

# **Dreaming of Light**

## **Grade 11 First Additional Language**

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## HOW TO EXPLORE EACH CHAPTER

This section of the study guide works through the chapters, one by one.

- There is a brief summary of each chapter.
- There are questions on each chapter. These are not to test you, but to help you get the most out of the book.

The **pre-reading** questions invite you to use your personal knowledge and experience and what you know about the novel to predict what is going to happen. You gain the most insights when you see how your predictions are right or are surprised by a turn the story takes.

The **during-reading** questions are there to alert you to some important elements and also to help you notice things as you read. It is probably a good idea to skim through the chapter first to gain a broad idea of what happens, and then to read more slowly so you can take in more. Jot down your answers in point form as you read.

The **post-reading questions** are for you to work on when you have read the chapter. They are meant to let you see how well you have understood the chapter, and to help you read better and with richer understanding.

- There is a list of definitions of useful words from each chapter.
- There is a brief description of the symbols and themes of each chapter.
- There are also two opportunities to practise doing formal assessment of the kind that you will have to do in tests and examinations. The first comes after Chapter 4 and the second after Chapter 10.

### 1. Identify the kind of answer you are being asked to give

There are five basic levels of questions: literal, reorganization, inference, evaluation and appreciation.

#### 1.1 Literal questions

Literal questions ask you to give information that is explicitly in the extract or in another part of the novel. Give only the required information, do not discuss or comment on it.

Keywords	Examples
<b>Name</b> the things/people/places/ideas ...	<b>Who</b> finds the newspaper report on Spike?
<b>State</b> the facts/reasons/points/ideas ...	<b>State/Give</b> two reasons why Taiba wanted to learn English.
<b>Identify</b> the reasons/persons/causes...	<b>Why</b> is Papa Mavuso so bitter?

### 3. Chapter by chapter

#### Chapter 1

##### Development of the plot

Setting the scene and introducing the main characters, Regile and Taiba. The **problem** is also introduced. Regile is in charge of the team of boys who have been trafficked into South Africa to work underground at this mine. He survives the horrors of being underground by being aloof and refusing to hope for anything different or better. It becomes difficult to keep this up when Taiba begins to ask him questions about the things he has not allowed himself to think about and to express his hope that they will be rescued.

#### Questions

##### *Pre-reading*

Thinking about the way Regile is pictured on the cover, how happy do you think he is with the life he leads?

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##### *During-reading*

1. A shoot-out usually means injury or even death. Why is Taiba excited when he hears the sound of shooting?

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2. Regile says that he uses a harsh voice.

What words tell us that Regile has not always spoken in a harsh voice?

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3. Regile says he can hear Taiba smiling.

(a) How would you be able to hear that someone is smiling?

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(b) Why would it be unusual for someone to smile underground (in this mine)?

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4. Refer to page 33. Regile tells Taiba to stop talking. Why does he use a harsh voice to do so?

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**Post-reading**

1. In what ways are the men better off than the boys?

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2. What is Taiba's reason for thinking it would be good to learn to speak English well?

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3. Why do you think that Aires is always tired?

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4. Are Regile's lies to his mother justified? Explain your view.

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5. (a) "I'm not supposed to want anything. It's weak and dangerous" (p. 34). List the TWO things you think that Regile wants most. Explain your choices.

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(b) If you were in Regile's situation, what would you miss most?

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6. The South African zama zamas come back to work in the mines no matter how many times they are jailed. What is the reason for this?

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**Definition of useful words**

shoot-out (noun)	<i>a gunfight between two forces</i> (here the security forces and the illegal miners are shooting at each other)
signifies (verb)	<i>means or is a sign of</i> (Taiba knows that gun fire means that the security guards must be in the mine. He hopes that this means a chance of rescue.)
puffed up (verb, past tense)	<i>enlarged, swelled</i> (Taiba's cheeks became bigger when he smiled)

trapped (verb, past tense)	<i>unable to get out</i> (the gases are contained behind the rocks until a rockfall, when they are able to escape and do harm to the men nearby)
obstinate (adjective)	<i>not willing to change his mind</i> (Taiba continues to believe that he and Aires will escape, no matter how many times Regile tells him it is impossible)
intruder (noun)	<i>someone who has no right to be there</i> (Regile believes that men should not go underground, the private space of the earth)
capering (participle functioning as an adjective)	<i>jumping about, dancing</i> (in the dark, the shadows seem like creatures that are wildly moving about)
listening-sleep (compound noun) (neologism)	<i>sleeping lightly enough to be able to listen</i> (Regile knows how dangerous it is to be underground so he feels he needs to be on the alert all the time)
clustered (participle functioning as an adjective)	<i>A number of things grouped together</i> (the stars seem so close together that they form a group)

## Symbols

### **Light**

Light symbolises all that brings comfort, security and pleasure as opposed to the heat, darkness and danger of the world underground.

### **Darkness**

Darkness (and excruciating heat) represents the forces of evil. Underground in the mine, it feeds fear, diminishes confidence and allows bad things to go undetected.

## Themes

### **Caring and love**

Taiba constantly makes sure that Aires's spirits are kept up. He comforts and encourages him.

This is contrasted with Regile's attitude to his team. He is hard and unfriendly. In the two months he has worked with this team of "recruits", he has made no effort to learn their names or anything about them. His relationship with them is limited to overseeing their work.

### **Good and evil**

The syndicates break into the disused mines and operate illegally. The law does not act against illegal mining. It seems that the police feel they are not paid enough for the kind of danger they would face. It seems all of the adult miners are armed. Papa Mavuso claims to have bribed some of the police to ignore the mining operations.