



Exploring Junior Cycle Prescribed Fiction

The Farthest directed by Emer Reynolds

The Farthest directed by Emer Reynolds is a film included as part of the Prescribed Material for Junior Cycle English (For the student cohorts commencing Junior Cycle in 2021, 2022 and 2023 and presenting for examination in 2024, 2025 and 2026).



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.
- *The Farthest* 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)

Pre-reading Activities - Discussion Starters:

1. Prediction Activity: “What Do You Think The Farthest Means?”

Write the title on the board:

The Farthest

Ask students to predict:

- What could be the farthest?
- How far is “far” in space terms?
- Why would NASA want to send something that far?

2. Think–Pair–Share: Why Explore?

Prompt:

“Why do humans explore? What drives us to go farther into space?”

Ask students to ponder think individually, then discuss with a partner, and finally share with the class.



Extract

[Click here to access a trailer to the documentary *The Farthest*](#)



Points to consider when exploring trailers in the classroom;

- Be clear about why you're showing the trailer or documentary.
- Identify specific learning outcomes (e.g., understanding space exploration, analyzing film techniques, practicing critical thinking).
- Encourage active viewing by providing questions, note taking and pauses for clarification.
- Trailers often include complex vocabulary, historical references, or scientific concepts. Introduce essential terms or context so students aren't lost during viewing.
- Accessibility & Inclusivity; ensure subtitles/closed captions are available for students with hearing difficulties or who benefit from text support.

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. Spot & Infer: Key Ideas from the Trailer

- Ask students to make two columns in their copy: What I see/hear and What I think that means.
- Students note visuals or phrases from the trailer (e.g. rocket launches, a "Golden Record," images of planets, mention of interstellar space, music, solemn narration).
- Then they infer what those mean for the film's themes (e.g. exploration, human legacy, science vs humanity, scale of the universe).
- Afterwards, you can share and discuss interpretations as a class.

2. Film Form & Techniques

Direct students to listen for how sound creates atmosphere. Highlight:

- How music builds excitement, awe, or tension.
- How narration guides interpretation and gives context.
- How sound effects (e.g., launches, hums, static) reinforce realism or emotion.
- Encourage them to think about how sound influences mood and expectations.



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. “A Message to the Universe”

Invite students to write the message they would send into deep space, inspired by the Golden Record.

Options:

- A letter to an unknown civilisation
- A poem representing humanity
- A short monologue from Earth to the stars

2. Feature Article: “The Story of Voyager”

Work with your students to produce a magazine-style article using:

- Engaging headlines
- Subheadings
- Interviews (real or imagined)
- Factual storytelling
- Emotional appeal

3. “My Message to Space” – Personal Letter

Prepare students to write a letter addressed to whoever might find the Voyager probe in the distant future.

They can include:

- Who they are
- What life on Earth is like
- What they hope the reader understands about humanity

4. Diary Entry

Students imagine they are a young scientist or engineer working on the mission in the 1970s.

Their diary entry might describe:

- Preparing the spacecraft
- The launch day
- Their hopes and worries
- Why the mission matters to them