



## SECOND TERM E-LEARNING NOTE

**SUBJECT: LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH**

**CLASS: SS2**

### SCHEME OF WORK

WEEK	TOPIC
1.	Reading and Content Analysis of Non-African Poetry: ‘ <i>The Proud King</i> ’ by William Morris
2.	Poetic Devices in the Poem.
3.	Themes in the Poem
4.	Reading and Textual Analysis of the Plot of Non-African Novel: <i>Native Son</i> by Richard Wright
5.	Themes in the Novel.
6.	The style of the Novel.
7.	Characterization in the Novel.
8.	Reading and Content Analysis of African Poetry- “The Dining Table” by Elvan GbanabonHallowel.
9.	Poetic Devices in the Poem.
10.	Themes in the Poem.
11.	Revision.

### REFERENCE

1. *Exam Reflection Literature- in-English* by Sunday OlatejuFaniyi.
2. *Exam Reflection Literature-in-English (Prose and Drama)* by Sunday OlatejuFaniyi.
3. *Native Son* by Richard Wright.

### WEEK ONE

**TOPIC: READING AND CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NON-AFRICAN POETRY-** “The Proud King” by William Morris.

#### CONTENT

##### Content Analysis

The poem, ‘The Proud King’ by William Morris can be seen as a replica of the bible story on King Nebuchadnezzar and the legendary story on King Solomon from Talmudic text. In the poem, ‘The Proud King,’ we see King Jovinian wake up and begin to eulogize his fame and riches. Due to his wealth and fame, King Jovinian relegates his father’s reign as inferior to his as his father’s kingdom is seen as ‘Kernel of my dogs.’ He berated his late father as a ‘prince of narrow lands’ and promised to ‘Rise higher’ than his father or he would ‘like poor wretches die’. Due to the satisfaction derived from his self-assessment, the King openly declared: ‘What need have I for temple or for priest,/Am I not God whiles that I live at least’. He reaffirms ‘I am God myself.’ The following day, King Jovinian wakes up from his sleep and decides that he will be going for hunting game. He recounts, ‘To-day through green woods will we run’ and ‘I ... intend to make it better for game and play’. The King puts on his ‘best attire and rode with heart right well at ease, deep chested hound’ in ‘the hottest of sun/When all the freshness of the day was done.’ When the king gets to a river, he sits ‘in the water sported leisurely’ after he had left all his royal embodiment and signet on his royal horse. Unknown to King Jovinian, a strange individual had carted away with his ‘rich attire.’ He threatens to deal ruthlessly with the



unseen and unknown thief. Tired of shouting in that lonely place, the King stops and decides on the next line of action. He sees a certain house beyond the stream. It was the house of a ranger nearby. In 'his naked skin,' King Jovinian approached the metallic gate and would wish that he is treated as King by the lord of the house. But to his greatest disappointment, he realises that the gate keeper fails to accord kingly respect to him even as he vehemently asked to be brought before the lord of the house. Reluctantly, the gate-keeper brought King Jovinian in to meet with his boss who also failed to recognise Jovinian as king but asked that he be given food and clothe. Angrily Jovinian leaves to find himself on the street again having realised that someone else sits on the throne. Thinking that he has been betrayed by his lords, the King went into the streets lying dejectedly on roadsides in great distress. Out there in the open during the night, Jovinian sees flashes of light shining in the dark, and from it he sees a lord carried aloft by some bearers in the company of soldiers. The King begins to rain causes on Duke Peters to get his attention. When he did, he tries to make the duke recognise him by asking him few questions: 'Who gave thee all thy riches and thy place/Well if thou canst, deny me, with such grace...Peter swore of old....' Unfortunately, Duke Peters could not recognise him as he thought that Jovinian is a madman. By daybreak, Jovinian managed to get to a cart owner who helped him to get to the palace. He secretly sneaked across the first gate before being caught while trying to go through the second gate. Jovinian sees himself arrested by the soldiers who had served him as their king. He begins to scream that he is king. The sitting king asked that Jovinian be brought to him. While in front of the sitting king, the queen and the lords, Jovinian begins to say that he is King Jovinian. But to his amazement, the queen failed to recognise Jovinian as her king. This drove Jovinian mad as he finds it impossible to believe. He was thrown out of the palace and warned not to return to the palace. Jovinian remembered the house of an old priest he had last visited when he assumed office newly as a king. The priest initially could not recognise Jovinian, not until he began to cry to God. Then the priest apologises for not recognising him at the first instance and provided Jovinian with clothe and horse to return to the palace. Though sceptical, Jovinian returned to the palace and was accepted by his servants and soldiers who recognised him as their king. While Jovinian goes in to his room, a servant calls his attention to his wife. He goes to his wife and sees her asleep. Still amazed at what had happened to him, the angelic figure that had sat on his throne appeared and spoke to Jovinian. He tells Jovinian not to ever become proud again but note that whatever he had achieved is because God allowed it. So Jovinian turned out to be very humble to his lord and people, knowing that God resists the proud.

