

Unit I

A. The Nightingale and the Rose (A short story by Oscar Wilde)

B. The Lady or the Tiger (A short story by Frank Stockton)

C. No Men Are Foreign (A Poem by James Kirkup)

1.0 Objectives

After studying this unit you will be able to :

1. To develop essential language skills through selected literary texts
2. To enhance understanding of core human values
3. To strengthen reading comprehension and critical thinking skills
4. To help students improve academic writing through responses

1.1.1 Introduction:

The Nightingale and the Rose is a touching short story by Oscar Wilde, first published in 1888 as part of his collection *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. Written as an allegorical fairy tale and tragedy, the story moves around a young Student who laments that he cannot dance at the Prince's ball because the Professor's daughter will not dance with him unless he brings her a red rose. However, it does not exist in his garden. The Nightingale, overhearing his sorrow and believing it to be true love, embarks on a quest to find a rose and learns from a white rose-tree that the only way to produce a red rose for the Nightingale to sing the sweetest song of love all night while pressing her heart against a thorn, sacrificing her life to do so. Despite the touchingly beautiful prose and lyrical language, the story ends in tragic irony: the Nightingale dies creating a red rose from her blood, the Student obtains the rose and presents it to the girl, but she rejects it because another suitor has given her jewels, and the Student ultimately declares love "unpractical" and turns to philosophy and logic. Through this heart-breaking narrative, Wilde masterfully explores profound themes of romantic love, selfless sacrifice, materialism, and the contrast between true idealism and shallow human emotions, using symbolism and personification to deliver an indirect commentary on how society values material possessions over genuine feelings. Even though it's written as a children's book, the deep life lessons and philosophy make it just as powerful for adults. It's a really moving story about what happens when hopeful ideals collide with cold reality.

About the Author: Oscar Wilde:

Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) was an Irish poet, dramatist, and wit, born in Dublin on 16th October, 1854, to a distinguished family. His father was a renowned surgeon and his mother an Irish nationalist poet who wrote under the name Speranza. Educated at Trinity College Dublin and later at Magdalen College Oxford, where he won the Newdigate Prize for his poem ‘Ravenna’, Wilde became widely known for his brilliant wit even as an undergraduate. A leading spokesman for the Aesthetic movement, which advocated “Art for Art's sake.” He gained fame in London through his flamboyance and wit before embarking on a lecture tour in the United States in 1882. His literary legacy includes his only novel, ‘The Picture of Dorian Gray’ (1891), which blends gothic elements with mockery of bourgeois morality, and his comic masterpieces, particularly ‘The Importance of Being Earnest’ (1895), considered his greatest work and a satirical critique of Victorian social hypocrisy. Wilde's life ended in tragedy after he was imprisoned in 1895 for "gross indecency" due to his homosexual relationships; he died of cerebral meningitis in Paris on November 30, 1900, at the age 46.

1.1.3 Summary of The Nightingale and the Rose by Oscar Wilde

The story begins with a young Student sitting in despair beneath an oak tree, weeping because the Professor's daughter, the girl he loves has promised to dance with him at the Prince's ball only if he brings her a red rose. Despite searching his garden madly, he cannot find a single red rose. A Nightingale, sitting in the oak tree, overhears his lament and, believing she has witnessed true love, decides to help him. She flies to different rose trees in the garden, first asking a White Rose-tree, then a Yellow Rose-tree, and finally a Red Rose-tree under the Student's window, but none can give her a blossom—all are either the wrong colour, or it is winter and no roses are blooming.

In desperation, the Nightingale asks the Red Rose-tree how she might obtain a red rose. The tree reluctantly reveals the only way: the Nightingale must sing all night with her breast pressed against one of the tree's thorns while moonlight shines down, and her blood must flow into the tree to dye the white rose red. This process will kill her. Though saddened by the thought of losing life's pleasures, the Nightingale concludes that the sacrifice is worthwhile for the sake of love. She returns to the Student and tries to tell him her plan, asking him to always be a true lover in return, but the Student cannot understand her words and dismisses her song as lacking meaning.

That evening, the Nightingale flies to the rose tree and allows the thorn to pierce her heart. She sings through the night of the love that grows in the soul, gradually pressing herself further onto the thorn as a rose begins to form and slowly turns red from her flowing blood. When the thorn finally pierces her heart completely, the Nightingale dies, and the rose is fully formed. The Student finds the beautiful red rose outside his window the next morning, though he does not know where it came from. He picks it up and brings it to the Professor's daughter, who is sitting outside spinning silk.

However, when he offers her the rose, she rejects it, saying it will not match her dress and that another suitor has given her jewels, which are far more valuable. The Student, heartbroken and disillusioned, throws the rose into the gutter where a cart wheel runs over it. He then declares that love is "unpractical" and dull, and decides to return to philosophy and study logic instead. The story ends tragically, highlighting the contrast between the Nightingale's selfless, ultimate sacrifice for love and the Student's shallow, pragmatic rejection of love.

1.1.4 Analysis of The Nightingale and the Rose by Oscar Wilde

The Nightingale and the Rose is a deeply symbolic fairy tale by Oscar Wilde that explores profound themes of love, sacrifice, materialism, idealism, and emotional blindness. Through the tragic story of a Nightingale who gives her life to create a single red rose, Wilde contrasts genuine emotional devotion with the shallow practicality of the human world.

The central themes of The Nightingale and the Rose revolve around love and sacrifice, true faith, and materialism. Wilde fiercely contrasts idealized love with selfish romantic desire, showing that real love requires sacrifice giving up something precious. The Nightingale believes so strongly in love that she willingly dies for it, declaring "Love is better than Life," while the Student's love is shallow and quickly abandoned after rejection he dismisses love as "not half as useful as Logic". Closely connected to sacrifice is the theme of true faith: only someone who believes wholeheartedly in something will make sacrifices for it, and the Nightingale's sacrifice proves possible only because she has genuine faith in love's worth. Finally, Wilde delivers a powerful critique of materialism, the evil of valuing material possessions over emotions. The Professor's daughter rejects the rose because "jewels cost far more than flowers," showing greed and materialism as terrible traits that destroy appreciation for genuine sacrifice. Through these overlapping themes, Wilde satirizes how modern society consumed by superficiality and self-interest remains blind to true love and beauty.

Symbolism is central to The Nightingale and the Rose, with each element carrying deep meaning beyond its literal significance. The red rose symbolizes passionate romantic love, undying devotion, and sacrifice, created through the Nightingale's music and "heart's-blood," showing that beauty and love are intertwined. The Nightingale represents the poet, the artist, compassion, and true idealism—a figure who believes so deeply in love that she sacrifices her life, making her an expression of Wilde himself as "the poet, Aesthete, and lover of love itself". The thorn symbolizes the pain required for genuine love and artistic creation, recalling Christ's crown of thorns and depicting sacrifice as a form of spiritual consummation. The Professor's daughter represents materialism and vanity, choosing expensive jewels over the rose and spinning blue silk—a cold colour opposite red on the color wheel, symbolizing emotional coldness versus passionate love. The Student embodies naivety that quickly turns to cynicism, and his dusty book

symbolizes the limits of materialism and pragmatism, suggesting intellectual pride and emotional detachment. The colors throughout carry meaning: white roses represent "joy of love eternal and pure," yellow roses symbolize "the jealous gaze of the eye," and the transformation to crimson represents sacrifice perfected through death. Through this rich symbolic network, Wilde conveys that true love and beauty require sacrifice, yet often remain unappreciated by a materialistic world.

Literary Techniques Wilde Uses

Wilde combines symbolism, irony, personification, and fairy-tale conventions to create a story that feels both romantic and deeply tragic:

- **Dramatic Irony:** Readers understand the Nightingale's sacrifice while the human characters remain unaware. When the Student says she has "form" but lacks "feeling," it's ironic since she is literally dying for love.
- **Personification:** Nature is emotionally alive—the Moon "leaned down and listened," the rose trembled "with ecstasy"—creating a world capable of appreciating beauty.
- **Colour Imagery:** The rose transforms from white to pink to crimson, symbolizing the progression from innocence to passion and sacrifice.
- **Repetition:** "Press closer" builds tension and reinforces the inevitability of suffering.
- **Fairy-Tale Subversion:** Wilde uses fairy-tale structure (talking creatures, symbolic objects) but subverts expectations—the story ends with rejection and waste, not fulfilled love.

Wilde's Own Meaning

In a May 1888 letter, Wilde wrote: "The nightingale is the true lover, if there is one. She, at least, is Romance, and the Student and the girl are, like most of us, unworthy of Romance". He added the tale has "many meanings"—he began with form and made it beautiful enough to have "many secrets and many answers".

As a leading figure of the Aesthetic Movement, Wilde dramatizes the debate between "art for art's sake" and art for utility. The Nightingale exemplifies art existing purely for beauty and emotional authenticity, while the Student embodies utilitarianism, dismissing her song as meaningless because it lacks practical value. Wilde satirizes humanity's inability to perceive beauty as an end in itself.

