

TEACHER PACK



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The Maia Press is an award-winning independent publishing house dedicated to bringing out high-quality original fiction by both new and established authors. Based in multi-cultural East London, Maia publishes writers from a variety of backgrounds and cultures including some works in translation.

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INTRODUCTION

This teachers' pack is designed to accompany *Asboville*, the debut novel of author and English teacher, Danny Rhodes. *Asboville* is a contemporary, coming-of-age story about a 16-year-old boy served with an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO).

The pack is a tool for teachers and their students working with, and beyond, the book. The author provides break-downs of different aspects of the novel itself (themes, character details, settings, etc) as well as a synopsis, which gives a unique insight into his own creative process. It also includes numerous student-based tasks and writing frames to encourage students' own creative processes – from writing texts, lyrics and poems to enacting dramas.

As the author also has an eye on the predicaments of young people in society today, the pack provides some key facts about ASBOs themselves. It includes a link to an interview with a young man threatened with an ASBO, and suggests other links to key articles on the subject.

Danny Rhodes hopes that the pack will also stimulate discussions about the broader social issues at the book's heart – surviving a deprived, modern-day adolescence.

*For further information, or to order books, contact
maggie@maiapress.com or karen@maiapress.com*

CONTENTS

4	What is an ASBO?
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Understanding the book

5	Themes
6	Character studies
8	Mapping the novel
8	Settings
8	Imagery
9	Close reading

Being creative

11	Creating prose
11	Creating lyrics
11	Creating poetry
12	Persuasive writing
13	Essay questions
14	Audio interview
15	Drama tasks
19	Photographic stimuli

Resources

21	Chapter breakdown and author's comments
27	Writing frame
27	Useful links
28	ASBO extras

WHAT IS AN ASBO?

Some understanding of the nature of an ASBO will help with a fruitful reading of *Asboville*. A good starting point for students might be a discussion about what an ASBO is and how getting one can affect a young person's life.

Anti-social behaviour orders.

An application for an order under this section may be made by the council for the local government area or any chief officer of police any part of whose police area lies within that area if it appears to the authority that the following conditions are fulfilled with respect to any person aged 10 or over, namely

- (a) that the person has acted, since the commencement date, in an anti-social manner, that is to say, in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as himself; and
- (b) that such an order is necessary to protect persons in the local government area in which the harassment, alarm or distress was caused or was likely to be caused from further anti-social acts by him...

If, on such an application, it is proved that the conditions mentioned in subsection (1) above are fulfilled, the magistrates' court may make an order under this section (an "anti-social behaviour order") which prohibits the defendant from doing anything described in the order.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Section 1

Danny Rhodes on ASBOs and his background views relating to his characters.



In addition to telling a compelling story, *Asboville* explores the effect of receiving an ASBO on one young person's life and those around him. Through its protagonist, JB, it implicitly raises important issues about young people in society today.

ASBOs – Anti-Social Behaviour Orders – are regularly served on young people and might be seen as one of the signs that society is becoming less tolerant and more cynical towards them. With increasing regularity, young people hear negative comments about themselves. They are commonly accused of being: disrespectful and aggressive; fat; materialistic; less intelligent with short attention spans; sexually promiscuous; drinkers and drug-takers ... not to mention normal teenage frailties like being spotty, smelly, angry etc.

Many anti-social teenagers have difficulties fitting in to the systems society has in place. Those who are not suited to formal education, for instance, do not have the chance to go out and work any more as unskilled jobs hardly exist. Lack of investment is one of the root causes of anti-social behaviour.

ASBOs are a civil reprimand given to people who ought to face criminal charges (and have their charges proved in a court of law). They can be handed out on the basis of hearsay evidence (they often are). They tend to target the weakest and most vulnerable in society, including children. They are used to label young people from the age of 10 upwards and can cause resentment, loneliness, depression etc.

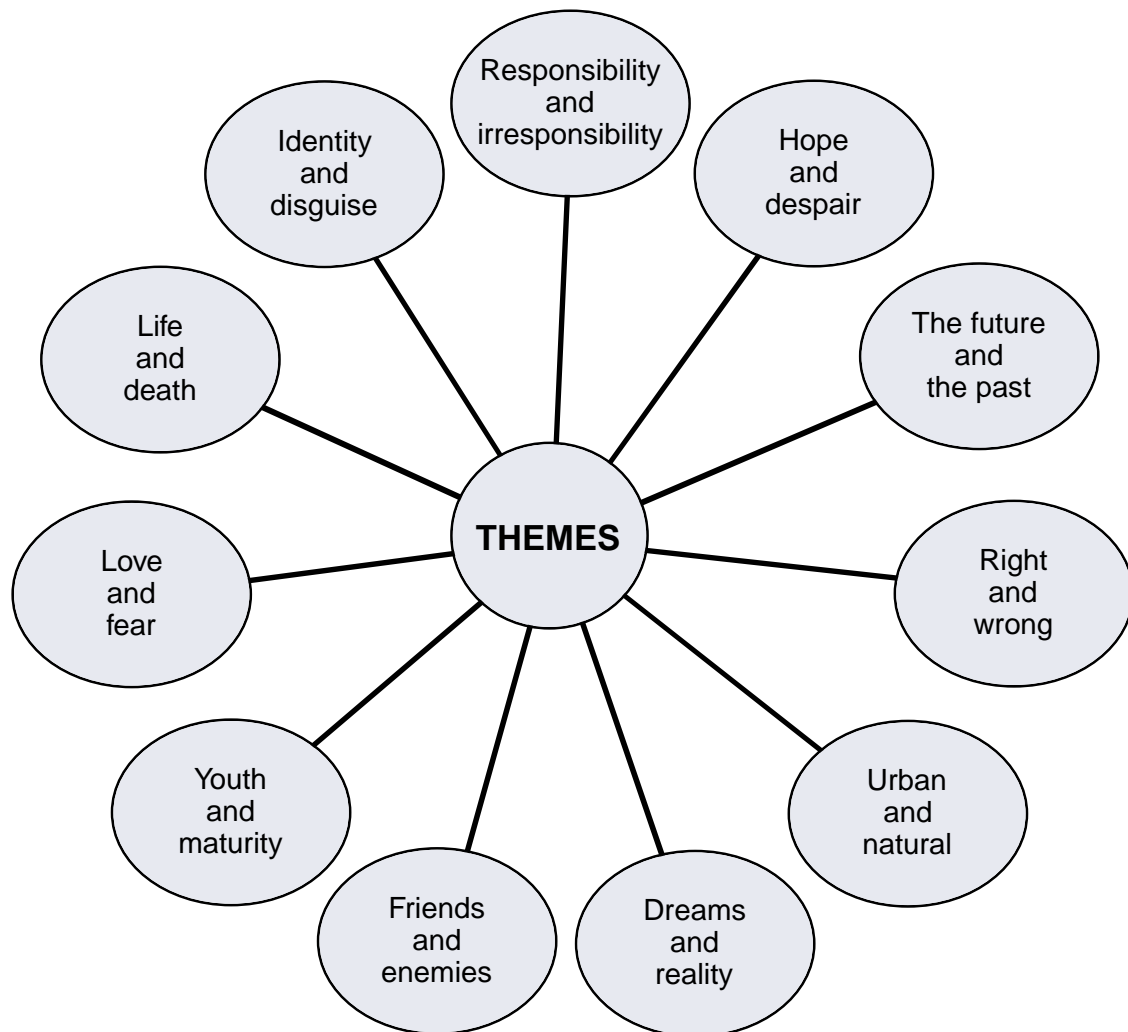
The naming and shaming policy which comes with an ASBO can encourage young people to see them as a badge of honour. *Asboville*'s protagonist, JB, receives an ASBO. This 'badge' leads another gang leader, Moey, to compete with him throughout the novel. JB is guilty of joy-riding, though he is not the driver of the car and was to an extent an unwilling participant. He is from a sink estate, where his behaviour is pretty much the norm – a bid to fit in rather than any deliberate anti-social streak. It is caused by boredom, distrust of authority and low self-esteem. JB begins to believe that all adults are not worth bothering with and that it is his 'fate' to have a life of being singled out, a life of bad luck and of bad things happening to him. When a meeting is held on the estate, JB is made an example of to show that the government is taking action: this causes much suffering for his family.

