

ENGLISH AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Why teach English with a Global Citizenship approach?



A key motivation for English teaching is to enable learners to use language powerfully and effectively in personal, communal and professional contexts.

English teachers encourage learners to explore diverse identities and cultures, think critically about their place in the world, build relationships and live positively and dynamically with those around them. A Global Citizenship approach to English develops learners' empathy, respect for diversity and imagination to recognise their place in local, national and global communities. It also expands learners' thinking and horizons and develops critical literacy, leading to higher levels of attainment.

A Global Citizenship approach provides the meaningful wider contexts necessary for language and literature to be fully understood. It enables learners to appreciate a range of perspectives, exploring how texts from different social, historical and cultural contexts influence values, assumptions and a sense of identity – all excellent preparation for the demands of the UK English curricula.

The emphasis of Global Citizenship on real-life learning in both local and global settings is a great way to inspire learners and demonstrate the purpose of English. Global Citizenship provides practical opportunities for learners to develop self-expression and the communication skills to interact with others in their own communities and more widely. For example, instead of writing persuasive letters for fictional audiences, learners can write real letters to their local MP in England, MSP in Scotland or AM in Wales about issues important to them. Instead of writing imaginary speeches, learners can write and perform speeches sharing their response to local-global issues with others in their school or wider community.

“LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE BECOME MEANINGFUL AND FULFILLING WHEN THEY ARE LINKED TO THE LIVES OF LEARNERS AND TO THE WIDER CONTEXTS OF CULTURE AND SOCIETY.”

At the Heart of English: Planning for the new curriculum, Looking for the Heart of English, 2014

Teachers are expected to take a real-life approach to English:

- In England, Ofsted has called for secondary schools to build in “tasks, audiences and purposes that engage students with the world beyond the classroom.” *Moving English Forward*, Ofsted, 2012
- In Scotland, the 3-18 Literacy and English Review states that: “In this ever-changing, information-rich society, it is essential that our children and young people develop a broad range of literacy and communication skills to participate fully in society.” (*Education Scotland*, 2015)
- In Wales, the Literacy Framework describes literacy as a “set of skills, including speaking, listening, reading and writing, which enable us to make sense of the world around us...” *National Literacy and Numeracy Framework*, 2013

“ENGLISH IS A SUBJECT WITH A GLOBAL DIMENSION. IT INVOLVES STUDENTS' PLACE IN THE WORLD AS WELL AS THE WORLD OF LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE STUDY. REFLECTING ON GLOBAL ISSUES AND COMMUNICATING WITH COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD GIVES THE SUBJECT VITAL RICHNESS.”

NATE website, 2015

What is a Global Citizen?

Oxfam sees the Global Citizen as someone who:

- is aware of the wider world and has a sense of their own role as a world citizen
- respects and values diversity
- has an understanding of how the world works
- is passionately committed to social justice
- participates in the community at a range of levels, from the local to the global
- works with others to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place
- takes responsibility for their actions

Practical ideas for a Global Citizenship approach to English

A Global Citizenship approach offers numerous, diverse opportunities for real-life learning in English, enabling young people to learn, think and take action in relation to global issues. Here are just a few practical ideas:

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

- Develop empathy, explore different perspectives and recognise the complexity of an issue by role playing a particular character or situation, for example using case studies to investigate how some communities around the world are being impacted by the climate emergency in Oxfam's *Stories of Climate Change* resource.
- Explore how spoken language has been used to challenge social injustices, for example by studying speeches by Nelson Mandela or Martin Luther King. You might like to refer to Oxfam's *Raising Her Voice: Music and Rights in West Africa* for song lyrics about civil rights in 1960s USA.
- Develop young people's essential skills to constructively discuss their own values and ideas about complex and controversial global issues such as war, migration, sexuality, religion and bullying. See Oxfam's *Teaching Controversial Issues Teachers' Guide* for further information.
- Exchange and perform poetry on a particular local-global issue with other schools locally, nationally and internationally. You could start an activity with Sadia Ahmed's poem, 'Emotional Euthanasia'. See <https://poetrysociety.org.uk/poems/emotional-euthanasia/>
- Discuss and formally debate issues of local, national and global concern and draw out links between them. For example, explore how food supplies are interconnected using Oxfam's *Global Food Challenge* or *Go Bananas* resources or hold a Model United Nations debate - see www.una.org.uk/globe
- Use philosophical enquiry about a global issue to develop a wide range of English skills including: critical, creative and collaborative thinking; supporting arguments and counter-arguments; generating hypotheses and making distinctions and connections. See www.sapere.org.uk.
- Use puppetry to explore issues such as conflict and identity. See www.persona-doll-training.org.

