

Literature in English — Integrated Study Note

1. General Principles of Literature

Literature is the creative use of language to reflect human experiences.

- **Literary Appreciation**: The academic evaluation of a work to understand its themes, subject matter, and formal structure.
- **Standard Literary Elements**:
  - **Plot**: The causal arrangement of events in a story.
  - **Theme**: The central idea or observation about life.
  - **Setting**: The time (**temporal**) and place (**spatial**) where events occur.
  - **Characterization**: How characters (protagonists, antagonists, round, or flat) are developed to represent social types or ideas.

2. The Three Major Genres & Techniques

A. Drama (Plays)

- **Types**: Tragedy, Comedy, Tragicomedy, Melodrama, Farce, and Opera.
- **Techniques**:
  - **Soliloquy**: A character speaking alone on stage to reveal inner thoughts.
  - **Aside**: A remark intended only for the audience.
  - **Catharsis**: The emotional release of pity and fear felt by the audience.
  - **Dramatic Irony**: When the audience knows something the characters do not.

B. Prose (Narratives)

- **Types**: Fiction (Novel, Novella, Short Story) and Non-fiction (Biography, Autobiography, Memoir).
- **Narrative Techniques**:
  - **Point of View**: First-person ("I") vs. Third-person/Omniscient ("He/She").
  - **Flashback/Foreshadowing**: Altering chronological time for effect.
  - **Stream of Consciousness**: Presenting thoughts exactly as they occur in the mind.

C. Poetry

- **Types**: Sonnet (14 lines), Ode, Elegy (mourning), Ballad (story song), and Epic.
- **Poetic Devices**:
    - **Imagery**: Use of words to create sensory pictures.
    - **Sound Devices**: Alliteration (consonant repetition), Assonance (vowel repetition), and Onomatopoeia.
    - **Figures of Speech**: Metaphor, Simile, Personification, Irony, Hyperbole, Synecdoche, and Oxymoron.

3. Prescribed Texts for 2026 JAMB/WASSCE Cycle

Ensure you focus on these specific texts, as questions will be drawn directly from them.

Category	Recommended Texts	Author
Shakespearean Text	*Antony and Cleopatra*	William Shakespeare
African Drama	*The Marriage of Anansewa*	Efua T. Sutherland
Non-African Drama	*An Inspector Calls*	J.B. Priestley
African Prose	*So the Path Does Not Die*	Pede Hollist
African Prose	*Redemption Road*	Elma Shaw
Non-African Prose	*To Kill a Mockingbird*	Harper Lee
Non-African Prose	*Path of Lucas*	Susanne Bellefeuille

African Poetry Highlights:

- *Once Upon a Time* — Gabriel Okara
- *Night* — Wole Soyinka
- *Not My Business* — Niyi Osundare

Non-African Poetry Highlights:

- *She Walks in Beauty* — Lord Byron
- *The Nun's Priest's Tale* — Geoffrey Chaucer
- *The Telephone Call* — Fleur Adcock

4. Exam Strategy

- **Unseen Passages**: Practice identifying devices in short, unfamiliar poems or prose extracts—this usually makes up about **30% of the exam**.
- **Literary Context**: Be ready to link extracts to the **socio-political context** of the author or their period.