

A Children's Theatre Partnership  
and Rose Theatre production

'A LOVELY,  
WARM-HEARTED  
CELEBRATION OF COURAGE  
AND FRIENDSHIP'  
The Guardian

**LIVE  
ON  
STAGE**

CAN'T  
WAIT!

DON'T MISS IT!

# THE BOY AT THE BACK OF THE CLASS

Based on the novel by  
**Onjali Q. Raúf**  
Adapted by  
**Nick Ahad**

RESOURCE PACK FOR TEACHERS  
for the study of

## **The Boy at the Back of the Class**



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



Creative Resource by





# INTRODUCTION

## How to use the Resource Pack

This pack contains practical activity ideas for teachers to choose from, to be used alongside the study of ***The Boy at the Back of the Class* by Onjali Q. Rauf**.

Our activities use creative, active approaches to explore different themes. The activities can be used in any order and you do not have to use all of them. They can be adapted for use with different themes and events from the story, or with other stories you study.

Activity ideas are split into different sections, which can be found in the contents.

## Getting to Know the Story

**If you have a class set of books, ask pupils to look at the back of their copy. If not, provide *The Boy at the Back of the Class* Blurb:**

*There used to be an empty chair at the back of my class, but now a new boy called Ahmet is sitting in it.*

*He's nine years old (just like me), but he's very strange. He never talks and never smiles and doesn't even like lemon sherbets, which are my favourite!*

*But then I learned the truth: Ahmet isn't strange at all. He's a Refugee who's run away from a War. A real one. With bombs and bullies that hurt people. The more I find out about him, the more I want to help.*

*That's where my best friends Josie, Michael and Tom come in. Because together we've come up with a plan...*

## Activity

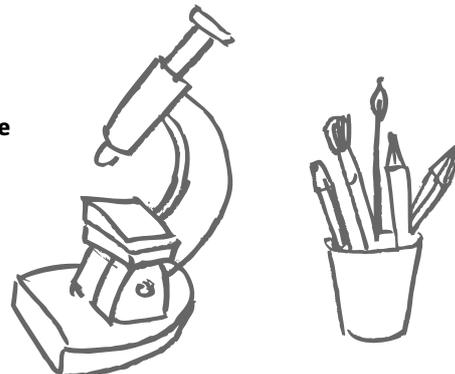
**In groups, explain how a blurb is designed to entice you to read the book – pick a book you are currently reading.**

### Discuss:

- What do we know from the blurb?
- What do we want to find out?
- Does the story look predictable?

**From the blurb alone, ask pupils to make predictions about the story. They could act these out, write them, create a storyboard, or just do this through class discussion.**

**You can revisit these throughout the story, and in particular at the end, to review what they got right. Hopefully, there will be a lot they get wrong so that you can discuss why it is good that the blurb does not give the story away.**



## KEY THEMES

Whilst studying a story, it is useful to identify key themes which arise at specific times or throughout the narrative. Create a list and utilise them for the activities below.

### Activities

- If you are focusing on one theme, cut out the questions under that heading and give each group a different question. Groups discuss and make notes then feedback to the class. Open up discussion and questioning from the rest of the class to share their thoughts. Alternatively, you could give each group a different theme to look at, with a few questions from this theme.
- Being each lesson with a thinking point. Display the day's question on the board for when the pupils come into class. They can think about it and make notes until class is ready to begin. Open the floor to ideas and discussion.
- At the end of each lesson, give pupils a question to think about. They should have time to jot down initial thoughts, then send them away to think about it for the next lesson. They might wish to do some research at home as well.

These questions can also be woven into class discussions or activities and the themes may arise naturally.

#### KS2 CURRICULUM LINKS

*Articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions; Maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments.*

#### KS3 CURRICULUM LINKS

*Using Standard English confidently in a range of formal and informal contexts, including classroom discussion; studying setting, plot and characterisation, and the effects of these.*

#### KS1 - KS4 CURRICULUM LINKS

*Use discussion in order to learn; they should be able to elaborate and explain clearly their understanding and ideas; Develop comprehension skills through pupils' experience of high-quality discussion with the teacher.*



$$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$$

# CHARACTERS

## Character Maps

In groups, pupils draw round one of them on large paper (or just draw a big body outline) and write the character's name at the top. Pupils should record what they know about the character using evidence from the novel.

- What do others say about them?
- What do they do?
- What do they say about themselves?
- What can pupils infer about the characters?

They should use quotes and their own words. This is done most effectively by starting when we first meet the character and revisiting it throughout the story (especially after key events/ changes or extra information).

### Alternatives to filling this in:

- Use a different colour each time so they can see what has been added at different points
- Write their first impressions inside the body and new information outside
- Write what they know for definite inside and what they infer outside

#### KS2 CURRICULUM LINKS

*Drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence.*

#### KS3 CURRICULUM LINKS

*Making inferences and referring to evidence in the text; Studying setting, plot and characterization, and the effects of these.*

#### KS3 CURRICULUM LINKS

*Learning new vocabulary, relating it explicitly to known vocabulary and understanding it with the help of context and dictionaries.*

#### KS1 - KS4 CURRICULUM LINKS

*Be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role.*

## Getting into Character

**Think of words to describe each character. Pupils can come up with their own words or use descriptions from the book.**

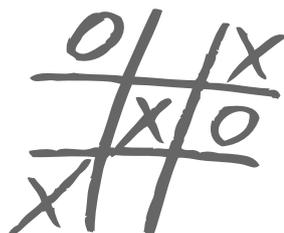
Ask pupils to become different characters and walk around the space. Think about their posture, facial expression, place, balance etc.

