



**education**

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Department:  
Education

**PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**CURRICULUM GRADE 10 -12 DIRECTORATE**

**NCS (CAPS)**

**ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE**

**GRADE 11 *TSOTSI***

**LEARNER BOOKLET**

***JUST IN TIME (JIT) PROGRAMME***

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**NOTE TO THE LEARNER**

This booklet aims to assist you in understanding the novel *Tsotsi*. In the booklet you will find information and activities to facilitate a better understanding of *Tsotsi*.

It provides a series of tasks and activities which must be done during the lesson and for consolidation after the lesson.

We hope that you will find the information useful. Wishing you the very best in your examinations.



**TSOTSI PLOT SUMMARY**

| <b>Chapter 1</b>  | <b>Chapter 2</b>   | <b>Chapter 3</b>  | <b>Chapter 4</b>  | <b>Chapter 5</b>  | <b>Chapter 6</b>   |
|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| <p>*Tsotsi, Butcher, Die Aap and Boston sit and talk in Tsotsi's room.</p> <p>*The protagonist of the novel is a dangerous criminal called Tsotsi, who kills and steals for a living.</p> <p>*The community lives in fear of their viciousness.</p> <p>*Their Friday night job is "taking one on the trains".</p> <p>*Gumboot Dhlamini is brutally attacked by the gang on the train.</p> | <p>*The gang drink at Soekie's place and Boston is visibly sick by the senseless killing of Gumboot.</p> <p>*Butcher and Die Aap go outside and rape Rosie.</p> <p>*Tsotsi beats Boston because he asks too many questions – Tsotsi becomes angry with all the prodding.</p> | <p>*Tsotsi goes for a walk and then starts running to escape Boston's words.</p> <p>*Tsotsi needs to feel powerful again and looks for a victim.</p> <p>*There is a young lady running away from someone. Tsotsi grabs the woman, she thrusts a shoebox into his hands.</p> <p>*He discovers that there is a baby in the shoebox.</p> | <p>*Tsotsi goes to Cassim's shop, he needs milk for the baby. Tsotsi who was confident, self-assured and commanded respect, is now vulnerable and uncertain. Tsotsi cannot read which allows Cassim to lie to him.</p> <p>*Tsotsi cleans and feeds the baby in his room.</p> <p>*Tsotsi hides the baby in the ruins.</p> <p>*Tsotsi has a flashback; He remembers the night before (being given the baby) and the memory of the 'yellow bitch'.</p> | <p>*Gumboot Dhlamini is buried.</p> <p>*Boston, still very injured, awakes and is unaware of his surroundings.</p> <p>*Butcher and Die Aap talk/wait outside Tsotsi's room to find out what their next job is. They are concerned about the future of the gang and await direction from Tsotsi.</p> <p>*The men feel the absence of Boston.</p> <p>They decide that they will go to the city.</p> | <p>*Description of the city.</p> <p>*Tsotsi steps on Morris Tshabalala's hand.</p> <p>*Morris Tshabalala reflects on his mining accident which left him crippled.</p> <p>*He tries to escape Tsotsi following him.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- he speaks to the newspaper man.</li> <li>- he sees people with the faulty car.</li> <li>- Goes to the café.</li> <li>-Tsotsi continues following him.</li> </ul> |

| Chapter 7   | Chapter 8  | Chapter 9   | Chapter 10  | Chapter 11   | Chapter 12   |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| <p>*Flashback to events of the evening from Tsotsi's point of view.</p> <p>*Tsotsi has a conversation with Morris Shabalala.</p> <p>*Tsotsi walks back to the township preoccupied.</p> | <p>*The church bell rings and Boston hears it first.</p> <p>*Tsotsi discovers ants all over the milk tin and the baby. He fears that the baby may be dead.</p> <p>*This chapter takes place at the communal tap (Waterworks Square).</p> <p>Miriam Ngidi is described.</p> <p>*Tsotsi follows Miriam and forces her to feed the baby.</p> <p>*Tsotsi sits in his room, thinking and remembering.</p> | <p>Flashback of Tsotsi's past :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A 10-year-old Tsotsi feeling protected and secure by his mother's side.</li> <li>-Tsotsi's mother taken to jail during a raid.</li> <li>-An old woman who is always there, speaks to him.</li> <li>-His father returns- finds out about the mother being taken away.</li> <li>-Tsotsi hides- he is afraid.</li> <li>-He witnesses his angry father kick the dog.</li> <li>-Dog gives birth to a stillborn litter and dies.</li> <li>-Tsotsi runs way , he meets the river gang, sleeps in the pipe.</li> </ul> | <p>*Tsotsi looks after the baby.</p> <p>*Die Aap visits Tsotsi, Tsotsi tells him the gang is no more.</p> <p>*Miriam comes to the room of her own will.</p> <p>*She requests to take the baby and take care of him – Tsotsi refuses.</p> <p>*Tsotsi visits the pipes – he realises that all his memories are very real.</p> | <p>*Tsotsi takes Boston back to his room.</p> <p>*Fugard re-tells Boston's life story.</p> <p>*Boston wakes up, talks to Tsotsi and then runs away.</p> <p>*There are clearly references to a godly or religious element guiding Tsotsi out of the darkness.</p> | <p>*Isaiah plants in the church garden, overseen by Miss Marriot.</p> <p>*Tsotsi talks to Isaiah.</p> <p>*Tsotsi takes the baby to Miriam, then takes it back to the ruins.</p> <p>*Tsotsi hears bulldozers and runs to rescue the baby.</p> <p>*Tsotsi is crushed and it seems likely that the baby dies too.</p> |

## SETTING

Tsotsi is set in an unnamed township just outside Johannesburg (possibly Sophiatown), in the 1950's. There are references to the bus boycott and the first man-made object to land on the moon. The novel clearly describes the difficulties of living in the townships and a number of passages are critical of the actions taken by the apartheid government and of the society it created.

## CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### TSOTSI (DAVID MADONDO)

#### **Tsotsi as a young boy**

- As a boy, Tsotsi was innocent and content, living as a victim of apartheid.
- His mother was taken from him and the old woman abandons him in search of his mother.
- He was left alone to witness the return of his father.
- We come to understand the immense impact, the night before his father returned and the day his father returned, had on him. His mother, who was a loving and caring woman, is taken away in a raid by the apartheid police. This is a great shock to the young David's system. The old woman leaves to find Tondi (Tsotsi's mother).
- His father's return leaves further scars, when the man walks into the house looking for his wife and paying no attention to the young David. He walks outside and kicks David's dog, breaking her back and David watches as the dog gives birth to stillborn puppies and then dies.
- David's father has left and he is now on his own.
- David leaves the house and meets a group of seven boys (Petah's gang) and they accept him. This gang changed his identity; he became Tsotsi after several days and participated in crime with them. He states: 'My name is Tsotsi'. This transformation from an innocent boy to a hardened young man has resulted in him living a life of robbery, rape and murder.

#### **Tsotsi and the 'gangster code'**

- He no longer has a use for past memories and his conscience no longer exists. He has learnt the 'gangster code' and this is what sets him on the path for his future.
- Tsotsi is 'street smart'. He is not educated – he cannot read or write (illiterate) – he therefore does not question anything. He acts on impulse and instinct. He has a code that he lives by:
  1. the rule of the working moment – always able to see his knife;
  2. never to disturb the inward darkness – does not attempt to remember; he is afraid that the childhood memories might distract him.
  3. not to tolerate questions – about himself or others (the rule Boston broke).
- He becomes the leader of a gang and commits crimes in order to survive.

