manner. Let them come up with their own explanation of why they think the expression(s) is (are) special. If you can, put the expressions you collect from each group on the board and have a class discussion about them. You can use this as an opportunity to highlight the literary use of language in poetry, such as rhyme schemes, figures of speech, alliteration, personification, similes, metaphors, etc. During the discussion, ask the students in their groups to try to rewrite the poetic expressions in "simple" or "normal" English. For example, in this line from Longfellow's poem "Rainy Day":

My thoughts still cling to the mouldering Past

there are at least three unusual uses of language: *thoughts… cling… mouldering Past,* and the word *mouldering* itself. If we try to make these expressions "normal" or "everyday," we will realise that *thoughts* cannot *cling*; they can *come/go/focus on*. We can use adjectives like *remote/long forgotten* to refer to the past, but the expression *mouldering* is unlikely to be used. In fact, *mouldering* is not listed in the dictionary (although *to moulder* is). It is an unusual coinage, perhaps stemming from the word *moulding* which suggests "something becoming bad from misuse."

- With the students working in groups, ask them to identify the unusual words and expressions in their poem, and to write the possible meanings. Using this vocabulary guide, ask each group to read aloud their short poem to the class and interpret its meaning.

- To give the students further practice, you can have them play a game like the one in **Resource 1**. To play the game, the students, working in groups, have to first read the given poem and discuss its theme in the group. The game is a guessing game, where some of the interesting expressions of the words, and their possible meanings in the poem, are given on flashcards. The flashcards are distributed around the class, and the students have to match the expressions to their meanings.

- To make the game a little more interesting and meaningful, you could add pictures to the matching exercise. To play this version of the game, students would have to listen to a reading of the poem, and then, working in groups again, arrange a set of pictures to tell the story of the poem. You can then tell them the correct sequence or display the pictures on a screen. To round off the activity, you could summarise the poem and its theme. This would ensure that the students have understood the gist of the poem.

The function of these two games is to teach students the value of interpreting the special meaning(s) of a poem by focusing on its vocabulary. Students will also realise that a group reading of poetry can be a very enjoyable experience, and that one can interpret the same poem in different ways by guessing at different meanings of the vocabulary in the poem.

After the exercises are done, you could read the poem aloud or play the audio and have the class give a choral reading of the poem after listening to it. This would not only improve their recitation skills, it would also personalise the poetry reading and help them understand it better.

Activity 2: Developing creativity in language use: Converting a prose text to a play

Activity 2

In this activity, students work in groups of five to convert a short piece of prose (preferably a story of one or two pages) into a play after they have read and discussed the story.

- Distribute a short story (maybe an adapted version of a popular short story, preferably not more than two pages) and ask your students to fill in the grid given in **Resource 2** with information from the story

after they have read it. Announce that they have to write a play based on the story. The grid should help the students include the necessary information, such as the characters in the story, the setting, the plot and the major actions and dialogue of the characters as an initial step in converting the story to a play.

- The next step should be a whole class activity, where you could use the board to write a comparative list of the characteristics of a prose text and a play as suggested by the students. For example, *A prose text has descriptions of places, characters, events and actions, but a play does not have descriptions; it has stage directions*. This should ensure that the students have a clear idea of the content and structure of a play, in preparation for the task ahead.

- Once the students have a fairly clear idea of the elements of a play, their next task is to plan, in their groups, the structure of the two scenes of the play they have to write. The two scenes should be no more than two pages each, with dialogue and stage directions.

- The two scenes of the play should then be discussed and edited by each group. If necessary, show the groups a sample of a short play so that they can familiarise themselves with the structure of dialogues and stage directions.

- You can also help the groups write simple stage directions for their play by giving them a few samples of stage directions that not only mark the characters' places on the stage, but also their mental state, such as: (*suddenly turning around*)/(*with a start*)/(*looking slyly at her*)

- When they are ready, each group presents their play to the class for critical comments and modifications, where necessary.

- The groups should incorporate all their changes and then rehearse until they are satisfied that their play has achieved the necessary balance between simplicity and suspense through interesting dialogues, plot and an effective climax.

- Each group's play should be performed and videotaped, if possible.

This activity offers students strategies and opportunities to read, plan, outline and rewrite stories, and listen to play rehearsals and videotape their plays. As they carry out these tasks, they have the opportunity to listen to, speak, read, write and proofread language used in at least two different contexts.

Activity 3: Creativity in collaboration: Using students' language resources for story development

Activity3

At the JSS level, students are usually asked to compose short stories from a given outline. While such classroom activities help them practise the skills of composition by recreating a storyline, they do not encourage them to exercise their creative abilities. Creative composition skills involve the ability to develop a storyline by weaving ideas together in an interesting and logical sequence.

The activity given here is meant to encourage students to express themselves creatively through a fun-filled group task. It is also meant to give them training in thinking logically and connecting ideas to develop a composition in an interesting way.

To prepare them for this story-development task, give them a homework assignment a day before. Give them two versions of a short story to read. The first version should contain the original story and should have a clearly developed storyline, with well-developed characters and a narrative that progresses logically with a beginning, middle and end. The second version should have some distortions in style, such as an unclear storyline, no clear progression from beginning to end and hazily sketched characters. The students' task is to individually mark which story is "better" and more interesting to read, and why (i.e., what differences are there in the two versions). The objective of this homework task is to help them find out for themselves the important ingredients of a good story so that they can use this knowledge for their group storytelling exercise.

For the actual exercise, have the students give a report on their homework assignment. You could list the points they give on a board. The preliminary discussion should cover the features of a good story, like the ones listed in **Resource 2** for **Activity 2** above.

Organise the students for the storytelling task in the manner suggested in **Resource 3**. If possible, videotape the storytelling task, and play it back to give the students a chance to refine their own lines and make them more interesting, crisp and creative.

Unit summary

Summary

In this unit, you learned how to help students develop their language competence through exposure to various samples of literature. You learned about the need to listen to and orally practise story and poetic presentations, and about the need to expose children to creative writing for a variety of purposes and in a variety of settings.

Reflections

Reflection

- Having gone through this unit, which of the activities did you find easy to use in your classroom? Which ones were difficult to accomplish?
- You are not expected to undertake each of the activities in a 40-minute class. The activities can be spread over other lesson periods. Which ones did you undertake in class and which parts did you use as homework assignments?

Assessment

Assessment

- Use the questions above to assess your understanding of the unit. Cross-check your answer with a colleague who is also working on this unit.
- Write down some strategies that you learned in this unit and that could be used to enhance the teaching of language through literature at the JSS level.

Resources

Resource 1: Using a poem for vocabulary enhancement

Resource 1

To play this game, divide the class into two groups. The first group will have words and phrases related to the poem "The Improbable," and the second will have the matching meanings.

Begin the game by asking a member of Group 1 to raise a flashcard with a word or phrase on it. Group 2 now has to raise the flashcard with the matching meaning. For example:

Student A (in Group 1 raising the flashcard):

Which expression in the poem means "unlikely"?

Student B (in Group 2 raising the flashcard):

"Improbable"

Note: If you think your students will find this task difficult, you can modify the question by mentioning the stanza number.

This game continues until all the questions in column 1 have been asked by Group 1 and answered by Group 2.

Column 1 **Written on the flashcards of students in group 1**	**Column 2** **Written on the flashcards of students in group 2**
1 Which expression in the poem means "unlikely"? **2** Which word in the poem means "likely"? **3** What does the word "nubile" suggest?	**1** Possible **2** Scary scourge **3** Noose **4** Adjective **5** In vain

4 Which emotion is called a "scary scourge"? **5** An example of alliteration is: **6** Which word refers to the act of hanging? **7** Which expression suggests "without success"? **8** An example of a metaphor for hanging is: **9** What part of speech is the word "fruiting"?	**6** Improbable **7** Young, innocent and attractive **8** The new disease **9** Love

"The Improbable"

The improbable happens in unexpected places-
A young woman of twenty three hangs herself
After leaving a note: "Nobody loves me, I have no man"
What a pity, what a pity, what a pity.

None would have thought it possible
That a nubile woman would die for lack of love
When too many were dying for making love-
And many sell love in public places all over the world

The new disease afflicts so many who love in haste
The disease is not written on the face and knows no bound
They have searched in vain to cure themselves of love
Love that's a scary scourge in the eyes of the wary.

And yet who's spared from debility and death
That love proffers to lovers tied her a noose
Her favorite wrapper to a fruiting tree outside
Love that is not in haste is not in waste.

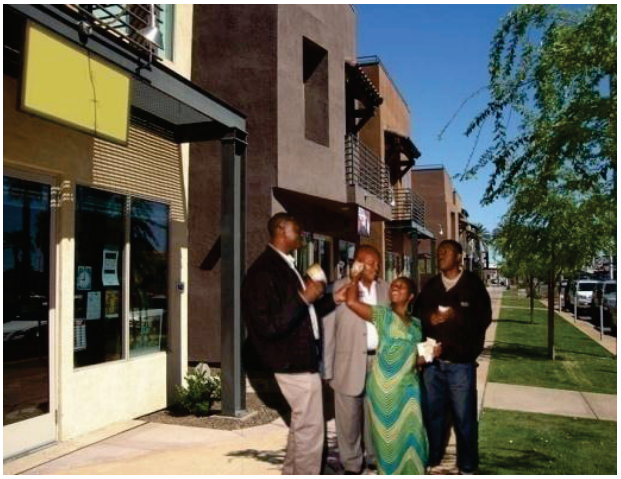
Audio

Resource file

See in the enclosed DVD an audio recording of the activity:

- Scripts\Module5\Unit1\Activity1\Resource1\Audio\The_Improbable.mp3

PERLA
DEL SUR
BAR & GRILL



Resource 2: Guide to editing

Resource 2

The following checklist can be used to evaluate a piece of prose fiction (i.e., a story):

Characteristic feature (Tick [√] as appropriate)	Yes	No	Examples from the story
Is the title of the story intere ting? Does it il ustrate the plot of the story well?			
Is the plot of the story interesting?			
Do the events in the story have a clear beginning, middle and end?			
Are the characters clearly developed?			

Do the settings reflect the theme of the story and its plot?			
Do the words and structures reflect a natural use of language? Do the dialogues resemble real-life conversation?			
Are appropriate punctuation marks (commas, full stops, etc.) and spellings used?			
Is the climax of the story interesting?			

(See the sample short passage developed in **Resource 4** below)

Resource 3: How to organise circular storytelling

Resource 3

Circular storytelling is a good way to unlock the imagination and develop listening and reasoning skills in a creative and entertaining way. To organise the circular storytelling:

- Have the students sit closely in a quiet classroom atmosphere, preferably in a circle facing one another.
- Announce that they are going to compose a story together. Since this is going to be a group task, there will be some rules. (i) Each student will be allowed to say only one sentence in turn, (ii) their sentence will have to follow from the one said by the previous student and (iii) they must not interrupt when someone else is speaking.
- If the class is large, give each student only one turn to speak. In a smaller class, students can have two turns to speak.
- To start the students off, ask them to choose one sentence from the following story beginnings.
    - *It was a bitterly cold day in December, and Angela had just got home from school.*
    - *Reeta looked at her mother in shock: she just couldn't believe what her mother was telling her!*
    - *Abdul and William woke up to find themselves in a dark room, their hands and feet bound tightly with nylon ropes.*
- To help them, you can choose one of the beginnings, say it aloud and add a sentence of your own. The students, in turns, add to your beginning. Alternatively, the first student can say the chosen sentence aloud, and add another to it to continue the story. The next student will add the next line, and the exercise will continue until all the students have contributed to the story.

- As this is an oral exercise, you can make arrangements to record the story, either by audiotaping it, or by writing down the sentences as they are said. This will make the exercise more exciting for the students, and also generate laughter, as the storyline may move from one direction to another as the narration continues. You could also play the story back or read it out to discuss grammatical mistakes, differences in style, choice of words and so on, providing correct or more appropriate alternatives, so that students learn as they listen.

