



**can't give 'em up,
can't take 'em away**



Human Rights Poetry
Activity Pack

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International Service

International Service was established in 1953. Our vision is a world where poverty and oppression are history.

We work in five countries throughout the world: Brazil and Bolivia (South America), Mali and Burkina Faso (West Africa), and Palestine (Middle East).



We send skilled professionals - known as Development Workers - to those countries where we work in partnership with organisations to help poor communities take active steps to eradicate poverty.

“start with what people know, build with what people have”

We work with grassroots organisations on grassroots development projects. This means that our Development Workers share their skills and expertise directly with some of the poorest and most disadvantaged people in the world. We believe that ‘development’ is a process that brings change for the better in terms of promoting human rights, and helping communities to grow and support themselves.

Although we reach many people through our work, we have a particular focus on women, disabled people and children because they are some of the most vulnerable.

It is also our mission to increase understanding of human rights and development issues in the UK and Ireland. Our ‘Same Difference’ project is a never-ending arts project that links children in the UK and overseas. Using art and creativity, Same Difference boosts the self-esteem of those in the world living with violence, oppression, disability, disease and poverty. Back at home, children take part to learn and express their ideas about their history, culture, citizenship, religions, festivals, food and the environment. All of the work is brought together in a vibrant exhibition that tours the UK and the countries where we work.

www.internationalservice.org.uk

www.is-samedifference.org.uk

Human Rights Poetry

This pack focuses on the human rights of children.

There are some classroom ideas and materials to help get things started in terms of helping your young people learn about their rights. We have included five case studies to help the class in their ideas and discussions, and to also think about what it's like for young people in the world who are not so lucky. There are links to a handful of other great resources available on the web, and we have also identified where this activity is relevant to the KS2 curriculum should you wish to take it a little further and tie it into other areas of learning.



Human rights are about knowing what it will mean to have your freedom taken away. There have always been connections between poets, poetry and human rights abuses. Poetry can help us use our imagination to know and understand how other people are suffering.

Many poets have had to live in exile from their people, their culture and their language. They have written about things they believe are wrong and unjust in the world, and those in charge have wanted to stop them from doing this.

Jack Mapanje

Jack Mapanje was born in 1944, in a village in the African country of Malawi.

Malawi was under the rule of a dictator called Hastings Banda. Jack started writing poems, inspired by his despair at all the political troubles.

Through his poetry, he dared to speak out against the brutal rule of the dictator. His first collection of poems was called *Of Chameleons and Gods*. Published in 1981, it won recognition and prizes. In 1985, it was withdrawn from bookshops, libraries and educational institutions in Malawi. Although he knew it was dangerous, he felt compelled to continue with his writing and set up a writers group within his own University.

In 1987 he was arrested while drinking in a bar.

The World Service broadcast a news item about Mapanje's arrest the following day and his cause was taken up by writers and activists across the world. Mapanje was held without charge or trial in Mikuyu Prison for 3 years, 7 months and 16 days.

Jack Mapanje was freed in 1991. Believing his life was still in danger, he fled with his wife and children to Britain. Since then, he has lived in Yorkshire. As well as being a poet, he teaches Literature and Poetry at the University of Newcastle.

Human Rights

The international community observes Human Rights Day on the 10th of December. It commemorates when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. This year is its 60th anniversary.

What are human rights?

According to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Right (OHCHR) – “ Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible.

Some of the most important characteristics of human rights are that they:

- Are universal—the birthright of all human beings
- Focus on the inherent dignity and equal worth of all human beings
- Are equal, indivisible and interdependent
- Cannot be waived or taken away
- Impose obligations of action and omission, particularly on States and State actors
- Have been internationally guaranteed
- Are legally protected
- Protect individuals and, to some extent, groups

Source: UNHCHR

The Poetry Activity

Here are some ideas on how you can do the poetry activity.

We’ve made a table that breaks down the Convention on the Rights of the Child into four main themes. In each theme are related words that you can use to encourage the children to think about rights and words for their poems.