For more ASBO facts, see page 28

UNDERSTANDING THE BOOK

THEMES

These are the main themes in *Asboville*:



Student tasks

In groups or pairs, students explain in their own words what these themes mean to them:

In your opinion, which theme(s) are the most important in the novel?

Give reasons for each answer and suitable quotations to back them up.

Create a diagram linking the various themes in the novel and present it.

Discuss tagging: What is a tag? What does a tag represent? Why would someone want one?

What sort of tag represents each student's character? Students can create a tag and share it with the group. Hold a class vote to choose the best tag. This can be done online at www.graffiti.playdo.com

CHARACTER STUDIES

Introduction

Here are some of the major facts about each character. Students can be asked to find examples from the text to support the points, perhaps using the grid on page 27. They might then be asked to write a brief character study, using evidence from the text to support their views. Alternatively, they could use the character details to write a new scene of their own.

J.B.

JB is the main character in the novel. We see most of the novel from JB's perspective. He is sixteen years old. He lives in the city on an estate with his mother, half-sister and grandfather. He is sent to live with his uncle because he has been issued with an ASBO for anti-social behaviour and because he is almost certain to breach the rules of his ASBO if he stays on the estate with his friends. He is lonely and isolated when he is forced to be away from his friends. He falls in love with Sal. He is accused of the graffiti on the beach huts and is also a suspect in the hoax-call event that causes the death of Sal's father. He often does things without thinking of the consequences.

*Use the following format for your answers:
See page 27 for a grid*

Point:
Quote or evidence:
Explanation:

Sal

We learn a lot about Sal and her life from her first person narrative perspective. Sal lives in Haycliffe with her mother and father. She is seventeen. She is in her final year at school and studying for her A levels. She disagrees with her father's outlook on life and wants to move away from the town but her father is keen for her to stay close to her roots. This causes them to argue. She finds JB interesting and different from the other boys in town.

Moey

Moey is the leader of a group of youths that come from Haycliffe. In many ways he's more badly behaved than JB. He steals from the cash point in the amusement arcade for instance. He's resentful and jealous of JB because JB comes from the city. His girlfriend is Lisette but he is both insecure about their relationship and disrespectful around her. He is cruel to animals. He may be responsible for the graffiti on the huts and the hoax call, though we never learn the truth about this. He says that he wants an ASBO of his own. He challenges JB at the end of the novel and calls him a fake. We do not discover if JB's knife causes him any injury.

Carla

Carla is JB's closest female friend on the estate. Though JB is fond of her and perhaps would have liked to be closer than just friends, nothing has happened between them. This may be because Carla is not really interested in JB as anything more than a close friend. She seems to always be flirting with lads, either on the phone or in person. At the end of the novel she has learned to move on from the life they shared. Carla is one of the most grown-up teenagers in the story.

CHARACTER STUDIES

Scooby

Scooby is JB's closest mate on the estate. He is wild and unpredictable. He takes drugs and drinks too much. He is forever pushing the boundaries. He is responsible for the final incident that leads to JB receiving the ASBO. Perhaps he is responsible for many of the other incidents too. After JB leaves, Scooby becomes more and more unstable and depressed. He begins to take more and more drugs (especially cannabis). At the end of the novel we learn that he has taken another car out and crashed it. He is killed in the accident.

Dicko

Dicko is one of JB's mates from the estate. His father is often out in the evenings and the youths go to his house to watch DVDs, play Play-Station games and smoke. In the past there has been trouble at his house because of the loud music the youths play.

The gang

The fat lad is the closest JB gets to meeting a male friend in Haycliffe. He respects JB. The little lad is responsible for kicking the paint tin over. The lad with the bruises is another of Moey's gang.

Lisette

Lisette is Moey's girlfriend until the event with the cat. She seems to like JB and sends him a text towards the end of the novel. Moey is jealous of this.

Uncle

JB's uncle is an outcast who lives in the caravan park because of an incident in his past. He is responsible for the upkeep of the beach huts. He spends much of his time at the allotment. He used to be a fisherman and is accused of causing the deaths of two of his crew members by the local men.

Mother

JB's mother sends JB to live with his uncle because she knows he will breach his ASBO if he stays in the city. She works, looks after JB's half-sister and his grandfather and struggles to keep JB in check. She has no time for JB's father. She berates the local politicians/councillors during a meeting at the community centre on the estate and accuses the local people of being hypocrites for forgetting that they were once teenagers themselves who were not much better behaved. At the end of the novel she moves to Haycliffe to start a new life.

Barry Swallow

Barry Swallow is JB's first social worker in Haycliffe. He tries to help JB to make the correct choices and attempts to understand him. He is taken off JB's case after the incident with the graffiti.