The tale transcends simple fairy story to become a profound commentary on moral and aesthetic values of modern civilization. By depicting a world where idealism and beauty are extinguished by selfishness and rationalism, Wilde affirms that love and art,

A) Choose the correct answer from the options given below each question:

- B) Answer the following question in one word/phrase/sentence**

- 6

5. What does the Nightingale represent symbolically?

The poet, the artist, compassion, and true idealism

1.1.9 Exercises

A. Answer the following questions

1. Explain the Nightingale's sacrifice to create the red rose and its significance.
2. Evaluate the character of student and his behavior to understand the love.
3. Discuss the materialism given by Oscar Wilde at the end of the story

B. Write Short Notes

1. Nightingale's sacrifice for the true love
2. Materialism verses idealism
3. Student's understanding of love

1.1.10 References for further study

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B. The Lady or the Tiger (A short story by Frank Stockton)

Introduction:

The Lady, or the Tiger? is a classic short story by American writer Frank R. Stockton (1834–1902), first published in 1882 in *The Century Magazine*. The story is set in a semi-barbaric ancient kingdom ruled by a powerful king who has created a unique system of justice through a grand arena: when someone is accused of a crime, they must choose between two doors, one hiding a ferocious tiger that will immediately kill them (signifying guilt) and the other containing a beautiful lady whom they must marry immediately (signifying innocence). The central drama unfolds when the king discovers that his daughter, the princess, is in love with a young courtier of lower social status, and condemns him to this trial. The passionate princess, using gold and willpower, discovers which door holds each fate but faces an impossible choice: she knows that behind one door is a beautiful woman from the court whom the young man will be forced to marry, a woman whom the princess hates for her amorous attention to her lover. At the trial, the princess directs her lover to the door on the right, and the story ends without revealing what was behind that door, leaving readers to decide whether the princess chose to save him by opening the lady's door (forcing him to marry another) or to destroy him by opening the tiger's door (killing him but preventing him from marrying another). This famous ambiguous ending has made the story a staple in literature classrooms worldwide, exploring themes of sacrifice, jealousy, passion, barbarism versus civilization, and inviting readers to complete the narrative themselves.

Summary of The Lady or the Tiger:

Long ago, in a "semi-barbaric" kingdom, there ruled a powerful king with exuberant imagination and a tyrannical grip on his people. Borrowing the idea from distant Roman neighbors, the king built a grand public arena—but with a purpose unique to himself. He created a barbaric system of justice through ‘poetic chance’: whenever someone was accused of a crime, they were brought to the arena and forced to open one of two doors, guided by nothing more than "impartial and incorruptible chance." Behind one door was a ‘ferocious tiger’ that would immediately kill the accused (proof of guilt); behind the other was a ‘suitable lady’ whom the accused was required to marry immediately, whether he liked her or not (proof of innocence). No one could accuse this system of unfairness because the accused himself chose which door to open. The trials were always popular and entertaining for the gathered audience.

The king had a daughter, the ‘princess’, who was as passionate and imperious as her father. She fell in love with a ‘young courtier’ despite the fact that he was of a lower social station. Their affair was happy until the king discovered it. He considered this a crime of the highest order—a commoner aspiring to marry royalty—and ordered the young man imprisoned and condemned to trial by arena. The king didn't care whether

the young man opened the door to the lady or the tiger; in either case, he would be disposed of (through marriage or death), and the king would enjoy the trial. For this trial, the king selected the ‘most ferocious tiger’ that could be found and placed it behind one door, and behind the other he placed the ‘most beautiful lady’ in the kingdom—a maiden from the king's court.

When the day of the trial came, the young man was released into the arena and confronted with the two fateful doors. As he entered, he bowed to the king, but then his eyes met the princess's, who sat watching him from her royal box. Because they were in love, he discerned at once that his lover had found out which door held which fate—as he expected she would, given her passionate nature and her father's influence. The princess had discovered the secret through gold and willpower. She also knew that the lady waiting behind one door was a woman from the king's court whom she ‘hated intensely’ for her amorous attention to the princess's lover. The princess became viciously jealous at the thought of this beautiful woman anxiously awaiting her forced marriage to the young man.

The princess agonized over her decision between two dreadful futures: the ‘savage, bloody death’ of her lover torn by the tiger, or the young man being ‘married to the beautiful maiden’ whom she was intensely jealous of. She had to choose between saving his life (and forcing him to marry another woman) or destroying him (and preventing him from marrying anyone).

In reaching her decision, the princess made a ‘quick gesture to the right’. The young man immediately moved to the door on the right and went to open it. The story ends with the narrator asking the reader the famous question:

This open ending leaves readers to decide whether the princess chose love (opening the lady's door, saving him but forcing him to marry another) or jealousy/death (opening the tiger's door, killing him but preventing him from marrying another woman).

Analysis of The Lady or the Tiger:

Frank R. Stockton's "The Lady, or the Tiger?" is less of a traditional narrative and more of a complex psychological puzzle. Here is a point wise analysis of its core literary elements, themes, and structures:

1. The Core Conflict and Character Psychology

- **The Princess's Dilemma:** The true climax of the story takes place entirely within the mind of the princess. She is torn between two devastating outcomes: watching the man she loves get torn apart by a tiger, or watching him happily married to another woman—a specific rival whom she already hates and envies.

- **The "Semi-Barbaric" Nature:** Stockton repeatedly uses the term "semi-barbaric" to describe both the king and the princess. This is crucial because it implies that while they have the outward polish of civilization, their core impulses remain savage, passionate, and untamed, making the princess entirely capable of choosing the tiger.
- **The Lover's Total Trust:** The young courtier's immediate action upon receiving the signal highlights his complete trust in the princess. He does not hesitate, underscoring a tragic irony: his absolute faith is placed in a person undergoing an intense internal struggle over whether to save or destroy him.

2. Major Themes

- **The Complexity of the Human Heart:** The story suggests that human emotions are rarely pure. Love can coexist with intense possessiveness, selfishness, and jealousy, making it impossible to predict whether mercy or spite will win out.
- **The Illusion of Justice:** The king's arena is presented as a system of "perfect fairness," but it is actually a cruel exercise in absolute power and random chance. It strips away real justice and replaces it with public entertainment.
- **Fate vs. Free Will:** While the courtier's fate seems to rest on a random choice of doors (fate), it actually rests entirely on the conscious, calculated decision of the princess (free will).

3. Symbolism

- **The Tiger:** Represents raw savagery, guilt, punishment, and the brutal death of the relationship.
- **The Lady:** Represents innocence, reward, and life, but for the princess, she also symbolizes a lifetime of jealousy, loss, and social humiliation.
- **The Arena:** Symbolizes a fatalistic world where individual choices are heavily controlled by authority, and life's outcomes are put on public display.

4. Narrative Structure and Style

- **The Framed Unresolved Ending:** Stockton breaks the "fourth wall" at the end of the story, shifting from a fictional narrator to addressing the reader directly. By refusing to give an ending, he forces the reader to become an active participant in the analysis.

- **Irony and Satire:** The tone of the narrator is heavily ironic. The king's system is described as "bland" and "genial" despite being deeply sadistic, which satirizes how absolute rulers justify cruelty under the guise of order and fairness.
- **The Ultimate Takeaway:** The story is a psychological mirror. Your conclusion about which door is opened does not reflect Stockton's intent; rather, it reflects your own view of human nature—whether you believe love is inherently selfless or fundamentally possessive.

Check your progress

A) Choose the correct answer from the options given below each question:

1. In the king's arena, the accused person's guilt or innocence was decided by _____.
 A. the king's decree
 B. a jury of peers
 C. impartial chance
 D. the princess's whim
2. The king is described as being _____, a personality trait that explains his interest in the cruel yet structured arena.
 A. semi-barbaric
 B. weak and indecisive
 C. wholly altruistic
 D. deeply religious
3. The youth was cast into prison and sentenced to the arena because he had dared to _____.
 A. insult the king's honor
 B. plot a revolution
 C. love the king's daughter
 D. steal from the royal treasury
4. The princess was able to learn the secret of the doors through the use of _____ and her strong will.
 A. magic and sorcery
 B. gold and influence
 C. stealth and spying
 D. the king's confession
5. The ending of 'The Lady, or the Tiger?' is famous for being _____, as it leaves the final choice to the reader.
 A. didactic
 B. resolute
 C. tragic
 D. ambiguous

B) Answer the following question in one word/phrase/sentence

1. What terms describe the untamed nature of the king and princess?
2. What does the tiger symbolize besides guilt?
3. Whose mind hosts the story's true climax?
4. What does the king's arena satirize?
5. What kind of mirror does the unresolved ending create?

