About a Boy

ESL Lesson Package
“About a Boy” Sample Lesson Plan

Note: The following is only an example. Instructors should feel free to add or remove activities as needed.

Day One

1. Tell the class they are going to be watching a movie. Introduce the characters and explain the slang expressions for Part One.

2. Assign the Part One **Mix-and-Match** vocabulary exercise (page 7-8) for homework. If you wish, you can ask them to write ten sentences using ten different words from the list of new vocabulary.

Day Two

3. Mark the **Mix-and-Match** homework in class. If you assigned the students sentences for homework, collect their sentences to mark later.

4. Have students complete the vocabulary **Self-Test** for Part One. (page 6)

5. Split the students into two’s or three’s and have them discuss the **Conversation Questions** for Part One. (page 7)

6. Watch Part One of the movie. As the students watch the movie, have them complete **Who Said It**. (page 8)

7. After the movie, have students complete the **Comprehension Questions** in pairs or assign the questions for homework. (page 9)

8. Assign the **Mix-and-Match** exercise (Pt. 2) for homework. (page 14)

Day Three

9. If you assigned vocabulary sentences to the students, given them back their homework. You may want to have the students work in pairs to correct sample incorrect sentences that you have taken from their homework.

10. Mark the **Mix-and-Match** vocabulary homework in class. If you assigned the **Comprehension Questions** for homework, you will need to mark these as well.

11. Have the students complete the **Conversation Starters** activity. (page 34-35)
12. Have the students complete the vocabulary Self-Test for Part Two. (page 13)

13. Watch Part Two of the movie. Pause at the appropriate time in the film to have them complete the Listening Close. (page 17-24)

14. After the movie, have students complete the Comprehension Questions in pairs or assign the questions for homework. (page 15-16)

15. If there is time, you may want to choose one of the supplementary activities (Hot Seat, Typhoon, Murder, etc.) to reinforce the vocabulary you have covered. (page 42-45)

16. Assign the Mix-and-Match vocabulary exercise (Pt. 3) for homework. (page 25-26)

Day Four

17. Mark the Mix-and-Match Homework. If you assigned Comprehension Questions for homework, mark those in class as well.

18. Choose a supplementary activity (Hot Seat, Typhoon, Murder, etc.) to reinforce the vocabulary you have covered. (page 42-45)

19. Have the students complete the Self-Test for Part Three. (page 24)

20. Watch Part Three of the movie. Pause at the appropriate time in the film to have them complete the Listening Close Exercise. (page 28)

21. Have students complete the Comprehension Questions in pairs or assign them for homework. (page 30)

22. Complete the Story Scramble in class (page 38-40) or use it as a warm-up the next day before marking Comprehension Questions (if you assigned them for homework).


Day Five


25. Complete the Story Scramble in class if you did not use it yesterday.

26. Mark the Comprehension Questions for Part 3 if you have not done so already. (page 30)
27. Choose a supplementary activity (Hot Seat, Typhoon, Murder, etc.) to reinforce the vocabulary you have covered. (page 42-45)

28. Assign the two Crossword Puzzles for homework. (page 31-32)

29. Choose a supplementary activity (Hot Seat, Typhoon, Murder, etc.) to reinforce the vocabulary you have covered. (page 42-45)


31. Mark the Crossword Puzzles in class.
### Who Is It?

**Instructions:** Write the name of each character under his or her picture. You should be able to do this after watching Part One of the movie.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marcus</th>
<th>Fiona</th>
<th>Will</th>
<th>Christine</th>
<th>Suzie</th>
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Self Test – Vocabulary Preview - Part One

Are you ready to watch the movie? Complete the quiz to see if you will understand the vocabulary in Part One of the film.

1. frustrating:
   a. satisfying
   b. annoying and disappointing
   c. wonderful

2. “I love kids. Yeah. I like messing about with them, doing kid things”:
   a. playing, fooling around
   b. traveling
   c. painting and coloring

3. “Listen, I'm really, really touched. But you must be joking”:
   a. moved emotionally
   b. disturbed
   c. amazed

4. to abandon:
   a. to leave
   b. to approach
   c. to surprise

5. “Marcus, we don't really want you hanging around with us anymore”:
   a. playing football
   b. spending time
   c. dangle one’s legs

6. “We never used to have trouble with them before we started hanging out with you. Now we get it every single day. Besides, everyone thinks you're weird”:
   a. old
   b. happy
   c. strange

7. imaginary:
   a. covered with pictures
   b. incredible
   c. unreal, make-believe
About a Boy – Part One

Start 00:00:44; End 00:17:45

Characters

Marcus Brewer  A twelve-year-old boy
Will Freeman   A thirty-eight-year-old man, single and self-centered
Fiona Brewer   Marcus’s mom, a depressed lonely woman
Christine      Will’s friend, a family-oriented woman
Suzie          A single mom, Fiona’s friend

Conversation Questions

1. Who influenced you more growing up, your family or friends? Do people’s family or friends help them grow up to be normal and healthy? Is one more important than the other?

