

# The New Senior Secondary Curriculum for Sierra Leone

## Subject Syllabus for African Literature

Subject stream: Languages and Literature



This subject syllabus is based on the National Curriculum Framework for Senior Secondary Education. It was prepared by national curriculum specialists and subject experts.





## Curriculum Elements for African Literature - a core subject

### Subject Description

African Literature constitutes literary works of the African Continent, comprising fictional writing in different languages and various genres, ranging from orature to literature.

### Rationale for the inclusion of African Literature in the Senior Secondary School Curriculum

- a. To counteract stereotypes about orature and literature of African descent.
- b. To raise awareness about the authenticity of African literature as forms of canonical texts.
- c. To enable students to understand the development of African literature from colonial, post-colonial and 21<sup>st</sup> century writing- thematic focus, trends.
- d. To provide a platform for pupils to experience different genres of orature and literature of African descent.
- e. Teaching of African Literature is core to Agenda 2063, rooted in Pan-Africanism and African renaissance – it provides a robust framework for addressing past injustices and realization of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as the African century.

### General Learning Outcomes

The following are some of the core learning outcomes of teaching African literature:

- Produce empathetic global thinkers who can empathise with others, who are open minded and have global awareness of life in their own and others' cultures.
- Produce critical readers who are perceptive, can read independently and appreciate African literature for its aesthetic values, as well as appreciating meaning in a social and historical context.
- Produce creative meaning makers who can read actively and are capable of deconstructing texts.
- Produce convincing communicators who can demonstrate critical thinking, make convincing interpretations of texts - pupils who can use point, evidence, explain and explore structures in their reading responses.

### Subject Content Outline by Broad Themes and Specific Topics

#### Introduction to Oral Literature or Orature

The forms of African oral poetry can be classified into three main groups as follows: **epics, panegyric odes and lyrical poetry**. Epics refer to poems that celebrate the deeds of a hero or the heroic acts of people. The form of such poems is usually in prose poetry, if written, or in narrative form. Other forms of orature include stories, myths, legends, proverbs, riddles, and songs. Pupils will



- Appreciate differences between orature and literature: content, mode of delivery, ephemeral nature, idiosyncrasies of narrative excellence, etc.
- Analyse an oral literary piece – listen to or watch a recording of a performance or read a transcript of a performance.
- Analyse a clip or transcribed text on the basis of language, style, content, literary devices used, theme and effectiveness.

### **Introduction to African Literature**

The focus will be on Anglophone and Francophone literature, particularly on the levels of theme, content, focus and style.

### **Novel Study**

(Possible authors to choose from: Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ngugi Wa Thiongo, Peter Abrahams, Sembene Ousmane, Camara Laye, Ayei Kwei Armah, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie).

Generic approach to studying a novel:

- Reading a book by its cover-analysing titles and blurbs – whole class
- Exploring story openings and endings – whole class
- Close reading of texts (opening chapter) – whole class and personal engagement
- Identifying and analysing key characters – whole class and personal engagement
- Exploring writers' craft – critical appreciation of a whole text or different sections of it
- Exploring plot and theme – making meaningful connections of a whole text – whole class and group activity
- Relating theme/ style and language to the social and historical context – making meaningful connections between theme and background information – whole class, group, and individual activities.
- Responding to whole texts – reflective practice showing understanding, insight and perceptive engagement of texts – whole class; group and individual activity

### **Drama**

(Possible authors to choose from: Athol Fugard, John Kani, Winston Shona, Ola Rotimi, Wole Soyinka).