CARE	RECREATION	YOU	LEARN
Discrimination	Relax	Life	Information
Protection	Music	Name	Education
Disability	Culture	Nationality	School
Adults	Play	Identity	Access
Guidance	Sport	Opinion	Quality
Safety	Drama	Thought	Standards
Hurt	Art	Expression	Respect
Refugee	Create	Friends	Rights
Health	Media	Privacy	Values
Help	Poetry	Religion	Environment
Food	Writing	Language	Inclusion
Clothes	Leisure	Respect	Participation
War	Pleasure	Equality	Knowledge
Abuse	Fun	Freedoms	Literacy
Exploitation	Entertainment		Training
Work			Skills
Standards			Communicate
Legal Defence			
Cruelty			
Poverty			

Questions around Themes

CARE – what protection do you need? What do you need to live?

PLAY – what do you need to relax? What things stop you relaxing?
Are these needs or wants? What things do you love doing?

YOU – what do you need to be you? What things make up you?

LEARN – what do you need to know? What do you think everyone needs to know?
What things stop people from learning? Why do you think this is?

Using the themes and case studies

- The children choose their own theme. Give them the word wheel and write their theme in the middle. They then write around the wheel words that they would want to use in their poems
- The class is put into 4 groups and given a theme
- Brainstorm each theme on the board – e.g. what does 'care' mean to them?
- Children make a mind map around the theme first
- Use the case studies to highlight issues on the board
- Give a case study for each table. Ask the children to read then discuss what the his/her life is like. What do they think he/she is denied according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Get them to write about what they would miss if they were living like that child. What do they think would make that his/her life better

The Poem

The poem should be between 8 and 16 lines long and done on a **12cm x 12cm** piece of card.

Here are some suggestions and questions that they could write a poem around:

- Use the words in the wheel and think about words that rhyme with them, metaphors, similes
- How would you feel about not being able to do something?
- How do you feel about the things you love to do?
- Put yourself in the shoes of one of the case studies
- What do they have to do to survive?
- How would you feel if something was taken away like your privacy, identity, voice, or protection?
- What would you do if you were discriminated against?
- What do you value/ think is important?

If you would like to see examples of poetry produced by children to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights visit:

www.is-humanrightsawards.co.uk/poetry/index.htm

We would like to include your schools' work on the website.

Please contact barry@internationalservice.org.uk for details

The Art Activity

These are suggestions for the class when they come to design the back of the cards:

- Decorate with shapes and patterns from case study
- Pick a line from your poem – draw what you think is happening
- Pick colours that you think reflect your poem e.g. calm, angry, sad, happy
- Draw the situation in the poem
- Draw yourself doing something you think it important for everyone to be able to do
- Illustrate a right from the Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Pick a word from your poem or from the list – make the word reflect its meaning e.g. objects surrounding the word, colours, shape the word to look like what it means
- For examples of card designs go to **www.is-samedifference.org.uk**

Follow-on Activities

- Find a story in that days media or a film/soap opera that highlights an issue in human rights
- Research newspapers and websites for subject matter then make your own case studies to put into a class newspaper
- Make a class display on the Rights of the Child
- Twin your school with another in a developing country and write to each other.

Useful Websites

POETRY

The Poetry Zone - **www.poetryzone.co.uk**

The Poetry Archive – **www.poetryarchive.org**

The Scottish Poetry Library – **www.spl.org.uk**

Childrens Poetry Bookshelf - **www.childrenspoetrybookshelf.co.uk**

Book Trust - **www.booktrust.org.uk/Resources-for-schools/Poetry-Friendly-Classroom**

HUMAN RIGHTS

Amnesty International – **www.amnesty.org.uk**

BBC -‘I have a right to...’ - **www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/features/ihavearightto**

