

Teaching Pack: *Purple Hibiscus*

Cambridge O Level Literature in English 2010



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Introduction

This *Teaching Pack* supports teachers and learners when studying Cambridge IGCSE / IGCSE (9–1) / O Level Literature in English set texts.

Set texts regularly rotate on the syllabus and may change from one year of examination to the next. Before you begin teaching, check the set text list for the year in which your candidates will take their examinations.

Teachers may use this teaching pack to engage their learners when introducing a set text, or as a revision tool.

The content of these set text resources will need to be expanded on to cover what candidates are expected to know and be able to comment on in an examination.

To increase learners' understanding and appreciation of the set text we recommend learners to set up a **reading log**, which could include:

- brief synopses of chapters (in no more than a couple of sentences in their own words)
- a timeline of events (very useful when a narrative is arranged non-chronologically)
- a list or diagram of characters and their relationships with each other
- first impressions of main characters
- initial thoughts about the main themes or ideas in the text.

Animation videos

This *Teaching Pack* focuses on supporting learners to produce animations using the software *Video Scribe* www.videoscribe.co/en/, but a range of other alternative animation and storyboarding tools may equally be used:

- www.storyboardthat.com
Online digital storytelling tool – free and pay for subscriptions available
- <https://wonderunit.com/storyboarder/>
Storyboarding software – free to download, but does have to be installed
- www.powtoon.com/edu-home/
Online video and animation creation – free and pay for subscriptions
- www.animaker.com
Online animated video creator – free and pay for subscriptions
- https://goanimate4schools.com/public_index
Online storyboard, scene and video creation tool – pay for subscription
- <http://plasq.com/apps/comiclife/macwin/>
Downloadable and app-based tools for creating comic books
- www.openoffice.org/product/impress.html
A tool for creating multimedia presentations
- <https://products.office.com/en-gb/powerpoint>
Microsoft PowerPoint for simple presentations as well as more complex multimedia presentations.

The lesson in this pack aims to help learners to understand and think about the key events and themes of the text, key quotations and their meanings, the significance of character behaviour, relationships and actions and how characters are depicted in the set text being studied. The focus of this lesson may be adapted for use with other set texts.

The lesson plan gives you a suggestion for how animation or storyboarding can be used by your learners in the classroom. You can apply most of the lesson activities to any text that you are studying with your learners. Once your learners have an understanding of how to use the software you decide to use, they can create their own animations for whole or parts of the texts they are studying.

The lesson is designed for learners who have experience of, a little experience of or no experience of using animation tools and features.

It is expected that learners should already know and have read the narrative events of the novel.

In this pack we have included some useful lesson resources for you to use with your learners. You may ask your learners to create their own worksheets similar to these, around a text, which they are studying:

- **Worksheet 4:** Text summary
- **Worksheet 5:** Character summaries and quotations
- **Worksheet 6:** Character animations
- **Worksheet 7:** Quiz

Lesson plan – Set text animations



Resources

- Animation software
- Videos
- **Worksheet 1:** Animation viewing sheet
- **Worksheet 2:** Animation success criteria
- **Worksheet 3:** Reflection
- Class set of set text
- *Padlet* site <https://padlet.com/> (or similar platform)

Key words

- Animated frame: Each individual animated screen that the audience sees.

Learning objectives

By the end of the lesson:

- **all** learners should be able to present the key events of a chapter(s) from the text in a coherent and appropriate animation.
- **most** learners should be able to thoughtfully present the key events of a scene / chapter in a logical and imaginative way; using sound.
- **some** learners will be able to effectively present the key events of a scene /chapter and incorporate comments on the author's style of writing.

