



Literary Contexts: 80s British Fiction

Billy Elliot

Suggested Responses

Comprehension Questions

1.

Group	Struggle
Miners	Against the government and mine/pit closures
Gay community	Against the AIDS epidemic and widespread discrimination
Women	For equal rights
2. **Coal/mining** was a key industry for Britain in the early 20th century. At its peak, in **1920, 1.2 million** people were employed as miners.
3. Student responses should reference the following factors:
 - Power plants began to rely on oil, gas and nuclear energy
 - Increased competition from overseas mines with lower wages and production costs
 - Businesses found it cheaper to import coal from overseas
4. Student responses should reference the following effects:
 - Pit closures
 - Lower wages
 - Strikes
5. The government responded by calling a state of emergency.
6. Examples of emotive language include: Terrorism; scabs; rule of the mob; kick us to death; starve us out; it'll not work; it must not succeed.
7. Student responses should reference the following factors:
 - Legislation
 - Community perspectives/attitudes,
 - The arrival of AIDS stigmatising the gay community
8. Student responses should reference the following factors:
 - Community perspectives/attitudes,
 - Poor/few work opportunities





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9. Student responses should reference the following factors:
- Contraceptive pill
 - Legislation
 - Strike action
 - Conferences on women's rights
 - Increased education
10. Government decisions both exacerbated problems, and led to improved conditions for some. Mine closures led to strikes and widespread upheaval. Legislation that made homosexuality illegal contributed to low opinions of same sex-attracted peoples. For women, legislation led to increased rights and access to employment and education opportunities.

Character Profile – Student responses will vary.

Thinking about Themes – Student responses will vary.

Transcript – For student and teacher use.

