

Between the Lines *By David Hill*

Introduction

Tensions develop between Brad and his friends when an attractive female singer joins their band.

Reason for reading

You could use this book with your students:

- to explore the themes of music and/or friendship
- to explore the characterisation, colloquial dialogue, humour, or other text features.

Setting the scene

Draw on your students' prior knowledge. If necessary, introduce concepts or vocabulary to help them access the story. Also communicate the reason for reading.

- Brainstorm ideas about being in bands. "Are any of you in a band? If so, what music do you play? What do you know about writing music and lyrics? What are some difficulties of being a member of a close group such as a band?" Draw out ideas about the challenges of working as a group when members have different personalities and ideas. Alternatively, you could elicit prior knowledge through a postbox or "think, pair, share" activity. Write key vocabulary on the board.
- Print Template A, the KWLH chart, from the back of this document. Alternatively, create a KWLH chart on the board. Have the students fill in the first two columns with what they know and want to know about being in a band and/or writing music and lyrics. After reading, they can fill in the final two columns (what they learned and how they learned it).
- Introduce any vocabulary that your students may need to access the text. Refer to Worksheet 3 for a list of potentially unfamiliar words. You could carry out this activity before or after reading. (See "Taking a closer look – Exploring language".)
- Have your students look at the title and cover of the book and predict what the text might be about. "What does 'between the lines' mean to you?"

Getting stuck in

Choose the prompts that you feel your students need. Remind them to note any unfamiliar words and check for clues to the meanings in the text or images.

- End page 3 – "Why is the band called LINE3? How do the three guys write their music? What other ways can people write music?" You might need to check understandings of "working off one another", especially for speakers of English as a second language. Look at "until last week, anyway" (end page 2). "What might have happened last week?"
- End page 4 – "Who are the characters so far, including the narrator? What do you think of LINE3's lyrics (lines)?" If necessary, check understandings of "We kicked it around", especially for speakers of English as a second language.
- End page 7 – "What would Brad's friends say if he told them about wanting to write some lines for Saskia? Have you been in a similar position before?"

- End page 11 – “What do you think of Brad’s lines? What do Caleb and Jerome think of them? Do they know how Brad feels about Saskia? What makes you say that?”
- End page 15 – “What do you think of the way Caleb and Jerome are behaving? What about Brad’s reaction?” If necessary, check understandings of “stuffing me about”, especially for second-language students.
- End page 18 – “Do you think Saskia would like Brad’s lines? Why or why not? Will this be the end for LINE3? What makes you say that? How would you describe how the characters are feeling?”
- End page 24 – “Were you right about Saskia’s reaction? About whether the band would break up?”

Taking a closer look

Choose suggestions that suit your students and reason for reading.

Exploring ideas and opinions

- Ask for your students’ opinions of the story and encourage them to justify those opinions. “What do you think of the ending and why? Did it surprise you? Why or why not?”
- Have the students complete Worksheet 1 (the three-level thinking guide) and discuss their responses in pairs, in small groups, or as a class.
- “How did the subject matter and tone of Brad’s lines change from page 4 to page 8? Why?” Discuss in more detail how Caleb and Jerome reacted to Brad’s new lines and why. “How would you describe their reaction? How would you have reacted?” Establish the idea that they are mocking Brad. Compare their behaviour throughout with their behaviour on page 23. “Have Brad’s lines actually changed?” (Notice that what Brad says to Saskia on page 21 is exactly what he suggested on page 8.) “Why do you think Caleb and Jerome suddenly react positively to Brad’s lines on page 21? How do you think they expected Saskia to react to them?”
- “How close do you think Brad’s friendship with Caleb and Jerome is? What makes you say that?” Discuss the situation of a girl (or boy) coming between friends. “How common do you think this situation is? What do you think of the way the characters in this story deal with that situation? Why?”
- Revisit the title of the text and discuss possible meanings. For example, the title might refer to the way Saskia “comes between” Brad and the other guys or to the situation (in a more general sense) that takes place “between” the band members. It might also refer to the period of time when the band transitions from LINE3 to LINE4 (the “between time”), or it might suggest the way in which the characters (and the reader) have to read between the lines to interpret the behaviour of others. Your discussion is likely to generate lots of ideas. “What do you think of this title and why?”
- Have the students complete the KWLH chart with things they’ve learned about being in a band and/or writing music and lyrics.

