 Damaged goods activity

Activity 1

Before reading the story have a discussion or class debate on the following issues.

* “For all our desire to want the media to represent real people society is still obsessed with physical perfection.”
* “We are constantly told to never judge a book by its cover but it seems hard not to judge a person by their physical appearance.”
* “Outward imperfection reveals inner nobility while outward perfection is a sign of self-centred narcissism.”
* “Physically beautiful people have no problems with relationships.”
* “Feeling is healthy but feeling so much that it becomes an obsession is damaging.”
* “The way we judge people says more about us than the people we judge.”
* “There is no such thing as normal when discussing human nature, we are all damaged in our own unique way.”
* “The sum total of a person’s identity is not totally connected to their physical appearance.”

Activity 2

Explain the meaning of the title and who it could relate to?

Activity 3

Why is Gail (the narrator) interested in Vic’s childhood and Alison?

Activity 4

The story explores the identity of three characters. The links between them reveal more about the deep nature of character. Identify five things reveal about Alison with a quote from the text. Then explain what this implies about Vic’s personality. Finally explain what this then reveals about Gail the narrator. Use the Character Table to complete the activity.

Activity 5

Using ALARM write three paragraphs for the following question:

How does Winton capture the idea that it is the imperfections in a person’s character that emphasises a person’s identity in “Damaged Goods”?

Activity 6

Contrast the narrative voice of Gail in “Damaged Goods” to Vic’s narrative voice in “The Commission” or “Big World”. How does the female voice differ from the male voice in Winton’s writing? What gender characteristics are reflected in the recounts?