

Billy Elliot – Extra

Level 1

This level is suitable for students who have been learning English for at least a year and up to two years. It corresponds with the Common European Framework level A1. Suitable for users of CLICK magazine.

SYNOPSIS

Billy Elliot comes from a mining family. His mother died two years ago. It's now 1984, and most of the miners, like Billy's dad and brother, are on strike. There's no money coming in and life is difficult. Billy, meanwhile, dreams about dancing, and, by chance, he joins the local ballet class. The teacher sees at once that he's special. When Billy's dad finds out, he's angry. Ballet is for girls! But Billy carries on in secret and his teacher enters him for the Royal Ballet School. Then the police arrest Billy's brother. Instead of going to the audition, Billy has to watch his brother in court.

The future looks bad. But then Billy's dad sees Billy dance and realises his son is a brilliant dancer. He takes him to another audition in London. It seems to go badly but, against all expectations, Billy gets in. His family are very proud of him.

THE BACK STORY

Billy Elliot is a story about a young boy trying to express himself in difficult circumstances. There's a scene in the film where he tries to dance through a wall ... and that's what it is like for him. He wants to get out of his narrow world and fly.

Most of the story is told by Billy in the first person. Some of

the story is told by Jackie, Billy's dad, and one part is told by Tony, Billy's brother. Look at the Contents page – the title of each chapter tells you who is telling that part of the story.

The writer Lee Hall thinks the miners' strike of 1984 is a very important time in recent British history. He wanted to explore the different characters and ideas involved in this political struggle. But he also wanted a good story.

When Elton John saw the film, it reminded him of his own life as a talented young pianist with a difficult father. He worked on the musical version of the story with Lee Hall and the film's director, Stephen Daldry. Elton wrote the music for the songs. Thousands of boys aged between 12 and 14 auditioned for the role of Billy. The musical opened in London in 2005.

MEDIA LINKS

DVD: The film *Billy Elliot* is produced by Universal Studios.

CD: A recording of *Billy Elliot* is available to accompany the Scholastic ELT reader.

Internet: For more information have a look at www.bbc.co.uk and www.billyelliottthemusical.com.

Book: Melvin Burgess's novel *Billy Elliot* is published by Chicken House.

HOW TO USE YOUR SCHOLASTIC ELT MEDIA READER

Choosing and motivating

Is this the right story for your class? Has anyone seen the film? Motivate them with background information and by reading aloud the first page of the story with dramatic atmosphere.

Organising

Plan a class reading schedule. Decide how many pages to set for reading each week. Select exercises from the back of the reader and extra activities from this resource sheet to go with each chunk of reading. (All answers on page 4 of this resource sheet.)

Using the CD

Students can listen and follow in their books. They can listen and then read. They can read and then listen. All these activities will improve their reading speeds and skills.

Using the DVD

Try to get the English language version DVD (with or without subtitles). Watch it yourself first – there are some scenes you may not want to show to your class. The film is realistic and many of the characters use bad language and again this may be a problem for your class. The accents used by the actors are strong – Scottish, north-eastern and southern – and students may find them difficult to follow. Show the film in chunks of, say, 20 minutes in parallel with the class reading schedule.

Alternatively, show the whole film in two sessions, perhaps over two lunchtimes when the whole class can get together.

The book is much shorter than the film and there are differences – ask students spot the differences. There are more ideas for using the DVD in class on page 4 of this resource sheet.

Glossary and casual language

Go to New Words! at the back of the reader. Translate the words with the class or get students to find meanings at home. Introduce the informal expressions used in *Billy Elliot* (see Vocabulary Builder on page 3 of this resource). Put them into context. Tell students to look out for them as they read.

Fact Files

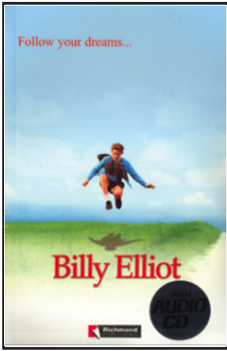
Set these as self-study or use for whole class work. The files explore the world of ballet, popular dance styles and the strike of 1984. Extension ideas are on page 4 of this resource sheet.

