

PILOT THEATRE PRESENT

CRONGTON

KNIGHTS

TEACHING PACK

KS3 ENGLISH AND DRAMA

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INTRODUCTION THE SHOW

By Alex Wheatle

Adapted by Emteaz Hussain

Directed by Corey Campbell and Esther Richardson

Co-production with Belgrade Theatre Coventry, Derby Theatre and York Theatre Royal

Teaching Pack created by Carolyn Bradley

Photography by Robert Day

If you have any questions about the content in this pack or how to use it, please contact education@pilot-theatre.com

**"I don't know why I listened to you about going on this mission!
Now we're in the middle of nowhere dot com, buses ain't rolling,
and they're gonna beat us down, shank us,
and then fling us in some big bin!"**

Life isn't easy on the Crongton Estate and for McKay and his mates it's all about keeping their heads down but when a friend finds herself in trouble, they set out on a mission that goes further than any of them imagined. Crongton Knights will take you on a night of madcap adventure as McKay and his friends 'The Magnificent Six' encounter the dangers and triumphs of a mission gone awry. In this world premiere adaptation of Alex Wheatle's award-winning novel, the pulse of the city is alive on stage with a soundscape of beatboxing and vocals laid down by the cast and created by acclaimed musician Conrad Murray.

Crongton Knights is about the friends you'll never forget and how lessons learned the hard way can bring you closer together.

**"Alex Wheatle is an inspirer. He is a vital writer. He is a prince among men. Long may he reign."
Lemn Sissay**

ABOUT THIS PACK

This teaching pack contains full lesson plans, handouts, medium-term planning suggestions and additional resources to support the teaching of *Crongton Knights* as a novel and play to KS3 English and Drama students.

The content focuses primarily on Pilot Theatre's production of the play, but also refers to Alex Wheatle's novel.

Lesson aims and objectives:

The English lessons take a holistic approach and aim to cover all areas of learning in the National Curriculum Key Stage 3 Programme of Study for English. To summarise, throughout these lessons, students will learn to:

- Appreciate texts, including multi-modal texts
- Infer from texts, use evidence from texts and explore how language choices create meaning
- Study setting, plot, characterisation and the interpretation of a dramatist, exploring the effect of these elements on the reader and audience
- Write fluently and articulately for a range of purposes and audiences – producing fiction and non-fiction writing
- Speak confidently and effectively – including for short speeches, presentations, formal debates and in role through improvisation and scripted acting scenes.

The Drama lessons are more focused on the core drama skills of creating, performing and responding, and allow students to develop skills needed for the assessment objectives required for GCSE Drama, including:

- Creating original devised performances based on a stimulus
- Performing scripted drama
- Analysing and evaluating the work of others
- Developing knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre are made.

Note to teachers:

Most lessons are stand alone and can be extended into multiple lessons at your discretion. The English and Drama lessons can be combined to make a longer scheme of work, and a suggestion for a medium term plan is included in the pack. Some suggestions for extension tasks or alternative tasks are included, but you may wish to provide more differentiation for your setting. Please note: there are some changes between the novel and play, one major change being the character of Boy From the Hills in the novel appears as Bushkid in the play. It might be useful to make this clear to students early on – you could have a general discussion about adaptations.

The novel and play contain some use of strong language and sensitive themes, so it is always advised that you watch the production in full yourself before sharing with students, and you are aware of any triggering issues that may arise in your context. As ever, you know your students best. Many thanks and we hope you enjoy teaching Crongton Knights!



**“IT’S BONKERS LIVING HERE
BUT WHEN THINGS ARE ON A LEVEL,
BRUVS AND SISTERS CHILL,
SOCCER GAMES BOOT OFF IN THE PARK,
SUMMER JAMS PUMP OUT BLASTING”**

- MCKAY

FILM

The webcast version of Crongton Knights was recorded at York Theatre Royal on Friday 28 February 2020.

Purchasing this pack allows unlimited access to the recording for the academic year within which you purchased the resource. You can access the password-protected recording by clicking the video thumbnail below.

Subtitles are optional and can be turned on by clicking the CC button that is positioned in the lower right corner of the playback window.

If you have any issues with the video please email sam@pilot-theatre.com.



ENGLISH LESSON PLAN 1:

INTRODUCTION TO THE STORY AND CHARACTERS

NC Links: Reading - making inferences and referring to evidence in the text; studying setting, plot, and characterisation, and the effects of these

Equipment: Handout 1, highlighters, Handout 2, webcast of Crongton Knights.