Provide different situations from the story – pupils should show their feelings physically as the character.

Ask different pupils how they are feeling, can they elaborate using different descriptive vocabulary?

**How might the characters act differently in the presence of someone else, or when put into a different situation.**

- What about Ahmet coming to a new country?
- What about Ahmet starting a new school?



# EXPLORATION OF PREJUDICE & DISCRIMINATION

# 4

## NOUN

Preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience:

## LAW

Harm or injury that results or may result from some action or judgement

## VERB

Give rise to prejudice in someone; to make biased



Prejudice is an **unreasonable dislike** of someone or something, or an **unreasonable preference** for one group over another for example, racial prejudice. If you prejudice someone or something, you influence them so that they are unfair in some way

Common features of prejudice include having negative feelings and holding stereotyped beliefs about members of a group, as well as a tendency to discriminate against them. In society, we often see prejudices based on characteristics like race, sex, religion, culture, and more.

## Word Origin

**C13:** from Old French *préjudice*, from Latin *praejūdicium* a preceding judgment, disadvantage, from *prae* before + *jūdicium* trial, sentence, from *jūdex* a judge

## Activity

Looking at the definition of prejudice, particularly the fact that it is made up of the words **Pre (before) and Judge (Pre-Judging)** - ask the class to think about the difference between **FACT and OPINION**

### Fact vs Opinion

**Facts** are statements that can be proven

**Facts** may be true or false

But **facts** can be proven

- Statistically women live longer than men (True)
- Most buses weigh more than cars (True)
- There are 10 inches in a foot (False)

**Opinions** are statements that can be argued

**Opinions** may be supported with facts

**Opinions** cannot be proven

- Tennis is the best sport
- Pizza is delicious
- Maths is the hardest subject

Ask the class to come up with a list of facts and a list of opinions – discuss the differences

**What are facts and opinions? - BBC Bitesize**

**Fact and Opinion Worksheets (superteacherworksheets.com)**

Think about how the language we use affects our opinions using examples from Boy at the Back of the Class. Are the following examples fact or opinion?

## Key Question for Debate

On page 18, the narrator says “Sometimes I think everyone likes to believe a lie even when they know it’s a lie because it is more exciting than the truth”. Does your class agree?

Split the class into groups to represent each side of the argument: yes, it’s okay to lie because it’s more exciting or no, you should never lie under any circumstances They should plan their opening arguments and be ready for questions.

- Conduct a debate by having each side present their opening arguments, then open the floor for each group to ask each other questions. You as the teacher could also ask questions to encourage deeper thinking.
- Use the ‘Poll Everywhere’ or ‘Padlet’ apps to share ideas and take a vote. Remember to encourage pupils to vote based on the arguments rather than their personal views. There are a few ways you could make the vote fair:
  - Present the debate in front of another class and ask them to vote;
  - Choose a few pupils to be the judges, who could get on with a different task (e.g. writing questions to ask the teams) then have them judge (these could be pupils working at a greater depth, or those who work better in a small group);
  - Split the class in half, and have two debates happening simultaneously, which are being filmed. Swap films and have the other half of the class vote on the other debate.

**Curriculum Links:** Key Stage 1 & 2 participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates; explain and discuss their understanding of what they have read, including through formal presentations and debates, maintaining a focus on the topic and using notes where necessary; provide reasoned justifications for their views.

## Examples of prejudicial language from Boy at the Back of the Class:



### Activity

In groups or pairs, bring the following quotes to life and discuss your views as a group.

- It’ll cause trouble - you mark my words. They’re only coming to take our jobs. **P31**
- A bother, the whole lot of ‘em! Wouldn’t trust one as far as I could throw ‘em. Just you wait and see – it’s our kids who will suffer just because these ones are coming over to do whatever they like... **P31**
- But my dad said refugee kids are dangerous and that they lie and steal things. He told me to stay away from the new boy and not to talk to him because he was probably a criminal. **P49**
- Look the dangerous kids been let out! Does this mean he doesn’t have a disease? But the kidnappers will be able to see him from here! **P63**
- Imagine! Being a war refugee back in the day? Before they all got loads of benefits and houses nicer than our ones... **P128**
- Oi! Smelly refugee bag **P136**
- Those pesky refugees are only here because they want a piece of our benefits pie! **P226**
- I know you’re not exactly white but you’ve been here long enough to know better - surely? **P226**
- Mrs Abbey once said that I was lucky to have parents from different places, because it meant that I never needed to go on holiday to get a suntan. **P231**
- Ahmet the refugee smells like poo! So we’re gonna stuff him in a bag, And flush him down the loo! **P258**

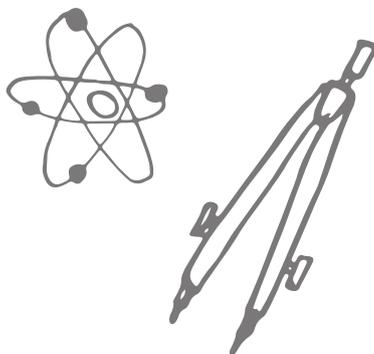
The reasons for prejudice are all different. Some are historic.