- Remember to enforce the rules of the game: if the storyline breaks, the group has to start from the beginning, either with the same opening sentence or a different one. Also, there should be no interruptions during the storytelling. Instruct students to say their sentence slowly and loudly, so that everyone can hear it clearly.

- The next student continues the story by adding the next sentence, another student adds another sentence and so on until the story comes to an end.

- This activity takes a bit of practice before it will start to flow well. No interruptions of any kind are allowed once the story is in progress.

- If the story breaks down, the teacher should try to encourage further attempts with prompts.

- The circular storytelling can be changed to circular story writing by the teacher writing an opening sentence and having the students contribute more sentences in writing, one at a time, until the story is completed.

Resource 4: Guide to summarising a prose text

Resource 4

The prose text below is used to illustrate how you can summarise a prose passage.

- **Step 1: Read the prose text below carefully.**

  There were mosquitoes everywhere when the rain came. John found some in his shoe. Emily saw three on the cooking pot and their father found several in his car. The whole village was infested with mosquitoes. This situation made the whole village call a meeting. They had a debate. How would they get rid of the mosquitoes? Every person got a chance to speak, and everyone listened carefully. The people discussed each of the suggestions made by both the wise and the foolish. However, none of the ideas was good enough. Then, an old woman who was sitting at the edge of the group, put up her hand. She told the villagers that in a small bush far away near Benue River, there was a plant with anti-mosquito odour. It was a magic herb. When it was burnt, the smell attracted all mosquitoes to the fire. The people decided that this was an excellent idea so they sent three people to get the plant.

- **Step 2**: **Gather the most important points in the passage:**

  Mosquitoes everywhere/whole village infested/issue worrisome/

discussion of the issue/old woman's suggestion/plant in a bush near Benue River/attracts mosquitoes/three people sent to get the plant.

- **Step 3: Change the notes into two sentences:**

  During the rainy season, mosquitoes infested the village, creating a worrisome situation that needed to be solved. The villagers accepted the suggestion of an old woman to use a plant near Benue River that could attract all mosquitoes and destroy them.

Teacher question and answer

Feedback

Question: What happens in a class where about half of the students cannot read or write English well?

Answer: In such a situation, do not ask a student who is not confident about using English to perform all the activities in this unit. Give the students comics written in good English to begin with. They can then start reading stories meant for younger children, moving up gradually to literature appropriate to their level.

Unit 2: Using Literature to Develop Sensitivity to Life's Values

Introduction

This unit's focus is on the use of children's literature to expose students to real-life values such as honesty, fair play, patriotism, love and bravery as presented through storylines, plots, settings, themes and characters. It does this through classification and co-operative exploration of core values in literary texts. This unit should also help students share their notions of the values, virtues and personality traits, both positive and negative, that are found in literary texts as well as in real life. The unit therefore aims to help you expose your students to diverse ways of exploring the language and elements of literature to promote core values amongst them.

Unit outcomes

Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit you will be able to:

- introduce literature to JSS students as representations of the values we prize in real-life experiences and that they can identify with,
- enable students to read literature critically to assess how real-life values are expressed in literary texts, and
- help JSS students enjoy discovering the real-life values brought out through the language of literature as expressed through storylines, plots, settings and so on.

Terminology

Terminology

Cooperative learning: Learning based on students working together and assisting one another to complete a task or learning item.

Exploration: Learning by discovery and investigation.

Value system: The system of moral, traditional and cultural activities valued by a community or society.

Literary texts: These are samples of fiction and non-fiction books that are used for educational purposes. Literary texts are meant to be read for enjoyment as well as learning and language development.

Theme: The central or main idea that is discussed in a novel, play or poem. It is what the work is about; that is, the major message(s) it portrays.

Setting: The totality of the environment of a story. It refers to the period, place, atmosphere and background of the story.

Characterisation: The particular qualities of characters as brought out by narration, description, dialogues and speeches in the literary text.

Plot: The organisation of the events in a literary work.

Teacher support information

Very often teachers, in their anxiety to complete the syllabus, treat literary texts as comprehension passages and focus on dealing with textual questions and answers. A sad consequence of this is that students miss an opportunity to read literature for pleasure or to develop their language competence by exposure to the special uses of vocabulary and grammar found in these texts. Although as teachers we should encourage students to read literary texts in detail, the objective of this exercise should be to make the students discover for themselves the unique and beautiful ways in which emotions and values are represented in literature. This can be done by engaging students in collaborative classroom activities that make them read such texts not just to collect a list of factual details, but to understand and appreciate the themes and messages behind the text. This unit will try to give you some strategies for engaging students in meaningful literary appreciation tasks.

Case study

Case study

Teacher Mohammed Kudu of a Government Secondary School in an African nation noticed a caption in a senior master's office that read, "Poetry begins in delight and ends in wisdom." He determined that in his next poetry lesson, he was going to help his students enjoy the experience of reading poems before he made them look for the wisdom in them. He quickly translated this idea into classroom reality. He chose poems from their school collections with underlying experiences that were familiar to the students; some of these were folksongs, dance poems and stories. The students enjoyed the new experience thoroughly; they especially liked turning some of the poems into songs, singing and

dancing to the poems and modelling characters in the poems. The opportunity to personalise the poems also made them aware of the values expressed in the poems — honesty, courage, love of fellow men and so on. Mr Kudu discovered that just using a simple strategy such as this gave students the motivation to read poetry and discover for themselves the feelings, values and wisdom expressed in the poems they liked in the lesson. After this experience, the students asked Mr Kudu to give them more poems to read at home to prepare for more enjoyable activities in the next class.

Points to ponder

1. Do you encourage your students to dramatise the poems in their course through song and dance? What class management problems do you anticipate when using such a strategy?
2. The experience of reading poetry in English is enhanced if students are encouraged to read or recite poems from their home language. Do you agree? What reasons would you give to support your opinion?

Activities

Activity 1: Using symbols to represent values in literary texts

Activity 1

The objective of this activity is to encourage students to explore moral and social values expressed in literary texts. As you will no doubt agree, one reason we tell bedtime stories to children is to illustrate the consequences of good and bad actions performed by good and bad characters. In JSS classes, encouraging students to discover values in literary texts can be a challenging experience as students of this age group are usually impatient with adult "sermonising."

To get students interested in discovering core values, you will probably need to personalise their experience of reading literature. One good way of doing this is to challenge your students to portray values through symbols (e.g., well-known personalities from your country/society/the world) and to support their choice of symbol with sound reasons.

To begin the activity, have the students suggest a set of abstract nouns that represent values (e.g., *honesty, cowardice, bravery*). Then ask them to think of any person they know who represents one of these, say, *honesty*. Collect their responses and put them on the board. Then put up a poster (or project a picture of the one given in **Resource 1a**) showing popular personalities and objects and ask the students, working in pairs, to select from the list of values (positive and negative) in **Resource 1b** the ones they think would fit the personalities. Each pair must also give reasons why they think a particular person adequately represents that value. Have a class discussion on their responses to explore what the term **values** means to us, and how well-known personalities with those values inspire us to live our lives.

Now put the students in small groups and have them read a popular story from your culture (written in English) or an abridged version of a classic

English story (some examples of popular tales from African contexts are given in **Resource 1d**).

As the students read, tell them to classify the characters and events in the texts of their choice in terms of the values that they represent, using **Resource 1c: Classification of characters and events in terms of values** as a guide.

Ask the groups to share their classifications with the other groups and to note areas of agreement and disagreement and the reasons for these judgements. Some core values, virtues or character traits that should emerge from the discussion are *loyalty, self-control, compassion, tolerance, firmness, respect, responsibility* and so on. You could even let them talk about negative traits such as *selfishness, cruelty, lying, cheating*, etc., as examples of character traits one should avoid. Ask each group to choose one character who represents a core value and prepare a short skit to demonstrate how the character displayed that value. They can modify the story they have read, or even base their skit on an imaginary event. Give them a day or two to prepare their skits, and then have class presentations. To make the students feel more rewarded for their efforts, you could invite other teachers and/or the principal to watch the skits and ask them to guess the core value being portrayed.

Activity 2: Exploring values expressed in familiar tales and folklore

Activity 2

This activity is based on three conceptual frameworks. The first concept is that of linking home, school and community to promote the teaching of core values in literature. The second is to engage students in co-operative learning activities such as class projects that bring out from literature texts the values needed for life goals. The third is to expose students to the experience of critically assessing literary texts, both oral and written. This guides the students in critically assessing the productions of the group projects.

You can begin this activity with a class discussion on favourite folktales from your students' culture(s). This will be an opportunity for you to introduce your students to folktales and the concepts of **setting**, **plot** and **characters**, and how **themes** can be used to explore life values. The discussion should also focus on how our traditional tales all have certain morals and values that we are meant to absorb and adhere to in our own lives.

For the main activity, ask the students to read the passage and complete the tasks in **Resource 2: Exploring life's values through folktales**.

If possible, invite a traditional storyteller from your community to present to the class traditional stories, songs and poems with specific values. You can then help the students to translate these traditional folksongs and folklore into English on either a chalkboard or cardboard. See **Resource 3** for an example of a folksong translated from Yoruba to English.

- Ask the students to identify the traditional values brought out in the folklore, poems and folksongs (see samples in **Resource 3**).

- The students should work in groups to dramatise the traditional values brought out in the presentations and enact the scene in class.

- Then ask the students to collect traditional folklore and poems from their family members and community elders and present them to the class in their own language and, if possible, translated into English. They should also highlight the core values represented in the folktales and poems.

- Each group's project should be displayed on the bulletin board. The groups assess each other's work using the **assessment grid** in **Resource 4**.

Activity 3: Personalising values expressed in literature

Activity 3

For this activity, students will learn to evaluate a literary text in terms of its characters, and to do a project on a particular value represented by a character in the text. For the activity they can read a storybook from their school collection or any other book recommended in their syllabus.

Put the students in pairs and have each pair read a literary text. The text could be a work of fiction, a play or even a poem. The students' task is to follow the development of a particular character and decide what value or values he or she represents. Encourage the students to provide reasons for their decision and to note them down. They should also decide whether they would like to emulate the life of that character, and say why or why not.

- To make the feedback session a little more interesting, have the students, working in pairs, share their responses by playing the *Who Are You?* game to reflect the different real-life values they would like to emulate from the story book. For example:

  Student A: Who are you?

  Student B: I'm the honest man in… (state the novel: e.g., *The Incorruptible Judge*).

  Student A: What makes you say you're honest?

  Student B: I refused to take a bribe and did not steal government property.

- The value need not necessarily be a positive one. It may be a negative value like *I'm a dishonest man*, which students should not emulate. The value should be examined in terms of the reasons for being dishonest and the consequences of dishonesty.

- Students who can list the most points about the character chosen in the story are awarded the maximum score.

When the presentations are over, give the students a project on expressing values in literary texts. Each pair should make a poster on the character they have chosen to analyse or emulate. The students' posters should be embellished with illustrations of the character, some quotes from the text

that illustrate the particular characteristic, the students' own comments and so on.

Unit summary

Summary

In this unit you learned how to help your students realise how core values are reflected in literary texts. Students can be encouraged to adopt positive value systems found in the literary texts. Books that present value conflicts clearly lend themselves to discussions, and students can assess their own beliefs and decide which ones to accept or reject. The unit also aimed to help students evaluate and analyse literary texts in terms of characters, setting and plot. A third objective of this unit has been to help students personalise the experience of reading literature by also referring to texts from their own cultures.

Reflections

Reflection

You can determine the success or otherwise of this unit using the following questions:

- How well were the students able to identify with some positive value systems at the end of this unit?
- How successful were the planning, organisation and execution of the various group activities and projects?
- What could have been done better and how?