Generic approach to studying a modern pla:

- Historical development of drama – a brief examination of play/theatre in African cultural practices – rites of passage, pouring libations and other traditional events
- The fusion of traditional cultural rites and modern drama
- Genres of plays – tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, historical; Adaptations such as *Oedipus Rex* and *The Gods are not to Blame*
- Features of a play – stage directions, Acts & Scenes, Props, Synopsis, Narrator, Characters; Speeches, Lines, Soliloquys, exits and entrances, stage lighting, sound, etc.
- Dramatic devices and their effects
- Dramatic irony



- Major and minor characters
- Character flaw, tragic flaw
- Social and historical context of a play
- Theme of the play – jealousy, over ambition, witchcraft, love, hate, pride, modesty, ambition,
- Connection between the beginning and ending of a play
- Responding to the whole text of a play – commenting on effectiveness of plot, language, style and theme on an audience (intended and the present); close analyses of an extract of a play

### Poetry

(Possible poets to choose from: John Pepper Clarke, Niyi Osundare, Gabriel Okara, Christopher Okigbo, Atukyei Okai, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka).

African poetry encompasses the wide variety of traditions arising from Africa's 55 countries and from evolving trends within different literary genres. It is a large and complex subject, partly because of Africa's original linguistic diversity, but primarily because of the devastating effect of slavery and colonization, which resulted in English, Portuguese and French, as well as Creole or pidgin versions of these European languages, being spoken and written by Africans across the continent.

Generic approach to studying poetry

- Understanding Poetic Genres:
  - *Lyrical*: Elegy, Ode, Sonnet;
  - *Dramatic*: Dramatic Monologue, Soliloquy, Oration, Character Sketch;
  - *Narrative*: Ballad, Epic, Social; Special Poems - Topical poems, Haiku, Limerick; Free style, Bank verse
- Close reading of a poem – analyzing the title, the opening and ending lines; identifying the genre of a poem, the theme, poetic devices used and their intended impact on readers including simile, metaphor, irony, rhyme, rhythm, personification, enjambment; social and historical context of a poem – the background of the poet, his/her culture and influences portrayed in the work in question; the poet's craft – choice of words, style of writing idiosyncratic to him or her
- Responding to a poem – using the point, evidence, explain structure in a written response to show understanding of a part of a poem; using the point, evidence, explain, explore structure to show understanding, perceptive and insightful engagement with a whole poem
- Unseen poetry – an opportunity to respond to a selection of poems not studied before; write a detailed analysis of each poem, focusing on language, theme, style, the social and historical context
- Write your own poem - an opportunity to experiment with writing a blank verse or a rhymed poem on a topic of choice

**NB: Literature teaching should not be limited to analyzing whole texts, but allow for close textual analysis of extracts from different genres.**



## Structure of the Syllabus Over the Three Year Secondary Cycle

	SSS 1	SSS 2	SSS 3
Term 1	<p><b>Introduction to Orature &amp; Literature</b></p> <p><b>Concepts and definition of terms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genres of orature</li> <li>• Features of oral literature</li> <li>• Recordings and transcriptions of orature or live Resource Person</li> </ul> <p><b>Introduction to African Literature</b></p> <p><b>Francophone Literature</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negritude and romanticizing of African culture</li> <li>• Extracts from Francophone Literature – extracts from the works of Camara Laye – <u>The African Child</u>, Sembene Ousmane – <u>Xala</u>, <u>The Last of the Empire</u></li> </ul> <p><b>Anglophone Literature</b> (post-independence)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the theme of culture clash</li> <li>• extracts from the works of Chinua Achebe, Ayei Kwei Armah, Peter Abrahams</li> <li>• analyzing language, theme and style</li> </ul>	<p><b>In-depth study of a novel</b></p> <p>Brief background information about the writer and his or her country of origin. A brief exploration of the social and historical context of the novel.</p> <p>Close reading of the whole text to enable the pupils to experience the story, immerse themselves into the imaginary world the writer creates, empathize with the characters, and explore the setting.</p> <p>These could take the form of whole class reading, group work and individual activity</p> <p><b>Objective</b> – to experience plot, character and setting of the selected novel</p> <p><b>“Understanding &amp; Exploring” a writer’s Craft / Style</b></p> <p>Whole class reading of parts of the novel with a focus on exploring the writer’s choices of words (diction) and literary devices used to describe characters, setting and theme/s, and their impacts on readers.</p> <p>These could take the form of whole class activity, group work and individual tasks.</p>	<p><b>Research, group or independent work on reading and revision</b></p> <p><b>Review knowledge and skills covered in SS1 &amp; SS2</b> about the oral literature, genres and features; development of the African novel, Francophone and Anglophone literature; common themes in 20<sup>th</sup> century novels – Negritude, clash of cultures, corruption of ruling elite and intelligentsia, dystopia and other pervasive themes in 21<sup>st</sup> century novels, etc.</p> <p><b>Teacher introduces the research and independent / group task</b></p> <p>Pupils select from a list of short stories or extracts from 21<sup>st</sup> century novels.</p> <p>In groups or individually, pupils should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• research the social and historical context of the selected work and the author’s background</li> <li>• closely read the selected short story or extract, taking notes on the major characters, writer’s craft, setting and theme.</li> </ul> <p>Individually, pupils should be supported to develop PEEE paragraphs which show understanding, insight and engagement with different aspects of the short story –</p>



