

STUDENT WORKSHEET 2

BIFF TANNEN

Biff Tannen plays a key role in both the film of **BACK TO THE FUTURE** and the stage musical. He bullies George, challenges Marty, and makes unwanted advances towards Lorraine.



KEY VOCAB IN FOCUS - THE ANTAGONIST

The antagonist within a narrative or story actively opposes, or is hostile towards, the main character, known as the protagonist (Marty). This helps to create conflict within the story or play.

DID YOU KNOW?

When the stage production of **BACK TO THE FUTURE** was being developed, a song was written all about Biff, which explored his upbringing and family. This was not used in the final production but helped to develop his backstory.

TASK 1

In this exercise you are going to explore Biff's backstory and what led him to become the antagonist. In groups or pairs, draw an outline of Biff on a piece of paper, which represents him as a ten-year-old boy. On the inside, write ideas about how he is feeling and, on the outside, the external factors which impact on his life - for example, his family, how he is treated by his peers, his family, at school etc.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

Can you create a timeline of the specific events in Biff's life, from childhood to adulthood?

DISCUSSION:

To what extent does someone's 'backstory' affect them in later life?

Task 2: Biff is a complex role as he is not merely the stereotypical 'villain'. As the genre and style of the production is musical comedy, there are also lighter, funnier moments. If you were directing the actor playing Biff, how would you strike a balance between communicating both elements?

Here are some sentences to get you started:

- ✓ I would direct the actor playing Biff to...
- ✓ If I were directing Biff, I would...
- ✓ When directing the actor playing Biff, I would want to portray / communicate / convey to the audience....