

THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME



NAME:

FORM:

LESSON DAY:

LESSON 1

Seeing the world through Christopher's eyes

Christopher sees the world differently to others. Many people say that Christopher has Asperger's syndrome or autism.

Although some of Christopher's behaviour traits do lend themselves to the syndrome, writer Mark Haddon never actually says that Christopher has autism.

He says *'The story is not about Asperger's. It's a story whose central character describes himself as "a mathematician with some behavioural difficulties". If anything it's a play about difference, about being an outsider, about seeing the world in a surprising and revealing way. It's as much a novel about us as it is about Christopher.'*

STAGING

The version that we will watch of Curious Incident is performed **IN THE ROUND**.

In the round means that the audience are seated all around the performance space – what challenges do you think that this creates for:

- **THE ACTORS**
- **THE SET AND LIGHTING DESIGNERS**
- **THE AUDIENCE**

Pay attention to how the set, lighting and sound play an important part in letting the audience see things from Christopher's perspective.

We are now going to watch the opening 7 minutes of the performance – MAKE NOTES on these questions as you watch:

1) Why do you think that the set designer chose to have the stage floor set out in squares?

2) How does the actor playing Christopher use his voice and physicality to show that he is struggling to cope with the situation?

3) How did the designers use set, sound and lighting to show changing locations?

HOMEWORK 1

Do this work on PAPER – not in your book

Research the backstage jobs of either a:

- **SOUND DESIGNER**
- **SET DESIGNER**
- **LIGHTING DESIGNER**

You should be able to show that you understand:

- **The tasks that they have to do as part of their job**
- **What they are responsible for doing day to day**

LESSON 2

SCENE 1 – POLICE

Policeman: Would you like to tell me what's going on here, young man?

Christopher The dog is dead.

Policeman I'd got that far.

Christopher I think someone killed the dog.

Policeman How old are you?

Christopher I'm fifteen years and three months and two days.

Policeman And what precisely are you doing in the garden?

Christopher I'm talking to you

Policeman Why were you in the garden in the first place?

Christopher I could see Wellington in the garden, it looked like someone tried to plant him.

Policeman Did you try to plant the dog?

Christopher No, I did not. I like dogs.

Policeman Is this your fork?

Christopher No.

Policeman You seem very upset about this. I'm going to ask you once again.

(Christopher *starts groaning*)

Policeman Terrific (Christopher *carries on groaning.*)

Policeman Young man I'm going to ask you to stop making that noise and to stand up please calmly and quietly.

(Christopher *carries on groaning.*)

Policeman Marvellous. Great. Just flipping-

(The Policeman tries to lift him up by his arm. Christopher screams. He hits the Policeman. For a while the two stare at one another.)

Policeman I'm arresting you for assaulting a police officer.

HOMEWORK 2

Whose non-naturalistic moment did you think was the most effective in communicating the way that Christopher felt?

Explain why you thought it was the most effective.

LESSON 3

Naturalism means a performance that looks like real life. You are going to write about a naturalistic scene in the play and so need to make notes on the following:

- 1) What **emotion(s)** do you think the scene was supposed to make the audience feel?

- 2) How did the actors use their **vocal** and **physical skills** to create that emotion in the audience?

- 3) Describe a moment of **NON-NATURALISM** that you watched and say what it added to the performance.

- 4) Why do you think that the director has chosen to have moments that are naturalistic and non-naturalistic in the same performance?

HOMEWORK 3

Who is the most convincing actor in your opinion and why?

LESSON 4

CHRISTOPHER'S JOURNEY

I came home from school one day and no one answered the door, so I went and found the secret key that we keep under a flowerpot outside the kitchen window.

I let myself into the house and wiped my feet on the mat.

I put my keys in the bowl on the table.

I took my coat off and hung it by the side of the fridge so it would be ready for school the next day and gave three pellets of rat food to Toby who is my pet rat.

I made myself a raspberry milkshake and heated it up in the microwave.

Then I went up to my bedroom and turned on my bedroom light and played six games of Tetris and got to level 38 which is my fourth best ever score.

HOMEWORK 4

Write your own version of Christopher's journey to use next lesson in order to create a piece of physical theatre.

The journey needs to be slightly longer than the one that we have used today and should give plenty of opportunities for the actors to be creative and work as an **ENSEMBLE**.

You will be being assessed on how you perform this journey so it needs to be good! It could be about coming home, going shopping, going to school or to the park – be creative!

