



Changing life stories

Holocaust Memorial Day

A National Literacy Trust membership resource

Book club resource

After the War by Tom Palmer

Thank you for engaging with our Holocaust Memorial Day resources, generously funded by the Marks Family Charitable Trust, the Association of Jewish Refugees and The Blue Thread, enabling us to provide these to schools for free.

We recognise that, while this subject is of the utmost importance, it might also feel like a tricky one to teach. To that end, we thank UCL Centre for Holocaust Education and the Lake District Holocaust Project who we have worked with to ensure both accuracy and sensitivity in all of our materials, helping you to support young people's understanding and learning. This resource is for the award-nominated novel *After the War* written by author Tom Palmer, who has conducted extensive interviews and research as part of his work.

We have written this book club resource with flexibility in mind and the knowledge that you know your students best. There are discussion prompts and a writing task for each chapter; we encourage you to use as many or as few of these as you see fit. Those of you who have students who are refugees themselves, from areas of conflict, will know to introduce the subject appropriately. Equally, you may have students who come from families who have limited experience of other cultures. These activities should provide an opportunity to open students' eyes and develop empathy for others.

While this resource is not designed to teach students about the Holocaust, *After the War* may invite questions. Below is some guidance about where you can find further help.

1. *How much detail about the Holocaust should I share with children from this age range?*
The Holocaust Educational Trust states that, for primary-aged pupils, wartime persecution and murder are not appropriate topics. A guide for primary school teachers, and early teachers of early KS3 students, can be downloaded here: https://www.het.org.uk/images/downloads/Primary/A_Guide_for_Primary_School_Teachers.pdf. The Holocaust is taught by law to students in Key Stage 3, typically in Year 9.
2. *Does this story include any traumatic scenes?* Whilst there are no graphic traumatic scenes that deal directly with the Holocaust, the child survivors continued to live with and struggle with the effects of this trauma and some of the protagonists' memories are upsetting. The physical and emotional toll that this took upon their wellbeing is described here and should be dealt with sensitively, while also ensuring that the wellbeing of your own students is supported.

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3. *How do I support students to explore viewpoints that might be considered challenging or different from their own?* This story is about community and peace, and explores positive values and friendship. However, with the presentation of a range of reactions to the arrival of the children, there are descriptions of undertones of discrimination and ‘othering’. We want our young people to understand why fear and suspicion of those who may be perceived as being ‘different’ is damaging, harmful and unfounded. It is important to explore this with your students. You might consider some of the following approaches:

- Group work to enhance understanding, identify issues, and to consider and demonstrate appropriate responses together
- Link in with your school values, with a focus on kindness and community
- Encourage children not to judge, but to question. If you don’t understand something, find out why it might be happening

4. *Where can I find appropriate definitions of keywords?* The United Nations, UCL Centre for Holocaust Education and the Holocaust Educational Trust are good sources.

We hope that this resource will be of great use to you and your students, enabling and inspiring them to produce several short pieces of writing whilst reading the novel.

	Theme	Discussion prompts	Writing task
1	<p>Plane ride</p> <p>This chapter describes the first part of the journey the children undertake.</p>	<p>Collecting vocabulary and sharing stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you feel in a plane with no seats? • How would you feel going to a place you had never been to before? • How would you feel going to live in a country where you didn’t speak the language? 	<p>The children on the plane are frightened of both the plane and going to an unfamiliar place. Can you describe a journey that involves going to an unknown place?</p>
2	<p>Memories and the senses</p> <p>In this chapter, Yossi tells us about a memory he has and how it is</p>	<p>Collecting vocabulary and sharing stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a food that you link with a certain place? E.g. a hot chocolate after swimming, fish and chips on a visit to the coast, cake at grandparents’ house. 	<p>Our memories are often connected to our senses. For example, the smell of suntan lotion might remind you of a holiday you went on or the taste of jam</p>

