

Teaching Pack: *A Man of the People*

Cambridge IGCSE™

World Literature 0408

For examination from 2027



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Introduction

This *Teaching Pack* supports teachers and learners when studying Cambridge IGCSE World Literature 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.

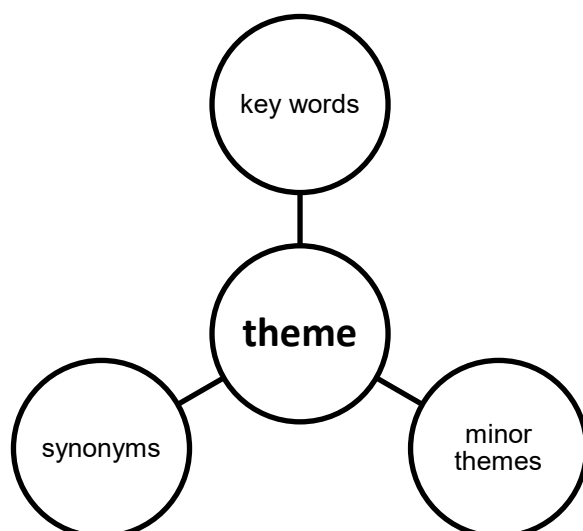
To increase learners' understanding and appreciation of the set text we recommend learners to set up a **reading log**, which could include:

- brief synopses of chapters/acts (in no more than a couple of sentences in their own words)
- a timeline of events (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.

The teaching pack aims to help learners to understand and think about the 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 key words we use for the themes in this *Teaching Pack* are not exhaustive.

We suggest teachers discuss synonyms and alternative key words for themes that are identified for a text. Create key major theme mind maps and then from each of those key themes map connected and subsidiary/minor themes.



Lesson resources



Included in this pack are some resources to use with your learners. You may ask your learners to create their own worksheets similar to these, around another text, which they are studying:

Character summaries and quotations – learners create their own character summaries including quotation.

Reflection – after reading the text. learners reflect, consider and explore.

Quiz – a fun quiz to test the learners' knowledge of the text.

1. Themes, character summaries and quotations

Some themes which Achebe explores include:

- Power and corruption
- Political disillusionment
- Gender roles
- Education
- Idealism
- Morality

A Man of the People is a critical commentary on the social and political issues facing post-colonial Africa. It is a powerful and thought-provoking satire that follows protagonist Odili Samalu as he navigates the disheartening realities of Africa's political landscape.

Odili Samalu

At the start of the novel, Odili is a well-educated teacher from rural village Anata. Odili's childhood has been both privileged and troublesome. Son of a District Interpreter, Odili grows up in relative luxury, attending the best schools and getting a superior education. Odili's mother died in childbirth leaving Odili with his wife obsessed father and a reputation as the 'unlucky child'. A sensitive child, Odili grows up understanding that, despite having many family friends and a large extended family, the 'world is full of enemies'. Odili is a complex character who develops and evolves through the narrative from idealistic educator to corrupt politician.

In the early chapters of the novel, Odili is presented as an idealistic educator who believes in the power of education to transform lives. He is a schoolteacher at Anata Grammar School when he meets Chief Nanga, who has come to give a political address. Somewhat naively he reminisces about his love for Nanga as a teacher and how it was widely accepted that Nanga was an 'approachable' politician and 'a man of the people'. At the address, Odili reconnects with Nanga, who remembers him and is impressed with his educational accomplishments and so invites him to stay at his compound in the capital. This starts Odili's journey into politics and the seductive world of political power.

As a result of his superior education and intelligence, Odili is clear, confident and articulate, making him a good political candidate. However, it is his move into politics, when he contests Chief Nanga's seat, that marks his ruthless ambition and moral ambiguity for the reader. Odili quickly succumbs to the lure of the lavish lifestyle he had once criticised Nanga for enjoying and alongside this he is prideful and hypocritical, seeking to further his personal success at the expense of his political morals.

Odili's relationship with Chief Nanga is central to Odili's life and his development. Their relationship is complex and evolves significantly throughout the novel. Nanga starts as a teacher/mentor to Odili who, sixteen years later, offers him the opportunity to visit him and stay with his family in the capital. Here Odili is introduced to luxury and the trappings of political gain, quickly getting used to domestic luxury, opportunity and wealth, despite his doubts about Nanga. The reader quickly starts to see disillusionment set in, when Odili recognises Nanga's betrayal of the public's trust in him and that he is not 'a man of the people'. This public betrayal turns into a private betrayal when Nanga seduces and sleeps with Elsie, Odili's girlfriend. It is this betrayal that catalyses Odili's campaign to rise to government and take Nanga's political seat. The transition from politically passive to active is driven by Odili's personal vendetta and his political idealism to clean up parliament.

