



From HSIE to Mathematics –
Global Education and 21st century teaching and learning

Boy Overboard Unit of work



GLOBAL EDUCATION PROJECT NSW – Global Education and 21st century teaching and learning

in conjunction with the Professional Teachers' Council NSW and the Primary Teachers' Network

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Stage 3 English – Novel Study on ‘Boy Overboard’

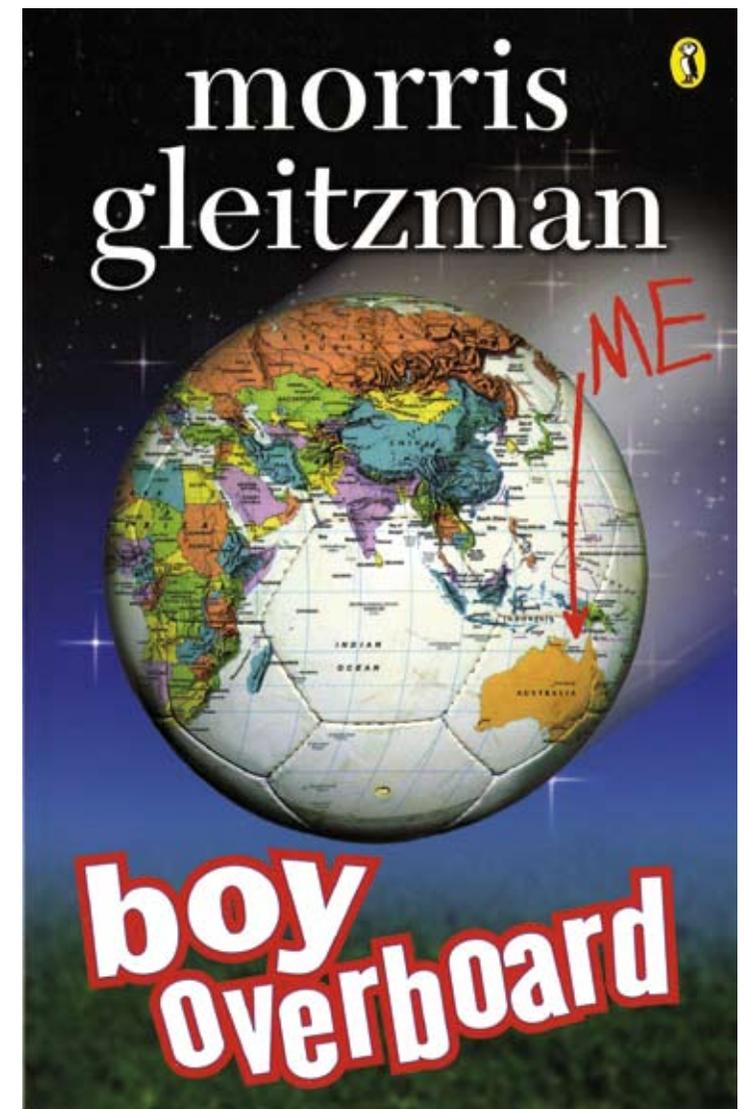
Duration: 5 weeks (approx)

Text:
Morris Gleitzman, *Boy Overboard*, 2002 (fiction)

Rationale

This text covers the core human rights and social justice issues surrounding refugees, asylum seekers and mandatory detention in a fast paced gripping story told through the eyes of a child. It brings the human dimension to the political arena and encourages children to look at the reasons behind families seeking asylum rather than dehumanising the process. All five emphases from the global education framework are addressed as is the Australian cross curriculum perspective Sustainability. It explores the responsibility we have as global citizens to care for one another in providing a safe and just world for each other and to empathise with those whose country’s political circumstances make them outsiders through no fault of their own.

This text provides a springboard for many rich discussions on migration (an Australian Curriculum history topic in Stage 3) and is to support primary teachers in teaching Migration, Education for Sustainability, Global Education and English in an integrated and pedagogically sound manner. The activities are grounded in pedagogy that supports inquiry and student self direction yet allow teachers flexibility where needed due to the time restraints of the primary classroom.



