

AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR MASTERCLASSES

NOTES FOR TEACHERS & LIBRARIANS

ONJALI Q. RAÚF

CREATING CHARACTERS YOU LOVE AND HATE



BEFORE WATCHING THE VIDEO AND READING THE EXTRACT:

GET IN THE ZONE!

In her film, Onjali talks about the importance of having good characters and bad characters. She says that ‘conflict’ is what keeps a story going – and also what keeps the reader interested!

To get children thinking about conflict and the importance of conflict in storytelling, ask them to create freeze-frames for some moments of conflict between two people. Examples of scenarios might include: one person laughing at another person behind their back; one person stealing something from another person; one person threatening another person; or one person being angry with another person.

Remind children to use body language, facial expressions and different levels to express the scenarios listed. Can their classmates create a “before” and “after” for each freeze-frame? What leads up to the conflict? What resolves it? Who are the “good” and “bad” characters in each scene?

AFTER WATCHING THE VIDEO AND READING THE EXTRACT:

Taken from pages 91–96 of The Boy at the Back of the Class (you can download the extract at worldbookday.com/online-masterclasses/creating-characters-you-love-hate).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does Onjali Q. Raúf paint a picture of a pomegranate on page 91? Can you draw it based on her description?
2. What is the significance of the pomegranate in this extract? Why does the narrator give the pomegranate to ‘the new boy’?
3. What do you think Ahmet means when he says “I . . . have . . . home” on page 93? Why does he smile here? Where is Ahmet from?
4. Why do you think Brendan-the-Bully behaves the way he does? How does he make the narrator feel? How does he make you feel? Have you seen this sort of behaviour before?
5. Why do you think Ahmet reacts the way he does to Brendan-the-Bully?
6. Why do you think the author uses lion imagery to describe Ahmet throughout this extract?

FUN ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: SMELLS OF STRAWBERRY JAM

In the film, Onjali talks about using names and other techniques to show how you feel about a character. For example, in *The Boy in the Back of the Class*, one character is called 'Brendan-the-Bully' – definitely bad!

- Fold a piece of A3 paper in half. Draw an outline of a human figure or stickman on each half of the folder paper.
- Decide which of your figures or stickmen is a "good" character, and which is a "bad" character. Using Onjali's tips from the film, annotate your characters with their different features. These should include: their names, their relationships with other people, their physical features (like Mr Irons' 'long strict nose') and their attributes. Do they 'smell like strawberry jam', like Mrs Khan?
- Swap your characters with a friend. Can they add anything to improve your good and bad characters?

ACTIVITY 2: CHARACTERS WHO CHANGE

In the film, Onjali talks about how characters in both of her books can go from seeming to be good, to turning into something 'quite dastardly'. Or from seeming to be bad, to actually having 'a good heart'.

- Brendan-the-Bully is a character in *The Boy at the Back of the Class*. In her film, she asks us to consider: is Brendan-the-Bully an intrinsically bad character, or someone who actually doesn't have a bad heart but simply wants attention? What do you think? Discuss your ideas with a partner.
- Draw a character arc for Brendan-the-bully. At the top of the arc, mark the scene from the extract that we've already read. Consider what might've happened to Brendan-the-Bully before or leading up to this event and what might happen afterwards. Mark your ideas on the arc that you have drawn.
- Write a diary entry in role as Brendan-the-Bully just after his altercation with Ahmet on pages 91–96.

ACTIVITY 3: THE IDEA OF HOME

Onjali's Share a Story Challenge is to put yourselves in a refugee's shoes. She asks you to imagine: how would you feel if, like Ahmet, you had to run away to 'a very different part of the world'?

- Consider what it means to be a refugee. To start off, discuss some of the reasons why people would have to leave their home. How would you feel if you were forced to leave your home?
- What does the word 'HOME' mean to you? Draw the outline of a house. Inside it, note down the things that you love about your house or hometown. Maybe it is an object, a smell, a person, or even a feeling. Write a short description, a poem, or draw a picture to show your ideas.

SHARE A STORY

Think of your favourite book. Create a Love/Hate Profile of the characters in that book! On one side of a piece of paper, write the heading, 'Love'. On the other side, write the setting 'Hate'. Which characters would you put under each heading? Can you put two separate personality traits or behaviours of the same character in separate columns? In fact, can you do this for most characters in the book? Share your Profiles with a friend, classmate or family member. What do you learn about each other's chosen books and their characters?

SPARK YOUR IMAGINATION...

AN INSPIRING SHARE A STORY CHALLENGE FOR YOU from Onjali Q. Raúf...

Think of your favourite food – the one thing that you look forward to eating most of all. Then, imagine you are a refugee who has had to run away to a very different part of the world. If someone there gave you your favourite food, how would that make you feel? How would you feel towards that person? Write down your feelings and share them with your friends, family or classmates.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are more brilliant Masterclass films and resources featuring amazing authors and illustrators over at [worldbookday.com/online-masterclasses](https://www.worldbookday.com/online-masterclasses). Don't miss out, download them today!