

Lesson Structure

- Learning outcomes
- Language use in literature
- Literary devices and concepts in literature

Language Learning Outcomes

In each aspect of your work you should ask yourself these questions: What have I learnt? What am I able to do now? Answers to the above will be expressions of outcomes / results / effects / of the lesson / activity undergone.

Your learning Outcomes: listening and speaking, reading and viewing, writing and presenting, and language.

Today's lesson primarily looks at learning outcome 4 (language) as applied in literature (set books). Language use in literature is artistic; the writers select specific words / concepts / register / jargon to create particular effects on the part of readers.

As a reader you should be able to uncover and unwrap the language chosen (diction) by the writer. An ability to uncover covert (hidden) messages in a work of art is a demonstration of having acquired the necessary skills (this is an outcome of an activity).

As a reader you MUST engage the text (symbols used to communicate with readers ie words) and subject it to a close examination. By so doing you would be tapping on critical language awareness. Critical language awareness (CLA) empowers you the reader / learner to become analytical when reading a set book. CLA demands that you do not read words superficially, delve deeper! Ask yourself many questions about the writer, the text, the register, medium, etc.

Language Use In Literature

In literature language is used in peculiar ways, the writers of short stories, poems, novels and drama works always seek very artistic ways of exploiting the language. Such a search challenges all the consumers of the literary genres, students (as consumers) should be familiar with the different devices that the writers use in order to appreciate and consequently analyze literature properly.

Two forms of language that can be identified in literature are: **Literal and figurative**

1. Literal language use

This is factual as words are overtly used, meaning is at a surface level e.g. Aphiwe broke her leg while playing netball yesterday.

2. Figurative language use

This is also known as metaphorical language. This is very colourful and descriptive, words used by the writer (speaker) do not actually mean what they say e.g. My students' failure to attend extra classes breaks my heart. The **heart** is not literally torn apart, but the teacher whose students do not attend classes is disappointed. In the first instance a netballer's leg is torn, and she must see an orthopaedic. In literature language is generally used figuratively, writers use different literary devices to more value and beauty to their works.

Literary Devices and Concepts in Literature:

The list: alliteration, antithesis, assonance, atmosphere, characterization, climax, conflict, connotation, denotation, denouement, elegy, emotive language, epic, exposition, genre, hyperbole, imagery, irony, metaphor, mood, narrator, onomatopoeia, paradox, personification, plot, rhyme, simile, theme, tone, etc.

Alliteration: is the repetition of consonant sounds usually at the beginning of words so as to intensify the rhythm of a line.

Antithesis: is the placing of opposite ideas next to each other to emphasize the contrast.

Assonance: is the repetition of vowel sounds preceded and followed by different consonant sounds to achieve a particular effect. e.g. harmony, joy, fear, sadness etc.

Atmosphere: is the mood and feeling evoked by a work of literature. e.g. Poem "Since there's no help" arouses feelings of sorrow and pity.

Characterization: is the way in which characters are presented in a story. i.e. described by the narrator/other characters or exposed through actions or behavioral patterns. e.g. 'I understood then how, in an earlier war, the Mtosas had felt, they who were also farmers.' (Funeral Earth, Sounding Wings, p.22). the story and the rest of the other characters are seen through the eyes of a narrator-character.

Climax: is when the crisis or the action or the tension in a poem, play, drama, novel etc reaches its highest intensity. The climax fulfils expectations and offers surprises. The leading families of Verona, Montagues and the Capulets that were involved in serious squabbles reconcile and unite as they mourn the death of their children. The climax here presents a tragic end of lives. (Romeo and Juliet). **Note** that this could be preceded by many other high points.

Conflict: is the struggle between or amongst various characters that take part in a story's plot. i.e. between the protagonist and the other characters. Example, Mrs. Parvena appears in court after having contravened a municipal rule, this is conflict around which all the events revolve. (The Trial, Sounding Wings).

Connotation: is the significance of an individual word beyond its factual, neutral meaning. i.e. the associations, attitudes and emotional meanings the word evokes.

Denotation: is the dictionary definition of a word, referring to objects or facts. Exclude the emotions.

Denouement/ anti-climax: point that marks an end of the story. It can take the form of having an unexpected outcome.

Elegy: is the poem which norms the dead or laments some tragic event such as the death of soccer fans at Ellis Park Stadium during the Chiefs Pirates game.

Emotive language: is the language that evokes strong feelings caused by love, sorrow, anger, pity, etc.

Epic: is a long narrative poem tells of the deeds of heroic significance. e. g King Shaka's praises.

Exposition: is the introduction or the part of a story where an initial event is introduced thereby allowing for the search for solutions and answers. It arouses suspense and enthusiasm on the part of the reader. E.g. Makhanya, a young fearful young man emerges from a small house close to the border of South Africa and Botswana; he is searching for a better life. (When Rain Clouds Gather).

Genre: is a specific form or type of literature. e.g. drama (Romeo and Juliet), novel (When The Rain Clouds Gather), poetry (Mosaic) and short story (A hand full of Life/ Sounding Wings).

Hyperbole: is an overstatement or an exaggeration for the sake of emphasis or creation of a particular desired effect.

Imagery: refers to the figures of speech that the poet has used to create pictures in the mind of the reader or to stress an idea or an opinion.

Irony: this is when the writer says the opposite of what s/he really means.

Metaphor: is an implied comparison of two unlike elements but deliberately omitting the linking word "like" or "as" thus creating a thorough identification between the two.

Mood: is the feeling that is created by the writer's use of words describing feelings and place or a setting. e.g. Braamfontein Funeral (Mosaic), most words (diction) chosen by the poet show gloom and sadness that prevailed in funeral.

Narrator: is the story-teller. S/he could be the author or a character in the story. The story teller who sees everything and through whom the story is interpreted is called an omniscient narrator. Such a narrator is very much intrusive.

Onomatopoeia: a word conveys the sound of the thing or an object that it describes or represents. The poet uses words that produce sounds that remind readers of the sounds made by objects about which they are writing .e.g. bang, buzz, hiss, scratch, etc. Onomatopoeia helps in the establishment of the atmosphere of the poem.

Paradox: a statement or a situation appears contradictory on the face of it, but upon a closer analysis it makes sense.

Personification: is a comparison between two things, an inanimate and a living thing e.g. giving human qualities or feelings to an inanimate object like a stone.

Plot: is a chronological (logical) series or an arrangement of events in a story. i.e from an exposition to the anti-climax.

Rhyme: is the echoing of sounds/syllable/vowel, at the end of words. The rhyme in 'Since there's no help' is ababacdcdefefgg. Rhyme is intentional; it creates harmony and interest, and helps in identification of meaning through emphasis.

Setting: is the place where characters and the story take place, it could be social or physical. E.g.

Simile: is a direct comparison, where one thing / creature is equated with another, the use of "like" and "as" indicates simile. e.g. 'They seemed like some strange species of man with four heads' (The Trial, Sounding Wings)

Theme: is the central idea, message or is the essence of a piece of writing. This derives from an engagement with the text and can differ from one reader to the next.

Tone: is the writer/poet's attitude towards his/her subject and the audience as implied in the text. This is a product of many associations and experiences by the reader. You can hear the poet's tone in the pace of poem, stresses and choice of images.

The concepts highlighted above are not the only ones you will encounter in literature. Study and apply them as you interact with the different genres prescribed this year. **The above will enhance and improve your interpretation and appreciation (analyzing) of literature as the work of art. So, apply them as you interact / engage and read the prescribed set books.**

Until next time, ENJOY!!

