

Step Wars



Issue: Family

Literacy/English framework links

Primary Literacy Framework strand 7: Understanding and interpreting texts

- Year 4: deduce characters' reasons for behaviour from their actions
- Year 5: Infer writers' perspectives from what is written and from what is implied
- Year 6: understand underlying themes, causes and points of view

Secondary English Framework strand 5: Reading for meaning; 5.2:

- Year 7: make a personal response to a text and provide some textual reference in support
- Year 8: respond to a text by making precise points and providing relevant evidence in support of those points

PSHE links

- Relationships – families
- Respecting others – how to value and respect differences in others, and how to respect and deal with different interests, opinions and points of view
- Managing change – how to handle new situations and relationships

Setting up the group

The most challenging parts in this play are the roles of Jay, Conor and Amy. Jay has the largest speaking part. Rashid and Ross are less challenging and the part of the narrator could be read by the least able member of the group.

If you have fewer than six pupils, you could ask half the group to read the parts of Jay, Rashid and the narrator and half to read the parts of Conor, Amy and Ross.

Warm-up

Introduce the play by explaining that it is about two step-brothers who are forced to share a room when their parents marry, but they have nothing in common and dislike each other. Talk about families and step-families with sensitivity. Discuss sharing a bedroom with a brother or sister. What are the advantages and disadvantages?

Choose pupils to read the different parts, and give each reader the appropriate character card (page 31). See page 3 for ideas about getting into role.

The reading sessions

The play is written in four scenes, each taking about 15–20 minutes to read as a group, so you can split the reading into four sessions. All the characters appear in each scene, apart from Scene 2 where Ross is mentioned but doesn't appear.

Teaching and learning focus

Use drama techniques such as hot seating and freeze frame (see page 4) to help the pupils think about the characters and their motivation. For example, at the end of Scene 2, put Jay in the hot seat and ask questions to find out why he is behaving like he is. What could he do to improve the situation? At the end of Scene 3, put Amy in the hot seat. Ask questions about how she feels and how she is dealing with Jay and Conor's animosity. Do the pupils think she is right to sing in Conor's band or is she being disloyal to Jay? Freeze frame the scene after page 42 (where Jay gives his backing to Conor). What is each character thinking at this moment? What do the pupils think will happen next? Do they think that Jay has really changed his mind about Conor?

Performing the play

The play takes place mainly in Jay and Amy's house, and also in the sports hall. A large part of the dialogue is performed through phone calls. If staging the play, you could use simple props to represent Jay/Conor's room and the sports hall. The phone calls would not need scenery apart from the phones. A computer would be useful as a prop, as Jay plays on it a lot and also uses it to search the Internet for a key plot point in Scene 4. Pupils can wear casual clothes.

Extension ideas

- Ask the pupils to role play a new scene for the play, in which Jay, Conor, Amy, Ross and Rashid go to the match together. Do Jay and Conor remain friendly or return to their old arguments? Does Conor change his mind about football? Invite them to practise their role play and then perform it for other groups.
- Give pupils copies of Photocopy Masters 11 and 12 for follow-up activities.

CHARACTER SKETCH

Name: _____ Date: _____

Fill in the spaces in these sentences about Jay. Use words from the box to help you.

football	lose	angry	unwelcome	prize	disloyal
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1. Jay is _____ because he has to share his room with Conor.
2. Jay is into _____, not music.
3. He makes Conor feel very _____.
4. He thinks Amy is being _____ by liking Conor's band.
5. He agrees to watch the competition because he wants to see them _____.
6. Jay agrees the band was good when he discovers the _____ is tickets to the football match.



- Now write three sentences to describe Conor.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

MAKING FRIENDS

Name: _____ Date: _____

In pairs or with your group, read the six statements below about how Jay and Conor might have behaved.

Talk about what might have happened if they had behaved in these different ways.

Act out your ideas with the group, then show your role play to another group.



1. Jay welcomes Conor to his room. He offers to take him to play football. Conor agrees.

2. Jay welcomes Conor to his room. He offers to take him to play football. Conor refuses and says football is rubbish.

3. Jay admires Conor for his drumming and asks Conor to teach him to play. Conor agrees.

4. Jay admires Conor for his drumming and asks Conor to teach him to play. Conor refuses.

5. Jay, Conor, Ross, Rashid and Amy decide to form their own group to enter the music competition.

6. Jay, Conor, Ross, Rashid and Amy decide to form their own five-a-side football team.

EXTENSION

Write your own statements, then swap them with another group.

How good was their new role play? How did you decide?