Books to support learning around identity and belonging

## Picture books for all readers (7+ with support)

Each of these books is striking in its carefully chosen language but also in the stunning, often unusual illustrations that affect our reading just as much.

The Island by Armin Greder

This harrowing tale, with illustrations that echo The Scream by Edvard Munch, charts the unwelcoming treatment that a man receives when he lands on an island. He is given a stable to sleep, for example, and eventually the people who live there act out of fear and send him out into the ocean.

The Silence Seeker by Ben Morley

A boy in an urban area mishears his mother when she explains that their neighbour is an asylum seeker, and takes his new friend on a quest around the city in search of ‘silence’, only to find that there isn’t much. This story depicts the two roles in a non-stereotypical way, and can help learners think about how to make someone feel welcome.

The Arrival by Shaun Tan

This is an extended picture book which takes a long time to read and decode. With no words, this book uses many pictures, and a combination of realistic and fantastical pictures to show the story of a man and his family parting when he travels overseas. Discussion with learners about what the monsters might represent can be thought-provoking and a great way to consolidate learning about the reasons people leave their own countries and become economic migrants, refugees or asylum seekers.

The Lost Thing by Shaun Tan

Another book with fantastical creatures, The Lost Thing tells the story of a boy who finds someone (or something?) that looks lost, and tries to help him find where he belongs. Instead of through the official system though, the thing finds a secret door into a different world where it is happy.

The Colour of Home by Mary Hoffman and Karin Littlewood

A new boy joins the class from Somalia, and at first Miss Kelly thinks he has spoiled the beautifully bright picture he just painted, by adding far too much red and black. But when a translator, Fela, arrives the next day, Hassan tells Miss Kelly and Fela about what happened in Somalia to make him and his family leave. The process makes him feel happier and his house in the UK begins to feel brighter, like the colour of home.

These ideas are shared courtesy of [www.readingourworld.org.uk](http://www.readingourworld.org.uk)

Fiction / class readers / novels for ages 9-15

The Other Side of Truth by Beverly Naidoo

Sade and Femi, two children in Nigeria, are forced to leave when their mother is killed, and their father, a writer, realises that they are in danger.

Boy Overboard by Morris Gleitzman

Jamal and Bibi both love football, even though football is frowned upon in Afghanistan, and is absolutely forbidden for girls. The brother and sister leave for Australia with their mother and father when the government begins to search for them.

Girl Underground by Morris Gleitzman

This follow on tells the story of an Australian girl who helps Jamal while he is in a detention centre. The not really so happy ending from the first book leaves many children hanging, and this sequel resolves things not unhappily. Especially, it shows through the main character, what individuals can do to help.

Hidden by Miriam Halahmy

A teenage girl, Alix, who lives on a sleepy island on the south coast of the UK, finds a drowning immigrant on the beach, and begins to help him. Whilst also learning about Migration at school, she struggles to reach a decision about whether to tell anyone who she has found.

Refugee Boy by Benjamin Zephaniah

Alem journeys from the Eritrea / Ethiopia border where a war is happening. He is helped by the Refugee Council to find a family that looks after him. He suffers from stigma at school, but battles it and shows strength.

Poetry by Benjamin Zephaniah:

We refugees: <http://benjaminzephaniah.com/rhymin/we-refugees/>

The British (serves 60 million) <http://benjaminzephaniah.com/rhymin/the-british-serves-60-million/>

…and reading for teachers

Two Caravans by Marina Lewycka

A hilarious yet challenging look at the experience of illegal fruit pickers in the south of England, and what happens when their job gets too dangerous to stay.

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