



Exploring Junior Cycle Texts

Mrs Robinson by Aoife Kelleher

Mrs Robinson by **Aoife Kelleher** is a film included as part of the Prescribed Material for Junior Cycle English (For the student cohorts commencing Junior Cycle in 2025, 2026, and 2027 and presenting for examination in 2028, 2029, and 2030).



Image courtesy of
IMDB

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.
- Please note that *Mrs Robinson* covers themes which could be considered sensitive or 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)

Pre-reading Activities - Discussion Starters:

1. “What Makes a Good Leader?”

Give students a guide list of values. Possible inclusions: Courage - Honesty - empathy
Fairness - Ambition - Intelligence - Determination - Kindness - Responsibility.

Task:

Sort them into two categories:

- Most important for a leader
- Less important for a leader

Invite students to discuss their reasoning with the class.

2. ‘Voices of Change’ Wall

Students brainstorm people they think that have made positive change locally or globally (Greta Thunberg, Martin Luther King Jr., Malala, teachers, local volunteers, etc.).

Write them on the board and explore what kind of changes might Mary Robinson have made?



Extract

Mrs. Robinson is a documentary about Mary Robinson, Ireland's first female President and a global advocate for human rights and climate justice. The film traces her journey from Ballina, County Mayo, through her ground-breaking legal career, 1990 presidential victory, and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights tenure (1997–2002). Featuring archival footage, interviews, and personal reflections, it explores her leadership in The Elders, her climate activism, and the challenges she faced. Below you will find some film stills from the documentary.



Images courtesy of IMDB



[Click here to access the trailer courtesy of Breakout Pictures](#)

Activities Based on Extract (Teacher Guidance)

The following may be completed in written or oral format,
as individuals or as part of a group activity.

1. Direct students to identify the type of shot used in each still (close-up, mid-shot, long shot etc.) and guide them to explain how this shot choice highlights a particular person, detail, or moment.
2. Ask students to examine the lighting in the stills and comment on whether it draws attention to anything important within the frame, explaining the effect created.
3. Encourage students to identify the key colours or tones visible in the stills and discuss the mood or message these colour choices help to convey.



Reflect and Respond (Teacher Guidance)

The following questions may be based on the extract included or form part of your extended study of the text. Students may like to complete the activities individually or collaboratively.

1. Personal Essay: “A Leader I Admire”

Prepare students to write an extended piece about a leader (local, national, international) they admire and explain why.

2. Profile Piece: “Who Is Mary Robinson?”

Invite students to write a short profile article for a school magazine, describing:

- Who Mary Robinson is
- Why she is significant
- What issues she cares about
- How she has made an impact

Simple structure: introduction → achievements → challenges → lasting influence.

3. Letter to the Next Generation

Ask students to write a letter from the perspective of Mary Robinson, offering advice to future young leaders.

They might focus on themes such as:

- justice
- human rights
- courage
- climate responsibility
- compassion

4. Reflective Response: “What Does Leadership Mean to Me?”

After watching the film, students could write a personal reflection explaining what they think makes a good leader, using Mary Robinson as an example or contrast.

5. Speech Writing: “My Vision for a Better Future”

Students imagine they are delivering a speech to an audience of their peers, inspired by Mary Robinson’s work.

Themes could include:

- equality
- climate action
- kindness in communities
- inclusion

Students should consider Purpose, Audience and Format before putting pen to paper.