Edna starts the novel as Nanga's young fiancé, promised to him by family and cultural ties. To start with, Odili seeks her love to punish Nanga for his infidelity with Elsie, but over time Edna evolves to end up as the genuine object of Odili's affection and love and he wants her 'for her own sake' rather than solely for 'a general scheme of revenge'. This love symbolises the part of Odili's character that remains hopeful and truthful, even when he is tainted by power and corruption.

Odili's character evolution, in *A man of the People*, is a reminder that the cost of fighting systemic corruption is personal. The naïve and idealistic educator becomes a disillusioned politician, seduced by personal gain and power. His character arc mirrors Africa's post-colonial battle to break free of colonial rule and find independence.

Quotation	This suggests...
'A common saying in the country after Independence was that it didn't matter what you knew but who you knew.' Ch 2	At the start of Chapter 2, Odili comments on the widespread corruption that existed in post-colonial Africa's political infrastructure. The pronoun 'who' suggests that this fragile nation invested more value in personal connections than it did in policy.
'Some of Chief Nanga's 'queen bee' characteristics had rubbed off on me and transformed me...' Ch 8	In reflection, Odili uses the metaphor of the "queen bee" to explain that Chief Nanga's negative characteristics have 'rubbed off' on him and changed him. This is a crucial moment of self-awareness and is a comment on the seductive nature of power and its ability to corrupt good men. This transformation is a central theme in the novel and presents the complexity of Odili's character and his development throughout the story.
'...in such a regime, I say you died a good death if your life had inspired someone to come forward and shoot your murderer in the chest – without asking to be paid.' Ch 13	Odili's black humour closes the novel on a satirical note. The noun 'regime' acknowledges the misuse of power and the corrupt nature of politics in post-colonial Africa. Odili is referencing the death of Max Kulamo and the devotion of his wife to punish his murderer. Max's martyrdom helps the reader to see the contrast between Odili and Max and their political and moral views.

Chief Nanga

Chief Nanga began his career as an educator. A well-respected teacher and scoutmaster in Anata village, Nanga was Odili's teacher in 'standard three'. Odili remembers him as a 'popular, young and handsome teacher, most impressive in his uniform as scoutmaster.' This description of Chief Nanga is set up early in Chapter 1 for the reader, ensuring that a contrast is quickly drawn between this and Odili's dislike for the leader.

Odili first reenounters Chief Nanga 'sixteen' years later at a political address at Anata Grammar School. Odili speaks out and is recognised by Nanga, who quickly remembers his former student and is impressed by his education and success. Nanga offers Odili the opportunity to visit him at his home in the capital and to experience a taste of political life. During Odili's recounting of this episode, he comments upon the official persona of Chief Nanga as a 'genuine' 'man of the people' and the private persona of a Machiavel.

As a politician, Chief Nanga is well described by the metaphor of the 'queen bee'. He symbolises ultimate political power and corruption, with all around him working to ensure his personal comfort and ease. He retains this 'hold' easily which demonstrates his good understanding of post-colonial

Africa's fragile political state and vulnerability, a vulnerability he exploits for his own gain, not that of his 'people'.

Chief Nanga's Chapter 1 introduction depicts him wearing 'damask and gold chains...' displaying the wealth and privilege that comes with his political position. Odili initially frowns upon such displays of wealth, yet quickly becomes accustomed to them to eventually find them alluring. On his first night at Nanga's residence, he describes himself as 'simply hypnotised by the luxury of the great suite assigned to me.' Very quickly, Odili finds himself looking up to Nanga's material gains, suggesting the seductive power of wealth and personal gain. Odili even goes as far as to excuse his seduction using the analogy of changing clothes after getting wet in the rain; 'the man in dry clothes is more reluctant to go out again than another who has been indoors all the time.'

Chief Nanga has a ruthless approach to politics. He is pragmatic and merciless, using his 'people' for personal gain and then discarding them when they are no longer useful to him or can no longer serve him. To begin with, Odili is scornful of this Machiavellian trait, but later he sacrifices his own principles and emulates Nanga, using people to further his own gain and political agenda. The reader sees this when Chief Nanga sleeps with Odili's girlfriend Elsie in chapter seven. This occurs at a point in the novel where Odili is starting to become frustrated by Nanga's unscrupulous behaviour. After they have picked up Elsie and have all retired to bed, Odili hears Elise 'deliriously screaming' while in Nanga's room. This betrayal confirms for Odili, Nanga's personal agenda and disregard for 'primitive loyalty'. It also sets Odili on a path to 'a general scheme of revenge', plotting to take Nanga's young fiancé Edna for himself and so ironically emulating Nanga's behaviour.