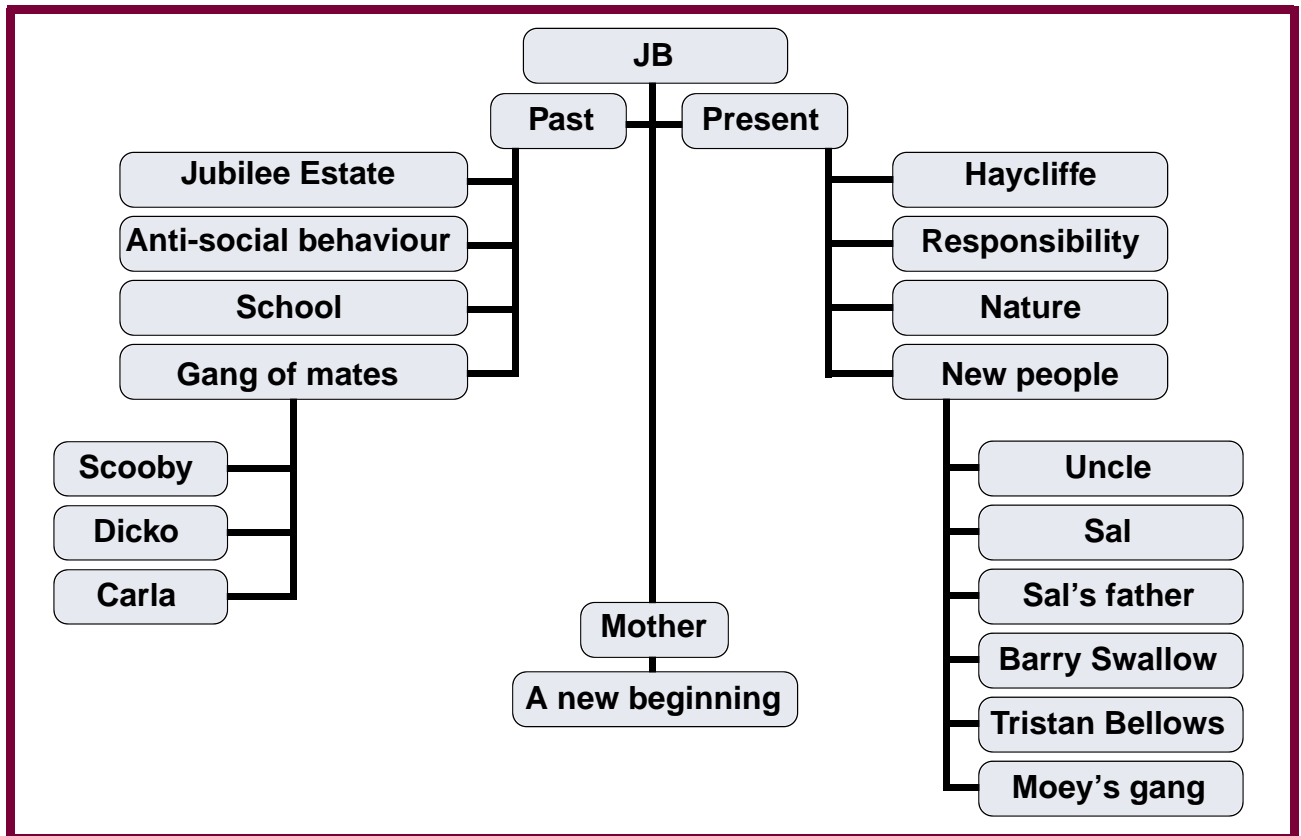
Tristan Bellows

Tristan Bellows is JB's second social worker in Haycliffe. He is put onto JB's case after the incident with the graffiti. He is much stricter than Barry Swallow but perhaps even more ineffectual as a result.

Sal's father

Sal's father is called Jefferies. He is a lifeboat man. He thinks of himself as an upstanding figure in the community but he is guilty of a lack of understanding when it comes to Sal. In many ways, the town has made him much like Moey, a big fish in a small pond. He dies in the storm as a result of the hoax call.

MAPPING THE NOVEL



SETTINGS

Jubilee estate

The novel begins here on this inner London estate. It is JB's home but the estate is crumbling under the weight of anti-social behaviour and a lack of community spirit.

Haycliffe

JB is sent to live in the seaside town of Haycliffe. Sal has lived here all her life and wants to escape from it. JB's uncle now lives in a caravan on a site at the edge of town.

The beach and the sea

JB works on the beach, painting beach huts. JB can see the lights and buildings of the city over the water. Sal's father is lost at sea. JB learns about the sea and its many moods and colours.

The marshes, nature reserve and ships' graveyard

JB looks out on the marshes from the caravan. He crosses them on the night he tries to run away. JB has a nightmare in which he sinks into the marshes. JB and Sal visit the reserve together. JB finally discovers the ships' graveyard at the end of the novel.

IMAGERY

The writer uses imagery to create a sense of isolation. To do this he focuses mainly on the natural landscape and the weather. Ask students what images stand out in the novel; and what is their effect?

CLOSE READING

Some thoughts and questions for students

Page 9. What do you learn from the opening paragraph of the novel?
Examine the final paragraph of Chapter 1. What does this section tell us about JB's estate?

Page 13. What does it tell us about JB's character? Why do you think he chooses to 'throw the brick anyway'?

Page 15. What are your opinions on the class divides we see reinforced every day in our society (First Class/Second Class train travel, Congestion Charge etc)? What effect does it have on a person to be labelled 'second class'? *Class vote*

Page 16. Describe your front garden. Describe your rear garden. How are they different? Why do you think this is? What other things do we only see in this 'front garden' sort of way?

Page 16. The guard is just doing his job. What is your opinion of him? Does your opinion change later on?

Page 17. What do we learn about JB's father ?

Page 19. How is Sal's story presented differently to JB's? Why do you think this is? How does writing from a different perspective alter the effect of a story? What can a writer do that's different?

Page 22. What do we learn about JB's future plans? What are your plans for the future? Ask your mother/father/carer about their job. Describe a day in their life. Is it what you expected?

Page 24/25 Read the 'Rabbit in Headlights' section. Why does JB feel threatened by others like himself? Describe a time when you found yourself in a situation, alone and vulnerable.

Page 25/26. Is your mobile phone important to you? Why? What does your mobile mean to you? Imagine you are separated from it. Write a love letter to your mobile phone.

Page 29 What is the significance of the opening sentence in Chapter 4? Discuss the use of imagery and the effect it creates. Look out for other examples.

Page 33. Why do you think JB chooses to argue with the teacher about taking off his coat? How do you respond to JB telling the teacher it'll be his fault if he fails the exam?

Page 47. Look carefully at how the adults act here. What is your opinion of them?

Page 50. Read Sal's description of Haycliffe carefully. Try to write your own description about a place without thinking too much. Just write down what comes into your head about it. Now share it with a friend.

Page 64. What is the effect of the use of italics on this page?

Page 68. Watch out for the 'ships' graveyard' as it reappears throughout the story. Make notes on what you think it is. Is it a real place or an imaginary one? What else could it be?

CLOSE READING

Pages 85-88. What is your opinion on JB's decision to 'take the rap' for his mate, Scooby? Do you think he is brave or naïve? Have you ever 'taken the rap' for someone else? Would you do it again? At what point do you draw the line?

Page 97. Is it ever okay to lie? Discuss a time when you have lied. Was it for the better or did you regret it later?

Pages 113-120. Moey's gang drink, smoke cigarettes/drugs, shoplift and cause vandalism. Discuss each of these things. Are some of these things more acceptable than others? Put them in order with the most unacceptable at the top. Now give your reasons.

Pages 121-125. Make a table to compare the two social workers assigned to JB's case. Which one is the more effective, Barry Swallow or Tristan Bellows? Why? Find quotes from the text to support your answer.

Pages 135-142. This is the only chapter that does not focus on JB or Sal. What is the effect of this chapter? Why do you think the author has included it?

Pages 165-171. How does the writer present the intimate scene between JB and Sal? What is the effect of this?

Page 173. This is the shortest chapter in the novel but some people say it is their favourite. Why do you think this is the case?

Page 184. Look carefully at the description of the crabs in the bucket on this page. Could the crabs represent something else? Discuss.

Page 207. What does the destruction of the mobile phone signify?

Page 210. After completing the novel, come back to the line that reads: 'They were waiting for him when he got there'. Imagine this was the end of the novel. How does this ending compare with the real ending? How does it change the effect of the story? Which ending do you prefer? Why?

Page 214. What is the effect of the final words of the novel? How important are 'circumstances' for each and every one of us?

BEING CREATIVE

CREATING PROSE

C.A.S.S.I.E

Students can use CASSIE as an aid to writing effective description:

- Colours
- Adjectives and Adverbs
- Senses (Sight, Sound, Touch, Taste, Smell)
- Stand Still Avoid Action
- Sentence Length
- Imagery, Simile & Metaphor
- Emotions

Encourage students to think ‘outside of the box’ and to try not to be predictable.

Tasks

Write about an event we do not see in the novel. For example:

- Man overboard. Describe the events as they happen on the night Sal’s father goes missing.
- Scooby’s car crash. Describe the events that lead to Scooby’s fatal accident.
- The funeral. Describe the funeral from Sal’s perspective.
- Use the images in the Drama section (page 19) to inspire your own creative tale.

CREATING LYRICS

JB shares some of his lyrics with Sal. He tells her he used a rhyming dictionary to help.

Ask students to go to www.rhymezone.com and use the rhymes to help write lyrics of their own.

For example: a previous exercise (Close Reading section; page 9) suggested students write a love letter to their mobile phone. Now they could write a love song/poem to it instead.

Key words: Phone; Mobile; Screen; Signal; Credit; Download.

What other key words can students think of?

CREATING POETRY

Students can be asked to write a poem about a special place or a dramatic event in their life, using imagery to make the poem more effective. The poem can be about anything but here are some examples:

Places: The Sea; A Forest; My Garden; My Bedroom.

