

PIVOTAL TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME [PTTP]

*FOR UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION
(UBE)*

COURSE BOOK ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE

MODULE 9: Revision of Punctuation

MODULE 10: Revision of Tenses and Mood

MODULE 11: Teaching Vocabulary Development

MODULE 12: Teaching Children's Literature



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UNIT 1: PURPOSE OF SUPPLEMENTARY READING

INTRODUCTION

Cast your minds back to the moonlight nights in your villages or occasions when you sat among other children in your village squares, listening to stories told by some older men or women, after their hard days' work in their farms. Did you enjoy such stories? What about the times when you participated or watched people sing and dance during your local festivities, round the shrines of certain idols in your village? These forms of activities are basic forms of oral literature.

Later, when you started schooling, you were taught nursery rhymes, asked to tell stories before your classmates. As you advanced in your studies, you were introduced to story books that were simple enough to be read. All these aspects of literary exposure gave you enjoyment, increased your power of imagination, shaped your moral, increased your knowledge of things happening around you, increased your vocabulary in the language in use for these activities. These are benefits accruing from literature. Both young and old enjoy literature. In this unit, we shall assess the level of development in the reading habits of both the youths and the adults in our country Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. explain what is meant by reading culture;
2. recognise the need for supplementary reading;
3. outline the reasons for poor reading habits among our youths and adults;
4. identify ways of helping youths to cultivate the habit of supplementary reading.

NOTE: ALL ANSWERS TO ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENT ARE AT THE END OF THIS BOOK

HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

1. Read through the whole unit carefully. This will give you a general view of what it is about.
2. Attempt the activities set before you.
3. Check your answers at the end of this booklet.

WORD STUDY

Here are the meanings of some words you may find difficult in the unit.

obsolete	- out of date
enthusiasm	- strong feeling of interest
dearth	- scarcity
inadequacy	- insufficiency
transition	- changing
deprivation	- being deprived
idiosyncrasies	- ways of thinking or behaving

WHAT IS SUPPLEMENTARY READING

The word 'supplementary' is defined by the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary as additional, extra. At the same time it brings to our minds the notion of insufficiency, inadequacy. Sometimes when our mothers in their various homes cook food that are not sufficient for the family, they usually give members of their families, especially children, some little chops like corn, groundnuts to help them fill their stomachs. In the same way if they feel they have not provided balanced diets to the growing children all the times, they supplement with such popular children's drinks as 'Ribena'

Supplementary reading therefore involves creating opportunities for reading materials outside prescribed tests or books for the school curriculum. This kind of reading activity will definitely make up for the deficiency, inadequacy or insufficiency experienced in the reading habits of our youths as well as adults.

PURPOSE OF SUPPLEMENTARY READING

Research has shown that there is insufficiency and inadequacy, with reference to the amount of reading materials consumed by both our youths and adults in our country today. The youths and indeed some of their parents have not developed what is called 'reading culture'. By reading culture is meant, developing interest and habit in reading so extensively that the reader utilizes his/her skills in such gainful ways as efficient use of the dictionaries and other simple reference materials like children's/ adults' encyclopedia. There is also love created for the use of the library, to develop a habit of wider reading and /or reading as a developmental programme. This also includes reading and understanding newspapers, magazines, charts, comics, notice boards, maps, following directions and instructions in doing and making things, and most of all the desire to read supplementary readers that offer entertainment and happiness to them especially at their leisure times.

Supplementary reading offers a good source of relaxation. Instead of spending his time in less profitable ways, he would engage in profitable reading. When the reader turns into an avid reader, his wealth of vocabulary is enormous and that forms a basis of proficiency in the language of the books read.

The experience of supplementary reading increases his knowledge of things happening both around him and beyond. When he reads, a wide range of experience is gathered which will enable him to tackle situations that crop up in his life. This helps to positively shape his moral.

His power of imagination is increased because his reading spans various themes and he discovers from his exposures to these themes that his understanding of the contents of the books could be of a symbolic nature.

ACTIVITY I

Write True or False against the following statements.

1. Folktales, music and ritual dances are forms of oral literature.
2. Literature is generally enjoyed by children alone.
3. Children and adults in Nigeria read books extensively for enjoyment.
4. Supplementary reading will take care of insufficient reading activities of adults and young children in Nigeria.
5. Reading culture means the habit of reading books only.

6. Supplementary reading will offer the reader enjoyment and wide range of experience about life and the society.

Factors Undermining the Success of Reading Culture among our Youths

The socialization factor: The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology defines socialization as the process by which the individual is adapted to his social environment and becomes a recognised, co-operating and efficient member of it. In other words, socialization is the expression used to describe 'the way children learn to behave like the people around them, taking for their own, the attitudes, values, customs, of the social group to which they belong. In relation to reading culture, it is the attitude the children have developed in their infant years. Their closest people for interaction at this stage are parents, brothers and sisters, attendant relatives and friends and it is how these people regard books, how much they read and talk about what they read, how many books they buy and borrow, keep about them and value, will be part of what they have learnt from people around them.

Research has proved that a book-conscious home lays a solid foundation for reading culture where as children born into non book conscious families do not have sustained conversation 'with adults' or even have the opportunity to have story books to read.

Living in overcrowded conditions adversely affects reading progress because there is lack of quiet, and of private places where children can get away from noise. There is the noise from T.V and record players and intermittent calls of visitors. These features are akin to average Nigerian families as well as large families and overcrowded houses. All these create difficulties for young readers.

The desire of the youths to survive the economic crunch in Nigeria has shifted their emphasis from relaxation to preoccupation with commercial activities. After school, youths are found hawking wares at strategic places, either to supplement their parents, effort towards their sustenance or even trying to 'earn a living' where there is no source of help. This causes a lot of distraction. Some that are comfortable in their homes, prefer watching video films and playing video games to gainful reading. These jeopardise the success of reading culture in our country.

There is a dearth of well written children's literature in the country. Lack of reading culture among our youths dampens the enthusiasm of publishers to undertake publishing of children's literature because the turnover is small, compared to the financial involvement of production. They would rather publish text books for schools' use. In the same vein, children whose appetites for reading have been whetted cannot be sustained even through existing libraries because books found there are obsolete and in most cases there are no libraries at all.

