

KENYA CERTIFICATE OF BASIC EDUCATION

SENIOR SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

AUGUST ASSIGNMENT 2026

GRADE 10 – LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Time: 2 Hours



LEARNER'S DETAILS

Name: _____ . School: _____ .

Assessment Number: _____ . Date: _____ .

School Code: _____ . Signature: _____ .

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

1. Fill in your name in the space provided above.
2. Write your school name and stream clearly.
3. Indicate your admission number and date.
4. The paper consists of **two sections: A and B**.
5. Attempt **all questions** in every section.
6. Use **English** to answer all questions.
7. Write your responses in the spaces provided in the paper.
8. Do not detach or remove any page from this paper.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

SECTION	SECTION A	SECTION B	% SCORE	EE1	EE2	ME1	ME2	AE1	AE2	BE1	BE2
SCORE RANGE	30 MARKS	50 MARKS		90-100	75-89	58-74	41-57	31-40	21-30	11-20	1-10
POINTS				8 POINTS	7 POINTS	6 POINTS	5 POINTS	4 POINTS	3 POINTS	2 POINTS	1 POINT
LEARNER'S TOTAL SCORE											

SECTION A (30 MARKS)

Answer ALL questions in this section.

TASK 1: ORAL LITERATURE (20 MARKS)

Read the following narrative from *Oral Literature for Senior School* and answer the questions that follow.

A long time ago, the Hare and the Hyena were great friends. One year, a terrible drought hit the land, and all the animals were starving. Hare, being the clever one, approached Hyena and said, "My friend, if we want to survive, we must go to the land of the Moon. There is plenty of food there, but we must be very quiet."

They traveled for days until they reached a giant ladder reaching the sky. Hare whispered, "Hyena, whatever you do, do not laugh or shout, or the Moon people will throw us down." As they climbed, they found a storehouse full of delicious honey and meat. Hare ate small portions quietly. Hyena, however, stuffed his mouth until his cheeks bulged. Suddenly, Hyena saw a very small, funny-looking Moon-man sleeping in the corner. He tried to hold it in, but the sight was too much. "Hah!" he let out a thunderous laugh.

Immediately, the Moon-man woke up and beat a huge drum. The Moon people rushed in and grabbed the two friends. Hare quickly hid inside a large gourd, but Hyena was caught. The Moon people threw Hyena out of the sky. He fell for three days and three nights, landing on a sharp rock, which is why his back is slanting and he limps to this day. Hare waited until it was dark, rolled the gourd down the ladder, and escaped safely.

Questions:

1. Based on the narrative, identify and explain **two** features of oral narratives. (4 marks)

- i. _____
- ii. _____

2. Classify this narrative. Give a reason for your answer. (3 marks)

3. Describe the character traits of: (4 marks)

- i. Hare: _____
- ii. Hyena: _____

4. Identify **one** non-verbal cue a storyteller would use to make the climax of this story effective. (2 marks)

5. State **three** social functions of such a story in a Kenyan community. (3 marks)

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____

6. What is the moral lesson of this story? (2 marks)

7. Imagine you are carrying out **fieldwork** to collect such stories. Name **two** methods of data collection you would use. (2 marks)

- i. _____
- ii. _____

TASK 2: POETRY (10 MARKS)

Read the poem below from *Voices from the Woods* by Christopher Okemwa and answer the questions.

THE VOICE OF THE ANCIENT TREE

I have stood here since the dawn of the first sun,
My roots drinking from the veins of the earth,
When the warriors returned with songs of red blood,
And the mothers wailed for the sons of the soil.
I saw the first smoke of the iron-fire,
And the tall men with pale skins and long sticks that spat fire.

Now, the forest is a skeleton of what it was,
The axe sings a song of death every morning,
And the birds have forgotten the lyrics to their own hymns.
My brothers lie in rows, waiting for the belly of the truck,
To be carried away to build fences for people who do not know
The language of the leaves or the heartbeat of the rain.

Do you hear the wind? It is not just air,
It is the ghost of the cedar, the spirit of the oak,
Warning the children of the concrete jungle:
If the green vanishes, the breath vanishes too.
If the shade dies, the spirit of man withers.
I am the last sentinel, the silent witness of your greed.

Questions:

1. What is the subject matter of this poem? (2 marks)

2. Identify and illustrate **two** stylistic devices used in the poem. (4 marks)

- i.

- ii.

3. Describe the **tone** of the speaker in the last stanza. (2 marks)

4. Identify an example of **personification** in the second stanza and explain its effectiveness. (2 marks)

TASK 3: NOVEL (10 MARKS)

Read the following excerpt from *The Parting Clouds* by Ken Kamoche and answer the questions.