Cover image courtesy Penguin Books Australia (www.penguin.com.au)

Scope of the unit

1. Learning about texts

Students will learn that fiction has specialised and specific language features, forms and structures.

Students will learn that language in texts is used to persuade or convince the audience to accept a particular point of view.

2. Ideas in texts

Students will learn and think about the concept of ‘sustainable futures’. They will explore how sustainability is presented, considering how cultural values can be sustained.

Students will learn and think about the importance of heritage (content and culture) for the shaping of identity.

They will consider the idea of continuity, in relation to and retention of culture.

They will learn and think about ways of acting constructively to contribute to issues they consider to be of importance.

3. Creating texts

Students will learn to create texts for different purposes and audiences. They will analyse the writing of others for bias and create texts of their own, becoming aware of the impact words can have on the lives of others. They will create journal entries in the first person demonstrating empathy for others, analyse their own lives in comparison to the central characters and write letters, create posters to raise awareness of children in detention; demonstrating they can make a difference in their world through language and action.



Stage 3 English – Novel Study on ‘Boy Overboard’

Teaching and learning scope and sequence

Note to teachers:

- This lesson sequence is a guide only. Variations will be necessary, according to the prior learning, abilities and interests of the class and the time available for the unit. Given this, the unit has been presented as lessons and not in weeks – as teachers may prefer to read on given time available and thus complete more or less according to timetable allowances
- It is assumed that students will be asked to read *Boy Overboard* at times in class for critical literacy activities/following on with class and occasionally for homework to complete class tasks
- As the content elaborations in the Australian Curriculum are provided to exemplify content and are not intended to be comprehensive content points that all students need to be taught, these references have been included in an additional section of the table. There are codes allocated to each content elaboration, for example ELB=elaboration, E=English, 571 item reference. The codes for each content elaboration can be identified using the search function in the Australian Curriculum.



Stage 3 English – Novel Study on ‘Boy Overboard’

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<p>Lesson 1</p> <p>Content: Visual literacy Persuasive techniques Value judgements Reflective discussion</p>	<p>(i) TS 3.1 TS 3.2 RS 3.6 RS 3.7 RS 3.8</p> <p>(ii) Year 5 ACELA1797 ACELT1611 ACELY1702</p> <p>Year 6 ACELA1518 ACELT1613</p> <p>ACELT1617 ACELY1709 ACELY1613</p>	<p>Pre Reading</p> <p>What assumptions do you make about the book by the illustrations/typeface?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why might the globe be a soccer ball? • What might be the significance of the handwritten ‘me’ on the globe/ball? • Does the reader have any idea of the book’s plot from the initial cover? What could it be about? • Is it written from the perspective of a boy or girl – why do you think so? <p>Blurb</p> <p>As a class discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the blurb on the back cover give you any insight to the content of the book? • What is the significance of the metaphor of soccer? • What might ‘Sometimes to save the people you love, you have to go overboard’ mean? 	<p>Identity & Cultural Diversity</p> <p>Social Justice & Human Rights</p> <p>Peace Building & Conflict Resolution</p>	<p>QT - Background knowledge</p> <p>Cultural knowledge</p> <p>Substantive communication</p> <p>Engagement</p>	