Dramatic Events: A Storm; A break-up; A birthday; A death

PERSUASIVE WRITING

A guide for students

Persuasive writing is a very different skill to descriptive writing. Rather than longer detailed paragraphs, it requires short, sharp points that are well argued and use a range of special techniques. Here's a five-point plan for students to use in their persuasive writing:

1. Read the question carefully. Be clear about what it wants – formal or informal, polite or forceful.
2. Make a list of 8-10 key points that you could argue to support what you are saying. These points all have to be different. This is the trickiest bit.

Here's an example: persuade someone to donate money to a charity to help homeless people

- homeless people are hungry
- homeless people are cold
- homeless people are unhappy
- homeless people would work if they could
- homeless people suffer from other people's pre-conceived assumptions about them
- a few pounds can make a difference
- giving to a charity ensures your money is spent in the most useful way possible

Can you finish the list?

3. Each of these points will be the basis of one short paragraph.
4. Put the points in a logical order before writing a brief introduction to your essay/letter.
5. Write each paragraph following this pattern:

Start by making your point (from the list that you've planned)

Build up each paragraph by writing one to three sentences, developing your point using these techniques:

- Use **F**acts - there's nothing more persuasive than the truth. If you don't have any facts, then write an opinion as if it's a fact (e.g. 'All homeless people want to work for a living.' This isn't necessarily a fact, but it sounds like one)
- Use **E**motive language - make your reader feel sad, happy or guilty by using powerful words and phrases - e.g. it's not 'difficult' for homeless people on the street, it's 'a titanic struggle'; it's not 'miserable' it's 'desperately unhappy and hopeless'
- **A**ddress the reader directly: 'you can make a difference'
- Use **R**hetorical questions: i.e. ask your reader a question that DOES NOT require them to answer (e.g. 'Would you like your child to sleep cold and hungry on these streets of despair?')
- Use the **R**ule of 3 ('it's demoralising, damaging and depressing for the homeless')
- **R**epeat key phrases and words (e.g. 'it is impossible for the homeless to make ends meet; it is impossible for them to improve their lives')

Use some of these techniques in every paragraph. Remember to make each paragraph about 5-6 lines and you should cover the two sides required in a GCSE exam.

Good luck with persuasive writing and remember:

F - facts and opinions

E - emotive language

A - address the reader

R - rhetorical questions

R - rule of 3

R - repeat key words

Activities

Ask students to use the resources and internet links (pages 27/28), together with their own knowledge, to write a persuasive piece on one of the following:

1. Persuade parents to get more involved in their children's lives.
2. Persuade teenagers to join a youth centre.
3. Persuade teenagers to stop doing one of the following: happy slapping; hanging around in gangs; damaging property; wearing hoodies.

Letter writing

Write a persuasive letter from JB's mother to JB, asking him to change his behaviour.

Write a descriptive letter from Carla to JB telling him about Scooby's accident.

Write the letter that Sal gives to JB at the end of the novel. What do you imagine she had to say to him?

Essay questions

1. 'Anti-social or just teenagers?' Examine these two arguments.
2. "Although the author states that he wrote the novel to give a voice to disaffected teenagers, he actually 'sits on the fence' regarding the issues surrounding ASBOs and anti-social behaviour." How far do you agree with this statement?
3. We witness most of the story from the perspective of the main character, JB, but there are also Sal's diary extracts. What is the effect of Sal's diary on the novel and does it help us understand her character better? Does it shed any new light on JB's character?
4. Are Moey and JB similar or completely different? Examine their characters.
5. Examine the importance of Scooby and the members of Moey's gang in the novel.
6. Examine the roles of the female characters in the novel.
7. Is *Asboville* a cynical novel or does it offer a ray of hope to its characters?
8. Examine how different environments affect JB throughout the novel.
9. 'A more interesting novel would have focussed on an anti-hero.' How far do you agree with this statement? Why do you think the author chose to present JB in the way he did?
10. *Asboville* confirms the effectiveness of ASBOs. How far do you agree with this statement?
11. Do you sympathise with any of the characters in the novel?
12. Write about two episodes in the novel which you find dramatic.
13. How does the writer present JB's relationships with other people in the novel?
14. Write about the various ways JB is shown to develop as a young adult in the novel.

AUDIO INTERVIEW

*Students listen to the audio interview with Charlie, a real-life ASBO recipient.
Go to www.dannyrhodes.net – Asboville Resources – Teaching Materials*

Answer the following questions:

Part one

1. What caused Charlie to start getting into trouble?
2. What sort of things did his gang get up to at first?
3. Why did Charlie's behaviour worsen?
4. What sort of things did he get up to next?
5. How does Charlie describe his experience of drugs and drink?

Part two

6. Describe a typical evening in Charlie's life.
7. In what part of the day did Charlie's gang turn anti-social?
8. How does Charlie describe the hoodie?
9. What was the call they shared when his gang were about to cause trouble?
10. What was the 'thrill' of causing trouble?
11. How does Charlie describe a gang attacking another person?
12. What does Charlie describe as a 'good mix'?
13. What did Charlie discover about his gang when the police arrived at his door?
14. What ultimatum was Charlie given?
15. Did the ASBO threat change Charlie?
16. How have Charlie's evenings changed?
17. What is the worst thing Charlie does now?
18. What is there to do in Charlie's village? Why doesn't he go there?
19. What did Charlie's gang do to the shelter?
20. Why doesn't Charlie like going to the youth club?
21. What sport does Charlie like?

Part three

22. How does Charlie feel about his experiences?
23. How does Charlie feel about the lads who let him down?
24. How does Charlie feel about the things he knows he has done wrong?
25. Describe if and how Charlie's experiences are similar to your own.

Activity:

Write a short script for a radio drama entitled 'The Hoax Call'.

DRAMA TASKS

Approach:	Action narration
Outline:	Each participant pauses and verbalises motives and descriptions of actions before improvising them.
Examples:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students prepare an improvisation of the scene where JB is with the gang on the day of the car theft. Each student takes on a role of a gang member and verbalises their thoughts in role . 2. Students improvise the scene which takes place between JB, his mother and the authorities when he is given the ASBO. Each character freezes at the height of the tension and reveals their thoughts aloud.

Approach:	Conscience corridor
Outline:	This is a way of exploring what might be going through a character's mind at a moment of crisis.
Examples:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The class split into two and forms two lines, facing each other. They consider the dilemmas faced by JB, his mother, his gang members, the authorities. In role as the character of their choice, the teacher or student walks between the two lines. They listen as the students voice arguments that might be going on in the character's head. 2. A character walks along the alley and is questioned by those on the outside. The character has to answer questions honestly and with thought. The character may only proceed when those on the outside believe the question has been thoughtfully answered.

Approach:	Whole-group drama
Outline:	All students in role at the same time within a given context
Examples:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The council meeting called to discuss the crisis on the Jubilee Estate. Students take on roles as members of the council. Their roles are constrained by the expectations of language and behaviour placed on them by the context. 2. The RNLI discuss the hoax calls with the families and confront Moey's gang. 3. Chat show centring on the theme of anti-social behaviour with beeps for any would-be swear words! 4. News report reconstructing anti-social behaviour and interviewing residents of the estate. 5. Create a dramatisation of an alternate ending for <i>Asboville</i> starting from when JB runs into Moey's gang.

Approach:	Forum theatre
Outline:	A small group enacts a scene selected from the narrative. Other students watch, operating as directors who make suggestions and pose questions.
Examples:	<p>Students sit in a circle in the middle of the performance space. They are presented with an event which happens in a chapter of <i>Asboville</i>. One student is selected to play the central character in the scene and enters the circle in role.</p> <p>At any given point one of the circle of directors may raise their hand to be chosen to replace one of the characters in the scene, or enter the scene as a new character. They must add to the drama, introducing themselves by their speech and actions. If replacing a character, rather than entering as a new one, he/she must 'tag out' the actor by placing his or her hand on the shoulder of the person, who must immediately leave and join the circle.</p>

Approach:	Essence machine
Outline:	This is a way of making the core elements of an issue physical. Strong physical gestures and key words or phrases are selected to capture the 'essence' of an event, character or issue and a sequence is developed to encapsulate it.
Examples:	In groups of six, students are either presented with, or select, a key character, issue or event from <i>Asboville</i> . They take turns to say a word they associate with that event, character or issue. Students then form a semi circle in their group. Each student selects a different word and creates an accompanying gesture, while not moving from their position. The words and gestures should be strong, bold and expressive.

