

A GUIDE TO A SILENT SONG AND OTHER STORIES

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How to write effective KCSE English Paper 3 Essays

How to write effective KCSE English Paper 3 Essays

If you have read and understood the setbooks, answering questions 2 and 3 in English paper 3 should be easy. After understanding the question, you will need to determine relevant points, characters, or episodes to use in your essay. Take the first ten minutes to analyze the question and make brief notes. A high-scoring KCSE essay should have an **introduction** , **four to five body paragraphs and a conclusion, and should be around 450 words.**

KCSE Essay Introduction

According to the 2022 KCSE Report an introduction should show that you understand the question. One way to show that you understand the question is by paraphrasing the question.

First, identify the **key words** in the question before rewriting it in your **own words** . It is good practice to mention the **book title and author** . You can also provide a **brief summary** of the main points you are going to discuss in your article as in the example below:

Action speaks louder than words. Discuss the truth of this saying using illustrations from Leonard Kibera's A Silent Song. (20 marks)

The character of an individual tells more than what they actually say. Mbane's brother, In the story A silent song by Leonard Kibera, Ezekiel, preaches water and takes wine. He is so devoted to God as a preacher, but neglects Mbane, to agonize in the streets for a long time until he almost dies.

Writing KCSE Essay Body Paragraphs

KCSE essays should have four to five body paragraphs. Each paragraph should start with a topic sentence that introduces the point you want to discuss. Provide relevant evidence from

the text and explanation after the topic sentence. Names of characters should be accurate to avoid losing points for textual errors.

Your goal should be to argue and illustrate your point. A common mistake that students make in body paragraphs is to narrate events from the text instead of showing how the events support their point. Such paragraphs are described as “thin” by KCSE examiners, and they do not score full points.

Remember you should be arguing and supporting your topic sentence therefore avoid narrating the text. As you conclude the paragraph make sure you have a clincher sentence- a statement that ties your paragraph to the question. So be sure to have about 9 lines of evidence and explanation in each body paragraph to score full points. You can end your paragraphs with a “clincher”, a sentence that summarizes your paragraph as in the example below:

Concluding a KCSE essay

End your essay with a brief paragraph that summarizes what you discussed in the body. You may start with the phrase “***In conclusion...***” followed by a summary of the moral lesson from the question. Keep the conclusion short, a maximum of three lines.

In conclusion, the true gospel is the action of an individual because it is more practical than mere words. Actions work and satisfy the heart more than proclaiming the word of God.

Other KCSE tips

Remember to use simple language in your essay. Proofread your essay to check for spelling, grammar, and textual errors. We will be posting more sample essays to illustrate the kind of essays that KCSE examiners expect to see.

A study guide to a silent song and other stories

A MAN OF AWESOME POWERS (Naguib Mahfouz-Egypt)

Points to guide interpretation

- 🔗 How Tayyib acquires his power.
- 🔗 Use of power by Tayyib:
 - For selfish interests
 - For the good of all
 - To harm others
- 🔗 How power changes Tayyib.
- 🔗 The role of the media
- 🔗 What causes Tayyib to lose his incredible power?

SYNOPSIS

A Man of Awesome Power is an intriguing story about Tayyib al-Mahdi, who lives a comfortable life after retiring from many years of service abroad. His current life is peaceful and uneventful. He spends time watching television, reading newspapers or listening to the radio in the comfort of his apartment that he shares with his wife since his daughters are already married. The story captures how an individual who is empowered when least expected utilises the power given to him. His illusions of desire for a better country lead to his dream of power acquisition.

One night, Tayyib dreams of a visitation by a man of radiant appearance who speaks to him in a kind tone, informing him that God had willed him the power to order things to be and they would be. Although he dismisses the dream like any other dream, its frequent recurrence makes him give it more thought. Tayyib confirms its reality when he orders his television to switch channels, and it happens. Endowed with the newly acquired power, he sets out to reform his country and the entire planet as he had often wished.

He utilises his power both for good and bad intentions. He starts by hitting back a taxi driver who ignores him by wishing him an accident. He also causes a man who had physically attacked a woman in a bus to suffer stomach cramps. We see him engaging in meritorious deeds such as filing a gaping pothole, locking an electric box and removing a pile of rubbish that he trips on.

The media does not escape his wrath as he causes one radio announcer to suffer massive sneezes after making an announcement that gave false hopes. As the story progresses, Sulayman Bey al-Hamalawi, a political leader who had evaded tax, is ordered by Tayyib to go and pay the tax that he had been avoiding for a long time.

