

My Uncle Is Not Pablo Escobar



**LEARNING
RESOURCE PACK**



This learning resource pack, created by Brixton House, is designed to support students' learning before and after watching *My Uncle Is Not Pablo Escobar*.

It provides structured activities, discussion prompts and creative exercises to help students engage with the play's key themes, characters and cultural context.

Artist Statement

By Elizabeth Alvarado

As a British-born Ecuadorian, seeing Latin American faces like mine within the arts was not the norm for me. I grew up dreaming of being a writer and actress but was surrounded with disbelief that the arts could provide a Latin American girl from South London a stable career/life. Luckily, I had a mother who encouraged me to dream. My short-lived experience at the Pauline Quirke Academy gave me hope, however, I chose to leave to ease financial burdens at home, as many of us do: we sacrifice what we love because we see what it costs our parents.

If I couldn't afford to enter the artistic world, I would focus on my community. The Advocacy Academy inspired me to question my social 'place' as a 'working class' person. I began thinking about why so few Latin American students reached higher education. The deterrent was money. Many couldn't access loans due to legal status, feared debt, or didn't know bursaries and scholarships existed. I didn't know.

At the end of my fellowship, I spoke in Parliament to MP Helen Hayes asking for better teacher training so migrant students received

clearer information about grades, qualifications, loans, bursaries, scholarships, applications and UCAS. She agreed. This became the LatinXcluded campaign, calling for representation and ethnic boxes for Latin American people on the UK Census.

Later, with Valentina Andrade, Tommy Ross-Williams and Lucy Wray, we created a play about Latin American dual identities, balancing arts knowledge with lived experience. Joana Nastari later joined as our dramaturg and eventually co-creator.

If someone had told 17-year-old me I would co-create and co-write a show that sold out on a real stage, I would never have believed them. This journey taught me the importance of allyship and breaking barriers for young people from global majorities.

Being a writer is not about publication, but about not giving up and believing in your work. Putting pen to paper makes you a writer. If you are a young Latin American person with dreams that feel closed off, don't let that deter you. Keep dreaming. Keep doing. Keep writing. Keep believing.

Introduction

The pack focuses on four main areas:

- » **Latinx Culture and Identity**
Students explore the richness and diversity of Latinx communities, moving beyond stereotypes and understanding how culture, migration, language and media shape identity.
- » **Debate and Critical Thinking**
Activities encourage students to analyse power, question social structures, and discuss complex issues such as inequality, privilege, and socio-economic systems.
- » **Script Work and Co-writing**
Students actively explore drama and storytelling by analysing character motivations, interpreting dialogue. These activities develop communication, collaboration, and critical thinking skills and confidence in expressing ideas. By stepping into the perspectives of different characters, students gain a deeper understanding of cultural context and social issues.
- » **Local Socio-Economic and Intergenerational Politics**
Students are invited to reflect on how class, opportunity, and family history influence communities and individuals, making connections between the play's narrative and their own lives.

By combining creative exploration with critical reflection, this pack helps students develop skills in analysis, communication and collaboration, while deepening their understanding of identity, justice and the structures that shape society.

Teachers' Night:

From 6pm, Tuesday 14 April

Join us on Tuesday 14 April to watch *My Uncle Is Not Pablo Escobar* and to speak to Brixton House's Creative and Civic Engagement Team.

Tickets to this event are free;
RSVP [here](#) by Friday 20 March at 5pm.

Schools Matinees:

2.30pm, Thursday 16 April
2.30pm, Wednesday 29 April

If you would like to bring a school group to see *My Uncle Is Not Pablo Escobar*, please fill out this [Schools Booking Form](#), indicating how many student and staff tickets you would like.

Schools Workshops:

21 April 2026
28 April 2026

Enjoy creative workshops exploring the process behind the making of the show, with some writing and devising exercises that will see student groups construct and develop their own 'heist' narratives tackling a social issue of their choice.

About the show

My Uncle Is Not Pablo Escobar

was created by Valentina Andrade, Elizabeth Alvarado, Lucy Wray, Tommy Ross-Williams and Joana Nastari, and is rooted in the lives and experiences of Valentina Andrade & Elizabeth Alvarado.

With the real-life social and cultural themes, and magical realism present throughout, this pack will break down ways in which you can use this play as a starting point in the classroom for both sit-down conversations and dramatic explorations.

This pack also contains key insight from the makers of the production: interviews with the creators and activity ideas from those who made the show what it is today.

We recognise that some of the themes of the show can be particularly heavy, especially in the present day. We encourage you to check in with your students after the production and encourage them to seek any support they may benefit from.

[Watch an interview with the show's co-creators.](#)

Character synopsis

A breakdown of each fictional character

Alejandra



- Confident, bold, a natural leader, but someone who has developed self-protective strategies to hide themselves.
- Takes charge in difficult situations, always thinking ahead.
- Can be stubborn – she trusts her instincts more than anyone else's.
- Motivates the group, challenges stereotypes directly.

Honey



- The heart of the group – sensitive, caring, and often sees the human side in tricky situations.
- Artistic and creative in her approach to challenges.
- Sometimes hesitates or doubts herself but brings empathy to the team.
- Practical and pragmatic.

Character synopsis

A breakdown of each fictional character

Lucia



- The “big dreamer” of the group who has high ambitions for herself and others.
- Good at problem-solving and organising.
- Less emotional, focuses on getting things done.
- Sometimes doesn’t show how they really feel
- Energetic, engaging and persuasive
- Empathetic team player

Catalina



- Energetic, charismatic and witty.
- Uses comedy and charm to defuse tension and manipulate situations in their favour.
- Bold in risky situations, loves adventure.
- Sometimes takes things lightly, which can be read as brusque or offensive by others.
- High functioning and has learnt to compartmentalise emotions to continue driving forward.