## Definition

- **Prejudice** is sometimes based on ignorance. Having the right information and learning about people and situations can overcome many prejudices. Some people don't want to learn as their beliefs make them feel superior. Prejudices can be passed on through families.

Some of the most common types of prejudice:

1. Racism
2. Sexism
3. Ageism
4. Classism
5. Homophobia
6. Nationalism
7. Religious prejudice
8. Xenophobia



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## Examples of Xenophobia

- **Stereotyping** is when a person thinks of all people from a group in the same way – for example refugees. The news and social media can sometimes be responsible for promoting stereotypes.
- **Scapegoating** is an example of a specific type of prejudice. A person or group can be blamed for the wrongs of another person or group. For example, in 1930s Nazi Germany Jews were made scapegoats for the country's economic difficulties.
- **Bullies** have often been the victim of bullying themselves. Some people who have experienced prejudice may also become prejudiced against others.

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## What are the effects of prejudice and discrimination?

- Prejudice and discrimination make the victim feel badly about themselves. When people are undervalued, their self-esteem is negatively affected and their mental health will suffer.
- Prejudice and discrimination can often lead to bullying and other forms of discrimination.
- Prejudice and discrimination can result in fear for what might happen at any moment and fear for what the future might hold.
- Extreme prejudice and discrimination can lead to genocide. This was demonstrated during World War Two, with the killing of six million Jewish people. This is an example of what can happen when prejudice is allowed to develop unchallenged in society.
- The consequences of prejudice and discrimination can lead to individuals and entire communities feeling vulnerable, frightened and worthless.

## Activity

In groups, think of examples of prejudice and discrimination. How could they be changed?

## Positive Discrimination

Not all discrimination is a bad thing. In the last 30 years, laws have been passed so that people with disabilities have better access to buildings and services.

Some companies have set minimum quotas for the number of women in positions of authority. These types of positive actions show that people who have suffered prejudice in the past are able to have a major role in society.

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## Media and Propaganda

Television, radio, internet, social media and print media can influence and shape public opinion both positively and negatively. The use of different words and phrases can help people to sympathise and empathise with refugees, migrants and asylum seekers or can make them feel hostile, scared and discriminatory towards them as a wider group. This can affect how people integrate into a host country.

By looking at the kind of language, photographs, images and individual stories used by the media we can start to understand how public opinion can be manipulated and influenced.

**Refugees** are protected under the 1951 Refugee Convention and “**a host state must provide care for them**”.

**Migrants** are not entitled to protection under the 1951 convention.

**Asylum seekers** are migrants who claim to be refugees but are waiting to have their claim evaluated.

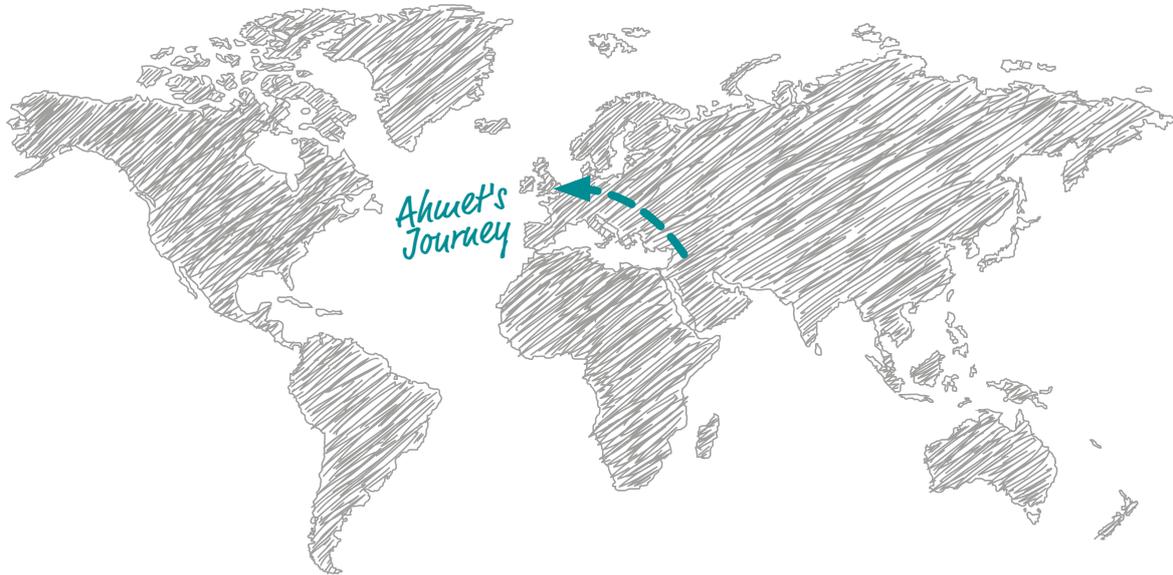
If people are mis-classed as migrants, they are not entitled to the protection of the 1951 Convention. By using the wrong term the media can influence opinion which could lead to people being wrongly categorised.