Suggestions for Inculcating Reading Culture in our Youths

'Readers are made and not born. No one ever comes into the world already disposed for or against words in print', says Aidan Chambers (1973). A child's literary development is heavily affected by complicated circumstances like stage of psychological development, individual idiosyncrasies and adult and peer influences. If we want to make literary readers fast, we must get at the social roots that cause deprivation. In short, education must go home, must involve parents. The teacher has a duty towards those

children from book-conscious homes, who do not create difficulty, and children from non-book homes, no matter how 'anaemic' it may seem to be. The transition for children from non-book homes is not smooth. You as the teacher have to find out what they read eg comics, cheap pulp books, special magazines and discuss the children's reading with them and so forge closer contact which breeds a relationship of trust.

The school has to make deliberately and carefully planned efforts to involve the parents by inviting them from time to time to infant and primary school classrooms to see their children reading by using school bookshops, book fairs and libraries as centres where teachers, parents and children meet informally and buy, borrow and discuss books. You, as a teacher can arrange and visit parents of your pupils at intervals to discuss your children's reading.

Try to control the socialization effect early, through advising young parents with regard to the reading habits of their children. Meet young mothers at their points of convergence for example schools, clinics, women's meetings, shopping centres, government offices for advice on the reading plan for their children in their early lives. Advise parents to buy books for their children as their birthday presents instead of dresses. By such a drastic change, children will put value on books. As a source of redressing this imbalance you, the teacher, have a major part to play by introducing older children to supplementary readers. You should underscore the necessity for the inclusion of periods for story time on the infant and primary school time table. This helps to sensitize the children to the enormous benefits of supplementary reading and so, groom them in their tender age. The provision of story telling in the junior school curriculum as was the case in the past will contribute to making our youths avid readers.

You should show interest in reading too and be ready to discuss with the pupils the books read by them. A good teacher-reader produces a good pupil-reader while a poor teacher-reader kills the interest of the pupils in reading. Encourage the pupils to donate books for the class library. Pupils could bring as many as four titles each for circulation and lending among class members. Follow up this whetted appetite by introducing the keeping of records of reading activities by your pupils. Draw a chart and indicate the week-ending date. Give each main subject a letter symbol e.g fiction = F. English = E; Maths = M; History = H for easy identification. Each time a book is borrowed enter the relevant symbols in the appropriate columns. See the figure below.

J.S II B

2000	MAY				JUNE				JULY				AUG	
Weekend	5	12	18	26	2	9	16	23	30	7	14	21	28	4
								<i>H</i>						
Ojo Makinde				F	F	F	F	<i>A</i>	F		F	F		F
Ngozi Ibe					F	F	E	<i>L</i>		F	F	M		F
Yakubu Waziri				F	F	F		<i>F</i>	F	F		F		
Ibrahim Kawo							F							
Obinna Ude				F	F	F	FF	<i>T</i>	F	F	F	F		FE
Efok Etim*					F		F	<i>E</i>	M			F		F
Monday Alabi						F	F	<i>R</i>			F			
								<i>M</i>						

Certain information is at once clear to anyone, even those who do not know the local conditions at the time. Three school weeks are left without any borrowing. But once activity begins Ojo Makinde is a fairly steady customer, taking only fiction, the section favoured by most pupils (only a selection of children are shown above) Monday Alabi of course is much less an active borrower, though more active than Ibrahim Kawo. Obinna Ude the most frequent borrower of all, on two occasions (June 16 and Aug 4th) takes two books a week, one time taking from English. He plans his reading and so his double borrowing occurs just before the holidays (half term and the end of term).

ACTIVITY II

1. State three factors that hinder our youths from cultivating the habit of extensive reading
2. Mention three things you can do as a teacher to help children to practise supplementary reading.

SUMMARY

In this unit you have studied:

- what supplementary reading is;
- purpose of supplementary reading;
- factors militating against the development of a reading culture among our youths;
- how to help our youths cultivate reading culture.

ASSIGNMENT

Draw up a chart stating reading activities for the following members of your class, using their borrowing habits at the weekends. Use the appropriate symbols for books borrowed.

	Name	Books borrowed
1.	Dayo Ige :	7 fiction, 2 English books
2.	Ibrahim Mohammed:	4 fiction, 1 maths
3.	Uchenna Okeke:	1 fiction
4.	Friday Tamumo:	6 fiction, 1 History, 2 English books

TAKE YOUR ANSWERS TO YOUR COURSE TUTOR AT THE STUDY CENTRE

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UNIT 2: PROSE FICTION FOR CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION

In unit I, you studied the purpose of supplementary reading. You discovered that because our youths have not assumed the expected level of literary reading as a result of lack of constant practice in reading activities. It is believed that this gap would be sealed by sensitizing them to supplementary reading.

In this unit, you will study the most common genre among children and youths. It is considered the most accessible to read because a prose fiction is a heightened short story. In other words, the short stories are graduated for young readers until they are old enough to read the novella (a small novel) and then a full blown novel. The folktales are the traditional forms of prose fiction.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. state similarities and differences between folktales and prose fiction;
2. enumerate and identify different kinds of folktales;
3. explain how to apply the two methods of introducing prose fiction to children;
4. state the important factors to bear in mind while selecting prose fiction books for children.

HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

1. Read through the entire unit in order to get the main issues discussed.
2. Read aloud the example of a folktale given in this unit to your mate in the study centre, as if you are telling a group of people the story.
3. Answer the questions in activities first before checking the answers at the end of the book.

NOTE: ALL ANSWERS TO ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENT ARE AT THE END OF THIS BOOK

WORD STUDY

Study the meanings of the following words.

whet :	excite
serialization:	the act of arranging in serial
endowment :	gift of talent
sophisticated:	complex
genre :	category of literary form
fundamental:	primary
essentially:	necessarily

FOLKTALES AS ELEMENTARY FICTION IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

The earliest exposure of children to fiction is through story-telling. This kind of story-telling rendered by elders and sometimes by professional artists in this field, in our local communities span various thematic considerations bordering on beliefs, customs, religions, occupations; in fact the ways and lives of the people. Virtues are highlighted in presenting moral codes, for example justice and fairplay, patience and endurance, hardwork, honesty, virginity and fidelity (for womenfolk) and a host of others. The essence of giving prominence to folktales in the traditional societies, is to help to place checks and balances, on various non-conforming individuals thereby curbing their excesses through communal policing of members of the community.