Answers to check your progress

A) Choose the correct answer from the options given below each question:

1. In the king's arena, the accused person's guilt or innocence was decided by _____.
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2. The king is described as being _____, a personality trait that explains his interest in the cruel yet structured arena.
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B. weak and indecisive
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A.didactic
B. resolute
C. tragic
D. ambiguous

B) Answer the following question in one word/phrase/sentence

1. What terms describe the untamed nature of the king and princess?
"Semi-barbaric"
2. What does the tiger symbolize besides guilt?
Raw savagery (or brutal death)
3. Whose mind hosts the story's true climax?
The princess's
4. What does the king's arena satirize?
Absolute power (or the illusion of justice)
5. What kind of mirror does the unresolved ending create?
A psychological mirror

Exercises

A. Answer the following questions

1. Explain the semi-barbaric nature of the princess.
2. Describe the unique system of justice established by the king.
3. How does Stockton change the relationship between the narrator and reader

B. Write Short Notes

1. Character of King
2. Conflict of the Princess
3. Symbolism in two doors in The lady or the tiger

References for further study:

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No Men Are Foreign (A Poem by James Kirkup)

About James Kirkup:

James Kirkup (1918–2009) was an incredibly productive English writer who did a bit of everything—he wrote poetry, plays, travel books, and translated other works. Born in South Shields, England, he went to school locally and studied modern languages at Durham University. During World War II, he worked as a farm laborer. He really found his voice as a poet in the late 1940s, and his very first collection, *The Submerged Village and Other Poems*, was picked up by Oxford University Press, who went on to publish five more of his books. He became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1962 and held prestigious positions including Professor of English at Tohoku University in Sendai, Japan (1959), and taught at Kyoto University of Foreign Languages for 10 years until his retirement in 1988. Kirkup was renowned for his lyrical voice, global perspective, and fearless exploration of controversial themes, particularly in his famous poem “The Love that Dares To Speak Its Name,” which presented Christ as the object of homosexual love and resulted in the last successful conviction for blasphemous libel in the UK in 1977. He wrote over 45 books, including several dozen poetry collections, six volumes of autobiography, and over 100 monographs of original work and translations, and was especially skilled in adapting Japanese poetic forms like haiku and tanka. Kirkup received numerous honours including the Atlantic Award for Literature from the Rockefeller Foundation (1950), the P.E.N. Club Prize for Poetry (1965), and the Scott-Moncrieff Prize for Translation (1992), and lived in Andorra until his death on May 10, 2009.

Introduction:

“No Men Are Foreign” is an inspiring poem by James Kirkup that reminds us we are all part of one big human family and should live together in peace. It’s a strong wake-up call against hatred, discrimination, and the artificial boundaries we create like race, religion, or country. Kirkup points out that even though we look different or speak different languages, we are all exactly the same underneath. At the end of the day, we are all human first—we breathe the same air, eat, live, and die the same way. The poet emphasizes that underneath our uniform, we all have the same body that breathes in the same manner, walk on the same earth, are fed by the same harvest, and after death, are buried in the same land. The central theme of the poem is the oneness of mankind, asserting that everyone in the world is equal and that all people are brothers and sisters who respond positively to love. Kirkup laments that human beings are spoiling and defiling the earth with their hatred and fighting with one another, polluting the air that we all breathe without considering its bad impact on others. The poem's title “No Men Are Foreign” aptly reflects its message that no human being is a stranger or outsider, as all share identical behaviour and respond to love, making man-made barriers unnatural and undesirable.

Summary of No Men are Foreign:

James Kirkup's poem "No Men Are Foreign" is a powerful plea for universal brotherhood that emphasizes the fundamental unity of all human beings regardless of nationality, race, or creed. The poet begins by asserting that no men are foreign and no countries are strange, challenging the divisive notions of nationality and urging readers to see beyond superficial differences. He highlights that all people share the same physical experiences and needs—everyone breathes the same air, walks upon the same earth, sleeps and wakes like all humans, and will eventually be buried in the same ground. Kirkup emphasizes that beneath their uniforms, soldiers from different countries are still human beings with emotions and are in no way different from each other. The poem points out that everyone's hands are the same, engaged in similar labour to survive, and all people are blessed equally by nature with sun, air, water, and food from the farmer's harvest. The poet argues that when people hate others or go to war, they are actually betraying themselves because they are despising their own brothers, and by hating a "foreigner," they damage their own collective humanity. Kirkup uses vivid imagery to describe the devastating consequences of war, creating "hells of fire and dust" that pollute the air everyone must breathe and desecrate the earth that belongs to everyone equally. The poem concludes with the message that all boundaries and differences are human-made, and we must remember that no man is foreign and no country is strange, as love is the biggest power that conquers all other strengths.

Analysis of No Men are Foreign:

James Kirkup's poem "No Men Are Foreign" can be analyzed through several key points:

- ♦ **Theme of Universal Brotherhood** – The central theme is "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (the world is one family), emphasizing that all human beings are equal and share a common bond regardless of nationality, race, religion, caste, or language.
- ♦ **Physical Commonality** – The poet strips away the "uniforms" (military or cultural) that hide human identity, highlighting that everyone breathes the same air, walks upon the same earth, sleeps and wakes the same way, and will be buried in the same ground, with universal needs like sun, air, water, and food.
- ♦ **Shared Experience of Labour** – Kirkup points out that "their hands are ours," meaning all people work hard to survive and experience the same labour and struggle, and everyone possesses the capacity for love, which is the only force that truly "wins" rather than warfare.

- ♦ **The Psychology of Hate** – The poet argues that when we hate “others” or go to war, we are actually betraying, dispossessing, and criticizing ourselves, as harming another person is akin to harming oneself due to human interconnectedness. (5) **Environmental Toll of War** – Kirkup uses vivid imagery of “hells of fire and dust” created by war, noting that modern warfare pollutes the air everyone must breathe and desecrates the earth that belongs to all equally.
- ♦ **Critique of Artificial Boundaries** – The poem critiques the artificial boundaries created by nationalism and prejudice, arguing that these divisions are man-made and do not reflect the true nature of human relationships.
- ♦ **Call for Empathy and Understanding** – Kirkup urges readers to put themselves in others' shoes, suggesting that recognizing our shared humanity leads to greater compassion and a deeper appreciation of others' struggles and joys, which is crucial for overcoming prejudice.
- ♦ **Tone and Style** – The tone is didactic (teaching) as the poet teaches us to stay united and peaceful, and the poem uses free verse without rhyming lines, employing symbolism (uniforms representing division) and repetition to reinforce unity.
- ♦ **Message of Peace** – The poem conveys a beautiful message of togetherness and peace, warning us not to fight or hate each other, and stressing that nations should not be at war, as we can win others through love, not war.

Check your progress

A) Choose the correct answer from the options given below each question:

1. James Kirkup's poem "No Men Are Foreign" is a powerful plea for _____ that emphasizes the fundamental unity of all human beings.

A) National pride	B) Universal brotherhood
C) Military strength	D) Religious superiority
2. The poet highlights that all people share the same physical experiences and needs—everyone breathes the same _____, walks upon the same earth.

A) Water	B) Air
C) Sunlight	D) Food

A) Choose the correct answer from the options given below each question:

- 19

B) Answer the following question in one word/phrase/sentence

1. What is the central theme of "No Men Are Foreign"?
Answer: Universal Brotherhood
2. Why does the poet strip away the "uniforms"?
Answer: To reveal human identity
3. What force truly "wins" rather than warfare according to Kirkup?
Answer: Love
4. How is the tone of the poem described?
Answer: Didactic (teaching)
5. What vivid imagery does Kirkup use to describe war's consequences?
Answer: "Hells of fire and dust"

Exercises

A. Answer the following questions

1. What is the main message of James Kirkup's poem "No Men Are Foreign"?
2. How does Kirkup describe the physical commonality among all human beings in the poem?
3. What is the significance of the poem's message about hate and war in "No Men Are Foreign"?

B. Write Short Notes

1. Theme of Universal Brotherhood
2. Critique of War and Nationalism
3. Message of Peace Through Love

1.1.11 References for further study

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Unit 2

Literary Forms: Play and Poetry

- A. Hidden Fire (A monologue by Manjula Padmanabhan)
- B. The Worker (One Act Play by Walter Wykes)
- C. I Thank You God (A Poem by Bernard Dadie)

2.1. Objectives:

After studying this unit students will be able to:

- Demonstrate improved reading comprehension through close reading of prescribed literary texts.
- Analyze how human values are represented in the selected works.
- Write clear and coherent responses in relation to the text
- Apply human values and life skills in academic and day today life

2.2. Introduction:

In the first unit, you studied poetry and short story as the important literary forms. Through these texts, you have learnt that reading literature not only enhances language proficiency but also cultivates human values and develops essential life skills. Literature helps us understand ourselves and the society around us more deeply.

In the present unit, you will study two plays and one poem as prescribed texts. In the previous unit, you became familiar with poetry as a literary form and understood how it contributes to the development of language skills as well as life skills. Like poetry and short story, drama, novel, autobiography, and play are other significant forms of literature. Every literary work reflects the society, culture, and human experiences of the time in which the writer creates it. Therefore, reading literature helps us understand the world around us in a more meaningful way.

At one level, reading literary texts improves our vocabulary, language proficiency, communication skills, and sense of literary aesthetics. At another level, literature creates awareness about humanity and human relationships. The world created by writers through literary texts provide opportunities to think critically, interpret ideas, and respond to life with greater sensitivity. Literature helps us become thoughtful and responsible individuals while strengthening our academic communication skills.