### **Change in Tsotsi's character**

- Throughout the novel we see an **evolution of Tsotsi's character** from a hard, uncaring individual to a man with an understanding much greater than that of an average man.
- In the early stages, Tsotsi demonstrates his hard, uncaring nature when he seeks out his victim Gumboot with the stealth of a predator hunting its prey.
- He kills him for no other reasons other than the colour of his tie, his smile and the pay packet. An innocent man dies and his death is pointless.
- Underneath it all, there is a man that is scared of what caring could do to him. Tsotsi carries fear in his heart - a fear of the past and the fear of what these memories could bring him. He is systematically forced to face these fears as the memories he suppressed start to surface.
- The three rules are starting to diminish and through his interaction with others, he changes back from Tsotsi to David.
- Boston's words send Tsotsi over the edge and he starts to think. He remembers things from his past. He also takes the baby and becomes caring towards it. A light starts to grow within him.

### **The baby acts as a catalyst for his journey of self-discovery.**

- As he starts his journey towards self-discovery, he encounters Morris, the beggar and eventually lets him live when Morris tells him he wants to live.
- While Tsotsi follows Morris, we also notice that he observes Morris's every move and starts to feel sympathy for the crippled beggar, because the baby has changed his value for life.
- Morris reminds Tsotsi of his dog who was powerless in a similar situation. The sympathy he attains is highlighted when he and Morris interact and he decides to let him live, as Morris explains he must.
- Not only has Tsotsi's outlook changed but Morris values his own life as well. Their exchange also leaves Tsotsi with the belief that he must value the little things in life in order to become redeemed.
- Tsotsi finds Boston and takes him to his house where he nourishes him like a mother would.
- Tsotsi leaves his rule about questions behind and his only desire is to seek answers to his questions.
- Boston explains that everyone is sick from life – living in apartheid – and in order to further pursue the answers to his questions, he must find God. This leads Tsotsi to Isaiah who teaches him more about God and what he can do for him.
- He explains to Tsotsi what sins are and the consequences of them. He tells Tsotsi that to further understand God, he must attend church. Tsotsi agrees to this and this shows that he is truly committed to do whatever it takes to pursue his path of redemption. He returns home feeling 'lighter'.

### **Miriam also plays a role in changing Tsotsi.**

- At first he threatens her, showing that the change within him is not complete.
- In their subsequent interactions, Tsotsi no longer has to intimidate her to receive nourishment for the baby.
- In their final interaction – after Tsotsi comes back from meeting Isaiah – she opens up to him, explaining how her husband is dead and she accepts that she must move on. This belief transfers to Tsotsi and resonates with him.
- From her belief, he understands that you cannot let your past determine your future and you must continue living on despite past influences. This is the next step towards redemption, as it allows him not to dwell on the mistakes of his past.
- This understanding makes it possible for him to realise he can leave his past lifestyle behind.
- She shows him trust and he starts to trust her – although not completely enough to leave the baby with her.

### **Tsotsi begins to change**

- These events collectively influence Tsotsi to become David again, a human with a soul.
- He is no longer a murderous Tsotsi but a compassionate and loving young man. These new values are what drive him to attempt to save the baby at the end of the novel.
- His instinct of killing has shifted to an instinct of saving lives without hesitation.
- When his body is discovered, he has a beautiful smile on his face, showing that he has no regrets and is pleased with who he has become.
- This is the ultimate sacrifice in life and the final step for Tsotsi to attain full redemption from past sins, becoming David – a new admirable man.

### **BOSTON**

- Boston is the 'brains' of the gang.
- He went to university but was accused of raping a fellow student before his final exams and was expelled. This alters his future path and he resorts to crime for survival.
- He is a very knowledgeable character and always entertains the gang with stories.
- He constantly asks Tsotsi questions, which go against Tsotsi's last two rules. These questions cause Tsotsi to eventually react violently towards Boston and he almost beats him to death.
- At the end of the novel Tsotsi seeks Boston out and cares for him in order to discover the answers to the questions Boston asked earlier.
- Boston acts as a catalyst for Tsotsi's search for God. He tells Tsotsi that he must seek out God to get more answers and tells Tsotsi that everyone is 'sick from life'.
- Not only does he help Tsotsi understand what he must do to seek further redemption but the exchange they have also makes Boston realise that he must go back home and seek redemption from his mother.

### **BUTCHER**

- Like all black males living in South Africa at the time, Butcher is a victim of apartheid.
- These men take all means to survive and we see this expressed in the way Butcher lives his day to day life in the gang.
- To them he is the killer – he never misses a strike and is the go-to man when the job needs to get done.
- Violence is the way he has learned to survive, because it is the only way he knows.
- To Tsotsi, Butcher is not much but a person in his gang who is a skilful and ruthless killer.
- Tsotsi does not trust Butcher and knows that he should not turn his back on him.
- Butcher is a flat character that does not show development. He simply disappears after feeling betrayed by Tsotsi, because he thought Tsotsi had done a job on his own.

### **DIE AAP**

- Die Aap was given his name based solely on his appearance – he has very long arms and is stronger than the rest of the gang members.
- He is also a product of the apartheid system.
- Although he is older than Tsotsi; he views Tsotsi as a role model.
- Die Aap is extremely loyal and when Tsotsi disbands the gang he is upset, because he feels as if they were brothers.
- Die Aap leaves, seemingly lost. He does not mean much to Tsotsi and does not play much of a role in the understanding of the novel other than being the person that Tsotsi tells that the gang is over.
- He is also a flat character that shows no development in the course of the novel.

### **THE BABY**

- The baby is introduced relatively early in the novel.
- A shoebox with a baby in it was thrust into Tsotsi's hand by a frightened woman.
- As the plot progresses we come to see, the baby represents innocence, kindness, and the positives of human nature just like Tsotsi when he was little.
- The baby catalyses Tsotsi remembrance of his past, and his shift in character by being the first thing he has to take responsibility for.
- Tsotsi goes to find milk for the baby, and cleans the baby; this shows he becomes compassionate, responsible, and merciful.
- When he rescues the baby from the ant infested ruins, Tsotsi begins to value life. To keep the baby alive, he finds a mother, Miriam, to properly feed and clean him.
- This allows him to later come to the realization that he must let his past go, and the importance of a mother's love for her children.
- Tsotsi names the baby David, after his past self.
- The baby helps Tsotsi become David again, through simple life lessons such as caring and nurturing and responsibility for others.
- By nurturing the baby, Tsotsi is developing a compassionate outlook. At the end of the novel when David Madondo sacrifices his own safety for that of the baby, he is actually saving himself. By his efforts to save the baby his instincts have changed from violence – a street thug - to compassion – like a mother, saving his humanity.

### **MORRIS**

- Morris is a cripple who lost his legs in a mineshaft collapse.
- He has lost his dignity and is ashamed of the way he must get his money in order to survive by begging. He believes he is a half of a man.
- When Tsotsi's gang goes to Terminal Place, he steps on Morris's hands and decides that Morris will be his next victim. However, while stalking him, Tsotsi starts feeling sympathy for the crippled man, because he reminds him of the 'yellow bitch'.
- Morris is the catalyst for Tsotsi remembering the dog he had as a child.
- He is also a symbol for South Africa – a nation crippled by apartheid laws.
- Morris helps the reader understand and see the pivotal moment that the shift within Tsotsi occurs.
- Morris shows Tsotsi the value of the little things in life (the sun and the rain). He also shows Tsotsi that one can make choices about things.
- With his reactions, he creates and helps Tsotsi develop the ability to show decency and allows Tsotsi to make choices that affect others, rather than just himself. Morris's final words to Tsotsi are that all mothers love their children.

### **MIRIAM**

- Miriam is an eighteen -year- old with a young baby.
- Like many other young women in South Africa, Miriam's husband, Simon, was a migrant worker who did not return home from work (or possibly a protest) and left Miriam with a child to care of all on her own.
- Tsotsi's mother and the lady who gave Tsotsi the baby were put in the same situation. Miriam is a symbol for these women.
- Gumbboot also left his pregnant wife.
- Miriam is the woman who is forced, by Tsotsi, to feed David. She symbolises motherhood and nurturing and desperately wants to keep little David. She performs motherly acts towards Tsotsi as well and teaches him how to love again.
- She shows Tsotsi – through her acceptance of her own fate – that we must not live in the past and need to move on with life and never give up.

