

Knowledge Organiser

KS4 Modern Text DNA (GCSE LITERATURE)

What you need to know to do well on this topic

PLOT

- ❑ Know the **main plot** about what happens to Adam & the gang's treatment of him.
- ❑ Know the **subplot** about the relationship between Phil and Leah.

CHARACTERISATION

- ❑ Understand how the main characters are presented (Phil, Leah, Brian, Adam, Cathay, John Tate)
- ❑ Understand the characterisation of Phil as a leader and the different leadership of John Tate & Cathay
- ❑ Understand how other characters are used by the playwright to explore broader ideas and themes such as leadership, power, gang culture, groupthink, guilt, morality and isolation.

THEMES

- ❑ Be able to talk about how the Big Picture Ideas (themes) relate to DNA: *responsibility morality injustice hierarchy*
- ❑ Be able to talk about the theme of gang culture and group think.
- ❑ Be able to explain the central theme of power and control in DNA

METHODS

Know what we mean by the following playwright's methods and give examples from DNA, explaining their effects:

- ❑ Juxtaposition / contrast
- ❑ Foils
- ❑ Character development
- ❑ Stage directions
- ❑ Symbolism (setting)

PURPOSE

Be able to explain the writer's overall purpose in writing the play, supported by examples from the text.

Plot: Key Events

ACT 1

The torture/death of Adam
Phil becomes leader - The Plan
Leah: Chimps v Bonobos monologue

ACT 2

The Postman is framed
Phil forces Brian to identify the postman
Leah: Jerry the Mouse

ACT 3

Adam's resurrection
Brian's madness
Phil's solution
Leah spits out the sweet

ACT 4

Leah moves on
Phil's isolation
Cathy's leadership

Links to other units

*Writer's Methods in DNA is about much more than language choices: **structural devices similar to those in Boys Don't Cry** are equally important (foils, contrast, character development, characters representing ideas)*

***Themes** such as **human nature and morality as well as isolation and savagery** are important to DNA and these are themes which were explored in **Jekyll & Hyde** and **The Island of Dr Moreau**.*

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Year 10 Autumn 2 Modern Text DNA

Definitions of Key Terms & Vocabulary

Morality: right & wrong. Moral means "right". Immoral means "wrong".

Hierarchy: a power structure where people at the top have more power and privilege than the people below. Hierarchy is about people who have power and people who do not have power

e.g. Phil has a privileged position at the top of the gang's hierarchy, whilst Brian had very little.

Injustice: when something is unfair it is an injustice. (The adjective is "unjust") e.g. It was *unjust* of John Tate to intimidate and threaten Danny. It was an *injustice* that an innocent man was arrested.

Responsibility: having a duty towards someone or something e.g. The rich have a social responsibility for the poor.

Groupthink: when a group of individuals reach a consensus (all agree with one another) without questioning, or evaluating the consequences, or thinking for themselves individually about possible alternatives.

Toxic Leader: a leader who abuses their power and leaves the group or organization in a worse condition than when they first found them.

Pragmatic Leader: a practical thinker & leader who gets things done. They focus on the processes behind any task or goal. Their top priority is to figure out how the team is going to get things done. They may not consider the morality of their actions (ethics)

Microcosm - a small "version" of our real world which the writer, poet or **playwright uses to** explore the bigger world we live in, through the play or text/s. E.g. the gang can be seen as a microcosm of wider society in some ways.

Intrinsic violence: the idea that within us all there is a potential for cruelty and violence, and is only held back by social rules and norms.

Power and control: the means (methods used) by members of a group or society in order to dominate others

Redemption: the belief that a person can find forgiveness and make amends for their actions by doing the right thing, morally. Based on the Christian idea of forgiveness by God.

Isolation: to be separate from the social norms and structures by an individual or group. Often resulting in a desire to belong to another group/society.

A sense of belonging: to feel part of a community, group or society

Emotional disengagement: when a person has difficulties in emotionally or verbally connecting with another person.

Barbarity: when all inhibitions towards the use of violence and aggression is lost, and a person or persons become brutal and savage.

The Greater Good: to make decisions that will benefit most of a society or group even if it means some will suffer for this.

"The means justifies the ends": meaning any actions/steps (*means*) are acceptable if they help achieve your aim (*ends*)

Juxtaposition: two very different things placed next to each other in order to emphasise their contrast (difference) e.g. Kelly juxtaposes John Tate's ability to lead with Phil's.

Chorus: a group of actors who verbally describe or comment upon the main action of a play or act. eg: Mark and Jan open the acts with a dialogue on the important plot details.

Structure: the way and order in which the playwright chooses to deliver the characters and narrative to engage the reader

Character development: when a character changes by the end of the novel/play/short story

Symbolism: when an object or place has an allegorical (deeper, hidden) meaning. e.g. Leah represents a sense of morality and introspection; Phil represents detached immorality & pragmatism; Adam represents the isolated and a need for belonging; the woods represent space detached from society that has hidden savagery; the street represents the fringe of society; the school represents the world of rules and social norms.

Key Characters

Phil

The play's protagonist: he quickly becomes the gang's leader who provides them with a pragmatic solution to the central problem.

Leah

Phil's girlfriend who provides profound (insightful) comments on life, but who struggles to gain Phil's attention. She is a foil to Phil.

Cathy

Sadistic character who enjoys the excitement of the gang's problems.

Mark and Jan

The chorus: they open each Act; through them we learn about the key events of each Act.

John Tate

The original leader of the gang.

Adam

The main victim of the gang's brutality - what happens to Adam at the start and end is the central problem the gang must solve.

Brian

a weak and vulnerable character who initially craves acceptance, and ultimately loses his sanity.