**Three education activities for young people to challenge discrimination - Amnesty International**

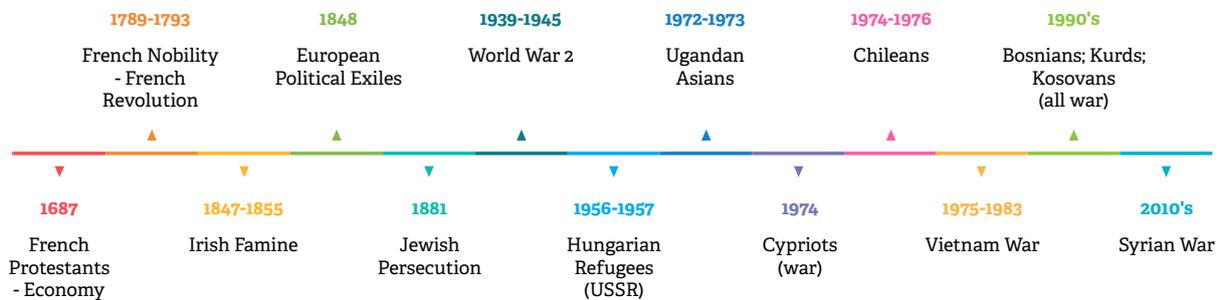


# REFUGEES IN CONTEXT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

# 5



## Timeline of Refugee History in Britain

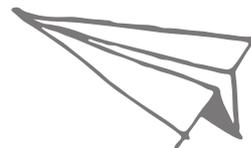


## Definitions

The Refugee Convention definition: "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country". <https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2016/04/in-search-of-safety-complete-teaching-pack.pdf>

Save the Children definition: A refugee is a person who is seeking a safe haven after being forced to flee violence, persecution or war. <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/emergency-response/refugee-children-crisis#:~:text=A%20refugee%20is%20a%20person,flee%20violence%2C%20persecution%20or%20war.>

# Refugees in the context of The Boy at the Back of the Class



## Narrator's Mum p.43

"...refugee children have been forced to run away – because bad people have made it impossible for them to stay. Those bad people drop bombs on their houses and destroy all the beautiful parts of their cities. And the places where refugees used to live have become so horrible and so scary that they can't live in them anymore. So they walk miles and miles and get into boats to travel to countries they've never been to before, and go to strange places they don't know, just so they can find somewhere that's safe enough to live in again."

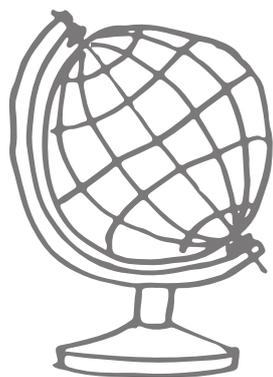
**Narrator** asks "What did the refugees do to make the bad people want to hurt them?"

## Narrator's Mum p.44

"Nothing at all, darling. The bad people are just much stronger than they are, and like to feel big and powerful by bullying them. You see, some people think that by taking things away from other people and hurting them, it gives them more power. And the more power they have, the more they want, and the greedier they get. So they go on hurting more and more people until everyone wants to run away."

## Why people flee their countries

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has been the main driver of asylum applications in the UK recently. War is the main reason people become refugees, such as the Syrian war which led Ahmet to becoming a refugee. People may also flee their countries due to being persecuted for their political beliefs and sexuality. More recently, people are becoming climate refugees, forced to leave their homes because of natural disasters like wildfires and flooding.



## Ahmet's Journey pp. 107-112

Ahmet lived near the Syrian mountains with his mum, dad, sister and cat. However, they had to leave because of the 'big war'. Ahmet narrates how, in Syria, there were buildings on fire, bombs dropping, guns and people on the floor. In their search for safety, they crossed mountains and rivers. During this time, Ahmet was never without his red rucksack. Nowhere was safe for them, so they got on a small boat in search of safety. The narrator describes the boat as being 'flat and round and was orange on the sides, just like the ones I had seen on the news that didn't have any toilets on them. And inside the boat were lots of people, all wearing vests that made them look like puffins'.

Upon reaching Greece, Ahmet and his family 'lived with lots of other people in a tent'. They then went on a long walk, crossing many countries. They were often cold and had to sleep on the hard floor. In France, they came across army tanks and soldiers pointing guns at them. Ahmet concludes his presentation with the following: "Then I come here... and come to school. I like here...no bombs. It safe and I like new friends and teacher and play football'.

## Figures

As of November 2022: 213,597 refugees in the UK. 127,421 pending asylum cases, 5,483 stateless persons. The ongoing war in Ukraine led to an increase in these figures.

In the world, Turkey has the highest number of refugees – 3.7 million, closely followed by Colombia with 1.7 million.

As of September 2022, most asylum claims were from Albania (13,560 cases), followed by Iran (9,652), Afghanistan (6,644), Iraq (6,333) and Syria (4,143).

'Everybody has a right to seek asylum in another country'.

In the UK, most asylum seekers don't have the right to work in the UK and need to rely on state support. They receive £40.85 per person, per week, equating to £5.84 a day for food, sanitation, and clothing).

283,366 have applied for visas through the Ukraine Visa Scheme. Of these, 225,278 have been granted.

Taken from: <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/asylum-uk>

## Syria

13 million have fled Syria since war began in 2012. 6.8 million fled to neighbouring countries – Turkey, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq.

2.4 million Syrian children aren't in school.

## Afghanistan

2.6 million Afghan refugees. 2.2 million of those are in Pakistan and Iran.

### In the news (2020 onwards)

The refugee crisis is in the news on a weekly basis. There are many stories of the increasing number of people arriving on UK shores in small boats in treacherous conditions, with some having lost their lives before arriving on shore. In 2023, the government announced that they would house the asylum seekers on barges on the water. Currently, most are housed in hotels, some having been there since 2020. The barges are thought to replace the hotels and an alleged way to cut down costs. However, conditions are poor, with bacteria having been found in one barge in the water system a few weeks after it opened. The charity Care4Calais says that the barges are unacceptable.

