

# Slam: Sam and Alicia as teenage parents?

This is a short online project dealing with the subject matter in Nick Hornby's *Slam*, as featured in your book.

## Before you start:

- Step 1:** Split up into two groups – one male and one female – to do this **online project** based on the situation the two main protagonists in **Slam** find themselves in.
- Step 2:** Then within that group split up again into two groups so that there is a total of four groups.
- Step 3:** Based on the tasks for each group (see below), you will then compare Sam and Alicia's situation with the situation featured in a song:
- The male groups will deal with the song '**With arms wide open**' by Creed.
  - The female groups will deal with the song '**Everything to me**' by Mark Schultz. (One group deals with the actual song; the other with the story behind the song in an interview; see below.)



## 1 Listening and viewing

On the Internet, find your group's material. In the case of both male groups and with female Group A, just enter your song title into a search engine. For female Group B, enter in 'Everything to me' as well as 'Story behind the song' as your key search words. Then listen / watch. (The Group B girls can of course also watch the music video to 'Everything to me', time permitting.)

## 2 Reactions

Share your first impressions about the content you listened to / viewed. What is the main message? Don't take more than two minutes to discuss this question.

## 3 Online research

For the three groups dealing with songs, find the lyrics to your song on one of the many websites for lyrics; print out a copy of them for group work. Explain in your own words the meaning of the song and its progression from stanza to stanza.

## 4 Gender-specific tasks

When your group has completed its task, present your results to the class.

Female groups: 'Everything to me'	Male groups: 'With arms wide open'
<p><b>Group A</b> <u>Creative writing:</u> Imagine Alicia happened to watch the music video of 'Everything to me'. Write down how she might react to its message.</p>	<p><b>Group A</b> Compare and contrast the speaker from the song with Sam from <b>Slam</b> (pp. 18/19 and 28). How are their situations similar, how are they different?</p>
<p><b>Group B</b> Watch the interview with Mark Schultz. In your own words (ca. 150), give his reasons for writing this song. Did the interview give you a new perspective on birth moms? Explain.</p>	<p><b>Group B</b> The song deals with the male perspective. Imagine you were Alicia and write a similar song or poem about how you would feel 'in her shoes'.</p>

