

Ich fühl' mich so fifty-fifty (novel)

This short novel is about an East German family and the effects of a divided Germany on their family life. As *Good Bye Lenin*, it deals with historical events on a personal level. It is a book aimed at a teenage audience and therefore suitable for A level age pupils. For many pupils the thought of reading a whole book in German may feel daunting, but due to the straightforward language, and the teenage themes *Ich fühl' mich so fifty-fifty* can be seen as a good first read.

The book paints a credible picture of everyday life in East Germany, and is mainly set before reunification. The title refers as much to the ambivalence of the main character as to the divided nature of Germany both before and after 1989.

The focus for the associated activities was "theme".

Activity	Skills covered	Ideas for use
Activity 1	This activity is a matching activity. Statements have to be matched to the individual word or groups of words containing important themes of the book. However there is an added challenge as this activity has a time limit.	For the purposes of brevity and practical reasons the on-screen themes comprise only a small number of words. It is vital therefore to exploit this exercise fully, by having a class discussion once it has been completed "on screen". Such discussion could take a theme and discuss the author's thoughts on it (e.g. "freedom" – what is the author trying to tell the reader about freedom? How free were the characters in East Germany before reunification? etc)
Activity 2	Students construct sentences relating to theme.	On the screen there are three columns. The first contains a word/words relating to theme/themes. In the next two columns, there are a number of sentence halves which demonstrate or illustrate the theme(s). These sentence halves need to be matched up by clicking and dragging. As with activity one, the follow up discussions taking place after completion of the on-line activity are crucial for maximising learning.

Activity 3	This activity is a translation exercise (German into English) of an extract from the book, containing key thematic content.	There is support if necessary from a vocabulary list. Students could tackle this on their own or in small groups. Afterwards they could compare their translation with translations by other class members and/or the pop up solution (in English)
Activity 4	This exercise involves reading skills, and is based on a customer review of the book in German.	<p>In the text of the review there are a number of gaps, which can be filled by dragging and dropping words from the word list below. Students could do this on an individual basis and a score is given at the end.</p> <p>As an extension activity students could translate the review into English. Alternatively/ Additionally students could search for other short reviews online.</p>
Activity 5	As activity three, this is also a translation exercise (German into English) of an extract from the book, containing key thematic content.	It is not the same text used in activity three and is more challenging (by being longer and not having a vocabulary list for support). There is also a pop up solution. As above students could tackle this on their own or in small groups. Afterwards they could compare their translation with translations by other class members and/or the pop up solution (in English).

Activity 6	For this activity students have to read two (very positive) reviews on the novel, with a view to writing their own.	Before writing their own review, students should be carefully prepared by teachers. Initially that might probably involve reading and thoroughly understanding the two model reviews. Thereafter students could discuss the relative strengths and weaknesses of the reviews. At the teacher's discretion, students could then write their own, which they could subsequently present to the class.
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