### **EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

1. Give a detailed content analysis of the poem, "The Proud King".
2. Examine the poem, "The Proud King" as an allusion

### **GENERAL EVALUATIONS/REVISION QUESTIONS**

1. What are the issues discussed in the poem?
2. Critically analyse the content of the poem.

### **READING ASSIGNMENT**

Read the content analysis of the poem in *Exam Focus* and summarise.

### **WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT**



1. Repetition is usually used in literary works to \_\_\_\_\_. A assess B emphasize C exaggerate D expose E modify
2. "She was found without her flower" is an example of \_\_\_\_\_. A alliteration B. allusion C. apostrophe D. metaphor E simile
3. The figure of speech used in the statement "The village lost its beautiful structures, glory and its inhabitants to the inferno" is \_\_\_\_\_. A anticlimax B antithesis C climax D epigram E paradox
4. "The child is the father of the man" illustrates the use of \_\_\_\_\_. A exaggeration B metaphor C oxymoron D paradox E personification
5. Rhetorical questions are used in literary works to achieve the following EXCEPT \_\_\_\_\_. A creating awareness B drawing a point home C emphasizing a point D jettisoning the writer's position E reinforcing a point

## THEORY

Describe the characters in "The Proud King."

## WEEK TWO

### Poetic Devices

**Biblical Allusion:** The story of the poem, 'The Proud king' is similar to the bible story of King Nebuchadnezzar. He is noted in the bible to have similar fate to that which King Jovinian witnessed due to pride and neglect for God. King Nebuchadnezzar was a powerful king that no other throne in his reign as king could challenge in every respect of kingship. But God decided to teach King Nebuchadnezzar a lesson by making him act like an animal and he was rejected by his people to be king over them. For good seven years Nebuchadnezzar was rejected and he could not sit on the throne until he cried to God for mercy and forgiveness. So Jovinian's experience model itself after that of King Nebuchadnezzar.

**Rhetorical Question:** The major poetic device that dominates this poem is the use of rhetorical questions. This is used by King Jovinian who found himself in a mess. Some of it include: 'Lord God, what bitter things are these?/What hast thou done, that every man that sees/This wretched body of my death is fain?...Why am I hated so of everyone? Wilt thou not let me live my life again...?' When he met with the priest, he asks: 'Father...knowest thou Jovinian? Knowest thou me not, made naked, poor and wain? Alas, O father! Am I not the King?'

**Antithesis:** There is a big contrast in the way King Jovinian lived his life before he lost his throne to an angelic figure and the moment he was helpless out there in the streets in search of help to regain his throne. The affluence that surround is a complete opposite of the penury and lack he witness in less than twenty four hours. Antithesis can also be seen in his conduct when he returned as king which is the exact opposite of what he displays before he was displaced as king.

**Irony:** The poem is full of powerful ironies but the most prominent ones are the claim of the impostor that he has been a king for many years and his own real name too is Jovinian. The impostor claims that his mother, the Queen delivers him as a baby boy in that house to his royal father (When in this house the Queen my mother bore/unto my longing father...). Another irony is in the Queen's speech when the impostor asks her to speak. She says:



‘Thou art the man/By whose side I have lain for many years/Thou art my lord Jovinian life and dear.’ The mistaken identity on the part of the Queen contributes a lot to dramatic irony.

**Narrative Poem:** A clear examination of the poem will reveal that the poem adopts a narrative style as its rendition medium. With this the poet-speaker effectively narrates quaking experience a proud king went through. It was trajectory of shame that King Jovinian was forced by a supreme power to observe in order to effect an adjustment in his conduct and manners.

### EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Examine the use of irony in the poem.
2. How does the poet explore narrative style?

### GENERAL EVALUATIONS/REVISION QUESTIONS

1. What are the poetic devices employed in the work?
2. Discuss the use of biblical allusion in the poem.

### READING ASSIGNMENT

Read the poetic devices of the poem in *Exam Focus* and summarise.

### WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT

1. “Here comes the princess, now heaven walls on earth”, illustrates the use of A. contrast. B. metaphor. C. metonymy. D. meiosis
2. An ode is usually a poem written for A. condemnation. B. celebration. C. instruction. D. entertainment.
3. The main character in a literary work is the A. antagonist. B. protagonist. C. narrator. D actor.
4. A sonnet may be divided into an octave and A. tercet. B. quatrain. C. sestet. D. septet.
5. “All hands on deck” is an example of A. metaphor. B personification. C. synecdoche D. simile

### THEORY

Read the content analysis of the poem in Exam Focus and summarise it.