<b>Zeitraumen</b>	Ca. 90 Min.
<b>Methodisches Vorgehen</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dieser Worksheet ist dazu gedacht, den Schülerinnen und Schülern (S) die Möglichkeit zu geben, über die Auswirkungen einer Schwangerschaft auf das Leben eines jungen Menschen einerseits, über die Chancen für das Baby andererseits nachzudenken. Die Klasse wird dazu zunächst in zwei Gruppen – eine männliche und eine weibliche – unterteilt und diese beiden Gruppen beschäftigen sich wiederum in zwei Untergruppen mit ihrem Thema anhand je einer Videosequenz (Musikvideo bzw. Interview).</li> <li>• Bei den Jungen geht es um die Reaktion eines Sängers auf die Nachricht, dass seine Freundin schwanger ist, bei den Mädchen um einen anderen Teenager in Alicias Situation, die sich dazu entschließt, ihr Kind zur Adoption freizugeben. Sowohl die Jungen als auch die Mädchen werden dazu hingeleitet, sich letztendlich in die Perspektive von Alicia zu versetzen, wobei bei den Jungen zunächst ein Zwischenschritt dahingehend vollzogen wird, Handlungsalternativen zu Sams Reaktion (vor dem Problem wegzulaufen) auf Seite 28 aufzuzeigen.</li> <li>• Aufgabe 3 kann in der Form <b>think-pair-share</b> bearbeitet werden, wobei die beiden Untergruppen sich dann jeweils zuerst eigene Gedanken zu ihrem Lied/Video machen und diese dann mit den Gedanken der Parallelgruppe abgleichen, bevor sie diese nach Bearbeitung der Aufgabe 4 den anderen im Klassenverband präsentieren.</li> <li>• Die Lehrerin/Der Lehrer (L) sollte hier noch die zusätzliche Arbeitsanweisung geben, dass die Gruppen je ein DIN-A2-Poster erhalten, auf dem sie ihr jeweiliges Thema darstellen. Dieses Poster soll dann vor der Klasse erklärt und erst danach mit <i>Slam</i> über Aufgabe 4 in Bezug gesetzt werden.</li> </ul>
<b>Einleitendes Gespräch</b>	L spricht mit den S die Arbeitsanweisungen sowie die Regeln für den Computerraum durch. Dann bittet er die S, sich in je zwei weibliche und männliche Gruppen aufzuteilen.
<b>GA</b>	 In der Gruppenarbeitsphase werden die Aufgaben zunächst am Computer (1–3), später im Klassenraum bearbeitet. Es bietet sich an, ins Klassenzimmer zurückzukehren, sobald die Gruppen die Songtexte gefunden und ausgedruckt haben, so dass niemand versucht ist, sich anderweitig am Computer zu beschäftigen.
<b>Ergebnissicherung</b>	Im Klassenraum teilt L den S verschiedenfarbige Marker und je ein DIN-A2-Poster aus. Die S malen und schreiben die ihnen wichtigen Aspekte auf das Poster, das sie dann den anderen S vorstellen. Es können entweder 2 oder 4 Poster entstehen ( <b>think-pair-share</b> muss also nicht verpflichtend sein). Der Dialog / Das Gedicht aus Aufgabe 4 kann je nach Wunsch der S in EA, PA oder GA erarbeitet werden.
<b>Klassengespräch</b>	Nach Ende der GA werden nun im Klassenverband die Ergebnisse der vier Gruppen präsentiert, wobei zunächst per Poster die Songs bzw. <i>the story behind the song</i> (Group B-Mädchen) vorgestellt werden, danach die verschiedenen S-Arbeiten vorgelesen werden. Daran anschließen kann sich eine Diskussion, in der geklärt wird, wie die S der jeweils anderen Großgruppe die in dem Videomaterial vorgestellten Handlungsalternativen einschätzen.
<b>Lösungsvorschlag</b>	<p><b>1</b> Online-Recherche für die Songtexte, Songs bzw. für das Interview bei „Group B, females“</p> <p><b>2</b> Individuelle Antworten in den Gruppen</p> <p><b>3</b> <b>Creed – ‘With arms wide open’:</b></p> <p><b>1<sup>st</sup> Verse / Stanza</b>  <i>The first-person narrator reflects on some life-changing piece of news he’s just received. He prays and then decides the change will impact his life positively – he is looking forward to it.</i></p> <p><b>Chorus</b>  <i>The change has to do with a person whom the narrator welcomes with open arms. He promises to show him everything. However, it is not yet specified what exactly the word ‘everything’ encompasses. The scene takes place in a friendly atmosphere (under the sunlight).</i></p>

**2<sup>nd</sup> Verse / Stanza**

The narrator doubts his ability to face what lies ahead of him. He then gathers up his courage ("I'll take a breath"), takes his girlfriend's hand ("her"), and together they look their future in the eye. Now the reason for his anxiety becomes clear: She is expecting a baby – the person to whom the narrator will show "everything".

**Extended Chorus**

First four lines → Chorus. Second four lines: The baby is born ("Now everything has changed"), the narrator reiterates that he welcomes his child into the world with open arms and that he will show him/her love and everything else.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Verse / Stanza**

The narrator prays for his child to be wiser than he was himself and hopes that he/she will turn their life into something special. Apparently, the narrator feels like he himself has not lived up to all he could have been, but he wants to ensure that his child won't miss that chance.

**Mark Schultz – 'Everything to me':****1<sup>st</sup> Verse / Stanza (the present and the past)**

The first-person narrator reflects on the day his birth mom gave him up for adoption and empathizes with her situation. He is sure she must have been endlessly sad, but wanted the best for her son, which is why she decided she would give up her own child so that he could have a better life.