		<p><b>The objectives</b> include to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyse a writer's craft</li> <li>• explore a writer's choice of words in the novel</li> <li>• evaluate writer's techniques in describing setting &amp; character.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examining theme/s of a novel</b> Whole class reading of relevant sections of the novel to examine the theme/s of the selected novel. Pupils could also work in groups or individually.</p> <p>Whole class will examine the social and historical background (context) of the novel and how the theme/s resonate with society at the time. The class will also examine and evaluate the significance of the theme/s to modern Africa – the Africa we want.</p> <p>The key <b>learning objective</b> is exploring / examining themes</p> <p><b>Planning and writing a detail personal response to the novel</b> By end of the term, the focus should be on developing and consolidating skills of writing a detailed personal response to a novel, or an aspect of it – comparing characters, evaluating the writer's language choices, the relevance of themes to a 21<sup>st</sup> century audience, etc.</p>	<p>themes, characters, writer's craft and how these resonate with the social and historical context.</p> <p><b>Exam Preparation</b> Past exam papers / sample of a mark scheme</p> <p>Consolidate knowledge and skills covered –</p> <p><b>Planning answers to reading questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorming</li> <li>• Structuring answers to a reading response to a novel             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An effective introduction</li> <li>○ An effective conclusion</li> <li>○ Samples of an outstanding essay to annotate</li> <li>○ Samples of less developed responses to improve, using a set of criteria</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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		Teacher will model a Point, Evidence, Explain, Explore (PEEE) paragraph and support students to produce theirs – in class, at home or during whole class assessment.	
<b>Term 2</b>	<p><b>Introduction to Poetry</b></p> <p><b>Concepts and definition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The forms of African oral poetry - epics, panegyric odes and lyrical poetry.</li> <li>• Types of poems</li> <li>• Poetic devices – examples of these, their uses and effect on the reader: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Allegory, alliteration, allusion, apostrophe, assonance, blank verse, consonance, enjambment, irony, iamb, iambic pentameter,</li> <li>○ Metaphor, meter, ode, pun, repetition, rhetorical question, rhyme, rhythm, simile, sonnet, synecdoche.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Analyzing poetry – demystifying a poem</li> <li>• A close study of poems by Francophone writers (Aime Cesaire), focusing on the themes of Negritude, anti-colonialism and romanticism of African culture;</li> </ul>	<p><b>In-depth study of a selection of poems</b></p> <p><b>Close reading of Poem A</b></p> <p>Brief background information about the poet and his or her country of origin. A brief exploration of the social and historical context of poem A</p> <p>Close analyses of the poem's title, the first stanza / verse and closing verse (if the poem is in stanzas)</p> <p>Whole class reading of the poem to enable pupils experience its focus, immerse themselves into the imaginary world the writer creates, empathize with the voice, and explore the setting.</p> <p>These could take the form of whole class reading, group work and individual activity</p> <p><b>Objective</b> – to experience the form, structure, and main idea in the poem under consideration</p>	<p><b>Research, group or independent work on reading and revision</b></p> <p><b>Review knowledge and skills covered in SS1 &amp; SS2</b> about the oral poetry, genres and features; common themes in modern African poetry.</p> <p>Poetic devices - meaning, examples and impact of these on readers; a table showing these will be helpful.</p> <p>A list of the poems covered and classified by theme: love, conflict, war, clash of cultures, corruption, etc.</p> <p><b>Teacher introduces the research and independent / group task</b></p> <p>Pupils select from a list of <i>unseen</i> African poems.</p> <p>In groups or individually, pupils should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• research the social and historical context of the selected work (if the title or poet's name or both are provided)</li> </ul>