On the other hand, sterling qualities exhibited by characters in the folktales, are meant to be emulated by the other members of the community.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FOLKTALES AND PROSE FICTION

Similarities:

- (a) Folktales have lessons to be drawn from them just like fiction. In other words, there are messages that both the folktales and prose fiction set out to drop to both listeners and readers.
- (b) Both are fiction and narrative in form. In the case of folktales, someone presents it orally while in prose fiction the presentation is through an omniscient narrator or first person narration.
- (c) The parts or elements of both folktales and prose fiction are the same i.e they have theme, plot, setting, characters, and language, even though they are fictitious.

The differences are:

- i. Whereas folktales were originally in oral form (some now put in print) prose fiction is in written form.
- ii. The narrator or story teller in folktales has direct physical contact with his audience, the narrator in prose fiction does not see his audience, to even appreciate their reactions to his book.
- iii. Lastly, where as folktales take a shorter duration to complete the presentation, prose fiction takes a longer time to read.

KINDS OF FOLKTALES

To capture diverse experiences of human existence, folktales have been presented under various groups. Taiwo (1967), quoted in National Teachers' Institute NCE/DLS Course Book on English Language, Cycle I, Module 9, categorised folktales, into four groups.

Tales of demons with strange magical powers, that interact with human beings

This kind of story tells the exploits of generally adventurous children who run into these demons in mysterious circumstances The Flute by Chinua Achebe, is a typical example. Below the story is paraphrased.

This story tells how a man who had two wives went to work in his farm with his family. His farm was very far and situated at the boundary between men and spirits. They crossed seven forests and seven rivers. On that day of farm work, he and his first wife with her children in addition to his second wife and her son all roused before day break and left for the farm. They were conscious of the activity of spirits who lived around when all human beings had left the farm. He quickly reminded his family that they would need to leave the farm early before night fall to escape the visit of the spirits to the farm.

They left in good time after completing their work only to get home to discover that his son according to him, had forgotten his flute. The treasured flute could not be forsaken by the boy because that was his only possession. In spite of his parents' objection to his going back to the farm to pick his flute, he left. On getting there he met with the spirits who showed resentment over his presence. They quizzed him but he answered them respectfully. They brought out flutes for him to pick his own. The first and the second one brought were more beautiful than his own, yet he refused to take them. The third time they brought a wretched wooden flute and the boy jumped in excitement to declare it was his. They asked him to give them music which he did and praised the spirits. They now brought two pots one large and the other small and was asked to choose. The boy chose the small one.

The spirits were happy with him and asked him to take the pots home and never to open it before getting home. On his way, he was warned that if he heard the sound 'dum, dum' he should run into the bush but when he heard 'jam, jam' he should come out and continue his journey. He did so and when he got home he was welcomed and he put down the pot, showed his parents before breaking it. When he broke it he saw gold, silver and bronze and all sorts of valuable clothes and property. They were happy and he distributed to his parents even to the elder wife of his father, who was jealous of his fortune and rejected her share.

Her plan was to make her son get his own, so, she asked her son to get ready for farm work when it was not necessary. When he objected, she hit him and forced him to the farm. On their way home she made sure she asked him to willfully drop his flute. When they got home, she forced him to go back and pick the flute. He went back and saw the spirits to whom he showed rudeness and disobedience. In the end he was asked to select one of the pots and he took the large one. He did exactly the opposite of what he was told to do on his way home. He eventually got home and took the pot to his mother's hut and broke it in the presence of his mother and his other brothers and sisters. Immediately they were attacked by leprosy, small pox, yaws and other deadly diseases. In the morning they were found dead by the father but on trying to open the door, a few deadly diseases escaped and infected people in the world.

Trickster tales:

Animal characters like tortoise, hare, goat, chameleon etc are used here.

'The Hare and the Crownbird' in Hugh Vernon Jackson's More West African Tales is a typical example.

Moral Fables:

These stories teach morals and extol sterling qualities, virtues, like honesty, justice, obedience, as well as condemn injustice, jealousy, etc 'The Forgiving Wife' in Hugh Vernon-Jackson's More West African Folk Tales.

Etiological Stories:

These deal with fishing out why certain phenomena happen, asking about the universe, nature, and why certain things are the way they are.

Fertility Tales:

These describe women and their ordeal in getting either a child or a son where the other children are females. "Medicine for getting a Son" in Hugh Vernon-Jackson's, More West African Folk Tales.

ACTIVITY I

1. Mention three similarities between folktales and fiction.
2. What is the major difference between folktales and fiction?
3. What lessons does the folktale The Flute drive home to the listeners?
4. What would you have done if you were the son of the first woman?

INTRODUCING PROSE FICTION BOOKS TO CHILDREN

Having looked at the place of folktales as a prelude to opportunities fiction, it must be emphasised that story telling benefits more, those children who have not learnt to read. These fall within the ages of 6-9 years, of course depending on an individual's exposure to books. Children from non-book homes take longer time to be able to read and enjoy books. Incidentally, this group creates difficulty in the process of making children literary readers. To bridge this gap between them and book-conscious homes and make a smooth transition to actual prose fiction reading, you will employ the two methods of story-telling and reading aloud from rich texts and providing opportunities afterwards for response tested against the written words.

The genre that best lends itself to these effective methods of producing avid readers, is prose fiction. In other words these two methods are seen as fundamental and essentially important. Both of them are appetizers. They stimulate the desire to read for oneself what one has heard.

STORY-TELLING

You must have watched the famous network programme of the NTA entitled 'Stories of our land' when children of diverse cultures listen to stories from African folktales, -myths, fables, legends etc. The story teller loses his own identity as he tells the story because he now is the agent through which the story gets to its audience. He applies his endowment - his learning, his voice, his movements, his tastes to succeed in the art.

