

## Preparation for SAFESTAY HOSTEL

Dear teachers,

Soon you will be coming to see our play SAFESTAY HOSTEL. **The play is set in London in the year 2026.** The action of the play takes place in the hostel and is about the lives of the inhabitants and the hostel owner. Their lives are being severely affected by what is going on politically under the new autocratic government.

Here are the main themes that are woven into the plot of the play.

**Racism. Nationalism. Privileges. Migration. Democracy. Demonstrations. Populism.**

We have made a few suggestions for group work on these topics, but no doubt you will have your own ideas for preparing your students. You don't have to stringently stick to our ideas. After you have seen the play, we welcome any suggestions from you as to how we can improve these preparation materials.

**For a class of 28 students. Break up into seven groups of four. Each group is assigned one of these topics and discuss these topics for 10 minutes. After this, a spokesperson for the group reports to the whole class on what their group had to say on their topic.**

### **RACISM**

Name calling: When is calling people names an insult? When is name calling "just for fun"? Should one stop making jokes about other people's nationalities? Where does racism begin? There is a saying in the English speaking world "Sticks and stones will break my bones but words will never hurt me" Discuss what this saying means. Is there some truth in the saying or is the saying incorrect?

### **NATIONALISM**

What is nationalism? Look at the lyrics of the Finnish national anthem, the Australian national anthem, the Brazilian national anthem, the British national anthem. Compare them to each other. Compare them to the lyrics of the German national anthem. Donald Trump once described himself as a nationalist. What is a "nationalist?"

### **PRIVILEGES**

What is a privilege? What privileges do you have? What is the difference between a privilege and an advantage or a privilege and a right? What advantages do you have over others? What privileges do diplomats have?

### **MIGRATION**

What are positive effects of migration? Are you an immigrant yourself? Were your parents immigrants? Name some of the disadvantages that immigrants have in Germany. How many years does someone have to live in a country before they are no longer considered to be a migrant?

### **DEMOCRACY**

Are you old enough to vote? If so, do you vote? Do you vote for the same party as your parents? How do you make a decision about which party you will vote for? Imagine that you cannot see the sense in voting and you decide not to vote in an election. Someone comes to you, someone who doesn't have the right to vote, and asks you if you could vote on their behalf. They may even offer you some money if you vote on their behalf. Would you do this?

## **DEMONSTRATIONS**

Discuss the effectiveness of demonstrations. Do you go to demonstrations? Do you think it's right to go to a demonstration in school time? Which demonstrations have changed the course of history? What issue or issues would motivate you to go out on the street and demonstrate? Think of a few good slogans that you would paint on a sign before you went on a demonstration.

## **POPULISM**

What is populism? What is right-wing populism and what is left-wing populism? Why is populism so wide spread in the world at present?

## **NEW EXERCISE (1)**

**TWITTER:** Twitter is now being used by politicians to communicate political messages and to react quickly to events.

( Guardian article)

### **[Trash talk: how Twitter is shaping the new politics ...](#)**

Task 1) Divide into groups of four. Discuss the use of twitter by politicians. You may find these questions useful. Who reads what politicians write on twitter? Why do politicians use twitter to comment on events rather than giving a press conference?

Task 2) Write a tweet to a politician, expressing your opinion on a topic you feel strongly about. You are only allowed to use 280 characters in a tweet.

## **NEW EXERCISE (2)**

**DEBATING** Politicians make important decisions about issues which affect the citizens of their countries. In order to make a good decision, the politicians have to inform themselves and have discussions so they can weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of adopting certain policies.

A good way to discuss issues is to have a debate. This is a formal discussion in which you argue for or against a topic. There are two teams in a debate. You have to argue why your team is right and why the opposition is wrong. A topic may be something simple such as "Cats are better pets than dogs" or something more political like the following topics, which are also relevant to our play. It can be fun!