### WEEK THREE

#### Themes

**The theme of Pride:** Pride is seen to be the major theme of the poem, ‘The Proud King’. And it is said that pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. An assessment of the first eight stanzas will reveal that King Jovinian displayed great arrogance even toward God that he says he has no need of temple and priest. In his words, his father’s reign and throne can only be measure by the portion of land where he keeps his dogs. Hence, he calls it the prince of narrow land. These and many more are the reasons while God decided to teach Jovinian a lesson that he can take away from the minds of his subordinates recognition of their King from them. So, an angelic figure was sent to humble King Jovinian who understood at the end that God alone deserves the kind of praise he ascribed to himself.



**Sovereignty and Supremacy of God:** The poem is an evident statement on the supremacy of God over all humans no matter the power and position. God's dealings with Jovinian portray this fact as in stanza 93, Jovinian recounts that 'God is good/...and good hope I have/of help from Him that died upon the rood/And is a mighty lord to slay and save....' Also in the words of the angelic figure: 'The God that made the world can unmake thee.' He continues, 'Thou hast learned how great a God He is/Who from the heavens countless rebels drave.' Here, he refers to Satan and his associates.

### GENERAL EVALUATIONS/REVISION QUESTIONS

1. Highlight on the theme of the dangers of pride in the poem, "The Proud King."
2. Comment on the poetic devices used in the poem, "The Proud King."

### READING ASSIGNMENT

Read the biography of Richard Wright in *Exam Focus* and summarise.

### WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT

1. A character that develops in the course of a novel or play is described as A. flat. B. antagonist. C. round. D. protagonist.
2. A dirge is poem sung A. to send a child to sleep. B. to make workers happy. C. at a birthday party. D. at a funeral.
3. In drama, the \_\_\_\_\_ creates humour. A. hero B. clown C. villain D. chorus
4. 'Let me not love thee if I love thee not' illustrates A. metaphor. B. proverb. C. paradox. D. meiosis.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ is a literary device used to express something unpleasant in a more acceptable way. A. Epilogue B. Epigram C. Euphemism D. Eulogy

### THEORY

1. Comment on the issue of sovereignty of God in the poem, "The Proud King."
2. Assess the diction of the poem, "The Proud King."

### WEEK FOUR

**TOPIC: READING AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF NON-AFRICAN NOVEL-** Native Son by Richard Wright.

#### CONTENT

##### Plot

Bigger Thomas, a poor, uneducated, twenty-year-old black man in 1930s Chicago, wakes up one morning in his family's cramped apartment on the South Side of the city. He sees a huge rat scamper across the room, which he corners and kills with a skillet. Having grown up under the climate of harsh racial prejudice in 1930s America, Bigger is burdened with a powerful conviction that he has no control over his life and that he cannot aspire to anything other than menial, low-wage labour. His mother pesters him to take a job with a rich white man named Mr. Dalton, but Bigger instead chooses meet up with his friends to plan the robbery of a white man's store.

Anger, fear and frustration define Bigger's daily existence, as he is forced to hide behind a façade of toughness or risk succumbing to despair. While Bigger and his gang have robbed many black-owned businesses, they have never attempted to rob a white man. Bigger sees whites not as individuals, but as a natural, oppressive force: a great looming 'whiteness' pressing down upon him. Bigger's fear of confronting this force overwhelms him, but rather



than admit his fear, he violently attacks a member of his gang to sabotage the robbery. Left with no other options, Bigger takes a job as a chauffeur for the Daltons.

Coincidentally, Mr. Dalton is also Bigger's landlord, as he owns a controlling share of the company that manages the apartment building where Bigger's family lives. Mr. Dalton and other wealthy real estate barons are effectively robbing the poor, black tenants on Chicago's South Side --- they refuse to allow black to rent apartments in predominantly white neighbourhoods, thus leading to overpopulation and artificially high rents in the predominantly black South Side. Mr. Dalton sees himself as a benevolent philanthropist; however, as he donates money to black schools and offers jobs to 'poor, timid black boys' like Bigger. However, Mr. Dalton practices this token philanthropy mainly to alleviate his guilt conscience for exploiting poor blacks.

Mary, Mr. Dalton's daughter, frightens and angers Bigger by ignoring the social taboos that govern the relations between white women and black man. On his first day of work, Bigger drives Mary to meet her communist boyfriend, Jan. Eager to prove their progressive ideals and racial tolerance, Mary and Jan force Bigger to take them to a restaurant in the South Side. Despite Bigger's embarrassment, they order drinks, and as the evening passes, all three of them get drunk. Bigger then drives around the city while Mary and Jan make out in the back seat. Afterward, Mary is too drunk to make it to her bedroom on her own, so Bigger helps her up the stairs. Drunk and aroused by his unprecedented proximity to a young white woman, Bigger begins to kiss Mary.