	<p>poetic devices used and their intended effects on the reader; form and structure of the poems and overall impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing a personal response to a poem – structuring a response, developing an introduction, a middle paragraph, and a conclusion - using the PEEE structure in a poetry reading response.</li> </ul>	<p><b>“Understanding &amp; Exploring” a writer’s Craft / Style</b> Whole class reading of parts of the poem with a focus on exploring the writer’s choices of words (diction) and poetic devices used to describe characters, setting and theme/s and their impact on readers.</p> <p>These could take the form of whole class activity, group work and individual tasks.</p> <p><b>The objectives</b> could include to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyse a writer’s craft</li> <li>• explore a writer’s choice of words in a poem</li> <li>• evaluate writer’s techniques and their effectiveness</li> </ul> <p><b>Examining theme/s of a poem</b> Whole class reading of relevant sections of the poem to examine the theme/s. Pupils could also work in groups or individually.</p> <p>Whole class will examine how the theme/s resonate with society at the time. The class will also examine and evaluate the significance of the theme/s to modern Africa – the Africa we want.</p> <p>The key <b>learning objective</b> is exploring / examining themes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• closely read the selected poem, taking notes on the major characters, writer’s craft, setting and theme.</li> </ul> <p>Individually, pupils should be supported to develop PEEE paragraphs which show understanding, insight and engagement with different aspects of the selected poem – themes, characters, writer’s craft and how these resonate with the social and historical context.</p> <p><b>Exam Preparation</b> Past exam papers / sample of a mark scheme</p> <p>Consolidate knowledge and skills covered –</p> <p><b>Planning answers to reading questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorming</li> <li>• Structuring answers to a reading response to a poem             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An effective introduction</li> <li>○ An effective conclusion</li> <li>○ Samples of an outstanding essay to annotate</li> <li>○ Samples of less developed responses to improve, using a set of criteria</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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		<p><b>Planning and writing a detail personal response to a poem</b></p> <p>By end of each poem, the focus should be on developing and consolidating skills of writing a detailed personal response to a poem, or an aspect of it – evaluating the writer’s language choices, selecting and analysing the effectiveness of poetic devises used in the poem, comment on their intended effects on readers and comment on the relevance of the poem’s themes on a 21<sup>st</sup> century audience, etc.</p> <p>Teacher will model a Point, Evidence, Explain, Explore (PEEE) paragraph and support students to produce theirs – in class, at home or during whole class assessment.</p> <p><b>Repeat the process for each of the poems selected!</b></p> <p>More importantly, teach pupils the skills of comparing and contrasting poems</p>	
<b>Term 3</b>	<p><b>Introduction to Drama</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous dramatic traditions – festivals, rites of passage, theatrical manifestations like plays.</li> <li>• Functions of drama in society</li> <li>• Evaluate the importance of drama as an art form.</li> </ul>	<p><b>In-depth study of a modern African play</b></p> <p>Brief background information about the playwright and his or her country of origin. A brief exploration of the social and historical context of the play.</p> <p>Close reading of a synopsis of the play, dramatis personae / characters to enable the pupils to understand the gist of the play</p>	<p><b>Research, group or independent work on reading and revision</b></p> <p><b>Review knowledge and skills covered in SS1 &amp; SS2</b> about the development of drama; indigenous dramatic traditions; modern African drama; common themes in African plays; features of modern drama.</p>