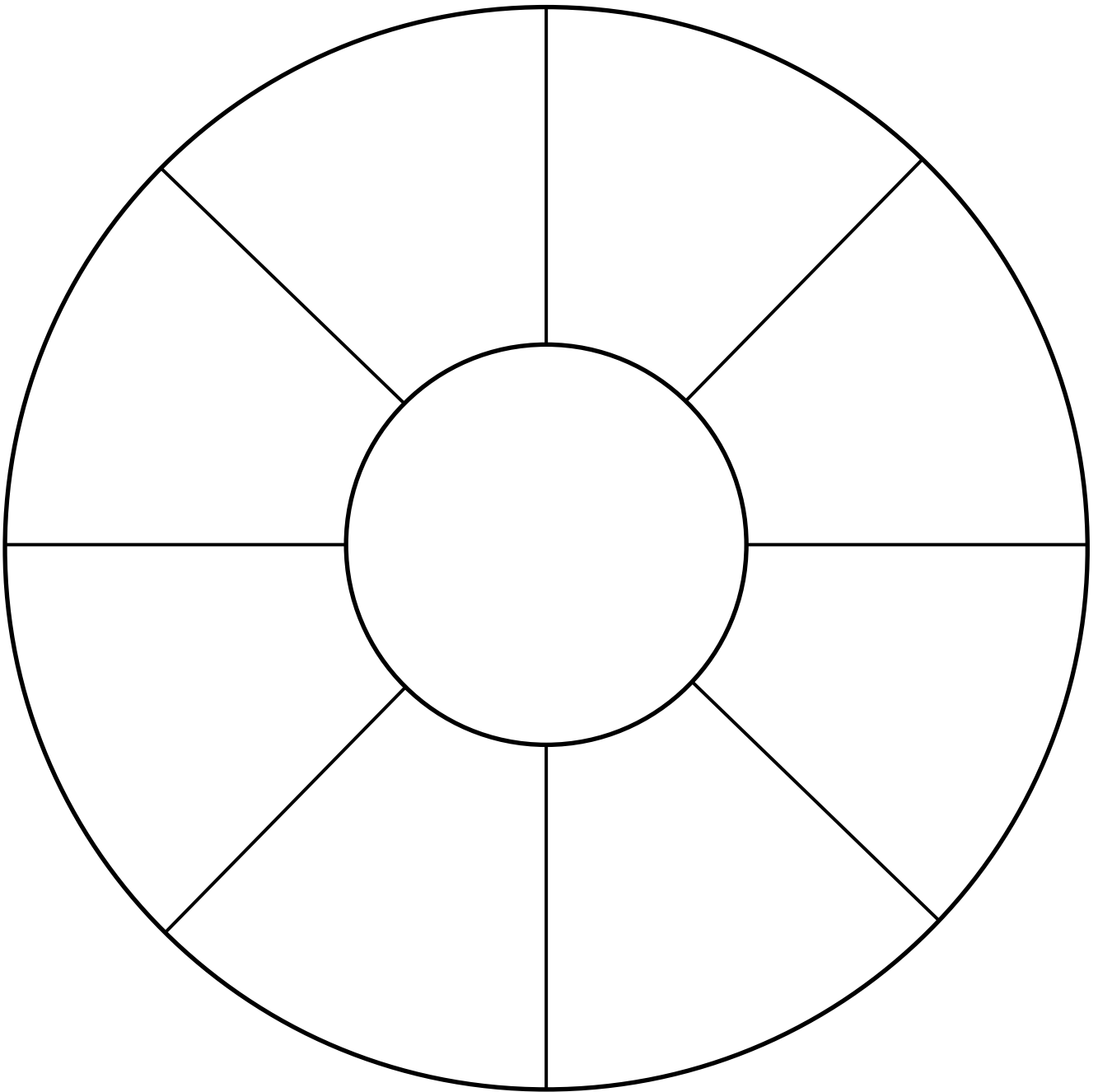
Save the Children – **www.savethechildren.org.uk**

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)- **www.ohchr.org**

UNICEF Teachers zone - **www.unicef.org.uk/tz/rights**

Child Rights Information Network - **www.crin.org**

Word Wheel



CASE STUDY

Brazil

My name is Andrea, I'm 11. I'm from a city called Recife which is in Brazil.

We don't have a proper house. Instead, we live in a *favela*. There are so many people there, it's really cramped. We have built a hut from things we can find, things that people throw out and don't want any more. I live there with my mum, dad, and brother.

We spend most days trying to earn some money to buy food. I feel very hungry quite a lot of the time. It is a very good day if we can get enough together for two meals. I help my family make some money by finding jobs to do. I can wash car windscreens and sell lollipops. Really I would like to be able to go to school to learn. I can't read and I would like to be able to read.

