REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

LITERATURE IN ZAMBIAN LANGUAGES

Comprehensive CBC Teaching Notes

Secondary Education — Ordinary Level

FORM 1 | Full Syllabus Coverage

Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC)
Aligned to the 2023 Zambia Curriculum Framework
Topics 1.1 – 1.7 | All Sub-topics, Competences & Learning Activities
Including Worked Examples, Assessments & Lesson Plans

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TOPIC 1.1: INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE

Literature is the art of written and spoken word that captures human experience, culture, imagination, and knowledge. In the Zambian context, literature encompasses works produced in Zambian languages that reflect the society, traditions, values, and modern experiences of the Zambian people. This introductory topic establishes the conceptual foundation that learners will build upon throughout their study of Literature in Zambian Languages.

1.1.1 Definition of Literature

Specific Competence: Define literature from different perspectives

Learning Outcomes

- Learners will be able to list various definitions of literature from different scholars and perspectives
- Learners will be able to explain the meaning of literature in their own words
- Learners will be able to define literature with accuracy and confidence

A. Background Knowledge for the Teacher

Literature comes from the Latin word 'littera' meaning 'letter' or 'writing'. Over centuries, scholars have offered many definitions, some focusing on the written word, others on imaginative content, and still others on its social functions. Below are key definitions from different perspectives:

Scholar / Perspective	Definition
Matthew Arnold (1822–1888)	Literature is the best that has been thought and said in the world — it is a criticism of life.
Terry Eagleton (1983)	Literature is a form of writing in which content and expression are inseparably intertwined.
African/Oral Perspective	Literature encompasses all artistic and creative use of language, including oral storytelling, proverbs, riddles, and songs passed from generation to generation.
Zambian Context	Literature in Zambian languages includes all creative works produced in indigenous languages such as Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga, Lozi, and others, reflecting Zambian life, culture, and values.
Broad Definition	Any written or spoken material that has artistic merit, expresses human experience, and uses language creatively.
Narrow Definition	Written works — especially fiction, poetry, and drama — that are considered of lasting artistic importance.

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B. Starter Activity (10 minutes)

Activate Prior Knowledge

Ask learners: 'Have you ever heard a story from your grandmother or grandfather? Have you ever listened to a song that made you feel deeply?' Allow 3–4 responses. Then ask: 'What do you think the word LITERATURE means?'

Write learner responses on the chalkboard without correcting them yet. This activates prior knowledge and reveals misconceptions.

Zambian context: Reference well-known Zambian stories like 'Kalulu the Hare' or proverbs in local languages that learners have heard at home.

C. Main Learning Activity: Listing Definitions

Learners work in groups of four. Each group receives a card with a different definition of literature (from the table above). Groups must:

1. Read and discuss their assigned definition among themselves (5 minutes)
2. Present the definition to the class, explaining what it means in simple terms
3. Give one example of literature that fits their definition (e.g., a song, a story, a poem)
4. Write the definition in their exercise books

D. Explaining Various Definitions

After group presentations, the teacher consolidates by explaining each definition in depth:

Key Teaching Points

1. Literature as Written Word:

The traditional Western view defines literature as written texts — books, poems, plays. In this view, only works that have been written down and published count as literature.

2. Literature as Imaginative Creation:

Literature uses imagination and creativity. It goes beyond factual reporting to explore 'what if' and 'what could be'. A newspaper article is not literature; a story about a character's journey through life is.

3. Literature as Oral Tradition:

In Zambia and across Africa, much literary tradition existed before writing. Oral literature — stories, songs, proverbs, riddles — has been passed down for generations and is equally valid as literature.

4. Literature as Social Mirror:

Literature reflects society. It shows us how people live, what they value, what they struggle with, and what they dream of. Zambian literature reflects Zambian society.

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E. Worked Example: Identifying Literature

Present learners with the following examples and ask them to decide whether each is literature or not, and why:

Example	Is it Literature? Why?
A story about a hunter in the forest told by a village elder	YES — it uses language creatively to tell a story with meaning and cultural value (oral literature)
A bus timetable showing departure times	NO — it is factual information with no artistic or creative use of language
A Bemba praise poem (Icisembe) performed at a ceremony	YES — it is a creative, artistic use of language that reflects culture
A recipe for Nshima with vegetables	NO — it is instructional, not creative or artistic
A song about love and heartbreak in Nyanja	YES — it uses language creatively to express human emotion and experience
A government notice about water supply	NO — it is functional, informational writing

Real-Life Zambian Link

Connect the definition of literature to learners' everyday lives. Ask: 'When your parents or grandparents tell stories at night, is that literature? When you sing a song at church or at a ceremony, is that literature?' Help learners see that literature is already part of their lives.

F. Assessment Check

Formative Assessment

Exit Question (individual, written, 5 minutes):

Ask each learner to write THREE different definitions of literature in their own words in their exercise books. They should use:

- One definition from a Western/written perspective
- One definition from an African/oral perspective
- One definition that combines both

Observation Checklist:

During group work, observe whether learners can articulate definitions clearly. Note learners who struggle and those who excel for differentiation purposes.

