Introduction

Overview

By the end of the novel, the reader has accompanied 13-year-old Gil on a particularly emotional series of experiences that challenge his thinking about his parents and what matters most in his life. Using medical animal testing as a moral pivot and the introduction of the counter-character Jude, the author has cleverly crafted a narrative that explores the intensity of adolescent thinking and developing principles, as well as the way that we all learn that things are not always what they seem. The gradual realisation that Gil’s own father has had an unconventional role in his own son’s conception, and the way that the family cope with the reasons behind his actions form the intriguing and thought-provoking finale to the text.

Brief plot summary

The novel centres upon the experiences of Gil Walker, whose scientist father is involved with medical research and whose mother is potentially developing a life-threatening hereditary condition. Gil is presented as a typical teenaged young man, striving for more independence and exploring issues that engage his passion and imagination. He meets Jude, whose politics are completely at odds with Gil’s father’s work, which we later learn involves the use of animals (specifically mice) for medical research.

On meeting Gil at a protest in the park, Jude confronts Gil’s father about his work with animals and this is where Gil begins to question what he has been told in the past and why he has been apparently misled. He secretly searches his father’s study but does not find any evidence of horrific experiments on defenceless animals – however, he unwittingly sees photographs that later have great significance in the novel.

He learns that Jude plans to try to close down the laboratory in which his father works and offers to help him in any way he can, taking leaflets to distribute at school. His father gives him the opportunity to visit the laboratory as a way of showing that his work is not as it is depicted by the activists and as an attempt to develop a closer bond with Gil. Gil secretly records his visit using a buttonhole camera. The reality of the laboratory is not what Gil expects and he feels that he has let down Jude and is embarrassed that he lacks the shocking footage he thought he would obtain. However, Gil learns from Jude that the film is very useful and that they plan to use the information to enter the laboratory to free the animals.

Gil discovers that he was created in the lab through IVF and that his grandmother is a sufferer of Huntingdon’s Disease – which may be the fate of his mother. He was created with IVF (losing a twin sister at twelve weeks) to ensure that he did not have the same disease. His mother is shocked at the revelation that had been meant for much later – if ever – in Gil’s life. Gil feels even more alienated and is in despair.

Gil returns to the laboratory on the night of the raid. He confronts Jude and explains that his father was trying to find a cure for Huntingdon’s Disease but the news falls on deaf ears. He is pushed aside but manages to hit the fire alarm. Injured, Gil returns home.

The next day, his parents realise Gil’s part in the raid but agree not to discuss it in order not to have to tell the police. His mother then announces that she wants to have the test for Huntingdon’s Disease, to know once and for all whether she faces the same fate as her own mother.

In the final chapter, the family that has been so fractured through the novel is drawn closer together.

Background and context

The novel can easily be seen as contemporary. Published in 2011, the cultural references and use of technology are easily recognised by the reader without appearing dated. The issue of animal rights has not been as fervently covered in the media over recent years but there is a wealth of news debate and historical cases for students to research. The strength of Jude’s feelings will be interesting for students who may not have encountered such principled thinking in their lives. The novel deals with the issue very evenly; on the one hand showing that the pictures on Jude’s leaflets do portray some horrific and viscerally shocking experiments but that they may well have been outdated and taken out of context for their shock value in a demonstration. Dr Walker is able to voice these points to Jude in the presence of Gil but his son is not ready
to accept his view because he is so shocked at the news that his father is involved in the world of testing animals. The debate is still polarised and the class may reflect wide gaps in opinions. Personal identity (in the sense of literally knowing who you are and where you come from) is also a subject that should be explored with some care. Gil’s discovery that he was the successful IVF embryo is shocking to a young man who had not been prepared for the news. Again, care will have to be taken in the way students may personalise the debate through their own experience (and expose frailties) but there is certainly rich subject matter for discussion and role play.

**Author information**

On her website, the author S. L. Powell explains her motivation for writing and gives some detail about the inspiration for *Fifty Fifty*. She had intended to write something quite different but researched genetics and the idea for the novel gradually came to fruition. She explains that she worried that *Pig-Heart Boy* by Malorie Blackman dealt with similar issues but then realised that they had common themes but were quite different stories – she even recommends Blackman’s novel. Some students may be familiar with the other text or can be directed to it. She remarks that it was deemed acceptable in the past to experiment on ‘less important’ people such as those with disabilities or prisoners but that now that would be inconceivable. Perhaps one day the same will be thought about experimentation involving the use of animals in research? The writer’s intention was to try to look at the issue from two distinct perspectives but what she found intriguing was how easy it was to take on the viewpoint of an angry young teenager at war with himself and his parents.

**Why study this book?**

The novel will engage young people with its focus on the search for teenage independence within a family. Most will clearly empathise with Gil, though not all will be an only child, and this will allow for discussion about the rights and wrongs of how parents and children relate to each other. The strong emotions surrounding the animal rights debate in the novel will inevitably give rise to much thought about the issues by students. Further discussion will revolve around the way that Gil’s character is presented as initially taking sides – before realising that there are different perspectives and valid arguments on all sides. Students will have a varied knowledge of the debates and moral arguments for and against animal rights; the novel gives them the opportunity to view the issue from a relatively balanced series of perspectives and should give rise to some interesting role play sessions – perhaps taking on the debate between Jude and Dr Walker in a controlled space using a variety of dramatic techniques.