2. In the movie, Marcus has trouble getting along with classmates at school because everyone thinks he’s different and strange. Have you ever experienced something like this? What do you think can be done to eliminate bullying in school or in the workplace? [Note: “Bullying” is when a stronger person forces someone to do something by tormenting, teasing, or intimidating the victim.]

3. Marcus’s mom, Fiona, is depressed. Have you (or a friend/relative) ever been upset for no particular reason? Why do you think people get depressed? What is your personal remedy for depression? What should people do to stay optimistic?

Slang Expressions

Your teacher will explain what these expressions mean:

“get your act together”  to be “cool”  “got dumped”
“up and running”  “hang around”  “what is the point?”

Mix-and-Match

Match the following words to their definitions.

1. frustrating (adj) ____________
   a. playing, fooling around
2. pudgy (adj) _________________
   b. an act, show
3. messing about _______________
   c. an expression that means “Keep on!”

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>dweller (n)</td>
<td>start, begin</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>weird (adj)</td>
<td>inhabitant</td>
</tr>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>stuck</td>
<td>strange</td>
</tr>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>self-centered (adj)</td>
<td>someone who watches kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>touched</td>
<td>describes bonds or connections between people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>imaginary (adj)</td>
<td>when someone is moved emotionally</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>cope (v)</td>
<td>leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>performance (n)</td>
<td>deal with something</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Hang in there!</td>
<td>describes something that is chubby, fat</td>
</tr>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>neglect (v)</td>
<td>ignores or forgets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>relationship (n)</td>
<td>annoying and disappointing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>babysitter (n)</td>
<td>describes someone who is selfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>abandon (v)</td>
<td>unreal, make-believe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>launch (v)</td>
<td>to be pleased by something</td>
</tr>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>shallow (adj)</td>
<td>describes something that is chubby, fat</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>rubbish (n)</td>
<td>prevented from growing properly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>stunted (adj)</td>
<td>the opposite of deep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>resources (n)</td>
<td>British word that means &quot;garbage&quot;, &quot;nonsense&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>relish (v)</td>
<td>a supply of stuff that can be used to function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>therapist (n)</td>
<td>a person who helps other people heal</td>
</tr>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>godfather (n)</td>
<td>money paid for the public performance of a song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>royalties (n)</td>
<td>a person who takes responsibility for a child's religious education</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Who said it?**  Write the name of the character beside his or her quote:

“...And I like to think that, perhaps, I am that kind of island. I like to think I'm pretty **cool**. I like to think I'm Ibiza.” [Ibiza is an island off the coast of Spain.]

“There were people who had a good time in life. I was beginning to realize I wasn't one of them.”

“And what about you, Will? Any desire for a family of your own yet?”

“I mean, what is the **point** of your life?”

“Oh no, no, no, you’ve always had that wrong. I really am this **shallow**.”

“But what if I like walking you to school?”

“She can’t be buying this **rubbish**. But she did buy my rubbish.”
“Having been Will the good guy, I didn’t relish going back to my usual role of Will the unreliable, emotionally stunted asshole.”

“I’m sorry. I’m not sure this is working out. It’s not you. You’ve been great. It’s me.”

“So that was the end of Angie, but the beginning of a whole new thing -- single moms.”

“I couldn’t figure it out, nobody was dead. She had a job as a music therapist, which is kind of a teacher for sick kids. So there was enough money for food and everything.”

“Marcus, we don’t really want you hanging around with us … anymore.”

“You got dumped then?”

“He’s a very good little boy. Very, very brave. They’ve got amazing resources, don’t they?”

**Comprehension Questions**

1. Why is Will unemployed? How does he support himself? Where does his money come from?

2. What do Will’s friends ask him to do for their daughter? Is he excited about doing it?

3. Why is Marcus worried about his mom? What does she do that makes him worry? Describe Fiona’s unusual behavior.

4. Why do the school bullies call Marcus and two other boys “Madonna” and “Spice Girls”?

5. Describe Will’s “brilliant” plan to meet women.

6. Why does Will have to come up with a series of lies about his life?
Listening Close

Listen to the dialogue and fill in the missing words.

