



Exploring Junior Cycle Texts

Blitz directed by Steve McQueen

Blitz directed by Steve McQueen is a film included as part of the Prescribed Material for Junior Cycle English (For the student cohorts commencing Junior Cycle in 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026 and 2027 and presenting for examination in 2026, 2027 and 2028, 2029 and 2030).



Image courtesy of
Apple TV+

Please note:

- The following tasks might be completed over a series of lessons.
- You may like to adapt and adjust the tasks to suit your context.
- *Blitz* covers themes which could be considered sensitive and controversial. You may wish to consult with our READY Framework to support you in your study.



Scan the QR code or click here to
access a Getting Started with Guide
for this Text

Before you watch... (Teacher Guidance)

1. Establish Prior Knowledge

On the board, provide students with some prompts such as *The Blitz, London, 1940s*. Ask pupils to do a quick mind map in pairs of what they already know about this time period and what words or images come to mind. Gather a few answers as a class and fill in any gaps in knowledge.

2. Joy in Hard Times Discussion

Give pupils some questions to prompt discussion:

Why might people still go out dancing or listen to music during a war? How might that help them cope? What do you think the mood in a 1940s nightclub might have been like? Then, instruct pupils to write down three words to describe the kind of atmosphere you expect in the club scene.

3. Technique Prediction

Before watching, ask pupils to think like film critics. In their copies, have them complete predictions: In this scene, I think the director will use...Music to show...Lighting to create...Characters to express...



Watch a clip

Click [here](#) to watch a clip from the film, *Blitz*, courtesy of Youtube.



Background: This scene from *Blitz* takes place in London during the Second World War, a time when the city lived under the constant threat of air raids. Even with the danger overhead, people still tried to enjoy themselves and find moments of normal life. In this clip, we see a group of people spending an evening together in a lively nightclub.

Activities Based on Clip(Teacher Guidelines)

These prompts are designed to support close reading and personal response. They may be used orally or in writing, individually or in groups.

1. Film-Language Focus

Ask pupils to work in pairs and identify how the director uses sound, lighting, and mise-en-scene in two phases of the clip: before the dramatic event and after. Afterwards, questions could be given for consolidation. What does the music do? How does the lighting change? What props or background details give clue to the context? How do the expressions or body language of characters shift?

2. Soundtrack and Atmosphere Reflection

Ask pupils if they were directing this scene, what sound effects or musical track would they use to heighten the moment. Have pupils draft a short description of the audio landscape (e.g., *At the start: swing band, laughter, clinking glasses; when change happens: siren wail, silence, footsteps, heartbeat*).

3. Rewrite

Have pupils rewrite the ending of the scene from the point of view of someone who wasn't in the club at the start such as someone walking past, or someone in a shelter hearing the music and then the change.

Reflect and Respond (Teacher Guidance)

These activities extend engagement with the extract and invite creative and personal responses. Use individually, in pairs, or in groups.

1. Analytical Response

Have pupils choose one moment in the clip where they felt the mood shift most strongly. They should explain what happens in that moment, how they felt as a viewer, and why they think the filmmaker made that choice.

2. Director's Notebook

Have pupils imagine you are the director of *Blitz*. They should write a short reflection explaining why they wanted to show this nightclub scene, what message or mood they hoped to create and how they used film techniques to achieve it. This could be written as a production note or short essay. Pupils could also sketch or storyboard one frame from the clip to accompany their writing.



3. Mood Board

In groups, have pupils create a visual mood board (digital or paper) that captures the two halves of the scene.

- One side: colour, texture, and words that represent the nightclub's energy
- The other: colours, sounds, and images that represent the aftermath

Encourage groups to present their boards and explain how each visual choice reflects what they saw and felt, or have them conduct a gallery walk and provide feedback on post-its to each project.

4. Discursive Response

Invite students to discuss the prompt below and guide them to write a discursive response using evidence from the film in their work. *Even in the darkest times, people still seek moments of light and joy. How is this idea shown in the nightclub scene from Blitz?*

5. Thematic Response

Give pupils the question prompt below and have them write a response discussing how the director uses film techniques to explore this idea.

This clip shows how quickly ordinary life can be shattered.

6. Filmmaking Project

As a longer project, have pupils work in groups to create a short film (maximum 3 minutes) where a sharp change in atmosphere is shown. Groups should be given different roles (director, actor etc) and planning time could be given in lessons for their ideas and script, or this could be assigned for homework. Scaffolding could be provided initially to help stimulate ideas such as before and after an exam, inside and outside the principal's office, an athlete during and after a race etc. **This link** could help pupils to create a script.