Further areas for discussion lie in the value and quality of friendship, and what it means. The way Gil alienates Louis from his life in favour of Jude will have been experienced by many young people (though this is more likely to have been within their peer group). His friend’s apparent betrayal and return at the end, showing concern for Gil’s mother, will help support the concept of loyalty in friendship. The loyalty of Gil towards Jude can be directly contrasted. The importance of living by principles can also be examined; perhaps even touching on the issue of animal rights being viewed with almost religious fervour based on a complete faith in an ideology that does not see compromise as possible. The novel offers a rich source of subject matter for Year 7 and Year 8 and will enable students to develop their skills in all areas of the subject.

**Ways into the book**

**Animal rights**

The debate is polarised but fairly clear in terms of the principles. Do animals have an inalienable right not to be used as the subjects of experiments by the human race? Is experimentation justified if human beings can be saved from certain genetic conditions, for example, if a family member was able to be saved as a result of such medical research? Gil is placed in such a position when Jude confronts him with Orwell’s ‘more equal’ reference when he tries to stop him in the laboratory. The writer herself asks whether we would feel the same if an intelligent alien race colonised Earth and started to experiment on humans in order to perfect medicines.
Relationships with parents

Family relationships are presented here as very problematic owing to the oppressive atmosphere Gil perceives in his home. In fact, what is being depicted will be very familiar to young people as they strive to have a voice in the world while still being protected by their parents. Being a parent is a very complex role to play, and young people reading the text may be given some insight into seeing things from an adult’s viewpoint.

Identity and truth

Who are we? Young people often say that ‘no one understands’ and that the way they feel has never been felt by anyone else before. Of course, this is not true but we do not understand this until we have experienced more of life and have learned a little more about ourselves and how we fit into the world. It is only with experience and the capacity to empathise with others that we truly find our place. Gil epitomises this struggle as he learns that there is more than one valid argument; that any ‘truth’ has more than one side and that life is all about listening and compromise.

Creative approaches

Analysis of the main arguments

Students can prepare a debate after research of both sides of the animal rights debate – choosing to focus upon up to three key points. This can be presented in groups of four after detailed discussion, with two pairs offering the two sides. Students should be assessed on their discussion and preparations and then the plausibility and conviction of their delivery.

Staging

Much of the power of the text derives from the confrontation between Gil and his father. Students could consider how Dr Walker talks to Gil’s mother about his own behaviour in a scene that presents a different side to his character in an early part of the novel. They could be guided to show the man who appears to Gil at the end of the story, exploring the feelings behind the argument.
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Objectives
Develop personal and group views through well-structured discussion.
Understand the role of Gil in his family and how successfully the writer has depicted his feelings.

Main targeted assessment
S&LAF 2; RAF 5

Starter
Display the following question: Who is right – parents or children?
Ask students to discuss the question.
Gather students’ answers from around the classroom and start to develop ideas about family, responsibility, independence, childhood, parenthood, etc.
Students could create a mind map to return to and reflect on after more of the narrative is revealed.

Working through the lesson
1. Explain that Chapter 1 sets the scene for the way Gil sees his relationship with his parents. Read Chapter 1, which depicts the way a teenager feels about having no voice and being victimised by parents. Ask the students to note particular points of conflict and the way that the characters are reported as speaking to each other.
2. Ask students to share their ideas and evidence showing how Gil and his parents feel about the situation. This should be done in matched-ability pairs.
   Share some of the ideas from the pairs to develop a discussion with the rest of the group and use the ideas to start to define why the characters feel the way they do. Use Worksheet 1 to frame some of this thinking and to encourage students to focus on explaining and justifying their ideas through direct reference to the text. This will help them to develop their thinking.
   (More references can be inserted and rows completed in the table on Worksheet 1 depending on the class and level.)
   Ask students from each group to share their thoughts with the rest of the class.
3. Use the activity to revise/develop the use of connective vocabulary in order to explain ideas. Make explicit the difference between writing an answer and sharing an answer aloud in a discussion (that is, the difference between formal and informal grammar in speech and writing).
4. In groups, ask students to explain simply what they believe will happen next, based on the evidence of the first chapter. Will it be a positive or negative development? Who will be the main focus of the development in the plot?
   Promote quality discussion as you listen to different groups.

Plenary
Gain feedback from the groups about their speculative thinking but press for their reasons based on evidence from the first chapter (Who? What? Why? When? Where? How?).
Encourage students to justify their ideas.
Self- and peer-assess on S&LAF 2 and RAF 5 using level descriptors to make a judgement.

Homework
Ask students to read Chapters 2–5 and to maintain the timeline on Worksheet 2. Ask them to consider and identify the way in which Gil is presented to the reader.

Learning outcomes
- All will be able to take part in discussions, listening to others and expressing ideas. They will also be able to comment on the writer’s use of language.
- Most will discuss their thoughts carefully, listening to others and offering ideas about language use and the way that the reader is led to certain conclusions.
- Some will skilfully manage their contributions to group discussions while developing the views of others. They will offer precise explanations about language use.
Objectives
Understand the main events in Chapters 2–5 and be able to explain ideas that they contain.
Be able to track the changes in the way Gil is presented over the first five chapters.

Main targeted assessment
S&LAF 2; RAF 6

Starter
Ask students to agree on words to describe the character of Gil in Chapter 1 (read together in class) and be able to explain why the words are so appropriate (based on events in the chapters read so far).
Ask students to discuss the events in Chapters 2–5, that were read for homework. Discuss the main changes in the way the reader is made aware of the family circumstances and Gil’s thoughts and feelings. This will involve the emergence of the character of Jude.