"LITERACY IS A BRIDGE FROM MISERY TO HOPE. IT IS A BULWARK AGAINST POVERTY, AND A BUILDING BLOCK OF DEVELOPMENT... LITERACY IS, ALONG WITH EDUCATION IN GENERAL, A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT... THE ROAD TO HUMAN PROGRESS AND THE MEANS THROUGH WHICH EVERY MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD CAN REALISE HIS OR HER FULL POTENTIAL."

Kofi Annan in "3-18 Literacy and English Review" in *Education Scotland*, 2015

- Develop collaborative thinking and increase exploratory talk using resources from *The Collaborative Learning Project*. See www.collaborativelearning.org.
- Present information about a global issue in a variety of ways to real audiences, such as to another class, in an assembly, in a podcast or radio programme or as a short film.

READING

- Explore alternative perspectives through works written by Southern authors such as Adichie, Mistry, Mafhouz and Garcia Marquez. See book list for further ideas.
- Use diaries, testimonies and case studies to explore similarities and differences between the lives of others and learners' own, and identify common hopes and values. See Oxfam's *If I Were President* resource.
- Compare texts about the same global issue, such as food, water or education, from a range of perspectives and in a variety of writing styles. For example, use Oxfam's *Explore the Work of Oxfam* resources.
- Develop learners' critical literacy by using reading to examine connections between language, knowledge and power.
- Reflect on how identities affect how viewpoints are both portrayed and interpreted in literature.
- Consider how the perspective and context of a reader can influence the way in which they might interpret a text.
- Research traditional stories and storytelling from different cultures, compare moral messages and consider how the environment might have shaped them. Look at how stories have travelled around the world, for example, the Anansi stories of West Africa travelled to the Caribbean with the slave trade.
- Explore how literature can contribute to attitudinal change. For example, consider *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee or *The Other Side of Truth* by Beverley Naidoo.
- Use a wide range of texts to stimulate learners' imaginations, moving them beyond both what is familiar and from immediate experience to wider issues and ideas. For example, use stories to



Photo: Aurelie Marrier d'Unienville



illuminate a current global issue, such as the plight of refugees and asylum seekers using books such as *In the Sea there are Crocodiles* by Fabio Geda.

- Solve a reading mystery such as ‘Why did Runa’s stall close down?’ in *Oxfam’s Climate Challenge (11–14s) Session 3*.
- Use *Oxfam’s Nelson Mandela* resource to distinguish between fact, opinion and fiction or implicit and explicit points of view.

WRITING

- Write a leaflet or create a poster which persuades others to take action on a global issue learners feel strongly about and develop their ability to make a case clearly, effectively and persuasively, using concrete examples and supporting evidence.
- Use Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s TED talk, *The danger of a single story*, to inspire learners to write down multiple stories about themselves or others. See www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story
- Write letters to MPs/MSPs/AMs about real local-global issues such as climate change. See *Oxfam’s Climate Challenge* for real-life stories about the human impact of climate change.
- Try writing activities from *Oxfam’s Children’s Rights* resource which include using persuasive language to promote good hygiene.
- Write and submit newspaper articles or send letters to local businesses about a local-global issue learners feel strongly about, such as carbon footprints or refugees. See *Oxfam’s Climate Challenge* or *Stand with Refugees* resources.
- Script a radio show, a short film or a speech based on responses to a global issue.
- Describe a person from different perspectives such as for a police description, a school report or a newspaper obituary. See *Oxfam’s Nelson Mandela* resource.
- Analyse a style of text and re-write children’s stories from around the world in this new style – see *Oxfam’s More or Less Equal? English* resource, Session 5.
- Write persuasive letters about global issues to customers buying second-hand books in *Oxfam’s* shops using *Oxfam’s Message in a Book* resource.

