

Reading Thematic Overview

'A Dangerous Crossing' – Jane Mitchell

A Dangerous Crossing by Jane Mitchell "A Dangerous Crossing" tells the story of Ghalib, a 13-year-old boy who flees war in Syria with his family. The novel follows their dangerous journey as they face smugglers, difficult conditions in refugee camps, and a risky sea crossing in search of safety. It explores themes of bravery, survival, and the refugee experience, showing the emotional impact of being forced to leave home. The story is based on real events and helps readers understand the realities faced by refugees.

English

A Dangerous Crossing explores themes of power, identity, displacement, and the struggle for justice.

Similarly, the novel's portrayal of dangerous, uncertain futures and controlled environments resonates with dystopian fiction, helping pupils grasp how writers use setting, tension, and character to critique society.

Technology

The novel's focus on survival and travel provides a creative springboard into design challenges such as creating functional products for people on the move (e.g. wearable items, compact shelters, or multifunctional bags). The novel is set within the town of Kobani, Syria. The children will then be cooking a range of Syrian street food and finishing the year with making different bush tucker style desserts.

Geography

The idea of "what happens where land meets sea" is clear in Ghalib's risky journey across the water, representing the difficulties and unknowns faced by people during the Syrian civil war.

Science

The refugees' journey can be used to explore real-world science, such as energy transfer in survival contexts—keeping warm, staying cool, or using limited resources efficiently. The novel's vivid settings also create entry points into Earth & Space: pupils can examine geographical positioning, navigation by the stars, time zones, and the Earth's rotation in the context of travel across continents and seas. These links make abstract science concepts feel immediate and relevant.

Art

The cultural identities and histories of the characters in A Dangerous Crossing can inspire pupils to explore printmaking through tribal patterns and tattoo symbolism. Pupils can investigate how traditional and modern forms of body art are used for storytelling, status, belonging, and memory—then respond artistically by designing their own prints that reflect themes of migration, heritage, and identity.

History

In the novel the main themes are shown through disruption and displacement of people. This links with our topic of British empire through displacement of people.