Where I live can be dangerous. Lots of people steal things and try to take your money because they don't have very much themselves. I know many people who go into the really nice parts of the city to beg the rich tourists for money, or steal their bags. The city has big shops, places to eat expensive meals, lots of new clothes, and huge houses. I wish we could live like that, too - in a proper house, with clean water so that we can cook and wash our clothes easily.

Because we don't have enough money to get any medicine or see a doctor, I am afraid about what will happen if me or one of my family becomes sick.

I feel lucky that my family is together, because so many people my age do not even have families or their families are always fighting and they don't like to go back to them at night.

[a *favela* is a shanty town. There are *favelas* in most medium and large-sized towns in Brazil]

CASE STUDY

Mali

Hello. My name is Lassina. I was named after my uncle, and I'm 12 years old. We used to live in the Ivory Coast, but we came to Mali in September 2002 with my father, and my older brother and sister. My mother came later with my younger brother and two sisters.

When I lived in the Ivory Coast, I used to go to the French-Arab school. I got to the 4th level, but I stopped going to school when we came to Mali. I have forgotten many of the things I learned at school. My youngest sister goes to primary school here.

Father is a religious teacher. Mother sells cloths, moving from house to house. We rent a three room flat (two bedrooms and one living room) and share a courtyard with other families.

I started learning joinery and how to work with wood two months ago. I am an apprentice at a workshop in the village. I'm always very busy and have lots of work to do. The money I earn goes to my mother so she can pay the rent and buy food.

My day usually goes something like this:

- I get up at 6:00 am
- For breakfast I have "bouillie" – this is a sort of porridge made up cereal granules and cooked with milk
- At lunch time, I have my lunch at home as my family are close to the workshop
- In the evening, we have dinner which is normally rice with sauce
- Then I will go out and play with my friends
- I go to bed about 10:00 pm

My favourite thing of all is playing football. I love it! I love being on the pitch. I play in goal for my village team which is called BARSA. I dream of becoming a footballer one day – I might even be famous.

I would really like to study but it's not possible. There is no night school available near the family house in my neighbourhood, but I would be very interested if there was. Then I would be able to go and study in the evenings after I have finished work.

CASE STUDY

Palestine

My name is Rahma and I live in a small village near Bethlehem, which is in Palestine's West Bank. I live with my family. I am 15, my brother is 11 and my sister is 8.

Palestine and Israel have been fighting each other for many, many years. My village is horrible because it is so dangerous. A huge wall runs along three sides of our village, cutting us off from other places. Many of the roads have been destroyed in the fighting, but mostly it is the soldiers who make it very difficult for us to go anywhere and we are afraid of them.

There is no school in our village, so we have to cross a checkpoint to leave the village and go to school. My village is not allowed to build its own school because the Israelis will not give us permission. In the morning, the soldiers make us all go through a scanner and force us to open our bags all over the ground to see what is inside them. I am worried that the scanners can cause cancer. The soldiers are very rude and very aggressive. Once, they made me dance in order to be allowed through the checkpoint. I ran off and one of them fired a shot into the air to scare me.

My father was furious about this and he went to the checkpoint with the Red Cross. Because he was so angry and was complaining to the soldiers, they arrested him and interrogated him. I was really scared for my father, but fortunately he was released later that day and he was okay.

After school I play with my cousins or go and visit my grandmother. She is teaching me how to do embroidery. I also like to go and play aerobics.

When I am older, I want to go to America and take my family with me. The situation is very bad here and I want to leave. I want to have a good job and I really want to be free to go anywhere I please. I would like to become a Paediatrician – this is a doctor who looks after children. I want to learn about medicine and be able to help children.

CASE STUDY

Burkina Faso

My name is Gilbert and I am 16. My country is called Burkina Faso, and is in West Africa. I live in the capital with my mother and 12 brothers and sisters. My father died three years ago.

I am a member of the Child and Young Workers' Association. This year, I was elected to represent the children from my country who are made to work. I was asked to attend a meeting about children in New York which was being held by the United Nations. A charity called Save the Children told me they were making a film about child miners. I wanted to know more about the living and working conditions of child workers.

