

Knowledge Map: Our Day Out

Synopsis/introduction:

The play is about students from an inner-city school in Liverpool who go on a trip to Conway Castle in Wales. Mrs Kay teaches a class of illiterate pupils, called the "Progress Class". At the last minute, the disciplinarian Deputy Headteacher, Mr Briggs, also joins.

It was written for a film which was broadcast by the BBC, and was later adapted into a musical.

<p>Themes</p> <p>Social class</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Stereotyping</p> <p>Prejudice</p> <p>Social mobility</p> <p>Poverty</p> <p>Conflict</p> <p>Morality</p> <p>Nature vs nurture</p>	<p>The Characters:</p> <p>Mrs Kay: the kind hearted and generous teacher of the progress class.</p> <p>Mr Briggs: the deputy head of the school who believes in strict discipline.</p> <p>Susan: A young teacher who is supporting on the trip.</p> <p>Colin: A young teacher who is supporting on the trip</p> <p>Les: a grumpy bus driver who pre-judges the students</p> <p>Reilly: An older student who used to be in the progress class. A bad influence on the others.</p> <p>Digga: An older student who used to be in the progress class. A bad influence on the others.</p> <p>Carol: a thoughtful student who seems unhappy with her life in Liverpool.</p> <p>Linda: A girl with a bad attitude. She has a crush on Colin, and clashes with Mr Briggs.</p> <p>Andrews: A young student with a difficult home life.</p>	<p>How to read the play...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All the characters names are in capital letters, to make them clear. All stage directions are in brackets and italics. These must be read by someone, even if it's midway through a character speaking. The character must then act upon these stage directions. When an ellipsis is used (...) you must allow that break in the speech. Use punctuation correctly when reading. If there is a question mark (?), read it in a questionable tone. There are line numbers on the right hand side, in 10s. Use these to direct which line number you are reading from. <p>Context:</p> <p>Willy Russell was born in 1947 into a working-class family near to Liverpool. He left school at 15 without academic qualifications and became a hairdresser. By the age of 20 he felt the need to return to education and, after leaving university, he became a teacher at a comprehensive school in his home city. Economic decline in the 1970s meant that many people had little or no income, which divided the rich and poor. Lack of education and health care stopped people from getting good jobs which mean they will have little or no income which means that social exclusion becomes a cycle for families.</p> <p>In the 1980's Liverpool's famous docks, a traditional source of local employment, were allowed to run down during this economic downturn, and thousands of households fell into poverty; crime levels increased; housing was allowed to deteriorate and illegal drug use became more common. Some of this context is directly reflected in the play, for example, Russell shows the terrible effects of unemployment on a number of pupils in the progress class.</p>	<p>Assessment tasks:</p> <p>Writing (to be completed halfway through the unit and performed as an S&L task): Write a formal letter or email of complaint from the Zoo manager to the headteacher of the school.</p> <p>Reading (to be completed at the end of the unit): Compare the different characters and teaching styles of Mrs Kay and Mr Briggs</p>
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Key vocabulary/ spellings:

Accent, colleagues, Dialect, Conway, Willy Russell, behaviour, stereotype, rehearse, Liverpool, cigarettes, character, poverty, scene, empathy, stage directions, relationships, Mrs Kay, attitude, Reilly, formality, conflict, performance