Working through the lesson
1. Use Worksheet 2 to engage the students in thinking about the main points to include in a timeline that focuses upon one or two key events in the plot and the principal changes in Gil through the studied chapters.
2. Engage students in talk about their choices and select a few of the more unusual ones at the end of the discussion to promote thinking in more depth about the events in the chapters.
3. Ensure that certain points are clear to all students by the end of Chapter 5: the argument with Louis; going to town alone; meeting Jude; the police visit home; the dreams of being like Jude; the punishments set by Dad; the bigger argument with Louis and the alienation of his friend.
4. Key question: ask the students to discuss in pairs what they feel is the writer’s intention at this point. What did she want the reader to feel about Gil, his dad and Jude at this point in the novel? The students should refer to the text directly or indirectly in support of their points of view. Encourage the pairs to feed back to the class with explanations for their opinions.

Plenary
What are the main changes in Gil by the end of Chapter 5? Ask students to return to the words chosen at the beginning of the lesson. What words would be chosen now? The students should offer clear explanations for their new choices. How far was their speculation in Lesson 1 accurate?
Encourage students to show learning through their contributions.
Self- and peer-assess on S&LAF 2 and RAF 6 (writer’s viewpoint and overall effect of the text on the reader). Use level descriptors to make a judgement.

Homework
Ask students to read Chapters 6 and 7 and to maintain the timeline on Worksheet 2.

Learning outcomes
• All will be able to take part in discussions, listening to others and expressing ideas. They will also be able to comment on the main effect of the text on the reader.
• Most will discuss their thoughts carefully, listening to others and offering ideas about language use and the way that the writer’s viewpoint is presented in the text.
• Some will skilfully manage their contributions to group discussion while developing the views of others. They will offer precise explanations about the writer’s viewpoint in presenting the characters and will explain the overall effect of the text.
Objectives
Understand how the characters of Jude and Dr Walker are clearly juxtaposed in Gil’s mind from this point.
Understand how to credibly present the characters in a role-play situation.

Main targeted assessment
S&LAF 2; S&LAF 3. This lesson will also cover RAF 5 and RAF 6.

Starter
Display the quotation ‘It was like walking into a house where the central heating was up way too high.’ (p43). Ask students what they think was the intended effect of this description.
Gather ideas from the class about the sentence (from Chapter 6). Discuss the range of feelings described that reflect Gil’s sense of being oppressed (as the punishments start to have their effect).

Working through the lesson
1. Ask students to look again at the confrontation between Jude and Dr Walker on pp52–55. In groups, ask the students to identify why Gil’s father is described as being ‘defeated’ (from Jude’s perspective) on p54 – and why this is significant in the way they think Gil will regard Jude from this point in the novel.
2. ‘He’s dangerous and he’s also wrong.’ The last sentence of Chapter 7 is a powerful trigger for speculating on the next meeting between Jude and Gil. Ask students to briefly discuss what they think may happen.
3. Gather the students’ ideas – these will range from the confrontational to the very positive. In pairs, set students the task of staging such a scene. Give them the starting points in Worksheet 3. With the students, carefully examine the skills needed to achieve credible role play in S&LAF 3 (use school/department documents to support this – perhaps even film of students taking part in role play).
4. Students should have about 10 minutes to prepare a reading of their short script as if on radio. Their own contributions to the script will make it fully their own, but the planning, delivery, tone of voice and any relevant pauses and changes in volume will also allow discussion of thinking and intended effect.
5. Assess students on the way that they are thinking about the task, dealing with the text and helping each other to present the scene in the most credible way. Mini plenaries can be used to focus on particular skills.
6. Choose one or two of the scenes to be presented to the rest of the class. Allow questions to be asked of the students about their intentions or – perhaps in role – about their thoughts and feelings at this time.

Plenary
Discuss what has been learned about the characters from the role play. Explore how to improve the S&LAF 3 skills in order to make the presentation of the characters (in a dramatic sense) more credible.
Assess and self-assess on the qualities of role play demonstrated for S&LAF 3 at this point (Worksheet 3).

Homework
Ask students to plan improvements to their scene.
Ask students to read Chapters 8 and 9 and to complete the timeline on Worksheet 2 based on their reading.

Learning outcomes
• All will be able to discuss ideas about the plot and the scenes – with some attempt to show understanding of the character in role.
• Most will discuss the characters in some detail – with careful thought about how to most successfully present the characters in role to an audience.
• Some will be able to explore the characters with real perception – they will have an obvious empathy with the role when playing a character in a scene.
Objectives
Understand how to develop the plausibility of role play through the use of further dramatic techniques. Understand the key events in Chapters 8 and 9 and use them to help adapt the scenes/role play.

Main targeted assessment
S&LAF 2; S&LAF 3; RAF 5; RAF 6

Starter
Display the question ‘Should you always stand by your principles?’ and ask the students to think about and discuss this in the light of having read Chapters 8 and 9.
Encourage feedback from the discussions about the question and how it relates to the reading of Chapters 8 and 9. Students should be able to relate the question to the new information Gil has learned about his parents and their CND past, and how he might see Jude as someone who has not betrayed his principles. Develop this point with a further question about whether or not it is ever acceptable to change your mind about something you have always fundamentally believed. This may be difficult for the age range of the class, so offer examples.

