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*South African literary works*

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# South African literary works

by Carmen Müntzenberg

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Die Schülerinnen und Schüler erarbeiten textanalytisch einzelne Werke unterschiedlicher Genres von südafrikanischen Schriftstellerinnen und Schriftstellern – Volksmärchen, Gedichte, Songtexte, eine Kurzgeschichte sowie einen Romanauszug. Hierbei werden die literarischen Werke auch in einen kulturellen und geschichtlichen Kontext eingeordnet. Im Verlauf der Einheit trainieren und erweitern die Lernenden Kompetenzen wie beispielsweise ihre Lese- und Schreibkompetenz sowie die Hör-Seh-Verstehenskompetenz. Abgerundet wird die Unterrichtsreihe durch eine Klausur, in welcher die Schülerinnen und Schüler ihr neu gewonnenes Wissen zu *South African literature* demonstrieren können.

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## Competences and skills:

By working with various types of texts (folktales, poems, short story, novel), students enhance their **reading and analysing skills**. They also train their **communicative competences** by retelling a folktale, engaging in a role discussion and acting out a role play. Throughout the unit, students continually apply and improve their **writing skills** (e. g. writing a blog entry). Finally, they develop their **viewing and listening skills** further by working with a video and a podcast.

## Overview:

List of abbreviations:

<b>CT</b> Creative Task	<b>D</b> Discussion/debate
<b>C</b> Comment	<b>G</b> Group work
<b>LVC</b> Listening/Viewing comprehension	<b>P</b> Working with a picture/cartoon
<b>PR</b> Presentation	<b>R</b> Research
<b>RC</b> Reading comprehension	<b>S</b> Summary
<b>T</b> Working with a text	<b>VI</b> Working with a video
<b>W</b> Writing	

Topic	Material	Methods/Skills
1: South African folktales	M1–M3	CT, G, RC, S, T
2: South African poetry	M4–M8	G, R, RC, S, T, W
3: A South African short story	M9–M10	P, RC, T, W
4: A South African novel	M11–M12	D, LVC, RC, S, T, VI
5: Working with podcasts	M13	CT, LVC, PR, R, S, W
6: Exam	M14–M15	C, P, RC, T, W

# South African literary works

## Facts

South African literature is rarely a part of classroom work because the focus often lies on British and American literary works. The works by South African authors offer various ways of getting to know more about their country. Indigenous South African tales include a lot of cultural background and offer an opportunity to get to know South African traditions, beliefs, geography and aspirations. Therefore, these works are a great resource for intercultural learning. Moreover, works that were published during and after the Apartheid regime frequently offer insight into the situation of citizens and politicians at that time, as well as the challenges of this period presented to blacks and other ethnic groups. Modern literary works often focus on recent problems like urbanisation and ghettoisation. This edition introduces several pieces of South African literary work and presents ideas on how to include them in a lesson.

## Notes on the material

**Topic 1:** Folktales are part of every culture. This topic introduces two South African folktales and has students groups compare them with tales they are familiar with. To intensify the learners' experience, they are then asked to retell the folktale to their classmates. In doing so, each group presents its findings and results and gets an opportunity to practise oral skills.

**Topic 2:** This split activity focuses on South African poetry. Several tasks lead to the creation of posters that in the end depict information about the poets, the topics of the poems and their linguistic features, as well as typical South African elements. Again, the focus is not only on students' reading comprehension skills, but also on practising their writing skills when they write a blog entry on their favourite poem.

**Topic 3** concentrates on a short story by Nadine Gordimer. Gordimer, who won the 1991 Nobel Prize in Literature, is famous for her short stories and *The Moment Before the Gun Went Off* offers various ways to learn more about literature in general (elements

of a short story, setting, etc.) and South African history in particular. Students are also required to analyse a cartoon which helps to improve their perceptual ability and their writing skills.

**Topic 4** starts with a viewing task to create a timeline of South African history. This background information helps students to understand the excerpt from the novel *A Dry White Season*, and to put the events of the novel into a historical context. Besides historical aspects, students will also focus in this section on mood as an additional literary term. Students can experience how discrimination and limited human rights are purely due to birth. This will also help them to develop different viewpoints for a role discussion. Topic 4 focuses mainly on skills like viewing, reading and talking, but could also be used as a history lesson on South Africa.

**Topic 5:** Podcasts can be regarded as a modern form of literature even though one only listens to them. The podcast used for this topic combines the modern and the traditional forms of literature, as it deals with books and a recording of an interview with the well-known South African writer Caryn Dolley. The podcast *The Quarantine Chronicles* picks up the current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Students use this podcast as a guideline to produce their own. This task does not only offer in-class learning, but may be broadcast on the school radio. This, in turn, would add self-competence to the reading and listening skills practised throughout topic 5.

**Topic 6** offers an exam to wrap up the unit. It includes another excerpt from the novel *A Dry White Season* and deals with discrimination and predetermined social roles. The composition part presents two topics, either for a comment on a quotation or on a cartoon, and gives students the opportunity to demonstrate the competences, skills and background knowledge they have acquired during their work with the material.

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