### **ISAIAH**

- Isaiah and Tsotsi meet at the church near the end of the novel.
- They engage in a short, yet life changing conversation.
- In the Bible, Isaiah is the inspired teacher or proclaimer of the will of God, and in the novel he teaches Tsotsi about God.
- He tells Tsotsi about the consequences of sin and that God is inside the church.
- Although we know that this is Isaiah's simplistic way of explaining things, Tsotsi takes these words to heart and it engages his interest for attending the church even more.
- Tsotsi had been looking for God and that is why he went to Boston; Isaiah is his door to God. Isaiah allows Tsotsi to understand the possibilities Christianity brings.

## THEMES



## REDEMPTION

- Fugard wants his readers to understand that redemption can be attained by even the most corrupted individuals if one chooses to make a change in their life.
- Tsotsi's violence and indifference towards his victims make him a corrupted thug, but because of the changes he makes, he finds redemption and is reborn with the innocence he had as a child – as David Madondo.
- His choices that lead him to forgiveness started with receiving the baby; he began to care for it which started to trigger memories from his past.
- Later in the novel, Boston tells him about God and Tsotsi goes to the church and finds Isaiah. Isaiah tells him about the goodness God wants and Tsotsi, in an attempt to learn more about God, agrees to go to church.
- Afterwards he goes to Miriam, and both of them realise they must let the past go, so they can become better people in the future. Through finding faith in God, and helping Miriam let her husband go, Tsotsi finds redemption.

## SURVIVAL

- Fugard also portrays the theme of survival. He suggests individuals will do whatever it takes – both physically and morally – to survive.
- At the beginning of the novel, Tsotsi and his gang members do whatever it takes to survive, despite the unethical nature of their actions. This represents the desperation of the blacks during Apartheid.
- They had to constantly overcome poverty in order to survive. Tsotsi's survival shifts from physical to moral, later in the novel once he receives the baby and begins to remember the innocent boy he once was.
- When he witnesses Morris, he begins to feel sympathy for him, and his other victims.
- When he meets Isaiah and he tells him God does not want us to sin, Tsotsi realises the

immorality in his actions. In the face of God, he has not been “good”, and will go to hell. However, Tsotsi chooses to become decent and live his life with morals.

- He becomes a different person – David Madondo – who is selfless, compassionate, and ethical. His change is derived from the decent influences of others and not wanting to be the same corrupted person. He chooses to survive morally, not just physically.
- Tsotsi’s moral survival caused him to compromise his physical survival by sacrificing for the baby.

### **APARTHEID**

- Fugard also conveys the theme of the negative effects the oppression had on the black society in South Africa during Apartheid.
- All of Fugard’s characters are a reflection of the effects of Apartheid. Tsotsi and his gang are healthy young men who should have jobs, but because of apartheid, they are sitting around in the middle of the afternoon without work; this forces them into a life of crime - having to murder for money.
- It is a recurring theme. It forced Tsotsi to choose violence when he was a little child. The police took his mother away because she did not have a passbook.
- A black man’s power is shown through Isaiah. He answers to Miss Marriot who wants him to plant in straight rows. This symbolizes her need – and the white people’s need – to control the black society.
- Houses in the townships were demolished to build new communities. It can be seen that the white’s bulldozed the ruins, causing both David (Tsotsi) and little David to die. Fugard implies that white domination in South Africa has resulted in the black society suffering to a large extent.

### **RELIGION**

- Religion is a major theme throughout the novel.
- Almost every event relates back to Christianity in some way. The baby represents the new-born baby Jesus. He brings innocence and peace to Tsotsi.
- Miriam represents the Virgin Mary. She loves and cares about everyone which is why she wants to keep David.
- Gumboot Dhlamini’s funeral leads the pastor to question his faith.
- Boston is the first person to mention to Tsotsi that if he seeks redemption he must seek God, Isaiah plays a pivotal role in directing Tsotsi focus towards God.
- Morris’s simple appreciation of nature also relates back to the creation of God.
- With Tsotsi’s death, we accept that his soul has been saved.

### **DECENCY**

- We are first introduced to decency at the beginning of the novel when Boston gets sick after Gumboot Dhlamini’s murder; this shows he has decency.
- Tsotsi beats up Boston because Boston asks him questions about decency, referring to Tsotsi having none.
- Tsotsi does not know how to answer and he feels insecure, which causes him to lash against Boston. Violence like this along with killing is what causes Tsotsi and his gang to lose their decency altogether.
- Boston later points out that they have become sick, from life, from the lifestyle that they

- have participated in, lacking decency.
- As the story progresses, Tsotsi learns he can attain decency in his life and this leads him on the path to redemption.
- Tsotsi also attains decency in his life through another important moment, remembering his past.
- When Tsotsi takes in the full memory of the boy he used to be, he remembers what his life was like before he turned into a 'savage'. Although the memory may not have been the most positive, it gives him a target of who he needs to become again and this person is decent.
- Fugard wants us to learn that even the most lost, darkest humans can turn their life around and become a new person with new values.

## SYMBOLS



## THE DOG

- The dog represents his past. It also represents the crippled apartheid system that South Africa is faced with.
- The dog allows Tsotsi to compare Morris to his past and help his decision to let him live.

## LIGHT AND DARK

- Light is the kind, compassionate, caring and thoughtful side of the story.
- Dark represents the bad, murderous, ruthless and violent aspect of the text.
- The story begins in the darkness when Tsotsi is still a thug who kills and robs with his gang but as the story progresses and he moves closer and closer to becoming David and we see more light appear in his life.
- Tsotsi commits acts of violence in the dark - He stalks Morris and Rosie was raped by Butcher and Die Aap in the dark too.
- Light is shown when Tsotsi decides to let Morris live (they are under the lamp post), we also see it when he confronts Boston after beating him only two days before, it is at night, in the dark when the beating occurs and it is light when Tsotsi meets up with him again.

- Finally when Tsotsi attempts to save the baby at the end, the sun is shining.

### **RUINS**

- Represent South Africa and the situation as a whole for the blacks under apartheid.
- The blacks have a tougher life, with fewer rights and privileges than the whites
- They were poor and lived in run-down townships.
- The whites held no care or concern for them and no desire to give them a respectable life. Just like how no one has care for the ruins in the novel, the blacks' lives were in ruins. They were viewed as inferior like a run-down building.

### **WATER**

- The water supply that many people lined up for is a symbol of life.
- It is essential to the survival of a human being and without it you will eventually perish.
- It shows us how desperate the blacks were under apartheid, for the most basic necessity.

### **BABY**

- The baby is a symbol of renewal, rebirth and redemption, focused on Tsotsi.
- It is the catalyst to change Tsotsi back to the person he once was, David.
- Tsotsi sees himself within the child and it triggers the pursuit of cleansing and redemption within his life.
- The baby is Tsotsi also; it is what he represents when he is David, innocence, kind-heartedness and youth. In attempting to save the baby at the end, he is actually saving himself from the 'thug life' he was living.

### **MIRIAM**

- Miriam represents the Mother Mary.
- She is caring and nurturing and shows Tsotsi how to start loving again. She is a character who can forgive him for his actions.