G. Differentiation

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Support (Struggling Learners)	Extension (Fast Finishers)
Provide a printed list of three simple definitions. Ask them to match each definition to a given example.	Research additional definitions from two different scholars not covered in class. Write a paragraph comparing them.
Allow learners to give their definition in their home language first, then translate.	Write their own original definition of literature and defend it to the class.

1.1.2 Analysis of Various Definitions of Literature

Specific Competence: Analyse various definitions of literature

Learning Outcomes

- Learners will examine definitions of literature critically
- Learners will compare and contrast at least three definitions of literature
- Learners will critique definitions, identifying strengths and limitations
- Learners will analyse definitions coherently in written and oral form

A. Starter Activity (10 minutes)

Quick Recall and Bridge

Ask learners to recall the definitions they wrote in the previous lesson. Ask: 'Do all these definitions say the same thing? What is different about them?' This bridges to analysis.

Write two definitions on the board side by side and ask: 'How are these the same? How are they different?'

B. Teaching Comparison and Contrast

Model the analysis process using a structured framework:

Analysis Framework

Step 1 — Examine:

Read the definition carefully. What does it include? What does it leave out? What key words are used?

Step 2 — Compare:

Find similarities between two or more definitions. What do all definitions agree on?

Step 3 — Contrast:

Find differences. What does Definition A say that Definition B does not?

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Step 4 — Critique:

Evaluate the strength of each definition. Is it too narrow? Too broad? Does it include oral literature? Does it represent African perspectives?

C. Worked Example: Comparing and Contrasting Definitions

Analyse these two definitions side by side:

Definition 1: 'Literature is writing in which expression and form, in connection with ideas of permanent and universal interest, are characteristic or essential features.' (C. Hugh Holman)

Definition 2: 'Literature is the total body of writing of a specific language, country, people, or era.' (Merriam-Webster)

Point of Comparison	Analysis
What it includes	D1: Focuses on quality — 'permanent and universal interest' and form. D2: Focuses on quantity — ALL writing of a group or era.
What it excludes	D1: Excludes popular or 'low quality' writing. D2: Appears to include everything written, even non-artistic work.
Suitability for Zambia	D1 may exclude much oral Zambian literature. D2 is broader and more inclusive.
Strength	D1 values quality and artistic merit. D2 is comprehensive and democratic.
Weakness	D1 is elitist — who decides 'universal interest'? D2 is too broad — it includes instruction manuals.
Overall critique	Neither definition perfectly captures Zambian oral literature. A combined definition is needed.

D. Group Activity: Critique Exercise

Divide learners into groups. Each group receives THREE definitions and must produce a written comparison using the framework above. They present their analysis to the class and respond to questions from peers.

E. Assessment

Assessment Task

Short Essay (homework or classwork):

Write a 200-word essay in which you compare and contrast TWO definitions of literature. Your essay must include:

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- A brief introduction stating what literature is
- A paragraph comparing the two definitions (similarities)
- A paragraph contrasting the two definitions (differences)
- A conclusion stating which definition you prefer and why

Marking Criteria:

Criteria	Marks
Clearly identifies both definitions	2
Identifies at least two similarities	4
Identifies at least two differences	4
Provides a reasoned preference	4
Coherent structure and language	4
Spelling and grammar	2
TOTAL	20

1.1.3 Creation of Own Definitions of Literature

Specific Competence: Create own definitions of literature

Learning Outcomes

- Learners will formulate their own original definitions of literature
- Learners will justify their definitions with reasoned arguments
- Learners will write and present their definitions convincingly

A. Teaching Process

Before learners can create their own definitions, they must understand what makes a good definition. A good definition of literature should:

- Be clear and concise — easily understood
- Be comprehensive — include written AND oral forms
- Reflect the Zambian context — include indigenous language works
- Identify the artistic/creative nature of language use
- Be original — not just a copy of existing definitions

B. Modelled Example — Creating a Definition

Teacher Models the Process

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Step 1: Think aloud — 'What do I know about literature from what we have discussed?'

Step 2: Draft — 'Literature is creative human expression through language, whether written or oral, that reflects experiences, values, and imagination of a people.'

Step 3: Evaluate — 'Does this include oral literature? YES. Does it include Zambian languages? It can. Is it too broad? Let me add more specificity...'

Step 4: Revise — 'Literature is the creative and artistic use of language — spoken or written — to express, preserve, and communicate human experience, culture, and values.'

Step 5: Justify — 'I chose this definition because it includes both oral and written forms, which is important in the Zambian context where much great literature is passed orally.'

C. Learner Activity

Each learner individually writes their own definition of literature in their exercise book. They must:

5. Draft a definition (minimum 2 sentences)
6. Check it against the criteria for a good definition
7. Revise and improve it
8. Share it with a partner and receive feedback
9. Present their final definition to the class with a justification

D. Assessment

Assessment: Oral Presentation

Each learner presents their definition to the class (1–2 minutes). They must:

- State their definition clearly
- Give one example of literature that fits their definition
- Explain why they chose to include or exclude oral literature

Peer Assessment Form:

Criteria	Score (1–5)
The definition is clear and understandable	
The definition is original (not copied from a book)	
An appropriate example is given	
The justification is logical	
Confident presentation	

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TOPIC 1.2: TYPES OF LITERATURE

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