

## *Earthquakes in London*

Author	Mike Bartlett
Published by	Methuen Drama, London
Published in	2010
Price	€12.99
Genre	Drama
Length	176 pages
First Staged	4 <sup>th</sup> August 2010 in the Cottesloe Theatre at the National Theatre, in a co-production with Headlong Theatre.
Summary	Three sisters of 37, 29 and 19 years are trying to deal with their personal issues such as career problems, pregnancy, depression, family and relationships against the background of severe environmental changes, entangled in the rush of modern times, parties, music and media. The action is set in London in the year 2010.
Structure	The play consists of five acts. At the beginning of each act there is a prologue given which contains either a flashback or a foreshadowing.
Characters	All in all, over 35 characters appear in the play. The most important ones are <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Robert</u>: father of Sarah, Freya and Jasmine, former environmental scientist, who is not interested in his children any more.</li><li>• <u>Sarah</u>: a Lib Dem environment minister and a very cold person (37 years old).</li><li>• <u>Freya</u>: pregnant and not happy about it, feels lonely, commits suicide (29 years old).</li><li>• <u>Jasmine</u>: rebellious student (19 years old).</li></ul>
Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Modern times</li><li>• Inaptness of humans to deal with environmental problems</li><li>• Should humans procreate or not? Can one individual make a difference in the world?</li></ul>

Performance	Spectacular performance “using as much set, props and costume as possible. The stage should overflow with scenery, sound, backdrops, lighting, projection etc.” ( <i>Earthquakes 5</i> ).
Available Media	No media available.
Helpful Secondary Literature	No secondary literature available.
Language	Modern language, easy to understand for students at school.
Suitable Age	From 15 years upwards.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions about global warming, alternative energies and the responsibility of everyone in order to save the planet for future generations; discussions about the advantages and dangers of social networks</li> <li>• Analysis of the (quite new) music in the play, translation of the lyrics</li> <li>• Pupils could imagine dialogues of people who have not met in the play (for example a conversation between Freya, the mother of Emily, who survived the suicide in her mother’s womb)</li> <li>• Act some scenes in class (helps pupils to identify with the characters in the play).</li> <li>• Letter to the author</li> </ul>
Teachability Pros	<p><b>Topic:</b>          Important questions of modern times</p> <p><b>Language:</b>          Modern, easy to understand for students at school</p> <p><b>Relation:</b>          Students can relate to the contents of the play as it features problems which they know from their everyday life.</p> <p><b>Curriculum:</b>          The play is suitable with regard to a number of contents of the <i>Bildungsstandards für Englisch (1. und 2. Fremdsprache) Gymnasium</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to read longer texts autonomously and summarise them</li> <li>• Ability of describing and commenting on the main topics and the different points of view</li> <li>• Ability to understand literary texts against the background of their socio-cultural background</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ability to understand the correlation between form and content of a text</li></ul>
Teachability Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Play is very long.</li><li>• Scenes are overlapping and characters are interrupting each other all the time, which can be rather confusing for pupils.</li><li>• The play is not available on DVD.</li></ul>
Overall Evaluation	All in all, Bartlett's play is suitable for teaching, as it deals with many interesting topics like global warming, social isolation and the growth of social networks, which can lead to discussions and several other activities in the classroom. The fact that <i>Earthquakes in London</i> is so up-to-date makes it also very attractive for students, as it offers an ideal diversion from historic plays.