### **THE CITY**

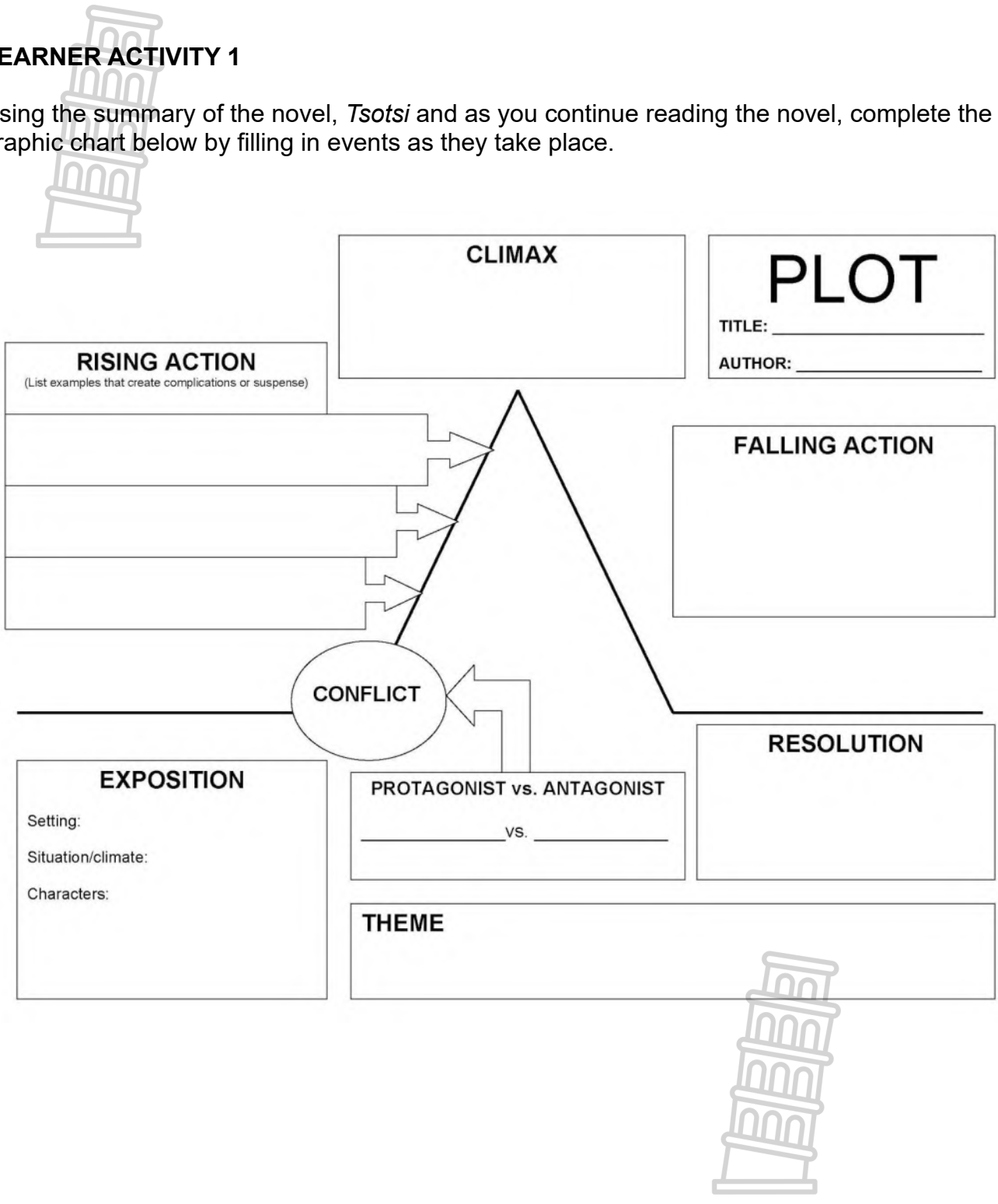
- This represents the labyrinth of Tsotsi's mind.
- He is confused about what he is feeling on his walk back home after encountering Morris. His feeling of being lost in the literal sense is relatable to the metaphorical idea that he is physiologically lost.

### **ISAIAH**

- He represents the link to God, and his way of speaking to Tsotsi about redeeming himself is pivotal.

### LEARNER ACTIVITY 1

Using the summary of the novel, *Tsotsi* and as you continue reading the novel, complete the graphic chart below by filling in events as they take place.





## HOW TO WRITE THE LITERARY ESSAY

EVERY NOVEL/DRAMA HAS THE FOLLOWING:

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Theme/s</b>                       | The lessons the author/writer wants the readers/audience to learn.   |
| <b>Characterisation</b>              | The main characters involved in the plot.                            |
| <b>Diction</b>                       | Choice of words used by the author/writer to get his message across. |
| <b>Figure of speech/<br/>Imagery</b> | Includes language that appeals to all the five senses.               |
| <b>Plot</b>                          | A series of inter-related events in a novel or play.                 |

### What is a literature essay?

It is a **critical analysis in an essay** form on the novel/drama studied.

Your essay is like a big answer to the question (TOPIC).

Aspects such as THEMES, CHARACTERS, IMAGERY may be the key issues in the topic given to you.

The topic will ask you to **raise an argument and explain** where you stand regarding the aspects in the topic. You will need the ability to **interpret and evaluate** the topic and the texts you have studied.

**NB. The Key words with regards a literature essay is :**

**JUSTIFY! EXPLAIN! GIVE REASONS! MOTIVATE YOUR POINTS OF DISCUSSION! In other words, any statement or viewpoint given must be substantiated with reference to the text (drama/novel).**

## **THE INTRODUCTION :**

Must include the following :

- The **name** of the text e.g. 'Tsotsi', 'Macbeth'. must be written in inverted commas, this also avoids confusion in essays when referring to the whole novel/drama or the character.
- There must be a **connection** to the topic – re-phrase the topic.
- There must be a **thesis statement** which includes what the reader should expect from reading your essay. A thesis statement declares what you believe and what you intend to prove = OPINION + REASON.
- Mention which characters you will be including in your analysis (essay).

**WORDS TO USE IN THE INTRODUCTION FOR A THESIS STATEMENT (opinion with reason) :**

It is often said that...

From the reader's point of view...

It becomes evident...

## **THEN YOU WRITE :**

The following essay takes a look at/will discuss...

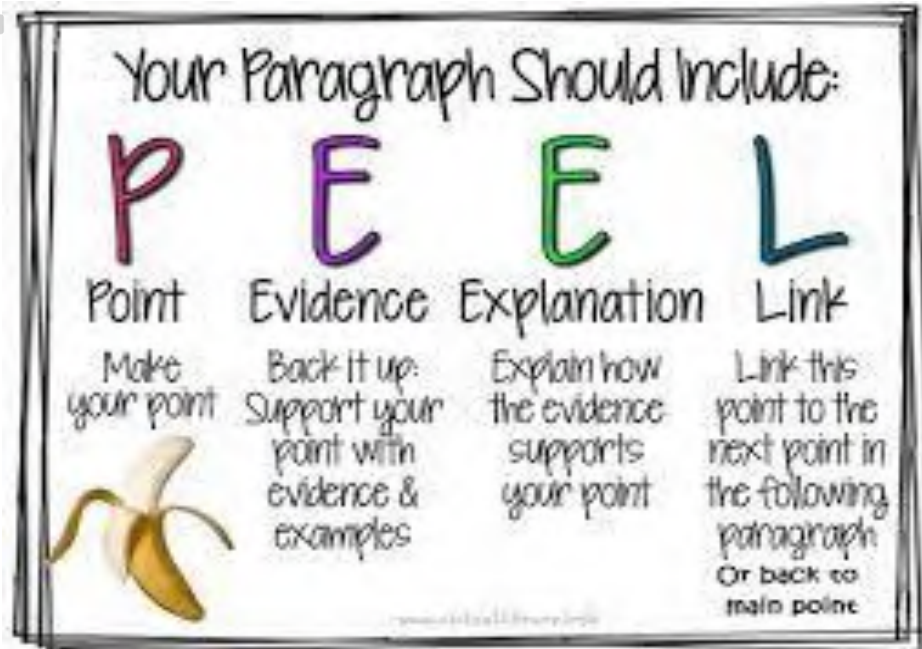
It will highlight/discuss (characters and themes)



## THE BODY (WRITE ABOUT 4-5 PARAGRAPHS)

THE PEEL METHOD CAN BE USED FOR THE BODY OF THE ESSAY.

The PEEL method explained :



The PEEL method essentially focuses on the format and structure when formulating a written piece.

