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| **Lesson Title:** Poetry | | **Theme:** Reading | |
| **Practice Activity:** PHL-09-107 | | **Class:** JSS 3 | |
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| **Learning Outcomes**  By the end of the lesson, you will be able to:  1. Recognise the literary devices – repetition, hyperbole, simile, metaphor and synecdoche – and their effects on a prescribed poem.  2. Answer short questions on the prescribed poem. | | | |

**Overview**

Poets use literary devices so that readers will feel a certain way. They also use them so that readers enjoy their poems. Common literary devices include repetition, hyperbole, simile, metaphor and synecdoche.

**Repetition** is when a poet repeats a word to emphasise a point. In the poem *‘*Abiku’, the poet uses repetition to emphasise the mother’s sorry state:

‘For her body is tired,

Tired, her milk going sour.’

**Hyperbole** is an exaggeration that makes something bigger or more important than it really is. Poets use hyperbole to emphasise a point. For example, ‘The lightbulb was brighter than the sun.’

**Simile** is when a poet compares two things that are not alike. Similes use the words ‘like’ or ‘as’. For example, ‘The boy was as clean as a bar of soap.’ In ‘Abiku’, the poet compares the scars on Abiku’s back to marks from a swordfish: ‘…down your back and front like beak of the sword-fish.’

Like a simile, a **metaphor** also compares two things that are not alike. However, metaphors do not use the words ‘like’ or ‘as’. For example, ‘The girl’s voice was a beautiful instrument.’ In ‘Abiku’, the poet compares the bamboo walls to straw: ‘…the bamboo walls are ready tinder for the fire.’

**Synecdoche** is when the poet refers to a part of something to mean the whole of that thing. For example, referring to a car as ‘wheels’.

**Practice**

**Activity 1**

Practise reading the poem aloud. Pay attention to the literary devices used in the poem.

‘Abiku’ by John Pepper Clark

Coming and going these several seasons,

Do stay out on the baobab tree,

Follow where you please your kindred spirits

If indoors is not enough for you.

True, it leaks through the thatch

When floods brim the banks

And the bats and the owls

Often tear in at night through the eaves,

And at harmattan, the bamboo walls

Are ready tinder for the fire

That dries the fresh fish up on the rack.

Still, it’s been the healthy stock

To several fingers, to many more will be

Who reach to the sun.

No longer then bestride the threshold

But step in and stay

For good. We know the knife scars

Serrating down your back and front

Like beak of the sword-fish

And both your ears notched

As a bondsman to this house,

Are all relics of your first comings.

Then step in, step in and stay

For her body is tired,

Tired, her milk going sour

Where many more mouths gladden the heart.

**Activity 2**

Answer the following comprehension questions about the poem.

1. Who is the author of the poem?
2. What is the setting in the poem?
3. What is the mood or feeling of the poem?
4. What is the theme in the poem?
5. In the lines, ‘No longer then bestride the threshold/ But step in and stay for good’ what is being asked?
6. Identify two relics of Abiku’s first coming.
7. Identify three pieces of evidence from the poem that show that the family is poor.
8. Why is the mother tired in the poem Abiku?

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**Activity 2**

1. The author is John Pepper Clark.
2. An African setting or a rural African setting.
3. The mood is unhappy. There is also sorrow and defiance.
4. Two themes of the poem are fate and reincarnation (belief in life after death).
5. The Abiku child is being asked not to go away in death but to stay and bring happiness to the mother.
6. The knife scar or marks on its body. The cut marks on its ears.
7. Example answer: The home is built of bamboo stems and thatch. The hut leaks whenever it rains. Owls and bats enter the hut and pester the family.
8. The mother is tired of the cycle of birth and death of the Abiku.