Lesson focus:
- To examine the role and character of Offred.

Opening exercise:
- Create an acrostic for the name Offred.
  - This could be done as a race between groups of 2 or 3, with the ‘best’ ideas being selected on the board. (O for ordinary? F for frightened?)
  - There should be plenty of discussion.
- (Characterisation in The Handmaid’s Tale > Offred)

Textual examination:
- Allocate the different sections entitled ‘Night’ around the class. (Leave out Ch.1 if it has been examined in the lesson on the opening of the novel.)
  - Each student/group explores what we learn about Offred in the chapter allocated. They should record their findings under the headings:
    - Language
    - Emotions and attitudes
    - Behaviour and actions
    - Memories.
- (Structure and methods of narration in The Handmaid’s Tale > Non-chronological time sequence)

Discussion ideas:
- Report back on findings.
  - Collect ideas on the board, and discuss any links or apparent contradictions.

Recreative task:
- Assume that Offred has escaped at the end of the novel. Create a wanted poster for her.
  - Include some description of her appearance, character, and crimes.
    - Try to make the language sound like that which the Gileadian authorities use.
- Other government records could be created, too.
- (Themes and significant ideas in The Handmaid’s Tale > Individualism and identity in The Handmaid’s Tale)
- (Religious / philosophical context of The Handmaid’s Tale > Freedom to and freedom from)

Critical task:
- Choose a short but significant passage from the novel.
  - Write an analysis of the passage, showing particularly how the reader learns about Offred from it.
    - Include language and references to other texts as well as Offred’s thoughts and actions.
  - (Critical approaches to The Handmaid’s Tale > Textual analysis of The Handmaid’s Tale)

Extension task:
- Draw up two columns on a sheet of paper, and list similarities and differences between Offred and other characters in the novel.
  - What effect does Atwood achieve through this ‘doubling’?
    - Research the notion of the doppelganger in other literature.
  - (Themes and significant ideas in The Handmaid’s Tale > Doubling in The Handmaid’s Tale)