Approach:	Written responses
Outline:	Drama can be a powerful stimulus for creative and critical writing.
Examples:	<p>Newspaper headlines and news stories, letters from or to characters, epitaphs and obituaries, diary entries or school report.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a 'Wanted' Poster for JB or another character who has been served with an ASBO. Make a list of things he/she has done wrong and a list of things that make up the ASBO, ie what the restrictions of the ASBO are. 2. Role on the Wall 'Name and Shame' game. Draw a large figure like a gingerbread man on the wall. Fill the gingerbread man with as many details as possible about the character who is receiving an ASBO. Information such as name, address and age should be recorded as well as personality traits, social status, convictions, cautions, friends, pastimes. These may be used to create stereotypical characters for their own short stories about anti-social behaviour; or to create a role play in which these characters are named and shamed. The latter may also inform the plot of their short story or script.

Approach:	Hot-seating
Outline:	A student takes on a role and is questioned by the rest of the group about their thoughts, feelings and motivation. Other students can question in role as other characters from the novel, or as officials, or simply as themselves.
Examples:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. JB, the protagonist of <i>Asboville</i>, could be hot-seated about his train journey to the seaside town away from his family, friends and the estate he grew up on. 2. Moey could be hot-seated about his reaction to the new boy on his patch. 3. JB's uncle could be hot-seated about having JB come to work with him. 4. Members of the estate could be hot-seated about anti-social behaviour. 5. Sal could be hot-seated about her isolation in the seaside town she lives in and about how her relationship with JB develops. 6. The police could be hot-seated about the introduction and effect of ASBOs. 7. The social workers could be hot-seated about their clients or their own views on the effectiveness of ASBOs as a crime prevention tool; and about the psychological effect on those receiving an ASBO.

Approach:	Still imaging
Outline:	Groups are asked to physically show the tensions and relationships between characters. Students use movement, gesture and space to make concepts or relationships physical.
Examples:	<p>1. A chair is placed in the middle of the room to represent JB. Other students in the group are selected one at a time to walk into the space to represent a character or emotion and their relationship to JB.</p> <p>For instance, JB's mother perhaps stands next to her son and takes on a supportive (or perhaps frustrated?) stance and facial expression. Moey and his gang all stand at a distance from him but close to each other to suggest an us versus him scenario. Other characters may be introduced to build the still image. The teacher may give students the opportunity to move; or they may be placed elsewhere by those observing the group.</p> <p>This exercise can lead to a useful discussion about how relationships in a play are perceived and about how stage space can be used to convey this.</p>

Approach:	Split-screen or Cross-cutting
Outline:	A convention which allows the group to analyse, compare and contrast by juxtaposing two related scenes and switching action from one to another.
Examples:	<p>Take either a major event from <i>Asboville</i> or an imagined event relating to the themes of the novel.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The meeting by the local residents of the Jubilee Estate following a night of anti-social behaviour by JB's gang. Cross-cut between their discussions and those of JB and his gang the next day. 2. An evening with a middle-class family (perhaps Sal's?) Cross-cut to a family from the Jubilee Estate. 3. JB speaks to Sal by the sea. Cross-cut to Dicko and the gang on the estate.

Approach:	Teacher in role
Outline:	An essential technique to model the behaviour, language, viewpoint and attitudes of a role. This can be used to generate spontaneous role play in groups or as a whole class.
Examples:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher takes on the role of a police officer and approaches a group of young people to question them about their behaviour, activities and their alibis for their whereabouts during the time when a car was stolen. 2. The teacher, in role as a social worker, talks to a group of young people who have received ASBOs. 3. The teacher, in role as a chat show host, interviews gang members, relatives, residents and police.

Approach:	Guided tour
Outline:	Student A (with eyes open) acts as expert, and leads student B (blindfolded or with eyes closed) slowly through an environment, providing a spoken commentary. The stimulus can be a picture or text (see opposite page).
Examples:	<p>The class is placed in pairs. Students choose, or are presented with, one of these settings from <i>Asboville</i>. Student A leads B (blindfolded) around the chosen setting. Students may need to sit and observe others, or take turns, if noise levels are high or space is restricted.</p> <p>Follow-up activity: to write two short paragraphs, one describing the setting in a negative way, the other describing it in a positive way.</p>

Photographic stimuli

The estate



The carnival



The beach



Approach:	Paired improvisation
Outline:	Students work in pairs in role to explore a given context. This is a useful strategy for quickly getting everyone thinking about the issues, characters and scenarios in the novel. Cards could be produced outlining the scenario.
Examples:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Neighbours look out onto a street where some youths are being 'anti-social'. They discuss what they've seen over their adjoining fence and express their different reactions to these. 2. Some teenagers discuss what there is for teens to do outside of school hours. 3. Some police officers discuss their experiences of crime and anti-social behaviour the previous evening/night. 4. An elderly person approaches a youth who has just 'tagged' a fence. 5. A police officer approaches a girl member of a gang which has been highlighted for an Anti-Social Behaviour Order. He wants her to give information. 6. A youth is approached by an adult for spitting in a bus shelter and swearing. 7. Parents discuss the anti-social behaviour of their son/daughter. 8. A parent argues with their son/daughter about their late nights out and the people they hang around with. 9. A social worker discusses anti-social behaviour with his/her client. 10. Two elderly people discuss 'the youth of today' and their memories of their own behaviour when they were young.

Approach:	Icebergs
Outline:	The teacher offers a visual image of an outline of an iceberg with the waterline on it.
Examples:	The words spoken by the character are above the water line, but the characters feelings and fears are hidden from view. Students suggest words for describing JB's (or another character from the novel's) invisible, inner feelings to fill in the hidden part of the iceberg.

RESOURCES

Chapter breakdown and author's commentary

Chapter 1. The book opens on the estate where JB, Scooby, Carla and Dicko are kicking around. We learn that JB is waiting to go to court.

Author commentary: The opening paragraph tells the reader a lot about JB's character. Like most of the teenagers in the novel, he doesn't think about consequences until it's too late. This is a major theme in the novel. Teenagers are guilty of not thinking about their actions and how they might affect others. That doesn't necessarily make them criminals, however, or even anti-social.

The description of the estate the gang live on is deliberately bleak. I wanted to show the landscape of their lives. One of my favourite sections of the novel comes in this opening chapter : 'It hit the driver's door and put a dent in the bodywork, one more dent to mix with the other dents, caused by other bricks and the heels of trainers where he and the others, all the others, even the little ones, had practised their karate kicks when the car had first parked there for the night, unaware of the fate that awaited it.'

It's the line 'even the little ones' that matters. I wanted to stress that the destructive behaviour of the young people was simply a part of their lives, that they did it 'because'... with no forethought or awareness of what it might mean to the car's owner. The little ones follow the big ones.

Chapter 2. JB is on the train, heading to Haycliffe. He's missing his friends. There's a moment where JB stares out of the window at the backs of houses and eventually sees a reflection of himself. He doesn't like what he sees.

There were a few things I wanted to achieve here. Firstly, I wanted to voice my own opinion about the class system in this country and how we reinforce it in minor ways without really noticing. People argue that Britain is now a classless society, but, in my opinion, they are wrong. Much of it comes down to money. The idea that those who can afford it get the best deals while the rest suffer really irks me. Public transport should be exactly that. Public.

