

Questions for reflection

- Are good quality texts from geographically diverse places available for children to choose to read?
- Are stories, poetry, information and reference texts drawn from a wide variety of cultures, traditions and mediums?
- Are chosen texts thought provoking; do they generate discussion and encourage critical thinking?
- Is information in books, newspapers, magazines and across the media continually checked for and challenged on bias and presenting stereotypical images of people and places?
- Do language and literacy activities help children become aware of their own opinions on a wide range of important global issues; are these opinions challenged and changed?
- Are dual language resources available for children whose first language is not English?

Thematic links

- There are many resources on BBC site around literacy, including the 'Bitesize' series for KS1 and 2.
- For a different perspective on using picturebooks not only for literacy but for visual literacy, oral literacy, critical thinking skills and philosophical thinking, go to: www.teachingchildrenphilosophy.org

Next Steps

- Carry out a literature audit to identify to what extent books and texts are available in school:
 - ⇒ Display bias or stereotyping
 - ⇒ Demonstrate positive representations of religion, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, age and ability
 - ⇒ Offer dual text resources for children with a language other than English as a first language
 - ⇒ Are drawn from a range of cultures and traditions
 - ⇒ Explore contentious and controversial issues
 - ⇒ Help generate critical questioning
- Ensure global learning objectives are included in the English curriculum.
- Appoint a member of staff with special responsibility for overseeing the quality of books on offer and that they meet agreed global learning criteria.
- Identify how global learning objectives can be incorporated into language and literature events celebrated in schools, e.g. Book Week
- Explore teaching methodologies that encourage and are compatible with global learning and which could be used in teaching English e.g. role play, critical thinking, philosophy for children etc.
- Ensure local international storytellers, theatre groups etc visit the school; ensure pre-agreed global learning objectives are delivered through such visits
- Identify any training needs to ensure global learning objectives are incorporated into English teaching together with adequate time, resources and support to make this successful.

Monitoring & Evaluation: how do you know it's working?

- Books and texts available in school are free of bias, challenge stereotyping and reflect a wide variety of cultures and traditions; dual language resources are available where appropriate.
- Pupils engage confidently in discussion, listen attentively to one another and reflect critically on global issues.
- The choice of books, texts and teaching methodologies for teaching language and literature results in observable improvements in pupils attitudes and behaviour towards each other and towards people in the local and global community.
- By integrating global learning into the curriculum and adopting global learning methodologies teachers demonstrate increased enthusiasm in teaching language and literature.



Global Learning Centre

Tower Hamlets PDC
229 Bethnal Green Road, London E2 6AB
T. 020 7364 6405 E. hec@gn.apc.org
[@hecglobal](https://twitter.com/hecglobal)

Details of current teacher training, information on global learning and examples of HEC's work
www.globallearninglondon.org.uk

Join the London Global Teacher Network - LGTN offers London teachers the chance to connect around global learning.
www.lgtn.org.uk

Learning in a Global Context is a framework for supporting schools in preparing young people for life in an increasingly globalised world.



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Introduction

The primary curriculum identifies the development of language and literacy skills as essential in underpinning successful learning and children's achievement across the curriculum.

English, communication and languages are recognised as being at the heart of our capacity to imagine, think and create and lay the foundations for active involvement in cultural life, society, work and lifelong learning.

By engaging with an extensive range of texts, including literature from different times and cultures, information and reference texts, media texts and online communications children can discover how powerful literacy and language are at expressing, exploring and sharing information, thoughts and feelings.

Through speaking and listening, reading, writing and drama children can become aware of their own opinions on a wide range of important issues, but also be willing to have these opinions challenged and changed.

Language and literacy and global learning

As probably the most important foundation subject at primary level, Language and Literacy (English) is a key area for achieving global learning objectives. Stories, poetry, information and reference texts drawn from a rich variety of cultures, traditions and mediums can help children to appreciate a range of perspectives and the global contexts to their lives. Storytellers and theatre groups can be invited in to share stories from other cultures. All this provides good stimulus material to encourage children to discuss global issues.

They learn to recognise that English is one language among many and that language affects perceptions. They also learn that language relates to and helps shape national, regional and cultural identities.