Working through the lesson
1. In groups, encourage the students to share their entries in the timeline (Worksheet 2) for Chapters 8 and 9. Select some of the best summary points to share with the rest of the class. Wherever possible, use this as an opportunity to build the students’ subject, critical and connective vocabulary in identifying the issues. Suggest that they start to ask questions at the end of each chapter, speculating on something important that has arisen. You could use role play here (Worksheet 3).
2. Give an example for Chapter 9 – just how far is Gil prepared to go in standing ‘shoulder to shoulder’ with Jude?
3. Return to the scenes from the last lesson and the scripts adapted in pairs. Improvements and adaptations should have been planned. So far students have only been asked to think about tone of voice and pauses. Now encourage them to consider how facial expression and the use of space on stage could enhance the plausibility of the scene. Demonstrate and/or exemplify these techniques if necessary.
4. Give students time to discuss any changes based on their homework planning from Lesson 3 and on what has been demonstrated in class. They should practise a few moments of their scene to show how these ideas have been incorporated. They may wish to adapt it further in the light of what actually happens in Chapters 8 and 9 or they may wish to stay with their original idea.
5. Present some of the ideas after assessing them round the class while listening. Encourage students to explain exactly what they have done to change their scene and what effect they expect this to have on an audience.
6. Discuss how and why the role-playing skills have developed in the group from one lesson to the next.

Plenary
Use the role play to present the way students think that Gil will change over the next chapters. What questions would they like to ask his character at this point?
Possible answers can be explored by hot-seating the students who ‘played’ Gil in the scenes.

Homework
Ask students to read Chapters 10–12 and to complete the timeline for these chapters on Worksheet 2.

Learning outcomes
• All will be able to discuss how to improve the role play using different dramatic techniques and will be able to demonstrate them in practice.
• Most will be able to present the characters with more empathy in role to an audience through selecting appropriate techniques.
• Some will be able to demonstrate a relatively sophisticated understanding of how to present the role by precise selection of dramatic techniques.
Objectives
Understand how betrayed Gil feels by his father after his talk with Jude, and why he is so enthusiastic about animal rights.
Understand how to appropriately use a range of literary features to successfully express the views of Gil in a letter to his father.

Main targeted assessment
RAF 5; RAF 6; WAF 2; WAF 5; WAF 6; WAF 7

Starter
‘I should have considered your feelings …’ (p94). Display this line, spoken by Jude, and leave it for consideration. What does it tell the reader (at this point at least) about his character?

As a class, discuss findings. Encourage students to consider how this apparent concern is in complete contrast to how Gil will perceive how his own father views him. How will this affect his relationship with Jude?

How do the actual scenes where Jude discusses the confrontation with Dr Walker match the role plays dealing with the same scenario? Have the students depicted Jude very differently? If so, why?

Working through the lesson
1. Read Chapter 13 together.
2. Discuss how Gil will be feeling at this point, and why.
3. Set the students up with a letter-writing activity based on the subject matter of Chapters 10–12, where there have been revelations and a change in the way Gil sees his world. In particular, there has been a downward spiral in the way he perceives his father, while at the same time he admires Jude. Use Worksheet 4 to set up the rationale for the task.
   Give students time to draft out some ideas for structuring the letter from Gil to his father (which will never be sent) and to establish the depth of feeling he would want to show at this point. Allow them to share ideas and the use of literary features to develop the power of the letter.
4. Ask some students to comment on others’ ideas, picking out particularly powerful sentences that explore the range of Gil’s feelings at this time.
5. Give time for students to note down ideas for adjustments or features that can be included in their letter to make it more effective in representing Gil’s feelings.

Plenary
Discuss the quality of writing required to achieve particular levels. Use students’ own self-assessment booklets and level descriptions to arrive at shared ideas of what will be needed to achieve target grades in the letter.

Homework
Complete the letter for assessment.
Ask students to read Chapters 14 and 15 and to complete the timeline for these chapters (Worksheet 2).

Learning outcomes
• All will be able to construct a letter that successfully conveys Gil’s feelings at this point, using a range of literary features and vocabulary.
• Most will be able to write very powerful letters that reflect Gil’s emotions, using a range of features, sentence structures and vocabulary.
• Some will be able to write very accomplished letters that reflect the character’s feelings, using precise features in an economic way to achieve the most powerful effects.
Objectives
Understand how Gil is given a surprising perspective of the laboratory and how this affects him.
Identify and explain how the writer presents the change in Gil’s feelings.

Main targeted assessment
RAF 2; RAF 5; RAF 6

Starter
Display the following question: Why does Gil think he is a hero? Students should explain with evidence from Chapters 14 and 15.
Discuss feedback from the discussions. Dig deeper for explanations rather than just repeating content from the plot. Gil has been given the opportunity to visit his father’s laboratory but has immediately seen it as a chance to impress Jude. Why? Link this to the feelings expressed in the letters.

Working through the lesson
1. Collect the completed letters for assessment.
2. Read Chapter 16 together.
3. Working in matched-ability pairs, ask the students to look again closely at Chapter 16 and to select references that reflect the changing emotions Gil feels as he visits the laboratory. Use Worksheet 5.
4. Gather feedback on what has been found and discuss the findings of the class.
   Allow students time to refine their ideas in the light of what has been discussed.
5. Set the task of writing an account of how Gil’s feelings are described by the writer in this chapter, and how the language and literary features used combine to allow the reader to feel his anxiety. The question can be reworded and made more challenging for higher-ability students, with the expectation of more explanation and exemplification.

Plenary
Select particular sentences that have been discussed. Ask selected students questions about the writer’s intended effect. Build up a clearer understanding of what has been learned about the way the writer has explored Gil’s feelings in this chapter. The students should be confident about knowing how to write the account using their ideas, references, explanation and development, where appropriate.

