



Exploring Junior Cycle Texts

The Teachers' Lounge directed by Ilker Çatak

The Teachers' Lounge directed by Ilker Çatak is a German Drama 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).

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.
- *The Teachers' Lounge* covers themes which could be considered sensitive and controversial. You may wish to consult with our READY Framework to support you in your study.



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for this Text

Before you watch... (Teacher Guidance)

1. Exploring School Dynamics Discussion

Ask students to **discuss** the following in groups or pairs.

- What pressures do teachers face that students might not see?
- How can rumours or misunderstandings spread in a school?
- What happens when trust breaks down in a community?
- How do different roles in a school (teachers, students, administrators) influence people's perspectives?
- Teacher may wish to gather key phrases on the board to revisit during viewing.

2. Title Prediction Task

Ask students:

- What do you expect the teachers' lounge to symbolise?
- What kinds of conflicts or secrets might occur in a shared professional space?
- Why might a film choose this location as its central setting?

3. Quick Write

Give students five minutes to respond in writing to the prompt:

"Describe a time when a small misunderstanding led to a much bigger problem."

4. Creative Writing Task: "Behind the Closed Door"

Before viewing the film, invite students write a short creative piece imagining a fictional moment set inside a teachers' lounge.

Students can respond in whatever style of writing they prefer Eg. Diary Entry, Letter, Newspaper Article etc. Advise them that their piece should create a sense of tension or uncertainty, use descriptive detail, and remain entirely fictional.



Activities Based on Film Stills

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

1. Lighting and Colour Analysis

Have pupils examine the use of lighting and colour in the provided stills. Ask them to discuss with a partner how the visual style in each image contributes to the mood and tone of the scenes throughout the film. Have students make notes on their observations.

2. Cinematography and Mise-en-scène

Guide students to analyse each still by focusing on cinematography (camera angle, lighting, framing) and mise-en-scène (characters, expressions, costumes, props, setting). Ask them to consider how these elements communicate mood, emotion, or relationships within the scene. Have students identify the image they believe conveys these elements most effectively and justify their choice.

3. STILL 2 - Carla Shouting

Invite students to create a dramatic paragraph describing the moment immediately before this outburst. Advise them to mention the following:

- What triggered her emotion
- The pressure building inside her
- One detail in the classroom that symbolises her frustration
- Use vivid, controlled language to build tension.



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

Ask students to choose a moment in the film where they see a central theme explored such as truth, trust, bias, surveillance, or power. How does the film introduce this theme, and how does it become more complex as the story develops? Refer to at least one specific scene to support your response.

2. Director's Notebook

Have students take on the role of the film's director and create a short Director's Notebook (1–2 pages) focusing on one key scene from *The Teachers' Lounge*. The task encourages close analysis of film techniques, character dynamics, and thematic meaning.

Students outline how they would film the scene, including:

- camera angles (close-ups, mid-shots, low angles, over-the-shoulder)
- framing (tight framing for pressure, wide shots for power imbalance)
- movement (static to show tension, handheld to show chaos)

3. Comparison Task: *The Teachers' Lounge* & Roger McGough's "*The Lesson*"

↙ [\(Link to poem\)](#)

Portrayal of the Teacher Figure

Ask students to compare:

- How the teacher in each text responds to stress.
- What emotions the teacher expresses (fear, frustration, anger, exhaustion, confusion)
- How the writer/director shapes the audience's sympathy for the teacher

Guidance

In *The Teachers' Lounge*, focus on Carla's emotional buildup under pressure, especially scenes where she loses control or feels cornered.

In "*The Lesson*", examine how McGough uses exaggeration, violence, and dark humour to show a teacher pushed past breaking point.

4. Diary Entry

Direct students to write a diary entry from the perspective of Carla, describing a moment when she feels overwhelmed, isolated, or under pressure within the school. Their entry should explore her emotions, the atmosphere around her, and any unspoken tensions she senses among staff or students. Use descriptive detail to show how the school environment affects her thoughts and reactions.

5. Newspaper Article

Prepare students to write a fictional newspaper article for a local paper reporting on an incident at the school featured in *The Teachers' Lounge*. Their article should describe a small event that has caused growing tension among staff, students, or parents. Include factual-style reporting, quotes from invented witnesses, and subtle hints of the conflict or uncertainty that surrounds the situation.