Assessment

Assessment

- Which of the following positive life values were your students able to bring out as they worked through the activities in this unit? Mention the literary text, characters and events that brought out the following values:
  - Honesty
  - Hard work
  - Truthfulness
  - Purity

Resources

Resource 1a: Poster representing values and virtues

Resource 1a

Resource 1b: List of values to match poster

Resource 1b

Positive traits: *Honesty, loyalty, self-control, compassion, tolerance, firmness, respect, responsibility, bravery, kindness, sacrifice.*

Negative traits: *Treachery, cowardice, greed, lust, disobedience, pride, dishonesty, intolerance, cunning.*

Resource 1c: Classification of characters and events in terms of values

Resource 1c

Literature, in its exploration of actions, events and characters, presents a variety of value systems. Children can judge their own beliefs against the values expressed in the literature books.

Ask your students to classify characters and events as presented in the box below. The students should then write a paragraph or two on the value systems they have classified.

Characters with positive value systems: (characters who display the following qualities or are):

Honest — brave — leadership qualities — respect — adventurous — bold — persistent

Events with positive value systems displayed in literature:

Adventure — morally acceptable love affair — selfless service — heroic deeds — restoration to life — rescue — success — happy ending

Characters with negative value systems (characters who display the following qualities or are):

Wicked — oppressive — exploitative — cowardly — disobedient — rude — corrupt — stupid — hot tempered — selfish

Events with negative value systems displayed in literature:

Disappointment — social stigma — blackmail — death — failure — punishment — destruction — illegal deed — infidelity — tragic or sad ending

Resource 1d: Example of literary texts

Resource 1d

Below are some value systems that can be identified in some literary texts used at the JSS level in Nigeria. You can use these to get your students started on writing a page or two about the characters in the books. You can develop similar lists of value systems for the children's literature of your own country.

Author	Title of the text	Major character in the text	Value system brought out in the life of the character
Onyewadume	*Echoes of Hard Times*	Jide Ojo	Wisdom and perseverance
Olagoke	*The Incorruptible Judge*	Ajala Oni	Brilliance, honesty, obedience, diligence and discipline
Zaynab Alikali	*The Virtuous Woman*	Nana Ai	Brilliance, strong work ethic, chastity, cool-headedness, maturity, honesty and obedience.
Agbo Areo	*Mother's Choice*	Ade Ogidi Junior	Intelligence, talent, sportsmanship, and evils of lack of self-control, alcoholism and drug addiction.

These value systems can also form a basis for further reading, role modelling, dramatisation, critical analysis, discussions, oral presentations or debates, depending on the language focus.

Resource 2: Exploring life's values through folktales

Resource 2

You probably know several folktales. Folktales are stories that are passed on by tradition; and many legends are passed from one generation to the next primarily by oral storytelling. Perhaps you have heard some tales from your country from your own family. Sometimes you can find several versions of the same story, like *The Lucky Ones*, below. Read the folktale and study the analysis that follows it.

The lucky ones

Many years ago, there were thousands of donkeys. They lived on plains and grasslands all over the world. Men caught large numbers of them and made them carry heavy loads. The donkeys did not get enough to eat, although they worked very hard. Many of them died, but the men did not worry. They could easily go out and catch more of the poor animals. After a time, the donkeys that were still free got very worried.

"The hunters will catch all of us," they said, "we must go to see the hare. He is a wise animal. He'll help us."

The hare felt very sorry for the donkeys. When their leader came to see him, he said, "I will try to help you. Bring all your friends to my house in the forest. I've thought of a plan to make you look different. If you do what I say, the hunters won't know you. They'll think that all donkeys have gone forever."

The donkeys were very pleased to hear this. "Tell us more about your plan," they said. But the hare answered, "Bring all your friends to the forest tomorrow. I'll tell you then."

As the donkeys went away, he shouted, "Make sure that all your friends come."

Early the next morning they went back to the hare's house with all their friends. He was waiting for them. He had a big brush and a bucket full of white paint. The donkeys didn't like the smell of the paint. One of them said, "I hope you are not going to paint us. I don't want paint all over me." "It will help to save you," the hare replied. "I'm going to paint white stripes all over you. When I finish, the men won't know what you are."

He dipped his brush into the paint and shouted, "Come on! Who'll be first?" But no one wanted to be first.

Soon he got angry. "I'll give you one more chance," he said. "Do what I say or I'll never help you again."

Then one donkey walked forward and said, "I don't want the hunters to catch me. I don't want to carry heavy loads. I want to be free. Paint me, Mr Hare."

Very carefully, the hare painted white stripes all over the donkey's body. When he finished, the donkey looked very different. The other donkeys were very surprised.

"He doesn't look like a donkey now. He's much more beautiful," they cried. Soon they were all pushing forward, saying, "Paint me, Mr Hare! Paint me, too!"

The hare told them to come to him one at a time. He worked very hard and soon only half the paint was left. One donkey who was still waiting shouted "You'll use all the paint before it's my turn, Mr Hare. Please paint me next." He tried to push to the front. The hare said, "Don't push. There's enough paint for everyone." But he didn't speak quite soon enough.

All the donkeys began to push. One of them knocked the bucket over. In a moment, all the paint had poured out on the ground. Not one drop was left.

The donkeys knew that he would never forgive them. They began to walk away slowly. But they didn't all go together.

The hare was very, very angry. He threw down his brush. "You foolish donkeys!" he cried. "I'm not going to help you any more. Get away from my house!"

Those who had new coats with white stripes went one way. They were laughing and talking happily. Those who hadn't been painted went the other way, crying sadly. They knew that they would soon be caught by the hunters. You can still hear the sad cries of the few donkeys that are left. Often they stand tied to a post, waiting to carry a heavy load.

The others rode the plains and grassland, still wearing their beautiful striped coats. They are now called *zebras*, which some people say means *lucky ones*.

This folktale can be used to explore life values. Compare the life values that you drew from *The Lucky Ones* with the ones presented below. The life values are drawn from the setting, plot, themes and various characters in the story.

Components of the folktale	**Real-life values brought out**
Setting: grasslands all over the world	The grasslands provide no hiding place for the donkeys, thus giving room for the hunters to dominate
Plot: the storyline presents the problem faced by the donkeys and their concern over it, the solution offered by the hare (painting their bodies with white stripes) and the origin of the zebra	▪ Wisdom of the hare ▪ Concern of the donkeys ▪ The hare as a problem solver

Theme: the main messages in the story: ▪ Oppression ▪ Problem and solution ▪ Luck versus ill-luck ▪ Sadness and joy	▪ Anger of the hare ▪ Rowdiness of some donkeys ▪ Hard-working hare ▪ Impatience of some donkeys
Characters: ▪ Major character is Mr Hare ▪ Other characters are the donkeys ▪ Minor character is the donkey that poured out the paint	▪ Determination of the hare to assist the donkeys ▪ Foolishness of some donkeys ▪ The donkey that pours out the paint is the spoiler

Resource 3: Folksong translated from Yoruba to English

Resource 3

Omo to mo ya re loju o, osi yo tamo naa pa 2x

The child that looks down on his mother, poverty will overwhelm him 2x

Iya to jiya po lori re, baba to jiya po lori re

The mother that suffers so much for you, the father that suffers so much for you

Omo to mo ya re loju, osi yo tomo naa pa.

The child that looks down on his mother, poverty will overwhelm him.

Description of the traditional values represented in the folksong

The traditional values portrayed in the above song (translated into English) are primarily those of respect for one's mother and father, and the perseverance of the parents as they raise their child. The message is that any child who does not recognise his or her parents' contribution and sacrifice is welcoming poverty into his or her life. It is a song normally sung in Yoruba-land to motivate children to love and take care of their parents.

Resource 4: Assessment grid for literary texts

Resource 4

The following is a grid for assessing any literary text. It contains certain guidelines that should help students to analyse and evaluate a literary text.

Feature	Description	Guideline for analysis
Plot	The storyline: what happens in the story or novel	Sequential, logical, clearly defined, well linked
Setting	Where and when the story takes place	Clearly described, relevant, appropriate, real/imaginary
Theme	The main message or underlying idea of the literary text	Well presented and clearly brought out in the text
Characterisation	The people, real or imaginary, whose lives are described	Well portrayed, well rounded (i.e., given recognisable human attributes), distinctions between major and minor characters
Style of writing	Use of words and sentence structures	Words well chosen, ideas well arranged, language easy to comprehend and reflects real-life use, use of metaphors
Real-life values represented in the text	Human virtues and personality traits expressed through the characters	Positive and negative traits, reflected in the themes, setting, plot, etc.

Teacher question and answer

Feedback

Question: Can the procedures used in this unit for analysing the sample texts be used to analyse all literary texts and other genres?

Answer: Almost all literary texts written for children or young adults lend themselves well to this kind of analysis. When choosing literary texts, you should therefore remember that the texts must be appropriate to the language, age and ability of the students. Most of the literary texts to be used at this level should be abridged copies and supplementary

readers. So, for example, when we ask students to read texts like *Great Expectations, Macbeth, The Merchant of Venice* or *Robinson Crusoe,* we are not asking them to read the unabridged copies of the texts, but rather the simplified versions that are not more than 100 pages long. This is because most children do not have the same understanding as adults do of the more subtle language functions of literature — irony, sarcasm, innuendo, etc. — and how these contribute to the theme.

Unit 3: Language and Style in Literary Texts

Introduction

Students at the JSS level are more likely to develop a sustained interest in reading and writing if they enjoy the content and different activities of literature classes. In many literature classes today, teachers merely tell the stories in their own words or explain each sentence as they read. As a result, students do not get enough practice in reading and understanding for themselves. Also, they miss out on an opportunity to enhance their vocabulary and language skills. This is probably why our students do not want to read or write literary texts on their own. In this unit you will learn to help your students notice the special ways in which language is used in literary texts.

Unit outcomes

Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit you will be able to:

- help your students notice the special and unique style of literary texts,
- enhance your students' vocabulary through literary texts,
- develop activities to help your students notice the patterns of sounds, words and structures that are found in literary texts, and
- devise ways to promote a sustained interest in literature.

Teacher support information

The types of children's literature that students at the JSS level enjoy are likely to vary. Therefore, you need to know how to select literature appropriate to their age, language level and areas of interest. You want them to identify with the characters, understand the viewpoints expressed and find the events and themes interesting — and this will not happen if the books you choose are beyond their level of interest, or have to be explained to them word by word. When students read for themselves, they become more familiar with new words, and gain confidence in sustained reading and writing.

Case study

Case study

Mrs Laitu Guga teaches English in JSS II of a Government girls' secondary school. She observed the indifference of the girls to reading and writing stories in English. She remembered how in the good old days her teacher used to give them one book to read per week. She also remembered how she used to enjoy the stories in the books. She would never forget some of the drama nights organised by her college's drama club and the stimulating debates organised by the debating society. She had even enjoyed participating in some of these activities, especially in choral readings of poems, turning some of them into songs, and analysing poems with her friends. She decided to experiment with some of these activities in her JSS II literature class. She noticed some change in the interest level of her students. They now wanted to read extensively. They also gained more confidence in reading and writing. They also read and wrote better.

Points to ponder

1 What strategies were used by your own secondary school English teacher?

2 How many or which of those do you use with your own students? Do they still help?

Activities

Activity 1: Exploring language patterns in poetry

Activity 1

In **Activity 1** of **Unit 1**, you saw how we can make students notice, understand and analyse the ways in which words are used in poetry. We also discussed the special ways in which poets make up new words, or change familiar words to mean something special. Looking carefully at the words used in poetry is one way in which students' vocabulary can improve.

In this activity, we will explore other ways in which poets play with language to bring out unique meanings or present a theme in a unique manner. Poets often use patterns, the repetition of sounds, words, structures or themes. Sometimes they twist accepted grammatical rules to say something in a new and interesting manner. This activity will try to build students' critical awareness of poetic language so that their own language skills are enhanced.