Homework
Write an account of how the writer presents Gil’s feelings in Chapter 16.
Ask students to read Chapter 17 and complete the timeline for the chapter (Worksheet 2).

Learning outcomes
• All will be able to identify ways in which the writer has shown Gil’s feelings and use references to support explanations.
• Most will be able to select further examples of how Gil is presented by the writer, using appropriate references to carefully support thoughtful points.
• Some will be able to select references to support ideas with precise detail in their explanations and will explore ideas with some perception.
Objectives
Understand that the writer is carefully showing that Gil is being used by Jude to help his cause.
Be able to explore Gil’s actual feelings about animal rights and whether his main aim is to be against his father.

Main targeted assessment
S&LAF 2; RAF 3; RAF 4; RAF 5; WAF 3

Starter
Project a picture of someone looking really sad and deflated on the screen. Ask students to relate it to their reading and understanding of Chapter 17.
Discuss why the picture may be relevant to the way Gil feels at the end of Chapter 17.
Through the discussion, draw out what has happened at the laboratory and why Gil’s father’s work does not seem to fit the picture portrayed by Jude’s leaflets and enthusiastic denunciations.
Students should now be able to skim over the text to remind themselves of key events and ideas that show Gil did not reveal any great secrets with his clandestine filming (at least from his perspective).

Working through the lesson
1. Speculate about why Jude might be happy with what Gil has filmed.
   Dig into the ideas and start to try to see things from Jude’s perspective. Link this to the aim of breaking in to the laboratory, and students may realise that Gil has been very useful indeed.
2. Read Chapter 18. A disappointed Gil is sifting through the footage of the visit, feeling that he has let down his ‘friend’, Jude. Once Jude has seen the footage, Gil has a bigger task – to find out the code to switch off the alarms. It is clear that Jude is using him but why is Gil blind to this? Or is he quite happy to do it?
3. Ask the students to imagine that Gil was able to use a social networking site (e.g. Twitter) where he can post messages of up to 140 characters. What would Gil write that would reflect his state of mind about animal rights at this point in the novel? Be explicit about the skill involved – how powerful a message can you create in so few words?
   Students should work in matched-ability pairs on this task.
4. Take feedback from some students: hear some answers, or they may be written on mini whiteboards and held up for the class to see.

Plenary
Return to the juxtaposition of Jude and Dr Walker in Gil’s mind. Ask students to choose a word that best fits the way Gil thinks about both of them. Build up a picture of the words across the group. Expect the students to be able to explain their choice of words based on the text.

Homework
Ask students to read Chapters 19–20 and complete the timeline for the chapters (Worksheet 2).

Learning outcomes
• All will be able to express a personal response to the way Gil feels at this point with an increasingly sophisticated level of expression.
• Most will be able to speculate about the way Gil feels about the main male protagonists in his life beyond what is stated in the text. There should be a high level of carefully crafted expression.
• Some will be able to explore Gil’s feelings with succinct ideas and a precise level of expression that reflects students working at the highest level.
Objectives
Understand that Gil now feels betrayed by everyone but Jude, and that Louis is even further alienated.
Be able to use the text to create a reasoned argument for and against what Gil has done and is preparing to do.

Main targeted assessment
S&LAF 1; S&LAF 2

Starter
‘You snake, Louis.’ (p180). Ask students to devise a better, more effective (but not abusive) put-down to Louis at the end of Chapter 20.
Discuss the range of insults that Gil could have more imaginatively used. Just how different and distant from his old friend is Gil at this point?
Ask students to devise a clever reply from Louis that accurately defines how far apart they are at the moment and why Gil should be thinking again about his behaviour/attitude.

Working through the lesson
1. Discuss the reading of Chapters 19 and 20. Ask students to share their timelines so far.
2. Ask selected students what they like about other students’ ideas based on their reading. Use this session to clarify that all students have understood why Gil is about to be interrogated by his father and what Gil may be worried about.
3. Move students into mixed-ability groups to discuss the way that advice could be given to Gil at this point in the novel. Students should look for at least four reasons why Gil should continue (positive) and four reasons why he should stop his activities (negative).
Use Worksheet 6 as a handout for the groups or to be projected on the board. The group discussion should be framed so that both sides of each point (positive or negative) can be understood. The better discussions will not see one side as the direct opposite of the original point but will draw in other points based on a close understanding of the narrative and what the writer has developed. Give students adequate time to prepare their ideas.
4. Ask selected students to explain what they would say to Gil. Record key ideas on the board and save them for future reference.
5. Discuss the range of advice given from both perspectives (positive and negative) and speculate upon how Gil would respond to different points. Students should by now be demonstrating a more sophisticated level of thinking at all levels.
6. Read the beginning of Chapter 21, up to the point where his dad says ‘On this subject, I am right.’ (p182).

Plenary
Discuss which way the students think Gil would think if he was given all the negative points now.
Self-assess the quality of speaking skills demonstrated in the lesson. Students could discuss how skills have improved (or not), and what to do to improve.

Homework
Ask students to read Chapters 21 and 22 and complete the timeline for these chapters (Worksheet 2).

Learning outcomes
• All will be able to discuss their ideas in groups, listening to others’ views. They will also be able to offer advice to Gil with confidence.
• Most will be able to discuss their thoughts carefully, listening to others and trying to help develop others’ views. They will offer carefully explained advice to Gil.
• Some will skillfully contribute to the discussions and offer precise and succinct ideas. They will also help express the group’s ideas in an increasingly sophisticated way.
Objectives
Understand that Gil’s world has been overturned yet again with his father’s revelation over his origins.
Be able to explore the text to identify and explain how the drama of the scenes has been heightened by the writing.