Exercise 1

Introduce the play, key ideas and explore stereotypes before watching the performance.

Starter Questions:

What is a stereotype?

Give examples from TV, film, music or everyday life. Small discussions on how stereotypes can be unfair, limiting or misleading.

Introduction to the play:

What do you think this play might be about based on the title? This can encourage predictions and conversations.

Contact:

Read a short synopsis aloud or show a short extract from the play. Teachers can highlight that the play explores identity and how people are represented.

Activity:

Character mind map.

Students create a mind map about the women within the play. Include name, personality traits, strengths, weaknesses etc. Students will return to this after watching the performance to see if their ideas have changed.

Don't forget:

Alongside the fictional characters, co-creators Elizabeth and Valentina also appear as themselves in the show. During the 'interruptions', the actors step out of character and address the audience directly.

Exercise 2

Key themes of the play

Objective:

Understand key themes including stereotypes, identity, crime vs perception, friendship and fear.

List of key themes in the production:

- Identity
- Belonging
- Friendship
- Family ties
- Travel
- Separation
- Latinx diaspora
- Work and employment
- Citizenship
- Immigration
- Political corruption
- Representation
- Stereotypes

Key artistic themes:

- Live art interruptions
- Telenovela
- Heist genre

Objective:

Help students explore key themes in the play and understand the process of co-creating the show.

Starter Activity: Co-Creation

- Introduce the process of co-creating the show, using excerpts from the transcript of the conversation between Valentina Andrade and Tommy Ross-Williams (from the paperback).

Activity 1: Match the Theme

- Students match a theme to a moment in the play: Identity, immigration, stereotypes, representation and belonging. Set up stations highlighting different themes within the play.
- Students rotate through stations and answer:
 - Where do we see this theme?
 - Which character links to it most?

Drama activity suggestion: Improvisation. Students will create a short original scene inspired by one of the play's themes.

Character & voice hot seating:

Students work with the extract and hot-seat one character. They must answer in role, using only the information and subtext from the script.

To build character understanding and linking to the text.

Freeze frame to action:

Students create a freeze-frame of a key moment from the extract, bring it to life with one line from the script and one physical action.

To encourage confidence and support vocal and physical skills.

Line shift/ intention:

Students perform the extract twice, each time with a different intention e.g. to overpower, to educate.

[Download the script excerpt here](#)

Writers' Room Activity

Co-creating a heist narrative fighting injustice

Warm up

This exercise explores one of the key aspects of co-creating, co-making or co-writing: the principal of YES/AND. This concept comes from improvisation and encourages mutual respect, resulting in creative ideas built on and developed in an exciting and productive way.

Set-up: get into pairs, label yourselves A and B

» Round 1:

A suggests to B things to do together.
B answers 'no' to every suggestion.

» Round 2:

B suggests to A things to do together.
A answers 'yes, but...' to every suggestion.

» Round 3:

A suggests to B things to do together.
B answers every suggestion with 'yes, and'.

Discuss:

how did it feel each time, to be person A and B?

Reflect:

how might this apply to making something creatively together?

The following exercise explores generating ideas, working collectively on a writing project, and writing individually on an aspect of story.

My Uncle Is Not Pablo Escobar uses the tropes of heist movies to create our fictional narrative: assembling a charismatic crew of diverse characters with specific expertise, meticulous planning, unforeseen complications and an audacious infiltration of an event at a high-security institution.

Heist movie protagonists are normally thieves who use the proceeds to increase their wealth and fulfil personal dreams. In *My Uncle Is Not Pablo Escobar*, the criminality of the international banking system is highlighted, based on the real-life HSBC money laundering scandal, with the protagonists fighting for economic justice and reparations, rather than individual wealth.

Writers' Room Activity

Co-creating a heist narrative fighting injustice

Working individually, answer these three prompts. Set a timer for 1 minute for each prompt. Use the opportunity to make decisions quickly and try not to judge what you've written:

- » Write down 5 things you know about.
- » Write down 3 things that you think are unfair in the world.
- » Write 5 things you've never seen (and would like to see) on stage.

In groups of 3, share your answers. Which do you respond to strongly as a group? Which interest, intrigue or excite you?

Using inspiration from the discussion, decide together on a 'heist' narrative, where the goal is to tackle one of your injustices. Spend 30–45 minutes writing one scene of your heist narrative individually. It could be meeting the individuals involved, the break in, or the aftermath. Don't worry about the entire narrative. It's a draft so explore the story and characters by doing it, be prepared for it to be terrible, and have fun.

Think about:

- » Showing character through action
- » Revelation vs concealment – let the audience catch up (get in late, out early)
- » YES/AND
- » Practice courage of convictions, make decisions in short time. Go with things that excite you

Debate Activity 1:

Ethics vs Safety

Debate motion:

“Individuals should always speak out against wrongdoing, even if it puts themselves or their family at risk.”

How to facilitate

- » Split the class into two teams: one supporting the motion, one opposing.
- » Ask students to use examples from ***My Uncle Is Not Pablo Escobar*** to justify their stance (e.g. the women exposing the crime or staying silent).
- » Encourage consideration of:
 - Civic responsibility and justice
 - Personal and family safety
 - Long-term consequences for the community
- » After the debate, students can reflect by asking them if their opinions changed and why.

Debate Activity 2:

Who is responsible for justice?

Debate motion:

Ordinary people should take action to fight injustice, not just the government. Or simplified, ‘regular people should take action to fight injustice’.

This can strengthen students critical thinking skills, civic awareness and healthy discussions within a classroom.

For more information about
our education work, please visit
[brixtonhouse.co.uk/take-part/
schools-activities](https://brixtonhouse.co.uk/take-part/schools-activities)