At first I didn't know that there were children working in mining. In fact, I didn't even know that there were gold mines in Burkina Faso. Now I have learned a lot about the hardships of child workers in our country.

Child miners are exposed to many dangers. Firstly, they can hurt themselves with their work tools. Secondly, the areas where they work can cave in at anytime. Thirdly, they work without any protection. They can catch tuberculosis because they are always in the dust. They have no money, so they have very little food. Because of that, they are weak but still they work too much.

We have met government officials to explain the working conditions of the children. We have asked them to help these children find other activities that are better than mining. They should open training centres to teach children carpentry, mechanics, welding and many other useful skills.

We have also talked to parents to convince them not to send their children to work in the gold mines. Most of the child miners do not have a choice. They have to work there to try and get some money for their family, otherwise they have no food. If they do not go to the gold mines they face an even poorer life.

The government should help families to develop other activities that can provide them with money so that they can take care of their children. They must provide medical care for child workers and ensure that there is enough safe water for all. Children need to go to school; the government should open more schools that they can attend free of charge.

Gold is precious. But we are more precious than that gold.

CASE STUDY

Uganda

Hello, my name is Charles and I am nearly 13. I live in Kampala, a city in Uganda. Three years ago, my parents were killed by soldiers so I ran away and hid. Now I live with twenty other boys in an old wagon in a railway yard.

We sleep on the floor of the wagon on newspapers. I also have some empty cardboard boxes and a bed sheet, but I keep them hidden in a safe place so that no-one can steal them. My best friend is called Musa. We look after each other and we will keep each other warm at night when it becomes very cold.

When I wake up, I usually go straight to the city market. All the lorries arrive here with goods to sell. I often pick up bananas that have fallen off the lorries and I sell them. Sometimes I also sell soap, which I can buy cheaply from one of the lorry drivers.

For my breakfast, I will go to one of the hot food stalls in the market and have some black coffee and some cassava with beans. For lunch I may have some matoke and rice. If I have earned a lot of money, I can buy some meat.

The police don't like boys like me working in the market. They think we're going to cause trouble and sometimes they come and chase us. If they catch us, they might take us to the police station and beat us, or they might send us to Naguru which is a boys' home. I hate it at Naguru because we are treated like prisoners.

I like living in the wagon and working in the market – it's better than going to school. One day, I would like to have my own market stall and make enough money to rent a house.

[cassava is a woody plant that has an edible, starchy root. It is a major source of carbohydrates, and most of it is grown in Africa]

[matoke is made from steamed green plantains. Plantains are a green fruit that look like bananas]

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

1. Everyone under the age of 18 has ALL of these rights. You have the right to...
2. Be treated fairly no matter who you are, where you are from, what language you speak, what you believe or where you live.
3. Have adults always do what is best for you.
4. Have all of these rights protected by your government.
5. Be given support and advice from your parents and family.
6. Life.
7. Have a name and a nationality.
8. An official identity.
9. Not be separated from your parent/s, unless it is for your own good.
10. Be reunited with your parent/s if they have to move to another country.
11. Not be taken out of your country illegally.
12. Have your own opinion, which is listened to and taken seriously.
13. Find out information and express what you think through speaking, writing and art, unless this denies other people their rights.
14. Think and believe whatever you want to and practice any religion, with guidance from your parent/s.
15. Be with friends and join or set up clubs, unless this denies other people their rights.
16. Have your privacy and family respected.
17. Get reliable information from newspapers, books, radio, television and the Internet, as long as it is not harmful to you.
18. Be brought up by your parents, if possible.
19. Be protected from being hurt or badly treated in any way.
20. Special protection and help if you can't live with your parents.
21. The best care possible if you are adopted or in foster care.
22. Special protection and help if you are a refugee.
23. Access to education and any support you may need if you have a disability.
24. The best health and medical care possible, and information to help you stay healthy.
25. Have your living situation checked regularly if you are looked after away from your family.
26. Help from the government if you are poor or in need.
27. A basic standard of living: food, clothing and a safe place to live.
28. An education.
29. An education that develops your personality and abilities, and encourages you to respect other people, cultures and the environment.
30. Enjoy your own culture, religion and language, even if these are not the same as most people in your country.
31. Rest, play and relax.
32. Be protected from work that harms your health or education.
33. Be protected from dangerous drugs and their trade.
34. Be protected from sexual abuse.
35. Not be kidnapped or sold.
36. Be protected from being taken advantage of or exploited in any way.
37. Not to be punished in a cruel or hurtful way.
38. Protection and care in times of war. If you are under 15 you should never be forced to join an army.
39. Special help if you have been hurt, neglected or badly treated.
40. Be helped and treated fairly if you are accused of breaking the law.
41. Be protected by national or international laws which provide better rights than the ones in this list.
42. ALL children and adults should know and learn about these rights.