In this unit, you will learn about the play as a literary form and understand how it can help in improving language proficiency and life skills. One of the prescribed texts is "Hidden Fire", a monologue written by Manjula Padmanabhan. The second text is a one-act play, "The Worker", written by the famous American playwright Walter Wykes. Both these texts belong to the dramatic form of literature, which are mainly written for stage performance.

The third text in this unit is a poem, "I Thank You God" written by Bernard Dadie. The poem makes us aware of how poetry can become a powerful mode of communication against discrimination and injustice, and how it can be used as a medium to express protest and human concerns.

In the following discussion, we will try to understand the play as a literary form and study the prescribed texts that provide opportunities for developing language skills, critical thinking, and human values.

2.3. Presentation of the Subject Matter:

2.3.1. Play as a literary Form:

Over centuries, play has been one of the major literary forms in human culture. In almost every language and society, play has a long and rich tradition. The history of play/drama can be traced from ancient Greek tragedies to contemporary plays of the modern world. The main function of play is not only to entertain people but also to reflect the society and human life of the time in which it is written. Through drama, writers present human emotions, relationships, conflicts, and social realities in a lively and effective manner.

Drama differs from other literary forms such as poetry, novel, and short story because it is mainly a performing art. Although some plays are written for reading, drama is generally meant to be performed on the stage before an audience. It combines dialogue, action, expression, movement, and performance to communicate ideas and emotions. Therefore, drama becomes a powerful medium for developing communication skills, emotional understanding, teamwork, creativity, and critical thinking. Reading and performing of drama also help students improve pronunciation, speaking skills, confidence, and interpretation abilities.

Drama can be presented in different forms according to its structure, theme, style of presentation, and effect on the audience. Some important forms of drama include tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, melodrama, farce, monologue, and one-act play. Tragedy presents serious themes and the sufferings of the main character. It usually ends in sorrow, loss, or disaster and creates feelings of pity and fear among the audience. Comedy, on the other hand, creates humour and amusement. It generally ends happily and often points out human weaknesses and social issues in a light-hearted way. Tragicomedy combines elements of both tragedy and comedy by presenting serious situations along with humorous moments.

Melodrama focuses on exaggerated emotions, suspense, and sensational events. It often presents a clear distinction between good and evil characters. Farce is a humorous form of drama based on exaggerated situations, misunderstandings, and comic actions meant mainly for entertainment. A one-act play is a short play that presents a complete story in a single act. It usually focuses on one conflict and has limited characters and settings. A monologue is a dramatic speech delivered by a single character that expresses the character's inner thoughts, emotions, and experiences.

Among these different forms of play, you will study representative texts of monologue and one-act play in this unit. You will also learn the important features of these dramatic forms and understand how they help in developing language proficiency, communication skills, critical thinking, and human values.

2.3.2. A form of Monologue and its features:

The word “monologue” is formed by combining two Greek root words. The first word is mono, which means “one” or “single,” and the second word is logos, which means “speech.” Thus, the word “monologue” literally means a speech delivered by a single person. In relation to drama, a monologue refers to the speech of one character performed by a single actor on the stage. In simple words, a monologue is “a dramatic speech delivered by a single character.”

A monologue expresses the inner thoughts, emotions, feelings, and experiences of a character. Since no other characters are directly present on the stage during the performance, language plays a very important role in a monologue. In fact, language becomes the most powerful tool of expression in this form of drama. The speech in a monologue is usually personal, emotional, and reflective because it reveals the inner world of the character.

In a monologue, the character may speak directly or indirectly to another character, to the audience, or even to oneself. Through such self-conversation and emotional expression, the audience gets an opportunity to understand the psychological and emotional condition of the character in a deeper way. Therefore, monologues help reveal the hidden thoughts, conflicts, desires, and struggles of an individual through powerful language and performance.

2.3.3. Hidden Fire-A form of Monologue:

Manjula Padmanabhan is a famous Indian playwright. Besides, she is a short story writer, illustrator and cartoonist living in Delhi. She began her career as a comic strip writer where she created a female character named Suki in a series called Doubletalk. This series was published in the newspaper “The Pioneer” during the 1992 to 1998. She has written the plays The Artist's Model, Sextet, Harvest and Lights Out. Among them the play Harvest received Onassis award and was transformed into a film by Govind Nihalani. Apart from short stories and comic strips she has written an autobiography named Getting There.

The monologue “Hidden Fire” is taken from the collection of five monologues written by Manjula Padmanabhan, and the anthology of these five monologues is also titled Hidden Fire. This monologue is the first one in the collection.

As a monologue, here we get only one person as a speaker on the stage. He shares with the audience the story of his life. This person is not given any specific name but is simply called “Man”. When the play opens, we see this man standing on a dark stage, and only a red spotlight is focused on him. He appears confused and tense, though he tries to keep himself calm. It seems that he is there to tell the audience about certain incidents that have happened in his life.

As happens in any monologue, the character, that is this man, addresses an unseen audience. He addresses them as ‘you’. There is a conversational tone in his speech. He makes use of pronouns like ‘you’, ‘us’, and ‘me’ as if he is talking directly to someone present before him. Towards the end of the monologue, the expressions he uses suggest that there may be a group of people to whom he is speaking. However, there is no clear indication of the audience in the play because they are never seen on the stage.

The monologue also makes ample use of lighting effects. In this monologue, the blackness of the dark stage and the redness of the red spotlight become important dramatic elements. The shade of the light changes as the speech of the speaker reaches its emotional peak. Thus, the colours and intensity of light play an important role in the monologue.

The event that the speaker communicates to the audience is related to his own life. As a monologue, it presents the personal and emotional state of an individual on the stage. Through his conversational and informal language, he strongly expresses the anxiety, pain, and helplessness that he is facing in his life. Thus, the language of the monologue becomes a powerful tool used by the playwright to communicate her major ideas about humanity, human values, and the human qualities one must remember in order to become a responsible citizen of society.

2.3.4. Summative Discussion on “Hidden Fire”:

When the monologue begins, the Man presents before us an incident that takes place while he is working in his shop. A woman customer suddenly hears a sound. Just after the sound, the speaker sees a man running, followed by a group of people carrying sticks. The running man tries to save himself by swerving away, but the speaker catches hold of him. Immediately, the people following him catch him and beat him to death.

Later, the speaker realizes that he has made a mistake by stopping the running man. But instead of regretting his action, he tries to defend and justify himself. In the monologue, he says that he does not consider those who die as real people. According to him, there is always an ancient hidden fire inside every human being; it only needs some fanning to rise. He says that nobody really knows who fans this fire. Actually, according to the speaker, every person is like a red-hot coal. As long as people remain

cool and calm, everything around them remains peaceful. But once the fire inside them is fanned and they begin to smoke, they turn into destructive flames.

Further, the Man tells us how the killing of one person gradually led to large-scale violence, and the number of deaths increased day by day. First the city, then the nearby towns, and finally the whole country came under this fire of violence and hatred. People started suspecting and differentiating each other. Those who had lived together peacefully for years suddenly became victims and victimizers. Every person became like a burning coal filled with rage and hatred, trying to destroy others.

The Man calls this situation the “law of the jungle.” He says that there is always someone like a lion who is meant to kill another person who is like a deer. According to him, it is the fate of both the lion and the deer. He believes in the rule of the survival of the fittest. Until the deer learns to defend itself, it will always remain the victim of the lion. Therefore, according to him, one must follow the fire and try to survive. In this way, he continuously justifies his actions.

However, at the end of the monologue, we come to know that the same violence and hatred that he supported in the beginning finally turn against him. The identity of “lion” that he proudly assumes for himself is rejected by the victimizers. They tell him that since his great-grandmother belonged to the “deer family,” he too is actually a deer and not a lion. Then they destroy his family before his eyes. They set his wife on fire, kidnap his sisters and their daughters, and hang his son to death.

At the end, the Man realizes that as long as this hidden fire exists among people, no one in the country is truly safe. He appeals to the audience to see things clearly and not repeat the mistakes that he made. But unfortunately, the audience does not believe him. They laugh at him, ignore him and turn away from him.

2.3.5. Hidden Fire and the Language skills:

As discussed in the introduction of this course any literary text always helps us in developing our language proficiency. The reading of the literary text helps us boost our vocabulary, interfere the meaning of language, symbolic, ironic meaning or tone of language and help us to express our own opinions/thoughts in appropriate language. In case of play it helps us boost our day today vocabulary and conversational English. We will see some of the instances from the play. As the student of the course you must read the monologue own your own and find out as many expressions as you can to develop your language proficiency. Here are some exemplary vocabulary items discussed to identify how you can take literary text to enhance your language proficiency.

A) Vocabulary: Following is the list of the words used in the text. If you consider them together you may find the register of violence communicated through them. These words and expressions together create the violent and fearful atmosphere of the monologue and help the audience understand the emotional intensity of the speaker’s experiences.

As a development of vocabulary you may get the meaning of these words as well as antonym expressions so as to enhance your vocabulary.

