

## Task for *Evil Genius*

### Key themes

In her conversation about the themes in *Evil Genius*, Catherine Jinks talks about the importance of belonging and forming your own identity. For some characters in the novel, forming a sense of belonging can be difficult. Brendan has Asperger's Syndrome and Sonja has Cerebral Palsy.

#### **Asperger Syndrome**

Asperger Syndrome now comes under the single umbrella term of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It is classified as a developmental disorder that affects how the brain processes information. People with Asperger Syndrome have a wide range of strengths, weaknesses, skills and difficulties. Common characteristics include difficulty in forming friendships, communication difficulties (such as a tendency to take things literally), and an inability to understand social rules and body language.

Although Asperger Syndrome cannot be cured, appropriate intervention and experience can help people to develop skills, use strategies to compensate and help build up coping skills. Social skills training, which teaches people how to behave in different social situations, is often considered to be of great value to those with Asperger Syndrome.

Watch the following clip and make notes about the film techniques used by the composer to successfully convey ideas about living with Asperger Syndrome.

[Asperger Syndrome – Understanding Asperger's in Adults](#)

#### **Cerebral Palsy**

Cerebral Palsy is an umbrella term that refers to a group of disorders affecting a person's ability to move. It is due to damage to the developing brain either during pregnancy or shortly after birth.

Cerebral Palsy affects people in different ways and can affect body movement, muscle control, muscle coordination, muscle tone, reflex, posture and balance. Although Cerebral Palsy is a permanent life-long condition, some of these signs of Cerebral Palsy can improve or worsen over time. People who have Cerebral Palsy may also have visual, learning, hearing, speech, epilepsy and intellectual impairments.

Watch the following clip and make notes about the film techniques used by the composer to successfully convey ideas about belonging and being different.

[Mat – A young man with cerebral palsy inspires others](#)

#### **Activity**

Choose one of these clips and explain how the composer has successfully used film and/or narrative techniques to make you think more about being different.