**Voting in elections should be compulsory.**

**Should people be able to vote from the age of 16?**

**People who are living, working and paying taxes in a country should be allowed to vote in that country even if they are not citizens of that country.**

**The deforestation of the Amazon Rainforest in Brazil is a global issue and must be governed over by a global organization and not a national organization.**

**Politicians should not be allowed to communicate on twitter.**

**The Brexit decision should have been made by the British government not by "the people."**

*If you don't know **how to conduct a debate** there is an explanation at the bottom of these pages.*

## Vocabulary List

a <u>viable</u> economy	an economy which is capable of working successfully
to prosper	to flourish, grow
a walk in the park	another idiom meaning "it's easy"
a set of linen	2 bed sheets and a pillowslip
to alert someone	to be made aware of
to ruin something	to destroy something
to be sensible	to act in a wise way
a plumber	a qualified tradesman who repairs water supply pipes in sanitary areas and in heating systems
a plunger	a tool made with a stick and a rubber cup on the end used for helping to unblock drains and toilets
to justify	to prove or to show that something is right
the end justifies the means	the goal justifies the actions taken to achieve the goal
to deprive	to take something away from someone
to despise	to dislike strongly, to hate
to spoil a child	to be too liberal with a child, to fail to set boundaries and restrictions
prosperity	more wealth
big bucks	lots of money, "bucks" is slang for American dollars
a privilege	a special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group
on the contrary	the opposite is true
tax	the money which companies and citizens pay to the state in order to cover the cost of public services
a tax avoidance epidemic	a sudden and large increase in people trying to avoid paying taxes
to get kicked out	to be sent away or sent out forcefully
an allowance	a certain amount of money given to you by your parents
an arts related course	a university course in the field of humanities e.g. languages, literature, art
to persist	to keep on doing something in a determined way
accumulated	gathered
a kettle	a kitchen utensil used for boiling water

harsh	hard, severe
stubborn	when someone has made up their mind not to do something
homophobic	a dislike of or a prejudice against homosexual people
to raise the university fees	to increase the amount of money one has to pay for going to a university
to have permanent residency	to be allowed to stay in a country forever
deportation	the act of being forcefully sent out of a country
to prosecute	charging someone with a crime and putting them on trial
to be indifferent	not to care about something
jail	another name for a prison, can also be spelt "gaol"
imminent	very soon
accordingly	in an appropriate way

## How to conduct a debate

### [How to run a debate - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch)

[https://www.youtube.com > watch](https://www.youtube.com/watch)

### [How to debate - first speaker affirmative - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch)

[https://www.youtube.com > watch](https://www.youtube.com/watch)

Two teams of three people sit at the front of the room usually behind desks so they can take notes. On one side is the "**affirmative team**." They would argue that cats are better pets than dogs. On the other side is the "**negative team**." They would argue that cats are not better pets than dogs.

The first person on the affirmative team speaks first. The first speaker defines key words in the topic, introduces the team's arguments and begins the debate.

There is a **timekeeper**. The timekeeper starts a stop watch when the speaker begins to speak. Usually each speaker can speak for four minutes and the timekeeper gives a signal after three minutes.

The second person to speak is the first speaker for the negative side. This speaker defines key words, introduces the negative team's arguments and "rebutts" the arguments of the first speaker affirmative. Rebuttal is when you choose a point made by the opposition and explain why they are wrong and prove why you are right. Rebuttals are important but you must never become personal in a rebuttal.

The next person to speak is the second speaker affirmative, followed by the second speaker negative. Both these speakers continue their team's arguments and rebut the opposition. They are followed by the third speaker affirmative and the third speaker negative. The third speaker of the negative team has the last word, which can be an advantage in debating. At the end of the debate, **an adjudicator or a team of adjudicators** will decide which teams win. They consider your presentation skills and how convincing your arguments are.

Debating teaches you to look at both sides of the argument. Sometimes you may not agree with the side of the debate you are arguing for and this can be challenging. It can be a good experience to look at a topic from a different point of view. It also teaches you teamwork. Each member of the team needs to know what their teammates are talking about. Planning and writing the debate are done together.

### **WHY WE MADE THIS PLAY**

We developed the play together as a team, the five actors, the director and the dramaturg. The actors are from Australia, Great Britain, Finland and Brazil. The dramaturg comes from Israel and the director is from Germany. The starting point for the play was the serious conflicts within our own families about politics.

We examined our own political opinions and attitudes and conducted research on topics such as how do we form our opinions, what influences our political beliefs or positions, how important is voting and how important is it to be politically involved in our society. Our research also took us into schools where we had lively discussions with students about their political opinions. This direct contact with senior students was very stimulating and very important for the development of the play.



**We hope you enjoy your visit to our play and that you will come up to the actors after the play and say hello. You can also send us an email: [mail@platypus-theater.de](mailto:mail@platypus-theater.de) ,**

Yours democratically,

Peter Scollin and team