### Policies

#### Illegal Migration act (taken from UNHCR):

The Illegal Migration Act was passed by Parliament on 18 July 2023. It was introduced by the UK Government into the House of Commons on 7 March 2023, when UNHCR expressed profound concern at the implications of what would amount to an asylum ban in the UK.

The Act extinguishes access to asylum in the UK for anyone who arrives irregularly, having passed through a country – however briefly – where they did not face persecution. It bars them from presenting refugee protection or other human rights claims, no matter how compelling their claim may be. In addition, it requires their removal to another country, with no guarantee that they will necessarily be able to access protection there. It creates sweeping new detention powers, with limited judicial oversight.

## Rwanda Policy

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-66051292>

The UK Conservative government has devised a plan that could see asylum seekers being sent to Rwanda, even if they did not come from there. Many members of the opposition have labeled the policy as 'inhuman'. UK charity Asylum Aid took the policy to court. The High Court originally backed the policy, however after the appeal, it has been ruled as 'unlawful'. Despite this, the government remains committed to pursuing the policy.

### Campaigns

Below is a list of popular campaigns that you can look at with your students.

**Amnesty International** – an organisation that focuses on human rights, campaigns against injustice and inequality across the globe.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/>

**Care4Calais** – a charity that delivers vital aid to refugees in Calais and those living in northern France.

<https://care4calais.org/get-involved/campaign/>

**Refugee Action** – provides support to refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. They are also campaigning for a fairer asylum system.

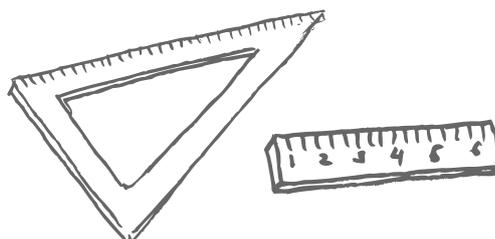
<https://www.refugee-action.org.uk/campaigns/>

**Refugee Council** – provides support and advice to refugees and asylum seekers and support other similar organisations.

<https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/>

**Refugee Week** – a week in June to celebrate refugees and asylum seekers and their contributions, creativity and resilience.

<https://refugeeweek.org.uk/simple-acts/join-the-movement/>



# CREATIVE LITERACY ACTIVITIES

## Writing Activities

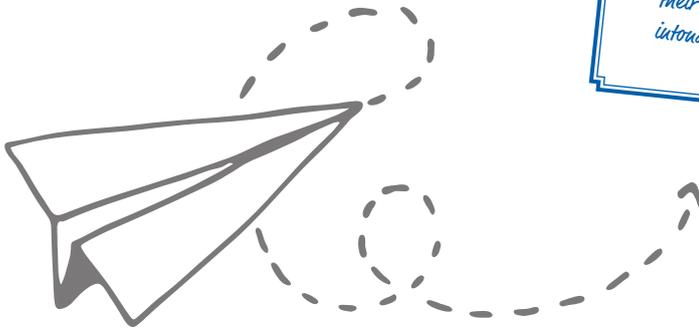
- 1) **The story ends with a happily ever after, Ahmet is reunited with his mother...what might happen next?**  
Create a storyboard/comic strip to continue the story.
- 2) **How would you translate the story to the stage?**  
Choose a scene from the story and write it as a play.
- 3) **The narrator writes a letter to the Queen, asking her to help Ahmet.**  
Write your own letter to a local MP to talk about the refugee crisis.
- 4) **What 10 questions of your own would you ask Ahmet?**
- 5) **Think about the narrator going to Buckingham Palace with her classmate.**  
As the narrator or x, write to an agony aunt. Swap with a partner and send a reply with the advice you would give.
- 6) **Many of the scenes are from the narrator's point of view.**  
Choose a different character and rewrite a scene from their point of view.

### KS1 - KS4 CURRICULUM LINKS

Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adopting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences.

### KS2 CURRICULUM LINKS

Identifying the audience for and purpose of the writing, selecting appropriate form and using other similar writing models for their own; noting and developing initial ideas, drawing or reading and researching where necessary; in writing narratives, considering how authors have developed characters and settings in what pupils have read, listened to or seen performed; perform their own compositions; using appropriate intonation, volume and movement so that meaning is clear.



# Drama Activities

Use the Warm Up exercises to start the lesson and choose any of the development exercises to look at the themes of the book.

These activities can be used for character exploration, developing confidence in performing, oracy, and reflecting on prejudice, status and belonging.

National Curriculum Spoken Language: All pupils should be enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils should be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role. They should have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.

**KS2 SPOKEN LANGUAGE**  
*Pupils should be taught to: listen attentively to spoken language and show understanding by joining in and responding, explore the patterns and sounds of language through songs and rhymes and link the spelling, sound and meaning of words*

**KS3 SPOKEN LANGUAGE**  
*Improvise, rehearse and perform in order to generate language and discuss language use and meaning, using role, intonation, tone, volume, mood, silence, stillness and action to add impact.*

## Warm Up Activities

**Game: Protector/Danger Walk** – who do we feel safe with, who are we frightened by?

**Introduction** – This activity acts as a warm up exercise and explores the ideas of who do we go to for protection and who are we afraid of.