The atmosphere in the village was thick with unspoken fears. Since the elders had met at the sacred grove, the young men had become restless. Odhiambo walked through the narrow paths, his eyes fixed on the horizon where the clouds seemed to be gathering in a strange, dark formation. It was a sign, his grandfather had told him, that the old ways were being tested by the new winds from the coast. The colonial officers had already established a post at the edge of the valley, and the sound of their bugles disrupted the morning lowing of the cattle. Odhiambo felt a pull between his loyalty to the spirits of his ancestors and the curiosity he felt about the books the missionaries carried. He wondered if the clouds would truly part to reveal a brighter day or if they were merely a shroud for the end of his world as he knew it.

Questions:

1. Place this excerpt in its historical context within Kenya. (2 marks)

2. Identify the internal conflict facing Odhiambo in this passage. (2 marks)

3. Discuss **one** theme brought out in this excerpt. (3 marks)

4. How does the author use the "clouds" as a symbol in this passage? (3 marks)

TASK 4: AUTOBIOGRAPHY (10 MARKS)

Read the following excerpt from *Dear Mama* by Kinyanjui Kombani.

My mother was a woman of steel wrapped in a faded floral kanga. She didn't have a degree, but she was the best economist I ever knew. She could stretch a hundred shillings to feed five hungry boys for a week, and still have enough to buy a kerosene lamp so we could do our homework. I remember the smell of onions frying in the small smoky kitchen; it was the smell of hope. She used to tell us, "The pen is your only ticket out of this dust." Every time I felt like giving up because my shoes had no soles, I would look at her cracked heels and keep walking. Her life was a long, difficult song, but she sang it with her head held high.

Questions:

1. Identify **two** features of non-fiction (autobiography) present in this excerpt. (2 marks)

- i. _____
- ii. _____

2. What does the "smell of onions" symbolize to the narrator? (2 marks)

3. Based on this passage, what are the narrator's values? (3 marks)

4. Describe the style of language used in this autobiography. (3 marks)

TASK 5: PLAY (10 MARKS)

Read the excerpt from *Dreams Denied* by James Karuga.

MAINA: (Pacing the floor) I have worked for thirty years! Thirty years of sweat and loyalty. And now they tell me the company is 'restructuring'?

WANJIKU: (Sitting calmly by the table, shelling peas) Take it easy, Maina. High blood pressure won't bring the job back.

MAINA: Easy? How can I be easy when the landlord was here this morning? The children are in Senior School, Wanjiku. Gredi Ten is not cheap!

WANJIKU: We still have the land in the village. We can go back.

MAINA: Go back? To be laughed at by those we left behind? My dreams were not meant to end in a dusty shamba! I wanted a house with a stone wall and a car that doesn't cough.

WANJIKU: Dreams change, Maina. Sometimes they don't die; they just take a different shape.

Questions:

1. Describe the setting of this scene. (2 marks)

2. What is the main conflict between Maina and his environment? (2 marks)

3. Discuss the character traits of Wanjiku as revealed in this dialogue. (3 marks)

4. Explain the significance of the title *Dreams Denied* based on this excerpt. (3 marks)

MARKING SCHEME / TEACHER'S GUIDE

SUBJECT: ENGLISH LITERATURE **GRADE:** 10 (SENIOR SCHOOL)

TASK 1: ORAL LITERATURE (20 MARKS)

1. **Features of Oral Narratives:** (Any 2, 2 marks each)
 - ✓ **Opening Formula:** (Implicit in "A long time ago") - used to transition the audience from reality to the world of fantasy.
 - ✓ **Personification:** Animals (Hare and Hyena) are given human traits like speaking, planning, and greed.
 - ✓ **Moral Lesson:** The story ends with a clear teaching about the consequences of greed and disobedience.
 - ✓ **Fantasy/Imaginary Setting:** Travel to the "land of the Moon."
2. **Classification: Explanatory (Aetiological) Tale.** (1 mark)
 - ✓ **Reason:** It explains why the hyena has a slanting back and a limp today. (2 marks)
3. **Character Traits:** (2 marks each)
 - ✓ **Hare:** Clever/Witty - He devises a plan to survive and successfully escapes.
 - ✓ **Hyena:** Greedy/Foolish - He overeats and cannot control his laughter despite the warning.
4. **Non-verbal Cue:** (2 marks)
 - ✓ **Vocal Pathos/Volume:** Increasing the volume and pitch when the Moon-man beats the drum to create suspense and alarm.
 - ✓ **Gestures:** Miming the heavy fall of the Hyena or the beating of the drum.
5. **Social Functions:** (3 marks)
 - ✓ To entertain the community during the evening.
 - ✓ To educate the youth on the dangers of greed.
 - ✓ To preserve the culture and beliefs of the people.
6. **Moral Lesson:** Greed and the inability to follow instructions lead to disastrous consequences. (2 marks)
7. **Fieldwork Methods:** (Any 2, 1 mark each)
 - ✓ Interviewing (Oral interviews with elders).
 - ✓ Observation (Watching a live storytelling session).
 - ✓ Recording (Audio/Video recording of a narrator).

