

THE BOY I AM

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Lesson Plans - A four-lesson unit

FOR

Extract lessons: Year 9+ • Whole novel: KS3 upward, at your discretion • English, with PSHE / RSHE & Citizenship links

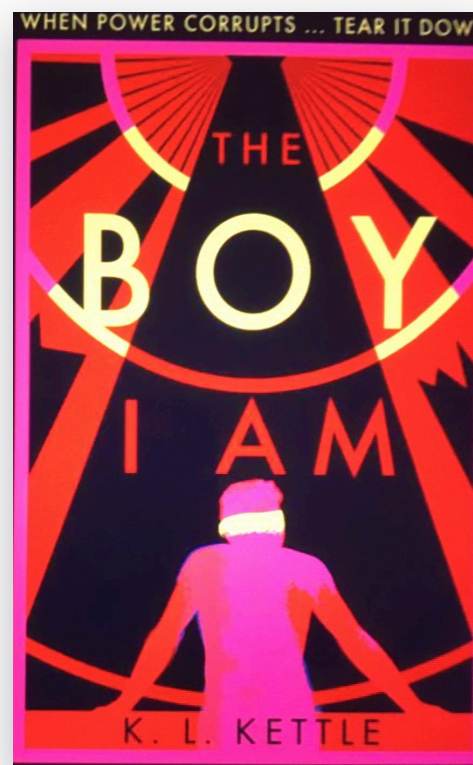
THE FOUR LESSONS

- ✓ Lesson 1 — The mask: voice, character and the opening
- ✓ Lesson 2 — The lesson: dystopia, merit and fairness
- ✓ Lesson 3 — The garden: imagery and setting as power
- ✓ Lesson 4 — The resolve: rhetoric, endings and theme

USE WITH

Activity Pack

Discussion Guide



Cover shown for reference

HOW THESE FIT TOGETHER

Four ready-to-teach lessons, each built on one classroom-safe extract and its Activity Sheet from the free Boy I Am Activity Pack. Teach them as a short unit or lift out single lessons. Every plan has objectives, timings, differentiation and assessment, and can be stretched to KS4 or trimmed for a single period.

A note, out of respect. The four extract lessons here read aloud comfortably from Year 9. The whole novel — a dystopia in the tradition of *The Handmaid's Tale*, taught from KS3 up — carries real stakes (a suicide attempt, sexual assault, a major character's death), handled with care. Read it first and pick what suits your class; fuller note at the back of the Activity Pack.

SCHEME OF WORK

At a glance

LESSON	EXTRACT	SKILL FOCUS	WRITTEN OUTCOME
1 • The mask	The auction stage (Ch. 1)	Narrative voice; surface vs interior; characterisation	A first-person opening: performing calm while hiding fear
2 • The lesson	"They call it a meritocracy" (Ch. 16–17)	Dystopian world-building; viewpoint, bias & rhetoric	The Cook's lesson rewritten from a Hysteric's viewpoint + a for/against case
3 • The garden	Turning off the sky (Ch. 8)	Sensory imagery; symbolism; structure of a "reveal"	A descriptive reveal paragraph ending on a rhetorical question
4 • The resolve	The final chapter	Rhetoric; how endings deliver theme; persuasive structure	A manifesto paragraph moving from "I" to "we"

Each lesson is planned for roughly 50–60 minutes. Assessment is built in through a short written outcome per lesson; together they form a portfolio spanning reading analysis, descriptive, persuasive and viewpoint writing — mapped to GCSE English Language AO2, AO5 and AO6. Homework tasks extend each lesson and can be set as reading-journal entries.

Grouping. The four lessons build in confidence but stand alone. For a single lesson, Lesson 1 (voice) or Lesson 3 (description) work best cold; Lessons 2 and 4 reward some prior discussion of the world.

LESSON 1 - THE MASK

Voice, character and the opening

50–60 min

KS3 & KS4

English

Extract 1 - Ch. 1

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Analyse how a writer reveals character through the gap between surface and interior.
- Understand how first-person voice positions a reader inside a character, fast.
- Write the opening of a story that performs one emotion while hiding another.

Starter

10 min

Show the first line — "My name is Jude Grant and I am alive." Students jot: what does this make you wonder? Share. Establish that a strong opening raises a question the reader needs answered.

Main 1

15 min

Read Extract 1 aloud. In pairs, students build two lists from the text: **what the audience sees** (wave, smile, pose) and **what Jude feels** (locked jaw, cold dread, shaking knees). Draw out the technique: character lives in the *gap* between them. Model annotation of one sentence together.

Main 2

20 min

Introduce the writing task on Activity Sheet 1: a first-person opening in a high-pressure moment (stage, exam, tryout, new school), **performing calm while hiding fear**. Craft rule modelled on the board: show the surface and the truth in the same breath. Students plan (mask / truth columns) then draft an opening.

Plenary

10 min

Two or three read openings aloud; class identifies the "surface" and the "truth" line in each. Return to the objective: did the voice put us inside the character quickly?

Differentiation

Support: sentence stems ("On the outside I... / but inside I...") and a word bank of body-language verbs. **Stretch:** compare Jude's opening with the first page of *Noughts & Crosses* — how does each control the reader? (KS4/older readers only: *The Handmaid's Tale*, an adult novel — check suitability.)

Assessment & homework

AfL: the mask/truth annotation and the opening paragraph (AO2/AO5). **Homework:** extend the opening by a paragraph, or write a reading-journal entry on what the numbered smiles reveal about Jude's world.

