

RED TEE

A VIGNETTE PLAY IN ONE ACT BY
Lindsay Price



CLASSROOM STUDY GUIDE

Introduction

Red Tee is a vignette play that examines questions of identity (gender, family patterns, traditions, labels) and what happens when someone doesn't fit in the way everyone expects them to.

Playwright Bio

Lindsay Price has been involved with theatre education for over 25 years as a playwright, adjudicator, workshop instructor, resource writer, curriculum supervisor, professional development creator, and keynote speaker. Her plays have been performed in schools all over the world with over 1000 productions a year.

Synopsis

Each scene looks at a different aspect of identity. How do we change the labels that are put upon us? Red (a teenage girl) wants to break away from her family's football team identity. Ruby and Corrine try to find common ground with Ruby's decision to explore a non-binary identity. Blush tells his teacher that his parents kicked him out of the house for being gay and he must find another safe space. Blue faces rejection but stays strong during their re-birthday party as a transgendered youth.

Characters

As this is a vignette play, actors will play multiple roles in a variety of scenes. Unless identified, the character can be any gender. Unless identified, the character is a teenager.

Role Call: Stel (M/F), Red (F), Ruby (Non-Binary), Blue (Trans), Blush (M)

Who Am I (1): One to Eight

The Family that Cheers together: Red (F), Kelsey (F), Jules, a mom (F)

Who Am I (2): Concerned, Worried, Label Off/Sporty, Drama Geek/Blank, Blue/Four to Eight (which can include the previous characters in the scene or not)

The Re-Birthday: Blue (Trans), Lane

Who Am I (3): Crystal, Fossil, Sand, Popular 1, Popular 2/Happy, Suspicious

Sammy/Sam/Slam: Sammy (F)

The Shopping Trip: Ruby (Non-Binary), Corrine (F)

Who Am I (4): One to Seven, Stel, Circle

Safe Space: Ms. Crober, teacher (F), Jody, Piper, Jaylin, Blush (M)

12 Grapes: Hopes, Wishes, all remaining characters

Themes

Identity, change, personal growth, acceptance

Pre-Read Questions

- ★ What makes up a person's identity?
- ★ Can you change your identity? Do you believe people can change?
- ★ How do you identify yourself? Do you have more than one identity?
- ★ Does anyone see you as different than how you identify yourself? How do you deal with that?
- ★ Do you ever have to change your identity in the presence of others?
- ★ How does your identity influence your decisions?
- ★ How does your identity affect your day to day life?
- ★ Have you ever judged others based on their identity?

Pre-Read Activities

Opinion Poll

- ★ One aspect of identity is the choices we make. Ask students to share their opinion by standing to indicate that they agree with a specific choice. State the choices and then repeat the choices so students can stand. Each choice will have three options – the first choice, the second choice, or neither.
- ★ For example, if the choices are Summer or Winter, you would say: Summer, Winter, or Neither. Then repeat slowly: Summer (give students a chance to stand and then sit), Winter (give students a chance to stand and then sit), or Neither (give students a chance to stand and then sit).
- ★ Possible Options:
 - » Summer or Winter?
 - » Meat or Vegetables?
 - » Music or Reading?
 - » Music or Movies?
 - » YouTube or Instagram?
 - » Travel or Home?
 - » Family or Friends?
 - » Sweet or Salty?

Identity Chart

- ★ Have students make an identity chart for themselves. An identity chart visualizes different aspects of the question, “Who am I?”
 - » Students will need paper and something to write with.
 - » You may want to complete an identity chart for yourself as a model.

- ★ An identity chart starts with students putting their name in a circle or square in the middle of the page.
- ★ Then students draw lines from the centre. At the end of each line, students write one word that describes them (tall, girl, sister, oldest daughter, Canadian, Scottish background, drama club, piano). Possible categories include:
 - » Family identity
 - » Social identity
 - » Background identity
 - » Physical identity
- ★ Ask students to reflect on the final product. What shapes their identity?
- ★ Ask students to choose what they feel is the most important part of their identity and write a paragraph describing why.

Identity Collage

- ★ Create a collage that visualizes your definition of “My Identity.”
 - » Brainstorm images, symbols, and words that represent your identity.
 - » Decide what materials you will use to visualize your identity.
 - » After you create your collage, write a one-paragraph description of the choices you made and why.

