

Derek Bentley - Learning Journey

This half term, we will explore the historical case of Derek Bentley through a selection of explorative strategies in class. We will use conventions, techniques and styles of theatre to create a performance that challenges, questions and evokes a response from the audience and questions the failings of a justice system and a period of time.

Lesson 1 - Historical & cultural context
 Lesson 2 - The Derek Bentley Story
 Lesson 3 - Explorative strategies
 Lesson 4 - Hot seating & role play
 Lesson 5 - Rehearsal & development
 Lesson 6 - Performance

What do I need to understand for this topic?

1950's culture
 The Derek Bentley story
 Capital punishment
 Explorative strategies - hot seating, cross cutting, role on the wall

How will I know how to perform in a successful way?

Teacher and peer modelled performance skills will be demonstrated in lesson. You will also use characterisation techniques to help you create a believable character.

How will I practice working creatively?

You will work in a number of groups, practising new skills and techniques in drama each lesson.

How will I be assessed?

In groups you will perform a short piece of drama demonstrating the characterisation skills you have learnt in lesson and put this into practise in performance. You will be assessed on your vocal and physical skills and your ability to create a believable character in performance.

capital punishment (n) punishment by death : the practice of killing people as punishment for serious crimes	vulnerable (adj) easily hurt or harmed physically, mentally, or emotionally
ambiguous (adj) able to be understood in more than one way : having more than one possible meaning	exploitation (n) an act or instance of exploiting.
cross cutting (n) is a device to move between two or more scenes staged in the space at the same time.	thought tracking (n) is when a character steps out of a scene to address the audience about how they're feeling.

Derek Bentley - Knowledge Organiser

The Case

Derek Bentley was an English man who was hanged for the murder of a policeman, which was committed in the course of a burglary attempt. The murder was said at the time to have been committed by a friend and accomplice of Bentley's, Christopher Craig, then aged 16, but whether he had fired the fatal shot was later called into question. Bentley was convicted as a party to murder, by the English law principle of common purpose,, "Joint enterprise". The jury at the trial found Bentley guilty based on the prosecution's interpretation of the ambiguous phrase "**Let him have it**" (Bentley's alleged instruction to Craig), after the judge, Lord Chief Justice Goddard had described Bentley as "mentally aiding the murder of Police Constable Sidney Miles". The judge sentenced Bentley to be hanged: at the time, no other sentence was possible.

The Bentley case led to a 45-year-long campaign to win Derek Bentley a posthumous pardon, which was granted in 1993, and then a further campaign for the quashing of his murder conviction, which occurred in 1998.

Derek Bentley

- Born 30th June 1933
- Died 28th Jan 1953
- Mental age of an 11 year old.
- Dyslexic
- Epileptic
- Easily Led
- Animal Lover
- Close to his family
- Lacked close friends



Christopher Craig

- 16 years old
- A notorious thug
- Obsessed with guns and the mafia
- Received 10 years for the murder of PC Miles because he was a juvenile
- Became a plumber in Buckinghamshire
- Despite the fact that Derek is 3 years older than Chris, and much taller, Chris has the higher status.

Explorative strategies

Still image

Thought tracking

Cross cutting

Marking the moment

Hot seating

Role on the wall