GCSE (9-1) English Literature

Scheme of Work

Boys Don’t Cry
By Malorie Blackman
Boys Don’t Cry - Scheme of work

Curriculum Intent: To examine current themes and the issues surrounding these themes in today’s society.

Implementation: As part of the GCSE requirement for English Literature learners will study a post-1914 drama or novel and this novel will form part of the GCSE literature study.

Impact: Through their study of this text, students will learn about the wider implications surrounding current issues such as single parenthood, teenage pregnancy, race and sexuality; these may be issues they can relate to. Through critical thinking and philosophical discussions surrounding the themes raised in ‘Boys Don’t Cry’, they will deepen their understanding and knowledge of these topics.

Assessment Objectives:

AO1: Read, understand and respond to texts Students should be able to:
● maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response
● use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations

AO3: Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written

AO4: Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Learning objectives/Assessment objectives</th>
<th>Possible tasks</th>
<th>Resources/homework</th>
<th>Assessment opportunities/links to GCSE English Language</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>AO1 – Explore the novel’s title&lt;br&gt;AO3 – Explore contextual ideas raised by novel’s title</td>
<td>Big question: Should boys cry?&lt;br&gt;- Display the title and cover and ask for initial inferences.&lt;br&gt;- Provide a ‘bag of objects’ relevant to the story and ask for predictions about plot/character/issues raised.&lt;br&gt;- Introduce the concept of ‘stereotypes’ by asking students to draw occupations such as nurse/doctor/firefighter/secretary. Depending on sensitivity of class, categories such as gay man/homophobic could be introduced.&lt;br&gt;- Define ‘stereotype’ and discuss common societal stereotypes around gender.&lt;br&gt;- ‘Boys Don’t Cry’ – discuss meaning and watch Newsround support video about men’s mental health and/or read Newsround article.&lt;br&gt;- Plenary: Revisit big question.</td>
<td><a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zmvbpg8">https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zmvbpg8</a>&lt;br&gt;<a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/48379047">https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/48379047</a>&lt;br&gt;<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDE24rR6ops">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDE24rR6ops</a>&lt;br&gt;<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/society/2009/apr/15/stereotypes-young-people">https://www.theguardian.com/society/2009/apr/15/stereotypes-young-people</a></td>
<td>English Language: Article with the heading ‘Teenagers face increasing stress in modern society’.</td>
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<td>Big question: What societal issues should Young Adult Fiction be covering today?&lt;br&gt;- Re-cap – read Guardian article about teenagers in the media. Find links to title of novel.&lt;br&gt;- Read blurb, link to title and list all potential ‘issues’ that might be covered.</td>
<td>Homework – find, or think of, other common sayings that draw upon gender, race or sexuality stereotypes.</td>
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• Watch ‘Loose Women’ extract about ‘Boys Don’t Cry’ and discuss/list ways in which a novel about this might help readers.
• Group activity – divide class into groups to research and present back to class ideas about the issues in the novel: single parenthood, the benefits of university education, coming out as gay, homophobia in society, teenage pregnancy. Encourage students to list what issues are raised and how novels can help readers to deal with the issue.
• Plenary: silent debate using contentious statements or quotes about the issues covered in the novel. Brief feedback with reference to opening big question.

BP: What issue should Malorie Blackman focus on in her opening, and why?
• Take feedback on big question starter.
• Project first line of chapter 1: ‘Good luck today. Hope you get what you want and need’. Give out [or project alongside] a list of the major characters and their role in the novel and ask which one is likely to have written it to whom, and why.
• Hand out copies of the first page. Model annotating for character mood, societal expectations, context, etc. Students to work in groups on page 2 with each group to take one of: character inferences, contextual issues, relationship inferences, predictions for plot. Take feedback and share ideas.