Home, School, Friends Tableaux Series

- ★ In groups, students will identify and discuss how they act at home, how they act at school, and how they act with their friends. What are the similarities in their behaviour? What are the differences?
- ★ Groups will then create a tableau for each environment.
 - » Emphasize to students any principles of tableau that you use in your class. Do they need to incorporate levels? Connection between individuals?

- ★ Lastly, groups will create transitions between each tableau to form a series.
- ★ Groups will present their series to the class. Those watching should try to identify the behaviours in the different environments.

Identity Scene

- ★ In small groups, students will create a one-minute scene on the theme of identity. How will you visualize “Who am I?”
- ★ Groups will rehearse and present.

Research Project

- ★ In small groups students are to research an identity that they are unfamiliar with. What identity do you know little to nothing about?
- ★ It could be a gender identity, a religious identity, a racial identity, or a cultural identity.
- ★ After completing their research, students will create a presentation in which everyone in the group must take part. It can be:
 - » A live oral presentation with a visual component such as a slide deck
 - » An original scene theatricalizing their findings
 - » A recorded presentation (filmed scene, or oral presentation with visual component)

Don't Label Me

- ★ You will need access to Post-it Notes.
- ★ Have students write on the Post-its how others have labeled them in their past.
- ★ Students will stick their Post-its on a wall, or you can hang butcher paper somewhere in the room and have students stick the Post-its on that.
- ★ Do a gallery walk where students observe the various Post-its.

- ★ Discuss afterward: What surprised students about what they saw? What label stood out the most? What label would you not want? Would a certain label change your mind about a person?

Close Reading Analysis Questions

Close reading is an analysis tool. Students read a text multiple times for in-depth comprehension, striving to understand not only **what** is being said but **how** it's being said and **why**. Close reading takes a student from story and character to drawing conclusions on author intention. Close reading prompts students to flex their thinking skills by:

- ★ Teaching students to engage with a text.
- ★ Teaching students to be selective. We can't highlight everything in the text, only the most important elements.
- ★ Teaching students to make educated decisions. All conclusions and opinions must be backed up with a text example.

Have students analyze *Red Tee*, individually or in groups, using the following text-dependent questions.

Read One: What is happening?

1. What is your first impression of the play?
2. What is Stel the Swedish word for?
3. What pronouns does Blue use?
4. What does Red want to talk to her mother about?
5. What does Kelsey want to ask Red about?
6. What is Lane's relationship to Blue?
7. What does Blue want from Lane?
8. What forms Slam's identity?

9. How does Ruby identify in terms of gender?
10. What does Ruby want from Corrine?
11. What does Ruby's mother want?
12. What does Ms. Crober teach?
13. Who says, "I'm sad but I'm not sorry"?
14. What does Blush want from his parents?
15. What is the key idea of the play?

Read Two: How does it happen?

1. In your opinion, why does the playwright choose to share the subject matter episodically through scenes, rather than following one story from beginning to end?
2. Analyze Red's use of language. What kind of words does she use? What can you infer about her character based on her vocabulary and word choice?
3. Based on the way that Blue speaks, how would you visualize him? What is his physicality?
4. In your opinion, why has the playwright chosen to use a bare stage with cubes to stage the play? How would the lack of set impact the staging?
5. In your opinion, why is there an ensemble in this play? How is the ensemble used?
6. What is the significance of the line, "My parents believe in the unchanging"?
7. What is the significance of the line, "Don't force me to be right handed because you think it's the way I'm supposed to be"?
8. What is the significance of the line, "I can control whether I am happy or not"?
9. How would you costume Blush? Use the text to support your answer.

10. Why does the playwright include the final scene “12 Grapes?” Why is it significant?
11. In your opinion, is there a common conflict throughout the feature scenes? If so, what is it?

Read Three: Why does it happen?

1. In your opinion, why is the play called *Red Tee*?
2. In your opinion, why does the playwright name the four feature characters the way she does?
3. What is the playwright trying to say about identity? Cite the text to support your answer.
4. What is the playwright trying to say about happiness? Cite the text to support your answer.
5. What is going to happen next for Blush?
6. What is going to happen next for Blue?
7. Compare and contrast your own personal experience with identity with what happens in the play.
8. How does the author want you to respond to this play?