	associated with chocolate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imagine your favourite food in the world. How would you feel if you couldn't have it again? 	tarts could remind you of being in your grandmother's kitchen. Write a description of a memory that links with the senses.
3	<p>Points of view</p> <p>In this chapter, we meet some other characters and see little glimpses of their points of view. Students will think about how different people view the refugees.</p>	<p>Collecting vocabulary and sharing stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you think the lady who gives Yossi tea feels about the children? How do you think the pilot of the plane feels about the children? Why did he give Yossi the hat? Why do the people that the children pass wave at them? How might they be feeling about the children's arrival? 	<p>Yossi describes bonfires and people outside of a building celebrating the end of the war. How do you think these people would be feeling on this day?</p> <p>Write a news article about the celebrations that took place that day. Do you think they would mention the arrival of the children?</p>
4	<p>Bedrooms</p> <p>Yossi finds his new room and thinks about his old bedroom. Students will think about how a bedroom represents them and what it would be like to lose this.</p>	<p>Collecting vocabulary and sharing stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you always had the same bedroom? What is your bedroom like? Do you think that your bedroom represents you? 	<p>You are going to write a detailed description of your bedroom. It is going to be so detailed that someone else is going to try to draw your room from this description and tell you three things that they have learnt about you.</p>
5	<p>Breakfast</p> <p>Yossi and his friends begin to settle into life on</p>	<p>Collecting vocabulary and sharing stories:</p>	<p>Have you ever seen an argument in your school's canteen/school</p>

	<p>the estate at Windermere. In this chapter, we find out how afraid they are of hunger and the conflict this can cause. Students will think about conflict in their own dining hall and what would be the best way to solve it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is it so important for Yossi and his friends to be in the right place in the dining hall? • What kinds of things do you think about when you are choosing to find somewhere to sit in the canteen/school restaurant? • What do you think caused the fight between the boys in the dining hall? 	<p>restaurant? Why might two people be disagreeing? Imagine a fight in your school canteen. Write a short paragraph that describes an argument between two students.</p> <p>Swap your paragraph with your neighbour. Now you are going to pretend to be the teacher. What would you say to these students to help them see another point of view?</p>
6	<p>Bicycles</p> <p>For Yossi, his bicycle means freedom. In this chapter, we read about some difficult incidents Yossi has seen and how that has shaped his life.</p>	<p>Collecting vocabulary and sharing stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does Yossi's father not challenge the Nazi soldiers? • Why do you think Yossi's father tells him he will ride a bicycle again? • What do you think Yossi's father would think if he could see him riding the bicycle in his underwear? 	<p>Yossi's bicycle represents freedom. What type of transport do you think represents freedom? Think of a type of transport. It could be a car, bike, van, bus or even a plane. What would it look like and where would go?</p> <p>Design an advert for your transport.</p>
7	<p>Helping</p> <p>This chapter moves back and forth in time as Yossi experiences kindness from</p>	<p>Collecting vocabulary and sharing stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The women who passed Yossi food could have got into a lot of trouble. Do you think they were right to do this? 	<p>Imagine you are Dorothy or Joyce. What do you think when the three boys arrive at your house? Write a diary entry that describes the day</p>

	Dorothy in the present, and thinks about the German women who snuck him food in the past.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yossi keeps the food until he gets back to the camp. Do you think this would be easy? How do you think he felt? • Can you think of a time that you have helped someone when it could have got you into trouble? 	<p>the three boys come to your house.</p> <p>Remember, they have also lost their home and had to move away.</p>
8	<p>Waiting</p> <p>A car arrives in this chapter, and a father and son are reunited.</p>	<p>Collecting vocabulary and sharing stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you think Yossi feels about the father and son being reunited? • Can you think of a time when you might have been pleased for someone but also felt jealous? • How do you think Yossi would have reacted if it was Leo or Mordecai's father who had come to pick them up? 	<p>Imagine a 'sleek black car' arrives at your school. Who is inside? What did they want?</p> <p>Write a diary entry imagining what happened the day a 'sleek black car' arrived at your school.</p>
9	<p>Lessons</p> <p>Yossi has his first taste of school in this chapter. He learns some English and is asked to write a list of names for the Red Cross so they can help reunite families.</p>	<p>Collecting vocabulary and sharing stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you think Yossi feels writing down those names? • Do you think it would be harder for Mordecai and Leo? Why/why not? • How do you feel on your first day back at school after the long summer holidays? Do you feel excited? Anxious? 	<p>Many people have strong memories of school. What is your strongest memory?</p> <p>Write notes that would help you to give a talk about your most memorable moment from school.</p> <p>Once you have finished, give your talk to a partner. Did your notes help? How could you edit them?</p>
10	<p>Tomatoes</p> <p>This is another chapter that spans</p>	<p>Collecting vocabulary and sharing stories:</p>	<p>Imagine three people who live on the estate. Who are they, and why do they give their</p>