An unfortunate incident occurs when Tayyib is busy planning to effectively utilise his power for the good of all sectors in the country. He notices a beautiful woman at the entrance of the tea garden and uses his ability to satisfy his desires for her. Their intimacy costs him his incredible power. He pays this price for misusing the power that God had freely given him. The story ends with his sad realisation that he no longer has power. His attempts to order the

television channels to change do not bear fruits. He experiences a tremendous sadness that will haunt him for the rest of his life.

CHARACTERS

a. Tayyib al-Mahdi

- ❏ He is the main character in the story, and the story revolves around the awesome power that he miraculously acquires sometime after his retirement.
- ❏ He does not reveal to his wife that he had been bestowed with such power. His initial intention is to use the ability to change his country and the entire planet like he had always wished.
- ❏ He is portrayed as religious, ambitious yet emotional and vengeful.

EPISODIC ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES

'Man of Awesome Power' is founded on several pillars determined by the various episodes:

1. Tayyib's dream — pg 1-2
2. Utilising the awesome power -pg 2-4
3. Losing the awesome power- pg 5

Nide to a silent son and other stories

Some key issues arise from the episodes:

Acquisition of power

How Tayyib acquires his power teaches several things:

One can gain power at any stage of life.

Tayyib believed that he had completed his mission in the world. Before acquiring power, he lives a peaceful life as he enjoys the fruits of retirement. The writer notes that 'He had generous insurance and more than adequate pension' pg 1 which do not prevent him from being given power by God.

Power is God-given.

Tayyib's power is bestowed on him by God. As seen from his words, "All praise to God, Lord of the Worlds", and listening to radio channels devoted to the Quran (pg 1), his religious nature is one reason God willed to grant him power. The man who visits him in the dream tells him that starting that moment and as long as God willed, he had been bestowed with the power to order things to be and they would be. (pg 1)

Utilisation of Power

Tayyib utilises the power given to him in different incidents:

- ✓ Encounter with the taxi driver (pg 2)
- ✓ In the bus, to deal with the conflict between a man and a woman (pg 3).

- ✓ Performing memorable services along his way to the cafe (pg 3).
- ✓ The radio announcer (pg 3).
- ✓ Tayyib's wrath on Sulayman Bey al-Hamalawi (pg 3-4).
- ✓ The beautiful woman in the Tea Garden (pg 4).

Good utilisation of power

The episode shows how a person bestowed with power should utilise it. Tayyib's soliloquy during his encounter with the taxi driver captures the need to use power for the well-being of others and to make things better. 'Whoever is granted with power like mine, must utilise it only for good.' (pg 2)

He uses the power to do several good deeds. Some of the outstanding services that Tayyib performs include filling a gaping pothole, locking an electric box that was open and hanging dangerously, removing a pile of trash and draining sewer water that was flooding an alley. Many people in the neighbourhood appreciate these services. (p 3).

He also does a good deed of making Sulayman, who has been evading tax, go to the taxi authorities and pay them millions of pounds he owed them. (pg3).

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Sample essay Questions

Question 1:

Ninema is an admirable character. Support this from Vrenika Pather's 'Ninema' 20marks.

Question 2

When one is given power, he/she should use it only for good but more often than not people use it for wrong purposes. Support this statement basing your argument from Naguib Mahfouz's 'A Man of Awesome Power'

Question 3

Some cultural practices do not add value hence should be done away with. Show the truthfulness of this assertion basing on Eric Ng'maryo's 'Ivory Bangles'. (20 marks)

Question 4

War causes a lot of harm and thus should be avoided at any cost. Validate this statement basing your illustrations from Chimamanda Adichie's 'Ghosts' (20 Marks)

Question 5

Lack of courtesy between the police and civilians leads to lethal conflicts. Justify the validity of this statement using illustrations from Meja Mwangi's Incident in the park. (20 marks).

Question 6

A Silent Song — Leonard Kibera.

Action speaks louder than words. Discuss the truth of this saying using illustrations from Leonard Kibera's A Silent Song. (20 marks)

Question 7

Incident in the Park -- Meja Mwangi.

1. Lack of courtesy between the police and civilians leads to lethal conflicts. Justify the validity of this statement using illustrations from Meja Mwangi's Incident in the Park. (20 marks).

Question 8

A Silent Song — Leonard Kibera.

1. Action speaks louder than words. Discuss the truth of this saying using illustrations from Leonard Kibera's A Silent Song. (20 marks)

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