Timings	Activity
 15 min	Starter/Introduction Before watching the first video, hand out the animation viewing sheet (Worksheet 1) to your learners. After watching the animation: in groups of three or four, learners complete and discuss Worksheet 1 to find out what they think about it. Extension activity: Learners identify which chapters the animation covers. They then consider what moments and quotations from the novel were left out of the animation that they feel should have been included? Learners give reasons for their ideas. Mini plenary: Class discussion to share learners' thoughts and ideas about the animation.
 20 min	Main lesson Share the success criteria for making an animation (Worksheet 2). Read through and discuss with the class to make sure they are clear about what makes a good animation. You may want to add some criteria to the list if there are any further suggestions. Learners work in pairs. Set each pair the task of animating the summary text of Video 1 (Worksheet 4). Emphasise that their animation should only last between 2–3 mins. Learners should use the success criteria as a guide to create their animations. Extension activity: Learners add further background animations to enhance the setting of their scenes and import an appropriate background song into their animation by using <i>YouTube</i>. Learners should justify why they selected the song to accompany their animation. AND/ OR Learners write a short analysis of their animation. In this response, learners should treat their animation as their 'text' and explain the ideas they attempted to highlight to the audience.
 10 min	Plenary <u>Each</u> learner completes the reflection sheet (Worksheet 3) and shares their thoughts with other learners. This will help them explain how they presented their episode, the characters, the key quotations, and the dramatic devices for the part they animated. Note: If the class need longer, continue with the activities in the main part of the lesson, and use the plenary as the starter activity of the next lesson. Suggested follow up activity to this lesson: When learners have finished their animations (and reflected on their work), they can upload their final animations on a <i>Padlet</i> site https://padlet.com/ (or similar platform) to share with the class. Learners discuss their ideas and explore differences and similarities.



Teacher notes

When to teach this lesson

This lesson could be used at the end of the first reading of the set text to help learners reflect and investigate important moments from the text, characterisation and the chronology of events.

Differentiation

Some parts of the text will be more complicated, detailed and significant than others. Therefore, think about how you will pair your learners up for the main task of creating an animation, and consider which scene or chapter would be best suited to which pairs. The learners' ability in their use of the software is also a factor in this.

Creating the animation digitally could be replaced by creating storyboards where learners draw on paper or cut out images from magazines to create their own visual representation of the text content.



Contingencies

Depending on your learners, you may find that this lesson extends into two, if your learners do not finish their animation in the time allocated. We suggest that no more than one and a half or two 50-minute lessons should be spent on this lesson plan.

It would be a good idea to show your learners the animation of the part of the text that they were animating after they have finished (as stated at the end of the lesson plan). This could be a good way to discuss the effects that learners were trying to create in their animations, compared to the events and effects depicted in the original animation. By relating all the ideas to the text, this should allow for some effective reflection on the content of the set text you are studying.

Worksheet 1: Animation viewing sheet



Make notes as you watch the animation. This will help you when you create your own animation.

1. Did you find it easy to understand and follow the story in the animation? Why? Why not?

2. What did you think about the choice of character animations? Was it clear who they were?

3. Was there anything in the animation that surprised you?

4. What did you enjoy or find useful about the animation?

5. What would you change or add to the content of the animation to make it clearer or more useful?

6. What text would you like to make an animation of?



Worksheet 2: Animation success criteria

Your animation should include:	Notes
1. a clear title at the beginning of your animation that states which part of the text you are presenting.	
2. suitable character animations, to portray the different characters from the text.	
3. appropriate props and background animations to depict the different settings of the text.	
4. at least two key quotations from the text in speech bubbles, or as text in the background, in your animated frames.	
5. pauses in time between the events that you animate so that the audience can see, follow and understand what is happening.	
6. text that helps highlight the use of any dramatic irony, symbolism, imagery or any other significant technique the writer has used.	

Worksheet 3: Reflection



Now you have completed your animation, use this sheet to reflect on the activity:

1. What do you think worked well in your animation? (Refer to the success criteria sheet.)

2. What did you find difficult or challenging when you created your animation?

3. What new things did you learn or notice about the content of the text as you created your animation?

4. What will you do differently when you create your next animation?

5. List three ways that your animation could help other learners understand and revise the text or part of the text you have animated.