Homework: ask parents/grandparents/carers or search internet for common homilies used by parents. For three of these, consider what they suggest about parental hopes for children.
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<td></td>
<td><strong>• Plenary: return to starter question and review.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Class reading. Aim to read chapters 1 – 5 up to page 28.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>• Encourage students to record their impressions of events/characters by bullet pointing key events and annotating with character ideas/inferences/predictions. Ideally using different pens.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>AO1: Explore characterisation and events in opening chapters</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Big Question: Who does Malorie Blackman want us to empathise with, and why?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>• Take feedback on starter question and homework.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>• ‘Benchmark’ the plot so far by brainstorming five key criteria for an effective novel opening. Benchmark the first 6 chapters against the criteria.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>• Introduce ‘what, how, why’ as a tool for explaining textual inferences. Students to work in groups on characters: Dante, Adam, Melanie, the father. Consider and mind-map – what Blackman tells readers about the character, how she tells them [dialogue, events, actions, structure of narrative, etc] and why she tells readers this [ie, to create empathy, to create tension, to progress the plot, to create an enigma].</strong></td>
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<td><strong>• Plenary: return to starter question using what/how/why ideas.</strong></td>
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<td>Paragraph using what/how/why technique to explore Dante, Adam or Melanie.</td>
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Class reading. Aim to read chapters 6 – 11, pages 29 - 61

- Encourage students to record their impressions of events/characters by bullet pointing key events and annotating with character ideas/inferences/predictions. Ideally using different pens.
- Create a tension graph template covering all chapters 1-49, begin to track tension whilst reading.

| 4 | AO3: Link events and characters to contextual issues | Big Question: What path should Dante take now? | Practise what/how/why technique on another page from the novel. |
|  |  | - Students to complete because/but/so sentences to consider big question. Half the class should complete three sentences starting ‘Dante should hand the child over to Social Services or Melanie’s family....’ and the other half to complete ‘Dante should keep his daughter....’.
  |  | - Take feedback on sentences and consider which path Blackman will take Dante on and why? Which would make the most effective story? Which will encourage readers to think deeply about the contextual issues raised?
  |  | - Discuss and list the range of contextual issues raised by Dante’s position at this point in the novel, referring back to research from earlier lessons. [single parenthood, teenage pregnancy, masculine responsibility, education, etc]. |
- Model linking the final line of Chapter 10 to a contextual issue. Students to practise linking events/characters to context using what/how/why technique for page 57.
- Plenary: return to big question in the light of contextual links – which path would be best for Dante?

Class reading. Aim to read chapters 12 - 18, pages 61 - 94

- Encourage students to record their impressions of events/characters by bullet pointing key events and annotating with character ideas/inferences/predictions. Ideally using different pens.
- Create a stereotype criteria list for single mothers /A Level students and begin to benchmark Dante and Melanie against the list.

| 5 | AO1: Explore the introduction of a sub-plot AO3: Examine the LGBTQ issues raised at this stage in the novel | Big Question: Whose future path is potentially most difficult – Adam or Dante?  
- Read the BBC Newsround article ‘LGBT people less satisfied with life in the UK’ before considering/discussing big question.  
- Introduce the concept of a sub-plot as something which potentially adds complications and puts obstacles in the way of the main character and therefore becomes a story conflict. | https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/44680973 | **English Language:** compare two articles about modern attitudes to LGBT. |
- Students to work in pairs/groups to create and act out a short drama that could be the next scene in the book, adding appropriate complications/obstacles created by the Adam sub-plot.
- Plenary: divide class in two, one group to return to the big question and decide whose path should be most difficult in terms of reader enjoyment, the other group to consider the question in terms of what would best signify an inclusive and tolerant society.

Class reading. Aim to read chapters 19 - 23, pages 95 - 140

- Continue recording impressions of events/characters and plotting tension graph.
- Start separate notes for sub-plot, perhaps recording the tension on the same tension graph as that for main plotline.
- Add stereotype characteristics for gay teenagers and benchmark Adam against the list.

