



7C



# THEMES IN AFRICAN LITERATURE

## SUMMARY COMPLETION (FROM THE TEXT)

- 1 Read the gapped summary to get the general idea, then **SKIM** the text to see if it's summary of the whole text or just one short section.
- 2 Identify the part of speech needed for each gap.
- 3 Look for key words before and after the gap.
- 4 **SCAN** to find the key words or synonyms from the summary, then read the surrounding information in detail.
- 5 Choose words **FROM THE TEXT** to complete the summary so that it has the same meaning as the text and re-read it to check it makes sense.



suggested time  
**9 minutes**

# TASK

Look at the text on “Changing Themes in African Literature” and complete the summary below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS from the text** for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes **1 – 6** on your answer sheet.

## REMEMBER

As well as the overall sense of the sentences, consider common collocations (word combinations) and fixed phrases.

### Changing Themes in African Literature

There are a lot of African texts written before the colonial era. These are mostly from northern and western regions as well as the Swahili coast, and are mostly written in Arabic. Some are also written in other **NATIVE** languages though. There are a large number of manuscripts from Timbuktu about various 1) \_\_\_\_\_ subjects and some Swahili text dealing with religious themes.

It wasn't until the 2) \_\_\_\_\_ period that African authors started to write in European languages. In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the first English-language African novels and 3) \_\_\_\_\_ were published. These dealt with African cultural and political themes, such as tribalism and colonialism, but later in the colonial period showed themes of 4) \_\_\_\_\_ and independence.

Literature from after the colonial era often deals with 5) \_\_\_\_\_ as recurring themes, such as the clash between past and present, traditional and modern, indigenous and foreign, individualism and community, and between socialism and capitalism. Other writer have notably dealt with social issues such as corruption, wealth disparity and women's 6) \_\_\_\_\_.

# Changing Themes in African Literature

1 Between the ancient and the colonial eras, examples of African literature are numerous; mainly written in Arabic but also in some native languages. In Ethiopia, there is a substantial literature going back at least to the fourth century AD; the best-known work in this tradition is the *Kebrä Negast*, or *Book of Kings*, which contains an account of how the Queen of Sheba met King Solomon and about how the Ark of the Covenant came to Ethiopia. Other works in written form are abundant, particularly in North Africa, the Sahel regions of west Africa and on the Swahili coast. From Timbuktu alone, there are an estimated 300,000 or more manuscripts tucked away in various libraries and private collections. The material covers a wide array of academic topics, including astronomy, poetry, law, history, faith, politics, and philosophy. Swahili literature however, draws inspiration from religious teachings but developed under indigenous circumstances.

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15 Eventually, in the colonial period, Africans exposed to European languages began to write in those tongues. The African works best known in the West from the periods of colonization and the slave trade are primarily slave narratives, such as Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789). In 1911, Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford (also known as Ekra-Agiman) of the Gold Coast (now Ghana) published the first African novel written in English, *Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation*.

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25 In addition to English-language novels, during this period, African plays written in English began to emerge. Herbert Isaac Ernest Dhlomo of South Africa published the first English-language African play, *The Girl Who Killed to Save: Nongqawuse the Liberator* in 1935. In 1962, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o of Kenya wrote the first East African drama, *The Black Hermit*, a cautionary tale about "tribalism" (discrimination between African tribes). Among the first pieces of African literature to receive significant worldwide critical acclaim was *Things Fall Apart*, by Chinua Achebe. Published in 1958, late in the colonial era, which analyzed the effect of colonialism on traditional African society.

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35 African literature in the late colonial period (between the end of World War I and independence) increasingly showed themes of liberation and independence. Since most African nations gained their independence in the 1950s and 1960s. Since then, several commentators have noted how conflicts appear as commonly occurring motifs; the clash between Africa's past and present, between tradition and modernity, between indigenous and foreign, between individualism and community, between socialism and capitalism, between development and self-reliance. Other themes in this period include social problems such as corruption, the economic disparities in newly independent countries, and the rights of women. Female writers are today far better represented in published African literature than they were prior to independence.