

GCSE (9–1) ENGLISH LITERATURE

Activity

Give learners Teacher Guide 2: Handout 1 and read through it with them.

NB: The first bullet of the question targets AO3 (context), the second AO1 (characters and themes). The third bullet targets AO2 (language effects). AO1 and AO3 are the two dominant assessment objectives targeted in this part of the exam.

The first bullet prompts learners to reference the contextual factors in the two extracts (*not* the wider contextual factors of *Never Let Me Go* that are not relevant to this extract, only the social context: school experience, presented in the extracts). Then the second bullet prompts learners to go on to say how these contextual factors affect the characters' actions and behaviour.

Step 1:

Learners pick out words and phrases that relate to the context of school experience presented in both extracts and fill in Teacher Guide 2: Handout 2.

Examples are given below:

<i>Never Let Me Go</i>	<i>Ghostwritten</i>
Ruler	Mr Ikeda
Perpetrators of the joke (bullies)	Form room teacher
The others (school mates)	High school
	Bullies
	Class
	Final form room hour

Step 2:

Elicit that the extract is concerned with the following social aspects of school: bullying and friendship. Elicit that both these aspects are related to being an outsider at school.

Step 3:

Learners pick out sentences relating to the reactions of the characters. Learners begin with Tommy and Kathy from *Never Let Me Go*, then learners go on to find examples of contrasting or comparative behaviour in *Ghostwritten*.



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Fill in the blank version of the table below, Teacher Guide 2: Handout 3.

For example:

Compare and contrast	<i>Never Let Me Go</i>	Surprising behaviour in this context?	Presentation of being an outsider	<i>Ghostwritten</i>	Surprising behaviour in this context?	Presentation of being an outsider
As outsiders, both Tommy and Quasar look to the people they trust at school for help – both are let down.	<p>'I don't trust any of the others... They might deliberately do it so it comes undone in the night.'</p> <p>A part of me wanted badly to tell him what was going on, and I suppose I knew that to do anything else would be to betray the trust we'd built up</p>			Mr Ikeda got to hear about it, and as a society-appointed guardian of young minds what did he take it upon himself to do? He conducted a funeral service for me during the final form room hour.		
Tommy is not in on the joke being played on him at school. Quasar is.	<p>He was looking at me in complete innocence.</p> <p>Tommy was touched by all the concern he believed had been shown him.</p>			[...] the bullies had got everyone in the class to pretend that I was dead.		
Tommy's reaction to being bullied is yet to happen. Quasar's occurs in the extract, in front of his classmates.	[...] he'd find out the truth sooner or later [...]			I sobbed and screamed at them to stop [...]		



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Compare and contrast	<i>Never Let Me Go</i>	Surprising behaviour in this context?	Presentation of being an outsider	<i>Ghostwritten</i>	Surprising behaviour in this context?	Presentation of being an outsider
Kathy does not tell Tommy about the joke being played on him by his school mates but she does protect him. Mr Ikeda does not protect Quasar; he joins in during form period.	[...] the main thing was that I didn't want to upset him.			He conducted a funeral service for me [...]		
Kathy is empathetic and conflicted; we can infer that Mr Ikeda is neither empathetic nor conflicted.	A part of me wanted badly to tell him what was going on [...]			He'd even lit some incense, and led the chanting and everything.		
Kathy is ashamed of what she did; we do not know if Mr Ikeda is as we do not have his point of view. Quasar infers he should be.	I still feel ashamed [...]			[...] as a society-appointed guardian of young minds what did he take it upon himself to do?		



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In groups, learners discuss whether the characters behave or react in typical or atypical ways in relation to the context.

