World Literature

KS3 English · Follows the national curriculum

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

1. Worked example

Spot the oral storytelling features in the Tortoise passage.

Step 1 · How does it begin?

'Now Tortoise was small and slow...': it sounds like a storyteller speaking to listeners.

Step 2 · What kind of character is Tortoise?

A trickster: weak in body but clever ('his mind ran faster than the hare').

Step 3 · What do you expect next?

A clever trick, a twist and a moral, perhaps about greed or pride.

Answer: The spoken opening, the clever animal trickster and the set-up for a trick and a moral are all features of oral folk tales.

Check: Three features, each with evidence.

2. Now try one with the steps

How does the magical realism passage make the impossible feel normal?

Step 1 · Find the impossible event

Step 2 · Find the calm reaction

Step 3 · Effect

Answer:

3. Practice

Show your working. The marks tell you how much is expected.

1. What does 'seminal' mean when describing a book? [1]

2. Who is said to have composed The Odyssey? [1]

3. In which year was Things Fall Apart published? Write the year. [1]

4. In which year did Tagore win the Nobel Prize in Literature? Write the year. [1]

5. What is a frame narrative? [1]

6. Give two features of stories from an oral tradition. [2]

7. What is a trickster in folk tales? [1]

8. What is magical realism? [1]

9. Why does Scheherazade end each night's story at an exciting moment? [1]

10. Why might the translator be called 'a second author'? [2]

11. In the magical realism passage, what is the effect of the sentence 'Nobody in the village thought this strange.'? [2]

12. Give one reason it is valuable to read literature from other cultures. [2]

13. Explain why Things Fall Apart is often described colonial history 'from the inside'. [2]

14. Choose two of the original passages and compare how each creates interest in its opening lines. [3]

4. Before you hand it in

Judging a culture by one book.
Say 'this novel presents...' and remember the writer's own perspective.

Ignoring translation completely.
Name the translator when you can, and be careful about building a whole argument on one translated word.

Thinking world literature is 'harder' or less relevant.
Look for the universal themes: family, justice, home, change.

Treating magical events or nonsense.
Ask what the magic expresses: grief, memory, history, hope.