Start 00:06:35; End 00:08:00

Will (to himself): While I couldn’t ______________ Christine and John’s disturbing offer to become their child’s godfather, I did allow them to set me up with Angie, a rather beautiful coworker of Christine’s. They had, however, being them, ______________ to tell me one thing.

Angie: There’s something you don’t know about me.

Will: Yeah? Something ______________?

Angie: I think so, yes. I have a 3-year-old boy.

Will (to himself): I wanted to throw the ______________ on the floor, push over the table and run.

Will: ______________. I love kids. Yeah! I like ______________ ______________ with them, you know. Doing kid things. I’d have been ______________ if you didn’t have a child.

Angie: Why do you say that?

Will (to himself): God knows. Mainly because it sounded ______________ and winning.

Will: Because I ______________ kids so much. They’re so ______________.

Will (to himself): What in God’s name are you saying, you idiot? She can’t be ______________ this rubbish. But she did buy my rubbish. And for the next few weeks I was ______________ Will the Good Guy. Her kid took to me right away, mainly because on our first meeting I took him to the ______________ and held him upside down by his ankles. I wish relationships with proper ______________ beings were that easy.

Angie: You know, you are brilliant.
Will (to himself): While I couldn't accept Christine and John's disturbing offer to become their child's godfather, I did allow them to set me up with Angie, a rather beautiful coworker of Christine's. They had, however, being them, neglected to tell me one thing.

Angie: There's something you don't know about me.

Will: Yeah? Something exciting?

Angie: I think so, yes. I have a 3-year-old boy.

Will (to himself): I wanted to throw the napkin on the floor, push over the table and run.

Will: Brilliant. I love kids. Yeah! I like messing about with them you know. Doing kid things. I'd have been disappointed if you didn't have a child.

Angie: Why do you say that?

Will (to himself): God knows. Mainly because it sounded smooth and winning.

Will: Because I love kids so much. They're so lovely.

Will (to himself): What in God's name are you saying, you idiot? She can't be buying this rubbish. But she did buy my rubbish. And for the next few weeks I was suddenly Will the Good Guy. Her kid took to me right away, mainly because on our first meeting I took him to the zoo and held him upside down by his ankles. I wish relationships with proper human beings were that easy.

Angie: You know, you are brilliant.
Extra Activity for Part One

Back Talk  [00:15:48 - 00:018:35]

With an even-numbered class, assign each student to either group A or group B. Have Group A face the screen first, and Group B sit with their back to it. Each student should sit back-to-back with a partner in the opposite group.

Prepare the students by telling them what led up to the scene. Before showing the scene, turn off the sound. When you play the film (silently), Group A should describe the scene to their partner in Group B. Stop the film clip halfway through and have the students switch: Group A now faces away from the screen, while Group B views the clip. See Summary below to help cue up the scene.

Watch the film: **00:15:48 - 00:018:35**.

When the scene is over, tell each pair of students to write down what happened in chronological order. When they are done, you can have the pairs compare results with other students in small group format. You might ask them to guess what the characters are talking about.

After students have read their descriptions aloud, play the clip again, this time with sound, so that the students can match their answers to the actual scene in the film.

**Summary of “Back Talk” Scene for Teachers:**

The scene begins with a Spat member (wearing a T-Shirt that says “Lorena Bobbit for Surgeon General”) asking Will, “You got dumped then?” [Turn off the sound.]

Will responds to the woman and has a discussion with Suzie. He puts his arms around his neck as if he’s putting on a necklace. Suzie says something and the women in the circle nod. Will says something and Suzie smiles and nods encouragingly. Will looks down and shakes his head. He clenches his fist. He appears overcome with emotion. A woman sitting beside Will reaches over and takes his hand. Women, standing in a row, fall back into each other’s arms. Suzie falls into Will’s arms. She smiles. Will smiles and squeezes her shoulders. The Spat women and Will hold hands in a circle, pump their arms up-and-down, and chant. They then raise their arms in victory and clap. [Students Switch.]

A silver car turns into a parking lot and pulls into a parking space. Will walks into a department store. He walks past cardboard cut-outs of smiling babies and up to a large display of children’s car seats. In the parking lot, Will scatters potato chips on a car seat and grinds them into the seat with his shoe. Some people stare at him. Will waves hello and then squirts liquid from a juice box on the car seat. Will’s car pulls up to a curb on a residential street. Will gets out. Will talks to Suzie. She’s holding a baby. Will takes a blue car seat from her. They smile and discuss something. Will nods in agreement, and Suzie calls over her shoulder to someone. Marcus then comes out of the house. He’s carrying a bag. He closes the front door and walks to the car to meet Will and Suzie. Will says something to him and Marcus looks unhappy. [End]