

Environment

Aims

- To explore the paper to stage process of making theatre
- To be able to consider ways of improving local facilities for young people
- To clearly express and justify your own opinions on issues facing young people in London

Resources and preparation

- A large space for easy interaction and movement
- Enough plain envelopes and pieces of paper for the whole class
- Pens and statements for the diamond exercise

Duration It should take approximately one hour to complete all activities but the lesson can be reduced or extended as necessary to fit the timetable.

Warm Up Under & Over Floor Clap

Activity 1 (20 minutes)

- Give each participant a blank envelope and pen.
- Explain to them that the writer of *Ya Get Me?* said that some of his best ideas for new writing have come from original scribbled thoughts, often on the backs of envelopes!
- The class will be using their creativity in the lesson and will need to note down any thoughts or ideas for later use.



Play DVD: Environment Drama

The scene from the DVD depicts professional actors playing teenagers based upon real young people who were involved in the making of *Ya Get Me?*. Participants involved in the process devised raps/songs in answer to the statement 'Why is London so...?'. The writing they came up with was so powerful it was included in the final performance.

- Ask participants to take a pen and blank envelope and find a space on their own. Using the film as initial stimuli, each should now try to complete their own statement 'Why is London so...?'. Encourage participants to write their idea on the back of the envelope provided. If the group struggles with this task they can take a few minutes to discuss in pairs as necessary.
- Ask each participant to create a 'pyramid outline' (see example below) under the statement on their envelope. Working in their own space they must complete the pyramid giving four detailed reasons (justifications) to support the statement. For example four justifications as to 'Why London is so.... Dangerous?' may be gang culture, not enough street lights, increase in knife crime and overcrowding.
- Once each participant has completed the task ask them to read aloud one by one their statements and justifications to the group. Encourage them to be clear and project.
- Ask them to note any observations, such as are there any similarities between the statements?
- Read or write on the board the statements and statistics shown in the box to the right



Play DVD: Environment Response

- Without talking, ask participants to make any notes or thoughts from reading the above information and from the young peoples opinions who were involved in the process of 'Hitting the Heights'.
- Notes should be recorded on the envelope.
- Are any of the points surprising, or stand out more than others, if so why? Do you agree or disagree with the other young peoples views?
- End the activity with a discussion.

London is a young city with almost 25% of London's population being under 18.

Around 300 different languages are spoken in London making it a vibrant, multicultural place to live.

48% of children in London are living in poverty compared with 30% in the rest of the UK.

In 2003, the Mayor of London's office carried out a survey.

80% of the children surveyed from across London had been bullied and 30% had themselves (or their families) been victims of crime.

The survey also showed the top reason for children aged 8–18 disliking London was that there was nothing to do.

Activity 2 (10 minutes)

- Arrange participants into pairs and give each pair the statements on how London could be improved for teenagers. (Eight statements have been provided – you can add more.)
- Ask the pairs to rank the statements in the order which they think are the most important in improving life for teenagers in London. The most important at the top down to the least important at the bottom.
- Ask each pair to join with another pair and working in a group of four allow a minute for each group to share with each other their top chosen statements and discuss their reasons why. Encourage each group to make notes of their thoughts on the envelopes.
- Now ask participants to find a space on their own. Using their initial statement as a starting point, instruct participants to write their own monologue. The monologue will be in a continuation of the statement text. It may be helpful to imagine a character directly talking to an audience, having a rant about 'Why is London so...?'. Who would the character be? How old are they? What has happened to them to make them feel this way? What cause of action would they like to happen?
- The monologue need only be a few paragraphs. When each participant has finished, ask them to prepare the monologue for presentation at the end of the lesson.

SUGGESTED STATEMENTS

These are not in order. Feel free to add more statements to initiate further debate within your group:

Transport should be more affordable for under 18s.

There should be more sports facilities for teenagers.

There should be more after-school and breakfast clubs.

Art galleries and museums should be cheaper for teenagers.

There should be more police on the streets.

There should be more youth clubs and organisations.

The speed limit around schools should be reduced to 20 miles per hour.

The voting age should be reduced to 16.

Plenary (approximately 5 minutes)

- Ask for constructive criticism about the monologue performances.
- Encourage participants to access their local council's website for more information about the services and events on offer for young people in their area (examples below).



Possible links

www.southwark.gov.uk
www.lambeth.org.uk
www.lewisham.gov.uk

Extension activity

Pupils could design a leaflet or web page giving all the information they can find on 'things to see and do for young people in your area'. It can also have organisations that might assist young people with issues or problems too. If the website idea was produced for real it could be linked to the school website making it accessible to all pupils.



Links for further research

www.southwark.gov.uk/YourServices/childrenandfamilies/activities/whatever/
[www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/Corporation-young people](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/Corporation-young%20people)
golondon.about.com/od/thingstodoinlondon/tp/free_London.htm