For the activity, choose a poem (preferably a well-known poem that deals with themes familiar to your students). A sample poem is given in **Resource 1**. Put the students in groups and give each group a stanza from the poem to analyse as shown in **Resource 1**. You can move around the groups and help them discover the patterns. The groups should then present to the class a few words about the main idea of their stanza, along with some quotations from the poem to prove their point.

Before the activity, however, you will have to familiarise students with some poetic devices such as use of **lexical sets, parallelism, inversions** and **run-on lines**. Here are some suggestions on how to introduce these concepts to students with familiar examples.

- **Lexical sets:** Put the following words on the chalkboard/whiteboard. Ask the students, working in pairs, to put the words in as many groups as they can. For example, words like *table, sofa, cupboard* can be grouped as *furniture*.

  - *clouds, anger, pink, jumping, river, grey, excitement, grief, birds, waterfall, chasing, jogging, envy, blue, riding, white*

  They should come up with the groups *nature, colour, movement* and *emotions/feelings*. Explain to the students that words belonging to a similar category make a **lexical set,** and when we can identify lexical sets in a passage, it usually helps us to understand the passage better.

- **Parallelism:** Give the students the following lines from the famous poem "The Charge of the Light Brigade" and ask them what is special about the lines:

  Into the valley of Death rode the Light Brigade

  and

  Into the mouth of Hell rode the Light Brigade

  What we notice in these lines is that the same lines are repeated throughout, but some of the words in the middle are changed (*the valley of Death/the mouth of Hell*). Ask the students why they think the poet has used this kind of repetition and what special idea the poet wanted to convey. Expected answers would be: *The poet repeats the lines because he wants us to notice that the Light Brigade kept riding and did not stop doing their duty even when they knew they would die. He replaces the phrase* the valley of Death *by* the mouth of Hell *to make us focus on the seriousness of the situation, and to highlight the heroic decision of the soldiers.* Explain to the students that this kind of repeated structure, with a significant change in one of the lines, is called **parallelism**, which is a special poetic device. Parallelism functions to highlight an important idea in the poem.

- **Inversion:** This usually refers to inversion of the word order in a sentence. Sometimes the change is grammatical and sometimes not, but this device is used by poets to highlight a certain word or phrase in the poem. Give the students the following sentences and ask them the difference in meaning between them.

  She left the room without a sound.

  Without a sound, she left the room.

  The room she left, without a sound.

  The students should notice that the first sentence simply describes the action, without highlighting any aspect of it. In the second one, the focus changes to the fact that there was no noise when she left (or no one noticed that she had left). The third sentence focuses on **what** she

left, rather than the act of leaving. By changing the groups of words in the initial position of a sentence we can find new meanings in sentences. This kind of inversion, very often used in poetry, may sometimes even be a little ungrammatical (*The room she left, without a sound*) but acceptable in the context.

- **Run-on lines:** These are poetic sentences that do not end at the end of the line with a punctuation mark, but continue into the next line. The purpose of using this kind of line is sometimes to show long movement, or that the idea the poet wants to express did not end in the previous line.

After the preparatory discussion, have your students look at the poem "The Solitary Reaper," by William Wordsworth (**Resource 1**) in groups and work through each stanza. The groups should look for all the interesting categories listed above and explain what special meaning is expressed through the patterns they notice, and how they contribute to the theme of the poem.

Activity 2: Exploring language patterns in plays

Activity 2

As the activities across the units in this module show, there are several ways in which we can help students explore the special language features in plays. In **Unit 1**, we had an activity for students to convert a prose text into a play, and this is one way of helping students notice the features of drama. In this activity, however, we will focus on the **dialogue**; that is, the characters' conversations, because conversations tell us more about the characters' relationships and help us understand the theme better.

Before students do the activity, they need to be aware of how our feelings are expressed in our conversations. Play the audio/video clip in **Resource 2a** or read out the transcript in a way that sounds like natural conversation. The students should watch/listen to the conversation clips in the audio/video carefully and then answer the following questions.

1. In each conversation, what is the relationship between the people?
2. Who is the more powerful person?
3. How do the characters feel about the matter they are discussing?
4. How do you know this? Watch or listen to the conversations again and note down which words helped you decide who is more powerful. Also notice the tone of voice, and the facial expressions of the people to answer Question 3.

After collecting the answers and having a short discussion, alert the students to how people's words, gestures and behaviour all help us learn more about their personalities and their state of mind (whether they are happy or sad, angry or anxious, and so on). In conversations, people who are more **powerful** tend to *speak more*, and *take more turns* in speaking (i.e., they speak at the same time as other people, interrupt other speakers, or just talk more often). People also do this when they are **agitated** (*anxious, worried, angry*, etc). When people are agitated, they also stammer, repeat words, start, stop halfway and start again. Another thing that students should notice about conversations is how people use

indirectness: sometimes people give half information, or avoid giving direct answers or even tell a lie. All these things give us more insights into people's personalities, feelings and relationships. In drama, playwrights use such strategies to tell us more about their characters and also to prepare us for the climax.

Once you have made the students aware of some such conversation features, give them an extract from a play from their curriculum. Divide them into groups and ask them to find out the theme of the scene by looking closely at the **dialogue**. They should also look at the **stage directions** to find more information about the characters and how they behave and think. A sample excerpt from a play is given in **Resource 2b**.

The students can do this same activity to analyse a prose text. Simply change the categories from stage directions to plot, setting and description. The dialogue can still form the basis of the analysis.

Activity 3: Writing a review of a literary text

Activity 3

Now that your students have had some practice in reading and analysing the language of literary texts, you can help them consolidate their experience by teaching them how to **review** a literary text.

Have the students imagine they have been asked by a reputable newspaper to review a new book. They will be given an excerpt from the book, and their task will be to evaluate it so that people can decide whether the book is worth buying. Tell them this is a task of great responsibility, as the writer's popularity depends on their review.

Before the students begin writing, they need to understand what is required in a review. For a discussion on the language of reviews, bring in some sample reviews from English newspapers and magazines and distribute them amongst the groups. Draw the students' attention to the writing style in a book review. In particular, they should note the **factual details** (name of the book, author, publisher, price, number of chapters, whether it has an introduction or preface, etc.), the **summary** of the theme, (including the characterisation, the feelings expressed), the **language used** (easy conversational style or more difficult to understand, use of words or humour, etc.) and finally, the **reviewer's own comments.** (See **Resource 3** for sample reviews.)

For the activity, divide the students into four or five groups and give each group a page from a literary text included in their English textbook or supplementary reader, or any book from the school library. Tell them to prepare a review in one paragraph, keeping in mind the guidelines they have already noticed in the sample reviews. The students should then read out their reviews, and vote for the best. The winning review could be displayed on the wall or included in the school magazine.

Unit summary

Summary

In this unit you learned how to engage students in tasks that help them notice and appreciate the special ways in which language is treated in literary texts. These activities, if executed with humour, can trigger a sustained interest in literature in the students. This habit will, in turn, not only help them become better readers, it will also make them more articulate users of English.

Reflections

Reflection

- Did you have easy access to literary texts? Were there enough copies for the students?
- Did anything — students' performance, curiosity or presentation skills, for example — surprise you?
- Would you like to modify some of the activities when you do them the next time?
- Did the students enjoy taking part in the activities?
- Did you notice any improvement in their use of language after the activities?

Assessment

Assessment

- Which of the three activities presented in this unit did you find most feasible, interesting and useful for developing the language skills of the students?
- Which of the activities enhanced the teaching of reading, writing, speaking and listening? Support your answer with evidence from the unit.

Resources

Resource 1: Sample poem: “The Solitary Reaper”

Resource 1

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands;
A voice so thrilling ne'er heard
In springtime from the cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago;
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of today?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate’er the theme, the maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

Resource 2a: The language of drama

Resource 2a

Transcripts

Conversation 1

Mother **(angrily):** Kathy, how many times have I told you not to use your cell phone when guests come to visit? It's SUCH bad manners! I was so embarrassed when your Aunt Marcia was asking you something and you didn't even notice!

Kathy **(carelessly):** Oh, I couldn't care less! Aunt Marcia is so boring. Who wants to talk to her?

Mother **(annoyed):** DO you HAVE to be so rude? I just don't understand this generation — you actually seem to take pride in being nasty! Whatever happened to good manners? And people will say I didn't bring you up the right way!

Kathy **(angrily):** Why can't you just leave me ALONE??!! God knows why people just don't understand me…

Mother **(cutting her off):** Get out of the room, you nasty girl! You don't help around the house, you live like a pig in that filthy room, and you have the guts to be rude! All right, I've had enough! You'll get no pocket money, young lady, until you have called up your Aunt Marcia and said hello to her. And while you're at it, clean up your room by tonight or else I'll rent it out! God knows how much I need the money, you ungrateful creature!

Conversation 2

Richard: Hey, guys, guess what… I've been selected for the squad! Got a call from none other than coach himself! He's asked me to show for practice on Monday! I still can't believe I've made the team!!

Zaffar: Wow, lucky guy! Imagine… We'll watch you on television up with the greats! You better start behaving like a star right from now… How about making me your manager?

Richard: Okay, okay… Rib me all you like… but when I'm really there on the field scoring goals, you'll have to line up for my autograph!

Celia: You're right, Rick! I'm going to be your manager, and Zaff will be your valet… After all, you'll need someone to press your clothes and polish your shoes. Ha ha!

Zaffar: Whoever heard of a woman manager for a football star?? You'll be his secretary when I negotiate his price with Manchester United!

Richard: Okay, okay, guys, cut it out… You're embarrassing me! Let me first prove my worth, and then watch where I land up! Right next to Beckham, Messi, Drogba, Eto'o….

Conversation 3

Teacher Musa: Good morning, children! Are you all ready?

Students **(in unison):** *We are, Sir!*

Teacher: Is anyone scared?

Rabia **(in a small voice, worried):** I don't think I'll pass, Sir… I just don't remember a word of what I read!

Ahmed: Me too, Sir! My mind has gone blank! My mum will skin me alive if I fail this time too! She's threatened to take me out of school, marry me to a girl from her village and make me work in the fields!

All: Ha ha! That'll be lovely, Ahmed! We'll all come and visit you some time!

Teacher: That's enough, everyone! Put your bags away… It's almost time!

Teacher: Okay, ready? Let's say a prayer first: Dear Lord, we are all gathered here today to begin our final exam. Please guide us on the path of success! Amen.

All: Amen.

Robin: Sir, can I go out for a minute? I've forgotten my pencil box!

Teacher: It's not allowed. Which one's your bag? I'll get it.

Principal **(walking in):** Everything under control, Musa?

Teacher **(caught by surprise, stammering):** Ye…yes, Sir! I… I was just going to begin distributing the papers…

Principal **(cutting him off):** You better do that, or there won't be time later. You know we have a meeting at five. Be there!

Teacher: Yes, Sir! Sure, Sir!

Video

Resource files

See in the enclosed DVD a video recording of the activities:

- Scripts\Module5\Unit3\Activity2\Resource2a\Video\Conversation1.mp4
- Scripts\Module5\Unit3\Activity2\Resource2a\Video\Conversation2.mp4
- Scripts\Module5\Unit3\Activity2\Resource2a\Video\Conversations3.mp4

Resource 2b: Extract from a play

Resource 2b

Adapted from *The Bishop's Candlesticks*

Bishop: Now I think you may let your prisoner go.

Sergeant: But he won't show me his papers… he won't tell me who he is…

Bishop: I've told you he's my friend.

Sergeant: Yes, that's all very well, but…

Bishop: He's your bishop's friend. Surely that's enough?

Sergeant: Well, but…

Bishop: Surely?!