<p><b>Modern African drama</b> – a fusion of indigenous dramatic forms and western dramatic forms</p> <p><b>Features of modern drama</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of characters – dramatis personae</li> <li>• Acts and scenes</li> <li>• Stage directions</li> <li>• Narrator</li> <li>• Props – lighting, voice overs, costumes</li> <li>• Lines /speeches</li> <li>• Stage setting</li> </ul> <p><b>Common themes</b> – Africa’s socio-cultural life; giving expression to the beauty of African culture; communal relations among communities; colonial distortion of African history</p> <p>List of authors to choose from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wole Soyinka – the Lion and the Jewel</li> <li>• John Kani – The Island, Sizwe Banzi is Dead</li> <li>• Athol Fugard – the Blood Knot</li> </ul> <p>Whole class reading of one modern play, examining social and historical context, theme, characters, writer’s craft and effectiveness of dramatic devices used.</p>	<p>and speculate or predict what the play could be about.</p> <p>These could take the form of whole class reading, group work and individual activity</p> <p><b>Objective</b> – to experience plot, character and setting of the selected play</p> <p><b>“Understanding &amp; Exploring” a writer’s Craft / Style</b> Whole class reading of parts of the play (acts, scenes) with a focus on exploring the writer’s choices of words (diction) and literary devices used to present characters, setting and theme/s and their impacts on readers.</p> <p>These could take the form of whole class activity, group work and individual tasks.</p> <p><b>The objectives</b> could include to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyse a writer’s craft</li> <li>• explore a writer’s choice of words in a play</li> <li>• evaluate writer’s techniques in describing setting and character in a scene, act, or the whole play</li> </ul> <p><b>Examining theme/s of a play</b></p>	<p>A brief revision of plays covered in SS1 &amp; SS2, comparing themes, setting, major and minor characters, dramatic devices used.</p> <p><b>Teacher introduces the whole class task</b></p> <p>-</p> <p>Pupils select should work in groups to select a scene in one of the plays they have studied for a class performance. The class can decide on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role of characters</li> <li>• Directors</li> <li>• Pupils in charge of stage craft, props, costumes, lighting, etc.</li> <li>• Rehearsals</li> <li>• Final performance</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Exam Preparation</b> Past exam papers / sample of a mark scheme</p> <p>Consolidate knowledge and skills covered</p> <p>-</p> <p><b>Planning answers to reading questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorming</li> <li>• Structure your answer to a reading response to a play             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An effective introduction</li> <li>○ An effective conclusion</li> <li>○ Samples of an outstanding essay to annotate</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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	<p>Pupils will be challenged to write a personal response to a play, using Point, evidence, explain and explore structure of theme/s, language and style.</p>	<p>Whole class reading of relevant sections of the play to examine the theme/s. Pupils could also work in groups or individually.</p> <p>Whole class will examine the social and historical background (context) of the play and how the theme/s resonate with society at the time. The class will also examine and evaluate the significance of the theme/s to modern Africa – the Africa we want.</p> <p>The key <b>learning objective</b> is exploring / examining themes.</p> <p><b>Planning and writing a detail personal response to the play</b></p> <p>By end of the term, the focus should be on developing and consolidating skills of writing a detailed personal response to a play, or an aspect of it – comparing characters, evaluating the writer’s language choices and their intended impact, the relevance of themes to a 21<sup>st</sup> century audience, etc.</p> <p>Teacher will model a Point, Evidence, Explain, Explore (PEEE) paragraph and support students to produce theirs – in class, at home or during whole class assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Samples of less developed responses to improve, using a set of criteria</li> </ul>
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