Points to note about Story-Telling

1. Your success as a story teller depends on a lot of factors. Your efforts must go into the selection of an appropriate story. The story to tell to young children is one whose plot is compact, direct and well paced, whose problem is early established and whose resolution hold the listener to the very last word. The characters should be few. Stories you tell children should be worth telling and retelling over and over again. To find such stories you would quite naturally turn to literature of our heritage eg stories of talking animals.
2. Preparation of the story is very essential. You have to decide whether to memorise the story for easy rendering or whether to fix a story line in your mind and tell it in your own words.
3. The Story Telling proper
Like every well planned action, there has to be an introduction. Introduce your story by attempting to get the attention of your audience:
Do this with a brief direct statement: "Today I'll tell you a story about....."
"This is the story of ..."; "Have you ever heard how ...?"
There are many ways of introducing story telling in our various ethnic languages because story telling is a universal phenomenon. Consider the following introduction.
 - i. The Igbo story teller will say:
'Enwelum akuko m ga akolu unu'
(I have a story to tell you)
Response: 'Kolu anyi k'obi di anyi mma'
(Tell us so that we will be happy.)
 - ii. The Yoruba story teller will say:
"Alo o"
(Get ready for what is approaching)
Response: 'Alo' (we are prepared)
 - iii. The Hausa story teller will say
'Gata nan, gata nan ku'.
(Listen to a story)
Response: Ka zo muji ka
(Let us hear you)
4. Plot of the story: You have to tell the story as a living story i.e there has to be life injected in the story through facial expression, hand movement, eye movement, action, action packed full by moving about as found appropriate. Your plot line will be organically connected. Watch the reaction of your audience and read their mood and compare it with what should be the expected reaction as the story moves. Ask questions as you go along to sustain their

interest and assess how far they have understood the story as it progresses eg What is the main message of the story? Who is the main character?

5. Recap the story. Ask general questions on the story told and let one of the pupils or more tell the story in her own words.
6. Organise a mini drama out of the story and let the children act it out. Assist them and supervise the acting too. For further evaluation, some could be asked to present a drawing or sketch of any part of the story that appeals to them.

READING ALOUD FROM RICH TEXTS

If story-telling is more demanding on the performer, then reading aloud is more demanding on the listener. Because there is a physical object between the teller and the listener, which is the book-source, it is of greater importance to realise that written words are more compacted in meaning, sophisticated in constructions than language of story telling. So, the listener needs ample time to decode and interpret the meaning of what is read. To help in this regard, the reader must make himself seen clearly by every listener, so that the facial expression would be watched.

HANDLING READING PERFORMANCE

1. A whole short story can be taken at a sitting. Depending on the level and age of the children, one can select the type that will match the attention span of the children. Discussion may occur and after that, everyone may feel that they would like to hear the story again and be better to appreciate it in the light of what has been said.
2. A 'programme' of short stories, poems, prose passages might be put together and read as a spoken anthology. An interlude is given between during which time a discussion is held.
3. One part of a novel or a long text could be read to whet the listeners' appetites to want to read the books themselves. The part read should have a unity of its own and offer a complete experience. The listeners should be left in suspense and they would then ask, 'What happens next?'
4. **Serialization:**
A short novel could be put into serials, broken down into parts that could be finished within few sessions. Much enjoyed by late primary and early secondary school aged children, are novels which could be split into chapters, each dealing with a self-contained part of the plot. Each chapter could be read in 35-40 minutes, just about enough time for children of this age to be asked to listen.
5. **Serialization spread over five or six weeks, a little being read each day:**
This is said to be traditional in the English schools. Books like *Treasure Island* are read aloud for children of 11 years of age. Serialization should not be spread over longer than six weeks. This might be too long even for the junior primary school children. Each session should begin with a brief recap of the previous week's reading.
6. **Duration of each session of reading should be given attention.** The younger the child, the less he can take. Infant children may be satisfied by a few minutes of listening; by the age of ten, twenty minutes to thirty minutes should be about right for all, but 'backward' children. By the end of secondary school, forty

minutes to an hour is bearable though at every stage, reading should be treated like play or music performances: there should be 'acts' or 'movements' with brief intervals between for relaxing the concentration of the body.

RECOMMENDING PROSE FICTION TO CHILDREN

Since the children cannot choose books for themselves, the teacher has to do the job. it behoves the teacher to bear in mind some factors before deciding to pick prose fiction for the children. Consider the following points:

1. Pictures are important for the children's prose. They are easily attracted by colourful drawings. In fiction, illustrations complement the text by telling the story in their own way.
2. There should be variety of titles namely:
 - i. Classics enjoyed by generations of readers:
 - ii. New books with fresh approaches
 - iii. Some humorous even ridiculous stories
 - iv. Books of information to which children will turn for the answering of questions and the satisfying of their need to know.
 - v. Many picture books with slight text particularly in the nursery school or kindergarten library.
3. The level of vocabulary and language use should be considered. It bores readers where high level difficult words are spread over the text such that readers stop at various intervals to look up meanings of words. In other words, the level of vocabulary should match the standard of the pupils.
4. The background of the readers is an important factor for consideration. For African readers, books with a African back- ground are easier than those with foreign background. The images expressed will be better visualised in prose fiction e.g the celebration of a local feast in the village square. A child with a foreign background will not understand that easily. However, there is need to expose African children to non-African prose fiction especially classics like Jane Eyre, by Charlotte Bronte, Gulliver's Travels by Jonathan Swift, so that they would have an idea of the adventure, escapades and life styles of their counterparts in the Western World.
5. The length of the book as well as the print should be considered, Books of very tiny prints are always difficult for young readers. Moderate prints are always food for young readers, very fat books bore and scare them easily.

ACTIVITY II

Answer the following questions

1. _____ and _____ are the two effective methods of introducing fiction books to children.
2. A prose fiction could be divided into _____ and read aloud to the children.
3. The duration for attention for those children within the age of 10, is usually _____.
4. Serialization should never exceed _____ weeks.
5. Mention two kinds of books you would select for your school library.

SUMMARY

In this unit, you have studied the following:

- folktales as elementary fiction in children's literature;
- similarities and differences between folktales and prose fiction;
- kinds of folktales;
- introducing prose fiction to children;
- recommending prose fiction to children and points to bear in mind.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Select one children's prose fiction and use the following headings to assess its suitability
2. What is the message the author gives there?
3. Comment on the book using factor's considered in the selection of books for children.

TAKE YOUR ANSWERS TO YOUR COURSE TUTOR AT THE STUDY CENTRE

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UNIT 3: PARAPHRASING PROSE FICTION

INTRODUCTION

In unit 2, you were led to see the gradual exposure of children to fiction through the use of folktales. This gradual and step-by-step process is to lay a good foundation and arouse the interest of young readers in the literary world.

In this unit, two phases will be used namely; the phase of comprehending the prose fiction being studied and lifting the level further to spice a little chunk of literary criticism, a dose of which will not bore or scare them and make us lose the catch we have so concertedly made. The main objective of children's literature is to create enjoyment, to educate them, to stimulate their emotions and aesthetic values.

For the purpose of achieving this, you will be working on a paraphrased text of African background.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

1. share the joy of prose fiction text;
2. paraphrase a prose fiction text or novel;
3. identify the elements of prose ;
4. discuss each of the elements with regard to the prose-fiction being studied.

HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

1. Read through the unit as a whole.
2. Study the unit section by section, to be able to understand the unit.
3. Work out the activities and do not look up your answers until you have completed it.

NOTE: ALL ANSWERS TO ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENT ARE AT THE END OF THIS BOOK

WORD STUDY

Some of the words have been explained to you under this section. Look up the meaning of other difficult words using your dictionary.

abomination	-	horror and disgust
epidemic	-	disease spreading rapidly among many people
truancy	-	staying away from school without reason

EXAMINING PROSE FICTION

Have you ever read a novel which can also be called prosefiction? What is the novel about? Did you find it easy or difficult to read? Would you love to read the same novel again? What is the title of the novel? Who is the author?

There is need for young readers to be able to give some vital information about what they have read. Start from telling them the title of the book and if possible, the

background of the writer. The technical name for one who writes a prose-fiction or novel is called a novelist or even an author. The word author can be applied to a writer of other forms of books but specifically, a novelist writes novels.

We shall now select and examine one title and demonstrate the way you would tackle such texts with your pupils. The prose fiction text is Emeka-Driver's Guard by Flora Nwapa.

The story is paraphrased below.

There was a boy named Emeka who had a twin sister called Ngozi. Both were born in their village and they lived with their parents. As infants, the people in the village did not welcome them as twins, because they regarded the birth of twins as abomination. But their parents loved to keep them and bring them up. They grew up strong and healthy. As Emeka was growing up, he took up the father's occupation of farming and was also a good fisherman. He combined that with hunting. He hunted lizards and sold them to support his parents. He was good and happy. Ngozi too was helping in her own way.

The outbreak of small-pox in their village led to the transfer of Emeka and Ngozi to the urban area to their aunt, to live with her. Emeka's parents were among the victims of the small-pox epidemic. The two children were sent to school by their aunt. Emeka had made friends in school. Sokari was his friend. Before they became friends Emeka and Sokari had fought because Sokari wanted to pick on a village boy. This incident brought them to their elders-Sokari's mother and Emeka's aunt. Emeka in his honesty was stating how it all happened but Sokari overshadowed Emeka and his truth. Nobody believed Emeka even his aunt; he was very unhappy. However Emeka got his ego back through a wrestling context with Sokari and other boys and he threw them on the ground and won the match.

As Emeka and Sokari became friends, Sokari introduced him to going to the river bank to watch traders selling kernel. They went once and picked kernel from leaking bags, sold the kernel and bought food in the eating house. This pleased Emeka and Sokari and they abandoned schooling. Indeed they preferred that to schooling. A report was brought to his aunt about Emeka's truancy. His aunt punished and sent him back to school. He had already lost grounds and he feared he would fail his exams.

One day he was asked to buy food stuff in the market; he ran into a man advertising all sorts of wares among which was a ring from India which could make one pass examination. Emeka now found an easy way out and so bought the ring with his aunt's money. He came home to tell a lie that he had lost the money. For the examination, Emeka and Sokari sat and failed woefully. He was disappointed and said he would not go to school any more.

He took to apprenticeship for driving despite his aunt's plea to go back to school. He was then sent to a lorry driver who undertook to teach him driving after years of serving him as his guard(i.e motor boy)

Emeka's period of apprenticeship was initially exciting to him because there were no more teacher and arithmetic. His new job demanded just to load and off load passengers' luggage and sometimes charged them and took the money. His co-guard was older and sometimes they fought. Emeka had formed worse habits of eating without paying the food sellers and cheating passengers. Emeka realised how dangerous his work was when they saw a vehicle involved in an accident killing many people including the driver, he was no longer happy. After sometime, he abandoned his job with the lorry driver and

took another as a house boy. His friend John introduced him to a family. He was happy with the family and even told their children stories because he was a good story teller. As he told his stories he remembered his aunt and sister and realised that life without education was useless. He made up his mind to go back to his aunt and if she refused to send him back to school, he could ask one of his teachers to take him as a house boy and in return sponsor him in school.

He finally came back and his aunt and sister welcomed him to the house.

General overview of the Prose Fiction

- a. Negative attitude of the villagers to birth of twins as a bad omen.
- b. Change of environment of Emeka and Ngozi from rural to urban life.
- c. Effect of bad company on Emeka.
- d. Emeka's behaviour degenerates
- e. Emeka re-examines his bleak future - a future without education and comes back as a prodigal son.

ACTIVITY I

Answer the following questions.

1. Why did Emeka buy the Indian ring?
2. When did Sokari become friends with Emeka?
3. What was the effect of Emeka's friendship with Sokari?
4. What lessons do you learn from the prose?

ELEMENTS OF PROSE FICTION

There are important aspects of the prose fiction which will aid you to understand the prose better. They are the **Theme, Plot, Setting, Characterisation**. Let us examine each in relation to the prose text being studied ie Emeka - Drivers' Guard

Theme:

This could be defined as the central point, subject matter, main issue at the background of the story or fiction. What message does the writer wish to pass on to the reader or his audience?

In prose, there could be one or more themes. In the text Emeka- Driver's Guard, you can notice that Emeka started drifting, right from the time he changed his environment and made friends with Sokari. In the village Emeka enjoyed fishing, farming and hunting. As soon as fate steered the wheel of life from the village to the town, his virtue of honesty had a shaky base, after Sokari had shown him that one could tell a lie and go scot free. His movement to the urban area brought him into contact with some characters like Sokari, who now introduced him to easy life such that he abandoned schooling. So the themes could be:

1. Effect of bad company on an individual
2. Effects of urban life on a village boy.

Plot:

The plot is made up of various events arranged chronologically. The story moves on with a heightened suspense which climaxes and everything is then resolved. In Emeka-Driver's Guard, an otherwise good natured boy, leaves the village to the town as a result of accident of fate. He comes in contact with a city bred child who now tries to test his strength and so, challenges Emeka to a quarrel, which culminated in a fight. In spite of his efforts to convince his aunt that he has been wronged by Sokari, nobody believes him because Sokari has been bolder and mouthy and with that Emeka loses out in the case. Although he made friends with Sokari later, he had to restore his ego and confidence by engaging in a wrestling match with Sokari and other two boys. His contact with Sokari led him out of school to bad behaviour like truancy, lying and belief in charms hence the Indian ring. Further he became a guard and a debtor to food sellers, a fighter. There was a progressive decline in his character which brought his action to a climax of abandoning schooling and full of reckless behaviour. The solution started with his realization that he was missing his relations, that there was no hope without education and finally, he returned to his aunt.

