

The Colour of Home by Mary Hoffman
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The following **Key Stage 1** activity is supplementary to the activities described in **A Welcome Experience** by Carolyn Herbert – a mainstream PSHCE project for Key Stages 1 and 2 that addresses the refugee experience.

The Colour of Home tells the story of a little boy, Hassan, who witnesses the violence of civil war in Somalia and escapes with his immediate family. He leaves behind his home, his cat and members of his wider family. Hassan begins to rebuild his life in the UK, a place of dull browns and greys, but it is not until he makes a friend at his new school that he can begin to see the colours around him once more. There are violent episodes in the story - Hassan's uncle is killed, Hassan hides under the bed from soldiers with guns and the house is burnt down. But the overall focus of the story is Hassan's experience of starting school in a strange country where he does not understand the language and where he is yet to make friends. I have used this story many times with Year 2 classes and all pupils are able to identify with Hassan's experience of being a newcomer. Children find the story thought-provoking but not especially upsetting.

The **aim** of the activity is to consider things we have in common with Hassan even though our experiences may have been very different.

The sentences on **Sheet 1** are about Hassan. They will need to be enlarged and pasted onto card so that there is one sentence on each card. You may want to add some more.

Whole class

Choose a volunteer to come to the front of the class.

Stick the words *same* and *different* on a flipchart board or something similar.

Read through the sentences about Hassan in turn, ask the volunteer if he or she is the same or different and place the sentence in the appropriate column.

The following table is an example of the result if you are comparing a girl with Hassan:

same	different
He has moved house.	He is a boy.
He has changed schools.	He speaks Somali.
He sometimes feels unhappy.	
He wants to have friends.	
He likes bright colours	

Remember that the sentences are about Hassan. In this example we have shown that the little girl is the same as Hassan in 5 ways but different from him in only 2 ways.

This activity can be repeated as many times as you like. It is not necessary to use all of the sentences each time.

Individual activity

Draw and write about ways in which you are the same as or different from Hassan. For children needing support with their writing, the exact same sentences from the class activity can be used. In the example below the child has adapted the sentences from the class activity.

<u>Hassan and me are the same</u>	<u>Hassan and me are different</u>
He is a boy and I am a boy. I sometimes feel unhappy. My cat ran away. <i>[space for pictures]</i>	I'm not Somalian. I don't speak Somalian.

Plenary

The children's work will demonstrate that they have more in common with Hassan than they may have at first thought.

For further information about **A Welcome Experience**, contact Carolyn Herbert on 020 7641 2096 or email cherbert@westminster.gov.uk

Sheet 1

He is a boy.

He is from Somalia.

He speaks Somali.

He has moved to England from another country.

He has moved house.

He has changed schools.

He sometimes feels scared.

He sometimes feels unhappy.

He wants to have friends.

He likes playing football.

He likes bright colours.

Hassan and me are the same

Hassan and me are different