**Learning Objectives** - In this activity the class will explore feeling alone in the space and working by themselves. They will choose a protector and a danger and relate this to the experience of Ahmet a child refugee alone in a new school.

- The group walks around room, filling the space and keeping equal distance from other participants.
- Leader tells group to silently (and without telling anyone) to choose another person as their protector (don't let anyone know who it is) – continue walking but keep as close to the protector as possible without speaking to anyone.
- Leader then tells the group to choose another group member to be a danger/threat to them. Continue walking round the room keeping the protector between them and the danger.
- Keep the room moving in this manner for a few minutes – then ask the group how it felt having to be aware of a constant threat and how it felt to have a protector.

This exercise relates to Ahmets experiences at school with his friends and the bullies.

**Game: Pass the feeling** – sharing emotions

**Introduction** – a warm up exercise to get the group working together and cooperating

**Learning Objectives** - Explore how different facial expressions and body language make us feel. Look at how important body language is in sharing emotion and communication

- In a circle, the leader explains that they will be passing a smile around the circle. (Like pass the clap). Each member smiles at the person next to them one after another.
- Leader then changes the emotion – pass emotions such as scared, hungry, shy, happy, sad.
- Ask the group for suggestions of emotions to pass round.
- Ask the group how it felt when everyone was angry/happy, etc. Did it change the mood in the room? How would it feel if you felt differently from the rest of the room or didn't understand the culture of the emotions.

This exercise relates to Ahmets experiences at school, to universal body language and how this affects those around us. How would it feel if a whole society only shared negative feelings with you? How can we make people feel more welcome into a group or new school or club?

# Development Activities

## Game: Refugees Welcome

**Introduction** - this activity explores and develops the idea of welcome.

**Learning objectives** - explore emotions associated with the idea of feeling welcome,

explore the language associated with feeling welcome and unwelcome, use drama techniques to personally reflect upon and share their ideas.

- Ask young people to find a partner and to share a personal experience of when they have felt unwelcome.

This could be very local to them – perhaps when trying to join in something with friends, starting a new school or could be a wider experience such as arriving somewhere new – perhaps through travel for example. Each person should share their experience of feeling unwelcome.

- Next ask pairs (or merged pairs in larger groups of four) to create a short drama to show the actions and feelings they discussed. This could focus on one experience or they may choose to combine aspects of different experiences.
- Explain that learners will now perform their short drama to each other.
- Their task as an audience is to see how they might change the situation to transform it into one of feeling welcome.
- What would they change and why? If they need guidance suggest that this could include language, body language, gestures etc. If confident you could do this as forum theatre.

### KS3 CURRICULUM LINKS

*During years 5 and 6, teachers should continue to emphasise pupils' enjoyment and understanding of language, especially vocabulary, to support their reading and writing. Pupils' knowledge of language, gained from stories, plays, poetry, non-fiction and textbooks, will support their increasing fluency as readers, their facility as writers, and their comprehension.*



## Game: Character Development

**Introduction** – this exercise encourages students to think about and the mannerisms and characteristics of the different characters in the story.

**Learning development** – encourages the students to think about how others feel and why they may act the way that they do. Encourages empathy and understanding of others situations. Develops characterization and oracy skills

- Ask the group to each choose a character from The Boy at the Back of the Class or the story you have been working on or the teacher can allocate roles.
- The first person sits on a park bench and through movement + actions describes their character and how they are feeling. For example, if this is a confident person, they may have an open posture and confident mannerisms or if it is a shy person they may display a more closed posture and mannerisms that display their insecurities.
- The group leader then asks another character to join them (thinking about their character and their mannerisms). The 2 characters have a short conversation about anything (the weather, football, the news etc.) – concentrating on how their character would act and feel about this interaction.
- Another character joins them and continues with the conversation. The leader can ask characters to leave or join in at any point. Make sure everyone gets a turn.
- Ask the group how it felt to interact with the other characters whilst being in their character. Were there power imbalances? Were they happy or worried to see the other people? Could they understand them? Did they understand the language and body language used? Did they feel like they belonged?

### KS2 CURRICULUM LINKS

*Pupils should be encouraged to use drama approaches to understand how to perform plays and poems to support their understanding of the meaning. These activities also provide them with an incentive to find out what expression is required, so feeding into comprehension.*

### KS3 CURRICULUM LINKS

*maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments, use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas, speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English, participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play/ improvisations and debates, gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)*

**Game: Sub-text**

**Introduction** – this exercise explores how people feel about each other, but how they don't express these feelings verbally.

**Learning Objectives** – to explore how we show our feelings non-verbally through improvisation and other communication styles. To look at how non-verbal communication affects us and our interactions with others

- In pairs - A and B - participants imagine two very polite characters, who don't like each other, meeting in a particular location; for example, at the bus stop, the school playground or in the doctor's waiting room.
- They should consider why the characters don't like each other, but the characters will be too polite to bring up their grievances in the scene.
- However, at key moments they will freeze the action and take turns to step out of the scene and address the audience directly, speaking what is truly on their minds.

For example, character A might say to character B, 'I like your hat!'. They don't really mean this; they're only being polite. So, the action freezes and character A steps out and speaks their real thoughts: 'This is the ugliest hat I have ever seen! What do they think they look like?'

- Even though they don't say what they are thinking, the character's tone of voice, facial expression and body language will convey the subtext of the character's inner thoughts, and thus, tension is created.

In showing back work the audience can try to work out why the characters don't like each other.