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<tr>
<th>AO1: Develop an informed personal response to character development</th>
<th>Big Question: ‘She was.... beautiful.’ What caused the big turning point for Adam?</th>
<th>Three paragraphs of a response to the exam-style question.</th>
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<td>• Think/pair/share ideas about the big question.</td>
<td>• Plot the changes in Dante’s attitude to Emma from ‘plaintive mewing’ and ‘grizzling’ to ‘She was... beautiful’ on page 111. Students to work in groups to find evidence [short quotations or specific text](<a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-42655079">https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-42655079</a> [BBC News ‘Being a teenage Mum’])</td>
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6
| **7** | AO1: Develop an informed personal response to events  
AO3: Explore society’s attitude to single parent families | Big Question: Why has Blackman introduced Aunt Jackie?  
- Odd one out starter with character names. Extend by selecting odd one out based on categories - theme/context/reader response  
- Think/pair/share ideas about big question.  
- Students to work in groups to explore the cultural norms and expectations reflected in chapter 26; for example ‘Boys Don’t Cry’, family relationships, parental love/expectations, gender roles, marriage,  
  
  *Homework: Students to find article from newspaper [ideally print] that relates to the cultural ideas explored in the lesson. Link ideas in the article to the novel.*  
  
  *Quotation explosions – students to write up as a paragraph of interpretation of Aunt Jackie or Dante.* |

- Watch BBC News ‘Being a teenage Mum’. Consider society’s reaction to a similar video featuring a teenage Dad.  
- Model developing an informed personal response to the exam style question: ‘She was....beautiful.’ Explore how far Dante develops in the novel.’  
- Students to write a three-paragraph response using the what/how/why technique.  
- Plenary: how relevant is the novel’s title at this stage in the plot?  

Class reading. Aim to read chapters 24 - 28, pages 143 - 174  
- Continue recording impressions of events/characters and plotting tension graph.
having children. Students to benchmark the way the novel presents these against their own experiences or family backgrounds.

- Extend the group activity by providing a selection of quotations from the chapter such as: “Even when they’re old and in their thirties?”, “Some get to walk away, some don’t” - students to select quotations that are relevant to their cultural area and explode them with full explanations.
- Plenary: revisit the starter big question in the light of the exploration of cultural ideas in chapter 26.

### Silent reading
Aim to read chapters 29 – 35. Pages 175 – 204

- One half of the class to read just Adam’s chapters and one half just Dante’s.
- Readers of Adam chapters to map tension created and then summarise events to Dante readers. Dante readers to respond by filling in the gaps in Adam’s chapters and summarising what happens to him in the Dante chapters.

| 8 | AO1: Explore the development of the sub-plot. | Big question: Does Adam represent a modern liberal view of sexuality?  
- Allocate students [either individually or in pairs/groups] one Adam chapter each [up to and including chapter 35]. Students to create a | https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/40459213 |
| AO3: Link the historical timeline of gay rights to the sub-plot. | newspaper headline for their chapter using the adjective/noun/verb/preposition/adjective/noun technique.  
- Students to use headlines to create a tension graph for the sub-plot.  
- Read and watch videos in BBC article about gay rights history. Consider how much Adam represents a modern liberal view towards sexuality.  
- Plenary: quotation race – who can find evidence that Adam is well-read? [pages 115 and 117]. Why does Blackman use these literary references [particularly the ref to Dorian Gray] for Adam and not Dante? |  
| --- | --- |  
| Teacher reading. Aim to read chapters 36 – 38. Pages 204 – 236.  
- Split class in groups of three and number themselves 1 – 4. Teacher to read aloud whilst number ones takes notes, number twos draw images and number threes listen but write nothing. At the end of each chapter students to compare recall and ensure each has detailed chapter summary. Students could swap numbers for each chapter.  
- Plenary – which method provided most detailed recall? |
| 9 | AO1: Develop an informed interpretation of the development of the main plot.  
AO3: Consider the writer’s presentation of fatherhood. | Big question: How has history repeated itself?  
- Think/pair/share ideas about big question.  
- Focus on chapter 38. If you were filming the chapter as an episode of a TV drama what genre would it be and why? What part of the chapter would you open with, and why?  
- Students to consider why Blackman chose to combine the crisis with Adam’s injuries and the reveal about Dante’s conception in the same chapter.  
- Zoom in on first page of chapter 38 – when she usually focuses so much on action and feelings, why does Blackman pause for a whole paragraph to describe the two women?  
- Allocate students [in groups or individually] a page of the chapter and challenge them to identify the dominant narrative technique used; for example – description/dialogue/feelings/action. Share findings with class and explore the way each technique helps to build tension.  
- Plenary: challenge students to link starter question idea with the contextual concept of parenthood. Is there any reason to suppose Dante will repeat all his father’s mistakes? | Creative writing – write about a time you did something you regret. Write as either Melanie or Dante. |

Before reading project ‘My whole body suddenly went cold’ from page 237 and the final line of chapter 44 onto the board or hand out with space in between for notes. Ask students to predict what happens in between.