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<p>Lesson 2 Chapters 1 – 3</p> <p>Resources: <i>Boy Overboard</i> Class Set A3 Paper, pencils/textas Spider graphic organisers English book for writing phrases Strip of card for group phrase KWL chart and background info sheet on Afghanistan (for extension)</p> <p>Content: Critical Literacy Value Judgements Writing</p>	<p>(i) TS 3.1 TS 3.2 RS 3.5 RS 3.6 RS 3.7</p> <p>(ii) Literacy 5 Literature 5 Literacy 6</p>	<p>Reading the book</p> <p>Read Chapters 1–3 then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In groups of four, using class sets of <i>Boy Overboard</i>, discuss Jamal and Bibi’s reality – compare these to your own – write down four sentences/phrases that caught your attention. Use a graphic organiser such as a spider diagram to represent these. Discuss with your group why these were of interest to them – choose one phrase/sentence as a group to feedback to the class – note any similarities/differences the group had in selecting phrases – were there many the same or did everyone choose different ones. Were the boy’s phrases different to the girls? Why do you think this is so? Were the girls more affected by Bibi’s lack of rights? Or the boys? Teacher to facilitate discussion and let children lead. Is the book what they thought it would be from the cover/blurb? What visual/linguistic clues were there? <p>Extension Activity</p> <p>In pairs, students complete a KWL chart on Afghanistan using an information sheet to give context to Jamal and Bibi’s story.</p>	<p>Interdependence & Globalisation</p> <p>Identity & Cultural Diversity</p> <p>Social Justice & Human Rights</p> <p>Peace Building & Conflict Resolution</p>	<p>GE – Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>Skills and processes</p> <p>Values and attitudes</p> <p>QT – Deep understanding</p> <p>Engagement</p> <p>Student direction</p> <p>Problematic knowledge</p> <p>Higher order thinking</p> <p>Substantive communication</p> <p>Student self regulation</p>	<p>Analyses of sentences</p> <p>Observation of rich discussion and facilitation of debate about choice of phrases/sentences – class to choose one</p> <p>KWL charts displayed and collated as a class – analysed and critiqued for similarities and differences</p>

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<p>Lesson 3 Chapters 4 – 6</p> <p>Resources: <i>Boy Overboard</i> class set</p> <p>A3 Paper, pencils/textas</p> <p>English book for writing phrases</p> <p>Y charts</p> <p>Content: Critical Literacy</p> <p>Value Judgements</p>	<p>(i)</p> <p>TS 3.1 TS 3.2 RS 3.5 RS 3.6 RS 3.7</p> <p>(ii)</p> <p>Language 5 Literacy 5 Literature 5 Literacy 6 Language 6</p>	<p>Viewing and Reading the book Women’s Rights</p> <p>Teacher to read Chapters 4 – 6 to the class then</p> <p>In pairs discuss and answer: (Think, Ink, Pair, Share)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is Bibi stereotypical of an Afghani girl • What does she say/do that gives you clues about her thoughts on the treatment on women in her society? • What does her use of language say about her thoughts on her country, the government, treatment of women – list 5 phrases she uses to exemplify this • How would her life be different if she were a boy in Afghanistan? • Draw a picture of what you think Bibi looks like – label it • Now draw what she might look like if she lived in Australia – compare and contrast • Make a Y chart of her life as an Afghan girl • Extension: Make a Y chart of Jamal in comparison 	<p>Social Justice & Human Rights</p> <p>Identity & Cultural Diversity</p> <p>Peace Building & Conflict Resolution</p>	<p>GE –</p> <p>Values and attitudes</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>Skills and processes</p> <p>QT –</p> <p>Connectedness</p> <p>Deep understanding</p> <p>Inclusivity</p> <p>Narrative</p>	<p>Responding to texts</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Y charts shared and displayed – deep understanding of cultural differences identified</p>

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<p>Lesson 4</p> <p>Chapters 7 – 10</p> <p>Resources: Large paper/ IWB to trace around classmate and write characteristics on screen and save to USB</p> <p>Content: Compare and contrast</p> <p>Analyse and critique</p>	<p>(i)</p> <p>TS 3.1 TS 3.2 RS 3.5 RS 3.6 RS 3.7</p> <p>(ii)</p> <p>Literacy 5 Literature 5 Literacy 6</p>	<p>Rights of the Child</p> <p>Discuss and Answer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do we know about Jamal? • What are his key characteristics? • In pairs make a profile of Jamal with quotes from the text to support your findings. Use chapters 7–10 to do this. • Is he any different to you or I? • Does he deserve to live any differently? • Draw an outline of your partner on the floor and then fill it in with excerpts that describe Jamal’s key traits. • Share these as a class – note similarities and differences – discuss the Convention of the Rights of the Child in this context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What DOESN’T Jamal have that you take for granted? Read the child friendly version of the rights of the child and note which acts of the convention Jamal is currently denied. <p>Website: http://www.hreoc.gov.au/human_rights/children/index.html (website supervision advised)</p>	<p>Peace Building & Conflict Resolution</p> <p>Social Justice & Human Rights</p>	<p>GE –</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding Skills and processes</p> <p>QT –</p> <p>Deep understanding Engagement Student direction Problematic knowledge Higher order thinking Substantive communication Connectedness</p>	<p>Engaging with text</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Critically analysing texts/websites for bias</p>

