

ALMEIDA THEATRE



Before you listen: Exploring the world of *As Waters Rise*

A selection of exercises to pick and choose from before listening to Episode 1.

What would happen if? (20-30 mins)

Ask students to consider what would happen if their school and/or local area flooded.

In small groups ask them to create a short news report with a reporter describing what has happened and interviewing eye-witnesses who are from the area.

They will need to decide who these eye-witnesses are and how they have been affected by the floods.

How would you respond? (10 mins)

Ask students to make a list of the ways in which they think people would respond if there was a flood warning.

They can make one list for adults and another one for young people.

Ask them to share their lists as a group and discuss whether everyone agrees on how people would respond to the threat of London flooding.

Pack a bag (10-15 mins)

Ask students to imagine they have to evacuate their home because of rising flood waters.

Ask them to write down 5 items they would take with them and the reason why. Remind them that they have to be able to carry these items in a rucksack or suitcase.

You might want to write a big list on the board or sheets of paper, then use them to draw some conclusions about what matters to the group – for example is it home comforts, survival, or memories?

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Research Task: What is it like to get flooded? (10-15 mins)

Many major floods have taken place in the UK. Ask students to have a look at the 2015 flood in York and answer the following questions:

How did people cope?

How did the Government respond?

What do you think it would have felt like to be there?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iA3Z-bVtMAA>

Where do you stand? (10-15 mins)

This is a discussion game in which you ask the students to respond to a question or a statement by placing themselves in a line according to their opinion.

For example, you could ask the question *What is more important, friends or family?*

One side of the room will represent family as the most important, and the other side will represent friends.

Give students 30 seconds to get into a single line which runs between the two sides, deciding where they stand.

Anyone who thinks family is the most important should be stood closest to the family side and anyone who thinks friends the other – everyone in between is choosing a balance between the two.

So, someone who thinks they are equally important should be in the middle of the line, while someone who thinks friends are a bit more important might choose to place themselves closer to the friends' side, for example.

Once the class is in a single line, you can ask different students why they are standing where they are. This can lead to some interesting discussions – it's a technique we used a lot early on in the devising process for *As Waters Rise*.

Some suggestions of things to explore for Episode One might be:

What is more important, family or friends?

Whose job is it to look after people in a crisis, Government or individual?

Is it OK to steal something if you have no-one else to help you: yes or no?

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While you're listening:

A selection of tasks for students to do while listening to *As Waters Rise*.

Describing characters

Working in small groups ask students to focus on a specific character as they are listening and think about their personality traits.

At the end of the episode ask each group to choose three words that best describe the character they were focusing on. They could also look at the transcript of the episode and choose one line of dialogue that best represents that character.

Relating to characters

Ask students to consider which character they relate to the most and which character they feel makes the best choices during the episode – this might be the same character or two different characters.

Draw what you hear

Pause the episode and get the group to do a quick sketch of what they are picturing in their heads.

Here are some suggested points to explore:

Scene 6

Pgs. 14 – 17 on the transcript

Starting at 14.50 and finishing at 17.45 on the recording

Scene 8

Pgs. 20 – 22 on the transcript

Starting at 21.30 and finishing at 24.00 on the recording

Ask students to pay attention to how the sound effects and the actors' voices are working to create a sense of place.

After the episode you might want to discuss the drawings and identify what aspects of the audio drama made the students imagine each part of their drawing.

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After Listening:

A selection of tasks and discussion prompts to encourage students to reflect on the content of the episode.

What would you do? (5 mins)

Ask students to think about what they would do if a friend's house had been flooded.

What would they **want** to do to help and what **could** they realistically do?

You could use this as a starting point for a writing exercise. Students could write a diary entry based on their thoughts and feelings about what's happened to their friend or they could try writing some dialogue for a conversation with their friend in which they imagine how they would offer to help and how their friend would respond.

How did the Government respond? (5 mins)

Ask students to consider how the characters felt the Government responded to the crisis. Do the characters feel the Government has done enough?

Students could also consider whether they themselves think the Government in the audio drama did a good job in responding to the crisis.

The celebrity response (10 mins)

Ask students to discuss the following questions:

- What did Alyssa do to try to help the flood response?
- Do you think this was enough or could she have done more?
- What moral obligations do people with more money have to support others during a crisis, if any?
- Do you agree with the characters' decision to steal from Alyssa?

Character development (10 mins)

Ask students to consider if and how their views on the characters change over the course of the story.

Students could also select a relationship between two characters and track how it develops, noting down any big moments of shift.

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Creating Cliff Hangers (30-45 min)

Replay Scene 9 (24.00 – 25.40)

Ask your students why they think the scene ends in the way that it does? Why cut to a new scene at that particular moment? What is the impact on the listener?

After listening to the whole episode, ask students to create their own short scene containing an act of betrayal between friends.

Ask them to create two versions of this scene to present back to the class. Version A should end on a cliff hanger, before the audience learns of the betrayal. Version B should end after the truth has come out.

Discuss the impact of each version on the audience. Is it always more effective to end a scene on a cliff hanger or does it depend on the type of revelation?

Tough Choices: A budgeting exercise (20 mins)

Ask your students to imagine that in response to the flooding in London in 2025 the Government has allocated £200,000,000 to tackle the disaster.

Ask them to decide who gets what share of the money using the information below.

Housing and Compensation

30,000 Londoners will lose their homes during the flood.

5,000 of those people earn below the London Living Wage.

15,000 earn between £20,000 and £30,000 per year.

5,000 earn between £30,000 and £40,000 a year.

5,000 earn above £40,000 a year.

Rehousing each person will cost £1500.

Do you rehouse everybody or only the people on the lowest incomes?

Many of these Londoners will have also lost all of their possessions. Would you give everyone compensation? How much? Do some people get more compensation than others? (Note: The average household in the UK has £38,000 worth of belongings!)

Saving Jobs

10,000 Londoners will become unemployed as their places of work were submerged.

Do you give them any benefits? How much per person?

How many new jobs do you create for the newly unemployed to do?

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Each new job costs £20,000.

If you are not creating many jobs, you might want to increase compensation for the newly unemployed so they can manage financially.

Flood Defences

Flood defences to stop this happening again will cost at least £30 million. Is that how much you choose to spend, or do you take the risk and cut corners?

Total Cost

Students should work out their total spend. If it is within budget, fantastic. If not they have to decide if they will:

- A) Cut their spending. If so, how?
- B) Spend above the budget. If they choose this option this will cause economic difficulty for the entire country. Is this a fair decision to do in order to help those living in London?