At the end of the novel, Odili attends Chief Nanga's 'inaugural campaign meeting' where he is humiliated on stage by a 'smiling and cool' minister. Following his shaming, Odili is beaten, arrested and hospitalised, meaning Chief Nanga wins the election unopposed. Yet this success is short lived due to the military coup and Nanga's subsequent arrest, ending the 'fat-dripping, gummy, eat-and-let-eat regime'.

Quotation	This suggests...
'No one can deny that Chief the Honourable M.A. Nanga, MP, was the most approachable politician in the country... a man of the people.' Ch 1	Odili's description of Chief Nanga opens the novel. He uses Nanga's full title ironically to suggest that the very opposite is true, Nanga is not 'honourable' and certainly is not 'a man of the people'. The adjective 'approachable' suggests that there is a commonality between him and his people and that they are all working for the same outcomes. Later, Odili makes it clear that Nanga exploits these people for his own personal gain.
'People like Chief Nanga don't care two hoots about the outside world. He is concerned with the inside world, with how to retain his hold on his constituency and there he is adept...' Ch 2	The simile comparing Nanga to 'people' suggests that there is nothing special about him at all, he is a conman. The informal 'two hoots' suggests that Nanga has little care or time for those he is exploiting. Odili then contrasts the 'outside' and 'inside world' to draw a distinction between those that work for the greater good of Africa and those that are only driven by personal gain.
'Then he took the microphone and said: 'My people, this is the boy who wants to take my seat... My people, this is the boy who is thrusting his finger into my eye. He came to my house and...'. Ch 13	Chief Nanga uses the possessive pronoun 'My' and the plural 'people' to both unite his followers and assert his power and authority over them. He repeats this phrase throughout his speech to confirm his position as their leader. Simultaneously, Odili is infantilised, next to this powerful leader, by the use of 'boy' which marks him as both younger and less experienced than Nanga.

Edna

Edna enters the novel as Chief Nanga's latest and youngest bride-to-be. She is a rural village girl and has been promised to Nanga, who has paid a great dowry for her; she is tied to Nanga by money, family and 'native law and custom' despite the fact that she does not wish to marry him. Odili first sees Edna in Chapter two where she is described by the houseboy Peter as 'a beautiful thing wasting herself on such an empty-headed ass.'

Edna (and Elsie) demonstrate gender inequalities in post-colonial Africa when they are viewed as pawns in a greater political and personal power struggle. Peter's description of Edna as a 'thing' dehumanises and objectifies her, just as Odili later objectifies her when he seeks to steal her from Nanga as part of his scheme of 'revenge'.

In chapter nine Odili visits Edna at home and reveals that she is the 'trusting-type' which he likes, yet his encounter with her strict father will make 'trying to reach his daughter' a tricky pursuit. Following the meeting Odili reveals that it was impossible for him to say 'any of the things he had in mind to Edna' and the reader realises that Odili's pursuit of Edna has become more than just a 'general' revenge scheme and that there may be some genuine feelings between them.

As the novel moves towards its conclusion, Odili starts to view Edna with genuine love and affection, and he is drawn to both her beauty and her intellect. After he recovers from his coma Odili and his father negotiate with Edna's father and the 'bride-price' is raised for Odili to marry Edna. Throughout the novel, Edna is the light that keeps Odili connected to truth and hope, despite his descent into political corruption and greed.

Quotation	This suggests...
'a beautiful thing wasting herself on such an empty-headed ass.' Ch 2	Peter is quick to draw Odili and the reader's attention to Edna's 'beauty' suggesting that a woman's worth and value is connected to her physical state. He uses the noun 'thing' to describe her which both dehumanises and objectifies her, suggesting that women in this culture are to some extent disposable, used as transactional objects.
'Marry him? To be frank with you I did not want to marry him...' Ch 13	Edna grows in assertiveness as the novel develops, by the end finding the confidence to question her tie to Chief Nanga, exposing it for the cultural transaction it was. Her language is direct and assertive when she speaks to Odili and the use of the short question assumes her shock at ever being connected to the Chief by choice.
'We made rapid progress with Edna's father...' Ch 13	At the end of the novel, a genuine love and affection has grown between Odili and Edna and he wishes to marry her for this reason, not that of revenge. However, Odili's business like lexis suggests that despite their love, the acquisition of a wife is still a business transaction within which the woman gets little choice.

Create your own character summaries including quotation tables:



[Character name]

Quotation	This suggests...

Now you have read the text, reflect on your thoughts:

Select a passage of key importance from the novel.

