

## Key theme: Life and career of Theresa Breslin

### Introduction

This learning journey supports the development and application of Literacy & English skills (reading, writing and listening and talking) at second level through the exploration of the life and career of Carnegie award winning Scottish author Theresa Breslin and her texts.

Learners will:

- research Theresa's life and career developing research, note taking and referencing skills.
- create a presentation and communicate their findings showing awareness of audience and purpose.
- engage with Theresa Breslin's *Divided City* novel developing reading skills such as prediction skimming, scanning and questioning.
- plan and create a range of texts exploring themes outlined in the novel.

Theresa Breslin was born and brought up in Kirkintilloch close to the castles old burial grounds and the Roman Wall, all of which helped fuel an active imagination as a child, further developed by a real love of reading. While working as a mobile librarian her route included a small village where the local steel mill closed down devastating the community and this led her to write her first novel, *Simon's Challenge*.

This novel won the Young Book Trust's Kathleen Fidler Award and Theresa also won the Carnegie Medal, the UK's most prestigious award in children's literature, with her highly acclaimed novel 'Whispers in the Graveyard'. Her books have been praised for their elements of strong setting and sense of place and she acknowledges that she draws on the dramatic landscape of Scotland, its history and its culture. Her books range from historical tales to modern school stories, from science fiction and fantasy to real life situations faced by children, such as bullying, or settling in at a new school. As well as writing "fun" stories she thinks it is valuable to address serious issues with the framework of fiction and allow young people to explore and extend their knowledge in this way.

Her work has been filmed for television, broadcast on radio, and is read world-wide in many languages. Theresa was awarded lifelong Honorary Membership of the Scottish Library Association for distinguished services to Children's Literature and Librarianship. She is passionate about libraries, literature and literacy and their value to young people and she has served on the Board of Scottish Book Trust and on the Advisory Committee for Public Lending Right in the U.K. Supported by the Scottish Arts Council and the Federation of Children's Books Groups, she also started the West of Scotland Children's Book Group. Learn more about Theresa Breslin at <http://www.theresabreslin.co.uk>

**Prior learning**

Prior experience of:

- locating, organising and presenting information
- reading strategies
- working collaboratively with others

**Interdisciplinary opportunities**

**Health and Wellbeing-** Exploring themes in the text, such as friendship, racism and tolerance.

**ICT-** creating presentations using a range of media and technology.

**Religious and Moral Education** – Exploring themes in the text such as racism and tolerance, developing an understanding of how people’s beliefs and values affect their actions.

**Social Studies-**gathering and using information about forms of discrimination and considering the impact this has on people’s lives. Discussing the diversity of cultures, values and customs in our society.

**SOC2-16b, SOC 2-16c, HWB 2-26a, TCH 2-04a, EXA 2-02a, RME 2-09c RME 2-09d**

**Capabilities**

**Successful learners:** use literacy skills to make predictions, research; make notes, summarise and share information. Make reasoned evaluations; create higher order questions and analyse responses.

**Confident individuals:** share information confidently with others. Present ideas in various ways; effectively communicate ideas both orally and in writing.

**Responsible citizens:** apply values and qualities such as tolerance and friendship in their everyday lives.

**Effective contributors:** contribute opinions and listen to the opinions of others while participating in discussions. Create and deliver presentations in collaboration with others.

### Experiences and outcomes

When I engage with others, I can respond in ways appropriate to my role, show that I value others' contributions and use these to build on thinking. **LIT 2-02a**

I can select and use a range of strategies and resources before I read, and as I read, to make meaning clear and give reasons for my selection. **LIT 2-13a**

I can make notes, organise them under suitable headings and use them to understand information, develop my thinking, explore problems and create new texts, using my own words as appropriate. **LIT 2-15a**

I can use my notes and other types of writing to help me understand information and ideas, explore problems, make decisions, generate and develop ideas or create new text. **LIT 2-15a**

To show my understanding, I can respond to literal, inferential and evaluative questions and other close reading tasks and can create different kinds of questions of my own. **ENG 2-17a**

I can:

- discuss structure, characterisation and/or setting
- recognise the relevance of the writer's theme and how this relates to my own and others' experiences
- discuss the writer's style and other features appropriate to genre. **ENG 2-19a**

By considering the type of text I am creating, I can select ideas and relevant information, organise these in an appropriate way for my purpose and use suitable vocabulary for my audience. **LIT 2-26a**

I can persuade, argue, explore issues or express an opinion using relevant supporting detail and/or evidence. **LIT 2-29a**

I explore and experiment with the features and functions of computer technology and I can use what I learn to support and enhance my learning in different contexts. **TCH 2-04a**

I know that friendship, caring, sharing, fairness, equality and love are important in building positive relationships. As I develop and value relationships, I care and show respect for myself and others. **HWB 2-05a**

I am increasing my understanding of how people come to have their beliefs, and further developing my awareness that there is a diversity of belief in modern Scotland. **RME 2-09a**

I can gather and use information about forms of discrimination against people in societies and consider the impact this has on people's lives. **SOC 2-16b**

I can discuss issues of the diversity of cultures, values and customs in our society. **SOC 2-16c**

## Learning experience A: Exploring the authors life and career

### Introduction

Learners will explore and make notes about Theresa Breslin's life and career using biographical information from a website. Learners will research further using a variety of sources, they will locate, select, make notes, organise and summarise information. They will then create a presentation to share their findings with others showing an awareness of purpose and audience.

