

## GCSE English Literature Activities

*While you are exploring the play in class...*

These activities are designed to:

- Encourage close analysis of the language used by the characters.
- Help students explore the complex structure of the play.
- Explore students' reactions to different characters.

### Sympathy Graph

Create a simple line graph that has 36-61 along the x axis and 1-10 along the y axis.

After the discovery that Judy is not dead students should rate how much sympathy they feel for Christopher, Ed, Judy and Roger as the play continues.

Each lesson, add to the graph and annotate with particular quotations that mark a change in your sympathies.

### Language features to notice and discuss:

- Sense of pace created by short sentences and stichomythia.
- Stage directions which imply things to the reader/audience but not to Christopher, thus creating dramatic irony.
- What the purpose of the Maths appendix is.
- Use of diary, dialogue and letters to give an insight into other characters' thoughts and feelings.

### Gingerbread Man

This activity helps students to think about the minor characters and their interactions with Christopher but also highlights clearly the difference between what is really going on and what Christopher thinks is going on.

Students should each have a blank/empty 'gingerbread man' outline which can represent any character in the play that you wish to focus on.

Inside the gingerbread man, ask students to write how they think that character is feeling on the inside or what they might be thinking.

On the outside of the gingerbread man they should write what other people think about them. This should be indicated through textual evidence.

Discuss.

Repeat this as many times as necessary to build up some clear and agreed responses to the different characters in the play.

### Creative Writing

This exercise could be kick-started by doing **'thought tracking'** (this is when students have created freeze-frame pictures of particular moments and, in their frozen state, you tap them on the shoulder and they should try to speak the *thoughts* or feelings of their character aloud) or **'hot seating'** (a popular drama technique where a student is put in the 'hot-seat' and the rest of the group ask questions of him/her that they need to respond to in-role. If students find this difficult, you could take the hot-seat first) the characters first.

Ask students to write an inner monologue for one or more of the characters other than Christopher; perhaps one of the neighbours that he meets when he is searching for information about Wellington's death.

The monologue should include events in the play and be based on the reactions and actions that Simon Stephens has already given us.