Consider the significant links between the content of the extract and the rest of the text.

Provide a brief overview of the content and organisation of the extract.

Explore the way the writer uses language to achieve certain effects. Highlight key words on a copy of the extract and annotate them, saying what you find striking, vivid, memorable, disturbing, etc.

Create practice questions around the passage, for example:

- How does [author] make this such a memorable / significant moment in the story?
- Explore the ways in which [author] portrays [character's] attitude towards [character] at this moment in the novel.
- Explore the ways in which [author] makes this moment in the novel so [moving / exciting / sad, etc].

[illegible]

Explore the characters in the novel

Create practice questions around the characters of the novel, for example:

- Explore the ways in which [author] portrays the differences between [character] and [character]?
- Explore the ways in which [author] strikingly portrays [character's] relationship with [character].
- How does the writer memorably depict the life of [character]?
- In what ways does [author] make [character] such a memorable / admirable character?

Choose **one** of your questions and complete the following activities:

Compile a QUOTATION + COMMENT table to record your ideas about specific characters.

Add notes to each quotation about what it reveals about the character and their relevant contexts.

Learn some key quotations.

Answer the question. Peer-evaluate each other's answers.

Note examples of:

- irrelevant points (which perhaps narrate or describe)
- repeated points (where no more credit can be given)
- unsupported assertions (which do not constitute analysis)
- long quotations (which indicate a lack of clear focus).

Tick:

- ✓ points that are valid and thoughtful
- ✓ quotations that are concise and relevant
- ✓ critical comments on key words or aspects of structure and form.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Explore the themes of the novel

Create practice questions around a theme (listed in section 1), for example:

- How does [author] portray [theme] in the novel?
- In what ways does [author] convey [theme] in the novel?
- How does [author] present his ideas about [theme] in the novel?

Choose **one** of your questions and complete the following activities:

- Compile a QUOTATION + COMMENT table to record your ideas about specific characters.
- Add notes to each quotation about what it reveals about the character and their relevant contexts.
- Learn some key quotations.
- Answer the question. Peer-evaluate each other's answers.

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3. Quiz

1. Who is the 'man of the people' in Chapter 1?

- A) Odili Samalu
- B) Max Kulamo
- C) Chief Nanga
- D) Chief Koko

2. What is Odili's profession at the start of the novel?

- A) District interpreter
- B) Minister
- C) Politician
- D) Teacher

3. What is Chief Nanga known to be?

- A) The most approachable politician in the country.
- B) The wealthiest politician in the country.
- C) The most ruthless politician in the country.
- D) The most corrupt politician in the country.

4. Why was Odili considered by his people to be an 'unlucky child'?

- A) His mother was wicked and evil.
- B) His mother had been a second wife.
- C) His mother left his father.
- D) His mother died while giving birth to him.

5. Why does Chief Nanga get very angry the first time Odili visits his house?

- A) He thinks Odili is rude.
- B) He thinks he has been poisoned.
- C) He thinks his first wife has been unfaithful.
- D) He wasn't expecting Odili.

6. What betrayal first ignites Odili's 'general scheme of revenge' against Chief Nanga?

- A) Nanga has an affair with Odili's girlfriend, Elsie.
- B) Nanga abuses his political power.
- C) Nanga humiliates Odili at a campaign meeting.
- D) Nanga assaults Odili and causes injury.

7. What motivates Odili to run for political office against Nanga?

- A) Power and wealth
- B) Arrogance and self interest
- C) Revenge and idealism
- D) Pressure and threat

8. Odili's original interest in Edna is as...

- A) ... a genuine love interest.
- B) ... a potential wife.
- C) ... a friend and ally.
- D) ... a way to get revenge on Nanga.

9. Which of the following statements is true?

- A) The novel ends with a military coup.
- B) The novel ends with Chief Nanga winning the election.
- C) The novel ends with a marriage.
- D) The novel ends with Chief Nanga's death.

10. What are the primary themes of *A Man of the People*?

- A) Tradition and culture
- B) Love and romance
- C) Power and corruption
- D) War and peace

Quiz answers

1. Who is the 'man of the people' in Chapter 1?

C) Chief Nanga

2. What is Odili's profession at the start of the novel?

D) Teacher

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C) Revenge and idealism

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D) ... a way to get revenge on Nanga.

Answer: D

9. Which of the following statements is true?

A) The novel ends with a military coup.

10. What are the primary themes of *A Man of the People*?

C) Power and corruption

Cambridge International Education
The Triangle Building, Shaftsbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
t: +44 1223 553554
e: info@cambridgeinternational.org www.cambridgeinternational.org

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