Each element helps to strengthen your argument by allowing you to produce overall effective paragraphs that complement and connect to one another.

### POINT

Your **topic sentence/ statement** is extremely important for providing variability and unity within your essay. Therefore the first sentence of each paragraph should **clearly state the point of the paragraph** - this should be directly connected to the argument of the essay. Essentially keep it short and straight to the point.

### EVIDENCE

The evidence presented should be in **line with your point of view**, meaning the **evidence provided** should be credible and verifiable such as examples from the text.

## **EXPLAIN**

This portion of your paragraph may be the LARGEST one as it involves interpreting, evaluating as well as providing additional details to accompany your main idea. Similarly, this section may also include a verdict or claim being made in which you clearly state your position based on the evidence provided.

## **LINK**

When providing the linking sentence at the end of your paragraph, you are not only linking back to the bulk of the paragraph and the topic, but you are also allowing for a transition to the next topic or paragraph. In some cases, you may consider the link sentence to be the first sentence of the next paragraph. This may provide unity and coherence to the work.

### **Useful phrases to use in the PEEL method:**

#### **Introducing points**

Firstly...  
To start with...  
First of all...  
Secondly...  
Thirdly...  
Furthermore...  
In addition...  
Another factor to consider...  
This shows that...  
These examples prove that...

#### **Linking words**

Therefore...  
Since...  
Although...

#### **Presenting ideas**

When it comes to...



In terms of...

With respect to...

Not only...but also...

### **Conclusion**

Ties up your thesis statement and topic.

#### **Useful phrases to use :**

- In conclusion...
- All things considered...
- Taking everything into consideration...
- This essay has therefore proven that...
- This essay has therefore shown that...

#### **Points to consider before you start with the literary essay:**

- Write in the present tense.
- Always write in the third person.
- Do not use contractions or abbreviations.
- Do not re-tell the story – respond directly to the question verb e.g. evaluate, assess, discuss.
- Use linking words e.g. However, in addition to, considering, in contrast etc.
- Remember to link your content to the topic and engage with the topic.

For example:

| <b>Do not use:</b>  | <b>Do use:</b>   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Colloquial language or slang.</li><li>• Abbreviations</li><li>• Contractions such as can't or it's.</li><li>• Sub-headings.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Formal language</li><li>• The present tense throughout your essay</li><li>• Short quotations or references to incidents in the novel to support your points.</li></ul> |

## APPROACH TO CONTEXTUAL QUESTIONS

Familiarise yourself with the question words/phrases in order to answer the contextual questions.

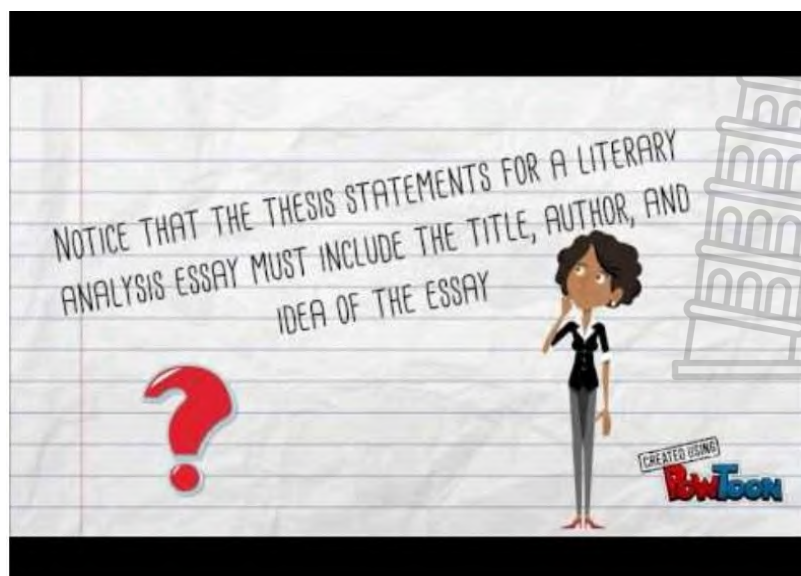
| Question words                       | Implication/What is expected of you  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Place the above extract in context.  | Consider the extract given and reflect over what has happened before the extract, when it happened, who was involved. What has happened prior to the extract that has been given to you.   |
| Discuss                              | Talk about or write about in detail, taking into account different issues or ideas.  |
| Discuss the significance             | The importance of the identified issue in context.   |
| What impression is created?          | What does the reference in the question lead you to think?   |
| Explain the mood/atmosphere          | What emotions does the extract/identified lines evoke in you as a reader?  |
| What is the tone?                    | The viewpoint/attitude of a writer on a particular subject. The tone is reflected in a particular word choice/diction.   |
| Explain                              | Make clear the meaning of something, by describing it in more detail or revealing relevant facts.  |
| Do you agree?- asks for your opinion | Take a stance with a definite Yes or No. However, no marks for Yes or No, rather for your justification.<br>Response is NOT always YES. Do not doubt yourself...know your text!<br>The question is usually followed by : <b>Justify your response.</b> |

## EXAM PRACTICE – LITERARY ESSAY

### LEARNER ACTIVITY 2

#### ESSAY TOPICS: TSOTSI

1. 'Tsotsi felt hate and resentment towards Boston.'  
Critically discuss the validity of this statement.  
Your response should be in the form of a well-constructed essay of 300-350 words. **[25]**
2. In a detailed essay of 350 -400 words critically assess the following statement: Tsotsi is the story of one man's redemption from numbness and moral indecency. In your discussion you may refer to the role of:
  - Boston
  - the baby
  - childhood memories
  - the church/God
  - Miriam**[25]**
3. Tsotsi is influenced to undergo a process of personal development by his encounters with certain characters. In an essay of 350-400 words, discuss the impact of Boston, the baby and Morris Tshabalala on Tsotsi's growth in the novel. **[25]**
- 4 Explain in a detailed essay of 350 – 400 the transformation that took place in Tsotsi immediately after the baby comes into his life. **[25]**



**LEARNER ACITIVITY 3**  
**EXAM PRACTICE**  
**CONTEXTUAL QUESTIONS: TSOTSI**

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

**EXTRACT A**

He hurried to the platform and waited there. See! He was still alive! But Tsotsi was closing in on his man, and when the train, the 5.49 (always ten minutes late), pulled into the station and the crowd surged for the doors, he used that moment to close in on his man.

And now in the train (still alive!), jammed in with as many as the coach could hold, going home in a smell of hard work and tobacco smoke, his ears as full as his nose with the low murmur of tired voices, himself impatient because the writing man was coming to his room at six-thirty and there was still a half-hour walk from the station, and in between all this thinking of Maxulu, then his tie, and seeing it crumpled by the rush to get in, wanting to straighten it but finding with slow surprise that he could not move either arm. 5 10

He never had time to register the full meaning of that moment. He tried a second time, but Die Aap was strong.