Compare and contrast	<i>Never Let Me Go</i>	Surprising behaviour in this context?	Presentation of being an outsider	<i>Ghostwritten</i>	Surprising behaviour in this context?	Presentation of being an outsider
As outsiders, both Tommy and Quasar look to the people they trust at school for help – both are let down.	<p>‘I don’t trust any of the others... They might deliberately do it so it comes undone in the night.’</p> <p>A part of me wanted badly to tell him what was going on, and I suppose I knew that to do anything else would be to betray the trust we’d built up</p>	<p>It is not unusual to seek out a friend in a difficult school situation</p> <p>Peer pressure might mean that someone would side against their friend. Fear of becoming the victim might make someone side with the bullies against their friend</p>		Mr Ikeda got to hear about it, and as a society-appointed guardian of young minds what did he take it upon himself to do? He conducted a funeral service for me during the final form room hour.	You would expect the teacher to stop the bullying, not join in.	
Tommy is not in on the joke being played on him at school. Quasar is.	<p>He was looking at me in complete innocence.</p> <p>Tommy was touched by all the concern he believed had been shown him.</p>	The victim not knowing is part of the ‘fun’ for the bullies. This is not unusual behaviour.		[...] the bullies had got everyone in the class to pretend that I was dead.	Not unusual, bullying can snowball	
Tommy’s reaction to being bullied is yet to happen. Quasar’s occurs in the extract, in front of his classmates.	[...] he’d find out the truth sooner or later [...]	It is not unusual. The victim finding out a joke has been played on them is part of the bullying. They will feel hurt and humiliated.		I sobbed and screamed at them to stop [...]	Some people might hide how hurt they are. There are different ways of dealing with bullying: either coping with it, or reacting to it.	



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Compare and contrast	<i>Never Let Me Go</i>	Surprising behaviour in this context?	Presentation of being an outsider	<i>Ghostwritten</i>	Surprising behaviour in this context?	Presentation of being an outsider
Kathy does not tell Tommy about the joke being played on him by his school mates but she does protect him. Mr Ikeda does not protect Quasar; he joins in during form period.	[...] the main thing was that I didn't want to upset him.	Kathy's behaviour is typical of a friend.		He conducted a funeral service for me [...]	This is atypical behaviour. A teacher would ordinarily protect the pupil.	
Kathy is empathetic and conflicted; we can infer that Mr Ikeda is neither empathetic nor conflicted.	A part of me wanted badly to tell him what was going on [...]	This is typical behaviour in this context. Siding with a friend against bullies is bound to have consequences.		He'd even lit some incense, and led the chanting and everything.	A teacher not empathising with a pupil is arguably atypical behaviour.	
Kathy is ashamed of what she did; we do not know if Mr Ikeda is as we do not have his point of view. Quasar infers he should be.	I still feel ashamed [...]	A friend would feel ashamed if they felt they hadn't done the right thing by their friend.		[...] as a society-appointed guardian of young minds what did he take it upon himself to do?	As 'society-appointed guardian(s)' of children teachers should protect them.	



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In pairs or groups, learners can discuss how the characters' typical or atypical behaviour contributes to the presentation of being an outsider at school.

Compare and contrast	<i>Never Let Me Go</i>	Surprising behaviour in this context?	Presentation of being an outsider	<i>Ghostwritten</i>	Surprising behaviour in this context?	Presentation of being an outsider
As outsiders, both Tommy and Quasar look to the people they trust at school for help – both are let down.	<p>'I don't trust any of the others... They might deliberately do it so it comes undone in the night.'</p> <p>A part of me wanted badly to tell him what was going on, and I suppose I knew that to do anything else would be to betray the trust we'd built up</p>	<p>No, outsiders need to choose their friends wisely</p> <p>Peer pressure might mean that someone would side against their friends. Fear of becoming the victim might make someone side with the bullies against their friend</p>	<p>Like all outsiders, Tommy cannot just ask anyone for help. He is isolated and forced to turn to those he trusts.</p> <p>Like all those who befriend outsiders at school, Kathy must weigh up whether her friendship with Tommy is more important than fitting in perhaps.</p>	<p>Mr Ikeda got to hear about it, and as a society-appointed guardian of young minds what did he take it upon himself to do? He conducted a funeral service for me during the final form room hour.</p>	<p>You would expect the teacher to stop the bullying not join in.</p>	<p>Mr Ikeda joins in the bullying with relish, unlike Kathy who frets about it. Quasar is presented as an utterly isolated outsider.</p>
Tommy is not in on the joke being played on him at school. Quasar is.	<p>He was looking at me in complete innocence.</p> <p>Tommy was touched by all the concern he believed had been shown him.</p>	<p>The victim not knowing is part of the 'fun' for the bullies. This is not unusual behaviour.</p>	<p>By keeping Tommy in the dark for as long as possible, the bullies are behaving in their usual sadistic fashion. The reader empathises with Tommy and cringes for him.</p>	<p>The bullies had got everyone in the class to pretend that I was dead.</p>	<p>Not unusual, bullying can snowball.</p>	<p>Both Tommy and Quasar are pointedly outside the joke. Their outsider status is emphasized by the fact that in both extracts they are excluded. Quasar knows. Tommy doesn't know exactly how, but the fact he asks Kathy for help shows that he is aware of his outsider status.</p>



