



About the Author



Charles Mungoshi

(b. 1947) is a Zimbabwean writer. He grew up working on his father's farm, where the time he spent alone inspired him to start creating stories. He writes in both English and Shona, one of the main languages spoken in Zimbabwe. His works have won the International PEN Award and the Commonwealth Writers Prize.

STANDARDS

Reading Literature

By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Language

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- b. Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.

The Setting Sun and the Rolling World

Concept Vocabulary

As you perform your first read of "The Setting Sun and the Rolling World," you will encounter these words.

patronized

obligations

psychological

Base Words If these words are unfamiliar to you, analyze each one to see if it contains a base word, or "inside" word, you know. Then, use your knowledge of the "inside" word, to determine the meaning of the unfamiliar word. Here is an example of how to apply this strategy.

Unfamiliar Word: *murkiness*

Familiar "Inside" Word: *murky*

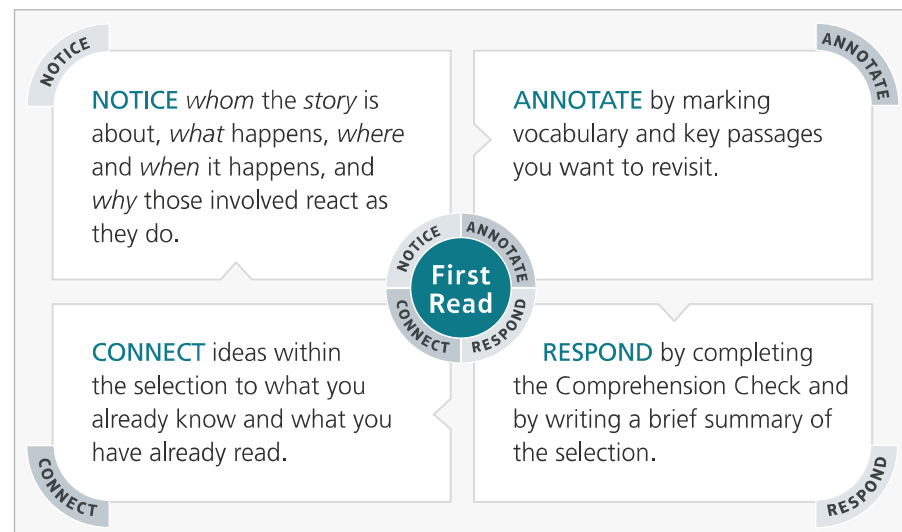
Context: But just as dust quickly settles over a glittering pebble revealed by a hoe, so a **murkiness** hid the gleam . . .

Conclusion: The word **murkiness** must mean something dusty or cloudy that makes it hard to see.

Apply your knowledge of base words and other vocabulary strategies to determine the meanings of unfamiliar words you encounter during your first read of "The Setting Sun and the Rolling World."

First Read FICTION

Apply these strategies as you conduct your first read. You will have an opportunity to complete a close read after your first read.



The Setting Sun and the Rolling World

Charles Mungoshi

BACKGROUND

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country in Africa. Traditionally, many Zimbabweans have made a living farming the land. When farming goes well, food is plentiful, but farmers are always at the mercy of unpredictable rainfall and weather.



- 1 **O**ld Musoni raised his dusty eyes from his hoe and the unchanging stony earth he had been tilling and peered into the sky. The white speck whose sound had disturbed his work and thoughts was far out at the edge of the yellow sky, near the horizon. Then it disappeared quickly over the southern rim of the sky and he shook his head. He looked to the west. Soon the sun would go down. He looked over the sunblasted land and saw the shadows creeping east, bleaker and taller with every moment that the sun shed each of its rays. Unconsciously wishing for rain and relief, he bent down again to his work and did not see his son, Nhamo, approaching.
- 2 Nhamo crouched in the dust near his father and greeted him. The old man half raised his back, leaning against his hoe, and said what had been bothering him all day long.
- 3 "You haven't changed your mind?"
- 4 "No, father."
- 5 There was a moment of silence. Old Musoni scraped earth off his hoe.
- 6 "Have you thought about this, son?"
- 7 "For weeks, father."
- 8 "And you think that's the only way?"
- 9 "There is no other way."
- 10 The old man felt himself getting angry again. But this would be the last day he would talk to his son. If his son was going away, he must not be angry. It would be equal to a curse. He himself