Just as Bigger places Mary on her bed, Mary's blind mother, Mrs. Dalton, enters the bedroom. Though Mrs. Dalton cannot see him, her ghostlike presence terrifies him. Bigger worries that Mary, in her drunken condition, will reveal his presence. He covers her face with a pillow and accidentally smothers her to death. Unaware that Mary has been killed, Mrs. Dalton prays over her daughter and returns to bed. Bigger tries to conceal his crime by burning Mary's body in the Dalton's furnace. He decides to try to use the Daltons' prejudice against communists to frame Jan for Mary's disappearance. Bigger believes that the Daltons will assume Jan is dangerous and that he may have kidnapped their daughter for political purposes. Additionally, Bigger takes advantage of Daltons' racial prejudices to avoid suspicion, continuing to play the role of a timid, ignorant black servant who would be unable to commit such an act.

Mary's murder gives Bigger a sense of power and identity he has never known. Bigger's girlfriend, Bessie, makes an offhand comment that inspires him to try to collect ransom money from the Daltons. They know only that Mary has vanished, not that she is dead. Bigger writes a ransom letter, playing upon the Daltons' hatred of communists by signing his name 'Red.' He then bullies Bessie to take part. Bigger is not a traditional hero by any means. However, Wright forces us to enter into Bigger's mind and to understand the devastating effects of the social conditions in which he was raised. Bigger was not born a violent criminal. He is a 'native son': a product of American culture and the violence and racism that suffuse and characterise it.

### **EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

1. Narrate the plot of *Native Son*.
2. Discuss the trial of Bigger.

### **GENERAL EVALUATIONS/REVISION QUESTIONS**

1. Summarise the plot of the work.
2. Give a brief background of the novel.



## READING ASSIGNMENT

Read chapters 1- 5 of *Native Son* and summarise.

## WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT

1. “The star blinked and the wind wailed” is an example of \_\_\_\_  
A antithesis B euphemism C metaphor D parody E personification
2. Pick out the odd item from the following\_\_\_\_\_  
A comedy B octave C Quatrain D sonnet E sestet
3. “United we stand, divided we fall”, illustrates the use of \_\_\_\_  
A anti-climax B antithesis C climax D irony E sarcasm
4. The writer’s freedom to use words to suit his own purpose is called\_\_\_\_\_  
A author’s freedom B author’s license C poetic freedom D poetic license  
E writer’s license
5. The expression, “Before Idi Amin breathed his last he admonished his children to shun violence” is a/an \_\_\_\_\_.  
A anecdote B metaphor C euphemism D onomatopoeia E paradox.

## THEORY

Describe Bigger as the protagonist.

## WEEK FIVE

### THEMES

**The dangers of racial oppression:** Beyond all reasonable doubts, it is convincingly established by Max in court that the gruesome crimes of Bigger are not in any way far from the intimidating weight of racial inequalities that permeate the American society. That is, by extension, this work proffers to readers that there are dangers concomitant to act of oppression, and particularly, racial oppression. We see young Bigger who enjoys his freelance attitude and gangsterism becoming a deadly emotionless murderer just within twenty-four hours he got to the Daltons. This is truly not surprising to Max, who understands the psychic of an oppressed mind and person. No wonder, he and his communist group fight for the emancipation of the black race from white dominance to assure a safer American society for all.

**The theme of poverty and penury:** Considering the economic standard of the Thomas’ family, who also represent other black character mentioned in the work, we will come to terms that poverty and penury have taken over the black neighbourhood that they find it difficult to groom a proper child with qualitative education and wellbeing. This is why the Thomas’ family find themselves under the care of the relief home. And this was the reason why Bigger had to come in contact with the Daltons in the first place, for they were threatened by the relief home not to supply them with food any longer. The look of the apartment the black people occupy reveals the level of poverty and penury that has conquered them.

**The theme of deceit and greed:** After the revelation in court by Max that the black race pay rent for houses obviously in bad conditions at a fee twice the amount the whites pay for their own houses in good conditions and that Mr. Dalton who coincidentally stands as the Thomas’ landlord is a major player in the atrocities, we realise the deceit in the charity displayed by people like Dalton to the black people as the money they give is only the excess of what they



have squeezed out of the black people in America. What this fact shows is that the donations made by Mr. Dalton celebrated in court by the state attorney hold no moral standing. This is what the communists decide to kick against, as they see the relationship of the white and the black to be that of the predator and the prey.

### EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Give a detailed plot account of the novel, *Native Son*.
2. Comment on two major themes of the novel, *Native Son*.

### GENERAL EVALUATIONS/REVISION QUESTIONS

1. What are the themes in the novel?
2. Discuss three dominant themes in the novel.

### READING ASSIGNMENT

Read *Native Son* and list the main characters.

### WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT

1. A praise poem is (a) a dirge (b) an epic (c) an ode (d) a ballad
2. Lines of regular recurrence in a poem constitutes (A) a refrain (b) an alliteration (c) an assonance (d) a theme
3. A regular group of lines in poetry constitutes (a) Stanza (b) verse (c) rhythm (d) metre
4. An individual who acts, appears or is referred to as playing a part in a literary work is a (A) villain (b) character (c) clown (d) narrator
5. A bitter remark intended to wound the feeling is (a) satire (b) an allusion (c) a sarcasm (d) an ambiguity

### THEORY

Comment on the use of symbols in *Native Son*.

### WEEK SIX

#### STYLE

**Suspense:** This is one narrative technique that any reader will easily and quickly identify with as it runs through the work. In a nutshell, this technique helps readers to go through the volume of the pages of the novel with getting tired. Richard Wright has cleverly entwined Bigger with an aura of suspicion as readers tend to suspect every move he makes. This is not alien to the circumstances that surround Bigger and the mess he got himself into. After killing Mary, readers read with rapt attention to know if he has any hope of escape or pardon for his crimes. Suspense is strongly felt in the court room as Max puts up a seasoned argument for Bigger in the face of threatening whites in the majority.

**Tragedy:** This technique is deployed by the writer to effectively betray the tragic presence of racism and inequality in a land. Beside the death of Mr. Thomas, Bigger's father, which is also a tragic one, we see Bigger unconsciously manifesting into an emotionless killer. Though, Mary's death was accidental, it satisfies Bigger's desire to be able to inflict pain and fear on the white folk. After the killing of Mary, Bigger sees himself losing it completely that he felt nothing bad in his decision to kill Bessie, his girlfriend. By this, the writer tries to make readers understand that the same consideration given to Bigger's crimes should also be





that which is given to what had stir such thoughts in Bigger in the first place, which is no other than racism.

**Flashback:** Though used on a low scale, flashback comes in timely to help tell about the death of Bigger's father and what efforts his mum had deployed before they found themselves in their present house. Through it, we were exposed to other crimes Bigger had committed in the past which as a result of one of them he was sent to the reprimanded home.

**Dramatic Irony:** The writer also utilised this technique to help Bigger to hide for a longer time in Mr. Dalton's house after committing such a gruesome crime. When Mr. Britten, a private investigator, was called upon by Mr. Dalton when he realises that his daughter has been missing, he considers Bigger the first suspect, which would have helped to unravel the situation at a lesser time period but Mr. Dalton intervened by asking Mr. Britten not to involve Bigger, who actually was the criminal who had killed Mary, his supposed missing daughter.

### EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the use of irony in the novel.
2. Examine the use of flashback and suspense in the novel.

### GENERAL EVALUATIONS/REVISION QUESTIONS

1. Critically analyse the style of the novel.
2. What do you about the novel?

### WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT

1. A speech in a play in which a character speaks his or her thought alone is A. a monologue. B. an aside. C. a soliloquy. D. an epilogue.
2. In Literature, repetition is used essentially for A. rhyme. B. suspense. C. allusion. D. emphasis.
3. The pattern of a poem without reference to its content is referred to as the A. limerick. B. metre. C. free verse. D. form
4. The performers in a play constitute the A. chorus. B. character. C. audience. D. cast.
5. A metrical foot in which a stressed syllable is following by an unstressed syllable is A. iambic. B. spondaic. C. trochaic D. dactylic.

### THEORY

Discuss the blindness of Mrs Dalton as a metaphor.

### WEEK SEVEN

#### Characterisation

**Bigger Thomas:** The protagonist of *Native Son*. A poor, uneducated black man, Bigger comes from the lowest rung on the American social and economic ladder. As his lack of education has left him no option other than menial labour, he has felt trapped his whole life, resenting, hating, and fearing the whites who define the narrow confines of his existence. Bigger views white people as a collective, overwhelming force that tells him where to live, where to work, and what to do.



**Mary Dalton:** The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Dalton, Bigger's wealthy employers. Mary identifies herself as a progressive, dates an admitted communist, and interacts with Bigger with little regard for the strict boundary society imposes between black men and white women. Mary's transgression of this boundary leads to her death and the resulting development of Bigger's character.