Sergeant: I… I… Humph! (To his men) Loosen the prisoner. (They do so.) Right about turn, quick march!

(Exit Sergeant and Gendarmes. A long pause.)

Convict: (Very slowly, as if in a dream) You told them you had **given** me the candlesticks — **given** me them. By God!

Mrs Persome: Oh, you scoundrel, you pitiful scoundrel! You come here, you are fed, and warmed, and — and you thief, you steal from your host! Oh, you blackguard!

Bishop: Persome, you are tired. Go to your room.

Mrs Persome: What?! And leave you with him to be cheated again, perhaps murdered?

Bishop: Leave, Persome, and place those candlesticks on the table on your way out.

Mrs Persome: I won't — I will not!

Bishop: I, your bishop, command you!

(Mrs Persome leaves with great reluctance.)

Convict: I… I… didn't believe there was any good in this world; one doesn't know when one has been in Hell; but somehow I… I… know you're good, an — and it's a queer thing to ask, but — could you, would you bless me before I go? I… I… think it would help me. I…

Bishop: Stay, my son… Sleep here tonight…

Convict: Uh?

Bishop: …and leave very early tom…

Convict: Fa… What are you **saying**, Holy Father…!!

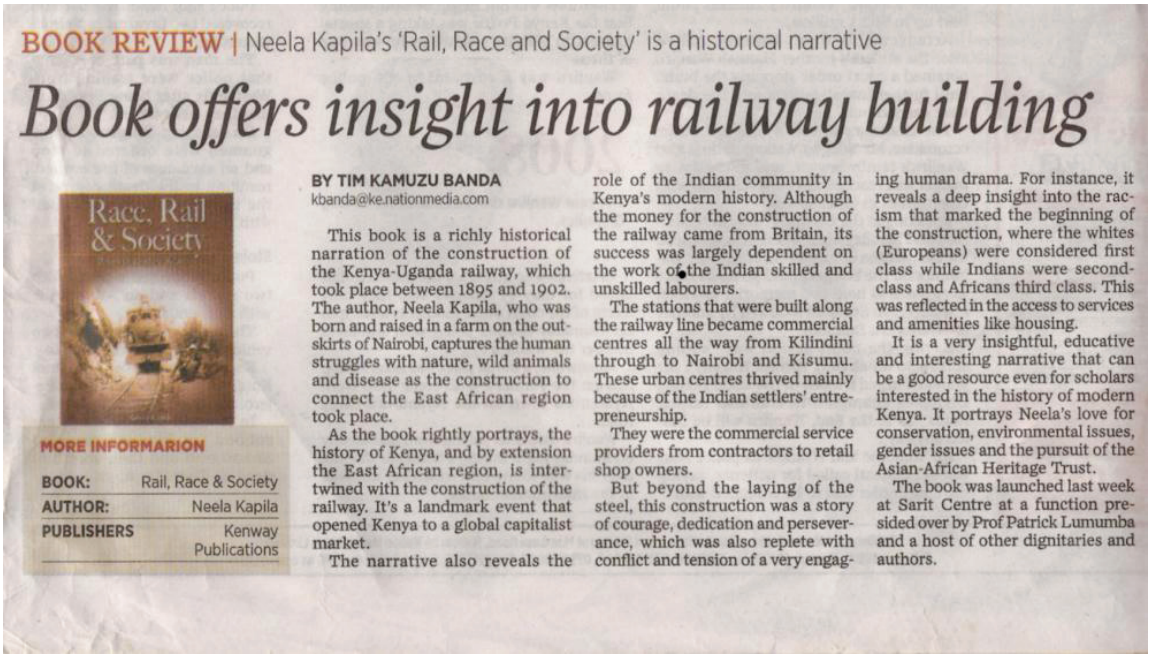
Bishop: There's a path through the back… A very lonely path.

Convict: I… I… don't know… what to say, Father Tha —Thank you!

Bishop: Always remember, my son, that this poor body is the Temple of the Living God.

Convict: I… I'll remember, Father! Bless you, Father!

Resource 3: Sample book review



BOOK REVIEW | Neela Kapila's 'Rail, Race and Society' is a historical narrative

Book offers insight into railway building

MORE INFORMARION

BOOK:	Rail, Race & Society
AUTHOR:	Neela Kapila
PUBLISHERS	Kenway Publications

BY TIM KAMUZU BANDA
kbanda@ke.nationmedia.com

This book is a richly historical narration of the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway, which took place between 1895 and 1902. The author, Neela Kapila, who was born and raised in a farm on the outskirts of Nairobi, captures the human struggles with nature, wild animals and disease as the construction to connect the East African region took place.

As the book rightly portrays, the history of Kenya, and by extension the East African region, is intertwined with the construction of the railway. It's a landmark event that opened Kenya to a global capitalist market.

The narrative also reveals the role of the Indian community in Kenya's modern history. Although the money for the construction of the railway came from Britain, its success was largely dependent on the work of the Indian skilled and unskilled labourers.

The stations that were built along the railway line became commercial centres all the way from Kilindini through to Nairobi and Kisumu. These urban centres thrived mainly because of the Indian settlers' entrepreneurship.

They were the commercial service providers from contractors to retail shop owners.

But beyond the laying of the steel, this construction was a story of courage, dedication and perseverance, which was also replete with conflict and tension of a very engaging human drama. For instance, it reveals a deep insight into the racism that marked the beginning of the construction, where the whites (Europeans) were considered first class while Indians were second-class and Africans third class. This was reflected in the access to services and amenities like housing.

It is a very insightful, educative and interesting narrative that can be a good resource even for scholars interested in the history of modern Kenya. It portrays Neela's love for conservation, environmental issues, gender issues and the pursuit of the Asian-African Heritage Trust.

The book was launched last week at Sarit Centre at a function presided over by Prof Patrick Lumumba and a host of other dignitaries and authors.

Teacher question and answer

Feedback

Question: In one academic year, there is barely time to allow my students to read books at their leisure and then discuss them. Also, not all my students understand literary language, so they complain if I don't explain or translate the story.

Answer: This is a valid problem faced by most teachers, but it can be partly solved by a little careful planning and time management. You could set aside one period every week for literature-based classroom activities, and have students read the text at home before

coming to class. This will save time, and help sustain your efforts to keep them reading. As for students with poor reading skills who like to have you explain the text, you should wean them off such dependency by grading the books they have to read. You can start by giving them books in simpler language than the one other students are reading, and over a period of six months or so they will learn to read and understand on their own. Then they can join the rest, and read and analyse the same texts.

Unit 4: Sustaining the Habit of Reading Literature for Language Development

Introduction

Students develop language skills through collaborative and interactive tasks around literary texts. These help them develop a lifelong habit of reading. Managing their reading habit and building a reading profile is a lifelong activity that will train their minds to think logically and also teach them to have an open mind. Getting students to work together makes tasks more meaningful and enjoyable. It also provides abundant opportunities to use language in meaningful and real-life contexts. Also, when students take charge of their reading habit, they become more motivated to read. In this unit, you will learn strategies to sustain your students' interest in reading literary texts. This unit will also help you to help your students transfer their study skills to other subject areas.

Unit outcomes

Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit you will be able to:

- create extensive reading opportunities for your students through interactive activities around children's literature,
- use reading and writing tasks to help the students review literary and non-literary texts, and
- use collaborative and interactive activities to link together school subjects and literacy development through literature.

Terminology

Terminology

Interactive tasks: Classroom exercises that allow students to listen and speak to one another using English and to share ideas.

Blog: (From weblog.) A regular record of our thoughts, opinions and experiences that we put on the Internet for other people to read.

Discussion web: Classroom discussion points put in the form of bubbles as the discussion evolves.

Literary exchange: A process of sharing summaries of the literature books with members of other classes, institutions or nations.

International Internet exchange: A process whereby literature books read by students of one country are shared with friends in another country via the Internet.

Teacher support information

The activities in this unit should help your students to work as individuals, in pairs or in small groups, and to interact at various levels to accomplish tasks in and outside the classroom. As you work through the unit, you might like to keep notes on the tasks and types of literary texts that the students choose, and the difficulties that prevent them from making the required progress (if applicable).

Case study

Case study

Ms Shikha Pandit is a JSS I English teacher in a remote school in India. She was concerned about her students' general indifference to reading literature, especially poetry. She worried about the fact that they were missing out on the valuable exposure to life's experiences that literature offers.

They were also being deprived of access to the vast collection of literature written for their age group. This lack of exposure to interesting literary texts written in good English was also preventing them from developing their own language skills. Ms Pandit decided to initiate collaborative and interactive tasks around children's literature to stimulate interest in extensive listening, speaking, reading and writing. Some of her techniques included classroom discussions, read-aloud picture books, maintaining a log of books read and encouraging healthy competition between the students to read and review the most books.

As a result of her efforts, her students became more interested in the lessons, demonstrating improved reading comprehension skills and developing an overwhelming interest in reading. Two additional benefits of this were enhanced literacy development and content area learning. In fact, Ms Pandit's efforts also helped to promote literacy across the curriculum, improving students' comprehension of other subjects' textbooks.

Points to ponder

1. Do you agree that a sustained interest in literature can improve students' performance in other subjects in your own situations?
2. Have you tried to have students maintain a log of what they read, and share it in class one period every week? Do you think your students will take up the challenge and begin to read?

Activities

Activity 1: Fostering the reading habit through a logbook

Activity 1

- One of the challenges facing English teachers is finding time within the tight academic schedule to encourage students to read and discuss literature in class. One way of ensuring that students are reading regularly is to have them create and maintain a logbook. The entries in the logbook can be made by the students themselves and reviewed in one class period per week. This will ensure a proper record of the kinds of books the students read, and motivate them to read faster and with more comprehension.

- For this activity you will need a number of literary texts and supplementary readers on different topics and at various levels of reading difficulty and age. This is to ensure that students with less proficiency will find something worthwhile to read and understand, and students whose language skills are well developed will find something interesting and challenging to read. If few books are available in the school library, students can be encouraged to make a contribution of at least one book for the class from their pocket money. In addition, they can visit the local library and read books there — they will not be required to read them in the class.

- The students take home and read any one storybook plus one play and one collection of poems of interest from the available collection.

- After they have read the text, they record the details of the text in the **logbook**. (See **Resource 1** on how to organise a logbook.)

- The logbook entries are made by individual students in the pages allotted to them.

- At the end of the week, five students (choose five different students every week) will present their experience of reading the text. The name of the text that was enjoyed most will then be entered into a chart displayed in the class. By the end of the year, the class will have a list of books they can recommend to their Junior class.

- In the case of poems, you can encourage the students to recite the poems with proper intonation.

Activity 2: Exchanging literary reviews on the Internet: Writing a blog

Activity 2

This activity is meant to give students meaningful exposure to Internet-based resources such as a **blog**. Other resources that are based on collaborative and interactive Web-based activities are wikis and social networking sites or online communities (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, LinkedIn, Picasa, Flickr). If your school does not have computers with Internet access for students, allow them to work at home

or anywhere they have Internet access. The Internet is a wonderful source of useful information, and we should make the best possible use of it for learning purposes.

Before the students begin this activity, you can give them a preparatory homework assignment to find out about **blogging** on the Internet, its advantages, its problems and so on. They can then share their knowledge with the class so that everyone becomes familiar with the concept and understands what steps will be involved in writing a blog. If you have the facilities, you can log on to the Internet and show your students a blog page. A quick Google search can take you to a blog if you are not familiar with the concept yourself. (Several popular blogs are maintained by English teachers; for example, Dave's ESL Café and Nik Peachey's blog.) (See **Resource 2a** for a sample blog page.)

For the activity, give your students one week to read a literary text and prepare a review of it in one paragraph. The review should contain details similar to the ones given for the logbook in **Activity 1** above, including an evaluation of the book.