NOTES

Mark base words or indicate another strategy you used that helped you determine meaning.

patronized (PAY truh nyzd) *v.*

MEANING:

obligations (ob lih GAY shuhnz) *n.*

MEANING:

had taken chances before, in his own time, but he felt too much of a father. He had worked and slaved for his family and the land had not betrayed him. He saw nothing now but disaster and death for his son out there in the world. Lions had long since vanished but he knew of worse animals of prey, animals that wore redder claws than the lion's, beasts that would not leave an unprotected homeless boy alone. He thought of the white metal bird and he felt remorse.

11 "Think again. You will end dead. Think again, of us, of your family. We have a home, poor though it is, but can you think of a day you have gone without?"

12 "I have thought everything over, father, I am convinced this is the only way out."

13 "There is no only way out in the world. Except the way of the land, the way of the family."

14 "The land is overworked and gives nothing now, father. And the family is almost broken up."

15 The old man got angry. Yes, the land is useless. True, the family tree is uprooted and it dries in the sun. True, many things are happening that haven't happened before, that we did not think would happen, ever. But nothing is more certain to hold you together than the land and a home, a family. And where do you think you are going, a mere beardless kid with the milk not yet dry on your baby nose? What do you think you will do in the great treacherous world where men twice your age have gone and returned with their backs broken—if they returned at all? What do you know of life? What do you know of the false honey bird that leads you the whole day through the forest to a snake's nest? But all he said was: "Look. What have you asked me and I have denied you? What, that I have, have I not given you for the asking?"

16 "All. You have given me all, father." And here, too, the son felt hampered, **patronized** and his pent-up fury rolled through him. It showed on his face but stayed under control. You have given me damn all and nothing. You have sent me to school and told me the importance of education, and now you ask me to throw it on the rubbish heap and scrape for a living on this tired cold shell of the moon. You ask me to forget it and muck around in this slow dance of death with you. I have this one chance of making my own life, once in all eternity, and now you are jealous. You are afraid of your own death. It is, after all, your own death. I shall be around a while yet. I will make my way home if a home is what I need. I am armed more than you think and wiser than you can dream of. But all he said, too, was:

17 "Really, father, have no fear for me. I will be all right. Give me this chance. Release me from all **obligations** and pray for me."

- 18 There was a spark in the old man's eyes at these words of his son. But just as dust quickly settles over a glittering pebble revealed by the hoe, so a murkiness hid the gleam in the old man's eye. Words are handles made to the smith's¹ fancy and are liable to break under stress. They are too much fat on the hard unbreaking sinews of life.
- 19 "Do you know what you are doing, son?"
- 20 "Yes."
- 21 "Do you know what you will be a day after you leave home?"
- 22 "Yes, father."
- 23 "A homeless, nameless vagabond living on dust and rat's droppings, living on thank-yous, sleeping up a tree or down a ditch, in the rain, in the sun, in the cold, with nobody to see you, nobody to talk to, nobody at all to tell your dreams to. Do you know what it is to see your hopes come crashing down like an old house out of season and your dreams turning to ash and dung without a tang of salt in your skull? Do you know what it is to live without a single hope of ever seeing good in your own lifetime?" And to himself: Do you know, young bright ambitious son of my loins, the ruins of time and the pains of old age? Do you know how to live beyond a dream, a hope, a faith? Have you seen black despair, my son?
- 24 "I know it, father. I know enough to start on. The rest I shall learn as I go on. Maybe I shall learn to come back."
- 25 The old man looked at him and felt: Come back where? Nobody comes back to ruins. You will go on, son. Something you don't know will drive you on along deserted plains, past ruins and more ruins, on and on until there is only one ruin left: yourself. You will break down, without tears, son. You are human, too. Learn to the *haya*—the rain bird, and heed its warning of coming storm: plow no more, it says. And what happens if the storm catches you far, far out on the treeless plain? What, then, my son?
- 26 But he was tired. They had taken over two months discussing all this. Going over the same ground like animals at a drinking place until, like animals, they had driven the water far deep into the stony earth, until they had sapped all the blood out of life and turned it into a grim skeleton, and now they were creating a stampede on the dust, groveling for water. Mere thoughts. Mere words. And what are words? Trying to grow a fruit tree in the wilderness.
- 27 "Go son, with my blessings. I give you nothing. And when you remember what I am saying you will come back. The land is still yours. As long as I am alive you will find a home waiting for you."
- 28 "Thank you, father."