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<p>Lesson 5 Chapters 11–13 Resources: <i>Boy Overboard</i></p> <p>Content: Critical literacy</p> <p>Analysing one’s own life in light of another</p> <p>Making value judgements</p> <p>Sharing thoughts and viewpoints</p>	<p>(i) TS 3.1 TS 3.2 RS 3.5 RS 3.6 RS 3.7</p> <p>(ii) Literacy 5 Literature 5 Literacy 5 Literature 6</p>	<p>Reading and Interpreting the Book Women’s Rights/Human Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the role of silence in perpetuating atrocities and the role of active citizenship – why this may not happen in autocracies and the role of fear in people’s lives. Discuss the rights of women and the freedoms we take for granted in our own lives. Construct PMI charts individually on being a teacher in Afghanistan – why would Jamal and Bibi’s mum risk her life to do it? Is she a good role model to her children? Share your chart with a friend and construct a new one to present to the class. Use IWB technology where possible and explain how Millenium Development Goals 2 and 3 fit into this topic. <p>Website: www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml (teacher website supervision advised at primary level)</p>	<p>Identity & Cultural Diversity</p> <p>Interdependence</p> <p>Social Justice & Human Rights</p> <p>Peace Building & Conflict Resoultion</p> <p>Sustainable Futures</p>	<p>GE – Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>Skills and processes</p> <p>Action and participation</p> <p>Values and attitudes</p> <p>QT – Higher order thinking</p>	<p>Engaging with text</p> <p>Supporting viewpoint with text</p>

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<p>Lesson 6 Chapters 14 – 19</p> <p>Resources: <i>Boy Overboard</i> Class Set</p> <p>Content: Close study of chapters</p> <p>Critical analysis of literary devices/text</p>	<p>(i) TS 3.1 TS 3.2</p> <p>(ii) Literacy 5 Literacy 6</p> <p>Literature 5 Literature 6</p>	<p>Symbolism and Heritage Identity and Cultural Heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the symbolism of the candlestick – why is it so important to the family? In groups of four, skim back through the book and find excerpts containing references to the candlestick – what happened, how it ‘saved’ them, where it is from (heritage), how old it is and what the students think it may symbolise for this fragile family. Does it have a monetary value or is it ‘priceless’ in Jamal and Bibi’s eyes? Why? How may they feel upon knowing the candlestick is gone – why? What clues does the text provide as to their feelings about the candlestick? Present a short 1 minute slide show/presentation on the importance of cultural relics in anchoring one’s identity 	<p>Identity & Cultural Diversity</p> <p>Human Rights</p>	<p>GE – Values and attitudes</p> <p>Skills and processes</p> <p>QT – Deep knowledge</p> <p>Higher order thinking</p> <p>Cultural knowledge</p> <p>Deep understanding</p> <p>Connectedness</p>	<p>Engaging with text</p> <p>Collating and presenting information</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Slideshow</p>

