



Exploring Senior Cycle Texts

Room by Emma Donoghue



Room by Emma Donoghue is a novel included as part of the Prescribed Material for the Leaving Certificate English Examination 2027 & 2028. It may be used as part of the Comparative at Ordinary Level or Higher Level or the Single Text at Ordinary Level

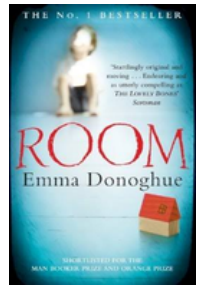


Image courtesy of
Picador London

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.
- *Room* 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 read (Teacher Guidance)

These activities encourage students to reflect on ideas of freedom, belonging and human connection while developing an understanding of perspective and resilience. Adapt as appropriate for your class

1. Watch, Reflect and Connect

Support students in viewing [the trailer for the film adaptation of *Room* on IMDB](#). Encourage students to reflect on the emotions, relationships and questions that emerge from the trailer. Students may compose a short written response exploring their expectations of the novel and predicting how the story might develop.

2. Exploring Freedom and Independence

Facilitate a class discussion on what freedom means to different people. Students may consider freedoms they experience in everyday life and discuss how freedom can be restricted by physical, social or emotional circumstances. Use a collaborative tool of your choice to gather responses.

3. The Importance of Home

Encourage students to reflect on what makes a place feel like home. Students may create a visual mind map, collage or written response exploring the people, places and experiences that contribute to a sense of belonging and security.

4. Predicting from the title

Present students with the title *Room* and invite them to generate questions, ideas and predictions about the novel. Students may compose a short written response explaining what they expect the story to be about and how the title might connect to the characters, setting or themes of the text.



Extract

Background: This extract is taken from the opening section of *Room*. The novel is narrated by five year old Jack, who has spent his entire life living in a small enclosed space with his mother, Ma. Through Jack's unique perspective, readers are introduced to the routines, relationships and experiences that shape his understanding of the world.

For a song I want a funny, she starts, " 'The worms crawl in, the worms crawl out - ' "

" 'They eat your guts like sauerkraut - ,'" I sing.

" 'They eat your eyes, they eat your nose - ' "

" 'They eat the dirt between your toes - ' "

I have lots on Bed but my mouth is sleepy. Ma carries me into Wardrobe, she tucks Blanket around my neck, I pull her looser again. My fingers go choo-choo along her red line.

Beep beep, that's Door. Ma jumps up and makes a sound, I think she hit her head. She shuts Wardrobe tight.

The air that comes in is freezing, I think it's a bit of Outer Space, it smells yum. Door makes his thump that means Old Nick's in now. I'm not sleepy anymore. I get up on my knees and look through the slats, but all I can see is Dresser and Bath and a curve of Table.

"Looks tasty." Old Nick's voice is extra deep.

"Oh, it's just the last of the birthday cake," says Ma.

"Should have reminded me, I could have brought him something. What's he now, four?"

I wait for Ma to say, but she doesn't. "Five." I whisper it.

But she must hear me, because she comes close to Wardrobe and says "Jack" in a mad voice.

Old Nick laughs, I didn't know he could. "It speaks."

Why does he say it not he?

"Want to come out of there and try on your new jeans?"

It's not Ma he's saying that to, it's me. My chest starts to go dung dung dung.

"He's nearly asleep," says Ma.

No I'm not. I wish I didn't whisper fi five so he heard me, I wish I didn't anything.

Something else I can't quite hear -

"OK, OK," Old Nick is saying. "Can I've a slice?"

"It's getting stale. If you really want - "

"No, forget it, you're the boss."

Ma doesn't say anything.

"I'm just the grocery boy, take out your trash, trek around the kidswear aisles, up the ladder to deice your skylight, at your service ma'am . . ."

I think he's doing sarcasm, when he says the really opposite with a voice that's all twisty.

"Thanks for that." Ma doesn't sound like her. "It makes it much brighter."

"There, that didn't hurt, did it?"

"Sorry. Thanks a lot."

"Like pulling teeth sometimes," says Old Nick.

"And thanks for the groceries, and the jeans."

"You're welcome."

"Here, I'll get you a plate, maybe the middle's not too bad."

There's some clinks, I think she's giving him cake. My cake.

After a minute he talks blurry. "Yup, pretty stale."

His mouth is full of my cake.

Lamp goes off snap, that makes me jump. I don't mind dark but I don't like when it surprises me. I lie down under Blanket and I wait.

(Emma Donoghue, 2010, *Room*. London: Picador.)



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. Visualising Room

Support students in creating a visual representation of Room using details from the extract. Students may create a sketch, digital design or floor plan and annotate key features with quotations from the text. Encourage consideration of how the setting shapes Jack's understanding of the world.

2. Writing Beyond the Extract

Challenge students to continue the narrative from Jack's perspective. Students may compose a short diary entry or additional section of narration that captures Jack's voice and reflects his thoughts and feelings following the events of the extract.

3. Exploring Narrative Voice

Guide students in examining how Jack's unique perspective shapes the reader's understanding of events. Students may select key quotations from the extract and create a thought bubble or comic-strip representation illustrating how Jack interprets the world around him.

Reflect and Respond (Teacher Guidance)

The following question may be based on the extract included or form part of
your extended study of the Novel

1. Author's Perspective

Support students in listening to Emma Donoghue discuss the inspiration and writing of *Room* in the podcast *My Biggest Book: Emma Donoghue on Room*. Encourage students to consider how the author's insights compare with their own interpretation of the novel. Students may compose a short written response identifying one idea from the interview that enhanced their understanding of the text and explain why they found it significant.

2. Survival Guide

Support students in creating a survival guide for someone living in *Room*. Students may compose instructions, advice and practical tips based on Jack's experiences, while reflecting on the importance of routine, resilience and human connection.

3. Missing Scene

Encourage students to write a short additional scene that could fit naturally into the novel. Students may focus on a conversation, memory or event not fully explored in the text while remaining faithful to the characters and setting.

4. Newspaper Front Page

Guide students in designing the front page of a newspaper based on events from the novel. Students may include a headline, article and accompanying image, drawing on key events and perspectives from the text.