

# GCSE English Literature Activities

## *Political Theatre*

These activities are designed to:

- Explore how Simon Stephens unites the 'political' and the 'personal' in the play.
- Explore to what extent *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* is a political play.

**Watch** this video created by the National theatre which talks about 'Politics in theatre' and write down three points the playwrights make about political theatre:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCvYfScSuBE>

### Political Theatre

- Presents an argument, statement or question to its audience.
- Discusses wider themes, relevant to a particular society/social group.
- Is about people; their wants and their needs.
- Is making the political, personal.

### Quick Question:

- Does political theatre have to be about politics?
- Why/why not?

### Group Task

Divide the class into groups of four and give each group ones of the following statements:

**Political theatre presents an argument, statement or question to its audience.**

**Political theatre discusses wider themes, relevant to a particular society/social group.**

**Political theatre is about people; their wants and their needs.**

**Political theatre makes the political, personal.**

Ask students to find three examples from the play *Curious Incident* that prove (or disprove!) the statement that they have been given.

For each piece of evidence, they must ensure that they are able to justify why they have chosen it.

Each group should then take it in turns to present their ideas to the rest of the class.

You can either ask them to talk through their notes or set them a poster-making challenge, which they can present.

### Discuss:

**What effect can a political play have on an audience?**

**What are some of the themes that make the play political?**

**Why might these themes be relevant/engaging to an audience?**

### Find Out More

If you or your students are interested in exploring more political plays, you can use the free **New Views** playwriting resource or sign up to the New Views playwriting programme and competition for schools.

[www.new-views.tv](http://www.new-views.tv)

