1. *Blossoms of the Savannah* is a novel about hope that leads to victory; write a composition to illustrate on this statement.

2. “In Oloisudori and Olarinkoi there is no lesser evil.” Write an essay to illustrate on this statement.

3. “One has to know which side of bread is buttered.” By referring closely to the lives of Kaelo and Oloisudori show the truthfulness of this statement.

4. “Kaelo digs his own grave.” Write a composition to show the truthfulness of this statement

5. “Though Resian goes through the valley of death, her determination leads her to a victorious life.” Write a composition to show the validity of this assertion.

6. Maa culture has not completely shed off archaic practices and traditions. Support this statement with illustrations from the novel.

7. “Strong selfless friendship is the remedy to stormy times.” Using the lives of Taiyo and Resian, write a composition to illustrate truthfulness of the statement.

8. Oloisudori, Kaelo, Mama Milanoi and Olarinkoi are to blame for the traumatizing life led by Resian. Write an essay in support of this argument.

9. By referring to the lives of Oloisudori and Olarinkoi, show how bad deeds are paid with bad deeds.

10. “*Blossoms of the savannah* is a novel about women fighting for their redemption.” By referring to the lives of Minik and Nabaru support the assertion.

11. “*Blossoms of the savannah* is a novel about patriarchy.” Write an essay to validate this argument using the character Oloisudori and Olarinkoi.

12. Optimism and ambition leads to victory support.

13. “Women are their own enemies” Write an essay exemplifying this position.

14. “The strong bond between Resian and Taiyo contributes significantly to their triumph.” Write an essay in support of the statement.

15. The old and the young generations in *Blossoms of the Savannah* are in conflict. Discuss.

16. Bad decisions can adversely affect our future. Write an essay in support of the statement with illustrations from the novel.

17. Change is as good as rest. To what extent do you agree with the assertion as far as *Blossoms of the Savannah* is concerned?

18. “Persistence, focus and determination is the secret behind success.” Expound on this position drawing your illustrations from the novel.

19. Some cultural practices have no place in the current Nasilian society. Discuss.

20. “Not all aspects of culture and traditions are bad.” Drawing your illustrations from the novel *Blossoms of the Savannah,* validate the assertion.

21. “There is need for women to unite in their fight against harmful cultural practices” Discuss.

22. “Greed for money is the source of most evils in the society.” Show how valid this statement is by getting supporting evidence from the novel *Blossoms of the Savannah*.

23. “Our greatest enemies are those close to us.” Support this statement with illustrations from the novel.

24. “Failure to take one stand on matters to do with culture can be very detrimental.” Write an essay reacting to this assertion.

25. Write an essay showing why Mama Milanoi is to blame most for the ordeals her daughters go through.

26. Write a composition in agreement with the assertion that harmful cultural practices against women would be history in Nasila if there were more women like Minik.

27. “Women should speak and act in order to have their way in the society” Write an essay in support of the statement with illustrations from the novel.

28. The rich cultural heritage of the Maa is under attack by modernity. Discuss

29. Nothing is impossible to somebody with the will to succeed. Discuss

30. “Resian has been wronged more by her father than the Nasilian society.” Write an argumentative essay reacting to this statement.

31. Material security does not guarantee happiness.

32. Gender inequality is tantamount to violation of human rights. Write an essay in support of the assertion drawing your illustrations from *Blossoms of the Savannah.*

33. Cultural erosion is the root cause of most evil things in Nasila. Discuss.

34. Help can come even when least expected. Discuss.

SAMPLE ESSAYS

1. “Though Resian goes through the valley of death, her determination leads her to a victorious life.” Write a composition to show the validity of this assertion.

Resian in the *Blossoms of the Savannah* seems to experience several challenging situations in her life. In the scenarios she seems resolute in her actions as shown in the following ways

Oloisudori declares his intention of marrying her at an early age. This follows after he changes his initial plan: extorting Kaelo. He demands that she should first be circumcised so as to get rid of her state as *nemengalana intoiye*. He intends to use anesthesia to make her unconscious and grab her. Resian resolves not to be married. She tells Oloisudori point blank that she cannot be his wife. She returns the gifts that he had earlier brought and escapes to her father's shop. Her father beats her so as to submit to the marriage, but Resian remains steady is her decision.

A number of callous youth in Nasila wish to assault Resian and Taiyo. In the first days, Resian and Taiyo take a walk around uncle Simiren compound. All of a sudden a young man emerges from the blues and grabs Taiyo. Resian order the callous young man to release Taiyo immediately. The Young man has no option but to give in though he promises to revisit his grave decision.