6. What advice would you give about creating animations?

Worksheet 4: Text summary

Video 1

The novel is set in Nigeria, where the Achike family live in luxury in Enugu. Papa Eugene is an extremely devout Christian, an important figure in the Catholic church and also the community, where he owns a newspaper and several factories. He has a wife, Mama Beatrice, and two teenage children, Jaja who is 17 years old, and his sister, Kambili who is fifteen years old and she is the narrator of the novel.

Palm Sunday (Breaking Gods)

At Enugu

The opening short section is set on Palm Sunday after the family return from Church. Papa immediately shows his violence towards his family, throwing a heavy book at Jaja for missing communion, which breaks Mama's figurines. Jaja is rebellious, speaking his mind to Papa, despite the inevitable awful consequences, whereas Kambili is terrified of upsetting her father further.

Video 2

At Aba

The family go to their traditional home at Aba for Christmas, taking enough food and gifts for the whole village. Papa prays for his father, Papa Nnukwu, in the hope that he will be converted and 'saved from hell' because he is not a Christian but instead worships the traditional gods. Papa allows Jaja and Kambili to visit their grandfather, but only for 15 minutes, as it is 'the home of a heathen'.

Auntie Ifeoma, Papa Eugene's sister, arrives with her three children, Amaka, Obiora and Chima. They are warm and relaxed, but Kambili is awkward and uneasy, unused to their free way of talking. Ifeoma talks about the political unrest in Nsukka, her hometown, and the problems with lack of fuel and food, in addition to strikes at the University, where she is a lecturer.

Ifeoma takes all five children to see the traditional Mmuo festival. Kambili and Jaja start to get to know their cousins better. Amaka cannot understand how they are not allowed to do so many things when they have so much money and so many luxuries. Kambili is shocked by Amaka's self-confidence. Just before they go to church, Kambili has stomach cramps so hurriedly eats some cereal, which is forbidden by Papa just before Mass. When he comes into the kitchen unexpectedly, he lashes Mama, Jaja and Kambili with his belt because they have 'walked into sin'.

Papa agrees that Kambili and Jaja can go and stay in Nsukka with Ifeoma but he gives them precise schedules which they must keep to every day. It is the first time they have been away from Papa.

Video 3

At Nsukka

Ifeoma's flat is small and shabby but clean and homely. Kambili shares a room with Amaka, who is not welcoming, mocking her luxurious lifestyle. Kambili is bewildered by their everyday life: how they play music, chatter at mealtimes and seem to cope effortlessly with poverty.

Father Amadi the local priest, comes for dinner; he is young, friendly and informal, and notices that Kambili does not laugh, smile or want to speak, unlike her cousins. However, Jaja begins to relax as their stay continues and chats easily with Ifeoma, who encourages his growing independence.

Mama phones to say that soldiers have smashed up the newspaper offices and taken Ade Coker into custody again.

Papa Nnukwu becomes very ill and Ifeoma fetches him to stay with them. Kambili feels guilty and worried that her father will find out that their grandfather has stayed in the same house as them. Jaja is unconcerned and is behaving much more like Auntie Ifeoma's children, enjoying Papa Nnukwu's Igbo stories.

Father Amadi visits and takes Kambili to play football. She cannot take her eyes off him and admits how attracted she is to him.

Papa Eugene has found out that Kambili and Jaja are now sharing the house with 'a heathen' and declares that they must return home, but in fact Papa Nnukwu dies in the night. Eugene arrives the next day and refuses to go to a 'pagan' funeral. As they leave, Amaka gives a painting of Papa Nnukwu to Kambili, which she hides from her father. Jaja brings some purple hibiscus stalks, which he hopes to grow.

