

The Woman Across the Road

(Activity & Project Ideas)



- Drama activity:

Get the students to each stand in a space, and get them to think of a sandwich they'd like to eat. The sandwich should have at least two ingredients (as well as bread and butter). Get the students to mime the making of their sandwich, including opening drawers and taking out /spreading toppings. Try to make the sandwiches in roughly 1 minute.

Now ask the students to make their sandwiches again, but this time whenever the teacher says 'Someone's watching' the students must exaggerate their actions - really try to show off. They must continue making the sandwich but do so whilst trying to get as much attention as possible. When the teacher says 'No one's watching' they must return to making their sandwich normally.

Ask how it felt having to show off like that. Was it fun? Or tiring?

This leads nicely into the following discussion task.

- Discussion activity:

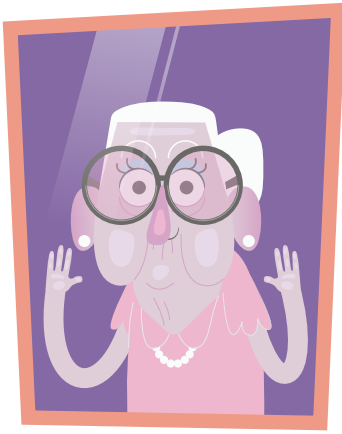
- Look at the last line of the poem.
- What do you think that the poet is saying in this poem?
- When do people tend to change their behaviour?
- What makes them change?
- Have you ever felt like you behave differently, depending on who is looking? Do you ever change the behaviour of other people?
- Who is watching who in this poem, do you think?
- Does this poem have a message?
- What do you think the message is?

- Look at the description of the old lady. Which words does the poet use to make her sound unusual or interesting?

Can you write a descriptive piece of writing that focuses on someone you might see outside your window?

Which descriptive writing techniques will you use?

- Write your own poem about someone or something you can see outside your window - does that person or object have an impact on you?
What changes in your life because of them?
Why is that person or object important?



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- Writing to advise:
Write an agony aunt advice response to the narrator in this poem. What advice will you give (and which techniques will you use) to help them improve their life?
- Write a poem from the old lady's perspective. Why is she looking out of the window? How does she describe the man? What does she think of him?

- Class debate:

Discuss the impact of peer pressure – relate to everyday issues in school.

'Peer pressure is a good thing to have in school.' Discuss.

Identify examples of positive peer pressure and negative peer pressure and then divide the class in two. Identify persuasive language techniques that will be useful and give time for each side to prepare their arguments and counter arguments.

- Can you write a poem or a diary entry from the perspective of a character that has made a mistake or who has let their behaviour get them into some kind of trouble? You can use three stanzas (like this poem) if you like.
 - Stanza 1 - What caused you to change?
 - Stanza 2 - How did you change?
 - Stanza 3 - How do you feel about it now?



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These activities were developed by Mark Grist
in collaboration with Louise Double & Poppy Ould.
Sheet design by Paper Rhino

If you've found these activities useful and would like to get in touch/
share your students' work feel free to email mark@markgrist.com