What did they think?

Get everyone to do a written or spoken review of *Billy Elliot*. Compare opinions. Will they go and see the film? Did you like it? Let us know at readers@link2English.com.

COMPETITIONS AND UPDATES

Check readers@link2English.com for competitions and other activities related to the Scholastic *Billy Elliot* reader.



Billy Elliot

- Extra

Chapters 1-2

1 Answer these questions.

- a) Where does Billy find his nan?
In some trees at the end of the street.
- b) Who are Jackie and Tony?
.....
- c) Where does Billy go on Saturday morning?
.....
- d) Who is Debbie?
.....

2 Billy calls his grandmother 'Nan'. He calls his father 'Dad'. What do you call your parents and grandparents? Ask other students.

3 What is life in Billy's house like at the start of the story? Talk to other students.

4 Boys don't do ballet in Billy's world. Why does he join the class, do you think? Write down some ideas.

.....

.....

Chapters 3-4

1 Who says or thinks these things about ballet? Choose from these names.

boys at school Nan Tony Michael ~~Debbie~~

- a) 'Ballet's not just for girls.' *Debbie*
- b) 'Lots of boys do ballet.'
- c) 'Where are your pink ballet shoes, Billy?'
- d) 'Miners do not do ballet.'
- e) 'Ballet shoes! How lovely!'

2 Life on strike is difficult. Correct these sentences.

- a) The weather is going to be ~~hotter~~ soon. *colder*
- b) The strikers are going to have lots of food for Christmas.
- c) The strikers have got lots of money.
- d) The mines are closing and the young men are happy.
- e) No miners are working.

Chapters 5-6

1 Work with a partner. You are in the ballet class when Billy's dad comes in. What do Mrs Wilkinson and the girls say after Billy and his dad leave? Write down some ideas.

2 Complete the sentences with words from the box.

different famous kitchen letter money pub ~~shouts~~

- a) Billy *shouts* at his father and runs out of the house.
- b) Mr Wilkinson often goes to the
- c) Mrs Wilkinson doesn't want for the ballet lessons.
- d) Gene Kelly was a dancer like Fred Astaire.
- e) Billy's mam wrote a to Billy before she died.
- f) Tony and Jackie have ideas about the strike.
- g) Jackie hits Tony in the at four o'clock in the morning.

3 Talk to a partner. Answer these questions.

Do you think Mrs Wilkinson's house is a happy house? What is Tony going to do with the police baton, do you think?

Chapters 7-8

1 Why does Billy cry? Tick (✓) the reasons. Because ...

- a) his dad hit Tony.
- b) his mam is dead.
- c) he doesn't want to do the audition.
- d) Mrs Wilkinson doesn't want to help him.
- e) Mrs Wilkinson hits him.

2 Answer these questions.

- a) Why do the police want Tony?
.....
- b) What do the police do with their batons?
.....
- c) Where did Tony sleep in the police station, do you think?
.....
- d) Tony shouts 'Happy Christmas' to the people in the court. Does he mean it?
.....
- e) How does Tony know that Mrs Wilkinson is frightened?
.....

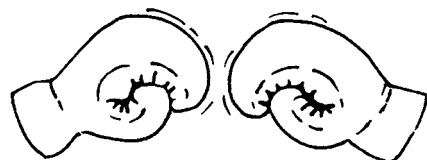
3 Think of two adjectives to describe each character in this scene. Use your dictionary to find new words.

Mrs Wilkinson *brave*

Billy

Jackie

Tony



RICHMOND MEDIA READERS

RESOURCE SHEET STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Chapters 9-10

1 Work with a partner. One of you is Michael. The other is Jackie. At the end of Chapter 9, imagine Jackie asks Michael questions about Billy and his dancing. What does Michael tell him? Have a conversation.

2 All Jackie's ideas change after he sees Billy dance. Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- a) Jackie thinks Billy is a fantastic dancer.
- b) Mrs Wilkinson is going to give Jackie money for the audition.
- c) Jackie is going to be a scab for a week.
- d) Jackie walks to the mine.
- e) Tony goes into the mine with Jackie.
- f) Tony and Jackie both want to help Billy now.