MEDIA LITERACY

- Critically analyse the media and explore issues around ‘fake news’ using Activity 6 in *Oxfam’s Teaching Controversial Issues* guide for teachers.
- Compare news reporting over time for a particular event. For example, explore how global disasters such as floods or earthquakes are reported several years afterwards.
- Identify facts, opinions, stereotyping and bias in news reporting and consider how choices are made about which stories are covered or given prominence.
- Use NATE/Global Education *Re-viewing the World* resources for a wide range of activities based on film, radio, TV, newspapers and images. See www.nate.org.uk/global-learning

BOOKS

Both picture and fiction books can be used in a wide range of ways as the basis of Global Citizenship English lessons. Here are some examples:

Picture books

- *Eric – Shaun Tan*, Templar Publishing
- *Handa’s Surprise* – Eileen Browne, Scholastic/Walker
- *Oh! Get Off Our Train!* – John Burningham, Red Fox Picture Books
- *The Colour of Home* – Mary Hoffman, Francis Lincoln Children’s Books
- *Wangari’s Trees of Peace* – Jeanette Winter, Harcourt Children’s Books (Kenya)

7–14 years

- *A Little Piece of Ground* – Elizabeth Laird, Macmillan Children’s Books (Palestine)
- *In the Sea there are Crocodiles* – Fabio Geda, David Fickling Books (Afghanistan)
- *Iqbal* – Francesco D’Adamo, Simon & Schuster Ltd (Pakistan)
- *Jasmine Skies* – Sita Brahmachari, Albert Whitman and Company (India)
- *Journey to the River Sea* – Eva Ibbotson, Macmillan Children’s Books (Brazil)
- *Out of Shadows* – Jason Wallace, Andersen Press (Zimbabwe)
- *Refugee Boy* – Benjamin Zephaniah, Bloomsbury Publishing (Ethiopia)
- *The Unforgotten Coat* – Frank Cottrell Boyce, Walker (Mongolia)
- *The Other Side of Truth* – Beverley Naidoo, Puffin (Nigeria)
- *Zlata’s Diary* – Zlata Filipovic, Puffin (Sarajevo)

14+

- *Half of a Yellow Sun* – Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Fourth Estate (Nigeria)
- *Midaq Alley* – Naguib Mahfouz, Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group (Egypt)
- *One Hundred Years of Solitude* – Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Penguin (Columbia)
- *The God of Small Things* – Arundhati Roy, Harper Perennial (India)
- *The Kite Runner* – Khaled Hosseini, Bloomsbury Publishing (Afghanistan)
- *Things Fall Apart* – Chinua Achebe, Penguin Classics (Nigeria)

Why teach English with a global citizenship approach?

BENEFITS TO LEARNERS

- Develops effective communication, critical literacy and thinking skills which lead to higher attainment.
- Deepens cultural understanding and enhances learners' awareness of their own embedded and shifting values and assumptions.
- Develops a knowledge of language and literature which reflects the cosmopolitan nature of English in a changing world, drawing on voices from the global South.
- Enables learners to explore how language is used to represent the world and the ways people experience it.

BENEFITS TO TEACHERS

- Engages learners through the use of real-life stories and situations to develop their reading, writing and spoken language skills.
- Motivates learners to deepen their understanding of local and global issues.
- Challenges learners' current perspectives and values.
- Provides a holistic approach to teaching and learning with no extra demands on curricular time.

