

Year 8

'Adolescence'

How do the choices we make, and the cultures we live in, shape who we become?

Unit overview:

This scheme of work has been written in response to Prime Minister Keir Starmer's endorsement of the screening of Netflix's *Adolescence* (2025) in schools to prompt discussions on online misogyny and the influence of toxic online cultures on young people.

For 7 lessons, pupils explore the fictional story of Jamie Miller, a teenager whose actions have serious consequences. Through a range of drama-based pedagogies, students are challenged to empathise with Jamie and the people affected by his choices. Pupils will build their understanding of key themes, such as toxic masculinity, peer pressure, emotional safety, and the impact of digital spaces. They will work in different group sizes to devise scenes, interpret character perspectives, and respond to key turning points in Jamie's story. Homework tasks are designed to provoke discussion and feed into practical classroom activities. Students will be assessed formatively throughout the scheme on their making, performing, and responding skills. Peer and self-assessment will be pivotal in supporting learning throughout. The unit culminates in pupils creating and performing an alternative ending for Jamie's story, to explore what might have changed the outcome.

NB: This scheme of work is not intended to open up disclosures about actual risks to which students may have been/be exposed to – but it does have that potential. Please respond according to your safeguarding policy, should this arise.

Learning areas covered:

- Dramatic Form - Teacher-in-role (TiR), role-play, hot-seating, mantle of the expert, scene of the blast, body mapping, still image, thought-tracking, improvisation, symbolic movement, mask work, monologue, characterisation, physical theatre, devising, ensemble performance.
- Personal, Social, Moral and BfL - Safe spaces, emotional literacy, digital safety, peer influence, toxic masculinity, empathy-building, working in a range of groupings (individual, paired, small/large groups), trust, respect, responsible risk-taking, peer/self-assessment.
- Thematic, Cultural, Social - Modern adolescence, online behaviour and digital footprints, toxic masculinity, influence of social media and online culture, youth justice, family dynamics, mental health, and emotional expression.
- Co-operative Learning - Group devising tasks, negotiated outcomes, shared leadership and collaboration, turn-taking, oracy and listening structures.
- PLTS - Creative thinker, reflective learner, effective participant, team worker, independent enquirer.

Assessment:

There is no summative assessment in this scheme of work. This decision supports the focus on process, exploration, and the emotional complexity of the content. All assessment is formative, with each individual lesson having a learning goal and opportunity for peer and self-assessment used to support progress, reflection, and collaboration.

This approach reflects research by Black and Wiliam (1998), which highlights the impact of formative assessment on student achievement when integrated into classroom practice. It also aligns with Heathcote's process drama methodology, which values reflection and critical engagement over performance outcomes.

Lesson	Big Question	Outline
1	What is the storyline of <i>Adolescence</i> ?	Starter: <u>Inquiry-based task:</u> Based on the photographs below, what might be the main themes in <i>Adolescence</i>? How do you know this? Main task: Students watch episode one of <i>Adolescence</i>. This can be accessed for free on Into Film once you have signed up with a school's email address. Plenary: <u>Paired discussion:</u> How do you think this episode is going to end? Who is your favourite character? Why? What Drama skills are used in this episode?
2	Was Jamie solely responsible for murdering Katie?	Starter: <u>Gina Martin's conversation cards:</u> Use in pairs. Provide each pair with two cards each. Reinforce 4 guidelines for effective utilisation of cards. Introduction to the Mantle: <i>You are a newly-formed multi-agency expert taskforce. You've been brought in by the government after the fatal stabbing of a 13-year-old by her peer, Jamie Miller. Your mission: investigate how this could have happened — and make recommendations to prevent another case like this.</i> Give out lanyards. Briefly explain each role's focus (students can look at the back of their lanyard to remind themselves of their role and responsibilities). Roles are: police, school staff, child psychologists, and digital safety officers. Main task 1: Clipboards and evidence sheets. Students enter a teacher-made evidence station. They analyse a variety of evidence that is specific to their role in the task force. They record findings on the evidence sheet, and use their findings to prepare questions for an interview with Jamie Miller. Main task 2: Students use hot-seating technique to ask Jamie (TiR) questions created based on evidence stations. They record anything they find useful on their evidence sheets.

