

GCSE English Literature Activities

Before you explore the play...

These activities are designed to:

- Give students an insight into the way Christopher sees the world.
- Explore how language can be used to show the different ways people think and to elicit different reactions. This will help students comment on how Simon Stephens uses language.
- Address the context component of their GCSE in which they can discuss how different readers and audiences might react and show an understanding of the world in which the play is set.

Christopher's Surroundings

Ask students to create a detailed map of either the area where they live or their journey to school. Over a few days or for a homework task, ask them to add in as much detail as they possibly can. For example: on average how many people wait at their bus stop in a week or how many steps are there up to their flat?

An alternative way to do this within one lesson is to show a clip or a picture of a busy London railway station and ask students to list all the things they can see.

Compare these maps with sections of the text where Christopher describes his surroundings and discuss what the differences are.

Lies

Ask students a series of questions where they cannot lie and must answer in as much detail as possible.

See how much more information they have to give to a question such as:

- "Have you got much family?"
- "What did you have for dinner last night?"
- "Oh my goodness what is that woman wearing?"

Ask students how they feel having to answer in that way and how it felt to be told so much information. In what scenarios might this be helpful/unhelpful and why?

Ask students to improvise one of the scenes where answering questions like

this might be awkward. They could explore the way different people might react: a social worker, a friend, a stranger at a train station.

Ask students to perform these scenes for the rest of the class and discuss the issues.

Metaphors

Ask students to explore their own idiolect and think of examples of metaphors they use in everyday life. Students could draw or enact literal representations of examples like: she's so hot.

Alternatively students should 'explode the metaphor' and think about all the possible reasons we use that metaphorical phrase in our day-to-day lives.

Students then discuss why this makes English a hard language to learn and understand and who it might be difficult for.

What could this activity tell students about the main character in the play *Curious Incident*, Christopher Boone, who finds metaphors confusing?

Predictions

After completing all three activities explain to students that the main character can't lie; notices everything he sees in immense detail and finds metaphors difficult.

Ask students to predict what kind of person he is and how he might find life.

Students could improvise scenes that incorporate everything they know about him and how he might interact with the world.