Post-Read Questions

- ★ Based on the context of the last scene, what do you wish for?
- ★ What is one question that you still have about the play?
- ★ Which character resonated with you the most and why?
- ★ Are labels good or bad?
- ★ If you were given a blank label, what would you write on it?

- ★ Should anyone else be able to define your identity? Why or why not?
- ★ Now that you've read the play, would your answer to the question "Who am I?" change in any way? Why or why not?

Post-Read Activities

Character Costume Design

- ★ Choose a character and design their costume.
- ★ Based on their personality, what would they wear? What pieces of clothing define them? What colours and textures would they choose?
- ★ Draw a colour costume rendering.

Staged Scenes

- ★ Divide students into small groups and assign each group a scene from the play, or a short moment within a scene.
- ★ Give students time to rehearse.
- ★ Each group will present their moment.
- ★ Discuss the scenes afterward.
 - » How did seeing the scenes acted out differ from reading them?
 - » Why is it important to act a scene as well as read it?
 - » Did any of the presentations offer a different interpretation of the characters than yours?

"Who am I" Ensemble Scene

- ★ In one of the "Who am I" sections, the ensemble repeats the line, "This is the way it is because this is the way it's always been done."

- ★ In groups, students will create their own version of this scene exploring their own struggles with dealing with an identity that is being placed on them, rather than the one they choose for themselves.
- ★ Connect the moments that the groups create by having everyone repeat the line, “This is the way it is because this is the way it’s always been done.”

“Who am I” Monologue

- ★ There has been a lot of discussion about the question “Who am I?” Have students turn their thoughts and opinions into a monologue.
- ★ Students can use their own experiences as the base for the monologue character, or if they don’t feel comfortable doing that, they can create a character.
- ★ The criteria for the monologue are as follows:
 - » The monologue is a half page to one page in length.
 - » The character in the monologue is talking to someone. Students must identify the listener.
 - » The character wants something specific from the listener. Students must identify what the speaker wants from the listener.

Set Design

- ★ There is no specific set design for this play. Have students write a description of their set vision, or draw a colour rendering. How would you visualize the themes of the play?

Playwright Process

Playwright Lindsay Price talks about her process writing *Red Tee*. Have students read and then discuss/reflect on how their perception of the writing process compares to the playwright’s.

What was the originating idea for the play? Where did you start?

The more I go into classrooms, the more identity comes up. It's important to students and that means it's something that I want to write about. At the start, I was focused just on gender identity, but came to the conclusion that I also wanted to mention other aspects. Identity is made up of so many things! This led to the play having a focus on feature characters and their gender identity, and then using an ensemble to explore other identities.

What challenges did you encounter during the writing process?

I identify as a cis female. And I was brought up in a time when gender was extremely binary. While I often write characters outside of my experience, I felt this was different. It was extremely important and challenging to make sure my characters were authentic to their experience. The internet is helpful for research but it's not the same as talking to people. I spent a lot of time sharing scenes with students of varying identities to get their feedback.

Also, any time you write stories in single scenes, you have to create vivid moments. Characters don't have time to develop, they need to have an immediate connection with an audience.

What changes, if any, were made during rehearsals?

I spent so much time in the workshop stage for this play, not a lot of changes were made in rehearsals. When the play was ready to be performed, I felt it was ready! Having said that, a small but significant change was made to the title in rehearsals. The original title of the play was Red Hoodie. But the more I said the title out loud, the less I liked it. The teacher of the first production and I had a discussion about the costuming and they asked, from a budget standpoint, if it was possible to have the four feature characters wear t-shirts rather than hoodies and that sparked something! One of the concepts of the play is being "ready" to have these conversations and Red Tee sounds really close to "ready." A new title was born!

As a playwright, what is your favourite moment/character in the play?

My favourite scene is between Ruby and Corrine. First because Ruby is in the middle of exploring and deciding identity but isn't completely sure. I thought it was important to include a character who was in the middle of that process. Secondly, Corrine is dealing with the aftermath of an eating disorder and coming out the other side. Both characters are finding themselves, and their identity, from different perspectives.