Tsotsi smiled at the growing bewilderment on the big bastard's face, waiting for and catching the explosion of darkness in the eyes as Butcher worked the spoke up and into his heart. Even as that was happening, Tsotsi bent close to the dying man and in his ear whispered an obscene reference to his mother. A moment of hate at the last, he had learnt, disfigured the face in death. 15

Die Aap still had his arms locked around the man's waist. As the body slumped the other three crowded in and with the combined pressure of their bodies held it erect ... a move unnoticed in the crowded coach. Boston who was nearest, and who was also sick, sick right through his brain, through his heart into his stomach, and was fighting to keep it down, Boston it was who slipped his hand into the pocket and took out the pay packet. 20

When the train pulled into the station the crowd made a second surge for the door, as happened every night, and the few on the station who wanted to go further up the line battled their way against this flood to get into the coaches, as also happened every night, but the 5.49 (ten minutes late) did not pull away, as happened occasionally on Friday nights, because those left behind in the coach and the few who got in found Gumboot Dhlamini and saw the end of the bicycle spoke. 25 30

[Chapter 1]

- 1.1 Provide TWO reasons for Tsotsi and his friends' presence on the train. (2)
- 1.2 What was the "writing man" (line 8) going to do for Gumboot Dhlamini? (2)
- 1.3 Surprises are usually quick. Why would Gumboot's surprise (line 11) be 'slow'? (2)

- 1.4 Refer to lines 14–18. What do these lines reveal about Tsotsi's character? Support your answer by quoting from these lines. (3)
- 1.5 How is Gumboot's senseless death a reflection of life in the townships in the fifties? (3)
- 1.6 Boston feels 'sick, sick right through his brain' (line 22) when he steals Gumboot's pay. From what you know about the rest of the novel, what is Boston's role in Tsotsi's life? (3)

### EXTRACT B

She went into the yard and down on her knees, and the heavy silence was broken by the splash and slap of her labours at the tub. There wasn't much left to be washed, and when the last had been rinsed out she dragged the bath to one side and began hanging up the washing to dry. Miriam shook out each piece of washing before draping it over a line. 5

The whiteness leapt and dazzled in the sunlight. The wind trailed endlessly through them and they billowed out and fluttered as brave as flags. Soon there wasn't a square inch of the yard that wasn't covered with the restless whiteness. Miriam moved through it all, bent low at the waist like someone struggling through a snowstorm. One shirt in particular held his eyes; the sleeves swinging uselessly at the sides, the collar fallen forward as if the man who had worn it had been decapitated. 10

Soon Miriam was clearing the line and then turned and came towards the room with her arm piled high with the dry washing.

Tsotsi went to the bed and looked down. His baby was awake, but lying quite still. He felt Miriam come up behind him. 15

'You want to take him. Please don't.'

'Why not?'

'Not ever. Please.'

'Is there water?' She gave him a mug.

'When will you be back?'

'Some time.'

'Where are you going?'

Ding-dong-ong-ong. Ding-dong-ong-ong. 20

Tsotsi did not yet trust her sufficiently to leave the baby in her care. By nightfall he had returned the baby to the ruins. 25

[Chapter 2]

1.7 How is the literal image of the clean washing also a figurative reference to Tsotsi's circumstances at this stage? (3)

1.8 Explain the bitter irony of Tsotsi's distrust in Miriam's plea that the baby stays with her. (3)

1.9 Refer to Extracts C and D. Discuss the change in Tsotsi's attitude. (4)  
[25]

**EXTRACT C**

The prisoner was young, maybe Tsotsi's age, but as thin as hunger can make a man, with those large shiny eyes that go with it. He had been beaten. There was a trickle of blood from his nose. Tsotsi watched him, vaguely uneasy at first, more so when the man saw him and his face lit up with recognition and he looked quickly at the policeman and smiled suddenly with a wild hope. Butcher nudged Tsotsi. 'Okay?' he asked. 5

But Tsotsi didn't answer. He was remembering the face – but in his memory it seemed younger and the body under the face was that of a boy, a child with knobby knees and empty hands. There was a memory of boys scavenging the townships. Beyond that he had never gone. 10

When the policeman and his prisoner were abreast of them he still hadn't moved, or given the word to the others. They looked at him perplexed. The smile on the prisoner's face was going, he looked at Tsotsi, hoping very hard. Butcher nudged him, and he might have moved then, but the prisoner looked at him desperately as he paused and called him by a strange name. David, he said. Tsotsi looked away, picked up the dice and rolled them. 15  
'David!' the man called. 'David!' Tsotsi looked away. 'It's me. Petah. David help me.' David, he called, all the way down the street.

But Tsotsi had closed his ears. He heard it no more. He forgot it. Right there and then. Knowing it was a voice from his past, he made himself forget. Under the bewildered gaze of Butcher and Die Aap he rattled the dice and played on. That incident, and the memories it had evoked, was the furthest Tsotsi had ever gone back into his past. 20

[Chapter 3]

2.1 Mention TWO things from lines 1–3 that can be ascribed to the apartheid era. (3)

2.2 Given his circumstances, explain why you think Petah's recognition of Tsotsi could give him 'wild hope' (line 5). (3)

2.3 From what you know about his past, what is it that Tsotsi does not remember clearly? (3)

2.4 "... he made himself forget". (line 20) Taking into account this extract and the novel as a whole, describe how Tsotsi's refusal to remember his past influences his relationships with Boston and Die Aap (3)

2.5 Comment critically on the significance of Petah calling Tsotsi, 'David' (line 17). (3)

AND

**EXTRACT D**

'I never knew about it. Not till yesterday. Like a long forgetting, you know.' Tsotsi wiped the sweat away from his forehead. Boston had been staring a long time and said nothing. He went to the door, and let the cool air pass over his body. He had told him everything and it had been hard. Not having to tell. That had come easy, driven as he was by some inner compulsion to know the meaning of the past three days and their strange events, a compulsion that had started with the baby and gained momentum ever since until he no longer had a desire for anything else except to know. He had told his stories and Boston had listened and now he must ask his questions and Boston must answer them. He turned back into the room, and fetching his chair sat down next to the bed. 5 10

'Boston, you've read the books.'  
'I've read books.'  
'So tell me man. What does it mean?'  
'What?'  
'What I told you Boston.' 15  
Boston closed his eyes. 'We're sick, Tsotsi. All of us, we're sick.'  
'From what?'  
'From life.'  
Tsotsi dropped his head and Boston felt the other man's anguish and for a moment it was like a stab of pain that cut through his own in which he was wrapped like a baby in its swaddling clothes. 20

He stretched out an arm and touched Tsotsi, and waited for him to look at him, and then into those eyes, desperate eyes, he said: 'I don't know, Tsotsi. I know nothing. I am blind, and deaf and almost dumb. My words are just noises, and I make them in my throat like an animal.' Then he gripped Tsotsi's arm very tightly because he was suddenly seeing something clearly and it might help to say it: 'You are different.' 25

[Chapter 11]

2.6 Explain how the baby (line 7) had started a 'compulsion' (line 5) in Tsotsi's mind. (3)

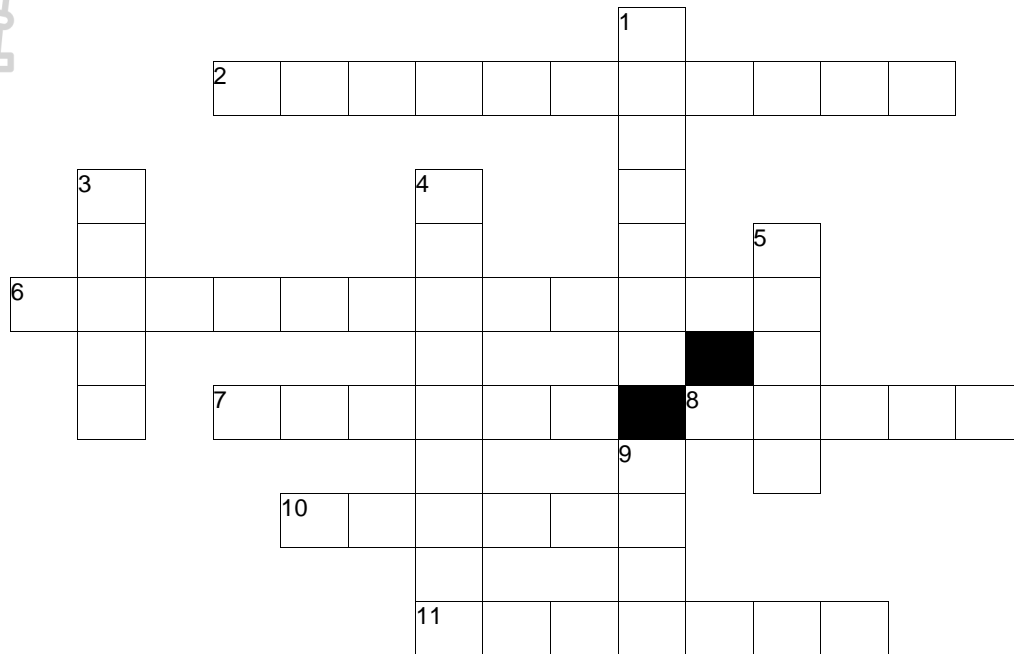
2.7 Explain why it is ironic that Tsotsi chooses Boston with whom to converse. (3)

2.8 Refer to EXTRACTS C and D. Critically comment on the change, if any, in Tsotsi's attitude. (4)

LEARNER ACTIVITY 4



# Tsotsi Crossword 1



**Across**

- 2. Author of book.
- 6. What weapon does Butcher prefer?
- 7. Member of gang who doesn't like violence.
- 8. The baby's name.
- 10. Who beats Boston?
- 11. Whose house do they drink at?