3 Who ...

- a) has no Christmas tree this year? *Billy*
- b) sees Billy's dad come into the Social first?
- c) says, 'Help the boy, Jackie!?'
- d) thinks Billy is the best?
- e) bangs on the scab bus windows?
- f) is going to find the money for the audition?

Chapter 11- Epilogue

1 Find words or phrases to complete these sentences.

- a) ... *People in town* ... helped with the money for the audition.
- b) Dad sold to get money.
- c) Billy didn't like the Royal Ballet School because it was
- d) T. Rex wasn't the kind of music for the Royal Ballet School.
- e) When Billy dances, there's

2 How does Billy feel when he reads the letter from the Royal Ballet School? Talk to other students. Use a dictionary to find new words.

FINAL TASKS

Writing

1 All these things are dangerous: mining, boxing, smoking cigarettes. Why are they dangerous? Write sentences. Which is the most dangerous? Which is the least dangerous?

2 Imagine that Billy doesn't get into the Royal Ballet School. What do you think happens to him? Write about his life.

3 It is the end of Billy's first day at the Royal Ballet School. He writes a letter to his dad. What does he say? How does he feel?



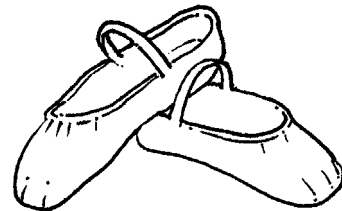
VOCABULARY BUILDER

1 Look at the list of New Words at the back of *Billy Elliot*. Choose the right word for these sentences.

- 1. Elton John plays this.
- 2. Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom is this.
- 3. Rudolf Nureyev was good at this.
- 4. Muhammed Ali was good at this.
- 5. Jesus Christ was born on this day.
- 6. Hercules was this.
- 7. Homer Simpson drinks a lot of this.
- 8. Jamie Bell was the best at this for the part of Billy Elliot.

2 Finish these sentences with words from the list.

- 1. My mum's not going to work today because she's
- 2. I always help my friends when they're
- 3. is very bad for you. I'm never going to do it.
- 4. is a very difficult job. It's hot and dark in a It's not for me.



Casual language

- Tony says 'Shut it!' to Billy (p.24). This isn't very polite. Don't use it! It means 'Be quiet' or 'Shut your mouth.'
- Some boys at school laugh at Billy because of his ballet classes. He says 'What do they know?' (p.12) He means, 'They're stupid.'
- Mrs Wilkinson says 'See you' to Billy (p.24). It's a way of saying goodbye. She's going to see him again but she doesn't know when.

Complete the dialogues with the expressions below.

Shut it! What does she know? See you.

- 1. 'Bye, Jude. Have a nice time at the club tonight.'
'Yeah.'
- 2. 'You're fat! You're fat! You're fat!'
'.....'
- 3. 'Jenny says I'm no good at English. She thinks I'm stupid.'
'..... She can't speak English at all!'

RICHMOND MEDIA READERS

FACT FILE FOLLOW-UP

BALLET SHOES! (pages 32-3)

Discussion

Ballet dancers have to work and practise very hard. They don't have much time for other things. What can they do? What can't they do? Is this a good way or a bad way to spend your life? Extend the discussion to other glamorous jobs, like being a model, footballer, athlete.

Presentation

Each student chooses a famous performing artist. They don't tell anyone who they've chosen. They research their artist and prepare about five sentences of biographical information. Each student tells the class about themselves without mentioning their name and the class guess who they are. The class can ask more questions if they can't guess.

LET'S DANCE! (pages 34-5)

Class show

Students find out about popular dances in their country. They present the information as in the Fact File and make a classroom collage of their work, including pictures if possible.

Alternatively, if you have an extrovert class, they can put together a show. Different students introduce each dance with a description. Other students perform the dances.

Story telling

Students work in pairs or groups to create a simple storyline around one of the dances in the Fact File. It can be about love, jealousy, dancing competitions, good dancing, bad dancing. Each student then writes their own version of the story. They can read their stories to each other in groups or to the class.