LESSON 5**MY JOURNEY**

	1	2	3	4
PERFORMANCE SKILL-INDIVIDUAL	There is no/little indication of role. Little or no use of voice or physicality.	There are moments when physicality is used effectively to communicate their role but this is not maintained throughout.	An effective use of physicality to communicate their role. The audience are engaged throughout.	A highly effective and consistent use of physicality to communicate their role. The audience are captivated by excellent stage presence.
EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION OF SCENARIO	Basic movement sequences are attempted but these are not always wholly successful.	At times, movement sequences are performed effectively to add to the performance.	Creative movement sequences are performed to a good standard and aid the story telling.	Highly creative and theatrical movement sequences are performed to an excellent standard and fully communicate the story.
CONFIDENCE AND FOCUS	Struggles to perform with confidence and self-discipline.	At times, confidence and self-discipline are evident.	Demonstrates a confident performance showing focus and discipline.	Performs with highly effective stage presence and excellent self-discipline.
GROUP CO-OPERATION	Little to no evidence of ensemble work. The piece fails to run smoothly.	Some evidence of ensemble work in both preparation and performance but this is not consistent.	Ensemble work is evident in the performance. The performance is cohesive and runs smoothly.	The group are completely cohesive and work as an ensemble in performance. Roles are equally distributed and appropriate for the performance.

TOTAL: /16

Band:

Previous target:

Target achieved Y / N

How was this target met/why was it not met?

Target for my next piece of work:

HOMEWORK: 5 Which journey did you think was the most effective and why?

LESSON 6

We are going to look at another **NATURALISTIC** moment in the play. Make notes on the following questions about the letter scene between Christopher and his mother.

1) Christopher's mum shows regret and sadness at the start of the letter. How does she show this using her voice and physicality (body)?

2) Christopher's mum then shows anger as she reads the letter. How does she show anger using her voice and physicality (body)?

3) Describe the way that the actor playing Christopher uses his physical skills to gradually change his reactions to the letter, and say what impact this has on the audience.

4) How does the use of set, sound and lighting add to the effectiveness of the scene?

HOMEWORK 6

Which naturalistic scene has had the biggest impact on you so far and why?

LESSON 7

Christopher: I made a decision, I did this by thinking of all the things I could do and deciding whether they were the right decision or not.

ED: Stay home.

Christopher: I decided I could not stay at home any more.

ED: Christopher please.

Christopher: No because I can't live in the house any more with you because it is dangerous.

Siobhan: Have you thought about me?

Christopher: I can't go and live with you as you can't look after me when school is closed.

Siobhan: I could try and –

Christopher: No, because you're a teacher.

Siobhan: Yes I am.

Christopher: Not a friend or a family member.

Uncle Terry/Aunty Pat: You could come and live with your Uncle Terry/Aunty Pat.

Christopher: You live in Sunderland. I don't know how to get to Sunderland.

Uncle Terry/Aunty Pat: Get a train. Get the train from Swindon.

Christopher: And you smoke cigarettes. And you stroke my hair.

Mr/Mrs Alexander: Hello Christopher.

Christopher: You're not a friend either.

Mr/Mrs Alexander: I think I am a friend.

Christopher: No. And you're not a member of my family.

Mr/Mrs Alexander: I do have a dog.

Christopher: Yes but I can't stay overnight in your house or use your toilet because you've used it and you're a stranger.

HOMEWORK 7 - Whose multi role-playing did you think was most impressive?
Explain how they used their voice and physicality to clearly show 2 of their characters.

LESSON 8

Match the following terms to their definitions:

CONTEMPORARY	unwilling to change
THRILLING	appropriate to the time or people
ENERGETIC	making an audience interested
UNCOMPROMISING	something modern or in the present
COLLABORATION	working with others
EQUAL EMPHASIS	something high in energy
RELEVANT	causing excitement and pleasure
ENGAGING	the same amount of importance

Frantic Assembly is one of the UK's leading **contemporary** theatre companies, producing **thrilling**, **energetic** and **uncompromising** theatre.

In **collaboration** with a wide variety of artists, Frantic Assembly continues to create new work that places **equal emphasis** on movement, design, music and text.

Frantic Assembly is interested in the power of **collaboration**.

They have a strong desire to tell stories, making them **relevant** and **engaging** for their audiences.

HOMEWORK 8: Which style do you prefer to watch in the theatre – naturalistic or non-naturalistic? Write at least a paragraph explaining your decision using examples from *The Curious Incident*

LESSON 9 - AT THE STATION

Voice One	Sweet Pastries.
Voice Two	Heathrow Airport Check-In Here.
Voice Three	Bagel factory.
Voice Four	Yo! Sushi.
Voice Five	Stationlink.
Voice One	Buses.
Voice Two	WH SMITH.
Voice Three	Heathrow Express.
Voice Four	Clinique.
Voice Five	First-class lounge
Voice One	Fullers.
Voice Two	The Mad Bishop
Voice Three	And Bear Public House
Voice Four	Dixons
Voice Five	Our Price.
Voice One	Paddington Bear at Paddington Station
Voice Two	First Aid.
Voice Three	Q Here Please.
Voice Four	Position Closed.
Voice Five	Closed.
All voices	Position Closed.