LESSON 2 - THE LESSON

Dystopia, merit and fairness

50–60 min

KS3 & KS4

English • Citizenship

Extract 2 • Ch. 16–17

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Explore how dystopian fiction builds a world by making an unfair system sound reasonable.
- Analyse viewpoint and bias — how the same facts change with who's telling them.
- Write persuasively from a chosen viewpoint, and argue a case with evidence.

Starter

8 min

On the board: "A meritocracy is a society where people succeed on merit alone." Quick vote — fair or not? Bank first reactions to return to later.

Main 1

15 min

Read Extract 2. Establish the rules: women born with "a thousand merits"; boys inherit debt. Students hunt for the **hidden assumption** the Cook never states (that everyone starts equal). Discuss how the word "merit" is drilled in — written, repeated, made a paragraph of its own.

Main 2

22 min

Quick-fire vote & reasons (5 min): "A meritocracy is the fairest way to run a society" — a show of hands, then two or three reasons each way, using the extract and real examples (exams, talent shows, socials). Then **writing** (17 min) on Activity Sheet 2: rewrite the Cook's lesson from a Hysteric's viewpoint — same facts, opposite spin — plus one line each for/against. *(For a full 10-minute structured debate, run it as a follow-on lesson and set the rewrite as homework.)*

Plenary

10 min

Read two rewrites side by side with the original. Draw the conclusion: information becomes pride or propaganda depending on who holds the pen. Revisit the starter vote — has anyone moved?

Differentiation

Support: give the "for/against" grid pre-labelled and a viewpoint sentence stem. **Stretch:** link to a real propaganda poster; argue whether the abuse of power is about gender or power itself. (KS4/older readers only: Alderman's *The Power*, an adult novel — check suitability.)

Assessment & homework

AfL: the viewpoint rewrite and debate contributions (AO5/AO6; Citizenship). **Homework:** find one real-world "merit" system (grades, credit scores, followers) and write what it rewards and what it misses.

LESSON 3 - THE GARDEN

Imagery and settling as power

50–60 min

KS3 & KS4

English

Extract 3 - Ch. 8

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Analyse how sensory imagery makes a reader feel a moment as strongly as a character does.
- Understand setting as a tool of power — who controls beauty, nature and even "night".
- Write a descriptive "reveal" using all five senses and a purposeful closing line.

Starter

8 min

"Describe something ordinary to someone who has never experienced it." Students spend three minutes describing grass, rain or the night sky to an imagined person who's never seen it. Share a line or two.

Main 1

15 min

Read Extract 3 slowly. Students underline every word that touches a **sense** ("prickling", "tastes rich", "plink and sparkle", "real and endless and black"). Name the craft: a **reveal** built from sensory imagery. Then examine the final line — a quiet **rhetorical question** that turns beauty into politics ("I wonder who turns off the sky").

Main 2

20 min

Writing task on Activity Sheet 3: a reveal paragraph — a character kept from something ordinary (the sea, stars, snow, silence) meets it for the first time. Two rules: **use all five senses**, and **end on a question** that exposes who's been in control. Students fill the sense bank, then draft.

Plenary

10 min

Swap paragraphs; partners highlight the strongest image and the closing question. Discuss: does the question make the world feel bigger than the paragraph?

Differentiation

Support: the sense-bank grid scaffolds planning; offer an image word-bank. **Stretch:** add a second paragraph that contrasts the character's ordinary world with the thing revealed, using deliberate sentence-length shifts.

Assessment & homework

AfL: the descriptive paragraph — imagery range and closing effect (AO5; AO2 in analysis).

Homework: find another passage in the novel where setting shows power, and explain how in 3–4 sentences.

LESSON 4 - THE RESOLVE

Rhetoric, endings and theme

50–60 min

KS3 & KS4

English • Citizenship

Extract 4 • final chapter

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Analyse how a writer uses rhetoric and structure to make an ending land its theme.
- Understand the novel's idea that freedom only counts when it is shared.
- Write a persuasive manifesto paragraph that builds from "I" to "we".

Starter

8 min

Read the ending aloud twice — once quietly, once as a rallying cry. Ask: which reading are the words *built* for, and how can you tell? Bank the features students notice.

Main 1

15 min

Map the rhetoric together: **short, certain sentences** ("I'll be a boy. Just that."), **repetition** and the **rule of three**, the **build from one to many** ("one boy... a hundred, more maybe"), and the **turn from "I" to "we"**. Discuss the theme: private feeling made into a shared cause. Compare with the opening of Extract 1 — how far has Jude travelled?

Main 2

20 min

Writing task on Activity Sheet 4: a manifesto paragraph in role — a character choosing **collective** over personal freedom and calling others to join, for any cause the student believes in. Toolkit checklist: punchy opening, one repetition, one "one-to-many" line, a final line that turns "I" into "we".

Plenary

12 min

Perform two or three manifestos. Class names the rhetorical device that landed hardest. (KS4/older readers) Compare the quiet, determined hope of this ending with the ambiguous close of Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, an adult novel — which lingers, and why?

Differentiation

Support: provide the toolkit as fill-in sentence frames. **Stretch:** write two endings for the same cause — one hopeful, one ambiguous — and evaluate which is more powerful and why.

Assessment & homework

AFL: the manifesto — rhetorical control and structure (AO5/AO6; spoken language). **Homework:** a full-unit reflection: "What kind of person does *The Boy I Am* argue it takes to change a system?"