1984: THE MINERS' STRIKE (pages 36-7)

I was there

Each student chooses an event from their own country's history. They imagine they are a character who lived through that event and describe aspects of their experience.

Discussion

Use the information about alternative energy sources for a discussion or debate. Students work in pairs or groups and choose one form of energy each, including wind farms, solar energy, hydro-electricity, nuclear power, burning fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas. Encourage students to research and prepare arguments in favour of their chosen energy source.

FILM/CD FOLLOW-UP

If you plan to show the film, watch it first. You may need parents' permission to show it – there is a lot of swearing, some violence and a scene where Billy and Debbie discuss sex.

Awards

Ask students to choose the best actor, best moment, worst moment, funniest moment and saddest moment.

Observing

Choose a scene before class and prepare questions on it. Tell students to look at everything very carefully and remember as much detail as they can. Play the scene a couple of times and ask your questions, e.g. *What colour was Billy's shirt? How many people were in the kitchen when Billy came home? What was in the middle of the table?* Students swap answers. Play the scene again. Students mark each other's work.

Predicting

Stop the CD at a dramatic moment. What will happen next? Ask the students to predict.

ANSWER KEY

Self-Study Activities (pages 38-40)

- 1 play – piano, hit – punchbag, bang – drum, smoke – cigarette, drink – beer
- 2 Open answers.
- 3 a) jump b) spin c) stretch d) go on strike
- 4 a) in the dark b) a police officer c) Open answer.
d) probably your dad! e) usually expensive clothes
- 5 a) 4 – Billy, his dad, his brother and his nan.
b) Ballet and boxing.
c) Because they want the money.
- 6 a) Billy b) Billy's dad c) Greavesy
d) Mrs Wilkinson, the ballet teacher e) a Hollywood dancer
f) the TV g) Michael, Billy's friend
- 7 Open answers.
- 8 a) audition b) court c) trouble
- 9 Open answers.
- 10 a) He's very angry. b) She thinks he's good enough.
c) She feels sad - she wants to cry.
d) They are shouting about the police. Tony wants to fight them. Jackie says, 'They're doing their job.'
e) He's angry about everything.
f) Because Tony is in court.
g) He doesn't like her. He wants to hit her.
- 11-13 Open answers.
- 14 The correct order is: g, d, e, g, b, h, a, c.
- 15 Open answer.

Resource Sheet Activities

Chapters 1-2

- 1 b) bother > brother
c) Boxing lessons
d) Mrs Wilkinson's daughter/a girl at Billy's school

Chapters 3-4

- 1 b) Michael c) boys at school d) Tony e) Nan
- 2 b) The strikers aren't going to have much food for Christmas.
c) The strikers haven't got much money.
d) The mines are closing and the young men are angry.
e) Some miners are working.

Chapters 5-6

- 2 b) pub c) money d) famous e) letter f) different
g) kitchen

Chapters 7-8

- 1 a and b.
- 2 a) Because he's in trouble.
b) They hit people and bang on doors. c) On the floor.
d) No. They're taking one hundred pounds from him – not a very nice Christmas present.
e) Because her face is white.

Chapters 9-10

- 2 a, c and f are true. b, d and e are false.
b) Jackie doesn't want Mrs Wilkinson's money.
d) He goes to the mine on the scab bus.
e) Tony and Jackie don't go into the mine – they go home.
- 3 a) Billy b) Michael c) Sarah (Jackie's wife and Billy's mother) says this in Jackie's head d) Mrs Wilkinson e) the strikers
f) Billy's family

Chapters 11 – Epilogue

- 1 b) some of Billy's mam's things c) big and posh
d) right e) a fire in his body

Vocabulary Builder

1. the piano 2. posh 3. ballet 4. boxing 5. Christmas Day
6. strong 7. beer 8. the audition
1. on strike 2. in trouble 3. smoking cigarettes
4. mining, mine

Casual language

1. 'See you.' 2. 'Shut it!' 3. 'What does she know?'