Books and other texts help children learn about the everyday lives of children in other countries and the similarities and differences between their lives and the lives of others. Children can also be encouraged to empathise with others' situations through drama or writing stories or poems and learn about interdependence through food, tourism and music etc.

Children can also learn about the power of language to influence for good or bad. In particular they need to understand the power of the press and media and develop an awareness of bias and stereotyping. At the same time language has the power to enlighten, to challenge, to revolutionise and so bring about positive change both locally and globally.

Outcomes for pupils

By using stories, poetry, information and reference texts drawn from a rich variety of cultures, traditions and mediums pupils will be able to:

- Develop curiosity about the world around them and be encouraged to seek out further information.
- See the world through the eyes of others by providing access to ideas and experiences from different cultures and times.
- Explore how values are portrayed differently in texts from a range of cultures and traditions.
- Develop empathy for others
- Understand that throughout the world people have common needs and rights and appreciate the importance of freedom of expression.
- Recognize that the written and spoken word has been and can be used to challenge injustice.
- Convey ideas and opinions clearly and respond creatively and critically to a wide range of information and ideas.
- Present informed and persuasive arguments in debate and discussion.
- Appreciate that many issues are both complex and contentious.
- Learn to recognise and challenge bias and manipulation of information in books, newspapers, magazines and across the media.
- Use role play to explore topical global issues and the experiences of others and look at creative responses to conflict.
- Appreciate the role language and literacy plays in engaging and influencing people and directing their actions.
- Think creatively about their own ideas for a more positive future and how this might be achieved.

Quotes

Literacy unlocks the door to learning throughout life, is essential to development and health, and opens the way for democratic participation and active citizenship.

Kofi Annan, former Secretary General to the UN

If we talk about literacy, we have to talk about how to enhance our children's mastery over the tools needed to live intelligent, creative, and involved lives.

Danny Glover, actor and United Nations Development Programme Ambassador

We teach academic subjects and we assume life skills will somehow be acquired along the way. Not a safe assumption! The curriculum has to include things like communication, conflict resolution, parenting, family dynamics, critical thinking, values, ethics.

Azim Khamisa, Forgiveness & Reconciliation Advocate

Reading furnishes the mind only with materials of knowledge; it is thinking that makes what we read ours.

John Locke, English Philosopher (1632-1704)

The boredom children can suffer when faced with specially created instructional resources disappears when teachers introduce books that do not moralise or patronise, but offer rich, complex and ambiguous narratives that communicate to young readers that they are taken seriously as thinkers....Many educators still pigeon-hole picturebooks as resources for teaching literacy to young readers, rather than being recognised as aesthetic objects that can provoke deep philosophical responses from people of all ages.

Joanna Haynes and Karin Murriss (2011) Literary and Philosophical responses to picturebooks

Opportunities for global learning through literacy and language

One approach to incorporating global learning into literacy and language is to link with the wide selection of popular annual events which have explicit literature and language themes. Many schools probably already mark some of these events. Here is a selection of possible opportunities:

World Braille Day (4th January)

The date marks the birth of Louis Braille in 1809 in France. Sightsavers International have a good range of resources and lesson plans. See: www.sightsavers.org/get_involved/teacherzone/resources_and_materials/

International Mother Language Day (21 February)

Created by UNESCO, this day is observed every year to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism. The day aims to raise awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions throughout the world and to inspire solidarity based on understanding, tolerance and dialogue. For further information, visit: www.un.org/en/events/motherlanguageday/.

This is an ideal day to celebrate the different languages in the school. Children for whom English is not their first language could be encouraged to read in their first language for example. There are many publishers who produce dual language resources. See Mantra Lingua (www.mantralingua.com) or Milet (www.milet.com)

World Book Day (March) is designated by UNESCO as a worldwide celebration of books and reading, and is marked in over 100 countries around the globe. Celebrated in many schools, there is potential to place global learning at the heart of the day through a focus on international stories and storytellers and global issues. A search on www.globaldimension.org.uk will reveal a large range of story and non-fiction books by international authors and on global themes.