Though in a dream, *enkamuratani* and other two women surround Resian to circumcise her holding an *olmurunya*. Although Resian is in a strange land and is defenseless she does her best to combat the situation. Determined, Resian twists enkamuratani's hand with an intention of ensuring that she does not initiate other girls in the future. She knocks the old witch using a mallet as well as fights the third woman until she disappears.

Olarinkoi disappears with Resian to a far hut in the forest. He locks her up and returns very late in the night while drank. Once he returns, he is in his mission of raping her. He unzips and this gesture sets her trembling. She bites Olarinkoi's thumb so that the pain reduces his action of rape. Owing to the fact that Resian had earlier witnessed Olarinkoi's fiery attacks when he dealt with two callous men, it calls for a lot of determination on the part of Resian to tackle him.

In summary, from the above illustrations it is evident that Resian suffers rough challenging times in her life but she deals with all these situations with determination.

2. "The strong bond between Resian and Taiyo contributes significantly to their triumph." Write an essay in support of the statement.

No man is an island. Human beings were created to relate mutually. The close friendship between Resian and Taiyo is the key to overcoming stormy times that present themselves in their lives as follows

In their new environment at Nasila, the girls meet unique challenges. They are not used to the communal life for all along they have stayed in an urban set up where life is individualistic. At Nasila, they have to get used to impromptu visitors and superior male counterparts. It is the love between the two girls that helps in these scenarios. The duo stay together most of the times. By so doing, they share a lot Taiyo counsels Resian on using kind language on Yeiyo Botorr her aunt. The two girls discuss about danger that lurks from the hostile youth especially because of their uncircumcised condition.

In overcoming the challenge of female genital mutilation (FGM), their friendship bond comes in handy. When Resian goes on a hunger strike she says it is only Taiyo who can change her stand. When Taiyo is informed of Resian's condition, she does not hesitate to offer herself for Resian's redemption even when there are risks all over. While at Nasila, they have a lot of time sharing their views towards FGM. The discussions must have strengthened their hard stands towards FGM. It is from these discussions that they vow never to give in to FGM.

In the incident when Taiyo and Resian are accosted by two callous young men their coordination and friendship save them. The incident finds them while they are walking together where they had visited Maiso for lunch. If the struggle had

between two men versus one girl probably she would have been surmounted. Although most of the salvation is largely brought by Olarinkoi the fact that the two girls where together makes it easier for them to go about the ordeal. Their joint screaming and their escape unhurt is partly contributed by their togetherness.

The two birds of a feather hatch a scheme to outwit Oloisudori. They wrap the gifts he had brought them into a box and title it as a gift. They then plan how to execute the plan. They arrange on how Resian is to thank Oloisudori and give him the gift. They discuss the aim of the gesture; to clarify to Oloisudori the fact they cannot be cheated with gifts. From this co-operation, Resian manages to trick Oloisudori and tells off her father and later with Olarinkoi, they manage to leave Nasila.

It is clear from the above illustration that strong friendship bonds can help friend go about hard experiences and overcome them in their lives.

3. Bad decisions can adversely affect our lives. Write an essay in support of the statement with illustrations from the novel.

The Choices we make can affect us positively or negatively. Bad choices definitely have adverse effects on our future. A character like Ole Kaelo makes several bad choices which not only affect his life but also his daughters.

Ole Kaelo is advised by his friend what kind of man Oloisudori is. He is told that he is not a man of integrity and warns him about doing business with him. He even warns him to keep his daughters from him. Oloisudori is unheeding to this warning. He goes on to sign business contracts and receiving a loan from him. Later, this man causes him great worry when he threatens to bring his business down if he does not give him his daughter in marriage.

Ole Kaelo makes the bad choice of agreeing to give his daughter Resian in marriage to Oloisudori. He does this to save his business empire and to acquire more wealth as dowry from him. This unleashes a myriad of problems in his

family. He keeps assuring himself that his choice of Oloisudori is good and that the man is not all bad but inwardly, he has reservations about such a marriage. His decision worsens the already poor relationship between him and his daughter, who ran away and gets into more trouble with Olarinkoi. Taiyo also has her life ruined by being forcefully circumcised before being forced to marry Oloisudori. Finally, he loses his daughters trust and his fate is unknown because Oloisudori might come for him in person.

Olarinkoi is not known by the Kaelos yet nobody asks questions about him. He seems a mystery and with time becomes like a member of the family. This earns him trust among the Kaelos to the point that Resian trusts him to take her to Minik's ranch. This man who the family trusted so much turns into a beast by raping Resian and even planning to circumcise her by force before marrying her. If the Kaelo's had not trusted the stranger, Resian suffering in his hands would have been avoided.