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<p>Lesson 7 Chapters 20 – 22</p> <p>Resources: <i>‘Face the facts’ refugees and asylum seekers resource</i> <i>RightsED</i></p> <p>Content: Debate</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Scanning and skimming text</p> <p>Investigating websites for information</p>	<p>(i) TS 3.1 TS 3.2 RS 3</p> <p>(ii) Literacy 5 Literature 6</p>	<p>People smuggling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class discussion on the powerful and powerless – great inequalities that surround refugees and the extreme measures they will take to get away from their dire situations. Discuss: what is the difference between an asylum seeker and a refugee? Does arriving on a boat make a person any less entitled to asylum? Debate the issue ‘Asylum seekers would rather live in Australia than their home country’ – considering all aspects of culture, family, tradition and the concept of belonging: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would Jamal, Bibi, Omar and Rashida rather be at home or on a boat to Australia? Validate your answers using references from the text Use the resource ‘Face the facts’ – particularly the worksheets on refugees in the media, what is it like to be a refugee for further exploration of this topic <p>Website: http://www.humanrights.gov.au/education/face_the_facts/index.html</p>	<p>Interdependence & Globalisation</p> <p>Social Justice & Human Rights</p> <p>Sustainable futures</p>	<p>GE – Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>Skills and processes</p> <p>Values and attitudes</p> <p>QT – Engagement</p> <p>Deep knowledge/ understanding</p> <p>Substantive communication</p> <p>Connectedness</p>	<p>Engaging with text</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Debate</p>

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<p>Lesson 8</p> <p>Chapters 23 – 27</p> <p>Resources: <i>‘Face the facts’ refugees and asylum seekers resource</i> <i>RightsED</i></p> <p><i>Boy Overboard</i> Class Set</p> <p>Content: Critically analyse texts</p> <p>Critically analyse online resources</p>	<p>(i)</p> <p>TS 3.1 TS 3.2 RS 3.5 RS 3.6 WS 3</p> <p>(ii)</p> <p>Literacy 5 Literature 5</p> <p>Literacy 6 Literature 6</p>	<p>Refugees/Asylum seekers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss what life must be like for the children on the boat – remembering Bibi is only 9 and they are very frightened without their parents. In pairs, list three things that have happened to the children on the boat, using references from the text Ask the students to place themselves in the childrens’ shoes and write a journal entry from either Jamal, Rashida, Omar or Bibi’s perspective. Define the terms refugee and asylum seeker using the resource ‘Face the facts’ Use the resource ‘Face the facts’ – particularly the worksheets on refugees in the media, what is it like to be a refugee for further exploration of this topic <p>Website: http://www.humanrights.gov.au/education/face_the_facts/index.html</p>	<p>Interdependence</p> <p>Social Justice & Human Rights</p>	<p>GE –</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>Skills and processes</p> <p>Values and attitudes</p> <p>QT –</p> <p>Deep understanding</p> <p>Connectedness</p> <p>Engagement</p> <p>Background knowledge</p>	<p>Engaging with text</p> <p>Journal entry</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Definition</p>

Stage 3 English – Novel Study on ‘Boy Overboard’

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<p>Lesson 9 Chapter 28 – 34 Resources: <i>Boy Overboard</i> Pencils/textas A4 /A3 paper</p> <p>Content: Visual literacy</p> <p>Critical analysis of central themes and synthesis of ideas</p> 	<p>(i) TS 3.1 TS 3.2 RS 3.6 RS 3.7</p> <p>(ii) Literacy 5 Literature 5</p> <p>Literacy 6</p>	<p>Reading and Responding to the Text Read and Discuss chapters 28–34</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the title of the book in light of what we have read so far – why do you think it was called so? With a partner devise three different titles for the book that represent its central themes and issues. Make a book cover for one of these, using visual literacy as a powerful tool the way Gleitzman has. 	<p>Interdependence</p> <p>Cultural diversity</p> <p>Conflict Resolution</p> <p>Human Rights</p>	<p>GE – Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>Skills and processes</p> <p>QT – Deep understanding</p> <p>Deep knowledge</p> <p>Higher order thinking</p> <p>Connectedness</p> <p>Cultural knowledge</p>	<p>Engaging with text</p> <p>Making notes</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Book cover production</p>

Stage 3 English – Novel Study on ‘Boy Overboard’

