

Y9 THE BLACK FLAMINGO: KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

Key Words

- **Bildungsroman**-a story that is about events and experiences in the life of the main character as they grow up and become an adult:
- **Theme:** an idea in a literary text that the artist or writer develops or repeats.
- **Motif:** A repeated symbol, image or idea in a literary text
- **Symbol** an object, a person, a situation, or an action that has a literal meaning in a story but suggests or represents other meanings.
- **Form** means the style in which a text is written. Atta uses the form of a novel in verse but also includes texts messages, poems and spoken word

Key Skills

- **Read and understand** a novel in verse
- **Understand the context** ideas about race, gender, sexuality, race and identity
- Write **analytically** about characters, themes and language
- Write creatively inspired by the text

Sentence starters

- Atta presents _____ as _____
- This is demonstrated when Atta writes "..."
- This could suggest/might show...
Atta uses the word/the image to convey....
- In addition... Furthermore...
- Atta might want his readers to know/ understand/ consider

Context

- Written by Dean Atta in 2019, *The Black Flamingo* is a coming of age story about a mixed race boy called Michael figuring out his identity in terms of race and sexuality. It is a verse novel and uses illustration by Anshika Khullar
- Dean Atta is a British poet of Greek Cypriot and Caribbean descent. He has been listed by *The Independent* newspaper as one of the 100 most influential LGBT people in the United Kingdom. His poetry often deals with questions of identity and social justice.

Key Characters

- Michael,(narrator)
- Mum, Uncle B, Granny B, , Trevor, Anna, (family)
- Emily, Callum ,Daisy, Faith, Grace and Destiny, Rowan, Kieran (school friends)
- Mzz B, Lennie, Sienna, Simon, Jack, Katy/David (university)

Key Themes:

- Friendship
- Family
- Growing up
- Identity

Key symbols/motifs

Flamingo -a symbol of difference, flamboyance, uniqueness, nurture, acceptance, Michael's perception of himself

Black Flamingo - a symbol of transformation, drag identity, acceptance and celebration, pride, difference

Locations - *Stage*- symbol of Michael's transformation, Michael's identity as a performer

Brighton- university, gay identity, pebble beach as a symbol of difference and non-conformity

Greece- a symbol of, family, identity(Greek), race

Childhood objects - *Barbie*: a symbol of gender assumptions, ideas about femininity and glamour *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*: as a symbol of masculine assumptions, *The Pink Flamingo*: a symbol of difference, *Telescope*: family connection, escape

Names - a symbol of the different parts of Michael's identity, different stages of his life, a symbol for his inspirations and mentors a symbol of new beginnings/identities, symbols of gender: Surname University, drag names, Bob Marley, Greek names

Drag - a symbol of transformation, identity, acceptance, pride, links to Halloween costume, a symbol of belonging and communication

Locs - a symbol of Michael's Jamaican side, a symbol of prejudice, identity, assumptions and stereotypes, links to Medusa, symbol of transformation