Sal briefly describes her father and his job. She begins to talk about her future plans.

It's hard to explain why I chose to write Sal's diary. It just felt more natural. It was a way to set up her character and to demonstrate that she comes from a different world to JB; and that they have contrasting things to think about and deal with in their lives. It's clear here that the most pressing thing on Sal's mind is her future and her relationship with her father. These things hardly change throughout the novel.

Chapter 3. JB is still on the train. He dreams of the estate and of his grandfather. He wakes to discover he's missed his stop. Locked out of the station, he is forced to spend the night in a phone box. For the first time we see his weaker side, when faced with a gang of lads in a car.

JB's memory of the conversation with his grandfather about his future is designed to allow us to focus on another issue affecting young people today: the increasing lack of low-skilled jobs. This was the mainstay of the working classes for a long, long time and, for better or worse, it's disappearing. Much of this work is carried out abroad, where labour is cheaper and higher profits can be made, but what happens to the people in this country who lose their jobs as a result?

JB's experience in the phone box comes directly from my own past. I spent a night in a telephone box once after missing a train. It's a long story. Needless to say it was very, very uncomfortable.

Sal talks about her plans for the future in more detail. She mentions her frustration at the town and how her father reacts to her whenever she tries to talk about it. Sal has a desire to leave Haycliffe. It manifests itself in her grievances with her father and her description of the town and its people.

Chapter 4. JB wakes up the next morning to find himself on the train that is taking him back to Haycliffe. He recalls a day at school, being forced to take an exam and using the excuse of being asked to take off his jacket to leave the place.

Another true story, one that was relayed to me by an ex-colleague. For JB, the business of refusing to

Chapter breakdown and author's commentary

remove his hoodie is an excuse to avoid something he doesn't want to face. The teacher might be more understanding, but he's not. He's bound by his own set of rules.

Chapter 5. JB takes a taxi to Lowes Field where his uncle lives. He sees the town from the taxi and the driver complains about how the place has changed. Eventually they arrive at a broken down caravan park and JB is left there in the place that is to become his home.

JB's first impression of Haycliffe is important. It's also the reader's first view of the narrow, terraced streets. I wanted to set up a contrast between the houses and the cars out front, many of them expensive. Our seaside communities are being infiltrated by second-home buyers. There's nothing wrong with this, of course, unless a person is unable to afford to purchase a house in their own community. And there is a community here still, as the carnival flags demonstrate. They're just worn and tired...

Chapter 6. JB meets his uncle and the dog. He has a meal and is left to his own devices. So begins his isolation. The short chapter ends with him planning his escape.

A little bit of an ode to Danny Boyle's film, *Trainspotting*, here: 'Choose life. Choose a job. Choose a starter home. Choose dental insurance, leisure wear and matching luggage. Choose your future. But why would anyone want to do a thing like that?'

And, in *Asboville*: 'Fold away the table, pull out the cushions, close the curtain that divided the room and pretend you weren't sleeping in a caravan in the middle of nowhere next to an old man you didn't know and a dog you didn't want to know. Pretend your friends were in the next room drinking beer or your mum was frying up some chips. Pretend you had a life'. Nowhere near as effective, of course, but there we are!

Chapter 7. JB is introduced to his new life of painting beach huts. There's a brief flashback to an event in his childhood and then we're back on the beach again. He challenges his uncle briefly and is defeated. Boredom sets in.

From the beginning, his uncle makes no attempt to appease JB. Instead he simply tells it as it is and as it will be. His uncle is a man of few words who hardly alters his daily routine in any way, shape or form to accommodate JB. Is this a deliberate ploy or the only way his uncle knows?

Chapter 8. Our first meeting with Moey's gang. JB hides from them as they kick a tin of paint over his newly painted huts. Later they return and make fun of him. They argue about tagging. (See website for a link to www.graffiti.playdo.com) A short look at life on the estate with nobody taking responsibility and then JB thinking of his friends as another day comes to an end, his mobile silent and lifeless.

What better way to make a character begin the long journey of facing up to past mistakes than to threaten him with his own behaviour? Moey's gang are JB's gang in another location, and Moey (who we don't meet until later), like Scooby, is careering off the rails.

Sal takes a swipe at her father's views by criticising the town and its inhabitants.

Another description of Haycliffe. This could be any town in England, couldn't it? It's not representative of the town as a whole, just a portion of it, a segment, a slice.

Chapter 9. JB is visited by his social worker, Barry Swallow, but refuses to open up. Instead he decides to return to the estate, a move that, if successful, will surely see him breach his ASBO. With no money he jumps on a train but the guard is suspicious of him and he's forced to get off again just one station up the line. Here he runs into Moey's gang again. They're giving an arcade attendant grief and they steal some money from the cash desk. JB is mistaken for one of the gang because of his 'hoodie' (ironic, as he chooses to hide in the arcade because it's full of lads in 'hoodies') and is forced to walk back to his uncle's caravan. Carla calls him from the estate but there's no real sense that any of his friends are truly missing him.

JB's decision to run away from his troubles is typical of his behaviour whenever he is threatened, only

Chapter breakdown and author's commentary

this time he gets nowhere. His journey back to the caravan site is lonely and forlorn, feelings exacerbated by the phone call from Carla.

Sal describes the second-home crowd that visit the town each summer weekend and how the local people are forced to endure their ways in order to take their money.

Chapter 10. JB meets the gang (minus Moey) on the beach and this time they learn about his ASBO and that he's from the city. They're clearly impressed and they invite him to join them on carnival day.

A crucial event in the story. JB's ASBO and his city roots serve to break down a barrier between himself and Moey's gang. It's the age-old story of fish and pond.

Chapter 11. JB meets Sal for the first time. She asks his name. He tells her. She mentions the ships' graveyard and then she's gone. Sal becomes the mystery girl and therein lies the attraction. Sal tells us a little more about the ships' graveyard; how her friend Emma found it by accident; how her father doesn't believe in its existence.

The ships' graveyard, a place that may or may not exist, is a metaphor for many things in the novel. It's up to the reader to decide what.

Chapter 12. JB finds the gang at the Lifeboat Memorial on carnival day. He meets Moey and the girls, including Moey's girlfriend, Lisette, for the first time. Moey infiltrates the parade and causes trouble with one of the lifeboat men who forces the gang to disembark and disperse into the alleyways. They arrive at the harbour where Moey demonstrates his nerve by lighting a banger and holding it in his fingers until the very last second. JB does the same. It's a test of his nerve, a challenge. The noise from the bangers attracts the same man from the parade and once again he moves them on. Moey offers JB some cannabis. JB refuses to begin with but, in the end, he takes it on credit. After he's left the gang he thinks about throwing the cannabis into the sea, but keeps it just in case.

Is this anti-social behaviour or is it something else? It's a question we need to ask ourselves. Where exactly is the line that separates teenage exuberance from anti-social trouble making? Does Sal's father overreact? Is he guilty of prejudging JB? The answer is the crux of the novel really.

Sal describes the hotel and the snobbery that exists there.

I spent some time living in a seaside community much like the mythical Haycliffe. I was aware of a real, pretentious undercurrent in some of the restaurants and hotels. I'm trying to address this here in a subtle way.

Chapter 13. JB tells Swallow about the evening he was caught joyriding. It's clear that Scooby was to blame but JB took the rap for it. When Swallow questions JB's judgement he gets nowhere.

At what point does loyalty cease to matter? In the audio interview with Charlie we discuss this very issue. Charlie was hung out to dry by his friends when the police started to take an interest in what his group was up to (see website www.dannyrhodes.net).

Sal admits that she's been thinking about JB

Behind the mystery, Sal is just another insecure teenager, but JB will never know this. I've always been fascinated by the secrets we keep and how much we reveal to each other, even those closest to us.