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<p>Lesson 10</p> <p>Chapter 34 – 38</p> <p>Resources: Access to ICT (class/1:2 ratio set of laptop computers – IWB display of CRC) A3 paper Pencils/ textas Hard copy of CRC</p> <p>Content: Viewing for meaning Critical literacy Poster making Assessing literature for bias and meaning</p>	<p>(i) TS 3.1 TS 3.2 RS 3.5 RS 3.6 RS 3.7</p> <p>(ii) Literacy 5 Literature 5 Literacy 6</p>	<p>Australia’s Political Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) from Lesson 4. What have the class learned about the reality of the rights of children in relation to the powerful and powerless in this novel? Revisit the website http://www.hreoc.gov.au/human_rights/children/index.html and read the convention again. What rights is Australia breaking in keeping children in mandatory detention? How do the class feel about this? Does Jamal and Bibi’s story change the way they think about the political situation – what if it were them? Design a poster raising awareness of this for others in the school community or a cartoon strip showing how children live in mandatory detention 	<p>Interdependence</p> <p>Cultural diversity</p>	<p>GE – Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>Skills and processes</p> <p>QT – Deep understanding</p> <p>Metalanguage</p>	<p>Engaging with text</p> <p>Making notes</p> <p>Discussion</p>

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<p>Lesson 11</p> <p>Chapter 39 – 42</p> <p>Resources:</p> <p>Content: How ideas are shaped in films</p> <p>Story construction and resolution of conflict</p> <p>Culture</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Developing an argument</p>	<p>(i)</p> <p>TS 3.1 TS 3.2 RS 3.5 RS 3.6 RS 3.7 RS 3.8</p> <p>(ii)</p> <p>Literacy 5 Literature 5</p> <p>Literacy 6 Literature 6</p>	<p>Action/Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the novel as a catalyst for change in Australia’s response to children in detention and the reasons people flee their country. Discuss the stereotypes from the media – and the bias it promotes – and how texts of all forms are written to persuade. How has Gleitzman persuaded you? Is this a positive or negative experience? How might you respond to this – <p>In pairs decide to either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the approval of the principal write a letter to a politician expressing concern over children in mandatory detention, using facts from the CRC to support your arguments Research further the exact numbers and details of children currently in mandatory detention and what Australia is doing in response to the global outcry In consultation with the class teacher/approval by the principal agree five questions to email the author that will help them gain a deeper understanding of the issues explored in the text Personal response choice in consultation with the class teacher 	<p>Interdependence & globalisation</p> <p>Cultural diversity</p> <p>Sustainable futures</p>	<p>GE – Values and attitudes</p> <p>Knowledge and understanding</p> <p>QT – Deep understanding</p> <p>Problematic knowledge</p> <p>Substantial communication</p>	<p>Engaging with text</p> <p>Discussion</p> <p>Letter writing using appropriate form</p> <p>Research project</p> <p>Questions</p>

Stage 3 English – Novel Study on ‘Boy Overboard’

Overview of text with a Global Education focus (matched with lesson sequences)

Boy Overboard

The **issues** are war, conflict, oppression, poverty, human rights, (particularly child rights and rights of women), refugees, asylum seekers, political agendas and mandatory detention within the main contexts of identity and cultural diversity, social justice and human rights and peace building and conflict resolution. Sustainable futures is touched upon in refugees and political issues that create such human tragedies. The link of this to interdependence and globalisation is simple to make – the same political issues that create the refugee situations also rely upon others to help relieve it.

Chapters 1 – 3

Social Justice and Human Rights, Identity and Cultural Diversity, Peace Building and Conflict Resolution.

Establishes Jamal’s cultural landscape. ‘Bomb wind can really put you off your soccer skills’ (p.1) as well as the role of women in this society ‘Bibi must have forgotten that girls aren’t allowed to leave the house without a parent. She must have forgotten that females have to keep their faces covered at all times out of doors. And it must have slipped her mind that girls playing soccer is completely, totally and absolutely against the law’ (p.4).

The Child Rights theme continues. ‘Please, I beg the landmines silently. Don’t let her tread on you. She’s only nine.’ (p.7).