**Mr. and Mrs. Dalton:** A white millionaire couple living in Chicago. Mrs. Dalton is blind; Mr. Dalton has earned a fortune in real estate. Although he profits from charging high rents to poor black tenants – including Bigger's family – on Chicago's South Side, he nonetheless claims to be a generous philanthropist and supporter of black Americans.

**Jan Erlone:** A member of the Communist Party and Mary Dalton's boyfriend – a relationship that upsets Mary's parents. Jan, like Mary, wants to treat Bigger as an equal, but such untraditional behaviour only frightens and angers Bigger. Jan later recognizes his mistake in trying to treat Bigger this way and becomes sympathetic toward his plight. Jan becomes especially aware of the social divisions that prevent Bigger from relating normally with white society.

**Boris A. Max:** A Jewish lawyer who works for the Labour Defenders, an organisation affiliation with the Communist Party. Max argues, based on a sociological analysis of American society, that institutionalized racism and prejudice – not inherent ethnic qualities – create conditions for violence in urban ghettos.

**Bessie Mears:** Bigger's girlfriend. Their relationship remains quite distant and is largely based upon mutual convenience rather than romantic love.

**Mrs. Thomas:** Bigger's devoutly religious mother. Mrs. Thomas has accepted her precarious, impoverished position in life and warns Bigger at the beginning of the novel that he will meet a bad end if he fails to change his ways.

**Buddy Thomas:** Bigger's younger brother. Buddy, unlike his brother, does not rebel against his low position on the social ladder. In fact, he envies Bigger's job as a chauffeur for a rich white family. As the novel progresses, however, Buddy begins to take on a more antagonist attitude toward racial prejudice.

**Vera Thomas:** Bigger's younger sister. Vera, like Bigger, lives her life in constant fear.

**G. H., Gus and Jack:** Bigger's friends, who often plan and execute robberies together. They hatch a tentative plan to rob a white shopkeeper, Mr. Blum, but they are afraid of the consequences if they should be caught robbing a white man. At the beginning of the novel, Bigger taunts his friends about their fear, even though he is just as terrified himself.

**Mr. Blum:** A white man who owns a delicatessen on the South Side of Chicago. Mr. Blum represents an inviting robbery target for Bigger and his friends, but their fear of the consequences of robbing a white man initially prevents them from following through on their plan.

**Britten:** A racist, anti-Communist private investigator who helps Mr. Dalton to investigate Mary's disappearance.



**Buckley:** The incumbent State’s Attorney who is running for re-election. Buckley is viciously racist and anti-Communist.

**Peggy:** An Irish immigrant who has worked as the Daltons’ cook for years. Peggy considers the Daltons to be marvellous benefactors to black Americans. Though she is actively kind to Bigger, she is also extremely patronizing.

**Doc:** The black owner of a pool hall on the South Side of Chicago that serves as a hangout for Bigger and his friends.

**Reverend Hammond:** The pastor of Mrs. Thomas’s church who urges Bigger to turn toward religion in times of trouble.

### EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Describe Buckley as a character in the work.
2. Describe Reverend Hammond as a character in the work

### GENERAL EVALUATIONS/REVISION QUESTIONS

1. Examine the role of Bigger in the novel, *Native Son*.
2. Comment on the narrative techniques employed in the novel, *Native Son*.

### READING ASSIGNMENT

Read *Native Son* and list ten themes in the work.

### WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT

1. ‘Loyalty to the flag is expected of all citizens’ illustrates A. euphemism. B. metonymy. C. symbolism. D. allusion.
2. ‘Wheels and wheels and wheels spin by’ illustrates A. repetition. B. rhyme. C. euphemism. D. meiosis.
3. The deliberate omission of a word or phrase in a piece of writing indicates A. ellipsis. B. enjambment. C. elision. D. scansion.
4. The technique of delaying the reader’s response to the action in a literary work is A. denouement. B. conflict. C. suspense. D. flashback.
5. A poem that teaches moral lessons is said to be A. pastoral. B. symbolic. C. primitive. D. didactic.

### THEORY

1. Discuss the issue of racism in the novel, *Native Son*.
2. Examine the role of Max in the novel, *Native Son*.

### WEEK EIGHT

**TOPIC: READING AND CONTENT ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN POETRY-** “The Dining Table” by Elvan GbanabonHallowel.

