

Book title

In the sea there are crocodiles

Author

Fabio Geda



Bibliographic information

Published in Italy in 2010 for Baldini&Castoldi

Links (adaptations, reviews, full texts etc.)

Complete novel: <http://www.youblisher.com/p/1299525-Nel-mare-ci-sono-i-coccodrilli/>

Theme

The experiences lived by a young asylum-seeker in his journey from Afghanistan to Italy

Short summary

The Italian writer Fabio Geda tells the true story of an Afghani boy, named Enaiatollah Akbari, and his journey from Afghanistan to Italy in the early 21st century. Enaiatollah is only 10 years old when he is left to fend for himself because his mother abandons him in Pakistan, – her way of saving him from Taliban rule. (His family belongs to the Hazara people, a minority persecuted by the Talibans). So begins Enaiatollah's long struggle to find a new home, security and education. The map in the book shows the route of his journey – through Iran, Turkey and Greece before finding a safe haven in Italy – and the text tells about the setbacks, cruelty and also kindness he encounters. His adventurous and perilous escape includes hiding in the false bottom of a lorry, dangerous border crossings and encounters with traffickers: it is a frank and revealing testament of the experiences of a young asylum- seeker today.

Why is the story appropriate for the targeted groups of RSP readers?

This story reflects the current political/historical moment and refers to today's migrant situation. It makes students reflect upon the principle of inclusion and, at the same time, it promotes understanding of cultural diversities and heritage.

What are the distinguished readers interests reflected by this book/story?

This novel reflects the students' interests because it deals with the true biography of a



teen-ager who, despite his tender age, has to cope with dramatic situations: in order to enjoy freedom he escapes from his country and sets out on a perilous journey, while going through terrible experiences.

Why is this story motivational for the pupils?

This book is about a real story of an asylum-keeper, so it deals with the current issue of migration, but it also concerns hospitality. The main character's experience makes readers reflect upon the theme, move to tears while providing tips for discussion and exchange about several important topics: violence, war, despair, freedom sorrow, exile, religion. Above all, it gives the students the opportunity to consider the migration phenomenon more carefully and caringly.

Is there a historical, political, multi/inter cultural, migrant or similar context recognized in this book/story?

Yes, it reflects the current political/historical moment in Pakistan and Afghanistan (Taliban, war, persecution of Hazara minority ...) and refers to today's migrant situation.

Is there a principle of inclusion reflected in this book/story and does it promote understanding of cultural diversities and heritage?

Yes, in this book readers can find the principle of inclusion (the boy will be adopted and will meet many caring people) and the understanding of cultural diversities and heritage

METHODOLOGY

Title of Activity

On a journey ... but not on holiday.

Description of educational activity

Duration: 4 lessons (6 hours)

Pupils' age: 15-16

Organization of the class of pupils: individual, pair and group work

The aim of the lesson: the aim of this activity is to get a deep insight into the human experience of being an exile from an emotional, "physical" and literary perspective. The students will have the opportunity to share the main character's long and perilous journey and will get a closer view of his world, his geographical reality, his inner journey, while partaking his discovery of different realities, worlds, attitudes and behaviours. After all, the theme of migration has increasingly inspired the world literature, while placing more emphasis on autobiographical experiences reported by very young writers and providing stimuli and means to learn that each of us can be considered an "outsider" depending on the situation.

Support materials:

- Book, Atlas, Maps



- Encyclopaedias
- Internet sites
- Films
- Six worksheets on reading /reflection activities in order to carry out in-depth tasks on six themes related to the six chapters
- Books written by other authors on the same theme

Activities:

First of all, students are expected to read the book

1. The students are divided into six groups.
2. Each group is assigned one of the chapters regarding one of the countries the main character had to go through (Afghanistan, Pakistan...)
3. The students carry out research on places, borders, distances, customs, possible literary links to other witnesses ... of the countries they were assigned. They will choose meaningful and specific images to “trace” the journey experienced by the main character in a very realistic way
4. Students will also do in-depth/follow-up exercises included in the worksheets
5. The members of each group will present their research/work, while summing up the main events regarding the assigned countries and providing more details on people and realities. Then, it will be the turn of another group to deal with the following country according to the chronological order of the events.
6. Students will publish their final output on the project Facebook page

Great importance will be given to debriefing: a moment devoted to reflection, reassembling and analysis of the activity, thus promoting the collective exchange of opinions, the detection of difficult problems and, finally, the results of the learning process.

Evaluation and assessment method:

In order to evaluate the activity, students are asked:

1. to orally present their works
2. to draw a map of the protagonist's journey in no more than 10 minutes where they mark and colour countries, borders (confine), towns and journey.

Effect of the activity on RSP reading:

Students will be aware of today's burning issues such as prejudices, racism, conflicts, minors' rights, motherhood, borders closing,..., while learning about people's welcoming attitudes and generosity. It may be the starting point for bridging cultural gaps between European and non-European countries.

Connection to curriculum

Grade: 2nd grade

Scientific curriculum: during the second year the study of literature is focused on

- Improving oral and written skills and competences.



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- Improving reading skills, understanding and analysing , specifically, literary texts, but also devoting attention to non-literary texts and non-verbal languages.
- Learning how to build up and understand the historical and cultural context regarding the texts

Knowledge:

- Singling out the context, the aim and the addressee of the communication
- Learning the different reading techniques
- Develop reading fluency
- Improve reading comprehension

Skills:

- Access and organize and use information
- Express ideas and Justify arguments
- Select appropriate media
- Analyze complex systems
- Reflect on learning
- Draw conclusions
- Ask clarifying questions
- Presentation before an audience
- Improved use of vocabulary, spelling, syntax and expression

Bibliographic reference to be used during the activity

Italian version

Fabio Geda

Nel mare ci sono i cocodrilli. Storia vera di Enaiatollah Akbari

Publisher: Dalani

ISBN: 9788860736475

Page count: 155

Year of issue: 2010



English version



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Hardcover, 215 pages

Published August 9th 2011 by Doubleday (first published 2010)

Original Title: Nel mare ci sono i coccodrilli. Storia vera di Enaiatollah Akbari

ISBN: 0385534736 (ISBN13: 9780385534734)

Edition Language: English



Literary Awards: [Marsh Award for Children's Literature in Translation \(2013\)](#), [John Florio Prize Nominee for Howard Curtis \(2012\)](#)

Digital sources

Meet the authors at bookshops and booktrailers:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qvk13yu4mik>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZOSolsr6Qs>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLsZbSaWbOw>

Results

The students are expected to :

- be fully involved in the main character's experiences, from an emotional and intellectual point of view
- eagerly learn new tips about different cultures as well as about those geographical areas which have become migration routes in the last few years
- get a deeper knowledge about the difficulties encountered by those migrants who haven't come of age yet
- connect information and data, do research, become aware of problems related to migration, work in groups.

Recommendations

Creating “environments” promoting learning (**scaffolding**) and working in groups (**cooperative learning**) are to be prioritised in order to:

- foster students' activities and knowledge;
- favour research and investigation;
- promote collaborative learning and students' sharing;



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- enhance the students' individual learning process;
- devising teaching units as workshops
- properly inform students about diversity