 Concepts – Expert group activity:

Student pages

Instructions: Your group will become experts on one major theme explored in Jasper Jones. You will prepare notes for the class using the table below.

1. Complete the notes for your group’s table with examples and analysis
2. Compose a 1-2 A4 page response explaining how your allocated concept is developed in Jasper Jones. Use complete sentences and paragraphs.
3. Present your notes and response to the class in a 3-5 minute lesson to the class.

Group:

Concept: Truth and the nature of reality

| Examples (speech and/ or scene from the play) | Analysis (how have theatre craft and language techniques been used to explore and develop this theme? |
| --- | --- |
|  | Setting: Corrigan has a veneer of peaceful, simple small-town life overlaying the horrors of child sexual abuse and the Vietnam war. |
|  | Irony: kids are locked up following Laura’s disappearance but the danger lies within the homes and society of Corrigan. |
| Mrs Bucktin |  |
| ‘Mad’ Jack Lionel |  |

Group:

Concept: Trust and Courage

| Examples (Speech and/ or scene from the play) | Analysis (how have theatre craft and language techniques been used to explore and develop this theme? |
| --- | --- |
| Charlie and Jasper |  |
| Charlie and Laura |  |
| Charlie and Jeffrey |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Group:

Concept: Conformity in Australian society

| Examples (Speech and/ or scene from the play) | Analysis (how have theatre craft and language techniques been used to explore and develop this theme? |
| --- | --- |
| Ostracism of the intellectual |  |
| The role of sport |  |
| Small-town life |  |

Group:

Concept: Identity

| Examples (speech and/or scene from the play | Analysis (how have theatre craft and language techniques been used to explore, and develop this theme?) |
| --- | --- |
| Racial |  |
| Cultural |  |
| Masculine |  |

Group:

Concept: Prejudice

| Examples (speech and/or scene from the play | Analysis (how have theatre craft and language techniques been used to explore, and develop this theme?) |
| --- | --- |
| Racism against Indigenous people |  |
| Racism against Asians |  |
| Sexism |  |
|  |  |

Teacher’s pages

Concept: Truth and the nature of reality

| Examples | Analysis |
| --- | --- |
| Setting: Corrigan has a veneer of peaceful, simple small-town life overlaying the horrors of child sexual abuse and the Vietnam war.  Act 1. Iii p. 12 “Pretty soon Corrigan will start demanding … They will.”  Act 2 ii p. 43 “See that boot print? …. He burned me with a cigarette.”  Act 2 xi p. 73 Charlie’s summary of the events “She told her mother … Neither of them have spoken.”  Discussions about death between Charlie and Jeffrey in Act 1 pp. 22, 37-38  p. 38 “For someone who has never given death much thought … nothing else.”  Act 2 I p. 41 “Everything and nothing ..to Vietnam.”  Act 2 x pp. 67-72 Eliza and Charlie tell each other what they know. | Mr and Mrs Wishart, Laura and Eliza’s parents, are apparently pillars of the community, but in reality they respectively perpetrate and cover up child sexual abuse. Mr Wishart, the shire president, also abuses Jasper under the eyes of the police.  ‘Carefree’ country childhood has undercurrents of darkness.  This speech draws together the various threads of this theme. |
| Act 1 viii Mrs Bucktin is relieved to see Charlie, who says “Corrigan has finally woken up.” She give him a pointless task to dig a hole which “turns into a kind of grave.” | Irony: kids are locked up following Laura’s disappearance but the danger lies within the homes and society of Corrigan. |
| Mrs Bucktin  Act 1 viii appears giggly and drunk after going out to play bridge  Act 2 vii p. 56 “Bridge eh?” “She play bridge a lot, your mum?”  Act 2 ix p. 66 “… a town of never-ending fucking silence. … escape the silence.” | Mrs Bucktin is bored and dissatisfied with life in Corrigan. She is searching for more and eventually leaves. On p. 33-34 Mr Bucktin says that Charlie is like his mother, to which Charlie reacts with incredulity. However, Mr Bucktin is right because like his mum Charlie doesn’t fit in the town.  In Act 2 xi p. 74 Charlie indicates that he has been teased about his mum’s reputation. |
| Mad Jack Lionel  pp. 3-4 rumours and half-truths “killed a young woman” “eight feet high and four feet wide” “scar… glass eye …tattoo of a skull and crossbones” etc.  Act 1 iii p. 11 “And who kills women in this town? Mad Jack Lionel, that’s fuckin’ who.”  Act 2 I p. 41-42 “For years he’s bin comin’ out that door and calling my name, whenever I’ve walked past.”  Act 2 vi p. 55 Laura’s ghost points to the word ‘sorry’ on the car in Jack’s yard, apparently confirming Jasper’s suspicions that he murdered Laura. | Jasper is prejudiced against Jack Morgan and thinks he is a murderer. In reality Mad Jack is Jasper’s grandfather who wants get to know him and to try to make amends for the past. |