Exploring character

- “Who can you most relate to in this story and why?” (The students can keep this to themselves if they want to.) Have the students choose a character and come up with words to describe that person, backing up their descriptions with evidence from the text.

- “Who do you think changes most in this story and why? What are the things that show this change?” For example, you could discuss the shift in Brad from writing negative lyrics (page 4) to writing romantic lyrics and from enjoying being in the band to not enjoying it – and then to once again feeling positive at the end. You could also discuss the shifts in Caleb’s and Jerome’s reactions to Brad’s lyrics.

Exploring structure

- Give the students the statements from Worksheet 2 and have them sequence them in the correct order.

Exploring language

- Cut out the words and definitions from Worksheet 3 and muddle them up. Hand them out to individual students and have them find their correct “partner”.
- As an alternative to the above, divide the class into two groups and have them complete Worksheet 4a and Worksheet 4b respectively. This activity involves the students in creating the definitions, which they then use to test the other group.
- Compare in more detail Brad’s lines on page 4 with those later in the story? “Which do you prefer and why? What do think makes good lyrics?” The students could try drawing up a list of criteria for successful lyrics. They might have a range of ideas, for example, that the lyrics sound good when sung, that other people can relate to them, that they are (or are not) positive. Encourage them to justify their opinions. “Do you think lyrics need to rhyme? Why or why not?”
- Explore the use of humour in the story. “What makes the story funny?” Focus in particular on what Caleb and Jerome say and do.
- Have your students complete Worksheet 5 – the cloze activity.

Moving beyond the text

Choose activities that suit your students and reason for reading.

Reading

- Read the GO for IT magazine designed to complement this book – Music Maker.

Writing

- Rewrite part of the story, such as the ending, and illustrate your work.
- Write lyrics in response to Brad’s lines, making fun of them in the way that Caleb and Jerome did – or write lyrics that you think would really work in a song.
- Write about a time when a guy or girl came between you and your friends.
- Pretend you are a news reporter and prepare a radio or television interview for Brad to find out why he changed his writing style after meeting Saskia. Remember to use open-ended questions (why, what, when, where, who, how). Carry out your interviews in pairs, with one person acting as Brad and one as the reporter before swapping over. You could tape the interview for presentation to the class.

Research

- Research a band that you like, focusing on their style of music and the way they write it.

WORKSHEET 1

Between the Lines – Three-level thinking guide

- Level 1 – Reading on the lines (interpreting what the text says on a literal level)
- Level 2 – Reading between the lines (inferring, or interpreting what the text might mean)
- Level 3 – Reading beyond the lines (evaluating ideas by relating them to other knowledge)

Students write “agree” or “disagree” beside each statement and then discuss their responses in pairs, in groups, or as a class. The value of this activity lies in the discussion it generates as students justify their views. The activity is not intended as a test for comprehension.

LEVEL 1	Agree/disagree
The band was called LINE3 because there were three people in it.	
They band composes their own songs.	
LINE3 won the high school Talent Quest Show.	
LINE3 often plays at high school dances.	
Caleb’s cousin Saskia joins the band.	
Brad finds Saskia very attractive.	
Brad decides to write lines that will get Saskia’s attention.	
Caleb and Jerome like Brad’s new lines.	
Caleb and Jerome laugh and jump around when Brad reads his lines.	
Brad decides to leave the band.	
Brad thinks Saskia’s long hair is like a mountain stream.	
Brad thinks Saskia’s eyes are like the evening sky.	
Brad decides the band will be called LINE4.	

Sheet 1 of 2

LEVEL 2	Agree/disagree
Brad, Caleb, and Jerome are best friends.	
They enjoy writing songs together.	
They give each other ideas.	
Brad, Caleb, and Jerome were experienced songwriters before they entered the school Talent Quest Show.	
Brad is in love with Saskia.	
Brad expects the boys to really like his ideas.	
Caleb and Jerome don't mean to upset Brad.	
Brad has excellent self-control.	
Saskia understands what Brad is trying to say.	
Brad is the leader of the band.	
LEVEL 3	Agree/disagree
The band works well together as a team.	
The behaviour of Caleb and Jerome is immature.	
Saskia's influence is important to the band.	
LINE4 will become the best band.	