When they are ready, show a group of them (you can select students who are already familiar with using a computer and the Internet) how to post their entries on a blog. You can help them create a personal blog (there are sites that help you to do it in a set of easy-to-follow steps if you are not confident about this) or post their entries on any existing blog that is based on such reviews. This group in turn can become group leaders and teach the others how to submit their entries to the same blog.

Once the students are familiar with the process, encourage them to give and collect feedback on the blog entries. Show them how fascinating it is to have people from all over the world — people we have never met and probably will never meet — commenting on our entries. They can then continue the chain of comments, add more entries, read reviews written by other people and so on.

This exercise will help them in several ways: (i) they will learn to navigate meaningfully through Internet-based learning resources and discover more ways of enhancing their knowledge and information base; (ii) their language skills will improve, as they will learn to read quickly and react appropriately, and to write in a lucid and comfortable style; (iii) they will have an opportunity to network with people of all ages and to learn more about different cultures and life experiences; and (iv) most important, they will have a motivation for reading and reviewing more literary texts.

If you and your students do not have access to computer-based learning resources, your students can do this activity by writing to pen friends. You can help them by collecting (maybe from the Internet) addresses of people in their age group and helping them write letters in English. A sample letter to a pen friend on a book review is given in **Resource 2b**.

If even that is not a viable option, you can have intra- and inter-class exchanges of critical comments on the texts. Encourage your students to

select friends in their class or from other classes in the school as partners with whom they can exchange summarised critical comments. Their comments should include the information as shown in **Resource 1: JSS literature reading log**.

As a follow-up exercise, you could display the materials and information gathered through these literature exchange activities on the class noticeboards and bulletin boards. They can then be used for further classroom discussions, social interactions and reading and writing activities.

Activity 3: Literacy development across curricula: Recording information from other subject areas

Activity 3

Now that your students have had a fairly good amount of practice analysing the language of literary texts, you can help them apply their skills to other subjects, such as Science, Social Studies, Geography, Economics, Environmental Studies and so on. In this activity, you will learn a technique to help your students use their language skills meaningfully when studying texts for other subjects: recording information about important topics.

For this activity, collect sample texts (a short topic should do) from your students' other subject textbooks or have them all read the same texts from their own textbooks. Choose texts that are short (two or three paragraphs) and can be read and discussed in class. The students' task (explained below in more detail) will be to present the information gleaned from the text to the rest of the class. To do that, they must first learn to record the information correctly.

Students also need to learn how to extract information from a passage and present it orally or in written form. The task on Environmental Science (below) will take them through the recording process. Then, using the same procedures, record the information from the passage from another subject that you have given them and present it to the class.

The preparatory activity for this task involves students listening to an audio/video recording of a person reading out information about an environmental issue. If you cannot play the audio/video clip, you can read the transcript given in **Resource 4** instead. As the students listen, they should note down the information in the grid below. (A completed form of the grid is given in **Resource 3**.) Do not tell the students beforehand what subject area the recording/reading deals with. Let them work it out as they listen. The objective of the task is to make them understand first-hand how to record information precisely and easily.

Let the students listen to the clip twice, so that they can get the information correct, and so record the information correctly.

No.	Item	Description
1	Subject area	_____
2	Topic	_____
3	Important points discussed	i. _____ ii. _____ iii. _____ iv. _____ v. _____
4	Presentation	_____
5	Assessment	_____

Now have a class discussion about what goes into a good report/review of a topic read. The students should come up with points like **clear presentation of facts** (e.g., subject and topic), **listing of main points**, commenting on the **language style** and the need to give a **good assessment**.

For the main activity, divide the class into groups of five or six, and give each group a topic from a different subject area to read. As they read, they should note down the information in the grid, and then write a paragraph on their topic. When all the groups are ready, ask them to present their reviews to the class. The class should listen actively and comment on the presentation, suggesting modifications, if necessary. The two or three best presentations can then be displayed (along with illustrations or diagrams) on the display board.

Unit summary

Summary

In this unit you learned how to organise collaborative and interactive tasks around literature by reviewing literary texts. You also learned to use literature to facilitate the learning of other subjects, and to develop the literacy skills of your students in the process.

Reflections

Reflection

- How feasible are intra- and inter-school literary exchange programmes? Do the students gain new information through the national and international exchanges? What are the constraints and how are they dealt with?

- Did you enjoy working through this unit? To what extent could you organise the collaborative and the interactive tasks? Perhaps some of the students were not very comfortable with completing the tasks. How did you handle this problem?

Assessment

Assessment

- What are the benefits of the literary exchange programme suggested in this unit?
- How can you encourage other subject teachers to collaborate with you to develop students' literacy skills across different subjects?
- What other Internet-based resources can you use to develop students' writing skills?

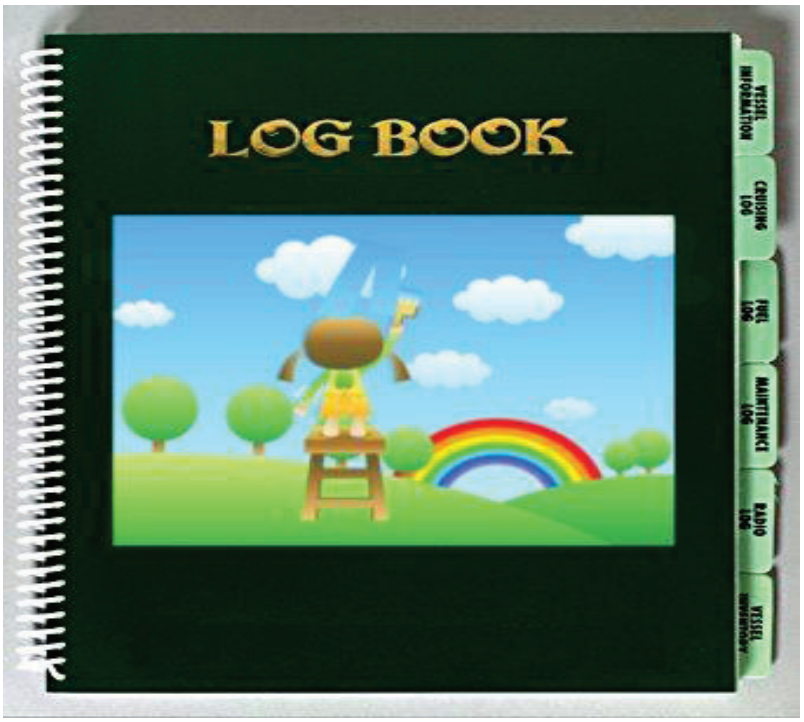
Resources

Resource 1: JSS literature reading log

Resource 1

To encourage your students to read, and make them responsible for actually reading literary texts, you can keep a logbook on a stand in a corner of the classroom, and have the class monitor update it every week. The logbook should be thick enough to accommodate multiple entries. Each student could be assigned two pages and encouraged to log the books they read every week. There could be a review at the end of the week, with the teacher or a volunteer student reading out each student's record of the details of the book and its brief summary. At the end of the year, the logbook could be shared with other teachers and the students' parents or guardians, so that the students' efforts are acknowledged. One or two students can also be asked to talk about their experience of log keeping and what they have gained from it.

Here are a few snapshots of logbooks:



name	Start time for page	Noon / midnight	Date

Hours	Rest time	Work time	Location (of each change) Remarks	Registration Driven vehicle	Distance Record for vehicles subject to RUC
12					
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					

All work must be recorded, including other employment.

No more than 13 hours work time in any 24 hours — 10-hour break between days.

No more than 70 hours work time before taking a 24-hour break.

Record copy must be given to **employer** within 14 days.

End of last 24-hour break (date)	Work time hours — today	+ previous total for cumulative work period	= total hours in this cumulative work period
		+	=

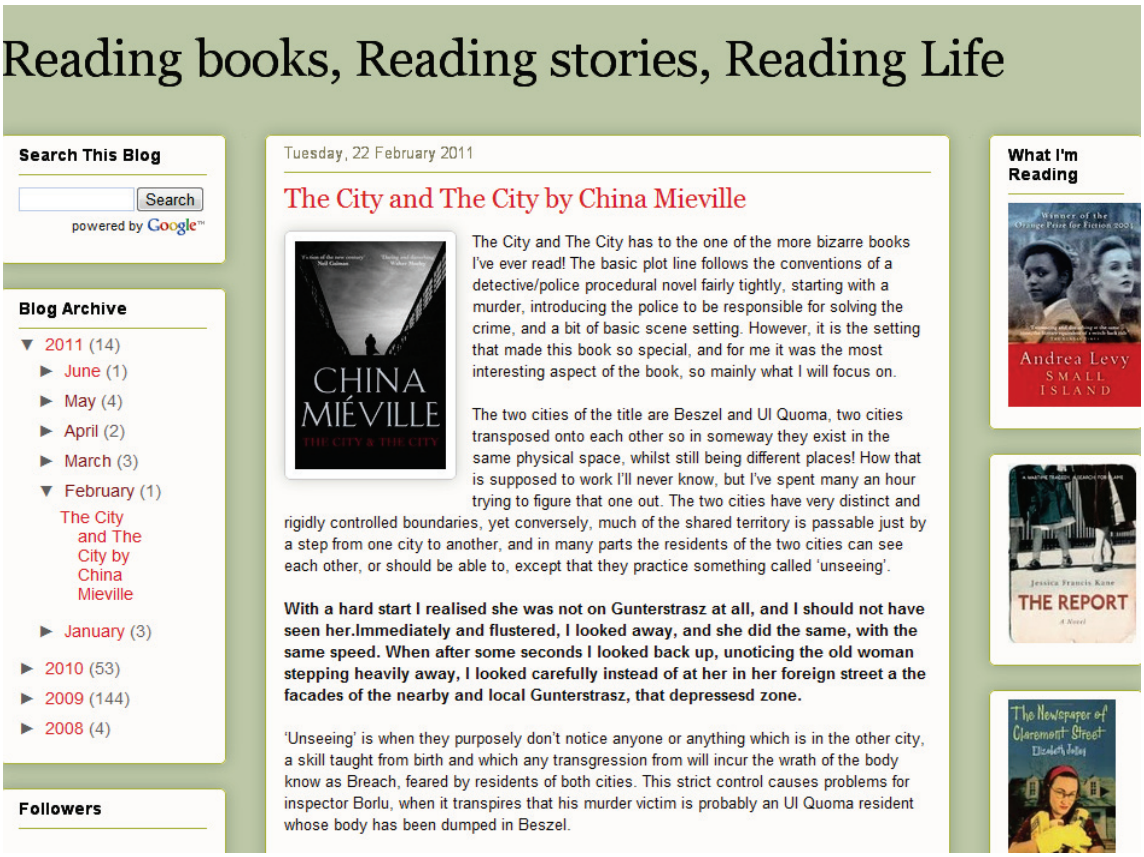
A sample page from a logbook

Student: *Roshan Seth*

Logbook page numbers: *34-35*

Sl. No.	Type of text	Name of the text	Author	Start date	End date	Assessment of the book
1.	Novel	*The Jungle Book*	Rudyard Kilping	20 April 2010	26 April 2010	Very interesting. The writer has a good knowledge of jungle life.
2.	Play	*A Doll's House*	Henrik Ibsen	28 April 2010	3 May 2010	Good, but a little difficult to understand as it talks about adult relationship.

Resource 2a: Internet-based learning resource: Blog entries



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Tuesday, 22 February 2011

The City and The City by China Mieville

The City and The City has to the one of the more bizarre books I've ever read! The basic plot line follows the conventions of a detective/police procedural novel fairly tightly, starting with a murder, introducing the police to be responsible for solving the crime, and a bit of basic scene setting. However, it is the setting that made this book so special, and for me it was the most interesting aspect of the book, so mainly what I will focus on.