Word/expression	Meaning	Opposite Meaning
to leap at someone	to jump towards someone aggressively	to withdraw from someone / to move away calmly
to stamp someone out	to crush or destroy completely	to protect / to preserve
crunching of bone	cracking sound of broken bones	healing / softness / comfort
raging fire	uncontrolled burning fire or anger	Extinguishing fire/Ceasing fire
put out the fire	to extinguish fire or stop conflict	to ignite / to inflame
a deadly scourge	something causing suffering and death	blessing / protection
Prey	a victim attacked by others	protector / defender
to strangle	to choke or kill by pressing the throat	to release / to free
to set fire	to burn intentionally	to save / to extinguish
to scream	to cry loudly in fear or pain	to whisper / to remain silent

B) Expressions for Day today Life: The monologue is in conversational tone that helps us use some of the expressions in day today life. These expression in other context can help you communicate in English at informal/formal situations. Mark the meaning and their usage given below.

Expression from the Play	Meaning / Function in Conversation	Example of Everyday Use
Let me tell you	used to introduce something important or strongly felt	Let me tell you, this work is not as easy as it looks.
I stood in his path	means to block or oppose someone physically or emotionally	I did not want to stand in her path of success.
I don't, of course	used to deny something naturally or politely	Do you hate him? — I don't, of course.
There is no point	used to say something is useless or unnecessary	There is no point arguing about the past now.
How else can I say it?	used when trying to explain something clearly in another way	How else can I say it? You must submit the form today.
Frankly, I don't care	used to express honest lack of concern or interest	Frankly, I don't care what others think about my decision.
That's what it is	used to accept reality or conclude something	The exam was difficult, but that's what it is.
Please, just don't turn away	emotional request asking someone to listen or stay	Please, just don't turn away when someone needs help.
Listen to me for your own sake	used to warn or advise someone seriously	Listen to me for your own sake, do not trust strangers easily.
Never mind about me	used when the speaker wants others not to worry about them	Never mind about me; first complete your own work.

Now find out some other expressions and their context which you can use in your day today life.

2.3.6. Hidden Fire and Reflection of Human Values:

The monologue “Hidden Fire” presents before the audience a violent incident from the life of an unnamed Man. The Man is not given a specific name because he represents any ordinary person who becomes a part of a mob and blindly follows its actions without using his own conscience. Through this character, the playwright shows how violence often exists within the human mind. This violence may remain hidden for a long time, but it is always capable of erupting when it is provoked. The title “Hidden Fire” itself suggests this idea. Just as a small spark can turn into a destructive fire, hatred and prejudice hidden in human hearts can suddenly burst into violence.

Human civilization has developed over thousands of years. According to Darwin's theory of evolution, human beings have evolved from earlier life forms. However, civilization has taught us to move beyond the law of the jungle and practise values such as empathy, equality, humanity, tolerance, and compassion. A civilized society teaches us that every human life is precious and deserves respect. Yet, the monologue shows that human beings have not completely overcome their primitive instincts. Deep within, many people still follow the law of the jungle where power dominates and the strong controls the weak.

The play also shows how this power is often created through blind followers. Certain people deliberately provoke others in the name of religion, caste, class, or other social differences. They create a feeling of "us" and "them" and build walls of otherness between human beings. Once these divisions are created, human values begin to disappear. Instead of seeing others as fellow human beings, people start viewing them as enemies. This loss of humanity finally results in violence and destruction.

Through the Man's monologue, the writer reminds us that the most important value in the world is respect for human life and human equality. We should not surrender our judgment to a few selfish individuals who manipulate crowds for their own purposes. Such people first unite others on the basis of certain similarities and then use that unity to spread hatred against those who are different. The play warns us that blindly following such leaders is not a sign of wisdom.

The Man himself becomes a victim of this blind following. Influenced by the mob, he participates in violent acts without thinking about their consequences. However, by the end of the monologue, he realizes his mistake. He understands that the fire of hatred he helped to ignite has destroyed not only innocent lives but also his own life and family. His confession becomes a warning to the audience. Through his suffering, he appeals to us not to repeat the same mistake.

The monologue therefore promotes important human values such as compassion, tolerance, equality, respect for diversity, and the sanctity of human life. It teaches us to value the "otherness" of others instead of fearing or hating it. The writer urges us to think critically before accepting the ideas of the crowd. She reminds us that civilization

has progressed by rejecting violence and by protecting human dignity. The tragedy of the unnamed Man shows how one wrong decision, taken under the influence of a mob, can lead to the loss of many innocent lives and cause irreparable damage to humanity itself. Thus, “Hidden Fire” is a powerful appeal to preserve human values and to reject hatred, prejudice, and violence in all forms.

2.3.7. Check Your Progress:

Q1. Fill in the blanks by choosing the correct option given below of each statement.

- A) A “raging fire” suggests uncontrolled fire or intense _____.
a) peace
b) kindness
c) anger
d) silence
- B) The expression “Listen to me for your own sake” is generally used to give a serious _____.
a) joke
b) warning
c) introduction
d) compliment
- C) The dictator tried to _____ all opposition.
a) encourage
b) protect
c) stamp out
d) praise
- D) “There is no point” means _____.
a) something is useful
b) something is unnecessary
c) something is dangerous
d) something is funny
- E) The word “prey” refers to a person who becomes a _____.
a) victim
b) leader
c) helper
d) defender
- F) “I take back what I said earlier” is used when a speaker wants to _____ a previous statement.
a) repeat
b) withdraw
c) explain
d) praise

- G) In the word 'monologue' mono means _____.
a) speech
b) drama
c) single/one
d) dialogue
- H) The major feature of monologue as a form is that it _____.
a) i presents the thoughts and feelings of one character.
b) requires many characters on the stage.
c) focuses only on action and not on speech.
d) is always written in verse.

Q2. Answer the following in one word or phrase of sentence each.

- a) Where was the speaker working when the incident took place?
- b) What mistake does the speaker realize later?
- c) What does the "hidden fire" symbolize in the monologue?
- d) What emotional condition of the speaker is shown in the play?
- e) Why is "Hidden Fire" called a monologue?
- f) What does 'To leap at someone' generally mean?
- g) Which expression in the monologue shows that the speaker wants the listener not to ignore him?
- h) Which animal represents the victimizer in the monologue?



2.4. Presentation of Subject Matter:

In the last section, you studied the monologue as a literary form and “Hidden Fire” as an example of a monologue. You also learned about the language skills that can be developed through the text. Along with this, we discussed how the playwright uses the monologue to highlight the importance of preserving human values such as equality, justice, compassion, and tolerance. Now, in the following discussion, we will try to understand the features of the one-act play as a literary form and study “The Worker” as an example of a one-act play.

2.4.1. Features of One-Act Play:

The one-act play is one of the forms of drama that is defined by the number of acts it contains. Before we discuss its features, let us understand the meaning of the terms ‘Act’ and Scene. Have you ever noticed that a play performance is usually divided into different parts? When a play contains many actions and events, the playwright organizes them into different acts. A play may consist of five acts, three acts, or even a single act. Thus, an ‘Act’ is a major division of a play that usually marks an important stage in the development of the plot or action. Each act can further be divided into smaller units called Scenes. A scene is a subdivision of an act and is generally marked by a change in setting, the entrance or exit of characters, or a shift in action. Therefore, when we say that a play is a “one-act play”, it means that the entire dramatic action is presented within a single act, though it may contain one or more scenes. Now let us look at some important features of the one-act play.

A one-act play is generally brief and can be performed within a short period of time. Unlike a full-length play, a one-act play usually concentrates on a single incident or a closely connected series of events. Since its duration is short, the action develops quickly and moves directly towards the climax and conclusion. It is also comparatively easy to stage because it does not contain many acts, subplots, or complicated scene changes.

However, it should be remembered that although a one-act play is brief in structure, it can be highly powerful in its effect. It is often charged with strong emotions, dramatic tension, and unexpected twists. It has the ability to engage both the emotions and the intellect of the audience. Thus, the dramatic impact of a play does not depend upon its length or the number of characters it contains. In many ways, a one-act play can be described as a condensed form of dramatic art, presenting maximum effect through minimum means.

2.4.2. “The Worker” as One Act Play:

The play, “The Worker” presents before us the story of two main characters—a husband and a wife. The entire action of the play revolves around a single central issue. The setting remains almost the same from the beginning to the end. The action takes

place in the living room of an apartment, which gives the play unity of place. The play portrays the life of a middle-class couple living during a period of economic recession. The fear of losing a job constantly hangs over their lives and creates tension in their relationship. This fear becomes the central conflict around which the entire action of the play develops.

One of the major strengths of this one-act play lies in its dialogues. Through the conversations between the husband and wife, the audience gradually understands their anxieties, frustration, and emotional struggle. Along with the dialogues, the actors' performances, body language, movements, and the stage directions provided by the playwright create a strong dramatic effect. These elements help the audience experience the tension and uncertainty faced by the couple.

