

Video Kid

Chris Woods

Teachers Key

Before Listening and Watching

This activity is designed to allow the student to explore connectivity between the title of the poem and film, the dictionary definition of 'addict' and any or all of the individual words (taken from the poem) or pictures (taken as screen shots taken from the film). They can work individually or in small groups, though more than 4 in a group might be counterproductive. The students are not attempting to write a poem but merely explore and share ideas of possible content of the poem they know they will soon hear. The act of creativity here is compounded when they compare their ideas with that of the poet and film maker.

After Listening Key

1. Class work. Allow students to come up with their own ideas for a minute or two. Ask students about internet, mobile phones, mp3 players or other electronic devices they problem use but haven't mentioned. Ask them to decide at what point does normal use and behaviour become addictive behaviour?

2. After they have read the article, ask students what is a good idea and what is a bad idea, in their opinion. Ask if the treatment described in the article might be appropriate for other forms of addiction.

If you wish, use the Word Box to explore this aspect of the poem.

Word Box

In this short poem there are no less than five verb/preposition collocations. The poet uses the collocations carefully. Look at the definitions of the collocations here, then decide what the use or metaphor has been given to them by the poet in the poem. (Some have more than one meaning. Which one is used in the poem?)

switched off	disconnected <u>not paid attention</u>
go through	<u>pass from one side to another</u> make connection
play through	rehearse <u>heard or seen via mechanism</u>
play with	share games <u>give sense of (false) security</u> ¹
reels past	<u>wind past dizzy fast dance</u> ²

¹. the reference to friends in the previous line gives this line a special 'bite'. It is as though the video is using her rather like a cat will play with a mouse.

². All three apply – there is a winding mechanism going on literally (the video machine reels in the tape) as well as metaphorically (life is going on without her) but there is also a sense of reeling senselessly from one moment to another, and finally the speed of the Scottish reel is reinforced by the reference to 'fast forward'

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***Note:** the text for the poem is given here for reference purposes for the teacher. Do copy for use with the students.*

Blank face

Switched off

Deaf to the high volume household

My one sided chat does not go through her head

Pale eyes for the screen only

Programmed

Wanting nothing but the tape to play through her

No friends

The machine plays with her

As life reels past on fast forward