		Plenary: <u>Think, Pair Share:</u> What have we learned about responsibility today? Who is responsible for what Jamie did? Ensure utilisation of sentence stem.
3	Who was impacted by Jamie's actions?	Starter: <u>Inquiry-based task:</u> Read the interview quote below. What does Stephen Graham mean by "we're all accountable". How does this challenge the way we usually think about blame? Main task 1: Students create still image in pairs, depicting the moment Jamie attacks Katie. Main task 2: Class come back together. Introduction to Scene of the Blast. One pair shows their still image in the middle of the circle. Who in Jamie and/or Katie's 'village' are immediately impacted by this huge decision and action? Create a still image of this using students not in the first still image in the next wave. Repeat until everyone in the class has been utilised and there are numerous waves. Main task 3: In groups, students create a short scene that reveals the impact of Jamie's actions on the person/people they chose to depict in task 2. It should start with the still image they have already created. Students then perform the scenes in the same spaces and order as they created the still images in earlier. Consider transitions between each scene. Consider teacher and peer feedback here. Plenary: <u>Paired discussion:</u> What might the people impacted by Jamie's actions now need to heal or move forward? Do you think Jamie understands the full impact of what we did? Was anyone impacted who wasn't visible in today's scenes?
4	How do people carry the emotional impact of someone else's actions?	Starter: <u>Warm-up:</u> Introduction to Emotion Memory. Students walk the space and respond to teacher's feeling cues, remembering a time they felt this emotion. They do not share it. Teacher may prompt with an imaginary idea. Students show how this may look in the body. Main task 1: In groups, students create and fill-in a body map based on their allocated character's feelings and emotions after finding out what Jamie did. Characters might be: Jamie's dad, a teacher, a classmate, Jamie himself.

		Main task 2: <u>Gallery walk:</u> Students create a gallery of their body maps in the classroom. They circulate silently, reading and observing. Music may be useful. Then, TiR as Jamie walks through a gallery of body maps. They respond in role, both physically and verbally. Invite students (in role) to step forward and speak back to Jamie. Plenary: <u>Paired discussion:</u> Students pick one character explored in today's lesson. In one sentence, they tell their partner how they carry the emotional impact of Jamie's actions. Examples displayed.
5	What pressures are placed on boys and men, and how does this impact society?	Starter: <u>Stereotype deconstruction:</u> Class look at displayed adjectives. Stereotypically, which might be used to describe a male? Introduce concept of 'toxic masculinity'. Main task 1: Mask making. On the outside of their mask, students write or draw things that society expects men to show (e.g. strong, confident, funny, leader). On the inside of the mask, students write or draw what boys/men might feel but hide (e.g. anxiety, sadness, pressure, loneliness). Main task 2: Mask movement. Students wear or hold their masks. Walk the room as the outer mask. Shift to inner mask. How is the gait and movement different? Main task 3: In groups, students create two scenes that are linked using cross-cutting. One should show what is happening between Jamie and his peers at school (in public) and one should show what is happening at home (in private). Utilise masks. Perform this back to the class or another group for peer feedback. Provide teacher feedback. Plenary: <u>Think, Pair, Share:</u> How can toxic masculinity hurt people – not just boys, but everyone around them? Ensure utilisation of sentence stems.
6	What makes a space feel safe, and how can that safety be an illusion?	Starter: In groups, students create a still image that depicts where most teenagers' 'safe space' is. They should only use their bodies – no blocks or chairs allowed. Main task 1:

		Students work in groups to build a den using only newspaper and tape. It can only be big enough to surround one person from their group. Who is inside the den? Is it Jamie? Themselves? What is the character hiding from? What are they hiding within? What is the safe space? Main task 2: <u>Destruction:</u> Groups now agree on a way to collapse the den, using drama skills and techniques (slow motion, unison movement, canon, sound, thought-tracking etc). How does the character feel about the destruction of their safe space? Music may be useful here. Perform this back to the class or a group for peer feedback. Provide teacher feedback. Plenary: <u>Circle sentence:</u> Students stand in a circle. One by one, they complete the sentence: “A space can feel safe, but...” Examples may be provided. <u>Reflect:</u> In <i>Adolescence</i>, Jamie’s bedroom looked safe. But what was really happening?
7	What could someone have said or done to change Jamie’s story?	Starter: <u>Timeline review:</u> Students review timeline of Jamie’s story. Whole-class discussion. What could someone have done or said to change Jamie’s story? What might Jamie’s life look like if that moment had gone differently? How would you want Jamie’s story to end – and why? Main task: In groups, students create an alternative ending for Jamie. Starter is used as stimulus here. They may choose to utilise some skills and techniques we have looked at throughout this unit – they may not. Focus should be on process, empathy, and transformation. Peer feedback. Plenary: <u>Self-assessment:</u> Independently, students complete self-assessment sheet. This is not reflective of skills or performance ability, but instead of process, exploration of themes and story, emotional complexity and literacy, and tolerance of those around us.