World Poetry Day (21st March)

Poetry contributes to creative diversity, by questioning anew our use of words and things, our modes of perception and understanding of the world. Every year this day supports linguistic diversity through poetic expression and to offer endangered languages the opportunity to be heard within their communities. www.un.org/en/events/poetryday/

International Children's Book Day (2nd April)

Celebrated on the date of Hans Christian Andersen's birthday, the day aims to inspire a love of reading. Each year the Day is sponsored by a different country member of the International Board on Books for Young People. It decides on a theme and invites an author from that country to write a message to the children of the world and a well-known illustrator to design a poster. See www.ibby.org/index.php?id=269

Children's Book Week (October)

An annual celebration of reading for primary children. Each year has a different theme, some with clear global learning opportunities; the 2010 theme was 'books around the world'. See: www.booktrust.org.uk/Campaigns/Childrens-Book-Week

World Post Day (9th October)

Celebrated on the anniversary of the establishment of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in 1874. On the anniversary of its formation, the UPU organises, with UNESCO, the International Letter-writing Competition for young people up to 15 years of age, on particular themes, many with a global dimension. See: www.upu.int/en/the-upu/international-letter-writing-competition-for-young-people

For a full set of calendar dates which may provide suitable opportunities for global learning see: www.globaldimension.org.uk/calendar

Stories - a vehicle for literacy and global awareness

Young children are familiar with stories, they listen to them, read them on their own or with friends, act them out and use them as a base for their own individual telling of stories. Stories are everywhere and as children enjoy them and develop literacy skills, so a new world opens up to them.

As this happens, children make connections with the world outside their own immediate environment. They can begin to empathise, to see events and problems from different perspectives, explore the potential for different narratives.

Stories from around the world hold within them messages addressing the most urgent questions in life:

- What can we learn about courage, tenacity and survival through adversity?
- How can we live in harmony with others?
- Where are the solutions to our seemingly impossible dilemmas?

Stories that have been told and retold over hundreds of years still survive to this day precisely because they hold the jewels to direct us to the answers we need to these and other questions.

It follows that global stories can be used to demonstrate the esteemed values and prized skills we share across humanity. From this ethos, HEC Global Learning Centre has developed a project bringing together stories from around the globe to demonstrate the commonality of some of our values and skills across different cultures, whilst also helping teachers develop key skills in oracy and literacy.

Stories - treasures of our humanity is a storytelling training, looking at stories from around the world and how they can be used in class to motivate children to explore universal human values and develop personal responses and important literacy skills.



Global Stories: Treasures of our Humanity

Contact globallearning@gn.apc.org for more information

With storyteller Alia Azougbi you will learn the key ingredients of storytelling and have a chance to develop, rehearse and tell stories in a supportive environment. You will explore the values communicated through these global stories, and learn how to work with pupils around these values. You will explore narrative, character, action and perspective, as well as ways to encourage oral and written responses.

Case Study - P4C Philosophy for Children (P4C)

P4C is a teaching methodology that helps develop children's critical thinking. It enables them to pursue in depth questions of their own choosing while enabling them to develop listening and speaking skills.

A series of lessons in a racially mixed urban primary school used story books as stimuli to consider global themes with Year 3 children. One book used was *The Day of Ahmed's Secret* by Florence Parry Heide and Judith Heide Gilliland. The book follows Ahmed through his working day as he hugs his secret to himself. Finally he shares his secret - that he can write his name!

This story raised many issues for the children, e.g. 'Why was the boy having to work?' 'Why could he only write his name when he was older than them?' 'Why did all the rich people go to school and not the poor people?'

The Muslim children in the class were delighted when the final page revealed Ahmed's name in Arabic script! Discussions revealed that none of the children were aware that in many countries families had to pay to send children to school, something they found very difficult to accept.

In further sessions, children explored why Ahmed was working instead of going to school and explored the question: 'Why didn't the rich people give the poor people some money?' This led to a challenging and thoughtful P4C 'enquiry' around issues of responsibility, selfishness, understanding and awareness.

By the end of eight sessions the children had made significant improvements in many areas including listening to each other, encouraging others to speak, respecting other's ideas and building on other's ideas.

For more on using P4C see the **Methodology Leaflet** in this series of Learning in a Global Context Leaflets.

Contact globallearning@gn.apc.org for more information