The two cities of the title are Beszel and Ul Quoma, two cities transposed onto each other so in someway they exist in the same physical space, whilst still being different places! How that is supposed to work I'll never know, but I've spent many an hour trying to figure that one out. The two cities have very distinct and rigidly controlled boundaries, yet conversely, much of the shared territory is passable just by a step from one city to another, and in many parts the residents of the two cities can see each other, or should be able to, except that they practice something called 'unseeing'.

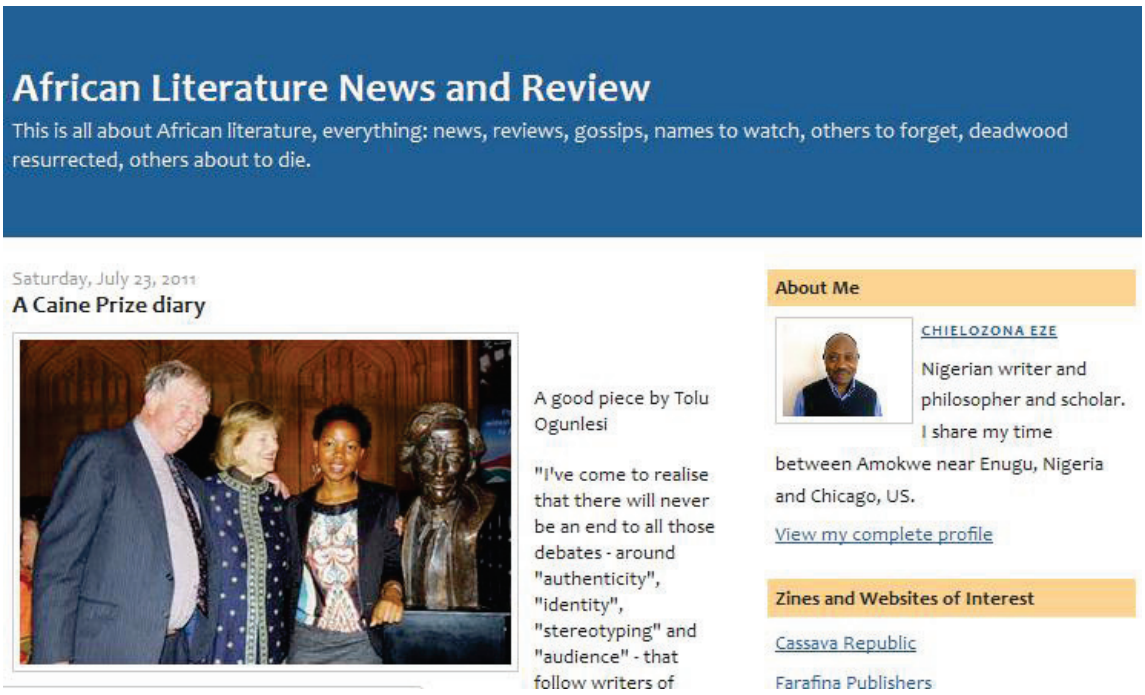
With a hard start I realised she was not on Gunterstrasz at all, and I should not have seen her.Immediately and flustered, I looked away, and she did the same, with the same speed. When after some seconds I looked back up, unoticing the old woman stepping heavily away, I looked carefully instead of at her in her foreign street a the facades of the nearby and local Gunterstrasz, that depressesd zone.

'Unseeing' is when they purposely don't notice anyone or anything which is in the other city, a skill taught from birth and which any transgression from will incur the wrath of the body know as Breach, feared by residents of both cities. This strict control causes problems for inspector Borlu, when it transpires that his murder victim is probably an Ul Quoma resident whose body has been dumped in Beszel.

What I'm Reading

From: http://peachybooks.blogspot.com/

From: http://blog.mawbooks.com/



From: http://africanliteraturenews.blogspot.com/

Resource 2b: Sample letter to a pen friend

Resource 2b

Hi Jim,

My name is Mary Mbeki and I'm a student in Grade 9 at Holy Heart Secondary School. I got your address from a friend and I'd like to be your pen friend. Would you like it too?

What are your interests? Mine are singing and reading, and at the moment I'm reading a book called *Lion and the Jewel* by Wole Soyinka. Have you read it? It's a lovely book, and I'm sure you'll enjoy reading it as much as I have.

Let me tell you a little more about it_____

What are your interests? Have you read any books lately? Please tell me about them. It would be lovely to exchange and discuss our comments on the books we read.

More for the next letter… DO reply fast! I'll be waiting eagerly to hear from you.

Best wishes,

Mary

Resource 3: Transferring information from text to visuals: Information chart on sample topic from Environmental Science

Resource 3

No.	Item	Description
1	Subject area	Environmental Science
2	Topic	Global Warming
3	Important points discussed	i. Burning of fossil fuels ii. Melting of ice glaciers in polar regions iii. Changes in weather conditions iv. CO_2 in the atmosphere v. Government views vi. Prevention measures: two solutions
4	Presentation	Clear, easy to understand, all important points covered
5	Assessment	Good presentation

Resource 4: Environmental Science passage: Global Warming

Resource 4

Definition

Global warming is a slow but steady rise in the Earth's surface temperature. Some people think that the warming is because of people burning fossil fuels like coal and oil. Some also think that human beings are cutting down too many trees. Most scientists believe that the sun actually became colder and is not to blame. If this is so, the Earth should be slightly colder. Many scientists say that the temperature will rise about 3.7 °C (6.7 °F) more in 100 years. Most major governments and science groups agree with these ideas.

Effects of the Earth's temperature rise

If the Earth's temperature becomes hotter, the sea level will also become higher because the temperature rise will make ice glaciers melt. The sea level rise may cause coastal areas to flood. Weather patterns, including where and how much precipitation there is, will change. Deserts will increase in size in some areas and decrease in others. Colder areas will become warmer faster than warm areas. Strong storms may become more likely and farming may not make as much food. These effects will not be the same over the entire Earth.

People in government have talked about global warming. They do not agree on what to do about it. Humans can burn less fossil fuels, adapt to any temperature changes, or try to change the Earth to reduce warming. The Kyoto Protocol tries to reduce pollution from the burning of fossil fuels. Most governments have agreed to it. Some people in government think nothing should change.

Some causes of increase of atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO_2)

Coal-burning power plants, car exhausts, factory smokestacks and other man-made waste gas vents give off about 23 billion tons of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the Earth's atmosphere each year. The atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide has increased by 31% above pre-industrial levels since 1750. About three-quarters of the human-made emissions of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere during the past 20 years are due to fossil fuel burning. The rest is mostly because of changes in how land is used, especially deforestation. People also make a lot of dust and dirt. Some of this dirt could stay in the air for years, and can cause changes in the temperature of the Earth.

Possible responses

There are two main ways that people think global warming can be stopped. The first is to stop putting greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Many people have tried to get countries to stop emitting greenhouse gases. The Kyoto Protocol was signed in 1997. It was supposed to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere to below their levels in 1990. As of 2010, the Kyoto Protocol has not worked in reducing

greenhouse gas levels. Carbon dioxide levels today are the highest they have been since the start of the Industrial Revolution.

The second is for people to change how they live because of any changes that global warming will bring. The amount of money a country has will affect how easily it adapts. Rich countries like the United States will be able to change more easily, while poor countries such as Bangladesh may not be able to change.

Video

Resource files

See in the enclosed DVD a video recording of the activity:

- Scripts\Module5\Unit4\Activity3\Resource4\Video\Global_Warming.mp4

Audio

See in the enclosed DVD an audio recording of the activity:

- Scripts\Module5\Unit4\Activity3\Resource4\Audio\Global_Warming.mp3

Teacher question and answer

Feedback

Question: How can I teach my students to work with other language texts when I need to finish my own syllabus in time?

Answer: A possible solution would be to team up with other subject teachers and do the activities in one of their classes. It would certainly mean extra effort for you, so you could ask the principal and other colleagues for some help. If one colleague can share your teaching assignments, or at least some of them, you could devote the extra time for students' language development in other subject areas.

Unit 5: Facilitating Critical Thinking through Literature

Introduction

Literature is an effective tool for engaging students in critical thinking. By teaching children to analyse and evaluate literary texts appropriate to their age and interests, we can help them develop critical thinking skills. This involves seeing relationships between events, drawing inferences, analysing events, synthesising evidence and evaluating both the content of a text and the language used to the express ideas contained within it.

Unit outcomes

Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit you will be able to:

- develop students' critical thinking abilities;
- engage students in activities that activate their higher-order thinking skills such as logical reasoning, evaluative comprehension, drawing inferences, etc.; and
- develop students' ability to express an opinion, argue their case, initiate and sum up ideas, and illustrate opinions with examples.

Terminology

Terminology

Critical thinking:	This involves analysing, drawing inferences, synthesising, and evaluating concepts and information in literary texts.
Creative writing:	Writing that is original and imaginative.
Debriefing:	Explaining to students the principles or theories behind any practical activity that has just taken place during a workshop.
Drawing inferences:	The skill of forming opinions, or developing ideas, about something from information supplied in a text.

Cause-and-effect relationship: The unity between what makes something happen and the result of it happening.

Teacher support information

The literature class gives a teacher the opportunity to engage students in discussions about the ideas expressed in literary texts. This exercise benefits students in two ways: firstly, it gives them an opportunity to express their own ideas about life and relationships, values and beliefs, and interests and dislikes; secondly, it forces them to use a more complex set of structures and a more "advanced" range of vocabulary. As a language teacher in a literature class, you can exploit this situation by engaging students in group and pair activities to read sections of texts and then give their opinions about characters in the text, for example, or the style of writing — whether it is interesting, humorous, tragic, and so on. This will let students practise expressing opinions, drawing inferences, explaining cause-and-effect relationships, comparing facts and applying ideas they have gleaned from literature to new situations. In addition, they will learn how to analyse texts based on logical reasoning and to synthesise and evaluate the information in the texts.

Case study

Case study

Mallam Abdullahi Musa's Grade 9 students were an enthusiastic group of children who especially loved reading literature. They regularly visited the school library, and delighted in reading storybooks from both their own culture and other cultures. Teacher Musa often found them having hearty discussions of the texts they had read. He realised this was an opportunity to develop their world-view, and to sharpen their skills of observation, analysis and critical thinking. Teacher Musa decided to offer two sessions per week for what he called Literary Appreciation classes. He announced this as an optional class, to be held after school hours twice a week, and was surprised when all his Grade 9 students signed up for it.

In these classes, Teacher Musa put his students in groups of five and gave each group a chapter or excerpt from a literary book to read. He made sure that each time the groups had a sample from a variety of reading texts, such as novels, biographies, travelogues, short stories, film reviews and so on. The groups' task was to read the text, say why they liked/disliked it, which characters they liked/disliked, and why and so on. He instructed them to discuss these points in their groups, come to a consensus and then have a group member present their opinions to the class. The class then decided whether their arguments were sound and convincing. The group that presented their arguments best would then be asked to write a review for the weekly wall magazine. This gave the students an opportunity to read different genres of literary/non-literary texts, and they also learned to analyse them critically. This improved

their language skills tremendously and subsequently also helped them score better in their examinations.

Points to ponder

1 How do you create opportunities for your own students to read literature?

2 Do you encourage your students to discuss books that they have read, plays and movies that they have watched, poetry readings that they might have attended, in the class? Do they look forward to such class discussions?

Activities

Activity 1: Using literature to develop critical thinking: Drawing inferences from a text

Activity 1

The term **critical thinking** suggests the idea of *not readily accepting any given viewpoint*. In terms of school students reading a literary text, critical thinking would involve asking *why* or *how* questions about the text: *why has the writer used this character as the hero?/why is the story narrated in the first person?/how does the climax resolve the conflict?* Engaging **critically** with a text implies not taking anything at face value; it means ***inferring*** the different meanings underlying a text.