Characterization:

There are certain individuals who the writer made to interact with others in order to effectively deliver his message. Prominent is the main character or hero which is Emeka. The life of Emeka had been followed or monitored from the village and all actions of his in relation with other people: Emeka has interacted with Sokari who shaped his life negatively. Other characters are Ngozi and Emeka's auntie who try to put checks on Emeka. The reader learns about these characters from the part they play, what they say and what others say about them.

Setting:

In this text, there are two settings i.e the background against which the characters live their lives. First part of the story starts with the rural setting and the later part happened in the city. The application of this setting is 'universal' i.e although no specific town was mentioned, it can apply to any environment that has a dichotomy of rural and urban setting especially in African context.

ACTIVITY II

Answer the following questions.

1. Who is the hero of the text you have just studied?
2. What was the influence of Sokari on Emeka?
3. Compare briefly the character of Emeka and Ngozi.
4. What kind of character is Emeka's aunt?
5. How do they regard twin babies in Emeka's village?

SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

- how to paraphrase a prose fiction text;
- the overview and main issues in the text;
- elements of prose fiction.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Select a prose fiction text suitable for children's literature.
2. Paraphrase it and comment on it using the various elements of prosefiction

**TAKE YOUR ANSWERS TO YOUR COURSE TUTOR AT THE
STUDY CENTRE**

REFERENCE

Nwapa, Flora. (1972) *Emeka-Driver's Guard*. London: London Press.

UNIT 4: POETRY FOR CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION

In unit 3, you studied how to paraphrase a prose fiction text and how to examine it closely in order to appreciate it fully.

In this unit, we shall study about poetry. Poetry is another genre of literature. Like folktales in the traditional setting, poetry features as songs used at various occasions, for example baby-sitters render them, to calm babies when they cry. Such is called lullaby. There are also songs sung by youths as they make merry on festive occasions; such is called ballad. At mournful occasions, someone can burst into an emotional song. In other words, poetry has been as old as tradition itself. Poetry in the modern times is rendered in a language different from those of our tradition. That is why special attention is being given to it and efforts being expended to make it interesting to younger children.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. state the features of poetry;
2. mention at least four factors to be remembered while choosing a poem for your children;
3. write a good lesson note for the teaching of poetry to the children.

HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

1. Read the items discussed in this unit carefully.
2. Attempt the activities in this unit without checking your answers until you finish them.

NOTE: ALL ANSWERS TO ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENT ARE AT THE END OF THIS BOOK

WORD STUDY

Use the space below to list the difficult words and their meanings.

THE PLACE OF POETRY IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Unlike prose fiction which children are versed in, through folktales, poetry poses some fundamental problems to young readers. Over the years, children in the infant classes or nursery schools have used nursery rhymes as a measure of progress in their learning activities. A parent who has sent her little child to a nursery or infant school feels delighted when the child comes home reciting some nursery rhymes.

Nursery rhymes keep the younger ones active and busy. Their teacher engages them in reciting their learnt poems when she has a little thing she wants to attend to. This recitation can go on and on provided they are cued to the next poem. It gives them joy more so as they compete for the producer of the loudest voice among them. Have you listened to a group of nursery children recite those regular rhymes like, 'Twinkle, Twinkle little Star'? Their body actions and demonstrations complement their ill-pronounced words with accurate melody of the rhymes. They are carried away by how they demonstrate, rather than by how they utter the words of the poem. If our nursery children enjoy these rhymes, what stops us, teachers, from maintaining the tempo through primary to secondary schools.

A probable explanation for this 'drop' could be that at the nursery level much mental exercise is not needed, apart from learning it by heart. As they come up to primary school level the meaning of the poem read may be demanded by the teacher, and so, slight mental exercise is employed and so the 'dance' starts to change steps and becomes complex. At the secondary level where critical analysis is expected the response drops completely. This ugly trend therefore calls for conscious efforts to maintain a continuous level of interest which has been aroused at the nursery stage by selecting suitable poems for our children and teaching them well to them.

FEATURES OF POETRY

Explain to your pupils that poetry has its own features. The children are more conversant with stories. A poem is a compressed story. Fewer words are used to express emotions, describe nature and natural events. These are done through:

Structure

This explains the layout or how poems are presented. Instead of having words written from the beginning of the line to its end, in succession, there are short lines of words which do not reach the end of the line. Each line usually starts with a capital letter even when the word does not start a sentence. These lines are grouped in fours, in a normal form. Each group is called a stanza.

Example I

Twinkle Twinkle little star,
How I wonder what you are
Up above the world so high
Like a diamond in the sky
(Jane Taylor).

The four lines above make a stanza. The lines can also be called verses. There could be other line arrangements different from the normal four lines. It is a form of its own but it will not be discussed in this unit. So, when we talk about poems, the form is stanza and lines or verses.

The Language

The language of poetry is compressed. The sentences are generally inverted unlike the type found in prose fiction

Rhyme

The source of enjoyment in poetry is rhyme. In an ordinary speech form, nobody bothers about rhyme or find words that sound alike, to use. This feature of rhyme is the secret of the success of nursery children's love for poems. They act it and sing it. This rhyme is found at the end of the lines. It makes them think that they are uttering the same sound twice.

Example 2

Tick says the clock tick tick
What you want to do, do quick.

You will observe that the last words of each line ie tick and quick rhyme. Between tick and quick you hear /ik/. Ignore the beginnings which is /kw\ or /t\. The rhyme is found in the last sound of the word. Observe the nursery or younger children in primary school as they rush to the end of the line to make sure it doesn't escape them. That's the beauty of poetry.

However many poems nowadays do not stress themselves to produce end rhymes.

Rhyme scheme

In this, you consider the frequency with which the same sound occurs. The first line can give us one sound at the end, while the second line may or may not resemble the first sound. The letter 'a' is used to indicate the first sound of the last word of the line. If the second last word sounds the same as the earlier sound, then the number 'a' is indicated. But where it changes sound, it will be given another letter ie 'b'

Examine this poem

Example 3

A FRIEND

All, that he came to give
He gave and went again
I have seen one man live
I have seen one man reign
With all the graces in the train
(Lionel Pigot Johnson)

The last word of the first line is 'give' /iv\ -a

The last word of the second line 'again' /gein\ -b

The last word of the third line is 'live' /iv\ -a

The last word of fourth line 'reign' /rein\ b

The last word of the fifth line is 'train' /trein\ b

The rhyme pattern is thus: ababb. This rhyme pattern is called rhyme scheme.

