

## *Attack the Block* (dir. Joe Cornish, 2011)

Lesson by Jenni Heeks, Woodford County High School

English, History, Religious Education or PSHE,  
Key Stages 3/4/5

A lesson exploring social structures, and the question of 'who is to blame' for an imagined crime: the lesson engages students' thinking skills as well as bringing up ethical issues.

Students watch either all or a segment of *Attack the Block* before being given an imagined account of events, linked to the film. Using their analysis and thinking skills, as well as contextualised knowledge from the film, they have to argue for who they think is to blame.

Students consider what they have seen in an abstract way in order to problem solve and enhance their understanding of genre through watching the film, and develop their problem solving skills.

### Lesson Objectives

- To develop thinking skills through solving a media-literacy based problem.
- To develop collaborative thinking skills.

### Curriculum Links

- All subjects: independent thinking and literacy.
- R.S – Ethical issue of blame.
- History – The idea of blame as a historical consequence (linked to the issue of causality).

### You will need...

Copy of the film *Attack the Block*  
Copies of the 'Who is to blame' narrative for students to work from (provided)

## Activities

### TRAILER: The Problem

Students should watch *Attack the Block* (or the first 45 minutes, when they have met all the characters and are aware of the issues).

You should then give them the sheet detailing the problem.

The first thing they need to do, on their own, is list the five people who could be to blame for the incident.

Conduct feedback to ensure that all students know that the possible options are: the girl, the gang leader, the leader's friend, the policeman, the alien.

### MAIN ATTRACTION: Discussion

Students should now, still on their own, rank these 'suspects' 1-5, 1 being the most to blame and 5 being the least to blame. Give them as long as they need to do this.

Once they have done this, they may discuss their decisions. They must discuss, in groups, to come up with *one list* of those to blame – they must all agree on the most-least to blame.

Once again, take feedback, but only ask them to give their rankings.

Now split the groups up, so they are working in pairs. They must come up with a reason for each suspect i.e. what is the reason that they are placed where they are.

Feedback again, but this time probe the students more carefully (e.g. 'why more to blame than x?')

### END CREDITS: Debate

In order to get the students thinking a little deeper, now pose the question:

- 'Why are these people *not* to blame?'

Give the students another 5 minutes to come up with reasons, and then take feedback.

End the lesson by asking if any students have changed their minds from what they wrote in the beginning – ask why they have done this.

## Extras

### Other Ideas

Students could use this lesson as an inspiration lesson from which to write a short story.

### Read

*The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins (2008)

*The Space Merchants* by Pohl and Kornbluth (1952)

*The Postman* by David Brin (1985)

*We All Died at Breakaway Station* by Richard C Meredith (1969)

### Watch

*Galaxy Quest* (Dean Parisot, 1999)

*Pumzi* (Wanuri Kahui, 2010)

*The Day The Earth Caught Fire* (Val Guest, 1961)

*Silent Running* (Douglas Trumbull, 1972)

*Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982)

### **Attack the Block: Who is to blame?**

#### The Events

Follow the exact events of Attack the Block, until the girl, Moses and his friend manage to drive off in the police van. The girl is now with the gang, the aliens have attacked and the gang decides to fight them. The leader's friend gives the girl a gun to help her defend herself. The police have now been called and have refused to come, on the basis that they think it is a prank.

A new group of aliens lands. The girl starts shooting, her eyes closed in panic. She opens them to see that all the aliens are dead. However, she also sees that she has shot dead two of the gang members.

#### *Who is to blame?*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

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