Chapter 14. A flashback revealing why JB's mother sent him to his uncle. Sal describes the reserve and its wondrous isolation.

The reserve becomes important as the novel develops. It's a place where Sal feels able to express herself and JB learns to do the same.

Chapter 15. Sal visits JB at the beach huts. JB lies about his age. It's clear that there's a connection between them.

What's in a name? How do we carry ourselves and our identities? How do we present ourselves?

Chapter breakdown and author's commentary

Chapter 16. Alone in the caravan, and then later when his uncle is sleeping, JB thinks about Sal and his situation. He smokes the cannabis Moey gave him to escape. He dreams about the night his father was arrested and taken from their home. He dreams that the marshes suck him in and swallow him. In the morning he gets a short message from Sal.

Cannabis. Apart of our culture now. Not an issue I particularly wanted to address in the novel, but there are two sides to it: the relaxation it can give and the paranoia it can create.

Chapter 17. Sal reads some of JB's lyrics. They talk about her father. JB walks her back to her house and recoils at the size of it and the gulf in wealth and social standing between them.

The lyrics are there to allow JB to express a little of what he experiences (see www.rhymezone.com).

Chapter 18. JB wakes to find the huts have been vandalised with graffiti. The man from carnival day turns up and blames him for the graffiti. He says something to JB's uncle about his past. Sal's father is quick to accuse JB of the act.

The idea for the 'Shit Town' graffiti came from a song by a band called 'Live' which I heard played once at Glastonbury and it stuck. The remark Sal's father makes to JB's uncle is a deliberate device to get the reader thinking and it's a writer's imperative not to reveal the answer straight away!

Chapter 19. JB hears nothing from Sal. Instead he goes to find Moey's gang. They go the beach where they mess around with a shopping trolley, throw pebbles, get drunk. Lisette drinks far too much. As JB grows restless waiting for Sal to respond to him, so the temptation to be his old self resurfaces. However, he never really infiltrates Moey's gang, largely because of Moey's own insecurities.

The story begins to pick up a little now. It's important for a writer never to forget story, as a reader expects and deserves one.

Chapter 20. A new social worker arrives at the caravan park. His name is Tristan Bellows. He's unsympathetic, the opposite of Swallow, and reminds JB of the rules he must follow.

I struggle with names. I wanted something officious. I'm not sure I got it right with Tristan Bellows. The name seems a little forced. It's up to the reader to decide who JB is better off with: Swallow (another forced name to represent a more relaxed character) who has one way of approaching the job; or Bellows, who has another. The reader's response reveals their attitude as to how we ought to deal with anti-social teenagers and adult criminals alike.

Chapter 21. JB and Sal have an argument. She tells him what people think of his uncle and why. A clue to his uncle's past...

Chapter 22. The calm before the storm. JB waits for it.

I remember waiting for a big storm when I was living in a seaside town. The TV told us it was coming. I took myself for a walk. Everywhere was still and silent; everybody hunkered down, the sea defences and sand bags prepared. It was a surreal experience, as though even inanimate things were awaiting the storm's passing and one I desperately wanted to evoke in this chapter.

Chapter 23. While the storm rages, we visit the community centre on the estate where JB's mother stands her ground against the local politicians and those in her community that she feels are hypocrites. At the end of the meeting she breaks down.

This is the only section that truly occurs outside of JB's realm of experience. It was an opportunity for JB's mother to offer her side of the story and a new perspective. Here we see a community in meltdown. Many people have said they like this chapter the best of all.

Chapter 24. The morning after the storm. While checking the huts for storm damage, JB spots a search and rescue helicopter. Later, the fat lad comes to tell him that one of the lifeboat men is

Chapter breakdown and author's commentary

missing. At the harbour, JB discovers Sal and realises that it's her father that's missing. A fisherman brings in a jumper and Sal recognises it as her father's. JB walks her home, where she leaves him without a word. Back at the caravan, JB dreams of Sal's father attacking him.

Sal describes how it feels when a loved one is lost. Sal has known the loss of others due to her father's occupation. Now she experiences that loss for herself.

Chapter 25. We learn that somebody made a hoax call to the lifeboat station on the night of the storm. JB is visited and questioned by the police. They discover the body of Sal's father. JB stops Moey and his gang from torturing a kitten. Moey accuses him of making the hoax call.

The important thing here is that JB is immediately a suspect. Is this because of his run-in with Sal's father about the graffiti? Or is it simply that his reputation is preceding him? I see this in school all the time and I'm guilty of it as a teacher.

Why does JB intervene when the kitten is being tortured? What does this tell us about his character? How does it compare to Moey's character? Are the rest of the gang comfortable with what they are witnessing? Lisette obviously isn't. So why is she part of the gang? What is going on here? Are we looking at peer pressure in a more serious and dangerous form?

Sal prepares for her father's funeral.

This section was influenced in part by Bruce Springsteen's song 'You're Missing', a beautiful account of a family waiting and hoping for someone to come home to them.

Chapter 26. JB watches the funeral from a distance. On his way back to the caravan, he's confronted by some of the members of Moey's gang. They accuse him of making the hoax call. He stands up to them.

More evidence of peer pressure here. The gang are not as confident as they like to think. The fat lad and Lisette are missing. Have they decided enough is enough? We never see or hear from either of them again.

Chapter 27. Sal comes to visit him. They search for the ships'graveyard and walk out to the nature reserve but fail to find it. Back in the caravan they make love. When JB awakes, Sal has gone.

The reserve, the ships'graveyard, Sal searching for something. She finds it momentarily in JB.

Years ago I saw a film called *Summer of '42*. There's a scene where a newly widowed woman sleeps with one of the teenage boys because she needs somebody. Writers are borrowers. They manipulate and change things to suit.

Chapter 28. JB hears nothing from Sal for several days.

Chapter 29. It's almost a week before JB and Sal see each other again. Sal tries to explain how she feels but their conversation stalls and in the end she leaves once again.

There's an important moment here when JB tries to pull his own feelings into their conversation and is rejected. Where do JB's feelings have a place in the midst of the storm, in the midst of the life that is passing him by? Is he selfish and insensitive here, or is Sal the one to blame?

Chapter 30. More days pass. JB tries to cope without Sal.

Chapter 31. On the beach, JB meets a small boy. He denies that Sal was ever his girlfriend.

A curious event this and one I considered cutting from the novel, but I was fond of the boy and had to keep it in the end. The important thing here is what he says about the crabs in the girl's bucket. There's also JB's denial of his relationship with Sal. Three times he denies it...

Chapter 32. JB's uncle explains why some of the townspeople hate him. He owned a fishing boat and lost two crew members in a storm. JB dreams of the estate, Scooby setting fire to a roundabout.

I'm fond of the dream at the end of this chapter. Particularly the line at the end where someone wraps the 'Police Aware' tape around the car. I'm trying to say something about responsibility... or at least the blatant disregard for it...

Chapter breakdown and author's commentary

Chapter 33. JB retraces his and Sal's steps to the reserve, where he stumbles across the ships' graveyard – a haunting and melancholy place that he runs away from.

The reserve again and this time JB discovers the ships' graveyard. So what is this place? A metaphor for trying to discover something that can never be discovered but only stumbled upon perhaps?

Chapter 34. After completing the final hut and silently delivering some lyrics to Sal, JB spots two police cars at the caravan and Moey's gang on the beach. Forced to make a choice, he approaches Moey's gang who are sitting around a camp fire.

Sal explains herself, her confusion, her need to be alone. She imagines the sea delivering a message from her father, telling her to do what she wants to do.

Chapter 35. On the beach, JB and Moey face up to each other. JB wields a knife. Moey's gang scatter. JB takes up a flame from the fire and sets the beach huts alight. He calls Carla.