BENEFITS TO THE WIDER WORLD

- Enables learners to apply their language learning to local and global issues.
- Encourages learners to value diversity and challenge inaccurate or false assertions made by others.
- Gives learners confidence in sharing their learning with real audiences.
- Equips learners with the knowledge, understanding, values, attitudes and skills that will enable them to contribute towards a more just and sustainable world.

"LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ARE EMBEDDED IN AN AWARENESS OF HOW THE WORLD WORKS, IN ISSUES OF POWER, CULTURAL DIFFERENCE, DOMINATION AND EMANCIPATION... LITERACY IS SEEN AS THE FOUNDATION FOR BUILDING A 'PROHUMAN' SOCIETY IN WHICH ALL CITIZENS CAN PARTICIPATE, REGARDLESS OF GENDER, CASTE AND DIFFERENCE."

Jonathan Neelands, National Teaching Fellow and Professor at the Institute of Education at the University of Warwick, in English Drama Media, NATE, 2004.

OXFAM RESOURCES FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS

More or Less Equal? English (11-16s)

Six English sessions based on the Young Lives longitudinal study of young people in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Viet Nam from 2000-2015. Activities include role play, reading, writing and Philosophy for Children.

Children's Rights (8-11s)

English activities exploring the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Tasks include persuasive argument, connectives and role play.

Global Food Challenge (7-11s & 11-14s)

Develop English skills while exploring fairness issues in the global food system through the experience of small-scale farmers.

Climate Challenge (7-11s & 11-14s)

Develop a range of English skills through focussing on the human impact of the climate emergency.

Each Picture Tells a Story (5-8s)

Inspire and develop literacy skills using photographs and stories created by children in Vietnam.

Message in a Book (all ages)

An opportunity to write persuasive letters about global issues which will then be inserted into second-hand books for sale in Oxfam shops.

Explore the Work of Oxfam (7-14s)

Find out how communities around the world are working to ensure everyone is able to eat, drink, earn and learn.

Stand with Refugees (7-14s)

Activities to strengthen critical thinking and develop empathy.

World Book Day Activity Ideas (7-14s)

Challenge stereotypes, prejudices and cultural misunderstanding by encouraging learners to look beyond single stories about other people and places.

Nelson Mandela (7-14s)

English activities exploring fact, opinion and bias and distinctions between biographical and autobiographical writing.

The World Cup: A Fair Game? (9-14s)

A look at media coverage and a role play investigating the benefits and challenges of hosting the football World Cup.

Teaching Controversial Issues (Teachers' Guide)

Develop effective approaches for discussing controversial issues, challenging assumptions and exploring global issues in greater depth.

CPD (England)

Oxfam offers courses to develop teachers' skills and understanding in global citizenship. See www.oxfam.org.uk/education/get-involved/professional-development-for-teachers/england

USEFUL WEBSITES

Oxfam Education www.oxfam.org.uk/education

NATE www.nate.org.uk

The English Association www2.le.ac.uk/offices/english-association

Education Scotland – Literacy and English www.education.gov.scot/Documents/literacy-english-pp.pdf

English for Speakers of Other Languages (Scotland) <https://www.gov.scot/policies/languages/english-for-speakers-of-other-languages/>

Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) <https://www.gov.scot/policies/schools/additional-support-for-learning/>

Hwb Wales (see literacy resources) www.hwb.gov.wales

National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum www.naldic.org.uk/

Collaborative Learning Project www.collaborativelearning.org

Looking for the Heart of English heartofenglishblog.wordpress.com/

National Drama www.nationaldrama.org.uk

National Literacy Trust www.literacytrust.org.uk

Teach Global Ambassadors English www.teachglobalambassadors.org/curriculum-areas/english

The Poetry Society www.poetrysociety.org.uk

SLAMBassadors UK <https://slam.poetrysociety.org.uk/>

SAPERE www.sapere.org.uk/

Provides courses and resources to deliver Philosophy for Children.

Global Dimension www.globaldimension.org.uk

To find out more, visit:
www.oxfam.org.uk/education

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