



<p><u>WHO</u></p> <p>John Godber is one of the most performed playwrights in the English language. Born in 1956, he is the son of a mining family who went on to be a drama teacher at the school he went to as a child.</p> <p>He joined Hull Truck theatre Company in 1984 and has since won many prestigious awards for his productions. He has written 17 plays and has directed all of their first performances.</p>	<p><u>INFLUENCES</u></p> <p>Godber claims that much of his influence comes from the world around him, his own experiences and the people that he meets and so the majority of his plays are set in the North West and are based around working class characters.</p> <p>He was greatly influenced by his time as a drama teacher, this is evident in his play 'Teachers'.</p> <p>He has felt like an outsider since he failed his 11+ exam and this is a theme which he often explores in his work.</p> <p>Many conventions of Brecht can be seen in 'Teachers' – multi role-play, direct address, music, minimal set and props, changing characters on stage. These are designed to keep an active audience.</p>
<p><u>WHERE</u></p> <p>Originally from Upton, a working class part of West Yorkshire, Godber has made his place of birth a focal point for his plays.</p> <p>One of his aims is to reflect the lives of the people around him and so his subject matter often surrounds the challenges that working class people face.</p> <p>He aims to appeal to a diverse audience, particularly working class people who traditionally don't go to the theatre.</p>	<p><u>CONVENTIONS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • His general performance style is heightened through the use of stereotypes or 'stock' characters, although his language and dialogue is largely realistic and conversational. • Direct address is used to engage the audience and involve them in the action of the play. • Multi role-play is used in some Godber plays and so actors need to use precise vocal and physical skills to portray distinctive characters that the audience can easily recognise. • Music is used to add atmosphere to a particular moment or to enhance the meaning of a scene.
<p><u>WHEN</u></p> <p>Godber wrote his first, and to date most successful play, 'Bouncers' in 1977 and continues to write and direct to the present day.</p> <p>Godber sets his plays at the time of writing as he aims to reflect life as he sees it around him and to attract contemporary audiences.</p>	<p><u>AIMS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Godber believes in theatre for the masses and so explores universal themes in his plays. • He believes in the theatre as an instrument of social change for the better. • Using comedy to engage the audience but also to make them think. He described 'Teachers' as a comedy that was 'deadly serious' as it made audiences laugh but then question the fairness of the education system.

Tasks to highlight understanding. Once you have completed a task you should highlight it.

- 1 – I can give examples from the play 'Teachers' that demonstrate the influences evident on John Godber.
- 2 – I can give examples of how I have used some of Godber's conventions in my own work.
- 3 – I can identify Brechtian techniques in Godber's work.

<u>FAMOUS PLAYS</u>	
TEECHERS	BOUNCERS
SHAKERS	UP N UNDER
OUR HOUSE	APRIL IN PARIS