

✕ Refers to links on www.crossref-it.info

- ❖ **Lesson focus:** To explore the theme of worship
- ❖ **Opening exercise:** Explain the concept of worship (to ascribe worth).
 - Use the worksheet to consider:
 - What do the characters in the play worship?
 - How does this worship affect their lives?
 - Is it a positive or negative force?
 - ✕ ([Equus: Themes and significant ideas > Religion and worship](#))
- ❖ **Textual examination:** Track the images of religious worship through the play, focusing on Alan and his use of religious language and ritual for horses.
 - Use this as an opportunity to explain any religious language and concepts which students struggled with on their first reading of the play
 - ✕ ([Equus: Synopses and commentaries](#))
 - You will need to re-read:
 - Act One Scene Eleven
 - Act One Scene Thirteen
 - Act One Scene Fourteen
 - Act One Scene Nineteen
 - Act One Scene Twenty
 - Act One Scene Twenty One
 - Act Two Scene Thirty Four
- ❖ **Discussion ideas:** Discuss the following questions in groups, making notes, and then feed back to the rest of the class.
 - How does the theme of horse worship develop across the first act of the play?
 - How does Shaffer make Alan's worship of horses so shocking?
 - What is the impact of the religious language and biblical references when applied to horses?
 - How does the audience respond to the pseudo-religious rituals Alan develops for horses eg. self-flagellation, use of the bit?
 - Do we blame Dora Strang's religious intensity for Alan's worship of horses?
 - Why / why not?
 - In what ways is Alan's worship of horses seen to be more damaging than the worship displayed by other characters in the play, for example
 - Dysart
 - Doraand society as a whole?
 - Look at Dysart's monologues about worship of the Normal and of materialism in Act One Scene Nineteen and Act Two Scene Thirty Five
- ❖ **Recreative task:** Use this theme of 'bad' worship to inspire a storyline about a teenager who develops problems.
 - What other (sometimes unlikely) things do people worship?
 - How might these negatively affect a teenager?
- ❖ **Critical task:** 'The play presents worship as a negative force.'
 - To what extent do you agree?
 - ✕ ([Equus: Themes and significant ideas > Religion and worship](#))
- ❖ **Extension task:** Research Shaffer and his religious views.
 - Is there any evidence of these views in his plays?
 - ✕ ([Peter Shaffer's early life and career](#))
 - ✕ ([Peter Shaffer's later life and career](#))