

■ Learning Plan 4.6

Our House

In this activity we treat texts as social documents. In other words, we suspend our disbelief enough to treat them as straightforwardly accurate.

Both pop videos featured here represents the working-class British family, but were made over 25 years apart. It helps if you provide the lyrics to these songs (see **Useful Websites**):

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kwle_sjKeAY

'Our House', Madness (1982)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ltPxz4PinDA>

'Our House is Dadless', Kid British (2009)

Show both several times and ask your students to treat the texts as faithfully accurate. Then, in groups, they should come up with five ways in which the family has changed and five ways in which it hasn't.

Next, make it more complicated by breaking up the analysis into parental roles, gender, ethnicity, neighbourhood, interior design/features of the home and attitudes of children.

Finally, and most importantly, take away the disbelief and remind students that these are textual constructions and thus are subjective. To do this, ask them to talk about the refrain from both versions – something tells you that you have to get away from it.

If you have covered this, you can link to the tradition of British social realism/kitchen sink drama and that strain of it that sets up the working-class community as at once romantic and claustrophobic.