Video 4

At Enugu	On arriving home, they see that Mama has a swollen face and black eye. Papa accuses Kambili and Jaja of giving in to evil by being with a heathen in secret and severely punishes them. The government is attempting to bribe Papa and Ade Coker not to publish a story but they go ahead anyway. Papa is warned he may be assassinated but it is Ade Coker who is killed by a bomb; Papa is distraught, blaming himself. He now seems ill and has a 'slowness' in his actions. Jaja and Kambili are looking at the painting of Papa Nnukwu when their father comes in unexpectedly. He rips the painting into shreds and beats Kambili until she becomes unconscious. She wakes in hospital, seriously ill. It is agreed that she will go to Nsukka when she leaves hospital.
At Nsukka	Kambili admits to Amaka that she has a 'crush' on Father Amadi and also that it was Papa who had caused her to be so ill. They become much more friendly. She goes alone with Father Amadi to the football stadium and becomes closer to him. The students riot to remove the head of the university and Ifeoma fears she will be fired for supporting them. She admits she has asked a relative about emigrating to America. Mama arrives unexpectedly, looking unwell. She tells them that Papa has beaten her and she has miscarried again. However, when Papa phones, despite Ifeoma's objections, Mama agrees to go back to Enugu with Kambili and Jaja, insisting that Papa is unwell and carrying a heavy burden, supporting so many other people financially. When Papa arrives to fetch them, he looks ill and tired. At home, Jaja sees that the purple hibiscus stalks he planted from Nsukka are about to flower.

Video 5

After Palm Sunday (The Pieces of Gods) At Enugu	The next day is Palm Sunday. Jaja does not go to communion and Papa throws a book, breaking Mama's figurines. Kambili says that this is when 'everything came tumbling down'. Mama is behaving oddly and Jaja continues to defy Papa, who looks worse. Ifeoma phones to say that she has been fired and has applied to go to America. Father Amadi is being sent to Germany and Kambili is desperately upset. Jaja tells Papa that he and Kambili are immediately going to Nsukka. Surprisingly, Papa agrees.
At Nsukka	Auntie Ifeoma has got her visa to America and they are leaving in two weeks. Father Amadi leaves for Germany and agrees to write to Kambili. On Ifeoma's final day in Nsukka, the phone rings and it is Mama, saying that Papa Eugene has died. Kambili is shocked and distressed.
At Enugu	Mama tells them that the autopsy has found poison in Papa's body and she admits to putting poison in his tea while they were away. However, when the police arrive, Jaja confesses to the murder to protect his mother and he is taken away.
The Present (A Different Silence)	Jaja has been in prison for nearly three years and Mama and Kambili are visiting him; Mama has told everyone that she is the guilty person but no-one has believed her. They have heard that Jaja will be released in a week, after they have paid many bribes.

Ifeoma is now working in America and Amaka writes to Kambili. Father Amadi also writes to Kambili and she treasures his letters. Jaja is in poor condition both physically and mentally, 'full of guilt' that he never did enough. Kambili tells Mama that they will take Jaja to Nsukka and then to America to help him recover.

Worksheet 5: Character summaries and quotations

Kambili Achike

Kambili is the narrator of the novel, so the first-person descriptions of her thoughts, feelings and actions give a strong insight into her character. It soon becomes clear that she is a meek and obedient girl, paying total attention to her father's instructions concerning her daily life and, in particular, religious practices. Although painfully shy and lacking in confidence, she is 'intelligent beyond her years.... responsible... a daughter to be proud of.' This comment from her school is nevertheless not enough to satisfy Papa, who is angry when she comes second in the class. Kambili is afraid of failure and spends all her time studying, so she has no conversation to share with other teenagers. She is not popular at school, lacking any friends, as her shyness is taken as being 'snobbishness' by her classmates.