Starter task (15 mins): Give students the prologue to the novel (Handout 1) and ask them to read it either in silence or in pairs, highlighting the key information which creates exposition for the story to come.

Pose the following questions to students: What do we find out from this prologue about McKay Tambo and his friends? What sort of world is this? Ask students to make a table like the example below, filling it in with information from the Prologue.

Facts from the Prologue	Inference from the Prologue

Give students 5 minutes to fill the table in, and then share answers and challenge students further by using questioning to develop their inferences.

Development task (30 mins): Give students Handout 2, Introduction to the characters. This contains extracts from Alex Wheatle's novel and is our introduction to each character. Remember that Boy from the Hills appears as Bushkid in the play, and the gender is changed, but the character details all remain the same.

Put students in pairs and assign them a character from The Magnificent Six: McKay, Jonah, Little Bit, Venetia, Saira, Boy from the Hills/Bushkid. Ask students to read Handout 2 again and start to build up a character profile for each character, giving 10-15 minutes for this task.

Now watch the Prologue from the play, (from the beginning up to 03:17) and ask students to look out for additional character details.

Discuss with students afterwards, asking questions to ascertain understanding and encourage analysis, for example:

- **Why have the company chosen to rap this beginning?**
- **What mood or atmosphere is created at the start of the play?**
- **What additional information do we learn about the characters this way?**
- **What sense of the characters do we get from this introduction?**

Watch the Prologue through again, this time asking students to add information to their character profiles in pairs.

If time allows, ask pairs to feedback on their character profiles to the class who can make notes on each character in their own books.

Plenary (10 mins): Either on a post it, or in the back of books, ask students to write down predictions for what they think will happen in the story.

Summarise either as an Exit Ticket (asking students to all give you one piece of information as they leave the class) or as questioning, what information has been established today.

HOMEWORK: Creative writing task – Write a rap, song or spoken word poem in the style of Crongton Knights that would introduce you and your friends to an audience.

Optional extension:

In a follow up lesson, use the raps students have written for homework and spend a lesson improving and re-writing them, adding in rhyme, slang, language features and imagery (like the Castle imagery that runs through Crongton Knights.) Either turn this into a solo Spoken Language assessment or put students into groups and ask them to now blend their raps together to form a group performance.

You could use a [simple instrumental beatboxing beat](#) for students to practice over, if they are feeling confident!



DRAMA LESSON PLAN 1:

EXPLORING THE THEMES AND STORY

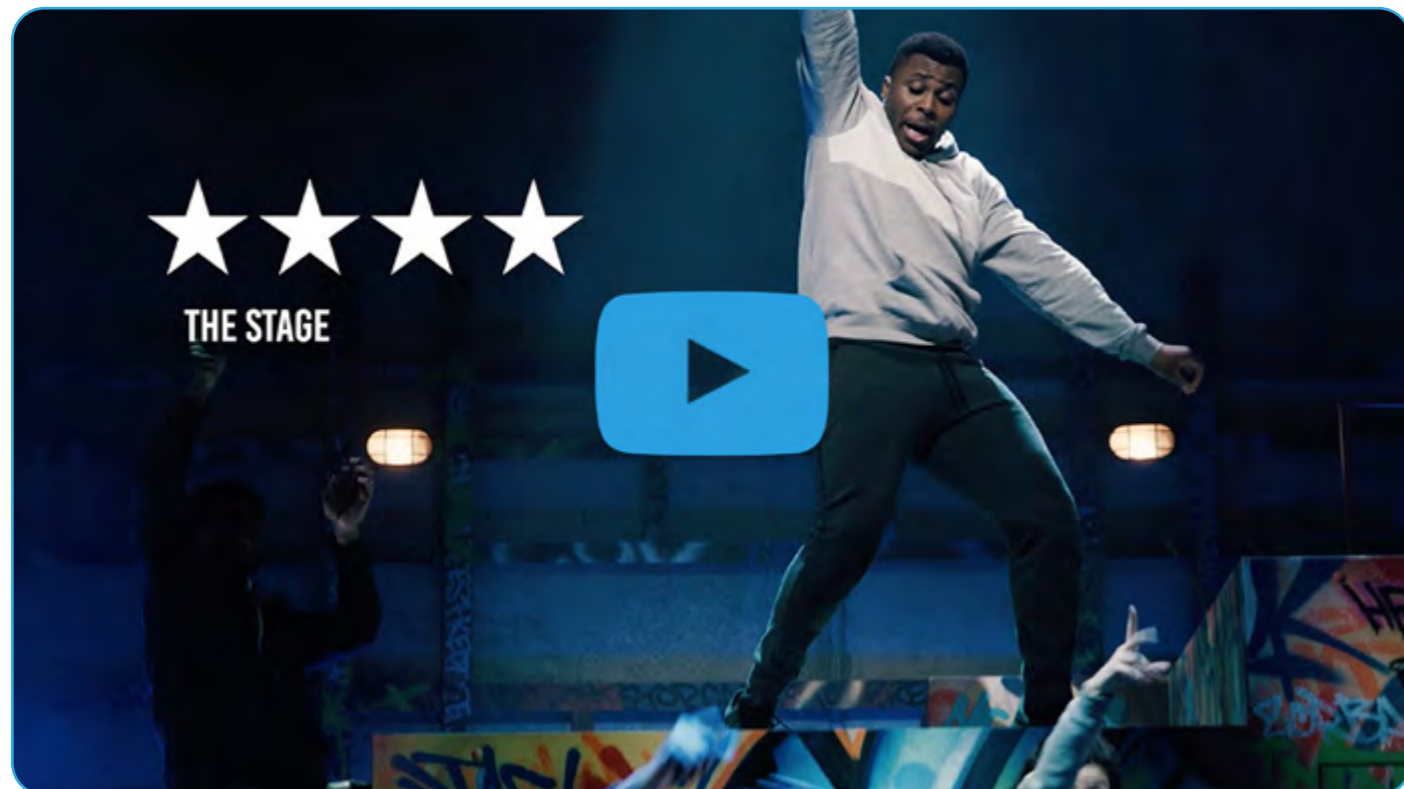
Assessment Objective link: AO1 Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning for theatrical performance.