As a one-act play, “The Worker” develops its action quickly and effectively. The play opens with the Man returning home carrying office files and belongings. This immediately creates curiosity and suspense. The action then moves rapidly through his arguments with his wife, his growing frustration and violence, and finally the arrival of the messenger. The messenger's appearance at the end confirms the fear that has been troubling the couple throughout the play—the loss of the Man's job. All these events occur in a closely connected sequence, creating a tense and emotionally charged atmosphere.

The play also demonstrates the dramatic unity that is characteristic of a successful one-act play. It has a clear beginning, where the problem is introduced; a middle, where the tension continues to rise; a climax, where emotions reach their peak; and an ending that leaves a deep impact on the audience. Though the play is brief, it successfully communicates its theme of economic insecurity, human frustration, and the effect of unemployment on family life.

Thus, “The Worker” is an excellent example of a one-act play. Its limited characters, single setting, single conflict, rapid action, and compact plot contribute to its effectiveness. The play proves that even within a short span, a one-act play can create a powerful dramatic experience and communicate its theme in a memorable way.

2.4.3. Summative Discussion on “The Worker”:

The one-act play “The Worker” presents before us the story of an unnamed Man and Woman who live in a nondescript apartment. The play opens with the Woman sitting in a rocking chair with an infant in her arms. Suddenly, she hears the sound of scuffling feet outside the door. Frightened, she quickly places the infant inside a drawer and rushes into the kitchen.

Soon the Man returns home from his office. He brings with him stacks of files, trays, a computer, and many other office items. He piles all these things in the middle of the living room, creating a gigantic heap. Looking at this unusual sight, the Woman anxiously asks him whether he has been fired from his job.

While arranging the office materials, the Man opens the drawer and discovers that the infant is actually a baby doll. This makes him extremely angry. He orders his wife to get rid of the doll immediately. The Woman, however, explains why the doll is so important to her. Living alone in the apartment for long hours, she feels isolated and neglected because her husband is completely occupied with his office work. To overcome her loneliness, she has created an imaginary world in which the doll serves as her child and companion. She talks to it and finds emotional comfort in its presence.

The Man does not share her feelings. Instead, he sees the doll as a threat. He fears that if anyone learns about it, people may assume that his wife is pregnant. In a society where employers try to avoid the responsibilities associated with employees having families, such a rumour could cost him his job. In a fit of anger, he drags his wife, pushes her to the ground, and throws the doll out of the house. Although he later feels sorry for his behaviour, he insists that remaining childless is the only way to secure his employment. He also tells her how many workers have already lost their jobs and how the company is always looking for reasons to dismiss employees.

The situation becomes even more serious when the Woman admits that she has casually told another woman that she is pregnant. She had done so merely to make the other woman jealous, but the Man is horrified. He explains that the woman is waiting for an opportunity to take his position in the company. What seemed like a harmless lie may now have dangerous consequences.

Soon a messenger arrives from the office. He informs the Man that the company is planning a special party for him and asks him to choose the flavour of the cake. The Man immediately understands the real meaning behind this offer. He knows that such parties are arranged only for employees who are about to be dismissed. According to the strange and disturbing logic of the company, the cake is meant to ensure that the employee will never reveal company secrets after leaving the job.

The play ends on a sad and disturbing note. The Man and the Woman are trapped by fear, loneliness, and economic insecurity. Although they care for each other, they are unable to support one another because of the pressures created by their circumstances. Through their story, the play highlights the human cost of unemployment, insecurity, and a system that values productivity more than human relationships.

2.4.4. “The Worker” and Language Skills:

Like the earlier monologue this one act play also provides students an opportunity to develop their vocabulary and the day today language expressions. The play also introduces to the intense emotional quality of the words, their tone and their power to communicate the emotional turmoil of the characters presented in the play.

A) Vocabulary: Look at the group of words given below. All of them are associated with the act of walking or moving from one place to another. However, each word describes a different manner of movement and creates a different image in the reader's mind.

Word	Meaning
Scuffing	Walking by dragging one's feet along the ground, often producing a scraping sound.
Scurrying	Moving quickly with short hurried steps, usually because of fear, anxiety, or urgency.
Stumbling	Walking unsteadily or almost falling because one loses balance.
Move on	To continue moving forward or proceed to another place or stage.
Crawling	Moving slowly on hands and knees or with the body close to the ground.

The play contains several other words that help us understand emotions, actions, and situations. Learning such words can enrich our vocabulary and improve our expression. Look at one more group of words related to the feeling of anxiety, fear and emotions.

Word	Meaning
Brooding	Thinking deeply, rather sadly about something
Frustrated	Feeling depressed
Anxious	Worried or nervous
Violent	Becoming angry with intention of hurting someone physically or mentally
Jealousy	Feeling of envy towards someone

Read the group of words given below and find out their meaning to improve your vocabulary.

Group 1: rush, drag, push, pile, throw out, arrange etc.

Group 2: warn, inform, convince, assume, admit etc.

Group 3: whisper, murmur, shout, scream, mutter

Group 4: glance, stare, gaze, peep, glare

Group 5: worried, anxious, frightened, terrified, panicked

B) Expressions for Day today Life:

Expression	Meaning/context
You are right on time	You have arrived exactly at the expected or correct time; you are neither early nor late.
You have been fired	You have been removed or dismissed from your job.
Thanks heavens	An expression of relief or gratitude when something bad has not happened or a problem has been avoided.
That's awful	That is very bad, unpleasant, shocking, or unfortunate
Lay them off	To terminate workers' employment, usually because of financial problems or lack of work.
I have fallen behind	I am no longer keeping up with my work, schedule, or responsibilities
Get rid of	To remove, throw away, or free oneself from something unwanted.
Discover the feet	To learn to walk
Put to death	To kill someone or cause someone's death, often as a punishment or deliberate act.

You may notice while reading the play that the dialogues contain a large number of questions. The husband and wife communicate with each other by constantly asking questions. This reflects a common feature of day-to-day communication. In our informal conversations, we also use different types of questions such as Yes/No Questions, Wh-Questions (Who, What, When, Where, Why, How), and Rhetorical Questions. These questions help us seek information, express emotions, show surprise, or continue a conversation. As you read the text, notice the various question forms used by the characters and practise their structures. This will help you improve both your understanding of English grammar and your communication skills.

2.4.5. “The Worker” and the Reflection on Human Values:

The one-act play “The Worker” presents before us a sad and gloomy story from the lives of an unnamed Man and Woman. They are not given specific names because they represent many ordinary people who live under the constant threat of unemployment and economic recession. The fear of losing his job and the struggle to remain employed have gradually turned the Man into a mechanical individual. He is not completely without emotions; he loves his wife and cares for her. However, he is so deeply absorbed in his

The play reveals how important human values such as love, companionship, emotional support, and the desire to become parents are threatened by the pressures of modern work culture. The Woman suffers from loneliness because her husband is always occupied with office work. In search of affection and companionship, she creates an imaginary world of her own. She treats the doll as her child, gives it a name, and imagines stories about its growth. Through this touching portrayal, the playwright highlights the emotional emptiness that can arise when human relationships are neglected in a world driven by competition and economic survival.

2.4.6. Check Your Progress:

A) The injured player was _____ and almost fell down.
a) peeping b) stumbling
c) muttering d) rushing

B) He sat alone, _____ over his problems.
a) rushing b) peeping
c) brooding d) staring

C) The child spoke so softly that he seemed to _____ rather than speak.
a) whisper b) scream
c) shout d) glare

D) The company had to _____ several workers because of financial losses.
a) arrange b) convince
c) lay off d) peep

- E) We should _____ old habits that prevent our growth.
a) get rid of
c) scurry
- F) "_____! Nobody was hurt in the accident."
a) That's awful
c) I don't care
- G) She became _____ when her efforts did not produce results.
a) frustrated
c) convinced
- H) I have _____ in my studies because of illness.
a) got rid of

Q2. Answer the following questions in one word/phrase /sentence each.

- A) What does the expression ‘You are right on time’ mean?
- B) What does the expression ‘You have been fired’ mean?
- C) When do we use the expression Thanks heavens?
- D) Give the five verbs from the text related to the act of watching/looking.
- E) What is the Woman doing when the play opens?
- F) Why does messenger come to the Man’s home?
- G) What does the Man discover inside the drawer?
- H) What does the Man bring home from the office?



2.5. Presentation of the Subject Matter:

Now, in the following section, we will study the form of poetry and one representative poem, “I Thank You God”, written by the famous Ivorian poet Bernard Dadié who has explored the African roots through his poetry. In the first unit you have learnt the poem, "No Men are Foreign" which illustrates the need of understanding a universal brotherhood through poetic language.

Poetry is one of the oldest forms of human literary expressions. It has evolved from the oral tradition. Poetry has various sub-forms such as the epic, lyric, elegy, ballad, sonnet, and ode. It also differs in structure and style. Some poems are written in free verse, whereas others follow a strict metrical pattern. Poems can also be classified according to the number of lines they contain. For instance, a poem consisting of only two lines is called a couplet, whereas a poem of fourteen lines is called a sonnet.