Mama Milanoi makes a bad choice of giving over her daughter Taiyo to three strange women cheating her that she was being taken to her sister. Her plans is to have Taiyo circumcised before being married by Oloisudori. This action makes her lose the trust her daughters had for her. The wound she has caused them will definitely take time to heal. They too are angry with her that they vow that they would not want to be like her in marriage.

Bad decisions made knowingly or unknowingly will definitely have negative impact in our lives or on those that are dear to us.

4. Gender inequality is tantamount to violation of human rights. Write an essay in support of the assertion drawing your illustrations from *Blossoms of the Savannah.*

Today's position on the male and female gender is that men and women are equal and none of the gender should dominate over the other. In *Blossoms of the Savannah*, women are culturally forced to be subservient to men, a practice that denies them some fundamental rights as human beings.

A wife has the right to state his position on any matter even if it is contrary to the husband's position. This is not the case with Mama Milanoi, wife to Ole Kaelo. She admits that she did not know which man her husband was doing business with and even if she did, she would not do anything about it for he was the one who carried the family's vision. She thus leaves every aspect of decision making to him whether those decisions are good or bad.

A woman is a being to be loved and not to love back. Although Ole Kaelo genuinely loved Mama Milanoi when he saw her first, her feelings on him are immaterial. Women were not expected to resist a man's advances according to Nasilian culture. This is a great violation of her right to love or hate. In her case there is no room for that. It is also expected that Resian should give in to Oloisudori's plans to marry her. Refusal is regarded as stubbornness. In fact, Oloisudori claims that none of his wives put any resistance in his interest in them. This means that their feelings for him did not matter a great violation of their freedom to choose their marriage partner.

Resian and Taiyo are forced to undergo cultural coaching by Joseph Parmuat. Resian rebels this citing inequality in the plan. She opines that if they were boys, such a thing would not be done on them. Instead, they would be freely roaming Nasila with nobody bothering them. In their case, there is no such option simply because they are girls. Their right to choose what to and not to learn is violated. Girls are taught how to cook for their men but there are no lessons for boys on how to please women. Resian opposes such arrangements saying she would not be

taught to solely please men. She claims that even boys should be taught how to please women.

Gender inequality in this society elevates man over the woman to the extent that Resian says that it made men assume that they had right over the body of any woman. This has reduced women to be objects of sex to be exploited by men at will. This practice started with the Ilarinkon warriors who sexually exploited women after arousing their desires. Taiyo and Resian undergo several rape attempts with Resian ending up being raped by Olarinkoi who assumes he has every right over her body. These inequalities have greatly undermined women's right to privacy and to choose whom to have sexual relation with.

Gender inequality does not just stop at that. Instead, it is a major cause of violation of basic human rights that all should be accorded a chance to enjoy. Women in the novel have most of their rights curtailed as a result of gender imbalance between men and women.

5. Help can come when least expected. Discuss.

Most people reach the end of the tether in difficult situations and are just about to give up when help comes. Most instances of help appear coincidental but nonetheless; they change the course of life of the character as well as shaping the rest of the novel.

Olarinkoi seems to be at the right place at the right time. He happens to be the savior of Resian and Taiyo when they need help most. He comes to the rescue of the two girls when they are coming from their father's shop and are about to be raped by two men. Olarinkoi single-handedly saves the girls by fighting the men. Resian and Taiyo are much grateful and would not want to imagine what would have happened if he had not come at that time, even fearing that they would have been infected with HIV.

Olarinkoi again comes to the rescue of Resian when she discovers her father'sbetrayal by planning to marry her off to Oloisudori. He comes to her rescue when she is even contemplating committing suicide by drowning herself into the river. At the same time, Oloisudori and his men are looking for her to abduct her. Olarinkoi promises to take her to Minik whom she had been yearning to meet someday. Although the help turns disastrous with Olarinkoi turning against her, she is able to escape the current wrath of Oloisudori.

Taiyo is rescued from the hands of her circumcisers by Minik's men. Minik's rescue team use tricks to rescue her from the well-guarded home which she would not have escaped in her sickly state. Were it not for Minik's intervention, Taiyo would surely have been forcefully married off to Oloisudori after healing. The rescue gives Taiyo a new lease of life, reunion with her sister and of course quicker physical and emotional recovery.

Minik's help to Resian and Taiyo perhaps is the most important event that completely changes their lives. She gives refugee to the girls in her ranch hence protecting them from marauding men like Oloisudori and Olarinkoi. She gives Resian a job in the ranch hence giving her something to live on and promises her a scholarship from the ranch. Most importantly, she is able to have the two girls enrolled at Egerton University, their dream university. These kind gestures create a happy ending in a novel that has been dominated by sad events.

When people are about to despair, that is usually the point when help comes. No matter how belated characters like Resian and Taiyo get help, their lives are greatly impacted and changed by those interventions.