1. **smith** *n.* blacksmith; artisan who creates objects out of iron.

Mark base words or indicate another strategy you used that helped you determine meaning.

psychological (sy kuh LAHJ ih kuhl) *adj.*

MEANING:

29 “Before you go, see Chiremba. You are going out into the world. You need something to strengthen yourself. Tell him I shall pay him. Have a good journey, son.”

30 “Thank you, father.”

31 Nhamo smiled and felt a great love for his father. But there were things that belonged to his old world that were just lots of humbug² on the mind, empty load, useless scrap. He would go to Chiremba but he would burn the charms as soon as he was away from home and its sickening environment. A man stands on his feet and guts. Charms were for you—so was God, though much later. But for us now the world is godless, no charms will work. All that is just the opium you take in the dark in the hope of a light. You don’t need that now. You strike a match for a light. Nhamo laughed.

32 He could be so easily light-hearted. Now his brain worked with a fury only known to visionaries. The **psychological** ties were now broken, only the biological tied him to his father. He was free. He too remembered the aeroplane which his father had seen just before their talk. Space had no bounds and no ties. Floating laws ruled the darkness and he would float with the fiery balls. He was the sun, burning itself out every second and shedding tons of energy which it held in its power, giving it the thrust to drag its brood wherever it wanted to. This was the law that held him. The mystery that his father and ancestors had failed to grasp and which had caused their being wiped off the face of the earth. This thinking reached such a pitch that he began to sing, imitating as intimately as he could Satchmo’s³ voice: “What a wonderful world.” It was Satchmo’s voice that he turned to when he felt buoyant.

33 Old Musoni did not look at his son as he left him. Already, his mind was trying to focus at some point in the dark unforeseeable future. Many things could happen and while he still breathed he would see that nothing terribly painful happened to his family, especially to his stubborn last born, Nhamo. Tomorrow, before sunrise, he would go to see Chiremba and ask him to throw bones over the future of his son. And if there were a couple of ancestors who needed appeasement, he would do it while he was still around.

34 He noticed that the sun was going down and he scraped the earth off his hoe.

35 The sun was sinking slowly, bloody red, blunting and blurring all the objects that had looked sharp in the light of day. Soon a chilly wind would blow over the land and the cold cloudless sky would send down beads of frost like white ants over the unprotected land. 🌧️

2. **humbug** *n.* nonsense.

3. **Satchmo** nickname for famous American jazz musician Louis Armstrong (1901–1971).

MEDIA CONNECTION



STORIES OF ZIMBABWEAN WOMEN

Discuss It How does this video help you understand more about life in a rural village like the one where Nhamo lived?

Write your response before sharing your ideas.



Comprehension Check

Complete the following items after you finish your first read.
Review and clarify details with your group.

1. Why does Nhamo want to leave his family?
2. Why does Old Musoni want him to stay?
3. How does Nhamo feel about getting charms from Chiremba?
4. **Notebook** Confirm your understanding of the story by writing a short summary.

RESEARCH

Research to Clarify Choose at least one unfamiliar detail from the story. Briefly research that detail. How does the information you learned shed light on an aspect of the story?



THE SETTING SUN AND THE ROLLING WORLD

TIP

GROUP DISCUSSION

As you discuss the story, build on the comments of others and refer to the text to support your ideas.

WORD NETWORK

Add interesting words about growing up from the text to your Word Network.

STANDARDS

Reading Literature

Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader create such effects as suspense or humor.

Language

Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on *grade 8 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

b. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word.

c. Consult general and specialized reference materials, both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.

Close Read the Text

With your group, revisit sections of the text you marked during your First Read. **Annotate** what you notice. What **questions** do you have? What can you **conclude**?



Analyze the Text

CITE TEXTUAL EVIDENCE to support your answers.

Notebook Complete the activities.