Main targeted assessment
S&LAF 2; RAF 5

Starter
‘I hate you. I hate you. I hate you. I HATE YOU!’ Ask students to discuss whether this is a valid response to what has happened in Chapter 21 (p191).
Discuss views and look for close links to the revelations from Gil’s father.
Ask students to explain the presentational features of the line and how this adds to the drama of the scene.

Working through the lesson
1. Link the starter activity and the focus on drama to the rest of Chapter 21 and set the students to work in groups to decide which five moments in the chapter are the most dramatic, and why.
   Give the students time to discuss the chapter and the events.
2. Gather feedback from the groups. Try to trace the events chronologically – students should have been able to use their timelines to help them identify the five dramatic moments. Look carefully at the language of the scenes. Exactly how has the writer made it so dramatic? Students will need to be guided to identify specific verbs, adverbs and adjectives that can be explicitly highlighted and explained for their effect on the reader. Focus on the reading skills already practised here in earlier lessons where students have had to justify their ideas with the use of references from the text.
3. Recap Chapter 22 and the way that it reveals Gil’s reversal of priorities – now focusing on the positive potential of his father’s research to help his family. Discuss why Gil’s mother has suddenly become part of his thinking when he seemed to have ignored her in his pursuit of revenge. Encourage the students to identify and explain the issues involving his mother that are directly part of Gil’s change in Chapter 22 – particularly the way he hears her speaking to his father.
4. Read the beginning of Chapter 23 with the tension of Gil’s realisation that the raid is wrong and should be stopped.
   Aim to reach the line ‘Get out get out get out get out get out!’ (p202). Discuss the obvious presentational features.

Plenary
Explore what has been learned about Gil’s transformation from the drama of Chapter 21 to the veil being lifted in Chapter 22.
Speculate on what Gil will say to Jude when he confronts him and what Jude’s reaction may be?

Homework
Ask students to finish reading Chapter 23 and all of Chapter 24. Complete the timeline with a focus on Gil’s changed views and his great disappointment.

Learning outcomes
• All will be able to show a well-focused understanding of their reading with some explanation of how the writer has employed drama through language.
• Most will be able to demonstrate thoughtful and reflective reading and a clearly explained understanding of how the dramatic language reflects the thoughts of the character.
• Some will be able to offer succinct, precise and intelligent reflections on their reading and the writer’s skilful deployment of dramatic language.
Objectives
Understand the dilemma felt by Gil after he has returned from trying to save his father’s mice and research. Be able to use selected dramatic techniques to improve presentation of character in role play.

Main targeted assessment
S&LAF 2; S&LAF 3

Starter
‘He’d been brave. He’d been unbelievably stupid.’ (p220). Ask students to find other examples of opposites being used to express Gil’s state of confusion at the end of Chapter 23. Discuss how the opposites work. Select students to explain their ideas and build up the picture of how Gil feels at this point.

Working through the lesson
1. Ask students to work in groups of three. The groups can be mixed or selected ability. They will be revisiting the role-playing skills practised in earlier lessons. Students should still have their notes on dramatic techniques from Lesson 3. They should ensure that they are used in the preparation of ideas for the scene created in this lesson.

2. Set the students to create the scene they believe will occur when Gil talks to his parents about how he has injured his hand. Set clear expectations for each character (Gil and his parents) to explain how they are feeling about recent events. Each scene should last for no longer than two minutes. Students should have 8–10 minutes for this activity.

3. View drafts of the scenes so far and ask other students to suggest alternative dramatic strategies to improve the plausibility of the characters. Give the students more opportunities to alter their ideas and to enhance their own performance.

4. Allow time to practise the scenes again with the aim of students achieving their target level.

5. Ask students to select a 30-second extract from their scene to present the best of each role play to the class.

6. Watch the selected extracts and ask the other students to give feedback.

Plenary
Ask each student to self-assess their S&LAF 3 and then set targets for what they have to do to improve.

Homework
Ask students to read Chapter 25 and complete the timeline for the chapter (Worksheet 2).

Learning outcomes
- All will be able to present their chosen character with a range of dramatic techniques to enhance plausibility in performance.
- Most will be able to select specific dramatic techniques designed to carefully express their character’s thoughts and feelings.
- Some will be able to confidently deploy a precise selection of dramatic techniques to present a plausible character.
FIFTY FIFTY

Lesson plan 11

Objectives

Understand that from this point Gil has matured and realised his responsibility and what his parents have done for him.

Understand that Chapter 26 is a critical turning point for Gil and his family.

Main targeted assessment

S&LAF 2; RAF 3; RAF 4; RAF 5; RAF 6 (depending on which aspect of the writer’s craft is focused upon more closely)

Starter

Project some animal rights images on the IWB. What is the expected emotive effect? Explore the presentational devices deployed to enhance this effect.

Ask students whether or not it would be ethical for the medical profession/government to create posters/leaflets to promote the use of animals in medical research. If so, what might they look like?

Working through the lesson

1. Review the homework reading of Chapter 25.

2. In groups, students should look at the key points they have included in the timeline. Ask them to locate what they feel is the moment in the chapter when Gil switches his worries from himself to his mother. Frame questions that will allow groups to come to the conclusion that this is a form of personal growth, both for Gil and his mother. They are both protective of each other in this chapter. Discuss which lines seem to define this moment most appropriately in the groups. Further discuss the possible intentions of the writer at these points in the chapter.