Indeed, Kambili is at her happiest when she is making Papa proud – when she does come first in class, for example. She is obsessed with pleasing him and worries when Jaja does not do or say the 'right' thing. She is very anxious when Ifeoma takes away Papa's strict schedule and Jaja seems to go along with this. It is Kambili who is terrified that Papa will find out that they have shared a house with Papa Nnukwu, while Jaja seems more unconcerned. Kambili is, of course, right to be terrified – the consequence of not letting Papa know immediately about this is to have their feet burnt. Surprisingly, she does not seem to blame Papa but instead accepts that any punishment he gives is deserved. Although there are several examples of his appalling abuse, Kambili still unconditionally loves and admires him. She has a deep religious faith herself and is not capable at first of questioning the contradictions posed by her father's Christian beliefs and his cruel behaviour. Over the course of the novel, she learns to reconsider her own faith and separate it from Papa's oppressive fanaticism, but this is a slow process. When Papa dies, she is still not free of his tyranny, genuinely anguished that she has lost him.

Kambili is helped to mature by her stay with Auntie Ifeoma, who is a much more moderate Christian. The example set by Ifeoma and her cousins slowly makes a positive impression on Kambili. Initially Amaka is hostile to her and sees her as 'a strange laboratory animal', because Kambili doesn't talk at mealtimes, know how to do even the simplest of tasks or interact with Amaka's friends in a normal way. It is as if something inside Kambili, beyond her control, prevents her from talking: '...my lips held stubbornly together.' She is still under Papa's influence and she cannot behave like a normal teenage girl. Kambili begins to acknowledge and understand her own feelings when seeing Amaka with Papa Nnukwu; watching them together she 'felt a longing for something (she) would never have'. After her stay in hospital, when she opens up to Amaka, they become close friends.

Her relationship with Father Amadi is also a turning point in her developing maturity. He is interested in her and encourages her to have self-confidence. The first time he takes her to the football field she is amazed that she 'had smiled, run and laughed', all new experiences for her. Kambili finds him very attractive physically but also looks up to him, a very different man from her father, which would have been unthinkable at the start of the novel. They become very close and Kambili is devastated when he leaves Nsukka. Her freedom of thought has come a long way: by the end of the novel, she no longer worries about whether it is right to love a priest. Kambili has become the strong one in the family, supporting both Mama and Jaja in very difficult times. She is the one making plans for their future.

Quotation	This suggests...
'Have a love sip, he would say The tea was always too hot, always burned my tongue. But it didn't matter, because I knew that when the tea burned my tongue, it burned Papa's love into me.'	Kambili does not see anything odd in a father deliberately burning his child's mouth. Instead, she is reassured by this evidence of his apparently deep love for her. The repetition of 'burned' is disturbing, as is the metaphor of a 'love sip', a symbol of the unnatural co-existence of both love and abuse.
'Perhaps it was what we wanted to happen, Jaja and I, without being aware of it. Perhaps we all	Kambili and Jaja are looking at the painting of Papa Nnukwu when Papa comes in unexpectedly, resulting in Kambili going to

Quotation	This suggests...
changed after Nsukka – and things were destined to not be the same.'	hospital then back to Nsukka. It is therefore a climax in the novel and, as Kambili recognises, the moment when Papa's tyranny and abuse is coming to an end. The suggestion is that the children unconsciously but deliberately confront Papa to bring about the change and take charge of their 'destiny'.
'She picked up an enterprising snail that was crawling out of the basket (then) threw it back in. I wondered if it was the same snail, crawling out, being thrown back in, and then crawling out again. Determined, I wanted to buy the whole basket and set that one snail free.'	The hairdresser's snails provide an unusual metaphor for Kambili's own struggles for freedom. The basket represents her home in Enugu where she has been trapped. Encouraged by her stays in Nsukka, she identifies with the persistent snail and is now as determined to free herself.

Eugene Achike (Papa)

Papa is a complex character and a deeply flawed man, full of contradictions. In public he is a man of strong Christian faith, capable of great kindness and generosity towards others, but in private he is a violent and abusive husband and father. While being a vile tyrant at home, he is also a hugely loved and respected community leader, dedicated to bringing democracy to his country and showing bravery doing so.

