Summer Holiday Reading 2021

The Jamie Drake Equation

For our reading classes together over the summer holidays, we will be exploring each book in three lessons, with the first offering a general overview, the second delving into the stylistic and narrative elements of the writing and the final lesson offering a closer, more thorough examination of the text itself through the use of close textual analysis and with particular attention paid to literary techniques and structural devices. These lessons are designed to help the students develop new frameworks through which to read and understand literature, equipping them with the vocabulary with which to discuss themes, genre and morals.

*Lesson 1:* **Introduction to *The Jamie Drake Equation***

In lesson 1 we will be starting our introductory work on *The Jamie Drake Equation,* thinking about the central ideas and context of the novel. We will be looking at the science behind the novel, reading up about the real-life astrophysics that underpin the book and considering our ideas on alien life and the universe. We will look at the idea of the International Space Station and write diary entries, imagining we are up there after having watched testimony from astronauts who have travelled there. We will delve deeper into the idea of genre, thinking about how this changes and morphs over the course of the novel and how the book is both a science fiction novel and one about growing up. The class will also be given time to ask any questions they had about the book and to give their opinions on how the story, characters and themes made them feel.

*Lesson 2:* **Exploring Style and Narrative**

In lesson 2 we will dive further into the novel, thinking about the moral framework in the book, the action- packed passages in the book and discussing how Christopher Edge uses themes in his book. We will develop a framework of themes to work with, identifying where and how thematic ideas make the reader relate to and empathise with the characters. We will discuss the moral framework of the story, looking at the values it espouses and asking what the writer is trying to say. Furthermore, we will try to put ourselves in Jamie’s position, thinking about times where we have done something and tried to cover it up, and thinking about his climactic reaction to learning about his parents’ divorce. Finally, we will consider the plot structure, asking ourselves how we would have ended the story and plotting the structure of the narrative throughout the book. The class will ask themselves- is the resolution with Buzz satisfying? The class will get the chance to share their thoughts on this and offer their own alternatives.

*Lesson 3:* **Close Textual Analysis**

In lesson 3 we will be focusing on developing the students’ analytical skills, looking at closely analysing the text of the novel. The class will be asked to discuss the way Edge uses suspense and conflict, looking at techniques they can use to mirror this, and will then respond creatively to it, thinking about how he uses high drama to drive the story forward. They will be asked to use their own experiences as inspiration and will be able to re-tell parts of the story whilst also having to work with the thematic framework Edge creates in the book. This lesson will focus on how to draw out suspense and tension in a book, looking at pacing and how to practice the zoom in/ zoom out technique that Edge uses in his writing in order to help improve their own creative work.