- Take feedback and ask students to justify their ideas based on: what has happened so far, reader enjoyment, contextual message, etc.

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<th>10</th>
<th>AO1: Form an informed personal response to the whole novel</th>
<th>Class reading. Finish novel.</th>
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<td></td>
<td>AO3: Consider how far the novel is an exploration of key issues facing young people today</td>
<td>Students to work in groups on the ‘Questions for readers’ at the back of the paperback Corgi edition of the novel.</td>
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<td>AO4: Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation</td>
<td>Big question: How far is “Boys Don’t Cry” an “adroit investigation of family relations, very clearly portrayed” (Toby Clements Daily Telegraph).</td>
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<td>- Students to correct/improve a badly written review paragraph [could be an altered version of one from The Guardian or The Independent]. When taking feedback, students to be reminded of the need for accurate SPAG in final assessments.</td>
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<td>- Create a wordle of the praise from The Guardian review of the novel [leave out the plot summary]. Students to create a one paragraph review using a set number of the words. Peer assess for content and SPAG.</td>
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**Homework:** Read a selection of positive and negative reviews on Amazon.co.uk. Summarise the main points made by readers about the novel’s handling of contemporary issues.

**Press reviews of “Boys Don’t Cry”:**

- Analyse language and structure of reviews from The Guardian and The Independent.
- Write own review using features and language techniques found in real reviews. [challenge higher ability to write a negative review].
| 11 | **AO1**: Explore how Blackman’s narrative style.  
**AO3**: Explore how Blackman structures her presentation of contextual issues. | **Big question**: How does Blackman structure the novel to keep readers engaged?  
- **Starter**: story shapes. Students to be given four or five different kinds of diagrams that might represent the shape or tone of the novel. Students to decide which best suits and give reasons for their decisions.  
- **Revisit timeline from previous lesson** - Students to add inferences to the timeline about points of tension, pathos, anger, crisis, etc.  
- **Watch Malorie Blackman interview about how to structure a story**. Consider how far she has taken her own advice and why/why not.  
- **Students to have page 1 and the final page reproduced together on A3 and to note points of similarity or difference in tone, plot, characterisation, etc.**  
- **Extension activity** - Open book – students to have a list of narrative techniques/feelings/tones, etc. Students to work in pairs to record what they find. | **https://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2013/mar/07/malorie-blackman-how-to-structure-story-video**  
Paragraph explaining the effect of Blackman’s narrative style. |
from the list and then compare with another pair, moving into larger groups to form an overview of Blackman’s literary style.