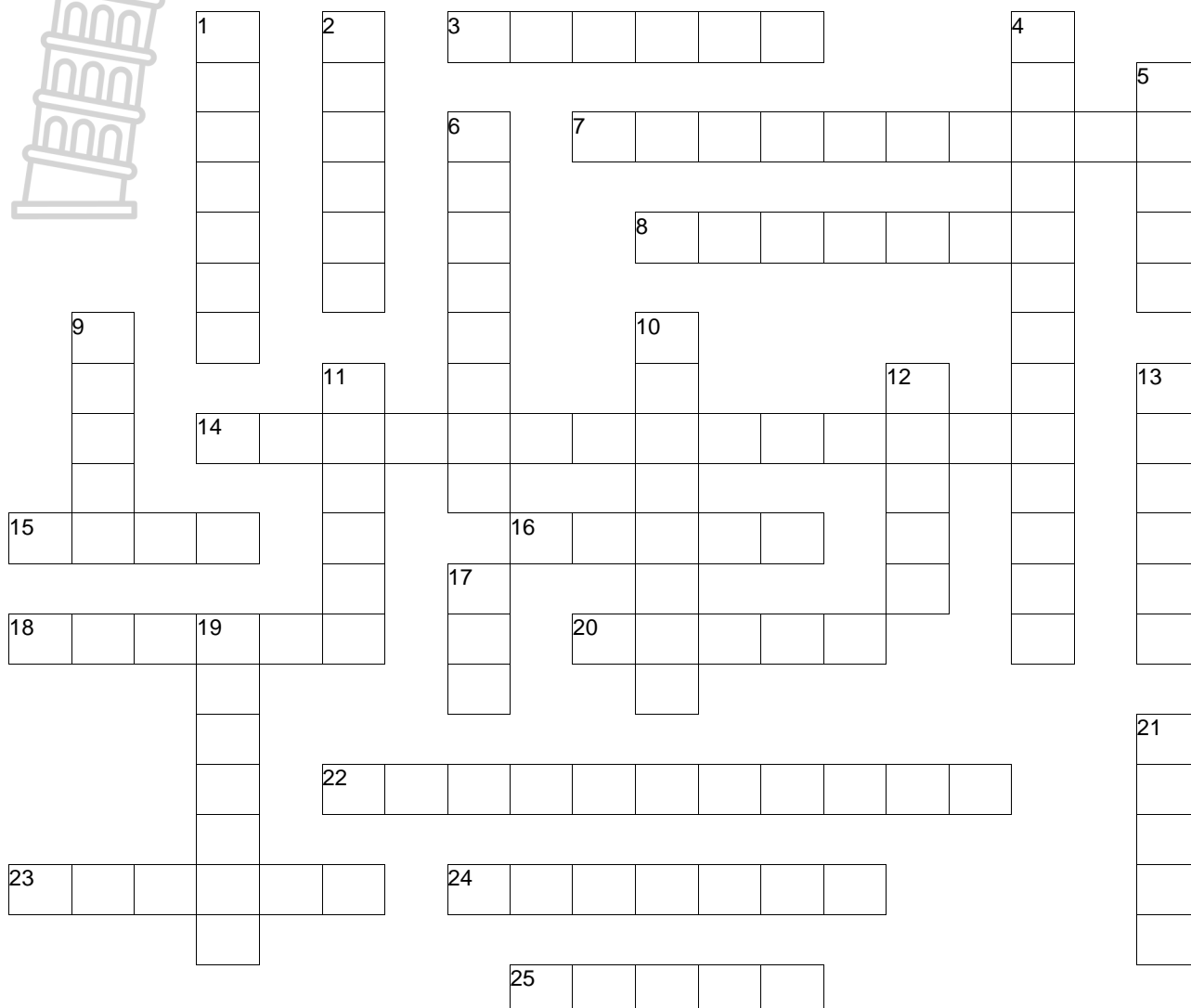
**Down**

- 1. Who did they kill on the train?
- 3. What does Tsotsi always carry?
- 4. What does Tsotsi not tolerate?
- 5. Who leads the river gang?
- 9. What does Tsotsi buy for the baby from the shop?

David      Knife      Boston      Bicycle spoke      Questions      Athol  
 Fugard      Tsotsi      Milk      Petah      Gumboot      Soekies



## Tsotsi crossword 2



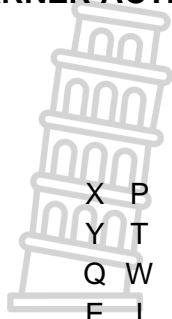
### Across

3. Who is the most civilized in Tsotsi's group?
7. What does Tsotsi seek towards the end of the novel?
8. Name one of three themes used in Tsotsi.
14. Where was the story set?
15. What is the reason that Boston gets kicked out of university?
16. What expression did Tsotsi have on his face when he died?
18. Whose hand does Tsotsi step on?
20. What is Tsotsi's real name?
22. Who wrote the novel Tsotsi?
23. What is another name for a criminal?
24. A major economic issue that plays a role in Tsotsi.
25. What name does Tsotsi give the baby?

### Down

1. What fell on Tsotsi causing him to die?
2. Who does Tsotsi force to breastfeed the baby?
4. What weapon does Butcher prefer?
5. One of Tsotsi's three rules is to always carry a...
6. What type of questions does Boston ask Tsotsi?
9. What genre is Tsotsi?
10. Name another theme used in Tsotsi.
11. Whose gang is Butcher taken in by?
12. Who does Tsotsi shoot and steal the baby from? (movie)
13. Who does Tsotsi brutally beat?
17. What colour tie did Gumbot wear?
19. What is the verbal motif in Tsotsi?
21. What is the symbol of Christianity for Tsotsi?

LEARNER ACTIVITY 5

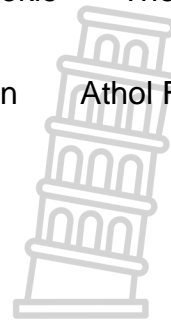


# Tsotsi themes and characters

X P H V H R P Q Z J F A X J A S P D V V C S K Y  
 Y T H A E Y V S O F Q L H A V K P I Z U P H L T  
 Q W J E Q Z Y B B N A I S T X G Y J B I M Y S G  
 E I A V L Y H Z O O J T G U X R D V M N S P A Z  
 W T T N E U F O R E J N B R Q H E G A I F K T M  
 T U F E N G E Q E M V T G C U E Z T U M N H I B  
 N G Z F J J Y U D O A C M S M P H M B A R P T U  
 F F L J H N Y N E W W K X I Q O M Y O L Y B X W  
 Y K C B N B W R M B I W A K L N U K S H M X Q U  
 N L B I A M J A P R Z N G F W O V D T D F Y B B  
 B D C B A V X C T O U S U D J O P I O T J C Q U  
 X G E X T T P Y I J V G B W U L P G N O Q K Y L  
 S H U O F A U X O S A E F V V Y N L V O Q E J Q  
 T L R O A R M L N R T L Y S E V W J K B S C J K  
 U A V E Q V E M D B Q B M R N U D T P M G N A K  
 X J I Z I V J H I X N D Z N O E W P O U N E B B  
 C D R Z F J Y M C U B I W R W Y I W G G G L P Y  
 M I S S A C Y W A T T K C I D F S K H Y L O W B  
 Q G O M P R H C B Z U R P J A X U Q E E U I I C  
 N U U S O R R Q F W Q B G N I K W B M O V V S L  
 J J X A H O P C X M I C P T U V Q T X F S N T H  
 X F J E X B U P B Z V W M I S D P D F S D C O S  
 J E I O O F Y E A Y T I T N E D I N Q I B L S A  
 J J D X N P R T B B M O Q S U J T F C Z Y N T T

Identity    Violence    Redemption    Cassim    Soekie    The baby

Maxulu    Gumboot Dhlamini    Butcher    Die Aap    Boston    Athol Fugard    Tsotsi



## LEARNER ACTIVITY 6

### ENRICHMENT EXERCISE

#### CREATIVE WRITING PRACTICE

Write an essay of 400 – 450 words on the following topics.

