***Away* Characters**

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| **Character** | **Description** | **Character Changes/Development** |
| Tom | * Confident, imaginative, creative   He loves the theatre  Only son of working class English migrant parents  Product of a happy family | Becomes more assertive as the play progresses  Also becomes more vulnerable when he tells Meg about his sickness |
| Meg | Confident, assertive, quick-tempered, independent, mature  Critical of her mother’s domineering ways | She shows a developing awareness to her mother’s behaviour and greater emotional maturity. |
| Gwen | Cranky, negative, impatient, snobby, racist, prejudiced, easily angered  Gwen is the product of a poor upbringing and views material wealth as the key to happiness  Gow presents her as a parody of a 1960s housewife | She develops emotionally and begins to see things from other people’s perspectives. Becomes less judgmental. |
| Jim | Pushover, weak, nurturing, friendly, optimistic  Jim is presented as a caring father who has a testing relationship with his wife Gwen. He obviously cares for his daughter and wants the best for his family. | His bond with Gwen strengthens in the second half of the play. |
| Vic and Harry | Courageous, friendly, working class, heroic, stoic, resilient. | The reality of Tom’s condition becomes more apparent as the play progresses and they become more withdrawn. |
| Coral | Grief-stricken, elsewhere, confused, mentally unstable  Coral has been unable to acquiesce to the death of her son in the Vietnam War. Her mental health has put a massive strain on her relationship with Roy. | A chance encounter with Tom and her part in the play-within-a-play ends her isolation. The bonfire symbolizes Coral’s spiritual renewal. |
| Roy | Dry, emotionally immature, insensitive, concerned with keeping up appearances  Roy has tried to ignore the death of his son and gets increasingly frustrated with Coral’s growing mental instability. | He understands Coral by the end of the play and grows emotionally. |

***Away* Themes**

List the themes conveyed in Michael Gow’s play *Away* in the box below:

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| * Reconciliation * Grief * Acceptance * Growth * Self-esteem and self-discovery * Class conflict * Death and how people respond to it * Conflict between relationships * Healing power of nature |

Choose ONE key theme from the play. Answer the following questions in detail based on your chosen theme:

1. Where is your chosen theme evident in the plot (storyline) of *Away? (Think about which events and scenes reflect the theme.)*

*The theme of reconciliation is evident after the storm occurs in the play. In Act 4, Scene 1, we see Gwen confront the confusion and turmoil that have plagued her and, instead of taking a Bex’s powder, she suggests that her and Jim go on a walk in the warm water to reflect on what they have just learned from Vic and Harry about Tom. This conversation acts a catalyst for reconciliation with her own family and a brighter perspective on life.*

2. Which characters in the play are linked with your theme? Explain how each character is linked.

3. Does your chosen theme relate to any other themes in the play? Explain how they are related.

4. How has *Away* enhanced your understanding of your chosen theme?

5. How is your chosen theme reflective of the world beyond the text?

6. List any quotes that reflect your chosen theme, include page references.

**EXTENDED RESPONSE**

Choose one of the following characters from Away: Gwen, Jim, Meg, Coral or Roy.

* From the perspective of the character compose three diary entries of approximately 250 words each.
* The first entry must be written before going away, the second whilst on holidays and the third at the end of the play.
* In your entries you should discuss your inner-most thoughts, feelings and attitudes, as well as actions you have taken.
* Reveal their relationships with the other characters.
* Include any discoveries they may have made about themselves and any other aspects of their life. Look at how the person’s understanding of themselves evolve, change or develop.