**Connections Assessment**

Texts:

* The 5th Wave directed by J Blakeson
* Boy directed by Taika Waititi
* Billy Elliot directed by Stephen Daldry
* Turtles All The Way Down written by John Green

A theme in the texts ‘The 5th Wave’ directed by J Blakeson, ‘Boy’ directed by Taika Waititi, ‘Billy Elliot’ directed by Stephen Daldry and ‘Turtles All The Way Down’ written by John Green was challenges that teenagers and children face. Many teenagers and children growing up have challenges that they struggle with. Most commonly anxiety, loneliness and mental illness, which can lead to depression. So it is important when they face these challenges that they have someone either family or someone they trust, to help guide them through these rough patches.

The theme was shown in The 5th Wave when the main character Cassie was faced with the challenge of who she should trust. The movie is about a girl called Cassie who has fought through each wave that the enemy have made to wipe out the human race. Along the way she lost all her friends, her mum, her dad and when her younger brother Sam is taken by the army she is determined to rescue him. In this case Cassie was faced with the terrible loss of her family and friends, which would definitely affect her because now she has no one to turn when she needs help. This is a struggle for teenagers, because we are learning and growing all the time and need someone older, that we can look up to and who will inspire us. As teenagers we are faced with the challenge of who we should and shouldn't trust all the time. On her travels to find Sam, a guy called Evan finds her and aides with her search. She puts her full trust into him because she thinks he is a genuine human trying to help. However when she finds out the true nature of Evan, that he is the enemy, she now realises that she doesn’t know if she can trust him anymore or anyone else. Cassie learned the hard way that trust means you can believe in someone and that they are reliable. To prove to Evan she didn’t trust him anymore she told him to stay away from her. “Follow me and i’ll shoot you.” This shows how even without her family to help her she now knows that she can’t be controlled by others, which helped her to save Sam. Since she had a goal she was working towards, which was saving her brother, this meant her judgement wasn’t clouded by others impacting on her decision. The director J Blakeson was showing us how trusting people is a challenge that you learn over time as you grow up and that it doesn’t always come easily. I think for teens who are struggling with a challenge need to have a focus or something that will make them determined, so that they can overcome the challenge. So for Cassie having that focus helped her to face the challenge, because of her love for her brother and the determination to find him since he is her only family left. This shows that having a focus can help anyone overcome a challenge they are facing, which is especially relevant to teenagers who face many challenges as they grow up.

The movie ‘Boy’ is about a kid named Boy and his struggles with losing his mum and his dad leaving when he was really young. This is probably a challenge that lots of teenagers face and not having those parental figures around all the time to guide you can be really tough. So when Boy’s dad came back he really looked up to him, even though his dad was a bad influence. The first thing he did when his dad arrives back home is introduce his own brother to his dad. Its quite sad that Rocky has no memories of his father and has to be introduced to him like a stranger. “ Do you think he remembers me?” This shows that for so long they have been brought up without having someone there who will teach them new things and help out as they grow up. His dad does care about them, but he has done things that a child should not aspire to be. His father's actions of smoking and drinking were a bad influence and lead Boy to copying. This shows that sometimes instead of actually helping a child with a struggle they have, they could be just adding to the problem. His aunty knew that his dad wasn’t good for him, but Boy needed to have that close bonding that a father and son do, which you can’t always achieve with others. In The 5th Wave Cassie has lost her loved ones and Boy has lost his mum so they both know what grief can feel like and as a teenager that would be the hardest challenge to move on with. Losing loved ones can be devastating when they were the people who helped and guided you. This is why Cassie was determined to get back her brother and why Boy was determined to get back his dad, so that they could have that connection of having family and someone to turn to. Taika Waititi is showing us that all families are brought up differently and what’s normal to someone in their family is different to someone in another family. No family is perfect, but you always still love them even if they aren't’ the greatest role model. This is a relevant to teenagers and the struggles with being brought up with only one parent or no parents.