Whatever its types and forms may be, the major feature of poetry is its rhythmic quality. Poetry may sometimes appear highly personal or individual, yet it often possesses universal appeal. The language of a great poem is usually rich in imagery. The soul of poetry lies in its evocative images through which the poet communicates thoughts, emotions, and experiences. Poems also make use of various figures of speech such as personification, hyperbole, and alliteration. Poetry may also be symbolic or allusive in nature. It uses stanza form where there are lines of the poem than the sentences. These lines sometimes rhyme with each other or they may not. Still the poem as a form of communication carries internal rhythm inside it. It is the distinct feature of the poetry/ poem.

As M. H. Abrams explains, allusion means “a brief reference, explicit or indirect, to a person, place, event, or to another literary work or passage.” The use of allusion shows how language can become suggestive and how communication in poetry is often indirect rather than straightforward. It enriches the language and deepens the meaning of the poem.

You have already studied poetry as a literary form. In the following discussion, you will study the key features of “I Thank You God” as a poem, along with the language skills and human values reflected in the prescribed poem.

2.5.1. The text of the Poem “I Thank You God” :

I Thank You God

I thank you God for creating me Black,
For making of me
Porter of all sorrows,
Setting on my head

The World.
I wear the Centaur's hide
And I have carried the World since the first morning.
White is a colour for special occasions
Black is the colour for every day
And I have carried the World since the first evening.
I am glad
Of the shape of my head
Made to carry the World,
Content
With the shape of my nose
That must snuff every wind of the World
Pleased
With the shape of my legs
Ready to run all the heats of the World.
I thank you God for creating me black
For making of me
Porter of all sorrows.
Thirty-six swords have pierced my heart.
Thirty-six fires have burnt my body.
And my blood on all calvaries has reddened the snow,
And my blood at every dawn has reddened all nature.
Still I am
Glad to carry the World,
Glad of my short arms
of my long arms
of the thickness of my lips.
I thank you God for creating me black.
White is the colour for special occasions
Black the colour for every day

And I have carried the World since the dawn of time
And My laugh over the World, through the night, creates the Day.
I thank you God for creating me black.

(French; trans. John O. Reed & Clive Wake)

2.5.2. The key features of I Thank You God as a poem:

The poem carries approximately seven stanzas. The poem is written in the form of free verse. The lines do not exactly rhyme with each other, but through repetitive structures and vocabulary, the poem creates an internal rhythm. The poem is full of several figures of speech. It makes use of repetition, which creates alliterative sounds and brings rhythmic quality to the poem. Besides that, the poem also makes use of allusions, metaphors, symbols, and metonymic use of language. These linguistic expressions make the poet's thoughts suggestive and communicative.

The poem makes use of personal pronouns such as 'I', 'me', and 'my'. In this connection, the poem can be considered as the personal voice of the speaker. But when we read the lines by understanding their metaphoric and allusive references, we come to know that the poem is a representative voice of the African race. It has a universal appeal and talks about the collective sufferings of the Black race. This is one of the significant features of poetry as a literary form. Let us see how these poetic features are reflected in the lines of the poem.

See the repetitive use of line structures such as "I thank you God for creating me black," "White is the colour for special occasions," or "I have carried the World since..." etc. In the same fashion, the poem repeats words and expressions like "Thirty-six swords," "Thirty-six fires," "my blood," "reddened," etc. The poem is rich in allusions. It uses biblical references such as "piercing the body," "reddening of the snow on all calvaries," and "making of me the porter of all sorrows." All these expressions refer to the image of Jesus and his sufferings.

Through the references to the black and white colours, the poet directly hints at the African and European races respectively, as well as the practice of racism in which the Black race becomes the victim. The poem is also rich in its metonymic use of language. Metonymy is a figure of speech in which "the literal term for one thing is applied to another with which it has become closely associated." Thus, in the poem, physical parts of the body like legs, head, nose, etc. metonymically refer to African identity. The poet suggests that, despite the way African physical appearance is viewed by others, he feels proud of it.

The metaphoric quality of expressions such as "the first morning," "the first evening of the world," and "dawn of time" demonstrates early human civilization and its correlation with the Black race. Thus, you can see that the poem exhibits poetic language

rich in suggestiveness. It makes an intense emotional communication of an individual person and simultaneously represents the sufferings of the Black race as a whole.

2.5.3. Summative Discussion on “I Thank You God”:

The poem “I Thank You God” makes a critical comment on racial discrimination. Bernard Dadié is an Ivorian poet who originally wrote this poem in French. In the very opening lines of the poem, the speaker thanks God for creating him black. It is an ironic beginning. Generally, people prefer a fair or white complexion. White is often understood as a superior complexion. But the speaker of the poem emphasizes his blackness. Therefore, he thanks God for it. The poem uses this ironic yet prideful tone throughout the poem.

He also thanks God for making him the porter of the world. He states that he carries the burden of the world’s sorrows and sufferings on his shoulders and that he is capable of carrying it. He reminds the reader that black is the colour of day-to-day life, whereas white is the colour of special occasions. He states that he is happy and satisfied with the shape of his legs, nose, lips, arms, and head. He can face hardships and sense dangers to his existence. However, he is capable of facing such dangers and surviving in a hostile environment.

Through the allusion to the Centaur’s hide, he refers to the manly heart, intelligence, and horse-like strength accumulated in his personality. Through the biblical references to crucifixion, he compares himself with the life of Jesus and associates the sorrows of Jesus with his own sufferings. He tells the readers that just as the calvaries were reddened by the blood of Jesus, in the same fashion the whole of nature has turned red due to his blood.

Still, he states that his laughter brings the dawn of a new day. Though the speaker talks about his own sufferings and hardships, he is actually reflecting the pains and sufferings of the African race, African race was considered inferior by the White race. Due to this racial discrimination, Black people, their physique, and their culture were declared inferior by the European White race. They were victimized to the point of bloodshed, and still the speaker thanks God for giving him a black complexion. He very courageously protests against this false supremacy and exhibits pride in being black.

This pride is called Negritude. The term refers to the proud feelings of Black people about their culture and identity, which had derogatorily been labelled as “Negro.” However, the speaker of the poem boldly accepts his Negro identity and, in moments of pride, thanks God for creating him black. He knows that, in the history of human civilization, the black man is considered to be among the earliest human beings, and therefore he laughs at the false supremacy of white people through the poem.

2.5.4. I Thank You God and Language Skills:

The diction of the poem is a rich collection of words that may help you expand your vocabulary. There are many words that you can learn for your day today conversation. You can also identify the creative use of words that is the major feature of poetic language. Though a poem makes an artistic use of language, learning of such poetic expressions may help you use their expressions more creatively and evocatively. Such form of language is useful in content writing, advertising or even in developing appropriateness and creative use of language. We will first discuss some of the words that may help to boost our vocabulary and then the poetic expressions that can be learnt to develop the day today conversation.

A) Vocabulary:

Word / Expression	Meaning	Synonym	Antonym
Create	to make or bring into existence	produce, form	destroy
Porter	a person who carries loads	carrier, bearer	receiver
Sorrow	sadness or grief	pain, misery	joy, happiness
Carry	to bear or hold	transport, bear	drop, abandon
Glad	happy and satisfied	pleased, joyful	sad, unhappy
content	satisfied	fulfilled, pleased	dissatisfied
Snuff	to smell or sense	Sniff	ignore
Pierce	to cut or enter sharply, prick	Stab	protect
Burnt	damaged by fire	Scorched	preserved
Dawn	beginning of the day	Sunrise	dusk, night
reddened	made red	coloured, flushed	whitened
occasion	special event	Ceremony	ordinary day
Shape	form or structure	figure, outline	distortion
thickness	fullness or density	Heaviness	thinness
Laugh	expression of joy	smile, giggle	cry
Heat	intense condition or struggle	pressure, hardship	comfort, coolness

B) See some of the expressions from the poem given below:

Poetic Expression	Simple Meaning	Everyday Expression
“Porter of all sorrows”	carrying suffering and pain	“bearing many problems”
“Carried the World”	handling responsibilities	“shouldering responsibilities”
“Snuff every wind”	sense every change or danger	“stay alert”
“Run all the heats of the World”	face all hardships bravely	“face every challenge”
“Thirty-six swords have pierced my heart”	deep emotional suffering	“heartbroken”
“Thirty-six fires have burnt my body”	severe suffering and struggles	“going through hard times”
“My laugh creates the Day”	hope and positivity overcome darkness	“spreading hope”

2.5.5. “I Thank You God” and the Reflection of Human Values:

The poem “I Thank You God” makes readers aware of the issue of racism and its effects on human beings. The poet ironically states that he is thankful to God for creating him black. This ironic statement brings out the harsh reality of racism and the mentality of racial discrimination.

The people of the White race, particularly Europeans, expanded their empires into several countries such as Africa, India, Canada, Australia, etc., and established colonies there. Their scientific discoveries and technological advancement made them consider themselves superior to the people of other countries. This attitude gradually developed into a sense of racial supremacy. As a result, racist practices emerged in which white people exploited Black people on the basis of their assumed superiority. They denigrated the physical appearance, language, knowledge, and culture of Black people and treated them as inferior. Consequently, Black people were denied equal status and dignity. Through this poem, the poet exposes the unjust treatment and painful consequences of racism. His references to himself as a “porter of sorrows,” a person carrying the world on his head, and the reddening of nature with his blood reveal the brutality and suffering caused by racial oppression and inhuman treatment. These poetic expressions symbolically communicate the collective pain, exploitation, and struggle experienced by the Black race throughout history.