The children encounter a tank in the desert, trying to retrieve their soccer ball – it trains a gun on them – child rights again – ‘Jamal, Jamal, come quickly. Your stupid sister’s stepped on a mine’ (p.15).

Chapters 4 – 6

Landmines, rights of children to play/live in safe places, ‘When your house keeps getting bombed you’ve always got a lot of chores’ (p.24). The rights of children to free schooling – without this there is illegal schooling – Jamal and Bibi’s mum runs an illegal school and gets caught by ‘the government’ – ‘We have to pack up and leave right now’ (p.33).



Image courtesy of AusAID

Chapters 7 – 10

Social Justice and Human Rights, Identity and Cultural Diversity, Peace Building and Conflict Resolution.

Jamal’s family are forced to flee their home as they know they will be persecuted for the running of the illegal school. They pack up all their belongings, say goodbye to their family home and possessions and then watch as their home is blown up in the night by ‘the government’. All they know of their ‘home’ and ‘culture’ is within their backpacks and their memories.

Chapters 11 – 13

Social Justice and Human Rights, Peace Building and Conflict Resolution.

The children are left on their own as their father goes to ‘pick up’ their mother. They discover she has been taken to a football arena to be publicly punished with other women for being teachers – Jamal’s father rescues her in the taxi and they all escape out of the city...‘I suddenly know that if dad can be a desert warrior in a soccer stadium, so can I” (p.69).

Chapters 14 – 19

Refugee Camp – Human Rights, Social Justice, Peace Building and Conflict Resolution.

The children’s parents tell them they are going to Australia – ‘Where’s Australia’ says Bibi?

‘A long way away’ says Dad, and in his voice I can hear how much he wishes he could stay at home’ (p.73).

The harsh reality of life in a refugee camp comes to Jamal – the sheer desperation of human existence – The role of the United Nations is introduced. They sell their only last cultural ‘heirloom’ (mum’s candlestick which has been in her family for generations but they also believe protects them and brings good luck) to pay for their flight out of the refugee camp.

‘With no candlestick to look after us, we’re going to have to look after each other’ (p.101).

Stage 3 English – Novel Study on ‘Boy Overboard’

Chapters 20 – 22

The family are waiting for their boat. Jamal loses his soccer ball into the harbour and he and Bibi go to get it. ‘If we lose the ball’ she says (Bibi) ‘we won’t get to do the plan. We won’t get to be soccer stars and form a new government and go home.’ They get separated from their parents and end up on two different boats – Mum and Dad on one boat and Jamal and Bibi on the other. There is no way to be reunited as they set off and the children are left to fend for themselves on the boat without their parents or food or supplies. This highlights the hope the children place on soccer as their saviour and their escapism and the childlike view they have on such a complex social and political issue.

Chapters 23 – 27

The discomforts the children suffer as refugees on a boat – seasickness, hunger, heat exhaustion, freezing at night but the hope they still hold that it is worth it all – ‘For the millionth time since we set sail I remind myself why we’re doing this. Freezing on a hard deck all night. Roasting all day. Watching poor little children and old people suffer even more than us. Australia. Laughing People. A kind government...’ (p.131). Child rights and human rights.

Chapters 28 – 34

Pirates, huge seas, sinking boat, people swept overboard – all part of life at sea. The children are finally ‘rescued’ by an Australian warship – and are treated well. It raises the question of the human face of carrying out the political agenda ‘Jamal’ he (Andrew) says quietly. ‘I want to say how sorry I am’ (p.152) but Jamal has no idea what the navy officer could possibly be sorry about. Conflict resolution – effects of pirates on their lives and the powerful vs powerless, social justice and human rights.



Image courtesy of the Australian Defence Image Library



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Chapters 35 – 38

Human Rights and Social Justice, Peace Building and Conflict Resolution, Interdependence.

