



TEACHING RESOURCE

From the Docks to the Stage

KS2 Upper / KS3 (Year 6–9)

SECTION 1: HISTORY – Liverpool, Migration & Identity

A. Understanding Context

1. What role did the docks play in Liverpool's economy during the 1950s?
 2. How did immigration (including Irish migration) shape Liverpool as a city?
 3. Why is the death of Patrick's father at the docks symbolically important to the story?
 4. How does music represent change in post-war Liverpool?
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B. Interpreting Historical Themes

5. How does the novel show the connection between hard physical labour (docks) and cultural creativity (music)?
 6. In what ways does the book show integration between different communities?
 7. How might young people in the 1950s have experienced life differently from young people today?
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SECTION 2: ENGLISH – Language, Structure & Literary Techniques

A. Characterisation

1. How does the author show Patrick’s resilience without directly saying “he is resilient”?
 2. How do dialogue and actions reveal Edward’s personality?
 3. What role does Lizzi play in balancing the emotional tone of the story?
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B. Literary Devices

4. Identify an example of symbolism in the story (e.g., docks, music, stage). What does it represent?
 5. How does setting contribute to mood in the novel?
 6. How does the author use contrast (loss vs hope, silence vs music)?
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C. Writing Activity

7. Rewrite a key scene from another character’s perspective.
 8. Write a diary entry from Patrick the day after his father’s death.
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SECTION 3: EMOTIONAL LEARNING (PSHE / SEL)

A. Resilience & Coping

1. How does Patrick respond emotionally to loss?
 2. What positive coping mechanisms does he develop?
 3. What could have happened if Patrick had chosen anger instead of hope?
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B. Identity & Integration

4. How does the book show that communities become stronger when people support each other?
 5. What does the story teach about belonging?
 6. How can music (or hobbies) help young people today during difficult times?
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ANSWER KEY & TEACHER NOTES

HISTORY SECTION – Guidance

1. The docks were central to Liverpool’s economy. They provided employment but were dangerous and unstable.
Teacher note: Encourage pupils to research post-war British port cities.
 2. Immigration brought cultural diversity, labour, and new traditions.
Teacher note: Link to Great Irish Famine migration and post-war labour movement.
 3. The father’s death represents both personal loss and the risks of industrial labour.
Teacher note: Discuss symbolism of the docks as both opportunity and danger.
 4. Music represents hope, generational change, and identity formation.
Teacher note: Connect to early rock and roll influence entering Liverpool.
 5. Labour builds the city physically; music builds it culturally.
 6. Through friendship across backgrounds (Patrick and Edward), shared struggle, and mutual respect.
 7. Limited opportunities, stronger class divisions, more physical labour expectations.
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ENGLISH SECTION – Guidance

1. Through actions: Patrick continues working, supports family, doesn’t complain.
Teacher note: Emphasise “show not tell.”
 2. Edward’s dialogue reveals openness and empathy.
 3. Lizzi provides emotional grounding and perspective.
 4. Docks = labour, hardship; Stage = ambition, hope; Music = transformation.
 5. Dark dock scenes vs lively music scenes create tonal shifts.
 6. Contrast builds narrative tension and emotional depth.
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EMOTIONAL LEARNING – Guidance

1. Patrick initially feels grief but channels it into responsibility.
2. Music, friendship, perseverance.
3. Discussion opportunity about choice and mindset.
4. Community support reduces isolation.
5. Belonging comes from contribution and shared experience.
6. Encourage pupils to identify personal coping strategies.



EXTENSION TASKS (Optional)

- Debate: Is Liverpool more defined by its docks or its music?
 - Research task: Compare 1950s Liverpool with modern Liverpool.
 - Creative writing: Imagine Part 2 – From the Stage to the Stadium.
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Teacher Implementation Notes

Year 6:

- Focus on resilience and basic historical context.
- Simplify symbolism questions.

Year 7–9:

- Deepen literary analysis.
- Encourage structured paragraph answers (PEEL format).

Cross-curricular links:

- History: Post-war Britain
 - English: Characterisation and symbolism
 - PSHE: Emotional regulation and resilience
 - Music: Cultural identity
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