- Review and Clarify** With your group, reread paragraph 10 of "The Setting Sun and the Rolling World." What does the author mean when he says that Musoni "felt too much of a father"? What "animals of prey" do you think the father worries about?
- Present and Discuss** Now, work with your group to share the passages from the text that you found especially important. Take turns presenting your passages. Discuss what you noticed in the text, what questions you asked, and what conclusions you reached.
- Essential Question: *What are some milestones on the path to growing up?*** What kind of milestone does the story explore? Why is it important? Discuss with your group.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Concept Vocabulary

patronized

obligations

psychological

Why These Words? The concept vocabulary words from the text are related. With your group, determine what the words have in common. Write your ideas, and add another word that fits the category.

Practice

Notebook Confirm your understanding of these words from the text by using each in a sentence. Provide context clues for the words.


Word Study

Greek Root: -psych- In "The Setting Sun and the Rolling World," the narrator observes that the "psychological ties" with his father were broken. The word *psychological* contains the Greek root *-psych-* which means "mind" or "spirit." Use a dictionary or thesaurus to identify several other words that have the same root. Write the words and their meanings.

Analyze Craft and Structure

Point of View in Fiction The perspective from which a story is told is its **point of view**. Using point of view, authors can control the information readers receive. Most stories are told from the first-person or third-person point of view.

- **First-person point of view** presents the story from the perspective of a character in the story. This character is the narrator and participates in the story's action. The narrator uses the pronouns *I*, *me*, and *my* to communicate what he or she sees, knows, thinks, or feels.
- **Third-person point of view** tells the story from the perspective of a narrator outside the story. The narrator uses pronouns such as *he*, *she*, and *they* to refer to the characters in the story. An **omniscient** third-person narrator knows everything that happens and reveals what each character thinks and feels. A **limited** third-person narrator reveals only the thoughts and feelings of a single character.

 **Notebook** Work with your group to identify the point of view the author uses in “The Setting Sun and the Rolling World.” Then, use a chart like the one shown to compare and contrast the points of view of Old Musoni and his son Nhamo. In the chart, note key passages from the story that show each character’s thoughts and feelings. Then, answer the questions that follow.

OLD MUSONI’S POINT OF VIEW	NHAMO’S POINT OF VIEW

1. (a) Use the details in your chart to identify key differences in the points of view of Old Musoni and Nhamo. (b) How do these differences develop the plot?
2. How would the story be different if it were told from a different point of view?

TIP

GROUP DISCUSSION

As you analyze a story, discuss the ways in which the story would change if it were told from a different point of view. How would these changes impact readers’ understanding?

THE SETTING SUN AND
THE ROLLING WORLD**STANDARDS****Writing**

- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

- b. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

- f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

- Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

- Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

Language

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

- c. Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood.
 - d. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.

Conventions

Verb Moods To write effectively and precisely, writers use a variety of **verb moods**.

VERB MOOD	WRITERS USE IT TO	EXAMPLE
Interrogative	ask a question	<i>Is Nhamo happy about leaving?</i>
Imperative	give a command	<i>Do not leave!</i>
Indicative	declare a fact or opinion	<i>The land is dry.</i>
Conditional	refer to something that may or may not happen	<i>I could go see Chiremba.</i>
	express uncertainty	<i>I might travel by plane.</i>
Subjunctive	express a wish, a hope, or a statement contrary to fact	<i>If Musoni were traveling, he would walk.</i>
	express a request, demand, or proposal	<i>Musoni asks that Nhamo be cautious.</i>

Read It

Work individually to find in the text an example of an interrogative verb, an imperative verb, a conditional verb, and a subjunctive verb. When you have finished, compare your findings with the group.

Write It

Writers sometimes use verb moods incorrectly. For example, writers may shift improperly between the **indicative** and the **imperative**.

Incorrect: Travelers must be cautious and don't get lost!

Correct: Travelers must be cautious and not get lost.

Writers sometimes use **indicative** when they should use **subjunctive**.

Incorrect: If I was Nhamo, I would be sad.

Correct: If I were Nhamo, I would be sad.

Work with your group to rewrite each sentence correctly.

1. If Musoni was younger, he **would understand Nhamo better**.
2. Sons should listen to their fathers and **don't talk back!**