TASK 2: POETRY (10 MARKS)

1. **Subject Matter:** The destruction of the environment/deforestation and the loss of cultural heritage due to human greed and modernization. (2 marks)
2. **Stylistic Devices:** (Any 2, 2 marks each)
 - ✓ **Personification:** "The axe sings a song of death" - gives the axe a human-like malicious intent.
 - ✓ **Metaphor:** "The forest is a skeleton" - compares the devastated forest to a dead body to show extent of loss.

- ✓ **Imagery (Visual):** "Tall men with pale skins" - clearly describes the arrival of colonizers.
- 3. **Tone: Accusatory / Stern / Ominous.** The speaker warns the "concrete jungle" children of their doom if the green vanishes. (2 marks)
- 4. **Personification (Stanza 2):** "The birds have forgotten the lyrics to their own hymns." (1 mark)
 - ✓ **Effectiveness:** It highlights how deeply the ecological balance has been disturbed; even nature has lost its natural joy and rhythm. (1 mark)

TASK 3: NOVEL (10 MARKS)

1. **Historical Context:** The **Colonial Era** in Kenya. (1 mark)
 - ✓ **Evidence:** Mention of colonial officers, missionaries, and the disruption of traditional African life. (1 mark)
2. **Internal Conflict:** Odhiambo is torn between his **loyalty to African traditions** (ancestors/elders) and his **curiosity/attraction to Western education** (missionary books). (2 marks)
3. **Theme:** (Any 1, 3 marks)
 - ✓ **Conflict of Cultures:** The collision between the "sacred grove" (African) and the "bugles/missionaries" (Western).
 - ✓ **Change and Transition:** The "new winds" signaling the end of an era.
4. **Symbolism:** The "clouds" represent **uncertainty and impending change**. Dark clouds suggest a threatening future, while "parting clouds" suggest a possible revelation or transition to a new way of life. (3 marks)

TASK 4: AUTOBIOGRAPHY (10 MARKS)

1. **Features of Autobiography:** (2 marks)
 - ✓ **First-person narration:** Use of the "I" voice (e.g., "I remember...").
 - ✓ **Subjectivity:** The author shares personal feelings and intimate memories of his mother.
2. **Symbolism:** The "smell of onions" symbolizes **hope and motherly care**. It represents the mother's ability to provide comfort and sustenance despite their poverty. (2 marks)
3. **Narrator's Values:** (3 marks)
 - ✓ **Education:** Believes the "pen" is the ticket to a better life.
 - ✓ **Resilience:** Inspired by his mother to keep walking despite his "soleless shoes."
 - ✓ **Gratitude:** Deeply appreciates the sacrifices made by his mother.
4. **Style of Language: Metaphorical/Poetic.** (1 mark)
 - ✓ **Evidence:** "Woman of steel," "faded floral kanga," "life was a long difficult song." This makes the memoir emotionally resonant. (2 marks)

TASK 5: PLAY (10 MARKS)

1. **Setting:** An urban household/living room. (1 mark)
 - ✓ **Evidence:** Reference to a "landlord," "car," and "Gredi Ten" school fees. (1 mark)
2. **Conflict:** Maina vs. **Economic Hardship/Modernity**. He has lost his job due to "restructuring" and cannot meet the high cost of urban living and school fees. (2 marks)
3. **Character Traits (Wanjiku):** (3 marks)
 - ✓ **Calm/Composed:** She shells peas quietly while Maina rages.
 - ✓ **Pragmatic/Realistic:** She suggests moving back to the village land.
 - ✓ **Philosophical:** She views dreams as things that "take a different shape."
4. **Significance of Title:** *Dreams Denied* refers to the **thwarted ambitions** of the characters. Maina's dream of a "stone wall house" and a car is "denied" by unemployment, forcing a confrontation with his reality. (3 marks)