

GCSE English Language Workshop: Reading and Speaking

Overview: This workshop provides students with the opportunity to develop Reading and Speaking skills which align with the Assessment Objectives of the Pearson GCSE English exam. Within the theme of Higher Education, students will explore two different texts: an extract from 'Normal People' (by Sally Rooney) and anecdotal texts from Arden University students, comparing different views on the university experience. Additionally, the workshop allows for personalisation in discussions surrounding university, increasing student awareness of their options after college. Key skills which are developed include:

- Gist reading and reading for detail (AO1)
- Inferring meaning of vocabulary from context (AO1)
- Comparing and contrasting opposing ideas within the same theme (AO3)
- Extrapolating the main ideas and attitudes from two different texts (AO3) (AO4)
- Developing and learning new vocabulary (AO6)
- Listening and responding to others' during discussion (AO7) (AO8)

Class Resources Required: • Computer with projector (to project slides), students' mobile phones, paper copies of handouts, blu tack or drawing pins to post texts on classroom walls, pens/pencils and tables and chairs grouped together (groups of 3/4).

Proposed Session Plan: 90 minute session

Learning Objectives	Learning Activities
<p>By the end of the workshop, students will have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed greater awareness of the Higher Education experience. 	<p>Activity 1 – Lead- in (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are shown three photographs of different buildings and are asked 'What do these buildings have in common?' <i>Answer: They are all universities.</i> • Students then work in groups to discuss the following questions: (AO8) <p>1. What are some of the subjects you can study at university?</p>

- Practised the skills of gist reading, reading for detail. (AO1)
- Practised the skills of inferring meaning from context (AO1) and demonstrated this understanding with textual and lexical references. (AO4)
- Have developed their vocabulary; descriptive adjectives and university terminology. (AO6)
- Compared and contrasted 4 texts describing different university experiences. (AO3)
- Engaged in discussion and reflection of their own assumptions about university. (AO8)

2. Do you know anyone who has been to university?
3. What was their experience? (positive/neutral/negative?)
4. What are some of the reasons people choose **not** to go to university?
5. Would you like to go to university? Why/why not?

Activity 2 – Myth busting quiz (10 minutes)

- Students complete a Kahoot quiz which targets misconceptions about university.

Example Question:

Which of the following is NOT a real university degree course?

- Construction Project Management BSc (Hons) (Heriot-Watt University)
- Ethical Hacking (University of Arbertay, Dundee)
- Philosophy of Homer Simpson (University of Glasgow)
- Mythical Wildlife Management (fake)

Activity 3 – Connell Waldron (5 minutes)

- Students are shown a picture of the protagonist from 'Normal People' and asked if they know who he is.
- Two follow-up questions encourage students to speculate: (AO8)
- Which subject do you think he studied? (English Literature)
- Which university do you think he went to? (Trinity College Dublin)
- A final question encourages deeper thinking: (AO8)
- What do you think Connell's experience of university was like?

- Presented their ideas to the class in short feedback stages. (AO7)

NOTE: These objectives complement: AO1, AO3, AO4, AO6, AO7, AO8

Activity 4 – Gist Reading 1 (5 minutes)

- Students are asked to check their answer to 'c' by reading the extract from 'Normal People' (Rooney, S. (2018) *Normal People*. London: Faber & Faber, pp. 67–68.)
- At this stage ss are encouraged to read only for gist, to get the general sense of Connell's experience (positive, negative, neutral). (AO1)
- Follow up questions to consolidate understanding are asked (AO3), (AO4), (AO8)

Example question:

Which words did the writer use to make you think this?

Activity 5 – Vocabulary Building (10 minutes)

- In preparation for the detailed reading, this stage focuses on new, potentially challenging, vocabulary from the extract.
- Students are given the definitions of 9 key words or phrases from the extract.
- They must then search the extract in small groups to try to find the lexis which corresponds to the definitions. (AO6)
- Students are assured that inferring (or even guessing) the meaning **is** allowed as this is an important skill in reading comprehension. (AO1)

Activity 5 – Reading for Detail 1 (15 minutes)

- Student read the extract again, this time they are given more time.
- They must find the answers to the detailed comprehension questions, which elicit both explicit and implicit meaning from the text. (AO1).

- Students are allowed to check/discuss their answers together in this task, to build confidence. (AO8)

Activity 5 – Response to text (5 minutes)

- After feedback on the comprehension task, students are asked some ‘response to text’ questions to encourage further engagement with the text. (AO8)

Example question:

How would you have felt in Connell's position?

Activity 6 – Reading 2 (15 minutes)

- In the activity students will read 3 more, much shorter and simpler, texts.
- These texts were written by Arden university students for the ‘Student Voices’ project which captures the views and experiences of alumni from the university.
- The texts will be displayed on different walls in the room, so students must now move around the classroom, providing a change in environment and pace.
- Students must find 3 differences between Connell’s experience and that of the Arden alumni. (AO3)
- Students can take their pens and paper to make notes on what they find.

Activity 7 – Presenting Ideas (10 minutes)

- Students discuss in groups which differences they found. (AO8)
- They must decide together which 3 they will share with the class.

- Sentence stems will be projected, and students encouraged to use them when reporting to the class. (AO7) (AO6)

Example sentence stems:

'Connell felt whereas student 1 felt...'

'Students at Arden seem... but Connell's classmates were...'

- Follow up questions to consolidate understanding are asked. (AO3) (AO4) (AO8)

Example questions:

How does this compare to Connell's experience? (AO3)

Which words did the writer use to make you think this? (AO3), (AO4)

Activity 8 – Lead- in Discussion Revisited (10 minutes)

- As a final, plenary activity, the questions from activity 1 are posted again.
- Students are encouraged to notice if their answer to any of the following questions has changed:

1. *What are some of the subjects you can study at university?*
2. *Do you know anyone who has been to university? (including the students who we read about today).*
3. *What was their experience? (positive/neutral/negative?)*
4. *What are some of the reasons people choose **not** to go to university?*
5. *Would you like to go to university? Why/why not?*