Sheet 2 of 2

Worksheet designed by Barbara Freeman, Wellington, New Zealand, 2007

WORKSHEET 2

Between the Lines – Restore the order

Photocopy this worksheet. Cut out the statements and mix them up, keeping an intact master copy for yourself. Give each student a statement. Ask them to arrange themselves so that their statements are in the order of the story. To check that the order is correct, they can read their statements aloud in turn.

Brad, Jerome, and Caleb are Line3.
They write all the lines for their songs.
They build the music around them.
Line3 came second in the high school Talent Quest Show.
Line3 got invited to play at a high school dance.
A fourth person, Saskia, joined the band.
She's nice-looking with this amazing long hair.
Brad knew he wanted to write some lines for Saskia that would make her notice him.
Caleb and Jerome laughed at Brad's lines.
Brad started to get pissed off.
"We need some lines before Saskia comes," said Jerome.
Brad kept his voice as calm as he could and looked straight at his friends.

Brad, Jerome, and Caleb are Line3.

Brad felt like whacking both of his so-called friends.

Caleb and Jerome tried to look serious.

Brad said, "If you guys stuff these lines up, we're finished."

Caleb and Jerome looked worried.

Caleb and Jerome began to laugh, and Brad stepped forward and raised his fists.

Saskia walked in.

Saskia's look went right through Brad.

Caleb and Jerome were silent, and then Jerome said he liked Brad's lines.

Brad said the band would now be called Line4.

WORKSHEET 3

Between the Lines – Match the meaning

Cut out the words and definitions, muddle them up, and have your students match them.

Word	Definition
basement	the bottom floor of a building, usually below ground level
stoked	really pleased (slang)
brilliant	really good
shrugged	raised and lowered one's shoulders
blank	without any expression
chucking	throwing
sad	silly, stupid
pissed off	angry, annoyed
zombie	a dull or lifeless person
whack	to hit
to put someone down	to make someone feel stupid or useless

Note that some words above may have other meanings in other contexts.

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WORKSHEET 4a – GROUP A

Between the Lines – Vocab swap

- Divide the class into two groups and give half Worksheet 4a and half Worksheet 4b.
- In the second column, each group writes definitions for the words in the first column. Where a word has more than one meaning, they may need to check the page listed.
- They then fold the first column out of sight and swap sheets with the other group.
- That group guesses the original word and writes it in the third column. They can go to the page listed if they need help. For an extra challenge, they can guess without referring to the page.
- You could make this a fun competition and give points for every correct word.

Word	Definition (Group A)	Word (Group B)
basement (p. 3)	(p. 3)	
brilliant (p. 6)	(p. 6)	
blank (p. 8)	(p. 8)	
sad (p. 8)	(p. 8)	
zombie (p. 13)	(p. 13)	
to put someone down (p. 17)	(p. 17)	

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WORKSHEET 4b – GROUP B

Between the Lines – Vocab swap

- Divide the class into two groups and give half Worksheet 4a and half Worksheet 4b.
- In the second column, each group writes definitions for the words in the first column. Where a word has more than one meaning, they may need to check the page listed.
- They then fold the first column out of sight and swap sheets with the other group.
- That group guesses the original word and writes it in the third column. They can go to the page listed if they need help. For an extra challenge, they can guess without referring to the page.
- You could make this a fun competition and give points for every correct word.

Word	Definition (Group B)	Word (Group B)
stoked (p. 6)	(p. 6)	
shrugged (p. 8)	(p. 8)	
chucking (p. 8)	(p. 8)	
pissed off (p. 11)	(p. 11)	
whack (p. 13)	(p. 13)	

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WORKSHEET 5

Between the Lines – Fill in the gaps

Add your own words in the spaces to make this passage come alive!

“Come,” Jerome told us. “We’ve to get something really for the dance at the high school. We need lines before Saskia comes. Any other ideas, Brad?”

I didn’t anything at first. I want to come up with more if they were going to keep me about. But after a I said, “Here’s one, maybe.”

You’re really when you dance.

This time both started laughing together. They both spoke,

You’re like a zombie in a Have you got spiders in your pants?

They pretended to fall down the floor and I just stood and them. These guys were supposed to be my

Try writing your own ending to the story.

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