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Tommy's reaction to being bullied is yet to happen. Quasar's occurs in the extract, in front of his classmates.	[...] he'd find out the truth sooner or later [...]	It is not unusual. The victim finding out a joke has been played on them is part of the bullying; the victim will feel hurt and humiliated.	The joke would not be a success if Tommy didn't find out. The presentation of Tommy as an outsider is especially poignant here because the reader understands that when he does find out, he will also find out that Kathy was in on the joke, and that he is completely alone. Kathy won't explain her complicated and well-meaning motives to him.	[...] I sobbed and screamed at them to stop [...]	Some people might hide how hurt they are. There are different ways of dealing with bullying: either coping with it, or reacting to it.	Quasar is 'defenceless' as an outsider. Tommy thinks Kathy is his defence against being an outsider. (NB: if learners point out that Tommy screams and shouts too – remind them that in the exam they can only refer to the extract not the wider text.)
Kathy does not tell Tommy about the joke being played on him by his school mates but she does protect him. Mr Ikeda does not protect Quasar; he joins in during form period.	[...] the main thing was that I didn't want to upset him [...]	Kathy's behaviour is typical of a friend.	What will probably be misinterpreted by Tommy as Kathy siding with the bullies is in fact a deeply caring act. She appreciates his outsider status and knows how important he finds all the concern he has been shown.	He conducted a funeral service for me [...]	This is atypical behaviour. A teacher would ordinarily protect the pupil.	Being an outsider is presented as a complete nightmare with no respite. Quasar's only hope joins in.



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Kathy is empathetic and conflicted; we can infer that Mr Ikeda is neither empathetic nor conflicted.	A part of me wanted badly to tell him what was going on [...]	This is typical behaviour in this context. Siding with a friend against bullies is bound to have consequences.	The reader does not fully appreciate Kathy's motives until the end of the extract. We assume she feels pressured to be part of the joke, but actually her only conflict is how to hurt Tommy the least.	He'd even lit some incense, and led the chanting and everything.	A teacher not empathising with a pupil is arguably atypical behaviour.	The way that Mr Ikeda actually takes to the bullying with relish is quite cruel. Is the writer joining in the bullying? Does the writer sympathise with Quasar? Is he presented in a sympathetic way? Compare to Tommy, who looks 'innocently' at Kathy and is 'touched' by the concern shown him.
Kathy is ashamed of what she did; we do not know if Mr Ikeda is as we do not have his point of view. Quasar infers he should be.	I still feel ashamed [...]	A friend would feel ashamed if they felt they hadn't done the right thing by their friend.	The fact Kathy feels ashamed suggests her true motives were not as selfless as she now claims. Did she not tell Tommy because, as an outsider, he was touched by the care he was being shown. Or did she not tell him for less altruistic reasons? So that she too would not become an outsider?	[...] as a society-appointed guardian of young minds what did he take it upon himself to do?	As 'society-appointed guardian(s)' of children teachers should protect them.	The outsider is presented as someone who realizes they were unfairly treated, whereas Tommy, in the extract, is presented as merely innocent of it all.



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Extension activity:

Discussion questions around how one text illuminates another:

- Do learners find Quasar's situation more pathetic/tragic because they have Tommy's to compare it with?
- Whose situation is worse – Tommy's or Quasar's?

Which writer elicits the most sympathy for the victim?



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April 2015

