

MESSAGE IN BOOK

ACTION GUIDE - INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Introduction

Oxfam is a global movement of millions of people who share the belief that, in a world rich in resources, poverty isn't inevitable, and is an injustice that can and must be overcome. In just 15 years, extreme poverty has been halved. 15 more years and we can end it for good.

In the 2018/19 financial year, Oxfam Great Britain helped nearly 13 million people to fight poverty¹. From women's rights to water, emergency relief to education, all the issues we work on centre on enabling people to create better lives for themselves. We help in a number of different ways - from developing innovative sanitation technologies, to training farmers to grow crops, to raising the voices of those affected by poverty and injustice. We respond fast in emergencies and stay to help people rebuild their lives. We work on long-term projects with communities determined to shape a better future for themselves. And we campaign for genuine, lasting change to beat poverty forever.

The following letter-writing activity provides a creative way for young people to be active global citizens by increasing awareness of the work of Oxfam among customers buying books from Oxfam shops. Young people could also collect books to donate to their local Oxfam shop, enabling them to support Oxfam's work through raising money from book sales.

This action guide links to our [Explore the work of Oxfam](#) resource in which learners use video, role play and case studies to learners to consider our basic needs in life and explore how communities around the world are working with Oxfam to tackle poverty and ensure that everyone is able to eat, drink, earn and learn.



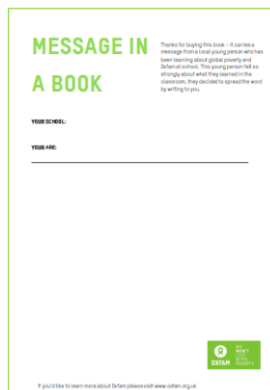
Photo credit: Aurelle Marrier d'Untenville / Oxfam

¹ www.oxfam.org.uk/what-we-do/about-us/plans-reports-and-policies/annual-report-and-accounts-2019

What to do - Overview

1. Print off copies of the letter template

First, print off copies of the letter template, enough for one letter per learner.



2. Learn about the work of Oxfam, write letters and encourage book collections

Use the [Explore the work of Oxfam](#) resource to learn how communities are working with Oxfam and partners to fight poverty and bring about positive, lasting change.

Support learners to use this knowledge to write their letters to raise awareness of the work of Oxfam.



Photo credit: James Beck

Encourage learners to start bringing in books to donate to Oxfam.

3. Call your nearest shop to arrange your book and letter donation

Find details of your nearest Oxfam shop on www.oxfam.org.uk/shop/shop-finder

Call your local shop to make arrangements. Many of the people who work in our shops are volunteers and they may not know about Message in a Book; be prepared to explain.

Unfortunately, Oxfam cannot come to collect your donation, so you will need to transport books and letters to the shop yourself.

4. Take books and letters to the Oxfam shop

Oxfam will sell books of saleable condition and stack letters by the till, inserting a letter into each book sold (like a bookmark).

Letters will not be matched with learners' donated books, so please do not insert them prior to donation.



Photo credit: Radka Dolinska / Oxfam



Photo credit: James Beck

Learning about the work of Oxfam

- Use activities from Oxfam's [Explore the work of Oxfam](#) resource to develop learners' knowledge and understanding of the ways in which communities around the world are working with Oxfam and partner organisations to beat poverty now and forever.
- In the final activity of this resource, learners work in groups to consider possible actions that they might take to support Oxfam's work. The Message in a Book letter-writing activity could be introduced at this point as one of the ways in which learners could take action. Where possible, learners should be given the option to choose and lead any action that they decide to take.

Letter-writing

Note: As their letters will be distributed to members of the public, please remind learners NOT to write their names on the letters for safeguarding reasons.

- Explain to learners that they will be thinking of ideas for letters that could be put next to the till at their nearest Oxfam shop. Each letter will be placed inside a book and sold to a customer. Explain that although customers receiving these letters have bought a book from Oxfam, they might not know much else about the ways in which Oxfam fights poverty: this is learners' chance to raise awareness about the work of Oxfam. Their letters may help persuade the reader to start or continue supporting Oxfam's work.
- Ask learners to sit in silence for one minute and think about what they want the reader of their letter to know about Oxfam's work in fighting poverty. You might want to display the following sentence starters to prompt their thinking.
 - Did you know that Oxfam...
 - Oxfam's work is important because...
 - You can support Oxfam by...
 - You can help to tackle poverty by...
 - I think the work of Oxfam is important because...
- Afterwards ask learners to write their ideas on slips of paper. Invite learners to share their ideas with others in the class.
- Give each learner a blank letter template and explain that they will be writing their letter on this.
- You may wish to allow learners time to draft their letters before writing directly onto the blank letter templates. Emphasise that their letters don't have to be long: a clear message is more important. Some learners may prefer to write a poem or draw a picture (with a caption).
- Finish by allowing time for learners to share their letters with others in the class before collecting them in.



Top tips for collecting books

Check with others first - If you are collecting books to donate to Oxfam, remember to first contact your local Oxfam shop to check that they are able to take book donations. Use the Oxfam Shop Finder to locate your closest shop (www.oxfam.org.uk/shop/shop-finder).

Spread the word - Encourage learners to think about how they will raise awareness and encourage more people to donate books. Could learners make an announcement in assembly or write something for the school newsletter?

Delivering your books - Staff from your local Oxfam shop won't be able to collect book donations so you will need to think about how you will get your books (and letters) there.

Create a shop display - You might like to ask your local Oxfam shop whether you can help to create a window display of your donated books. Learners could design and display posters about Oxfam's work.

Celebrate your success - Remember to let everyone know about your amazing efforts. Even if you only manage to collect or sell a few books, every donation to Oxfam helps in the fight against poverty. If your school has a Twitter account, you might like to tweet about your success!

Further ideas

Find out more - Book an Oxfam Speaker to come to your school to talk about the life-changing work Oxfam does to fight poverty. Find out more: www.oxfamapps.org.uk/speaker/

Learn and think about the causes of poverty - Oxfam offers a huge range of free ideas and resources for developing global learning in the classroom and the whole school. Assemblies, quick activity ideas, detailed lesson plans, video clips, case studies, photo stories, quizzes, simulation games and more - all with global citizenship at their core. www.oxfam.org.uk/education/

Organise a second-hand book sale - Instead of collecting books to donate to their local Oxfam shop, learners could organise a second-hand book sale at school to raise funds to support Oxfam's work.

Set up a pop-up shop - Running a pop-up shop is a great way for learners to develop their organisation skills, encourage re-use and upcycling, and raise money for Oxfam. Here are some top tips from a fellow teacher on how to make your pop-up shop a success!

<https://mailchi.mp/e29459d86d5b/pop-up-shops-top-tips-from-a-fellow-teacher?e>



Photo credit: David Azia/Oxfam