

## English grade 12

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Read each question carefully before answering it.
2. Use complete sentences.
3. Note the mark allocation for each question. Use the mark value to determine how many points are required for full marks.
4. Proofread all work carefully before handing it in. Do not leave any questions blank.

### **Part A: Sight Passage**

Read the short story below and answer the following questions:

1. What does Paul Obi condemn in older headmasters?
  - A. They are too outspoken in their philosophies.
  - B. Their gardens are lacklustre.
  - C. Their views of education are too narrow.
  - D. They are too old to teach physical education.
2. What is the significance of the path to the villagers?
  - A. A bond between life and the afterlife.
  - B. The elderly travel it to get to the village to be born.
  - C. It is an ergonomically constructed trail.
  - D. King Hector made it.
3. What happened that was the turning point for the villagers to reject Obi's plans?
  - A. The students refuse to attend the school.
  - B. The village priest explains the problem and they agree to build a new path.
  - C. An elder was hurt on the path.
  - D. A young woman dies in childbirth.
4. What is the significance of the Priest's metaphor, "Let the hawk perch and let the eagle perch"?
  - A. They are bird lovers and are going to use their love of birds to beautify the school.
  - B. It's a warning to let others believe what they want to believe, even if one does not agree with the viewpoint.
  - C. The hawk and the eagle are both birds of prey, and cannot coexist as they compete for food sources. "Perching" together implies an impossible task.
  - D. Eagles (representative of the school), not being indigenous to the area, are unwelcome.
5. As a critical reader, respond to the short story by offering **ONE** piece of praise for the story (something the author has done well) and **ONE** piece of constructive criticism (something the

author could improve). Explain your ideas thoroughly and support them with textual evidence. You must include **ONE** of the following in each response: (6 marks)

- a) A new literary device from this semester (Comparisons, repetitive devices, listing strategies, etc.)
- b) A thoughtful choice of diction OR sentence structure
- c) Literary elements: setting, structure, theme, or characterization
- d) The development of voice

### **Part B: response**

Throughout the course we have explored a variety of key questions. Select **ONE** of the questions below and write a well-organized response in which you compare and/or contrast how this question has played a significant role in the lives of characters from **TWO** different texts in the course. Use key terms / definitions to support your answer where available.

- A. **The Other:** What implications does otherness and recognizing otherness have on the lives of characters from the course?
- B. **Mental Health:** What messages do the course texts portray about mental health issues?
- C. **Civil Disobedience:** How is a person's identity developed by challenging ideologies<sup>1</sup>

### **THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT:**

*The British gained control of Nigeria at the turn of the twentieth century. Viewing Igbo culture and beliefs as inferior and barbaric, British missionaries introduced Christianity and Western education. Christianity ultimately weakened tribal affiliations. (Note: Nigeria achieved independence in 1960.)*

### **BIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT:**

*The author is considered one of the most influential African writers of the twentieth century. He was born in eastern Nigeria in 1930. His father was an instructor in Christian catechism<sup>2</sup> for the Church Missionary Society. Educated English-speaking families, like the author's, occupied a privileged position in the Nigerian power structure. The author attended the Church Missionary Society's school where the primary language of instruction for the first two years was Igbo. At about eight, he began learning English. His late introduction to English allowed the author to develop a sense of cultural pride and an appreciation of his native tongue — values that may not have been cultivated had he been raised and taught exclusively in English. He later attended University and worked for several media outlets, all while writing.*

### **SIGHT PASSAGE**

Paul Obi's hopes were fulfilled much earlier than he had expected. He was appointed headmaster of Ndume Central School in January 1949. It had always been an unprogressive school, so the Mission authorities decided to send a young and energetic man to run it. Obi accepted this responsibility with enthusiasm. He had many wonderful ideas and this was an opportunity to put them into practice. He'd had sound Western secondary school education which designated him a "pivotal teacher" in the official records and set him apart from the other headmasters in the mission field. He was outspoken in his condemnation<sup>3</sup> of the narrow views of these older and often less-educated ones.

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<sup>1</sup> Philosophies

<sup>2</sup> Religious instruction in the form of questions and answers

<sup>3</sup> Disapproval

"We shall make a good job of it, shan't we?" he asked his young wife when they first heard the joyful news of his promotion.

"We shall do our best," she replied. "We shall have such beautiful gardens and everything will be just modern and delightful ... "

In their two years of married life she had become completely infected by his passion for "modern methods" and his denigration<sup>4</sup> of "these old and superannuated people in the teaching field who would be better employed as traders in the Onitsha market." She began to see herself already as the admired wife of the young headmaster, the queen of the school. The wives of the other teachers would envy her position. She would set the fashion in everything ...