- Plenary: revisit and answer big question in an exam-style paragraph.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Big question: In “Boys Don’t Cry”, should boys cry?</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Think/pair/share ideas about big question. Compare to responses at the start of this unit and consider whether Blackman has altered their views.</td>
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<td>• Add contextual issues to large timeline of events.</td>
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<td>• Consider points of tension/crisis/resolution for each contextual issue covered by the novel.</td>
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<td>• Slow writing – use a slow writing technique or model writing an opening paragraph of an answer to the question, ‘How does Blackman develop ideas about [contextual issue] over the course of the novel’.</td>
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<td>• Plenary: Just a minute activity - Students to work in opposing groups to argue the “Boys Don’t Cry” big question.</td>
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| 12 | AO1: Develop an informed personal response to characters.  
  AO3: Explore how Blackman uses characterisation to raise contextual issues. | Big question: What is the importance of Melanie in the novel?  
  - Because/but/so activity to complete the sentence ‘Melanie is important in the novel because.../but.../so...  
  - Match key quotations to characters and add inferences and/or contextual issues.  
  - Model creating a character profile by using the contrast created in chapter 1 between Dante and Melanie [him awaiting A Level results vs her smoking, him at home surrounded by family pictures vs her alone with baby, etc].  
  - Students to complete full character mind maps or profiles for Dante, Melanie, Adam, Tyler, Aunt Jackie, Josh.  
  - Plenary: quick fire answers to questions about characters; ‘if Dante was an animal, what animal and why?’, ‘if Tyler was a car, what car and why?’, ‘where would Aunt Jackie choose to holiday, and why?’ | Homework: write part or all of answer to question about importance of Emma.  
  Plan and answer an exam style question about importance of Emma. |
| 13 | AO1: Explore the development of key themes within the novel  
AO3: Find links between key events and contextual issues  
AO4: Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with | Big question: What is the key theme?  
• Starter: students to link prompt pictures around the room to key themes in the novel or solve anagrams of key themes.  
• SPAG activity – students to correct a poorly written paragraph about one of the key themes.  
• Students to work in groups to track a theme through the novel, for instance: guilt, family, age, friendship, loyalty, destiny, responsibility, anger. Link to contextual issues where appropriate.  
• Groups to summarise what Blackman’s message about their theme is – start at 100 words, reduce to 50 words, then reduce to 3.  
• Plenary: class vote or debate on big question. | Complete knowledge organiser without notes from lessons. |
accurate spelling and punctuation

Revision activity.
- Model the creation of a knowledge organiser for revision of key facts about the novel such as characters, themes, plot, context.
- Plenary: come up with a class list of advanced vocabulary to use in exam answers about the novel. Add to KO.

Drama activities:
- Explore Blackman’s use of reactions to highlight issues by focussing on the incident with the women in the shop. Create and act out another scenario featuring one of the women – for instance, how would they react to witnessing racist behaviour or drunkenness?
- Change the settings in the novel and recreate key scenes in alternative settings, for instance: change the Bar Belle scenes to an upmarket coffee shop, change the shop scene to a scene outside school gates. Consider how Blackman uses reader’s preconceptions about settings to establish ideas about themes and characters.
• Create an additional scene one year later with Melanie and Dante meeting in the street. Consider whether that would make a more satisfying ending for readers.

AO3: Explore potential audience reactions to the novel.

Big question: Who is the intended audience for ‘Boys Don’t Cry’?

• Starter: students to draw and annotate their idea of Blackman’s intended reader for the novel. Share ideas.
• Students to work individually or in groups as a different profile of potential reader, for instance; elderly woman, teenage mother, male PE teacher, Labour MP, etc. As their persona they should work on a critique of the book in terms of key contextual issues raised. How would their persona respond to the way the issue is raised, and why?
• Groups to present their critiques.
• Plenary: How far do the students themselves agree with Blackman’s presentation of key contextual issues. Do books like this novel help?

Research potential reader response by producing a short summary of the novel and giving it to friends, family and teachers and asking for their initial reactions.

Write a letter of complaint to Blackman from a potential alternative reader [for instance, an elderly reader who objects to the gay sub-plot]

Students to work in groups to prepare an assembly on one of the contextual issues. Each group to take a different year group.

Or:
Students to plan and write a letter to their Headteacher, MP or the Education Secretary outlining why the novel be compulsory reading for all teenagers.

| 15 | AO1: Read, understand and respond to texts AO3: Show understanding of the relationships between texts and context AO4: Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation | Big question: ‘I’d been lumbered with a kid that was supposedly mine’. Explore the idea of personal responsibility in “Boys Don’t Cry”.

- Starter – students to underline key words in question. How does the quotation help as a starting point for planning an answer?
- Model gathering ideas for assessment by using quotation as starting point.
- Students to work in groups on different characters [Dante, Adam, Tyler, Melanie, Josh] and mind-map how each one handles responsibility.
- Share ideas and decide as a class on most effective points for assessment.

- Starter: SPAG correction activity.
- Write assessment. | Full assessment answer. |