His treatment of Mama causes her to have two miscarriages, after which he says they must pray for her forgiveness. The awful beatings she endures and the unforgivable abuses inflicted on the children are seen by Papa as necessary to prevent further sinful behaviour; he thinks he is saving them from a worse fate in hell. He is able to exert absolute control over them through a regime of fear, setting rigid and unreasonable rules with impossibly high standards. Kambili's success in school is simply 'to fulfil God's purpose'. He makes all decisions for his family: Kambili accepts that Papa will decide which university she will go to. However, Papa does show a type of love for them: he is upset when they leave home to go to Nsukka and also stays with Kambili while she is unconscious in hospital, where he seems unable to grasp that she is only there because of his own violence.

It is interesting that he is unable to intimidate his younger sister, Ifeoma, who stands up to him at all times. She is furious that Eugene, now completely estranged from all traditional beliefs, will not have any contact with their father. Furthermore, Eugene has so little respect for him that he insists on a Christian funeral, which Papa Nnukwu would never have agreed to. However, in a further contradiction, Eugene pays for Papa Nnukwu to have a lavish traditional, non-Christian funeral.

Eugene sees Father Benedict as a suitable priest for his church because he is white and does not speak in Igbo during the service; the black priest at Aba is not 'spiritual' enough. He has learned many of his more extreme views from Father Benedict and from the white missionaries who educated him as a boy.

Eugene shows many times that he can be generous and caring for others. He gives large sums of money and aid to the church, to charities, the poor and family and friends in need, sometimes anonymously. Eugene cares deeply for Ade Coker and the other staff at the newspaper, blaming himself for Ade's death and looking after his family afterwards.

Mama's murder of her husband seems just and excusable in many ways, considering what she has suffered at his hands, but of course it is also wrong. Jaja and Kambili were beginning to find ways of escaping him and Ifeoma had offered Mama sanctuary, but she may have felt that Papa was just too powerful; poisoning him was the only way to liberate herself. Indeed, after his death, a shocked Kambili says that 'he had seemed immortal'.

Quotation	This suggests...
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'Eugene quarrels with the truths he does not like. Our father is dying, ...yet Eugene will not let him into this house, will not even greet him.'	Ifeoma understands her brother's hypocrisy and cruelty towards his father, which would certainly go against Christian teaching. It is an example of Eugene's extreme interpretation of his beliefs.
"Imagine what the <i>Standard</i> would be if we were all quiet." It was a joke. But Papa did not laugh. Jaja and I turned and went back upstairs, silently.'	The irony of Ade's statement about Papa's newspaper shouting the truth about government corruption is not lost on the children, who 'silently' leave, unable ever to have a voice at home. It appears that Papa may also actually understand this. Here, he is shown as both hero and villain.
'You should not see sin and walk right into it. Everything I do for you, I do for your own good.'	After Papa has poured boiling water on Kambili's feet, he is trying to justify his actions. He had been given the same punishment as a boy and feels he had learned from it. He wants Kambili to avoid 'sin' in future, by remembering the consequences, and thus go to heaven.

(Auntie) Ifeoma

Ifeoma, Eugene's younger sister, is a widow with three children – Amaka, Obiora and Chima. They are a close-knit, happy family living in Nsukka, where Ifeoma is a university lecturer. They have 'seen hard times', struggling financially, as Ifeoma is paid irregularly, and they often go without basic needs such as water, electricity and meat. Their flat may reflect their poverty, but it 'sparkles' and is homely. Strong-minded Ifeoma refuses financial help from Eugene because of the conditions he would place on her – not wearing make-up, for example.

Despite being educated by missionaries at the same time as Eugene, Ifeoma's Christian beliefs are moderate and able to exist in parallel with Igbo traditions, which are still followed by their father, Papa Nnukwu. Her role in the novel is to act as a counter-balance and contrast to Eugene's fanatical Catholicism and extreme behaviour, providing a refuge for Kambili and Jaja.

