

**METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO TEACHING EPIC WORKS IN  
LITERATURE LESSONS**

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**Abstract:** This article examines the theoretical foundations and practical mechanisms of teaching epic works in literature lessons. It analyzes the genre features of epic texts, their plot-compositional structure, system of images, and artistic techniques, as well as effective methods for enabling students to deeply comprehend these elements. The study reveals the significance of analytical models, interactive teaching methods, problem-based questioning, and integration of historical-cultural context when studying epic works. The findings show that a comprehensive approach to reading and analyzing epic texts expands students' literary horizons and develops their skills in holistic understanding of artistic works.

**Keywords:** epic work, literary education, methods of analysis, plot structure, artistic world, educational technologies, student perception.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Teaching epic works in literature lessons requires a comprehensive methodological approach that takes into account the artistic, historical, and cultural significance of the genre. Epics, with their complex narrative structures, heroic characters, and profound moral-ethical themes, offer rich material for developing students' analytical, interpretative, and aesthetic abilities. Effective instruction involves not only familiarizing learners with the plot and characters, but also guiding them toward understanding the deeper layers of meaning, including the worldview of the author, the socio-cultural background, and the symbolic nature of epic storytelling. Modern literature pedagogy integrates various methodological approaches – structural, comparative, contextual, interactive, and competency-based – to make the study of epic works more meaningful and engaging. These approaches help students develop critical thinking, interpret narrative patterns, analyze character development, understand genre-specific features, and relate epic themes to contemporary realities. Thus, teaching epic literature becomes not just an exploration of past heroic narratives, but a powerful educational process that shapes students' cultural awareness and intellectual development. An epic work is a complex piece of literature belonging to the epic genre – one of the three major literary forms. Epic literature encompasses a system of genres aimed at broadly depicting the life of society, people's daily life, historical events, and social issues. As one of the oldest and most widespread forms of verbal art, the epic plays an important role in preserving a nation's worldview, spiritual nature, historical memory, and cultural experience. The leading feature of epic works is a narrative form of representation. The author narrates events directly or through a designated storyteller. Therefore, epic literature is characterized by a broad scope of events, free use of spatial and temporal frames, and the depiction of human fate in close connection with the social environment and historical epoch.

## **MAIN PART**

The main characteristic of the epic genre is the depiction of life phenomena not within narrow limits of an individual fate but within a wide context of social life, forming a holistic panorama. Another important feature is the diversity of character systems. Through the fate of a single

protagonist, the life of an entire era or social stratum may be revealed. Characters' traits, actions, and worldviews are portrayed in detail, together with their place in society and social surroundings. The author connects each character's actions with the demands of the time and the specifics of the historical period, creating a unified artistic system. The complexity of plot and composition is of particular significance in epic works. The plot often consists of several branches, and secondary narrative lines may intertwine with the main one. The narration may slow down or accelerate, allowing readers to immerse themselves more deeply in the artistic world. The spatial-temporal framework varies: sometimes long historical periods are covered, and sometimes only several years of a particular community's life. Epic works not only describe life but also provide philosophical interpretation. Through artistic images, the author reveals relationships between the individual and society, personal interests and social duty, freedom and justice, tradition and innovation. All this enhances the educational and cognitive significance of the epic genre. Epic literature accumulates the spiritual experience of a people and passes it from generation to generation. Kazakh heroic and historical legends, classical dastans, as well as 20th-century novels and novellas form an important part of the national cultural heritage. The genre range of epic works is extremely broad. It includes epics, novels, epopoeias, dastans, novellas, short stories and others, each with its own characteristics. For example, heroic epics express the people's ideals of heroism, novels portray personality psychology in connection with social changes, while epopoeias convey extensive historical events. Even short stories may contain epic features, though limited in scope. The linguistic features of epic works are also significant: various artistic devices are used, the language is rich in imagery, and historical or ethnographic terms often appear. The author strives to accurately convey the people's way of life and worldview. Dialogues, monologues, and authorial digressions help reveal characters' personalities. One of the essential functions of epic literature is the formation of national identity and historical consciousness. Through epics, people transmit knowledge about their origins, national values, ideals of heroism, and life principles. Thus, epic works serve not only as literary heritage but also as cultural, historical, and social monuments. In middle-school curricula, texts are selected according to genre and theme. Since grades 5-9 form the foundation of literary education according to state standards, the curriculum includes the best works of Kazakh literature – from oral folk literature to modern texts. These epic works correspond to students' age-related perception, world outlook, and personal development. In the 5th-grade Kazakh literature curriculum, attention is paid to the plot, composition, genre features, character descriptions, depictions of customs and traditions, portrayals of nature, and the moral-linguistic features of the work. Students are given opportunities to discuss events, express opinions, complete creative tasks, and develop written speech. Epic works have a multilevel structure, including mythological, historical, sociocultural, and artistic elements. The short story is a small prose genre. It presents events and character behavior concisely, covering a short period of time. This makes short stories easy for students to grasp. However, they should not be taught superficially. Beginning literary education with short stories helps students later master more extensive prose genres such as novellas and novels. A student who thoroughly understands a short story will find it easier to analyze longer prose works. Therefore, teachers must emphasize the importance of the short story as an entry point into prose literature. A plan plays an important role in understanding the text and mastering the plot. The teacher may present the plan in two ways: either by giving students a ready-made plan beforehand to guide their comprehension, or by creating the plan together with the class during analysis. For example, consider sample plans for Altynsarin's short stories:

“Garden Trees” Plan:

1. Father and son.
2. The son's question.
3. The father's instructive explanation.

“The Clear Spring” Plan:

1. Meeting of travelers at the spring.

“The Rich Man's Son and the Poor Man's Son”

Plan:

1. Asan and Usen get lost.
2. Usen's actions.
3. The moral lesson received from his father.
4. The boys find their way back to the village.

Although these stories are short, their messages are profound. Altynsarin's works typically contain deep educational meaning. In the first story, the father's explanation about garden trees is connected to the upbringing of children. He helps his son understand the beauty of nature and the importance of protecting it. In “The Clear Spring,” three travelers interpret the inscription on a stone – “If you are a traveler, be like this spring” – each according to his worldview. The author encourages young readers to value purity, kindness, and sincerity. In “The Rich Man's Son and the Poor Man's Son,” Altynsarin depicts two boys raised in different social environments. Usen's resourcefulness results from the lessons received from his father. This story encourages students to respect hard work and cherish cultural traditions.

## **CONCLUSION**

Methodological approaches to teaching epic works play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of literary education. By combining traditional analytical methods with modern pedagogical strategies, teachers can ensure a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of epic texts. Such approaches foster students' ability to appreciate the artistic value of the epic genre, recognize its historical and cultural relevance, and interpret its universal themes in meaningful ways. Integrating interactive techniques, contextual analysis, and student-centered activities strengthens learners' engagement, encourages independent thinking, and develops their creative and interpretative skills. Ultimately, a well-structured methodological framework allows epic works to become not only objects of academic study, but also sources of inspiration, moral reflection, and cultural enrichment for students. Epic works are an important source of cultural and moral education. A well-organized analysis of epic literature develops students' aesthetic perception, strengthens their national identity, and enhances their intellectual potential. Effective methodology combines analytical, creative, and cultural approaches.

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