This simplified version of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is taken from Save the Children
www.savethechildren.org.uk

Links to Areas of the Curriculum

Taking part in International Service's Human Rights Poetry Competition can link into areas of the KS2 curriculum for Citizenship, PHSE, Geography, Art and Design, and Literacy.

Citizenship

Unit 5 Living in a Diverse World

- through a range of activities, they explore sameness, difference and diversity. They learn that, as humans, we are all equal, have basic needs and rights, and belong to a range of groups and communities, including school and family. Children learn about the importance of respecting each other, and that it is wrong to abuse people for any reason, including their race. Through a theme such as toys or clothes, they explore what other places are like and how we are connected with different countries in the world (interdependence).

Unit 7 Children's Rights – Human Rights

- children learn about every human's basic rights and the differences between needs, wants and rights. They learn that with rights come responsibilities, such as the responsibility not to infringe the rights of others and the responsibility to support others in their quest for rights. They learn about the importance of honesty, trust, tolerance and respect for others.
- they find out about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and that it applies to all children, whoever or wherever they are. They also learn how human rights apply in their school and in the local community. They develop strategies for ensuring that rights are upheld and to promote equality in the classroom and playground, and they encourage others to respect and care for one another.

Unit 8 How do Rules and Laws Affect Me?

- they develop their appreciation of why we need rules to protect rights and how they help us - at home, at school and in our wider communities.

PHSE

Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people

- think about the lives of people living in other places and times, and people with different values and customs
- realise the nature and consequences of racism, teasing, bullying and aggressive behaviours, and how to respond to them and ask for help
- differences and similarities between people arise from a number of factors, including cultural, ethnic, racial and religious diversity, gender and disability

Preparing to play an active role as citizens

- there are different kinds of responsibilities, rights and duties at home, at school and in the community, and that these can sometimes conflict with each other
- reflect on spiritual, moral, social, and cultural issues, using imagination to understand other people's experiences
- recognise the role of voluntary, community and pressure groups

During the key stage, pupils should be taught the knowledge, skills and understanding through opportunities to:

- meet and talk with people. For example, people who contribute to society through environmental pressure groups or international aid organisations; people who work in the school and the neighbourhood, such as religious leaders, community police officers.
- consider social and moral dilemmas that they come across in life. For example, encouraging respect and understanding between different races and dealing with harassment.

Geography

Unit 24 Passport to the World

- encourage the development of knowledge about places and their locations. Over time, children learn about places, where the places are and how they are connected.

Literacy

- Speaking & Listening
- Handwriting
- Group discussion and interaction
- Creating and Shaping Texts
- Creative Writing
- Structure and Organisation of Texts

Art and Design

Unit 1B Investigating Materials

- investigate the qualities of a variety of natural and made materials. They learn skills for weaving and gain sensory experience of materials and an understanding of colour and texture. They learn about how textiles are used in their own and others' lives.

Unit 3A Portraying relationships

- investigate how paintings, prints, photographs and other images that include figures communicate ideas about relationships. They use composition skills to make a double portrait that conveys ideas about themselves and their relationship with another person in their lives.

Unit 3B Investigating Pattern

- investigate patterns in textiles from different times and cultures. They use ideas from these as a starting point for developing their own designs. They investigate stencilling and print-making techniques and explore ways of combining and organising shapes, colours and patterns to make a decorative textile piece.



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