In ‘Billy Elliot’ the main character Billy is going to boxing practice when he is intrigued by the ballet class happening next door. He has a go and finds it interesting enough to keep on going to the next classes instead of boxing. He doesn’t tell his dad, because he knows that he will think he is a ‘sissy’. This can relate to many teenagers who struggle with judgement from other people, which makes us hide who we actually are and the passions we have. Back in those days the views of society on gender and what is acceptable, were that boys do manly sports and jobs, while girls did feminine jobs and worked in the house looking after children. So boys who had a passion for a ‘girl sport’ were classified as gay. This is why Billy didn't want to disappoint his dad but he also wanted to keep dancing. When he had attended a couple dance lessons the teacher noticed he was actually doing extremely well, so she gave him the opportunity to audition for the royal ballet. However this dream is crushed when his dad finds out about him doing ballet. “Lads do football or boxing or wrestling not fricken ballet.” This shows that parents can have a huge impact on a child's decision and since Billy’s father opposed him of doing ballet, it made him question whether he wanted to keep doing it or be seen as weird for doing a girls sport. People are categorised all the time by things like how they look, where they come from and who they associate with, so it came as no surprise that his dad thought of him as a sissy because of the stereotype that boys who do ballet are gay. Billy faces the struggle of trying to follow his own dreams when his father has different expectations. Without the support from his dad it put pressure on Billy to have to choose between living his dream or his dad’s dream. I think this links well to many teenagers and children around the world whose parents impact their decisions and put them in difficult positions of choosing whether they want to impress their parents or follow their passion. Billy is alone with his decisions, because he can’t turn to his dad or brother for help. This is the same in The 5th Wave because Cassie loses all her family to the ‘others’ so she also has no one she can turn to and trust. It is hard when you are alone to make decisions and sometimes all you want is your family there to support you. “Dad's right mum would have let you." Stephen Daldry is suggesting that no child can succeed as well without 100% support from family and people we trust. This can be a struggle for teens.

Anxiety and mental health can be some of the top struggles that teenagers suffer with while growing up. In the novel ‘Turtles all the way down’ Aza the main character struggles with having a conscious that controls her thoughts. She feels like she can’t escape the constantly tightening spiral of thoughts in her mind. With these thoughts being trapped there, she sometimes feels very alone. “I have these… thought spirals, and I can't get out of them.” She finds it hard to explain to others what she's going through because no one else can really experience what she is feeling. This also links to feeling alone, which many teenagers struggle with. Anxiety is one of the main challenges and struggles that teenagers face everyday and it’s very hard to face it on your own. John green is making it aware that teenagers suffer from this all the time and they need family and friends to help them through it. Aza sees a mental health therapist, who has a good understanding of her sense of feeling alone and isolated. I think having that person to talk to and express your feelings and what your going through without feeling self conscious really helped Aza. Seeking help is not a sign of weakness and can help to save many teenage lives, from suicide. Aza never really thought about suicide, but she did say about how she hated the person inside of her. “Whoever is authoring me, let me up out of this. Anything to be out of this.” She felt like there was someone else in her body and she wanted out. After trauma and injuries sustained from a car crash, she ends up in the hospital. Aza has a fear of bacteria and being in the hospital causes her to panic. Her panicking makes her con work into overdrive and it comes up with the idea of drinking hand sanitizer to kill the bacteria inside of her. She is forced into doing this, but the effects only make her sick. This shows how fear can make you do weird things you wouldn’t normally. Her conscience controls her and overcrowds the rest of her thoughts, which made her feel very isolated and lonely. All four texts relate to being alone and the pressures of youth, which is very relevant to many teenagers who struggle with this.

Overall these texts all showed the different challenges that teenagers and children face and how it can effect them. They all showed how a major challenge that teens face is the feeling of being alone and how the lack of help can make the struggle even harder. Sometimes all you need is that glimmer of hope from someone who believes in you, which can help you to overcome your challenge.