Then, suddenly, it occurred to her that there might not be other wives. Wavering between hope and fear, she asked her husband, looking anxiously at him. "All our colleagues are young and unmarried," he said with enthusiasm which for once she did not share. "Which is a good thing," he continued.

"Why?"

"Why? They will give all their time and energy to the school." Jane was downcast. For a few minutes she became skeptical about the new school; but it was only for a few minutes. Her little personal misfortune could not blind her to her husband's happy prospects. She looked at him as he sat folded up in a chair. He was stoop-shouldered and looked frail. But he sometimes surprised people with sudden bursts of physical energy. In his present posture, however, all his bodily strength seemed to have retired behind his deep-set eyes, giving them an extraordinary power of penetration. He was only twenty-six, but looked thirty or more. On the whole, he was not unhandsome.

"A penny for your thoughts, Paul," said Jane after a while, imitating the woman's magazine she read.

"I was thinking what a grand opportunity we've got at last to show these people how a school should be run." Ndume School was backward in every sense of the word. Mr. Obi put his whole life into the work, and his wife hers too. He had two aims. A high standard of teaching was insisted upon, and the school compound was to be turned into a place of beauty. Jane's dream-gardens came to life with the coming of the rains, and blossomed. Beautiful hibiscus and allamanda hedges in brilliant red and yellow marked out the carefully tended school compound from the rank neighborhood bushes.

One evening as Obi was admiring his work he was scandalized to see an old woman from the village hobble right across the compound, through a marigold flower-bed and the hedges. On going up there he found faint signs of an almost disused path from the village across the school compound to the bush on the other side. "It amazes me," said Obi to one of his teachers who had been three years in the school, "that you people allowed the villagers to make use of this footpath. It is simply incredible." He shook his head.

"The path," said the teacher apologetically, "appears to be very important to them. Although it is hardly used, it connects the village shrine with their place of burial."

"And what has that got to do with the school?" asked the headmaster.

"Well, I don't know," replied the other with a shrug of the shoulders. "But I remember there was a big row some time ago when we attempted to close it."

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<sup>4</sup> Scorn, Unfair criticism

"That was some time ago. But it will not be used now," said Obi as he walked away. "What will the Government Education Officer think of this when he comes to inspect the school next week? The villagers might, for all I know, decide to use the schoolroom for a pagan ritual during the inspection."

Heavy sticks were planted closely across the path at the two places where it entered and left the school premises. These were further strengthened with barbed wire.

Three days later the village priest of Ani called on the headmaster. He was an old man and walked with a slight stoop. He carried a stout walking stick which he usually tapped on the floor, by way of emphasis, each time he made a new point in his argument.

"I have heard," he said after the usual exchange of cordialities<sup>5</sup>, "that our ancestral footpath has recently been closed ... "

"Yes," replied Mr. Obi. "We cannot allow people to make a highway of our school compound."

"Look here, my son," said the priest bringing down his walking-stick, "this path was here before you were born and before your father was born. The whole life of this village depends on it. Our dead relatives depart by it and our ancestors visit us by it. But most important, it is the path of children coming in to be born ... "

Mr. Obi listened with a satisfied smile on his face.

"The whole purpose of our school," he said finally, "is to eradicate just such beliefs as that. Dead men do not require footpaths. The whole idea is just fantastic. Our duty is to teach your children to laugh at such ideas."

"What you say may be true," replied the priest, "but we follow the practices of our fathers. If you reopen the path we shall have nothing to quarrel about. What I always say is: let the hawk perch and let the eagle perch." He rose to go.

"I am sorry," said the young headmaster. "But the school compound cannot be a thoroughfare. It is against our regulations. I would suggest you construct another path, skirting our premises. We can even get our boys to help in building it. I don't suppose the ancestors will find the little detour too burdensome."

"I have no more words to say," said the old priest, already outside.

Two days later a young woman in the village died in childbirth. A diviner<sup>6</sup> was immediately consulted and he prescribed heavy sacrifices to propitiate<sup>7</sup> ancestors insulted by the fence.

Obi woke up the next morning among the ruins of his work. The beautiful hedges were torn up not just near the path but right round the school, the flowers trampled to death and one of the school buildings pulled down.

That day, the Supervisor came to inspect the school and wrote a nasty report on the state of the premises but more seriously about the "tribal-war situation developing between the school and the village, arising in part from the misguided zeal<sup>8</sup> of the new headmaster."

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<sup>5</sup> Customary Friendliness

<sup>6</sup> Psychic, medium

<sup>7</sup> Appease, satisfy

<sup>8</sup> Fanaticism, enthusiasm