**This can be adapted to reflect characters from The Boy at the Back of the Class or other stories.**

**KS3 CURRICULUM LINKS**  
*Identifying themes and conventions in a wide range of books  
 preparing poems and play scripts to read aloud and to perform, showing understanding through intonation, tone, volume and action.*

**KS2 CURRICULUM LINKS**  
*Skills in spoken language form part of this programme of study. In years 5 and 6, pupils' confidence, enjoyment and mastery of language should be extended through public speaking, performance and debate.*

**KS3 SPOKEN ENGLISH**  
*Improvising, rehearsing and performing play scripts and poetry in order to generate languages and discuss language use and meaning, using role, intonation, tone, volume, mood, silence, stillness and action to add impact*

**Game: It's Mine, It's Yours!** – this can be related to Ahmet's bag if relating to The Boy at the Back of the Class.

**Introduction** – Exploring the different importance of belongings and objects to different people.

**Learning outcomes** – Children explore improvisation, language and movement to tell a story.

- Two students have a small object – a stuffed animal or small toy. They are to pretend they both really want to have it or get rid of it and demonstrate different ways of taking the object away or giving it to their partner. They should demonstrate that the object is one of the following:
  - **Precious, valuable, worth a lot of money**
  - **Nasty, old, and something they do not want**
  - **Very heavy, light, sharp, dangerous**
  - **Something about to blow up.**
  - **A hot pan or plate.**
  - **An injured pet.**
- The exercise then develops into short pieces based on the improvisations that the students can share with the group. Relate this to the themes of Boy at the Back of the Class to discuss – how would it feel to not be wanted, emotions about giving things away, bullying etc.



### Game: The Final Chapter

**Introduction** – This exercise encourages to explore the life of the characters beyond the story

**Learning Objectives** – To encourage the students to think about the characters beyond the confines of the book/production of The Boy at the Back of the Class (or story of your choice)

#### What happens next for each of the characters in the story?

- Split into groups and decide to focus on one of the characters from The Boy at the Back of the Class or a story you've been working on.
- Create a silent movie or mime that shows what happens to this character after the book has finished.
- Come back together as a group and share your silent movies.
- Ask for suggestions from the audience about what sounds or words could be added to the silent movie. Try performing the scene again but adding in some of the sound suggestions.
- Advanced option: Create title cards/captions to go alongside particular moments in the silent movie.

## Writing Activity

Using either your role-play or inspiration from another group, write an extra chapter for the story.

Try to see if you can follow the writing style the author uses.

*"Building up a practice of using drama in the classroom allows children to inhabit the story and to have a real ownership over the work. It also shows them that you can participate in literacy even when writing is not your strongest skill - and building up confidence is just another way by which drama can help improve children's writing!"*

*How to use drama for writing in the classroom — West End in Schools*

## Forum Theatre

Forum theatre was first explored by Augusto Boal and can be great for developing ideas. It brings the actors and audience onto an equal playing field. Ideas generated are varied, as audience members can experiment with situations from their own life experiences. As such, forum theatre can work well as a way to explore alternative outcomes for a variety of pieces of devised work.

A scene is shown once and then repeated to the audience, during which any audience member (Boal called them 'spect-actors' can shout 'Stop' and step into the scene, taking the place of one of the characters. The scene then continues in a different way, showing how that audience member can change the situation and gain a better outcome. This can happen several times, with different spect-actors. Actors need to remain in character and improvise their responses, with a facilitator aiding the communication between the actors and the audience.

*Forum theatre - Developing an idea - Edexcel - GCSE Drama Revision - Edexcel - BBC Bitesize.*

#### KS3 CURRICULUM LINKS

*Pupils should understand nuances in vocabulary choice and age-appropriate, academic vocabulary. This involves consolidation, practice and discussion of language. Specific requirements for pupils to discuss what they are learning and to develop their wider skills in spoken language form part of this programme of study. In years 5 and 6, pupils' confidence, enjoyment and mastery of language should be extended through public speaking, performance and debate.*



# APPENDICES

## Reading List

**Who are Refugees and Migrants?  
What Makes People Leave Their Homes  
and Other Big Questions.**

**Author:** Michael Rosen &  
Annemarie Young

**Publisher:** Wayland Books

**Interest level:** 9-11

**You Don't Know What War Is:  
The diary of a young girl from Ukraine.**

**Author:** Yeva Skalietska Translator:  
Cindy Joseph-Pearson

**Publisher:** Bloomsbury Childrens Books

**Interest level:** 9-11

**Leila and the Blue Fox**

**Author:** Kiran Millwood Hargrave  
Illustrator: Tom de Freston

**Publisher:** Hachette Children's Group

**Interest level:** 9-11

**Wisp: A Story of Hope**

**Author:** Zana Fraillon and  
Grahame Baker Smith

**Publisher:** Orchard

**Interest level:** 6-8

**King of the Sky**

**Author:** Nicola Davies Illustrator:  
Laura Carlin

**Publisher:** Walker Books

**Interest level:** 6-9

**The Journey**

**Author:** Francesca Sanna

**Publisher:** Flying Eye Books

**Interest level:** 7-9

*The Refugee Cat Drama Unit (5-11 years) -  
Drama Resource*

*Drama games - A resource for teachers  
(trinitycollege.com)*



# APPENDICES

## Story in 10 Scenes

**Story in 10 Scenes is a great way of getting to know a story, or else recapping what happens.**

- Split the students into 5 or 10 groups depending on the size of your class. Give each group a scene from the **Story in 10 Scenes** (or 2 scenes if you only have 5 groups).
- The groups now rehearse showing this scene to the rest of the class, using 'freeze-action-freeze'. They should freeze in a still image (like a photograph), then bring the action to life, then refreeze into an ending image.
- Students can choose to narrate the action from the written scene, with others performing, or just act out what is being said. They should speak the quote from the story.
- After rehearsing (give around 10 minutes for this, or up to 15 if each group has 2 scenes) stand the groups around the edge of the work space.
- In scene order, the groups perform. When one group finishes, the next starts straight away without a gap.