The children arrive at the detention centre – and find out it is a ‘holding centre’ not Australia. They were so excited to be landing in what they thought was Australia – questions raised about their right to know where they are and be informed of their status. They also are told that their parents boat has sunk – ‘I can’t believe it. I can’t believe that people can be like this in Australia’ (p.166) in reference to ‘letting their parents boat sink’ – Jamal and Bibi have a belief that they will be looked after by Australia – the direct opposite to their government at ‘home’ – issues here concerning refugees, asylum seekers, human rights and social justice, mandatory detention and rights of the child.

Chapters 39 – 42

‘Never give up – even when things are looking hopeless’ (p.181) is the theme of the novel – the children are reunited with their parents who have been rescued from the sinking boat – they are extremely grateful just to be at the ‘holding centre’ as they have their freedom and each other – the issues of mandatory detention and carrying out government orders by the human face are again touched on ‘I hate what we’re doing to you people’ he says quietly (p.180) – issues of freedom, family and peace – both inner peace and away from conflict are explored here as Jamal reaches closure in having his family all together again away from harm – this is enough for him.

Stage 3 English – Novel Study on ‘Boy Overboard’

Global Education Learning Emphases in the text

Interdependence and globalisation – ‘Interdependence describes the relationships of mutual dependence between all life forms (including humans) within and across cultures, environments and social systems. It means that decisions taken in one place will affect what happens elsewhere.’ (Global Education Framework p.8). The features of interdependence covered in the novel focus on the concept of civil and human rights and political agendas – how others rely on those with power to speak for them when they cannot. These actions have direct effects on the lives of others (eg. outrage about children in detention and media scrutiny has led to Australia being forced to make changes to its policies on mandatory detention). Globalisation is a direct cause of some of the huge refugee population movements in the world today – students are given the chance to explore the reasons why people flee and why they can’t go back. Peace and security issues are essential elements of interdependence.



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Identity and cultural diversity – *Boy Overboard* cuts through cultural divides – making this a story of human struggle, not religious or political. Students develop a sense of shared identity with the central characters as they grapple with the many disappointments and tragedies encountered on their way to Australia. The candlestick provides a rich source of discussion about tradition and cultural heritage, as do the references to Jamal’s family being desert warriors and bakers (both equally important). It engenders the students with a sense of personal story that defines who you are – Jamal and Bibi’s pride in their heritage and family does not end when they enter Australia – and children from any culture all over the world still love soccer.

Social justice and human rights – This is the cornerstone of this fictional story – the right of others to a safe place to live, free from harm and persecution. Throughout the novel, from the very beginning where the everyday goes on where human rights are denied (no music, no fizzy drinks, no schools, no sport, no teachers, no freedom to live peacefully and free from harm (landmines abound), persecution by ‘the government’ (women being tortured, houses blown up) policemen being bribed, illegal satellite dishes etc to the end where they are going to be free from all this (and end up in detention) human rights and social justice is the dominant recurring theme.

Stage 3 English – Novel Study on ‘Boy Overboard’

Peace building and conflict resolution – Peace is the end goal for this family. Inner peace and peace from conflict that destroyed their lives. They seek a place to be free from persecution to live as a family – working and existing as before. They are inhabitants of a country that is oppressed and as such are denied basic human rights. There are many examples of conflict in the text – from the public execution of the teachers to the pirates on the boat. Peace building is an active component too where the United Nations are mentioned in their food aid for the refugee camps and their efforts to uphold international conventions to provide basic human rights to all. Conflict is an everyday part of life for Jamal and Bibi’s family in their lives in Afghanistan.



Image courtesy of AusAID

Sustainable futures – Education for sustainable development is about learning to....live in a world where all people have sufficient food..... create and enjoy a better, safer, more just world; be caring citizens who exercise their rights and responsibilities locally, nationally, and globally (UNESCO 2005). These themes are dealt with in the Refugee Camp, in the lives of Jamal and Bibi’s family who are attempting to create their own ‘better, safer more just world’ as their own country will not provide that for them. They have a right to this as a human but also to a future for their children. There are other subliminal issues this deals with such as their national and international rights and responsibilities as global citizens.