### Stimulus

Theresa Breslin website:

<http://www.theresabreslin.co.uk/biog.php>

### Key Learning

Learners can:

- find, select, sort and use relevant and reliable information from a variety of texts for a specific purpose.
- select main ideas from text.
- make and organise notes.
- summarise information in own words.
- communicate information effectively when presenting.

### Possible learning opportunities /tasks

- Make notes from the website about Theresa Breslin (see useful resources) by extracting main ideas and creating a summary.
- Research further relevant information about Theresa Breslin using appropriate sources and note-making and summarising activities (see useful resources).
- Create a relevant presentation to communicate research findings to others (see useful resources).
- Deliver presentation showing an awareness of purpose and audience.
- Write a biography about Theresa Breslin.

### Useful resources

- Theresa Breslin Website:
- <http://www.theresabreslin.co.uk>
- Notemaking and summarising activities sheet
- Prezi <http://prezi.com>

### Possible evidence

Learners can:

SAY- describe aspects of Theresa Breslin's life and career.

WRITE/MAKE - make notes, summarise information in their own words. Create a presentation to communicate relevant information.

DO - research relevant and reliable information. Use notes to create a summary.

### Reflecting on learning

Reflective questions for learners:

What skills did you use when researching?  
 What does note making help us do with the information we have found?  
 What new information did you learn about Theresa Breslin?

### Taking it further

Look at different ways of note making as a means of collecting information and summarising, e.g. lists and bullet points.

Create a written biography about Theresa Breslin or another famous author.

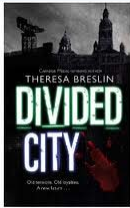
## Learning experience B: Engaging with texts

### Introduction

Learners will explore a novel written by Theresa Breslin: *Divided City*. They will develop reading skills such as prediction, scanning and questioning and will collaborate with others to explore the text. These learning opportunities can then be applied to any text.

### Stimulus:

*Divided City*  
Book cover



### Key Learning

Learners can:

- understand and analyse aspects of text such as plot (including issues), setting and character.
- scan for information.
- create and answer relevant higher order questions
- use clues in the text to understand inferential information.
- give informed opinions using evidence in the text.

### Possible learning opportunities /tasks

- Use aspects of the novel's front and back cover such as title, images and blurb to make predictions about plot, setting and character. Record predictions on a prediction board (see useful resources). Check predictions during exploration of the text.
- Explore, ask and answer literal, inferential and evaluative questions (see useful resources). Create and answer higher-order questions about the text using Bloom's taxonomy (see useful resources).
- Explore the text using reciprocal reading strategies and activities (see useful resources).
- Use quick on the draw activity (example given for chapter 12) to practise scanning skills. Scan texts for key information and use this support understanding of the text and to explore themes.

### Useful resources

- Prediction board
- Questioning
  - Blooming Questions: <http://storybird.com/books/blooming-questions>
  - Bloom's fans template
  - Bloom's Questions sheet
- Literal, inferential, evaluative questioning task (PowerPoint and questions Word doc)
- Reciprocal reading guide and role cards
- Quick on the draw activity
- Scanning activity PowerPoint

### Possible evidence

Learners can:

**SAY** - describe plot (including issues), setting and character. Answer higher-order relevant questions.

**WRITE/MAKE** - make and write predictions and create and write higher-order relevant questions.

**DO** - make predictions. Answer higher-order relevant questions. Take on roles when exploring the text.

### Reflecting on learning

What issues were raised in the novel?

How did reciprocal roles and questioning help you to understand the text?

### Taking it further

Apply skills to texts that explore similar or different issues.

## Learning experience C: Creating texts

### Introduction

Learners will plan and create a range of texts exploring themes outlined in the novel.

### Stimulus

Divided City: Citizens Theatre dramatisation

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swXAFwf-Rrg>

### Key learning

Learners can:

- find, select, sort and use relevant information from a variety of texts for a specific purpose.
- make and organise notes to develop thinking, explore issues.
- contribute appropriately to discussions, taking turns and showing respect.
- create texts, using appropriate format and language for a given audience and specific purpose.
- review and edit writing to sustain a high level of technical accuracy, including grammar, paragraphing, spelling and structure to clearly convey meaning.

### Possible learning opportunities/tasks

- Watch video clip of Theresa Breslin talking about her novel *Divided City* and make notes identifying the key themes that this novel explores.
- Participate in a group discussion examining an issue from the text.
- Watch video clip of *Divided City* at the Citizens Theatre. Create a dramatised version of a scene or event in the novel, record this and use it to explore issues/themes identified in the text. (see useful resources)
- Create an animated version of a scene or event in the novel, record this and use it to explore issues/themes identified in the text. (see useful resources)
- Use notes, previous exploration and further research text to write a report on sectarianism or a persuasive piece encouraging others to oppose sectarianism. (see useful resources)
- Write a review of the novel and post this as a wiki or create

### Useful resources

- Report writing mat.
- [Theresa Breslin discussing Divided City](#)
- [How to Make a Movie on Windows Movie Maker](#)
- Creating a Podcast with Audacity  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHgD6cVv9QU>
- Making animation  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blast/119158>

### Possible evidence

Learners can:

SAY- contribute effectively to group discussion, describe issues explored in the text.

WRITE- a report and a persuasive piece of text.

MAKE- create a video, wiki, podcast and animation.

DO- act out a scene from the novel. Research information, select appropriate sources, use appropriate body language.

### Reflecting on learning

Reflective questions for learners:

- In what way have you developed your research and writing skills? How do you know?
- How effective was your text?
- What did you learn from others about your text?

### Taking it further

Create these texts in other areas of the curriculum. Create other text types such as a short story or poem.