Ifeoma and her children are introduced to the novel at the family Christmas celebrations in Aba. It is immediately obvious how different she is to her brother, Eugene. She is likeable, fun and easy-going; more importantly, she is not afraid to stand up to him and disagree with his ideas. In fact, for several years she had not spoken to him at all as he refused to allow their father to come to his house.

The way she brings up her children is in stark contrast to Eugene's methods. This is seen both at Aba and Nsukka. She insists that they help with chores so that everyone is fully involved in supporting the family, but this is done in a cheerful, co-operative atmosphere. The humorous, teasing tone she uses with her children and Papa Nnukwu is completely characteristic of her relationships with them. It is typical that her prayers ask first and foremost for 'peace and laughter'.

More seriously, she encourages the children to express opinions and show their individuality, as she does herself. They all argue and debate, sometimes heatedly, but Ifeoma lays down boundaries and ensures they respect one another; she is firm without being authoritarian. She is not afraid to challenge conventional ideas, suggesting to her female students, for example, that they should not marry early but make sure they are educated first, in a society where feminist ideas would not necessarily be welcome.

A major contrast between Ifeoma and Eugene is shown by their attitudes to Papa Nnukwu. She is close to him and values maintaining links with his traditions, happily speaking both Igbo and English. She enjoys taking the children and her father to the mmuo festival, but she is able to see the mmuo through a modern woman's eyes. She is angry at Eugene's extremely hostile attitude to their father, even when he is dying. Eugene judges him harshly for being 'a pagan' but Ifeoma says he should 'stop doing God's job'. This disagreement reaches a climax after Papa Nnukwu dies when Ifeoma refuses to let Eugene arrange a Catholic funeral, respecting her father's beliefs.

Ifeoma is also a strong character and feminist at work, standing up against the corrupt leaders of the university. She is fired for 'disloyalty' when, in fact, she is just 'speaking the truth'. However, Ifeoma is also

pragmatic – she knows she does not have the power to win the fight and therefore decides to protect her family's future by emigrating to America. She understands that she will be valued and paid but, most importantly, her children can study at university without disruption. She is ambitious for them.

Ifeoma's impact on Kambili and Jaja is obvious throughout the novel. She acts as an example of a parent who provides a normal family life and is the voice of love and reason. In this way, she can also be compared to Mama Beatrice, who is unable to assert her own voice to protect her children. Kambili is completely shocked by Ifeoma's constant laughter and the way she encourages the children to argue. Even more disturbing for her, Ifeoma is 'flippant' when talking to Eugene, not seeing him as 'different, special' as Kambili does. Jaja, however, soon responds to Ifeoma's care and warm attitude; he develops a special bond with her, as she shares her love for gardening and nature with him. He starts to behave like one of her own children as he is breaking free from Papa's influence. As time goes on, Kambili begins to understand the contrast with her own home; she appreciates and envies Ifeoma's family and their relationships with one another.

Ifeoma has recognised the need to rescue Kambili and Jaja from Eugene's abuse, which is why she keeps them at Nsukka whenever possible, insisting that Kambili returns there after leaving hospital. She also tries to help Mama, who refuses to give in and leave Eugene, though this is later shown to be because she is slowly poisoning him. By the end of the novel, Ifeoma and the children have emigrated to America, forced out of Nigeria by the authorities. She is making a success of her life there.

