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| **Year 9 Dead Poets Society sow 5 weeks** |
| **Objectives:**To be able to define bullyingTo be able to use dramatic conventions of direct address and the thought tunnelTo complete a Role on the WallTo explore the theme of parenthoodTo be able to question whether the students are demonstrating rebellious attitudes or the development of self-knowledge and free-will.To chart the development of characters from before Keating and after Keating’s lessons.To be able to compare attitudes towards delivering education, from Welton Academy and Mr Keating.**Speaking & Listening**Although there will be opportunities for group discussion of topics, stronger candidates could deliver a presentation on a related topic. This could be caught on video to generate evidence for the AQA Speaking & Listening component for GCSE English Language. Weaker candidates could be given the opportunity to present their views in a formal interview. This could be made available to pupils who would struggle to present a formal speech to an audience.Individual presentations suggestion. “Mr Keating deserves to go. He broke every principle of this great institution.” Argue the case for or against the sacking. |
| **Resources**Dead Poets Society DVD The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost, used as Unseen PoetryAQA Anthology: Walking Away by Cecil Day Lewis**ICT**Dead Poets Society film script is available online. Short scenes can be referred to on Youtube.Power-point for lessons. (Photographs in the power-point are from freedigitalphotos.net)**SMSC**Sadly, suicide is a topic that is too often in the news nowadays and while I am cautious of raising the subject, given the new emphasis on mental health and wellbeing, I think that this work is necessary to promote dialogue, uncover views and be prepared to flag up any students at risk. (It is sadly ironic that the leading actor, Robin Williams, committed suicide himself in later years. Fame, fortune and public adulation did not prevent this.)Dead Poets Society explores bullying through the pressure and expectations placed on the pupils from the Establishment and specifically from Neil’s controlling father. A new teacher who dares to teach free-thinking is also bullied by the Establishment – for breaking with the norm. Ultimately, though Neil has a strong sense of duty, he commits suicide feeling unable to fulfil the life his father has laid out for him. This unit could be followed by Romeo & Juliet where two young lovers take their lives due to the social expectations and attitudes of their parents – or it could follow on from Eva Smith’s suicide in An Inspector Calls.Social education – rules of society/expectations of family/influence of peersMoral education – what is right and wrong?Cultural education – Do the Arts and Literature help you to shape your thoughts – or are they simply unnecessary subjects?Spiritual – In Genesis, the Tree of Knowledge is the knowledge of good and evil. In Dead Poets Society the light of knowledge represents academic prowess but symbolises knowledge of the pressures of life; knowledge beyond what you wanted to know. Light is also often symbolic of Truth. Who killed Neil? Father? Mr Keating? The Establishment?(This makes a good grounding later on for debating who killed Romeo and Juliet?)**British Values**To develop self-knowledge. What is self-hood? Self-aware, self-belief, self-choices, self-decisions**Links to Other Subjects**Use The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost and Praise Song for My Mother by Grace Nichols as Unseen Poetry in English Literature, and the poem ‘Walking Away’ from the AQA English Literature Anthology.Could link to English Literature through the death of Eva Smith in An Inspector Calls, or the parental pressures leading to the deaths of Romeo & Juliet. Link to Religious Studies with the symbolism of light, knowledge, even reference to the crucifixion with the crown of thorns.Link to Drama with the Under Pressure sketch and the study of excerpts from the Dead Poets Society script. GCSE Drama text A Midsummer Night’s Dream. |
| **Week 1**Storyboard the opening sequence. Explore the symbolism of the ‘Light of Knowledge’Brainstorm ‘Seize the Day.’ Make character pages for Neil, Todd and Charlie. Show what they are like at the start of term. Watch the film.**Week 2**On character pages, show how the behaviour of the boys is changing. To what do you attribute this? How does Mr Keating council Neil? What is the play Neil is involved in? How is the play used as a vehicle to reach out to the father? In the night, Neil puts on his wreath. What inferences do you draw? Is there a spiritual inference? Explain. Film, Neil commits suicide. What are your predictions for the plot now?**Week 3**Speaking & listening work. Argue the case for or against Keating. Reflective writing. British Values is to develop self-knowledge. What difference did Keating (and his poetry club) make to their lives? Update your character pages, especially the change in Todd. Compare the attitudes and ideas of Welton Academy with Mr Keating.As head-teacher, make ‘inquiries’ and complete Interview Notes page.**Week 4**Responses to the end of the film. Discuss aspirations. Compare the values portrayed through TV in 1967 versus today. Reflective writing. What have you learned?Has Mr Keating changed the school? Has he ruined lives? Observe the structure of the cyclical approach. The film ends as it began – but the audience has grown in knowledge.Homework could be Unseen Poetry The Road Less Taken. **Week 5**Under Pressure sketch, looking at peer pressure. |
| **Differentiation**Variety of learning styles: brainstorming, drama, group discussions, formal and supported discussions, visual – storyboard and pictures to help stimulate thought.The most able pupils will be able to explain the significance of symbolism in the Light of Knowledge and will be confident and eloquent in their delivery of speeches for or against the sacking. Weaker pupils will be supported here by an interview format.**Assessment**Speaking & listening skills of presentation and argument.Quality of responses in analysing poetry**Arts Council Quality Principle 5: Actively Involve Young People**This can be done through discussion, speeches, drama and expressing opinions**Arts Council Quality Principle 3: Being exciting, inspiring and engaging.**The work encourages young people to have aspirations and to consider their life and career choices.**Artsmark Curriculum design**Silver: The setting uses an arts and cultural curriculum to help young people explore or make connections in other subjects.**Artsmark Equality and Diversity**Bullying is certainly a major topic when equality and diversity is considered. The film is about limitations and conditions being imposed upon the main characters. Their problems arise from choosing to be different and choosing to sound their own ‘voice.’**Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing**Neil commits suicide but the film does not end there. Students can see the effect on others and recognise the suffering inflicted onto others as a result of this act. Nevertheless, students can also question the significance of Todd’s ‘barbaric Yawp’ and his act of standing on the desk at the end of the film. How has Todd’s self-esteem developed through the film, and what helped him to gain his ‘voice?’ |