Rhythm

This is known as pattern of stressed and unstressed words in a poem. Certain classes of words are usually stressed eg noun, verb, adjective, adverb. On any line of poem, when words are stressed while others are not, there is a pattern created. Let us give an example from the poem suitable for older pupils—senior primary - a few lines of the poem **Mr. Nobody**

Example 4

✓ — ✓ — ✓ — ✓ —
I know a funny little man

✓ — ✓ — ✓ —
As quiet as a mouse

— — ✓ — ✓ — ✓ —
Who does the mischief that is done

✓ — ✓ — ✓ —
In everybody's house

The pattern is ✓ unstressed, — stressed

The beat usually falls on the stressed syllable

ACTIVITY I

Select the appropriate answer from the option below

1. The poem for calming children is - (prose, lullaby, song)
2. Which of these is not a feature of poetry (stanza, rhyme, prose)
3. The rhyme pattern/scheme of Example 4 poem is (a a b b|abcb|aaab|)
4. Which of the descriptions favours poetry (tells story, generally has short lines, enjoyed by children alone).
5. Write True or False.
Nursery school children recite poem without uttering properly the words of the poem.

TEACHING OF POEMS TO CHILDREN—METHOD

A recent test carried out on final year students of one of the Institutes of Education in Nigeria, to determine which of the genres of literature they are most comfortable with, gave the result below. The questionnaire read:

Of the three branches of literature- poetry, drama and prose, I like

- | | | |
|---|---|-------------|
| 1 | - | best |
| 2 | - | second best |
| 3 | - | least |

Response from 72 students read:

- I like poetry best - 10 students
- I like poetry second best - 19 students
- I like poetry least - 43 students

The figures above leave dark disquieting hints about the state of affairs concerning the teaching of poetry in our schools. There is no doubt that poetry is the least enjoyed both by students and even their teachers. It calls for a stock taking and a re- evaluation of the methods used to teach poetry.

In teaching children poetry, the step-by step-approach would be:

Start with choosing a suitable poem for the class. Consider the points earlier mentioned in this unit.

Give a brief introduction of the poem in a short story form. It does not need to be lengthy. Prepared teaching aids should be used to enable them to understand the explanation.

Give them a model reading, putting the necessary actions as deemed necessary and which would make the children desire to learn the poem.

Ask a few questions after explanation and direct explanation towards the plain sense of the poem.

Teach them the poem line by line by letting them read after you. Let them read in chorus for a start and as you go along withdraw the chorus reading for the class and apply it to a fewer number. When a majority of the children have learnt the poem appoint some who can recite or read the poem to do so.

In case of older children especially those in junior secondary, go a step forward to discuss and analyse the poem by means of further questions to search for hidden meaning.

Final evaluation:

Ask a few general questions and let the children read the poem for enjoyment.

Do not force any child to memorise a poem. Memorisation comes naturally if they like the poem.

ACTIVITY II

1. State three factors which must be considered while choosing poems for your pupils.
2. What is the major problem in the teaching of poetry in our schools, according to the findings made from the test carried out?

SUMMARY

In this unit, you have studied:

- the place of poetry in children's literature;
- features of poetry;
- choosing of poetry for children and points to bear in mind;
- methods of teaching poems to children.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Select a suitable poem for a class –mention the class.
2. Prepare a lesson note on how to teach the poem.
3. Teach the poem to your members at the study centre in the presence of your course tutor.

MEET YOUR COURSE TUTOR AT THE STUDY CENTRE FOR DISCUSSION

REFERENCES

Grieve D.W. ed (1960) *Adventures into Poetry for African Schools*. London: Macmillan.

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Institute of Education, ABU (1981) *Nigeria Educational Forum Journal*, Vol 4 N02

UNIT 5: PARAPHRASING POETRY

INTRODUCTION

In unit 4, you studied the relevance of poetry in children's literature as well as how to choose and teach poems to our young readers.

In this unit, we shall look at various poems and try to paraphrase them using the parameters carved out for this purpose.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. paraphrase a piece of poem;
2. identify poetic devices employed in the poem.

HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

1. Read the poems as well as their paraphrase.
2. Study the poetic devices identified in each poem.
3. Do the activities in the unit and after check your answers at the end of this book.

**NOTE: ALL ANSWERS TO ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENT
ARE AT THE END OF THIS BOOK**

WORD STUDY

Add the meanings of other difficult words in the space below.

- awe: respect, combined with fear and reverence.
admiration: feeling of pleasure
magnitude: size
paraphrase: re - statement of the meaning of

STUDY OF POEMS

Having looked at some poems for our very young readers, we have to consider the old children since we know that subject matter is a point of serious consideration in choosing our poem.

Poem I

THE TIGER

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forest of the night
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deep or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare sieze the fire?

And what shoulder and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat
What dread hand and what dread feet

What the hammer? What the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? What dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp

When the stars threw down their spears
And watered heaven with their tears
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the lamb make thee?

Tiger, tiger burning bright
In the forest of the night
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

Paraphrase and Development of the Poem

The poem is a mystical and rather difficult poem. Although it is a difficult poem experience has shown that with good paraphrasing, the children enjoy it.

The poem is not about a tiger perse but the poet expresses the thought of awe and wonder that feels his mind each time he sets his eyes on a tiger or thinks about it. In **stanza 1**, the poet thinks about the tiger whose eyes, because of their brightness, give light to the forest where it lives. The tiger is such a fearful picture that the poet wonders by whom it was created. Fearful here means the tiger instilling fear even in his balance of beauty and grace, given by his shape of body.

Stanza 11: The poet wonders where the tiger would have been created, certainly not within this universe, what kind of being would have made the tiger? The image of a blacksmith is created in the last line because he fashions things out of a glowing hot metal. As a man of tremedous strength and great skill, the author feels he could have been responsible for the marvelous work.

Stanza III & IV:

The poet wonders, what great skills and strength and great muscle that could twist his heart.

Stanza V & VI:

A reference is made to the shooting stars. To some people especially the more primitive, shooting stars seem to be supernatural. The thought is that the Tiger, a beast of almost

supernatural creation must have been conceived at a time when other supernatural things were happening. A final wondering question was given. It is unbelievable that He who made the gentle lamb could also have made such a fearsome beast as the Tiger.