HOMEWORK 9 - Which performance was most effective in communicating how Christopher sees the world? What skills did the actors use to make their performance so effective?

LESSON 10

You are going to answer the following questions as we finish watching the play:

1) The director has chosen that Christopher's mum and dad should not be lit while they are arguing – why do you think they made that decision?

2) The technician plays a really jarring sound when Christopher's mum and dad come into the bedroom – why do you think that sound was chosen for that moment?

3) How is technical design used to communicate to the audience that Siobhan isn't really at the flat with Christopher when she tries to calm him down?

4) The scenes in the last part of the play transition (change) into each other very quickly – why do you think this is?

5) Who is your favourite **actor** in the play and why?

HOMEWORK 10

Think of at least 3 purposes (uses) of SOUND and LIGHTING in the theatre.

PURPOSES OF LIGHTING:

1

2

3

PURPOSES OF SOUND

1

2

3

LESSON 11

Mrs Shears: What in Christ's name have you done to my dog? Oh, no, oh Christ!

Siobhan: It was 7 minutes after midnight. The dog was lying on the grass in the middle of the lawn in front of Mrs Shears' house.

Mrs Shears: Get away from my dog.

Siobhan: It's eyes were closed, it looked as if it were running on its side. But the dog was not running. The dog was dead.

Mrs Shears: Get away from my dog.

Siobhan: My name is Christopher John Francis Boone. I know all the countries of the world and the capital cities. And every prime number up to 7507.

Mrs Shears: Get away from my dog for Christ's sake!
(Christopher kneels on the floor with his head in his hands and starts to groan)

Siobhan: After 12 and a half minutes a policeman arrived. He had a big orange leaf stuck to the bottom of his shoe which was sticking out from one side. He squatted down next to me and said.

Policeman: Would you like to tell me what's going on young man? *(Pause, Christopher is still groaning)* You are going to have to stop that noise, get up and answer my questions young man. *(Pause)* I said stop making that noise and get up.

(The policeman grabs Christopher by the arm and tries to make him stand up. Christopher screams and starts to hit the policeman. The policeman lets go of Christopher and they stare at each other in silence for a few seconds)

Policeman: Right, I'm arresting you for assaulting a police officer.

Duty Sergeant: Could you empty your pockets out on to the desk please Christopher?

HOMEWORK 11 Finish your annotation of sound and lighting designs for the scene

LESSON 12 – CHAIR DUETS

NAME:

MEANING THROUGH MOVEMENT

	1	2	3	4
PERFORMANCE SKILL- INDIVIDUAL	There is no/little indication of role. Little or no use of voice or physicality.	There are moments when voice and physicality are used effectively to communicate their role but this is not maintained throughout.	An effective use of voice and physicality to communicate their role. The audience are engaged throughout.	A highly effective and consistent use of voice and physicality to communicate their role. The audience are captivated by excellent stage presence.
EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION OF SCENARIO	Basic movement sequences are attempted but these are not always wholly successful.	At times, movement sequences are performed effectively to add to the performance.	Creative movement sequences are performed to a good standard and aid the story telling.	Highly creative and theatrical movement sequences are performed to an excellent standard and fully communicate the story.
CONFIDENCE AND FOCUS	Struggles to perform with confidence and self-discipline.	At times, confidence and self- discipline are evident.	Demonstrates a confident performance showing focus and discipline.	Performs with highly effective stage presence and excellent self-discipline.
GROUP CO- OPERATION	Little to no evidence of ensemble work. The piece fails to run smoothly.	Some evidence of ensemble work in both preparation and performance but this is not consistent.	Ensemble work is evident in the performance. The performance is cohesive and runs smoothly.	The group are completely cohesive and work as an ensemble in performance. Roles are equally distributed and appropriate for the performance.
Target for my next piece of work:				

HOMEWORK – WWW / EBI for your performance

LESSON 13

CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME EVALUATION

Make sure that you answer the questions in **FULL SENTENCES** that make sense without the questions.

- 1) What does the word **ensemble** mean in terms of the work that we have been doing?
- 2) Give **2 skills** that are needed to be successful when performing as an **ensemble** and give an example of when you have **effectively** used each one in your performance work on Curious Incident. (Police scene, journeys, Chair Duets)
- 3) Describe a movement that you think was the clear in communicating a moment between your characters in your Chair Duet performance. You should describe what you did and said as well as the way that you did it – eg attitude, pace, intensity, facial expression. Don't forget to say what it communicated to the audience.
- 4) What have you found challenging whilst working on Curious Incident and why?
- 5) Which task do you think you have been most effective in during this scheme and why? (Reviewing the performance, naturalism, journeys, Chair Duets)
- 6) Whose Chair Duet performance did you admire the most and what made it so successful in your opinion?
- 7) If you could have improved your own performance, what would you have done differently and what impact do you think that this improvement would have had on the audience?

HOMEWORK 13

Finish your evaluation for next lesson.