1. My story. Life in a township.
2. Freedom – an illusion?
3. The picture produced below may evoke some reaction or feeling in you or stir your imagination. Write an essay in response to the picture. Provide your essay with a suitable title.

3.1



### TRANSACTIONAL WRITING

#### 4. OBITUARY

Maxulu has found out that her husband Gumboot Dhlamini is murdered. Write the obituary of Gumboot Dhlamini.

5. **DIALOGUE**



Using the visual as a stimulus, write the dialogue that takes place between Miriam Ngidi and Tsotsi.

6. **PERSONAL LETTER**

Pretend that you are Boston, write a letter to your mother explaining why you were expelled from the university.

7. **E-MAIL**

You have witnessed Boston and Johnboy forging documents. As a concerned citizen write an email to the Chairperson of the local Police Forum discussing your views.



## **QUESTIONS ON THE NOVEL**

### **CHAPTER ONE**

1. What words would you use to describe each gang member?
2. Write down the following information about Gumboot:
  - 2.1 His wife's name.
  - 2.2 His occupation
  - 2.3 The three mistakes that he had made.
3. What is Boston's role in the robbery?
4. Account for Boston's reaction to the killing of Gumboot.
5. Tsotsi whispers an obscenity into the dying man's ear. What does this reveal about him?

### **CHAPTER TWO**

1. What evidence is there at the beginning of the chapter that Boston is losing control?
2. What do Boston's words 'Everything you are not', infer about his opinion of Die Aap and Butcher?
3. How do we know that Boston had a better upbringing than the rest of the gang members? Discuss.
4. Boston states that Gumboot has a lot of 'decency' and 'so he is dead'. Do you agree with this statement? Explain.
5. Tsotsi wants everything to stay 'the same as always. Why?
6. We are told that in front of a mirror Tsotsi can't resemble his own features 'to make a man with a meaning.' Why does he have no identity?

### **CHAPTER THREE**

1. What sparks off Tsotsi's attack on Boston?
2. Why is Tsotsi continuously running?
3. List the three rules that govern Tsotsi's way of life.
4. Who is Petah?
5. Why does Tsotsi not kill the woman he meets in the bluegum grove?
6. Why do you think the lady decides to give her baby to Tsotsi?
7. Tsotsi takes the box and realises there is a baby in the box. Why does he keep the baby?

### **CHAPTER FOUR**

1. Account for Cassim's nervous state?
2. Where is Cassim and his wife from originally?
3. Why did Tsotsi linger in the shop for so long?
4. Why is Tsotsi not able to see on the label that the condensed milk is not really considered suitable for babies?
5. Why is buying the milk an embarrassment for someone like Tsotsi?
6. Why is MaRhabatse's house now in ruins?
7. In what way is the arrival of the baby into Tsotsi's life 'destructive'?
8. Tsotsi must use his knife to open holes in the tin. What is the irony of this action?

## CHAPTER FIVE

1. Explain the reason for Reverend Ransome being so troubled?
2. Briefly describe the township cemetery.
3. What is the gravedigger's name?
4. Describe Boston's condition when he wakes up.
5. Butcher and Die Aap waited quite a while for Tsotsi. What was the reason for this?
6. What is the significance of the woman who walks past carrying a baby?
7. Why is it so difficult for Tsotsi to formulate a plan for the gang's night operation?
8. What is the irony of Tsotsi wanting to know from the others where Boston is?

## CHAPTER SIX

1. What is your response to the portrait of the beggar's miserable existence?
2. How did Morris lose his legs?
3. Why did Morris become a beggar?
4. Why do you think Tsotsi chooses Morris as his next victim?
5. How is Morris able to safely negotiate the dangerous side street on the way to the eating house?
6. Despite being a cripple, Morris tried hard to find work.  
How did he feel about himself when the only option left was being begging?

## CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Why does Tsotsi step on Morris' hand?
2. What is the effect on Tsotsi of the curse uttered by Morris? Why?
3. Which three words (all beginning with 'b') keep entering Tsotsi's mind?
4. Why is Tsotsi alone?
5. Tsotsi compares Morris to a sack of potatoes. What other simile does he think of?
6. What does Tsotsi feel when Morris crawls down the side street in the wake of the car that is being pushed?
7. What new 'truth' does Morris discover after 'all the years of thinking nothing mattered'?

## CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Boston is suffering from 'fear of pain or shame ... and he hears his terror'. Why is he in this state?
2. What is the significance of Tsotsi scribbling with a pencil? What is the significance of Tsotsi breaking Boston's pencil?
3. What is the significance of the fact that Tsotsi has to fight down an urge to throw the baby deeper into the ruins and never come back?
4. The communal water tap is described as 'indispensable, hated at times, and enjoyed at other'. Account for each of these descriptions.
5. Suggest why Miriam's man has disappeared.
6. Why does Tsotsi not simply ask for Miriam's help?
7. Why is it that Miriam finds feeding the baby deeply satisfying?

## CHAPTER NINE

1. Why does this 'flashback' chapter come at this point in the story?
2. What is his mother's first name?
3. Why did the yellow bitch stop being friendly and playful?
4. Why does the young Tsotsi feel so intimidated by his father?
5. Why do the street children 'adopt' the boy?

## CHAPTER TEN

1. How has the symbolic significance of his knife changed for Tsotsi?
2. List three of the memories that fill Tsotsi's mind.
3. Why has Die Aap come to Tsotsi's room?
4. What has happened to Butcher?
5. How has Tsotsi's response to the baby changed?
6. Why is it not necessary for Tsotsi to force Miriam to come and care for the baby?
7. When Tsotsi says that 'David' never saw his father, who is he really referring to?

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. Who is Marty?
2. Account for Tsotsi's need to find Boston?
3. Why does Boston cry out and cower away when he sees who is carrying him?
4. What effect does his examination of Boston have on Tsotsi?
5. Why did Boston not tell his mother about his expulsion from college?
6. Who is Johnboy Lethetwa?

## CHAPTER TWELVE

1. Why do you think Fugard chose the name Isaiah for the old man at the township church?
2. Who is the pastor of the church? What is the name of the lady at the office?
3. Describe Isaiah's job.
4. Isaiah and Tsotsi have a conversation under the shade of a blue gum tree. What does this remind you of?
5. Isaiah plants the seedlings in a crooked row. What else does he not get 'straight'?
6. How does Miriam make her living?

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RESOURCES**

1. Eastern Cape DOE – English Home Language November Paper 2, 2017.
2. Eastern Cape DOE – English Home Language , November Paper 2, 2018.
3. X-Kit Achieve Grade 11 – *Tsotsi* Guide.
4. Wordmint.com
5. <http://ontrack-media.net/english>.
6. <http://www.alamy.com>.- stock-photo-tsotsi

*'And that is how change happens. One gesture. One person. One moment at a time.'*

**Libba Bray, novelist.**

**Wishing you the best of luck.**