3. Read Chapter 26 together. Ask students to note down the points where Gil gradually becomes the focus of his father’s thinking once he pieces together the narrative of the break-in. On p232, the writer brings Gil’s mother to the fore when she effectively tells Gil not to tell them the truth about how he cut his hand. By p234, Gil has decided to lie to keep the family together.

4. Set students to review the timeline they have been keeping over the course of their reading. Remind them of the earlier learning about using references to support ideas and the development of explanation. Ask them to identify at least one reference from each chapter that could be used to explain how Gil’s feelings have changed from the point where he hated his father to the end of Chapter 26. These references could be presented as a form of narrative and be performed for the rest of the group. You should be assessing students for S&LAF 2 here, as well as for the RAfS.

Plenary

Demonstrate the use of references and ideas by revisiting what has been discussed about Chapters 25 and 26. Ask students to choose, in pairs, what they feel are important references and ideas. Select pairs of students to offer their ideas to the class – allow them to confer first.

Homework

Ask students to read Chapter 27 and conclude the timeline (Worksheet 2). They should choose at least one reference from the chapter to reflect Gil’s changing feelings.

Learning outcomes

- All will be able to select appropriate words and phrases that reflect the change in mood in these chapters and can suggest the writer’s intention.
- Most will be able to select relevant extracts from the text at this point and will be able to explore the writer’s possible intentions with some confidence and skill.
- Some will be able to select precise references that clearly signify a shift in tone and will be able to offer cogent suggestions for the writer’s possible intentions.
Objectives
Understand the main influences that have changed Gil through the course of the novel, and their specific effects. Understand how to select appropriate points and references to develop an analysis of how Gil has changed.

Main targeted assessment
RAF 2; RAF 3; RAF 4; RAF 5; RAF 6

Starter
Now the novel has been read by the students, ask them to decide which person has influenced Gil the most in the narrative. Their decision should be justified with more than a brief comment! Develop the views around the class. Students may wish to add points to the notes already made on the timeline, and will be referring to events in particular chapters as a result of the homework preparation. Try to draw a consensus for the class – or is it too divided? Refer to the title of the novel, and suggest that many things in life remain fifty–fifty in our minds until something very significant tips our opinion one way or the other.

Working through the lesson
1. Refer back to the homework from Lesson 11 and stress the need to feel comfortable with the timeline of the narrative. Use Resource 7 (a PowerPoint® presentation) as a way of finding out just how familiar some of the lines are – and how it is sometimes possible to imagine that certain things were said by a very different character! (See Resource 7: Notes on use.) You can add as many references to the resource as needed.
2. As each student is selected and answers a question on a reference, ask them to decide when to stop the selector for the next student. The serious point here is that most students should recognise most of the references, but the teacher can dig deeper and start to ask more speculative questions: Why do you think …? What did he mean …? Why did the writer …? What might have been the effect if …?
   What would you have thought if …?
3. Use Worksheet 8 to set up the students for their final summative assessment based on their reading of the novel. The students will need to select their own series of references to support their main ideas about how Gil changes through the novel. They should use Worksheet 8 to help them draft ideas about what points to make and which references to use in support of them.
   The students could work in pairs or groups to support their thinking and to develop the scope of their ideas.
4. Some feedback from the groups will be helpful in gauging the range of ideas being discussed and to further share points of view as students prepare to plan and write the assignment.

Plenary
Share final thoughts about how Gil changes with the groups. They should all have ample evidence to support their ideas. More-able students can develop the detail to cover the complexities of family, friends, Jude and self-discovery. All should go away confident that they can meet the demands of their target level in an analysis of their reading.

Homework
Draft the assignment for discussion and revision. The students should have time to discuss drafts and then hand in a final version – allow a week to complete this work.

Learning outcomes
• All will be able to coordinate their ideas about Gil and how he has changed, using some references to support their ideas.
• Most will be able to write a convincing analysis of the way the writer develops Gil in the novel, using relevant references and developed explanation.
• Some will be able to write an engaging analysis of Gil’s character as he moves through the narrative, selecting precise references in support of perceptive points.
Chapter 1 – Feelings

Use the table below to explain your thoughts about what is being portrayed about the characters in Chapter 1. An example is completed for you.

Include ideas based on your group discussion and be ready to share these ideas with the rest of the class.

Remember, anyone may be chosen to give answers from the group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idea</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>What it shows</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gil knows that he can persuade his mum to get what he wants.</td>
<td>‘Crap, “Yeah” was the wrong answer. He’d have to find a way to get round Mum later.’ (p1)</td>
<td>Gil may not really respect his mum much at all if he thinks he can fool her – he seems to be used to thoughts like this.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Timeline

Use the following timeline table to record key events in the novel and changes in Gil – you will use this in later assignments to help remind you of the chronological order of events. You may choose to include some brief references to support your ideas about the timeline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 1</th>
<th>Chapter 2</th>
<th>Chapter 3</th>
<th>Chapter 4</th>
<th>Chapter 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gil is having a difficult time as a teenager with his parents. He feels overprotected and wants to do more on his own – without Mum. His parents seem to want to know exactly where he is at all times. He is not allowed a front-door key or a mobile phone. He sees his dad as the main problem, blocking his way in all he wants to do.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter 6</th>
<th>Chapter 7</th>
<th>Chapter 8</th>
<th>Chapter 9</th>
<th>Chapter 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 11</td>
<td>Chapter 12</td>
<td>Chapter 13</td>
<td>Chapter 14</td>
<td>Chapter 15</td>
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<td>Chapter 16</td>
<td>Chapter 17</td>
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<td>Chapter 19</td>
<td>Chapter 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter 21</td>
<td>Chapter 22</td>
<td>Chapter 23</td>
<td>Chapter 24</td>
<td>Chapter 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter 26</td>
<td>Chapter 27</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 8 – Role play

Use the following scene to stage a meeting between Gil and Jude in Chapter 8. You can use the scripted scene and add to it or you can adapt it and add to it or you can ignore it altogether and write your own complete scene. However, make sure that the scene only lasts one minute.