POETIC DEVICES USED

Rhetoric questions: Because of the magnitude of awe and wonder, the poem is pervaded by questions, which nobody was to give answers to. This type of questions that requires no answer is called rhetoric. eg.

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?

Did he who made the lamb make thee?

Metaphor: The words fire, burning bright are used metaphorically. There is no fire burning but the dazzling eyes of the tiger in the night darkness.

Metonymy: They are the articles of use which stand in or represent the blacksmith in stanza 4. eg hammer, furnace and anvil.

Personification: In stanza 5, the stars are being personified.

When the stars threw down their spears.
And watered heaven with their tears.

The quality of beingness has been bestowed on the lifeless objects like stars.

Repetition: Some patterns have been repeated as well as words. The word "tiger" has been repeated variously in different stanzas. The pattern in stanza four is:-

What the hammer?
What the chain?

Stanza 1 was fully repeated as stanza 6.

The use of contrast: There is the contrast of beauty and grace of the tiger, originating from the perfectly proportioned body on the one hand and the dread it inspires on the other hand.

In stanza 5, the tiger is contrasted with the meak and gentle lamb.

Rhyme: There has been a consistent rhyme pattern of aa bb in stanzas 2 - 5 where as in stanzas 1 and 6 which are stanzas repeated, the rhyme pattern is aabc. This is in maintenance of the wave of contrast in the poem.

POEM II

HENRY KING

The Chief Defect of Henry King
Was chewing little bits of String,
At last he swallowed some which tied
Itself in ugly knots inside.

Physicians of the Utmost Fame
Were called at once; but when they came
They answered, as they took their Fees
"There is no Cure for this Disease".

Henry will very soon be dead
His parents stood about his Bed
Lamenting his Untimely Death
When Henry, with his Latest Breath.

Cried, "Oh my Friends, be warned by me
That Breakfast, Dinner, Lunch and Tea
Are all the Human Frame requires"
With that, the Wretched Child expires.

HILAIRE BELLOC

Paraphrase and Development of the poem.

The poem is about a boy named Henry King who unconsciously bites objects like strings and bits stuck in his stomach and tied themselves into knots. Many children are like Henry King because some play with pins, carrying them in their mouths, while some put bean seed into their nostrils or ears while further still some bite all sorts of rubbish. Physicians were invited to help Henry King and although they knew they could not cure him, they nevertheless charged their treatment fees. Henry was helpless and was about to die. Before he finally gave up, he cried out warning his friends to beware of going in for something that is not beneficial to their bodies. This poem could also be applied to warn people who drink, smoke and go for useless things in the name of enjoyment. This will teach pupils a lesson.

Devices Used

It has been observed that some words have been capitalised, which is unusual, especially at the middle of a sentence. That is to draw our attention to those words eg. Chief Defect ie to say, a very bad habit; string ie to show that it is unusual to bite such objects because they are not food and they are not useful to our bodies; "Utmost" tells us that the most renowned doctors were sought for and invited, yet nothing could be done by them to save Henry King; "Fees" - in spite of the fact that they could not cure Henry, and they knew, they still charged and took away their fees; Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner - they have been capitalised to show that any other things taken outside the major meal times are not useful for the eater.

Euphemism: The death of Henry King was described with the word "expires" which is euphemistic.

ACTIVITY I

Answer these questions.

1. What are points of contrast in the poem The Tiger?
2. Mention 3 devices used in the poem The Tiger.
3. Write out the words that rhyme in stanza 2 - 5 of the poem The Tiger.
4. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem Henry King?
5. What lesson did you learn from Henry King?

POEM III

LEISURE

What is this life if, full of care
We have no time to stand and stare?

No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cow

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight;
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

No time to turn at beauty's glance;
And watch her feet, how they can dance

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began

A poor life this if full of care
We have no time to stand and stare
(W.H. Davies)

Paraphrase and Development of the poem

The poet expresses his disgust about the practice of not carving out time to spend for one bit, to admire nature or even care about nature. There is too much time with us hostling to get this or that or get things done. Human beings are being compared with animals like sheep which we usually consider as stupid, yet they have time to stand and stare at nature beneath the boughs.

Human beings do not recognise for one moment places or things depicting relaxation. Places like parks are meant for people to come and stay for a while and in the process could admire grass, trees, birds, rivers etc. In fact there is no time for relaxation, no leisure time.

It is indeed a terrible situation because our people do not go on leave or holiday to rest where as Europeans save for this purpose at least yearly. The Africans would not; when they have their annual leave period (forced on them by work condition) they convert it for use towards another activity that is not relaxation. That is why most of them are stressed to death, collapse in their offices etc. The Africans find it difficult to have evening stroll along quiet avenues - No it is a waste of time for them. It is when you stroll that you observe nature and shut off those pressures that worry you.

The poet observes that even to admire beauty, having the patience to watch and admire beauty, to watch her feet dance - again going to dances are ways of relaxation which Africans do not have time for

In conclusion, the poet condemns lack of time for relaxation and tags it "a poor life".

Devices Used

Rhetoric question: In stanza 1 the poet starts with a question, What is this life if.....?

Eventhough it is a rhetoric question, the poet draws our attention to his judgement of such a life as "poor".

Alliteration: There is the alliteration of the sound /s/ in stand and stare. Both are monosyllables and they add to the beauty of the poem. Other words depicting the sound are streams, stars, skies in line 8

Smile : In stanza 4, there is simile eg. where stars are likened to skies
Stanza 2 "And stare as long as sheep or cow"

Repetition: Used to stress the issue in question.

The poet has repeated the phrase "No time.... in 5 stanzas showing his emphasis on the crux of the matter.

ACTIVITY II

Answer these questions:

1. What is the message or subject matter of the poem "Leisure"?
2. Why does the poet describe our life as a poor one?
3. Write at least two devices used in this poem "Leisure"

SUMMARY

In this unit you have learnt

- how to paraphrase a poem;
- how to identify poetic devices used in a poem.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Select a suitable poem for any senior class in the primary school.
2. Paraphrase the poem.
3. Identify the poetic devices used there in.

**TAKE YOUR ANSWERS TO YOUR COURSE TUTOR AT THE
STUDY CENTRE**

REFERENCE

Grieve D.W. (1960) *Adventures into Poetry for African Schools*. London: Macmillan.