Equipment: Crongton Knights trailer, Handout 1, highlighters, Webcast of Crongton Knights

Starter task (10 mins): Watch the trailer for the Crongton Knights production. Discuss with students what their initial impressions are of this production so far. What do they infer from this introduction?

Ask students to comment with reference to:

- Theatrical style and genre
- Mood and atmosphere
- Themes
- Potential plot
- Music
- Colour



Students could write predications about the themes on post its, which they can then refer to at the end of the lesson.

Development tasks: Give students the prologue to Alex Wheatle's novel (Handout 1) and ask students to read this silently first, highlighting what they think is the key information. Then ask students to get into groups of 4, and set them a task of staging the prologue, putting the key information in to still images. They could add narration on top of the still images. Give students 10 minutes for this task.

As an extension task, see if students can move fluidly from image to image to create a seamless performance, and vary their use of voice when narrating – e.g. choral speaking, song, repetition, varying tone, volume, pitch, pace. They may want to have one person as McKay narrating, or change this actor with every still image, or use 'collective character' so everyone is McKay.

After watching the still image performances, show students the prologue from the stage production of Crongton Knights (from the beginning up to 3.17). Use questioning to assess students' understanding, using the following questions as prompts:

- What connections can we make between the prologue in the novel and this extract from the play?
- What do we learn about the characters and the plot?
- What questions do we have?
- How is this an engaging opening?
-

Encourage students to analyse the performance and production techniques as well as reflect on their developing understanding of the story. Students could either make notes on this or contribute to small group or class discussion.

Next, give students the plot synopsis for the production and ask them to read this, or you could read it aloud as a class.

Use questioning to discuss what themes emerge from this synopsis. As a reminder for students, a theme is a recurring idea, motif or message which runs throughout a storyline.

Students may easily identify the themes of gangs and knife crime, but also encourage them to see the themes of friendship, loyalty, family and journeys in the story.

Give students time to add to their description notes, with details analysing and evaluating the use of skill.

Plenary task (10 mins): Ask students to choose one of their quotes, and write a plenary paragraph, like the one modelled above. If they are stuck, they could use the sentence starters below.

- *(Actor's name) playing (character name) creating a convincing character through their use of acting skills on the line.....*
- *The actor..... (description)*
- *This conveyed / showed / suggested that..... (analysis)*
- *This was effective / successful because..... (evaluation)*

Optional extension: This lesson could be expanded into two, to focus more on developing these exam writing skills. More time could be spent on ensuring students understand how to describe, analyse and evaluate, and then a full lesson could be spent writing up an extended answer which could be marked.



THE CAST



Aimee Powell

Venetia/Yvonne



Kate Donnachie

Bushkid



Nigar Yeva

Saira



Olisa Odele

McKay



Khai Shaw

Jonah



Dale Mathurin

Nesta



Simi Egbejumi-David

Festus/Dad/Sergio



Zak Douglas

Bit



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