

## THE OUTCASTS

### SOME TEACHING IDEAS

Incorporates ideas useful for: SEN, EBD, English, Drama, Citizenship, Personal Issues and Development, Gifted and Talented (extension), tutor groups (bonding and understanding others)

- *Character investigation - strengths and weaknesses*

Tailor to your students' needs by asking for a specified character, (even giving page ref. if necessary), providing a list, or, for those requiring extension, allowing them to select one or cover all main characters. Traits can be listed as simple bullet points; student can draw the character and arrange strong/weak points in single words around them; develop into an essay, extension students showing also character development; kinaesthetic learners may like to act out (can be done mute, as a tableau) moments where the characters' strong and weak points come to the fore e.g. Joe carrying Mia (practical, problem-solving, kindness, physical strength). Bear in mind possibly quite a few will like to show Chris and Iz's fight - reiterate those ground rules..! Chris is an interesting character, as some of his strengths in the "real world" - logic and reason - don't seem to help once the group has slipped dimensions.

- *Celebrating strengths*

Joe thinks that the knowledge he does have - for example, about cattle - isn't valuable as it doesn't seem to matter much in school, for exams, and so on. He is not good at maths, but sees pattern quickly - hence shouts out the answer from the frequency table in the nick of time, before others

who are better at maths.

Having identified the characters' strengths, weaknesses (and recognised that some character traits can be both, depending on situation - eg. stubborn:resolute), students might want to discuss some extra curricular knowledge/strengths they have - hobbies etc. Encourage positive responses, make the classroom a “no put-down zone” with posters, if necessary. Depending on required outcome, can be a prepared oral presentation, or more informal discussion (though of course, rules such as turn-taking need to be in place).

- *What was your favourite part? And of course, the dreaded “Give your reasons”!*

If you're reading the book in class, students could be given prior notice to keep an eye out for, and mark, favourite parts as they go along. If required, the question can be broken down into a)event b) descriptive.

This is a lovely question, as, in asking for/allowing choice from the student, it

- ✓ prevents top set disenchantment with “dry analysis”
- ✓ is non-confrontational for students who either lack confidence/ challenge didactic approaches
  - ✓ invites engagement from disaffected students
  - ✓ checks understanding
- ✓ subtly covers areas of the curriculum (personal response, author intention, imagery, language etc.)
- ✓ According to requirements, can take the form of a piece of literary analysis (essay), persuasive writing, formal presentation with preparation, or informal oral/discussion. Some classes or groups may reap the usual benefits of oral approach - as students are likely to occasionally choose the same pieces, reiteration will embed learning and understanding, and bonding will occur with the opportunity to learn from peers as opposed to a central teacher.

- *The challenges which the characters face cannot be overcome by running away or brute strength/violence. Investigate and discuss.*
- *Have the characters changed due to their experiences? If so, how is this demonstrated? Extension - hypothesise about their lives after we leave them. What challenges might they still face?*
- *Extension/ gifted and talented students: Find examples of the different references to nets - (give additional clues/reminders if necessary - Johan's description of the net within the body, the net of dimensions, the individual and the community (jellyfish) etc.) - and discuss.*