**Chorus 1 (the past = narrator's childhood)**

The narrator describes his wonderful childhood with the loving parents who adopted him. He assures his birth mom that she made the right decision.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Verse / Stanza (the present)**

The narrator wonders if his mother would recognize him if they met on the street and if she would hug him or let him walk by with a smile in her heart, knowing that she did the right thing. He hopes she would be proud of him.

**Chorus 2 (the present = narrator's adulthood: wedding day)**

The narrator describes the day he married his beautiful wife. He is sure that this happiness is what his mother would have wanted for him.

**Bridge (the future = the shared hereafter)**

The narrator imagines meeting his birth mom in heaven, running into her arms to hug her, and sharing his good life on earth with her.

**Chorus 3 (the present = narrator's adulthood: his own fatherhood)**

The narrator shares with the listener that he now has a wonderful family of his own and that he is doing the same things with his son that his parents did with him. He reiterates his gratefulness to his birth mom for presenting him with the gift of life.

**4 Female groups**

**Group A** Watching the music video to 'Everything to me' is going to significantly impact Alicia. She is in the very same situation as the girl from the music video, thus watching the video and listening to Mark Schultz's lyrics will be something of an emotional challenge for Alicia. This challenge should trigger a process of introspection and may put her on an 'emotional rollercoaster'. (The students are given free reign on how to put this process of introspection and evaluation into a fitting narrative frame.)

**Group B** Mark had never really thought much of his birth mom; in fact he had always felt rejected by her. Then one day he happened to talk to a lady who had quite a different idea about the role of birth moms for one's life. She explained to Mark that his birth mom had actually shown him her love for him by giving him away. She opted neither for an abortion, nor for keeping and raising him under very difficult circumstances. Instead, she gave him up after having been pregnant with him for nine months so that he could have the best life

possible. Thus, Mark realized that his birth mom had actually done what he called 'the most unselfish thing' by giving him up for adoption. Even though it probably broke her heart at the time, she decided that what was best for her son was to be raised in a real family that could provide for him. The impact of this conversation on Mark's life was so important that he decided to turn his thoughts concerning the matter into a song to share with others.

Second question: Individuelle Antworten

#### **Male groups**

**Group A** The narrator in the song 'With Arms Wide Open' appears to be a bit older and more mature than Sam from Slam. Whereas Sam tries everything to run away from his 'problem', the narrator considers his situation (prayer as a kind of reflection) and then embraces it. He is looking for solutions and when he starts doubting his own abilities, he knows he can rely on his girlfriend because they stand united in this situation ("take her by my side"). His relationship to her gives him strength. Sam is scared of other people's reactions to Alicia's pregnancy, especially his mom's reaction, and does not have the same kind of strong relationship with Alicia the narrator from 'With Arms Wide Open' seems to have with his girlfriend. In fact, Sam and Alicia had broken up before she realized she was pregnant and he was actually seeing other girls. His solution is to run away and to never have sex again, which obviously is no solution at all because it can't undo what's already happened.

**Group B** Individuelle Antworten

#### **Hinweis zu den Medien**

Im Rahmen des Online-Projekts soll unterschwellig gleichzeitig die Schulung von Informationsbeschaffung über das Internet stattfinden. Lassen Sie deshalb am besten die S selbst die Texte\* und Musikvideos finden. Den meisten S dürfte Letzteres nicht schwerfallen, aber bei den Liedtexten müssen die S dann darauf achten, dass nicht alles, was im Netz steht, automatisch richtig ist.

*\*Anmerkung der Redaktion: Auch wenn die S im Rahmen der Recherchearbeit die Songtexte selber ausfindig machen sollen, so hätten wir gerne Ihnen, den Unterrichtenden, die Songtexte zur Verfügung gestellt, was jedoch aus Copyright-Gründen bei dieser Online-Veröffentlichung nicht möglich war. Vielen Dank für Ihr Verständnis.*