**KS2 CURRICULUM LINKS**  
*Checking that the book makes sense to them, discussing their understanding and exploring the meaning of words in context; Asking questions to improve their understanding.*

**KS3 CURRICULUM LINKS**  
*Checking their understanding to make sure that what they have read makes sense.*



# APPENDICES

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1.

## A new boy arrives in the school

“Everyone”, said Mrs Khan, as the boy went and stood next to her. “This is Ahmet, and he’ll be joining our class from today. He’s just moved to London and is new to the school, so I hope you’ll all do your very best to make him feel welcome”

2.

## The first fight with Brendan the Bully

Suddenly with a huge roar, Ahmet ran straight at Brendan-the-Bully, and like an angry lion, crashed into him with his head! Brendan-the Bully fell backwards and onto the floor, his legs swinging in the air. We all gasped out loud.

3.

## Ahmet’s story is shared with the children

As we waited for our row to be called out. I looked over my shoulder at Ahmet and wondered what pieces he was missing before he could put his life back together again. It was like a jigsaw, I thought.

4.

## Overhearing adults talking about government plans to “close” the border

“Oh, ain’t it horrible”, the man said. “Look at what they’re saying about refugees! Border restrictions as of next month...I knew this would happen”

The woman shook her head, looking over his shoulder at the paper. “Those poor people. Where are they meant to go? Back to that nightmare they left behind, or left to starve in France?”....”Says here the borders will be closed by the end of the month. So that’s all the racists made happy then!”

5.

## The children make plans about how they can help Ahmet

I had it!

An idea!

And it was without doubt, quite possibly the Greatest Idea in the World! It leapt right into my head, just like a giant frog, and I jumped around until I knew it had to work! It just had to!



## APPENDICES

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### 6.

#### The day in London and Buckingham Palace

I think when you're the most scared you've ever been in your life and have to do something you've never done before, your brain switches off and your arms and legs do all the thinking for you which is why you feel like you're moving under water. That's what happened the moment I began running. I felt as though I was running underwater, as if someone else was doing everything for me. When of course, they weren't. It was all me.

### 7.

#### The attention from the press

"No comment!" shouted Michael, as he began running towards the school gates. We all ran too but before we could reach them, lots of cameras and arms and legs had surrounded us and were blocking our way.

"What message were you trying to send to our government?"

"Was this an act of protest on behalf of child refugees around the world?"

"What was in the note?"

"Who put you up to this?"

"Where are you from? Were you born in this country?"

Everywhere we looked, there were lenses and lights and loud clicking sounds.



### 8.

#### The second fight with the bullies (what happens differently this time)

On every single channel, and in all the weekend papers, headlines like "Video of Bully Attacking Refugee Boy Sparks Outrage" and "Teacher Stands Aside as School Bully Threatens Refugee Boy" and "School Bully Trash-Talks Refugee Child" were everywhere.

### 9.

#### Getting the letter from the Queen

"Children, these gentlemen have a very special message to give to you" said Mrs Sanders.

"We certainly do", said Lieutenant Kungu. "It gives me great pleasure to present you with this very special message from the Her Majesty the Queen"

### 10.

#### Ahmet finds out that his parents will be coming to London

And suddenly Michael jumped up and shouted, "WE DID IT!" and the whole class started cheering and whooping and jumping and clapping all at once.



# APPENDICES

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## Care Guide

Learning about conflict and the refugee crisis can be upsetting. Any emotional response should be validated, and their questions acknowledged. You may have students in your class who have gone through a similar journey to Ahmet. They may need additional support during the sessions and after watching the play. The story may trigger some upsetting memories. All children should feel welcome and encouraged during the sessions.

Helpful responses taken from **Beacon House**:

“Many people feel the same way as you, it’s natural for humans to feel so sad when other people are hurting.”

“It’s important to ask those big questions so that you can understand what is happening around you.”

*NEU's Guide to 'Welcoming refugee children to your school'.*

*Amnesty International's resource on teaching asylum and refugee issues.*

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## Helpful Contacts

Some students may find the topics in the book distressing. Below are some useful websites that student can contact to get support with their mental health.

**Childline:** <https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/contacting-childline/>

**The Mix:** <http://www.themix.org.uk/>

**Stop Hate UK:** <https://www.stophateuk.org/>

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## Credits

The Children’s Theatre Partnership (CTP) was established in 2010 to produce and tour bold, ambitious and imaginative theatre for young people. Our aim is to excite and engage new and diverse audiences, often introducing them to the theatre for the first time, bringing communities to their local theatres, inspiring a life-long love of theatre and supporting the UK’s most talented artists.

The Boy at the Back of the Class Resource Pack for Teachers was written and produced by Ruth Collinge and Hazel Challinor

With input from Celine Wyatt, Head of Creative Learning

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