Quotation	This suggests...
'...tall, exuberant, fearless, loud, larger than life.' 'She walked fast, like one who knew just where she was going and what she was going to do there.'	Kambili's early impressions of Auntie Ifeoma clearly describe her powerful appearance and personality. She is unafraid to confront the many challenges in her life and has a clear vision of her family's future.
'You are on holiday here and it is my house, so you will follow my own rules.'	When Jaja gives her Papa's study schedule, her response is to laugh. She then takes the papers away, instructing them not to tell their father. Ifeoma's compassion, common sense and independence make her unafraid to challenge Papa's inappropriate rules.
'Laughter always rang out in Auntie Ifeoma's house...it bounced around all the walls, all the rooms. Arguments rose quickly and fell just as quickly...prayers were always peppered with songs.'	Kambili gives a sense of the atmosphere in Ifeoma's house, a combination of joyful high spirits and good-tempered debate. Ifeoma is frequently portrayed as 'laughing'.
'She looked like a football coach who had done a good job with her team.'	She understands the importance of allowing her children, her 'team', to develop their own personalities and now sees how successful her approach has been.
'Defiance is not a bad thing when it is used right.'	Ifeoma is trying to help Jaja see that independent thought and action are sometimes necessary, though Kambili sees this idea as 'sacrilege'.

Now create your own character summaries:

Chapter	Quotation	This suggests...

Chapter	Quotation	This suggests...

Chapter	Quotation	This suggests...

Worksheet 6: Character animations



Character name	Character image
Papa Eugene	
Mama Beatrice	
Jaja	
Kambili	
Father Benedict	

Character name	Character image
Ade Coker	
Papa Nnukwu	
Auntie Ifeoma	
Amaka	
Father Amadi	

Worksheet 6: Character animations (blank)



Character name	Character image
	
	
	
	
	

Character name	Character image
	
	
	
	
	

Worksheet 7: Quiz

1. Papa Eugene's newspaper, the *Standard*, gets an Award for supporting:

- A) the government
- B) the military
- C) democracy
- D) the University

2. Which of these facts is false?

- A) Papa often prays with his family for 20 minutes at the start of a meal
- B) Papa sits away from the front of the church so that he can appear modest
- C) Papa usually visits Father Benedict after Mass
- D) Papa reports anyone who misses communion twice in a row

3. Why does Kambili not wear trousers when Auntie Ifeoma suggests she should?

- A) It is a very hot day
- B) Mama has said they do not suit her as much as a skirt
- C) Papa says it is a sin for a woman to wear trousers
- D) She does not have any that fit her now that she has grown

4. The purple hibiscus is a symbol in the novel for:

- A) devotion to religion
- B) friendship
- C) love for the family
- D) freedom and individuality

5. Which of these statements about Mama Beatrice is true?

- A) Mama asks Sisi to get poison from the witch doctor
- B) Mama poisons Eugene with rat poison
- C) Mama is relieved that she did not have to go to prison instead of Jaja
- D) Kambili thanks Mama for stopping Papa's abuse at last

6. Which of these statements about Papa Nnukwu is false?

- A) Kambili and Jaja are not allowed to eat and drink in his house
- B) He likes to speak both Igbo and English
- C) He starts the day by asking his god, Chineke, to bless his family
- D) He blames the missionaries for leading Eugene so far away from his culture and traditions

7. Why are Mama's figurines of the ballet dancers so important to her?

- A) They make the room very attractive
- B) They remind Mama how much she loves Papa
- C) The children have given them to her as presents
- D) They symbolise the family's acceptance of Papa's abuse

8. After Papa Nnukwu has died, Papa Eugene is very unhappy that:

- A) He had not seen his father before he died
- B) The doctor had not looked after him properly
- C) Ifeoma had not called for the Catholic priest to come
- D) Kambili and Jaja will not be able to go to his funeral

9. Which of these statements about Father Amadi is false?

- A) He asks the church if he can stay in Nigeria rather than go to Germany
- B) He takes Kambili to have her hair plaited
- C) He visits Kambili when she is in hospital
- D) He tells Kambili that she has good legs for running

10. 'Kambili behaves funny. Even Jaja is strange. Something is not right with them.' Who says this?

- A) Auntie Ifeoma
- B) Father Amadi
- C) Obiora
- D) Amaka

Quiz answers

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