However, the poem also reveals the optimism of Black people, their pride in their identity, their courage to endure suffering, and their boldness in expressing it openly. The speaker proudly accepts his black identity and rejects the notion that blackness is inferior. The poem suggests that differences in skin colour, physical appearance, culture, or ethnicity cannot become valid grounds for inequality or oppression.

Similar humanistic ideas are reflected in the poem “No Men Are Foreign” by James Kirkup, which emphasizes the equality of all human beings beyond racial and national differences. In this context, “I Thank You God” critiques the mentality of racial superiority and exposes the destructive consequences of discrimination and otherness. At the same time, the poem appeals for the values of equality, human dignity, brotherhood, and coexistence as essential principles of humanity.

2.5.6. Check Your Progress:

Q1. Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct option.

- A) The phrase “carry the World” symbolically suggests _____.
 a) physical strength
 b) travelling around the world
 c) bearing great responsibilities and sufferings
 d) carrying a globe
- B) The synonym of the word ‘pleased’ is _____.
 a) sorrowful
 b) happy
 c) request
 d) frightened
- C) The expression “White is the colour for special occasions” indicates _____.
 a) personification
 b) alliteration
 c) hyperbole
 d) symbolism
- D) The expression, “Run all the heats of the world” reflects _____.
 a) face every challenge
 b) stay alert
 c) carry the responsibilities
 c) feel proud
- E) The thirty six sword the heart of the speaker.
 a) burnt
 b) pierced
 c) reddened
 d) contented

- F) _____ expression from the poem symbolizes hope and positivity.
- a) Thirty-six fires b) reddened the snow
- c) my laugh creates the Day d) porter of sorrows
- G) The opposite of the word dawn is _____.
- a) day b) dusk
- c) afternoon d) morning
- H) The expression “porter of all sorrows” in the poem means _____.
- a) a happy traveler
- b) a person carrying suffering and pain
- c) a servant in a palace
- d) a person carrying luggage

Q.2. Answer the following questions in one word/phrase or sentence each.

- What does the expression, “snuff every wind of the world” suggest in the poem?
- What is the poet glad and content of?
- What has reddened the snow and the nature?
- Which expression in the poem represents emotional suffering?
- What do the colours, ‘black’ and ‘white’ refer to in the poem?
- Since what time the speaker is carrying the world?
- What does the speaker wear?
- What does Negritude mean?

2.6. Summary:

In this second unit you learnt two forms of the play and one poem as the form of literature. You have also studied how these texts can help to develop vocabulary, day today expression and language skills like reading and writing skills. The texts are also important for imbibing human values that are very essential to preserve in this fast changing world of technology. As the students you must have noticed that writers do not deliberately or overtly use language expressions to communicate human values. However, the artistic language, depiction of characters or speaker help us interpret his/her point of view that very naturally brings out the need of sustaining human values. The monologue “Hidden Fire” exhibits the conversational vocabulary and expressions as well as importance of correct decision, need of diminishing the hatred and angers for

others. The play “The Worker” too brings out several words that can be used in our day today life and asks us to remember that work is a part of life and not the end of life. It demands to pay attention to humanness first and bring a good balance between life and work. It presents how the workaholic society and fear of unemployment threatens the human life. The poem “I Thank You God” alike the earlier plays provide day today vocabulary and need of understanding the sense of equality and brotherhood against the unjust racism. It demands the awakening of compassion and sensitivity towards all human beings irrespective of their race, culture or nationality. Thus all the texts prescribed in this course help you to read and be able to comprehend the language skills along with the human values which are the integral part of human life.

2.7. Terms to remember:

- **Monologue:** The word monologue is formed by combining (compound) two Greek root words: The first word is ‘Mono’ which means one/single and ‘logos’ means speech. Thus the word ‘monologue’ means a speech by a single person. In relation to the play a form of monologue indicates the speech of one character by one actor. Thus Monologue is “a dramatic speech delivered by a single character”.
- **One Act Play:** The One-Act Play is one of the forms of drama that is defined by the number of acts it contains.
- **Act:** an Act is a major division of a play that usually marks an important stage in the development of the plot or action.
- **Scene:** A scene is a subdivision of an act and is generally marked by a change in setting, the entrance or exit of characters, or a shift in action.
- **Allusion:** a brief reference, explicit or indirect, to a person, place, event, or to another literary work or passage.”
- **Metonymy:** Metonymy is a figure of speech in which “the literal term for one thing is applied to another with which it has become closely associated.”

2.8. Answers to Check Your Progress:

2.3.7.

- Q1. A- c) anger B) - b) warning C)- c) stamp out D)- b) something is unnecessary E)- a) victim F)- b) withdraw G)- single/one H) - a) It presents the thoughts and feelings of one character.

Q2.

- a) The speaker was working in his shop
- b) The speaker realized his mistake that he should not have taken hold of the running person.
- c) The hidden fire symbolizes the ancient feelings of anger and hatred in the heart of the people towards others.
- d) The “emotional condition of the speaker shown in the play reveals that he is tense and confused.
- e) The play presents on the stage a single character and his personal life event depicted by a single actor through delivering his own speech.
- f) To leap at someone generally means to jump towards someone aggressively.
- g) “Please just don’t turn away” is the expression that shows that the speaker wants the listener not to ignore him.
- h) The lion is the animal that represents the victimizer in the monologue.

2.4.6.:

Q1. A)-b- stumbling B)- c-brooding C)-a-whisper D)-c-lay off E)-a-get rid of F)-b-thanks heaven G)-a-frustrated H) – fallen behind

Q2.-

- a) you are neither early nor late.
- b) You have been removed or dismissed from your job.
- c) To express sense of relief or gratitude when something bad has not happened or a problem has been avoided.
- d) glance, stare, gaze, peep, glare
- e) Woman is sitting in a rocking chair with an infant in her arms.
- f) To inform the Man that the company is planning a special party for him and has asked him to choose the flavour of the cake.
- g) Man opens the drawer and discovers the infant that is actually a baby doll.
- h) The Man brings with him stacks of files, trays, a computer, and many other office items.

2.5.6.

Q.1.

- A) - c) bearing great responsibilities and sufferings
- B) - b) happy
- C) - d) symbolism
- D) - a) face every challenge
- E) -b- pierced
- F) - c) my laugh creates the Day
- G) - b) dusk H) - b) a person carrying suffering and pain

Q.2.

- a) stay alert
- b) The poet is glad and content of the shape of his nose, head, short arms, long arms and thickness of his lips. i.e. the physique of him as a black person.
- c) the blood of black person has reddened the snow and the nature.
- d) Thirty-six swords have pierced my heart
- e) The black colour refers to black race(Africans) and the White colour refers to White race(European)
- f) The speaker is carrying the world since the dawn of time
- g) the Centaur's hide
- h) Negritude refers to the proud feelings of Black people about their culture and identity.

2.9. Exercises:

Q.1 Answer the following Questions in 2-3 sentences.

- a) Whom does the Man call 'hot red coals'? Why?
- b) What is the 'Law of jungle' and how does the Man explain it?
- c) What happens to the family of the Man as mentioned at the end of the monologue?
- d) Why does the Man use the pronouns 'they' and 'us' and what do they indicate? Why does the Woman hide the infant inside the drawer?
- e) Why does the Man bring the whole of his cubicle in the home?
- f) How has the company fired its the employee?
- g) What is the man's reaction to the imaginary world of the Woman about the doll?

- h) What fear dominates the Man's life?
- i) Why does the speaker call himself the 'porter of all sorrows'?
- j) Which biblical references are used in the poem? What do they suggest?
- k) Why does the speaker say "still I am glad to carry the world"?
- l) In what way does the speaker express his pride of being black?
- m) What does the allusion 'Centaur's Hide' refer to?

Q2. Write short note on the following in 5-8 sentences each.

- 1) The character of The Man depicted in Hidden Fire
- 2) The reflection of human values in The Hidden Fire
- 3) Character of the Worker in "The Worker"
- 4) Dream World of Woman depicted in "The Worker"
- 5) Fear of unemployment presented in The Worker
- 6) Feelings of Pride expressed in I Thank You God
- 7) The use of allusions in the poem I Thank You God

2.10. References for Further Reading:

Primary Texts:

- ♦ Dadie, Bernard. *African Verse*. Heinemann Educational Book, 1972.
- ♦ Padmanabhan Manjula. *Hidden Fires*. Calcutta, Seagull Books, 2003.
- ♦ Wykes, Walter. *One Act Plays from the Edge*. Black Box Press, 2008.
- ♦ Digital edition can be accessed with following link:
- ♦ I Thank You God.
- ♦ <https://www.ronnowpoetry.com/contents/dadie/IThankYou.html>
- ♦ Abraham M.H. *Glossary of Literary Terms*.

