

Lesson 1: Initial Responses

Focus

The following are suggestions for how you might pick up on the ideas and issues raised by the play and discuss the students' initial responses. You can select to do one or more from the range below. They can be used as stand alone exercises or as preparation for one of the other lessons. They use a range of strategies and could be used in a variety of different lessons: i.e. PSHE/ Science/ English/ Drama/ Form Tutor Period etc.

If you used the Preparatory Lessons "What Do We Feel?" and "What Do We Think?" it may be interesting to return to the activities to see how the students' ideas have changed since seeing *Nobody Lives Forever*. (See Preparatory Lessons, "What Do We Feel?" and "What Do We Think?").

Note

The Preparatory Lesson "What Do We Think?" (see below) would work as an interesting follow-up exercise regardless of whether it has been done beforehand.

What do we Think?

Objective

To prepare your students for the debate that will follow the play. The debate will explore issues of stem cell research, and the ethical questions it raises.

Materials

Ideally a large space i.e. drama studio, or a cleared classroom

Process

1. Ask your students to stand in the centre of the space.
2. Explain that there is an imaginary line running down the centre of the space. One end of the line represents Agree and the opposite end of the line represents Disagree. The middle of the line is Don't Know.
3. Explain that you are going to read out a series of statements. If they agree with the statement they should go and stand at the end of the line that is Agree. If they disagree they should go and stand at the end of the line that is Disagree. If they are not

sure or don't know what they think they should stay in the middle. They can take up any position on the line that represents the closest to their opinion.

4. After they have taken up their positions, ask your students to explain *why* they have chosen their position. After hearing from several students give your group the opportunity to change their position.
5. Repeat the process for each statement.

Statements

- I don't think you should create any kind of life– even if it “lives” for an hour in a test tube - simply so that you can kill it and take cells from it
- Life begins at the moment of birth and not before
- Is it right that embryonic stem cell research (using cells from embryos up to 14 days to understand illness and investigate treatments) is legal
- It is OK to create 'hybrid' embryos as sources of stem cells for research using the egg of an animal injected with the DNA of a human
- Scientists are the people who understand new technologies, and should be the ones to make moral decisions about using them
- Stem cell research has the potential to make a real difference to people's lives, and this overrides the ethical cost
- There are other ways of curing diseases, we do not need to clone embryos
- It is dangerous for human beings to 'play God' by creating human life in this way
- Any potential therapies resulting from stem cell research could only treat a few rich people, which is not acceptable
- The debate about stem cells has been blown out of all proportion by the media
- We owe it to sufferers of chronic diseases to try to find cures. It is therefore more unacceptable NOT to do embryonic stem cell research than to do it
- We should learn to accept pain and suffering rather than meddle with nature

Group Discussion Exercise

Divide the students into pairs or small groups. Ask them to discuss and write down their answers to the following questions:

- What did you like/dislike about the play?
- Why do you think the play is called *Nobody Lives Forever*? Do you think it's a good title?
- What surprised you in the play? What new things did you learn?
- Did anything make you laugh? Was this appropriate in relation to the subject?
- Did anything shock you? Why?
- What didn't you understand? What do you need further clarification on?
- What questions has the play made you ask?

After allowing 10 minutes to discuss their answers, ask each group to share their answers and discuss them as a whole group.

Still Image Exercise – Memorable moment

Divide the class into groups of four.

Ask the group to share with each other the moment of the play that sticks most strongly in their mind.

Each group must agree on one of these moments and create a still image of that moment (not all the group members have to be in the image).

Share the images with the class.

Try to identify each one (the characters and situation) and discuss the different choices. Is there a consensus about the most memorable moment? What made it memorable?

Trailer

Divide the class into groups of four.

Ask them to create a short cinematic trailer for *Nobody Lives Forever*. This will require them to have a discussion to re-cap on the major story-lines and issues of the play.

Share and discuss the different trailers. Do they show similar scenes? Do they capture the essence of the play?

Practical Exercise Tell a story

Divide the class into groups of four.

Ask them to tell the story of *Nobody Lives Forever* as succinctly and accurately as possible in one of the following ways:

- Freeze Frames (max. 5)
- Sentences (max. 8)
- Improvisation (max. 1 min)

Share and discuss the differences between the versions.

Design a Poster

Ask the students, individually or in pairs, to design either:

- a poster for *Nobody Lives Forever* for the rest of the school
- a poster for or against stem cell research

Before designing the poster, discuss:

- posters that advertise films, plays, art exhibitions, gigs.
- why we have them
- what they're trying to do
- posters that class members have seen and liked/disliked, and why?