The first real climax to the novel. JB and Moey stand toe to toe, with everything they represent behind them. Moey is confident and so are his gang, but when JB draws the knife the situation changes. Only Moey stands up to him, and, of course, he has no choice if he is going to keep face. He taunts JB but does not understand the weight that JB is carrying at this point. When JB strikes, everything happens so fast that JB does not even know what he's done or what damage his knife may have caused.

I found this scene difficult because I didn't want a clichéd fight to wind up the JB versus Moey business. I opt instead for something much less dramatic in one sense, as the fight hardly occurs and is a bit of an anti-climax. It's the beach huts that bear the brunt of JB's rage and frustration.

The burning of the huts is symbolic. They represent JB's hopelessness. They are the one thing that he has to show the world, yet he is trying to destroy them and his own self too. He escapes to the quiet of the marshes to call Carla. He wants to take himself to a place where he was something, where he felt something, however meaningless and shallow it may appear to be, but he's about to learn that his route back to the estate has gone forever.

Chapter 36. By the railway tracks, JB tells Carla that he's coming back to the estate. Carla explains that Scooby has been involved in an accident. A train appears. JB's phone is smashed to pieces.

The juxtaposition of JB's claim that the estate is 'theirs' set against Carla's understanding that everything is at an end and nothing is 'theirs' anymore. The symbolic smashing of the phone and the end of his contact with the estate...his old life. With a bit of luck some readers will fear for JB here too. Has he ended up under the train? This was the end of the book at one point, but perhaps that would have been an exceptionally bleak way to end things!

Chapter 37. In the morning, the first four huts having burned to the ground, JB sneaks back to the caravan. Before he's discovered he finds a letter from Sal. He resolves to stay and face his punishment.

JB's decision is to stand and hold his ground. This is an important moment, for as we are well aware, there was a time when all he'd think of doing was running away. If we are forced to face our demons we can sometimes overcome them.

Chapter 38. Two months have passed. JB and his family have moved to a new house on the edge of the town. Sal calls from university. JB takes his phone to the beach where he lets Sal listen to the sound of the waves. They promise to see each other the following Christmas.

The final line is the crux of the whole novel: '...the waves caressing the shore, the sky wide open, the stars guiding them to a better set of circumstances.'

Circumstances, the cards we are dealt, are what separate us from one another and if a person is dealt a poor hand it's not easy to win the game. It's possible, but it's not easy.

Writing frame

Use this frame to help formulate your answers about characters, themes and settings

1. POINT:

2. EVIDENCE or QUOTE:

3. EXPLANATION:

Word bank

Use a blank page to write down any words you do not understand. Use a dictionary to discover their meaning.

Useful links

Useful Links

www.dannyrhodes.net

www.maiapress.com

www.asboconcern.org.uk

www.childrenssociety.org.uk

www.rnli.org.uk

www.kidsco.org.uk

www.rhymezone.com

“I am shown into a cell, which is only a few centimetres wider than the thin, single bed. This cramped space seems to sum up something about being young in 21st-century Britain: no room to move or grow; no room to be naughty, or to be forgiven.”

Alice O’Keefe – New Statesman (for full article go to www.dannyrhodes.net)

Ten things you may not know about an ASBO

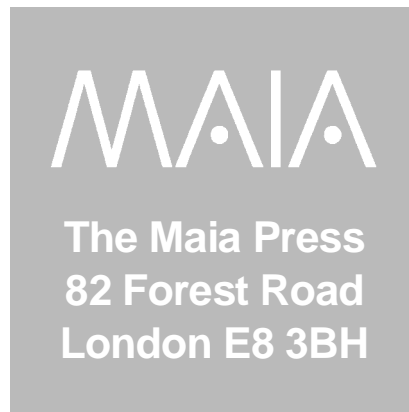
1. ASBOs can be used to criminalise behaviour that would otherwise not be illegal. Under ASBO law, people have been banned from playing football, feeding pigeons, swearing, being sarcastic and riding a bicycle. ASBO laws have also been used to curb people’s rights to free speech and association. It is not uncommon for someone to be banned from being with more than one other person in a public place.
2. If you breach your ASBO you can be sent to jail for 5 years, with children aged under 17 years facing a two-year Detention and Training Order. Overall, one in four of those who have been given an ASBO have ended up in prison.
3. The Government said that ASBOs would only be imposed on children “in exceptional circumstances” but this promise has proved to be worthless. In reality, more than four in 10 ASBOs have been imposed on young people aged less than 17 years old.
4. Many of these ASBOs have been imposed on children with special needs. A study by the British Institute for Brain Injured Children (BIBIC) found that up to 35 percent of young people with ASBOs had a diagnosed mental disorder or accepted learning difficulty.
5. ASBOs have also been imposed on vulnerable adults, including people with mental health problems and homeless beggars: one homeless man was given an ASBO banning him from begging in an ‘earnest and humble manner’. He carried on begging, was jailed and died in prison.
In another shocking case, a suicidal woman was banned from going near the railways, multi-storey car parks, rivers or bridges. Instead of offering support to deal with her depression, the judge threatened her with imprisonment for being a nuisance!
6. Anyone who gets an ASBO can be publicly ‘named and shamed’. This means that your photo and personal details are posted on the internet, through door-to-door leaflet drops and poster campaigns. Children as young as 10 have been named and shamed in this way, with some facing threats of violence from vigilantes as a result. Other children regard naming and shaming as a perverse ‘badge of honour’, making it very unlikely to change their behaviour for the better.
7. ASBOs are being misused because they are so easy to impose. Less than one in a hundred of the applications made so far have been refused. This is because local council officials or the police merely have to persuade a judge that someone’s behaviour ‘is likely to have caused harassment or alarm or distress’ to someone else to get one imposed. They are also allowed to use second- or third-hand hearsay as evidence in court, so it is very hard to defend yourself against vindictive or mistaken allegations.
8. There is no evidence that ASBOs stop people from behaving anti-socially. More than four in 10 are breached and frequently those that are not merely move the problem on to another area. At best they are a quick fix which fails to address the root cause of problem behaviour.
9. There is strong public support for more positive methods of tackling anti-social behaviour. Research by the Joseph Rowntree Trust found that two thirds of those surveyed preferred preventative to punitive approaches such as ASBOs.
10. Asboconcern has presented the government with a dossier of evidence of the widespread misuse of ASBOs. So far, ministers have refused to accept the call for a full independent review of their use. Asboconcern believes that the public has the right to know why so many ASBOs are being imposed, how many ASBO recipients have disabilities or medical conditions, what people are being banned from doing and why so many ASBOs fail to work.

See www.dannyrhodes.net to read / download articles from the press on ASBOs.

Notes

Notes

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Asboville: what the critics say



‘Moving and atmospheric, this coming-of-age tale also has political bite’

The Guardian

‘A finely crafted and often lyrical debut novel which offers far more than hoodie-hugging sympathy or sink-estate despair’

Independent

‘Rhodes asks important questions about social justice, but also tells a compelling human story. An impressive debut’

New Statesman

‘Rhodes’ sure sense of pace and keen evocation of seaside life...’

Observer

‘A coming-of-age story with an actually rather shy, sensitive and likeable kid as its hero’

Independent on Sunday

‘An excellent debut novel, definitely in my top ten of the year’

Scott Pack, The Bookseller

‘Rhodes’ thought-provoking debut makes you sympathise with JB while recognising that he’s the author of some of his own misfortunes’

The Big Issue

‘Deft combination of social issues and teen angst’

The London Paper

‘I really, really, really (lots of reallys and then some more reallys) enjoyed *Asboville*. It’s direct, palpably honest, sympathetic, and entirely unpretentious’

Jill Murphy, The Bookbag