### CONTENT

#### Content Analysis

The poet persona in the poem, “The Dining Table,” x-rays the gory experiences of the Sierra Leoneans during a decade long civil war of 1991 to 2002. For a country as Sierra Leone, the effects of the fallout which grew in a war are unimaginable as manslaughter became a part of



their society. The failure on the part of Joseph Momoh led administration transforms the country into a spate of degeneration and collapse in governance. At a period when the people expect to enjoy the dividend of independence, the shocker came. In his words, “Dinner tonight comes with/gun wounds.” The parallel lines between dinner and gun wounds project the shocker. At this moment, war has broken out and the poet speaker hears sounds of gunshots. Immediately, a sensation of fear is sent round everyone in the room as “Our desert/tongues lick the vegetable/blood – the pepper”. No one in the room is able to continue with the meal as their tongues go dry right in the face of war. The abrupt nature the war started terrifies the poet and his inmates at the dining table that they considers it best not to continue with the food as it can “...push scorpions/up our heads” by “the pepper/strong enough...” The fear caused by this war makes “Guests/look into the oceans of bowls/ as vegetables die on their tongues.”

In a tensed moment, he tries to describe what his physical environment has turned into “The table/that gathers us is an island where guerrillas/walk the land while crocodiles/surf.” At the outbreak of war, the poet persona signals that they were surrounded by group of newly recruited armed boys as ‘guerrillas’ while behind them were ‘crocodiles’ which surf in the river behind. This is the atmosphere of fear that accompanies war and they are all in a fix. To the poet’s amazement, the core of the guerrilla group comprises “Children from Alphabeta with empty palms dine/with us; switchblades in their eyes,” and their school ground has been completely deserted. He says “... the playground/is emptied of children’s toys”. As an effect of war, the poet speaker identifies that there is a breakdown in government and movement of people as roadblocks which were unnecessary are mounted. No wonder he asks, ‘who needs roadblocks?’ Besides the hunger and starvation that threatens the people, the poet persona realises that “When the hour/to drink from the cup of life ticks/cholera breaks its spell on cracked lips”. He sees war bringing the disease called cholera on the people of the land of Sierra Leone. All these are born out of the insensitivity of the government of Joseph Momoh which refuse to attend to the plight of the masses until it degenerated into a war.

In the last stanza of the poem, we see the poet speaker driven by emotion promising to ensure that an end is brought to the crisis in the land. But on a second note, we deduce that his attempt had rather come too late to have an impact. He recounts “Under the spilt/milk of the moon, I promise/to be a revolutionary,” but at contact with realities of war, he understands our unfit he is in “but my Nile, even/without tributaries comes lazy/upon its own Nile.” He observes that without the support of others, he can do little or nothing to salvage to situation the country is brought into. The bewilderment that surrounds the poet and his guest is wrong timing or sudden outbreak of the war. He says, “On this/night reserved for lovers of fire, I’m/full with the catch of gun wounds, and my boots/have suddenly become too reluctant to walk me.” When the poet intends to enjoy with his loved ones, he is distracted by sounds of gunshots and he sees how helpless he is to do something.

### **EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

1. How does the poem, “The Dining Table”, x-ray the issue of war in Sierra Leone.
2. Give a detailed content analysis of the poem, “The Dining Table”.

### **GENERAL EVALUATIONS/REVISION QUESTIONS**

1. What is the poem all about?
2. What are the dominant ideas in the poem?



## READING ASSIGNMENT

Read the content analysis of the poem in *Exam Focus* and summarize.

## WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT

1. A speech in a play in which a character speaks his or her thought alone is A. a monologue. B. an aside. C. a soliloquy. D. an epilogue.
2. In Literature, repetition is used essentially for A. rhyme. B. suspense. C. allusion. D. emphasis.
3. The pattern of a poem without reference to its content is referred to as the A. limerick. B. metre. C. free verse. D. form
4. The performers in a play constitute the A. chorus. B. character. C. audience. D. cast.
5. A metrical foot in which a stressed syllable is following by an unstressed syllable is A. iambic. B. spondaic. C. trochaic D. dactylic.

## THEORY

Read Exam Focus and summarize the content of the poem.

## WEEK NINE

### POETIC DEVICES IN THE POEM

**Imagery:** This is one device that the poet employs to paint in our minds' eyes the pathetic experiences the Sierra Leoneans went through. With it, a sense of empathy is created and better understanding of their plight is realised. This device runs through in the whole poem as we can deduce how tensed the poet speaker and his visitors had been when the war suddenly caught up with them at the very moment they were to have a sumptuous meal. A practical picture is conceivable with this device.

**Oxymoron:** To effectively state how traumatised they were at the abrupt nature of the war, the poet speaker decides to employ the oxymoronic expression, 'Our desert tongue....' Tongue can't be dry as desert except in situations where gruesome fear is in place and this is only possible where war is on.

**Personification:** In establishing a clearer picture of the thought of the work, the poet speaker deploys personification to effectively present the helpless situation they found themselves as a result of the war. In '... vegetables die on their tongues', the gruesome fear that envelopes the poet persona and his guest can be imagined. They seem to see their taste-board stop functioning when faced with the sudden nature of the war. Also the line, 'cholera breaks its spell on cracked lips', reveal the bold way the disease announces its presence on the people due to lack of good water; an effect of war.