	<p>the past and the present. In the present, the people of the Calgarth Estate give their tomatoes to the children to make them feel welcome. Yossi also thinks about the past and his tutor Nathaniel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think the tomato soup made Yossi feel stronger? • Why do you think the people of the Colgarth estate wanted to give the children their tomatoes? • Why do you think Nathaniel teaches Yossi even though he got into trouble? 	<p>tomatoes to the children?</p> <p>Write a paragraph about each person and their reason.</p>
11	<p>The visitors</p> <p>In this chapter, Mordecai wants Yossi to attend a religious service with him but Yossi is reluctant. In his flashbacks, he reveals why.</p>	<p>Collecting vocabulary and sharing stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a friend ever asked you to do something that made you feel uncomfortable? • Why doesn't Yossi want to go to the service? • How would you help Yossi in this situation? 	<p>Imagine a friend asks you to go somewhere you don't want to go. It could be a theme park and you're scared of roller-coasters, or maybe a youth club where the other members are much older. What would you say to your friend? Write a script of the conversation. How could explain why you were uncomfortable?</p>
12	<p>The Red Cross</p> <p>The Red Cross arrives in this chapter to begin to take details from the children to help reunite them with their families. Yossi reflects on his arrival at the</p>	<p>Collecting vocabulary and sharing stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think it is so difficult for The Red Cross to find the families? • What kinds of records would the Red Cross check? • How do you think Yossi feels writing his list? 	<p>You are going to work in pairs to become detectives. One of you is going to imagine you have lost something important. The second person is going to ask questions and take notes.</p>

	concentration camp.		
13	<p>Storm</p> <p>A storm occurs in this chapter. Different groups of children react in different ways. Yossi remembers a distressing memory after a pillow fight.</p>	<p>Collecting vocabulary and sharing stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do storms make you feel? • Do you have any specific memories of storms? • Why do you think the children in the story react to the storm in different ways? 	Describe a storm that you remember.
14	<p>Bed</p> <p>Yossi finds it difficult to get out of bed in this chapter.</p>	<p>Collecting vocabulary and sharing stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever wanted to stay in bed and not get up? • Why do you think Yossi wants to stay in bed? • How would you help Yossi? 	A powerful way of feeling better when you are sad is to think of the things you are grateful for. Make a list of 10 things you are grateful for. They can be as small or as large as you'd like. If you feel like sharing your list, you could see if it is similar to other students in your class.
15	<p>The doctor</p> <p>Yossi goes to the doctor to find out how he can become fit and healthy. He admires Lawrence the physical education instructor, and</p>	<p>Collecting vocabulary and sharing stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yossi wants to be like Lawrence. Is there anyone that you look up to and want to be like? • Aeroplanes are symbolic in this chapter. What do they represent? 	Write a guide for people to help them stay fit and healthy.

	finds out about his brother.		
16	<p>Groups</p> <p>This chapter describes the way the children have split themselves into groups, and a fight that occurs between the groups. Yossi flashes back to a memory of Leo's brother's death and then goes back to the present in which the boys burn an effigy of Adolf Hitler (there are notes at the end of the book to explain this).</p>	<p>Collecting vocabulary and sharing stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there groups in your school? Do people stay in their groups, or do they mix in and out of groups? • What groups do you belong to? These could be in or out of school. • What happens when there are arguments between groups? 	<p>In schools, there are rules for how to behave. Look at your school rules. How would the boys' fight have broken those rules? What should happen to them?</p> <p>Write a set of rules for behaviour at the Colgarth estate.</p>
17	<p>Choices and growing up</p> <p>Yossi, Mordecai and Leo think about their futures and where they would like to go after they leave the Colgarth estate.</p>	<p>Collecting vocabulary and sharing stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you know what/where you want to be when you are an adult? • How does it make you feel to think about the future? • What would you advise Leo, Mordecai and Yossi to do? 	<p>Research three A level subjects or three different apprenticeships that you could do after you leave school. Make notes on these and then use your notes to tell your partner what you have found.</p>

18	<p>Peter returns</p> <p>The Red Cross returns with bad news for the children, and Peter finds his way to the Colgarth estate and his family.</p>	<p>Collecting vocabulary and sharing stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you think Yossi felt when he first saw Peter? • How do you think Dorothy felt when she first saw Peter? • What do you think happened that evening? 	<p>Create an information page about the British Red Cross. What kind of work do they do? How can we support them?</p>
19	<p>Friends</p> <p>Yossi makes the decision to stay with Mordecai and Leo, making his friends his family.</p>	<p>Collecting vocabulary and sharing stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think about the ending of the book? • Would it have been realistic to have an ending in which Yossi's father returned? • Would you have made the same choice as Yossi? Why/why not? 	<p>Imagine it is 10 years later. You are going to pretend to be Mordecai, Yossi or Leo. Write a letter to Talia letting her know what happened to you.</p>