Check the skills needed to achieve your target level at role play (S&LAF 3).

(In the main street the next day.)

JUDE: Gil! How are you doing mate?

GIL: OK, I guess. Oh, sorry about my dad yesterday. It was all a bit embarrassing.

JUDE: Yeah. It’s tough to hear the truth about someone, isn’t it?

GIL: What do you mean?

JUDE: Oh, I just got the feeling you were hearing all of that stuff for the first time. Isn’t that true?

GIL: Well, some of it.

JUDE: But you always had your suspicions. Right?
Chapters 10–13 – Gil’s letter

At this point in the story, Gil has found out a great deal about his father and what he does for a living. He has learned this from looking around his study and from his conversation with Jude while he played truant from school. There are a number of things he is unsure about, such as the pictures in the album in the desk, but he is quite sure that he does not like his father at the moment. This dislike may be because of the way he feels he has been unfairly treated or because he has been influenced by Jude’s animal rights sympathies – or both.

Task

Write a letter from Gil to his father. The letter should reflect the depth of his emotions at this point in the novel. It is not intended that Gil’s father should receive the letter. It is a way for Gil to express his views in a ‘safe’ way. You should include anything you think is relevant from the novel so far. Do not be inappropriately abusive; write this in an intelligent style. Gil is an intelligent person and should be quite capable of expressing himself clearly and forcefully.

Key literary features

You should be aware of the range of skills needed to achieve your target level but you may find the following list useful.

- Variety of sentence structures for particular effects
- Variety of verb tenses
- Repetition, for emphasising a point of view
- Using statistics to give examples (invent these)
- Rhetorical questions
- Emotive appeal
- Inverted commas
- Bracketed comments
- Lists
- Underlining
- Imagery/figurative language

Starting your letter

Use an interesting start to show how he is feeling. The following example may help you to begin.

Dear Dr Walker

I hope I am not interrupting your precious scientific experimentation of defenceless animals for too long but, as your son (YES – you do have one!), I would just like to make some of my feelings very clear to you.
Chapter 16 – Gil’s experience in the laboratory

Use the following table to explain how Gil undergoes a range of experiences at the laboratory. Some are set for you. An extension task, use the three blank rows to note and explain anything else you feel is described in the chapter, other than Gil’s feelings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idea</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>What it shows</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gil is surprised by the appearance of the laboratory. (pp131–2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gil is terrified by a loud noise but his father is unconcerned. (p131)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gil thinks that his mission has been uncovered by his father. (p133)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gil is finding it very difficult to keep calm once he is inside the building itself. (p135)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 20 – What should Gil do?

You have been asked to explore four positive and four negative points about Gil’s behaviour at the moment and to imagine that you are able to give him advice.

Each member of the group should be able to explain the points if asked – so it is important that you all agree on what to say.

Here are a couple of examples to get you started.

### Positive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point</th>
<th>What it also means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keep your friendship going with Jude because he is someone who treats you fairly.</td>
<td>Your dad does not trust you in any way and he has even persuaded your ex-friend to betray you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Negative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point</th>
<th>What it also means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You should not have stolen the code for the alarm because your dad will never trust you if he finds out.</td>
<td>Jude does not care about your relationship with your dad. All he cares about is what he can persuade you to do to help him and his cause.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes on use

How to use the PowerPoint®

- Open up the PowerPoint® file.
- Start the slides – they will run through (without having to click) every second.
- Press ‘S’ to stop on a slide.
- Ask the students about the quotation. For example: Why do you think …? What did he mean …? Why did the writer …? What might have been the effect if …? What would you have thought if …?
- A variety of retrospective and speculative thinking can be stimulated by the resource.
- You can also use a presenter’s mouse to start and stop the slides.

All these quotations have been taken from the first eight chapters. Add further quotations and tailor the display as you wish!
How has Gil changed through the novel?

In the novel, Gil has changed from a very angry young man who believes that his father is the most hateful human being who has ever walked the Earth to someone who, by the end of the final chapter, realises the importance of family.

- How does Gil change so much, and who influences him the most in his life during the novel?
- You could look at the role of Jude, his mother and father as separate influences on his life.
- Include references to support the points you make about Gil, how he has changed and how the writer has helped the reader to understand his feelings through the novel.
- The following grid should help you to plan the main details of your assignment, but you can adapt the framework as necessary to restructure the plan.

**Introduction**

Summarise how Gil changes and the main events of the novel. Use the timeline to select the most appropriate points and references.

**Gil and his friends**

Explain the problems Gil has at school, and with Louis in particular. Show how Louis is actually the best of friends at the end.
Gil and his mum
Explain how Gil moves from pitying her in Chapter 1 to worrying by the end. Explain her influence on his dad at the end.

Gil and his father
Show why Gil hates his father so much at the start of the novel, and how he changes his view by the end when he realises the importance of the research.
**Gil and Jude**

Explain why Jude appeared so heroic to Gil. Did he really help Gil or was he using him all the time? You decide.

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**Conclusion**

Explain what the writer has done to help the reader understand the difficulties faced by Gil in the novel.