**Metaphor:** This device helps to show the true state of mind of the people through the employment of comparison. In 'switchblades in their eyes', he compares the wrath in the children who are the most affected by the war, with 'switchblades' ready to attack whoever stands in their way during the war. When saying 'Under the spilt/milk of the moon', the lateness in the poet's reaction to the war is noted. The face of the sky during the appearing of the moon is effectively painted when compared with 'spilt milk'.

**Repetition:** To emphasize the several points identified by the poet, some words as 'vegetable', 'gun wounds', 'Nile', 'Children' and 'tongue' are repeated.



## EVALUATION

1. Examine the use of personification and metaphor in the poem.
2. Discuss the use of imagery and oxymoron in the poem.

## GENERAL EVALUATIONS/REVISION QUESTIONS

1. What are the poetic devices used in the poem?
2. Discuss three of them.

## READING ASSIGNMENT

Read the poetic devices of the poem in *Exam Focus* and summarise.

## WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is the location of the action of the plot. A. Setting B. Narrative technique C. point of view D. Characterisation
2. A ballad is essentially a \_\_\_\_\_ poem. A. descriptive B. dramatic C. pastoral D. narrative
2. The first fourlines of Shakespearean sonnet rhyme A. abcd. B. abba. C. abab. D. cdc.
3. A story in which characters or actions represent abstract ideas or moral qualities is A. an epic. B. a legend. C. an allegory. D. a satire.
4. The use of imagery in prose or verse A. appeals to the senses. B. develops the plot. C. creates confusion. D. obscures meaning.

## THEORY

Discuss the issue of neglect in the novel, *Faceless*

## WEEK TEN

### Themes

**The adverse effects of war:** The poem, 'The Dining Table,' reveals that war has to positive gains to offer a nation or a people. The first thing noted is that war comes with great fear and tension on the people. The uncertainty war brings caused the poet speaker and his guest to cease eating and they had 'desert tongues'. He realises that 'the pepper/strong enough to push scorpions/up our heads' when 'Dinner tonight comes with/gun wounds.' To situation led to the closure of schools or rather students deserting schools as noted in 'Children from *Alphabet* with empty palms dine with us'. These children are in the poet speaker's house instead of staying in school because, 'When the playground/is emptied of children's toys'. The whole areas look unsafe for not only students but also teachers who would teach them. War also brings sicknesses and diseases as part of the adverse effects. He recounts that 'cholera breaks its spell on cracked lips'. During war time, the waters are no longer safe for drink and food scarcity sets in. The people are displaced by war. No wonder the poet speaker cannot find support, so that, he can champion a revolution. He says, 'I promise/to be a revolutionary, but my Nile, even/without tributaries comes lazy'. The poet identifies his helpless state as those he wishes to count on for change have also been displaced by the war.

**The theme of bad leadership:** From the poem, it is deductible that bad leadership is the sole cause for the war in the country. The people had experienced failure in government for a very long time that they could no longer bear it, and they forcefully ejected the government of the day which resulted in a war. The leaders were insensitive to the plight of the children that the



‘Children from *Alphabet* with empty palms dine/with us; switchblades in their eyes/silence in their voices.’ The hunger in the eyes of the children has driven them to join the R.U.F. (Revolutionary United Front). They left the school ground due to ‘the playground/is emptied of children’s toys’.

### **EVALUATIONS QUESTIONS**

1. What are the adverse effects of war in the poem?
2. Discuss the theme of bad leadership in the poem above.

### **GENERAL EVALUATIONS/REVISION QUESTIONS**

1. Comment on the theme of effects of bad leadership in Sierra Leone, “The Dining Table”.
2. Discuss the significance of the poetic devices used in the poem, “The Dining Table”.

### **READING ASSIGNMENT**

Read the themes of the poem in *Exam Focus* and summarise them.

### **WEEKEND ASSIGNMENT**

1. The choice of words to create special effects is called A. fallacy. B. atmosphere. C. diction. D. mood.
2. A long narrative chronicling a family’s heroic deeds is a/an A. opera. B. epistle. C. fable. D. saga.
3. .... in drama operates against a character who is unaware of a situation which is known to the audience. A. Verbal irony. B. Dramatic irony. C. Satire. D. Parody.
4. The use of dialogue creates a/an ..... effect. A. humorous B. poetic C. ironic D. dramatic
5. One of the following is not a form of poetry. A. Sonnet B. Ode C. Suspense D. Lyric

### **THEORY**

Comment on the issues raised in Elvis Gbanabon Hallowell’s “The Dining Table”.