In this activity, students will practise their inferential skills by reading excerpts of literary texts critically to try to discover the underlying meanings and themes in the text. To prepare them for this activity, you need to give them some practice in **inferring** information not directly said or given. Play the extract, or read the transcript, given in **Resource 1**, and ask the accompanying questions. The students should explain their answers. Then have a discussion on the answers to the questions, bringing to the students' notice the strategies they had to use to come up with the answers. Tell them that such questions are called **inferring** questions and that they help us understand the underlying meanings of a text.

After some practice, give the students the main activity, which gives them practice in drawing inferences from a literary text. Put the students in pairs and distribute copies of a short literary text (you can use a prose text from their English course book or any passage from an actual piece of literature meant for adolescents). Each partner must think of three inferential questions to ask the other. Then each pair should select their best question, and ask the rest of the class for the answer. The pairs will take turns to ask a question until the whole class has had a chance to present. The students will have to support their answers by quoting related sections from the text. You could note down three of the best questions, and have a discussion on how these questions best bring out the theme(s) of the text and any underlying meanings. Ask your students to use the language expressions used for **inferring**, such as *I feel the underlying meaning of the novel is…/In my opinion the focus of this piece…/In the climax of the novel, the actual message is…*, etc. This exercise will

expose them to the underlying meanings of a text and will prepare them to read and enjoy original and more challenging pieces of literature.

To make this activity more interesting, put the students in small groups and ask them to think of ***opposite*** arguments to the events described in the extracts: *If the author had written this in the first person…/The main character in this play dies in the end…* Then ask them to think of an opposite viewpoint to the one expressed in the text they have just read. They should then write a short paragraph, changing the story by changing the main character/climax/storyline/beginning, etc., to make the story more interesting. Give them about 30 minutes to write and present their story from this new perspective.

Activity 2: Evaluating a literary text

Activity 2

One way to develop higher-order thinking skills is to have students **evaluate** a text. This involves judging the merit of a text; that is, saying whether one liked/disliked the storyline and why, or what, in the reader's opinion, are the special merits/demerits of the text. This activity benefits students in many ways: they learn to be self-confident and value their own opinions, they are forced to think and present their views in a more logical and creative manner, and they become motivated to read more.

This activity is divided into three stages; the students work individually at first, then in pairs with a partner and finally in groups. For this activity, give the students a selected extract from a literary text. If you used a prose text for **Activity 1**, you could use a play or a poem this time. The students should read the text, and answer evaluative questions like the ones given in **Resource 2a**.

The students, working in pairs now, should then share their opinions with their partners and decide on the reasons behind their opinion (whether they liked it, for example). Then each pair should present their point of view to the class. In the third step, pairs who share the same point of view (like/dislike, happy/sad ending, etc.) should be put in groups of six. In their groups, the students should pool their arguments and prepare a paragraph on their views, giving reasons for their decisions. At the end of the activity, group leaders should read out the reviews for the class to comment. The best two viewpoints, arguing two opposite positions, can then be selected and, if possible, included in the school magazine.

Students should also keep a record of what they read, with **evaluative** comments, by making a **journal entry**, as shown in **Resource 2b**.

Activity 3: From critical to creative skills: Participating in creative writing workshops

Activity 3

Now that the students have had some practice in critical reading, they can build on their skills for more creative purposes. In this activity, they will learn to **extend** the ideas they read in the literary texts in their own creative ways.

- At a creative writing workshop, divide the students into groups of five or six and let them choose a short text from a selection you have provided (samples of a short story, a short extract from a play, a chapter from a novel or a good abridged version, and a poem, for example). Then ask them, in their groups, to imagine *what will happen* ***after*** *the events described in the story/play/poem/novel*.

- In their groups, the students will discuss and finalise **an alternative ending** to the story, poem or play. That is, if the story ends on a sad note, they should change it to a happy ending or vice versa.

- The students should make a draft of their alternative endings, adding, removing or modifying characters or situations. Working collaboratively, they should take ideas from each group member and include these in the new version, so that everyone contributes. Then the groups can take a day or two to finalise their drafts, with feedback from each other and the teacher.

- In a weekly creative response class, the groups should read their drafts to the class. The other students should comment on the drafts, evaluating them and suggesting modifications. These sessions are meant to be learning experiences, so you need not select the best pieces. Instead, you should focus on extracting constructive comments from the listeners to boost the students' confidence in their creative skills and motivate them to improve.

- The second session of the workshop should start with the students writing down one or two life experiences and sharing them with their peer group for critical comments and feedback. They should then turn the life experiences into a short story with a captivating title, storyline and setting, and one major as well as two minor characters.

- The writing process should include making a first draft, re-drafting, editing and making a final draft.

- Working in pairs, the students should read their stories to their partner. After both partners have read their stories, the stories can be modified if necessary and then read to the whole class.

- The workshop ends with a whole class assignment that requires the students to choose a topic then write a short play. The theme of the play can be based on childhood experiences relating to regrets, surprise, happiness or sorrow, as well as recent challenges. The students decide on the number of acts or scenes, the characters, setting and plot. Then they assign actors to perform the play to the school. The performance can be videotaped and played back to the class so that they can review it and improve upon it if necessary. The recording can then form the discussion of the next creative writing workshop.

Activity 4: Collaborative creative writing: Creating a big book

Activity 4

The concept of a **big book** is an exciting model for collaborative writing exercises. A big book is, as the name suggests, a large book containing an interesting and varied collection of literary and non-literary texts on a theme, with illustrations.

- Divide your students into five groups to work on a big book. Each group chooses the theme and genre — such as poetry, short story, science fiction, short play, myth, folklore — of their book.
- Then they decide on the contents of the big book. They can include about ten pieces on their chosen theme; try to encourage a variety of texts, including illustrations and pictures, fictional texts such as a story or an anecdote, and non-fictional texts such as a poster or a descriptive passage.
- The students discuss and share their topics with their group members under your guidance.
- To prepare the drafts of the contents of the big book, the students should read diverse literary and non-literary texts on the topics and gather materials that can be used during the creative writing process.
- Each group collates all the literary texts produced by each member and binds them into a large book. They jointly produce the captions, a table of contents, notes on contributors, a preface and acknowledgements.
- After drafting, editing and proofreading the contents, and finalising the illustrative designs, the final drafts of the literary texts can be produced.

Unit summary

Summary

In this unit you learned strategies for developing your students' critical and creative thinking abilities by analysing literary texts. Some of the skills that the unit aimed to develop were the ability to draw inferences from a text and to synthesise information to evaluate a text, and to then apply this knowledge to produce their own texts. The activities described in the unit should help you make your students more aware of the interesting ways in which writers use language to convey their thoughts and ideas. Using this knowledge, students should be able to use their imagination and language skills to express themselves creatively.

Reflections

Reflection

- Did the activities in this unit motivate your students to draw inferences from their own lives? Did you encourage them to read and appreciate the literary texts as reflections of events in real life? Did you manage to make them aware of the ways in which literature connects us to our life experiences?

- Is reading literature simply an emotional experience or does literature appreciation include logical reasoning? Did the activities help you show your students that we react to literature both emotionally and logically?

Assessment

Assessment

- Think of two or three short literary texts that you enjoyed reading. Would your students enjoy reading them as well? What kinds of skills (e.g., language skills) and knowledge (e.g., about the background) would your students need to appreciate these texts? Devise one activity to help your students notice the literary features of the text.

Resources

Resource 1: Inferring information from a literary text: A sample text

Resource 1

"Study! Study! STUDY!" Trudy was tired of hearing the same old line every day. Couldn't her parents think of anything else to say?? After all, her grandparents were such fun — she couldn't believe these were their children, for God's sake! "Don't swear, Trudy!" shot her mother, catching the last part of Trudy's parting shot. Trudy didn't bother to respond. She strode into her room and slammed the door shut. Her school books were lying all around in her room, and somewhere under the pile her weekend project was also waiting patiently for her. "Damn the project, and damn studies!" she muttered under her breath as her right foot bumped into the chair which had overturned with the weight of her clothes on it.

Trudy had no idea what she'd do now that she'd come out of the TV room, so she started opening the drawers of the old study table her grandfather had recently given her. Slipping her hand into the first drawer, she pulled out something. It seemed to be a very old book — it was a diary. Excited now, she turned it over. It was *her grandfather's diary*! She flipped through the pages. It was written in a very neat hand, with each page dated meticulously. Curious to know more about her grandfather as a young man, she opened a page. It was dated February 12, 1945. She calculated his age — he was probably 18 then. She read about

some girl called Betty, and how she had looked at him and smiled when they crossed at the corner of his street every morning. He wrote about his plans to give her a single red rose on Valentine's Day, which was just two days away.

Trudy flipped two more pages. There it was — 14 February! This was a very long entry, but the page was just filled with the words "Betty, I love you!" scrawled over and over in every inch of available space! There was even a dried out petal… it must have been from a rose. Sure enough, on the next page was the entry — it seems Betty had shyly accepted his rose, and had quickly handed him a rose herself and run away. And so the romance blossomed. Trudy read about their first date, the war and their painful separation for two months! Who was this Betty, Trudy wondered. Her grandmother's name was Caroline, not Betty. Trudy decided to visit her grandparents on Sunday to find out more about the story. Her anger forgotten, she settled down with the diary and spent the rest of the evening quietly finishing it. Her parents, noticing her silence, were happy that she was finally paying attention to her studies.

Audio

Resource file

See in the enclosed DVD an audio recording of the activity:

- Scripts\Module5\Unit5\Activity1\Resource1\Audio\Inferring_Information_from_a_Literary_Text.mp3

Inferential questions:

1. Why do you think Trudy's mother was shouting at her?
2. Does Trudy understand her responsibilities?
3. Is Trudy a tidy person?
4. Look up the meaning of the word "curious" in your dictionary. Is Trudy a curious person?
5. Did Trudy's grandfather finally get to spend his life with Betty?
6. Do you think it was normal for girls and boys to meet freely during Trudy's grandfather's time?

Resource 2a: Critically reflecting on and responding to literary texts: Asking evaluative questions

Resource 2a

You can use the following questions as prompts to sensitise your students to the special nuances of the text.

- What traits/qualities do you notice in the main and minor characters in the text?
- Which characters do you like or dislike, and why?

- What parts of the text did you like, and why? Which parts did you not like? How would you have told the story differently, if given the opportunity?

- What different interpretations could you give to the text? Is it a story about personal relationships, a romantic story, a story about sacrifice or patriotism or bravery?

- Is the language of the text easy to understand? Did you notice any unusual words, phrases or grammatical patterns? Do the characters speak like normal people? Do the descriptions of people, places and events resemble real life?

Resource 2b: How to write a journal entry (worksheet)

Resource 2b

Ask your students to read their books silently in class, if they are short story or poetry books, or read them at home, if they are longer ones. Ask them to keep a reading record of the parts they liked best, quotable quotes or beautiful expressions they want to remember, characters they like best, characters they dislike most. And ask them to write down why they want to record these things.

A journal entry is similar to a book report. It is also a way of keeping a record of books read. Students' journal entries can be kept in a portfolio and assessed periodically.

You may follow the format given below or devise your own format.

Name of book:_____

Author:_____

Date started:_____

Date finished:_____

Type of text and period written: _____

_____

Brief summary of the plot/structure and its effectiveness:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

The areas enjoyed in the text:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Areas not enjoyed: _____

The aspects of the story that were interesting: _____

Aspects of the literary text not found interesting: _____

Language structures, words and expressions learned: _____

Teacher question and answer

Feedback

Question: Is it not too early to start to teach critical thinking and creativity at the JSS level, especially where English is a second language and students are generally not proficient in it?

Answer: Critical thinking and creativity are skills that should be developed as early as possible However, we cannot expect the critical thinking and creative writing of students at this level to be at a very high level. The critical thinking and creative potential expected of the students should be appropriate to their level and scope of interest.