



Activist is the third powerful and immersive YA verse novel from acclaimed author Louisa Reid. Tackling the sexual abuse and misogyny endemic in Secondary Schools, this is a novel about activism in all its forms, about speaking out and standing up for what's right.

Cassie's school is enmeshed in a scandal when a female student anonymously posts about the sexual abuse she has suffered and the school fails to act properly. As accusations start flying, a powerful movement arises in the school, with calls for those responsible to be punished – not just the students but the school whose environment has allowed this sort of behaviour to happen, unchecked, for so long.



LOUISA REID has spent most of her life reading. And when she's not doing that she's writing stories, or imagining writing them at least. An English teacher, her favourite part of the job is sharing her love of reading and writing with her pupils. Louisa lives with her family in the north-west of England and is proud to call a place near Manchester home.

Louisa writes about things that she thinks are important to young people, and all people generally, really.

'An anthem to raising your voice, to standing your ground and to the friends who help you find hope where none seemed possible. Exquisite.'

Amy Beashel

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- Activity: Discuss Political Activism.
2. Task 2: Conflict
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3. Task 3: Debate
- Activity: Prepare arguments for and against the censorship of certain types of speech.
4. Task 4: Protest
- Activity: Write a verse and chorus of a protest song/rap.
5. Task 5: Change (See PowerPoint: Activism - slides 16)
- Activity: Design a poster with the prompt: Change Will Come.



Cassie and her friends are fighting a war on two fronts: against a rising tide of male violence against women and systemic misogyny, and against a redevelopment which aims to destroy an area of natural beauty to build luxury apartments.

TASK 1 - Activism

Show slides 1-10 of **PowerPoint: Activism** showing activists and discuss the causes they fight for.

Which of the causes do you believe to be most important?

What makes a cause worth fighting for?

Which causes do you support?

Share slides 11/12/13.

How can young people become involved in political activism?

TASK 2 - Conflict

EXTRACT 1: Read pages 10-21

ACTIVIST is primarily about sexism and misogyny in schools. In this scene Cassie stands up to boys who have sent inappropriate material to the girls' phones. Read and discuss the scene.

Can you empathise with Cassie and her friends?

How would you have handled the conflict between the girls and the boys?

How did it make you feel?

Cassie is enraged by the boys' treatment of the girls and understandably finds it hard not to show her anger and despair. What advice would you give to her?

Write a rant in which you express your feelings about a situation that makes you angry or which you feel is unfair.

TASK 3- Debate

EXTRACT 2: Read pages 186-201

Cassie tries to make herself heard in a school assembly, but Henry takes the opportunity to spread his misogynist message.

Read the scene and discuss the speeches delivered by the students.

Should this "debate" have been allowed to take place?

What is the difference between free speech and hate speech?

TASK: This house believes that certain types of speech or expression should be censored.

Divide the class into two and prepare arguments for and against the above motion.



TASK 4 - Protest

EXTRACT 3: Read pages 257-277

Cassie and her friends come together in their mission to change the school. Their strike, bolstered by song, is a powerful means of protest. Listen to some protest songs (links also on slide 15 of **PowerPoint: Activism**).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrVLL7soS1U> Helen Reddy: I am Woman

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOCWma5vOiQ> Bikini Kill: Rebel Girl

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ratQlft_G5c Joni Mitchell: Big Yellow Taxi

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A134hShx_gw Aretha Franklin: Respect

Students might have favourites of their own to share!

Discuss the impact of the lyrics.

The lyrics of Billie Holiday's *Strange Fruit* or Bob Dylan's *Blowin' in the Wind* could be used but teachers will know their own classes best.

Discuss what makes a great protest song.

TASK: Write a verse and chorus of a protest song/rap.

"Protest songs give a social movement a soundtrack."

Decide what you want to change, whether it be the minds of the people who disagree with your ideals, or the complacency of those who agree with you, so you can energize them into action.

- **Memorable chorus**
- **Direct title**
- **Be honest and true**
- **Use startling and arresting imagery**

TASK 5- Change

EXTRACT 4: Read: Page 311 - end

Discuss Ursula Le Guin's words on slide 16 of **PowerPoint: Activism**.

In **ACTIVIST** the rainbow is a symbol of hope; share ideas about how Le Guin's volcano and the symbol of the rainbow convey ideas about hope/protest/possibility.

TASK: Design a poster with the prompt: Change Will Come.

It might help to link your poster to a cause you care about – eg: rights for girls and women, anti-racism, climate change etc.

Choose an image to develop ideas around; think about what symbolises hope and possibility for you in the context of your cause.

Use words and images on your poster to create a powerful and striking visual representation of hope.