Group:

Concept: Trust and courage amongst the teenage characters

| Examples | Analysis |
| --- | --- |
| Charlie and Jasper:  Act 1.i.  Act 1. Iii p. 10 (also Jasper and Laura) “Why did you pick me?” “Seems to me you’re a bit of a thinker. You’re different from the rest of this town.”  P. 12 “I want to invite Jasper with me. Take him home, …”  Act 2 ii p 43-44 “We’re just specks …than we are.” And “”I am filled with … pale skin.”  Act 2 iii p. 46 “”You’re just gonna have to get brave in a hurry now, Charlie. Understand?” | Instinctive trust between Charlie and Jasper  Charlie’s courage fails him p.12 in the face of the town’s racism and prejudice.  The teenagers face the fearful prospects their insignificance in the universe and the existence or not, of God. They have courage to keep going even after these thoughts. |
| Charlie and Eliza  Act 1 iv. P16 “I wanna tell Eliza everything”  Act 2 x pp. 68- | They finally trust each other with their secrets about Laura |
| Charlie and Jeffrey  Act 1 iv. Pp. 14-15 discussion about superheroes |  |
| Jeffrey  Act 1 iv persists in asking Warwick and Clarry to let him bowl.  Act 2 v. p. 51 – 52 Jeffrey bats for Corrigan and wins the match “He shows no signs of panic or pressure…”  Act 2 xii pp | Creates an uncomfortable atmosphere for the audience and strong feelings of sympathy and admiration for Jeffrey.  Despite the ridicule and bullying Jeffrey perseveres with his passion and plays loyally for his team. |
| Jasper and Laura  Act 1. Iii p10 “We made a promise to each other …” |  |
| * Mr and Mrs Bucktin: unhappy marriage, grief at loss of daughter. Mrs Bucktin is having affairs pp. 24-26 * Mr and Mrs Lu: refugees suffering from trauma and trying to establish themselves in a new country pp. 36-37 Act 1 ix * Mr and Mrs Wishart: abusive and corrupt * Mr and Mrs Jones: victims of racism, Mr Jones is an alcoholic who is estranged from his own father | Parents are not available for their children. They are hiding secrets and/or struggling to survive trauma. The teenagers must trust each other and have the courage to stand by each other. |

Group:

Concept: Conformity

| Examples | Analysis |
| --- | --- |
| Ostracism of the intellectual and the refusal to conform with the dominant culture against one’s principals  Act 1 Scene 1  P. 18 Charlie describes how “Warwick and his henchmen will seek me out after school and repeat the offending word as they beat seven shades of shit out of me.  p. 58. Mr Bucktin “came out of nowhere. Like he was Superman … Just tore those blokes off my dad like they weighed nothing at all. One after the other.” | Charlie decides to ally himself with Jasper partly to feel more grown up and manly, but also because he knows that Jasper will be persecuted due to his Aboriginality.  Charlie is called “queer” and is beaten for using “big words”. He does not fit with the dominant masculine culture of Corrigan.  Mr Bucktin stood up to the town thugs and saved Jeffrey’s father. |
| The role of sport  Act 1 iv. p. sport as a means of exclusion and racism.  Act 2 v. pp 51 – 53 “Suddenly that terrible insult has become a kind of nickname.” The cricket match enables Jeffrey to join the team but he is not accepted on a regular basis until Charlie wins his ‘bet’ with Warwick regarding the peaches. | The ‘Aussie’ characters show none of the respect or inclusivity that is ideal in good sportsmanship, but Jeffrey shows all the signs of being a good sportsman.  In this scene Jeffrey triumphs and at one stage Warwick even appears to be on his side “Wide. Wide Ump!” The language is a mix of racism and admiration and triumph. |
| Small –town life  p.2 “And the kids always nod … Jones.”  Act 1 iv. P13 Stage directions and dialogue between Charlie and Jeffrey | The Lu family behave in a quintessentially Anglo-Australian way, and they do it with genuine passion - growing roses and loving cricket. Jeffrey seems more “Aussie” than Charlie in some ways, however, the fact that the Lus are Asian means that the townsfolk persecute them. |

Group:

Concept: Identity

| **Examples** | **Analysis** |
| --- | --- |
| Racial  Act 1 iv Warwick and Clarry abuse and tease Jeffrey and Charlie.  Act 2 v the cricket match where Jeffrey makes his team win the match.  Act 2 viii p. 58 Jeffrey describes the attack on his family and Mr Bucktin’s intervention. | The dominant group in Corrigan are white males. Those in authority are corrupt, and the others that are represented in the play have limited education and are violent and racist.  Even when Jeffrey saves the match he is called ‘Cong’. |
| Cultural  Act 2 xii Charlie and Mad Jack trick Warwick | On the surface the racial differences in Corrigan seem insurmountable but the play offers hope. Warwick and Clarry can be outwitted and defeated when Charlie, Jack and Jasper combine forces. Jeffrey’s indomitable spirit suggests that he too will triumph. Even the iconic game of cricket seems to have some power to unite characters. |
| Masculine:  bravery Act 1.i p. 3 and 1. Iii p. 11 smoking Act 1 S. 3 p. 9-10 drinking  Act 1 iv. Pp. 17-18 “Warwick Trent … I hate him like poison.” I have to be careful not to use big words with Warwick … beat seven shades of shit out of me.”  Warwick addresses Charlie as “Queer” with reference to his bookishness and articulateness.  Ac t 2 iv p 48. Juxtaposition of Charlie’s fantasy about dancing in Manhattan with Warwick’s abrupt, crude intrusion.  Act 2 ix pp.66-67 Mrs Bucktin explains herself to Charlie and finishes by saying “You’re a good man, Charlie. I love you, my darling. Sorry.”  Act 2 xiii p. 77 Eliza burns down the family home. Charlie is with her “I put my arm around Eliza. Because I’ve finally got the right words. Not from a book. Or a poem. Words that come from me. And they’re just for her…” he whispers them and she nods.  Act 2 xiv stage directions Jasper leaves boots, a bottle of whisky and a journal at Charlie’s window. | Jasper Jones is a coming of age story. Charlie changes from an awkward boy to a confident young man.  Source of comedy because Charlie is awkward and childish in his actions and fears.  Another source of high comedy, albeit dark - Charlie describes Warwick as a stereotypical macho, small-town Aussie male: unintelligent, crudely spoken, racist, sexist, daring and physically rough.  Establishes a stark difference between the two young men.  Charlie has come of age during the play, becoming a man who can be trusted by men and women alike. He is privy to their secrets because he has proved himself to be sensitive and trustworthy.  The penultimate scene demonstrates Charlie’s maturity and confidence.  Symbolic acknowledgement that the two young men are equal in their maturity and understanding. They are friends who understand each other. Jasper has ben the catalyst for Charlie’s maturity. |

Group

Concept: Prejudice

| Examples | Analysis |
| --- | --- |
| Racism against Indigenous people:  “In this town Jasper is the first to be blamed for everything … motherless half-caste Jasper Jones?”  p. 7 “This town thinks I’m an animal, Charlie. They think I belong in a cage… that.”  Act i. iii p. 12 “I want to … that’s not how Corrigan works.”  Act 1 ix p. 39 dumb show in which Jasper is beaten and kicked  Act 2 I p. 43  Act 2 ix pp. 63-64 Jack Lionel tells Jasper the story of his past: “I told them they could get rid of you or I’d get rid of them.” “The town turned their backs on them too.” “Your dad never forgave me… I never forgave myself.” | Racism and prejudice against Jasper make it more difficult to see the truth of the situation, or any event that occurs in Corrigan. By automatically assuming that Jasper is responsible nobody asks further questions.  Jasper describes being tricked, detained illegally and bashed by the police.  The stigma of having a mixed race baby was so strong in the ‘60s that Jack let it break up his family and cast them out. |
| Racism against Asians  Act 1 iv. P. 17 Warwick’s brutal foul language to Jeffrey when Jeffrey asks to bowl  Act 1 iv p.19 “Every now and then … a thing of beauty.”  Act 2 I p. 41 “At a meeting …. But no-one helped Mrs Lu.”  Act 2 v p. 49 Jeffrey describes his father’s persecution at work. “They’re treating him like some kind of Bond villain.”  Act 2 vii p 57 An angry mob tear up the Lus’ flower bed, screaming ‘Red rat! | Highly comic scene illustrates Jeffrey’s courage, confidence, determination and perseverance in the face of major obstacles. It also exposes the ugliness of racism and bullying.  Charlie recounts a town meeting where Mrs Lu was assaulted by the publican’s wife whose son had just been conscripted. In ignorance and fear Mrs Findlay lashed out at another victim of the war, Mrs Lu, rather than the government who firmly followed the USA into the conflict.  These events are understated but they are crimes designed to devastate and exclude the Lu family. |
| Sexism  Act 1 iv p. 17 Warwick “Oi, Wishart. Show us your tits.” | Women and girls are treated poorly in 1960s rural Australia. Laura is abused and murdered, Mrs Bucktin is talked about for leaving her family and Charlie is teased. Mrs Wishart is too cowed and dependent to stick up for her daughters. |
| Charlie searches for reasons for the suffering that he is being exposed to  Act 1 iv. P. “Last year in Perth, they hanged Edgar Allen Cooke – the Nedlands Monster … ‘I just wanted to hurt somebody’. “ | This monologue occurs straight after the scene in which Charlie and Jeffrey are persecuted by Warwick and Clarry. The scene ends with the boy’s discussing death. The text is inviting the audience to consider the reasons behind people’s inhumanity to their fellow humans. |