

LESSON FOUR

EDUCATION

This lesson will look at Education and Gypsies' experiences of education in Lincolnshire.

We will use creative writing gathered through the programme to illustrate how their attitudes to education are gradually changing.

LEARNING QUESTIONS

- How is Gypsy and Traveller experience of education different to your own?
- How important is education for the Gypsy and Traveller community?
- How has this changed over the past 50 years?
- Why may attitudes to education have changed?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Pupils should be able to:

- Have a greater understanding about how Gypsies are educated.
- Have greater empathy about some of the barriers to education faced by Lincolnshire Gypsies.
- Understand alternative educational routes available to Gypsies.
- Be able to construct a clear argument on the theme of education and present this to the class.

ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Assessment of individual poems.
- Observation of the team work which takes place throughout the presentation task.
- Students to fill in the topic self review sheet which can be added to after each lesson during this topic.

CURRICULUM LINKS

PHSE - 2a, 4b, 5g

ENGLISH

EN1 SPEAKING AND LISTENING: GROUP DISCUSSION AND INTERACTION

3a and 3e

EN2 READING: READING FOR INFORMATION

3c and g

PRIOR LEARNING

Not required

RESOURCES REQUIRED

- Resource Sheet 1 – Linda’s creative writing and bullet points of writing.
- Resource Sheet 2 - Excerpts taken from the Guardian newspaper and bullet points of article.
- Resource Sheet 3 – Data.
- Resource Sheet 4 – Barriers to Education.
- Resource Sheet 5 – Possible interview questions.
- Resource Sheet 6- Acrostic poems about school written by Lincolnshire young Gypsies and Travellers.
- Resource Sheet 7 – Template for acrostic poems.

LESSON PLAN FOUR

KS2 EDUCATION

Content 0-10 minutes

How does the education of a young Gypsy or Traveller differ from yours?
Traveller Lincs DVD

This DVD clearly demonstrates the differing attitudes to education and how this has changed over time, as the lives of Gypsies and Travellers has changed. This is a great introduction which shares the stories of many families in Lincolnshire.

10mins -20mins

Split the class into groups of three; in those groups read together the following:

- Resource Sheet 1 - Recall piece of creative writing from Linda
- Resource Sheet 2 - The Guardian
- Resource Sheet 3 – Statistics and graph
- Resource Sheet 4 – Barriers to education information

20-35mins

Using the information in the Resource Sheets create a TV studio style presentation with a presenter and interviewees (Newsnight style).

One child will present and ask the questions, the other two pupils will offer two opposing views.

One pupil will play the role of a traditional Gypsy mother/father who advocates that the children should be educated at home and adhere to the 'traditional ways'. The other is someone who wants their children to be educated and experience the wider world, but not necessarily turn their back on the Gypsy life.

Resource Sheet 4 offers some ideas for interview questions which will support this work.

35mins-50mins

Finally, present your arguments to the rest of the class.

50mins-1 hour - Plenary

Working in small groups ask pupils to write bullet points of the main arguments for and against having an education.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

ART

Using the images below as inspiration, create the starting letters for your Acrostic poems, see Resource Sheet 5 in the style of Gypsy and Traveller Fairground lettering. Think about making it interesting and possibly using 3D lettering. If you find it tricky to draw the 3D, try drawing the letter in a single line first, then drawing around that with a gap. Make it as bright and colourful as you can.

A B C D E F G H I J K L
M N O P Q R S T U V W
X Y Z À Á Ê Ë Ì Ö Ø Ù & 12
3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 (\$ £ . , ! ?)

A B C D E
F G H I J
K L M N
O P Q R S
T U V W
X Y Z



LITERACY

Create your own acrostic poem based on the theme 'My School'

Acrostic poems are poems in which the first letter of each line forms a word or phrase (vertically). An acrostic poem can describe the subject or even tell a brief story about it.

Look at some of the poems created by Lincolnshire Gypsies and Travellers in Resource Sheet 4 and use the template in Resource Sheet 5

LESSON PLAN FOUR

KS3 EDUCATION

0-5 Minutes:

Teacher asks the question: 'what is education?' Explains that the session will be about exploring different ideas and views on education (discuss for example some young people are 'home educated' and do not go to school).

5-10 minutes:

Split the class into 4 groups. Each group is to create a still image (freeze frame) of a formal lesson in a school.

Each group will be given one of the pieces of text to use as a narration, (to avoid confusion, if necessary, the teacher explains that it is deliberate that their still image will show an image of formal education, whilst the 'voiceover' is talking about different kinds of learning).

Students should not try and make their image match what the text says: the contrast between what is spoken and the image of 'formal lessons' which the audience will look at is the effect to aim for, (as it is the CONTRAST between them that makes people think and enter into discussion.)

This approach also asks the students (quite deliberately) to voice the documented words of Lincolnshire travellers, without initially pointing out who is speaking. For some learners/young people, hearing the words spoken by their peers may enable them to engage with an exploration without filtering their views through pre-existing prejudices.

Give one of the following extracts to each of the groups:

'It's getting hard for people. Even maintenance on a house, you can do it now, you've just been learned to do it, always done it but there'll be a law to say you've got to go to college to do it, it won't be a choice'.

'Instead of going to school, my siblings and I like many children from Travelling families were taught about the arts, music and dance. Our Education was learning about wildlife and nature, how to cook and how to Survive... I could milk a goat and ride a horse. I could identify ink caps, puff balls and field mushrooms and knew where to find wild watercress and sorrel. By the age of 8 or 9 I could light a fire, cook dinner for a family of 10 and knew how to bake bread on an open fire'.

10-25 minutes

Each group to share their image and voiceover – everyone gets a chance this way to both experience each other's work and comment on what it is making them think about.

The teacher may wish to prompt the students for their comments in response to the following key questions:

- What are the differences between the image we see and the voice we hear?
- What kinds of learning are described by the voices?
- How valuable are the different kinds of learning?

Teacher can explain that the words are those of Gypsies and Travellers from Spalding and may want to read the whole of resource sheets with the group.

25-35 minutes

In pairs, (ideally formed one from each half of the class as they were split), try and identify the different kinds of learning that have been expressed both in the images created and the commentary spoken. (For example, formal/informal; practical/theoretical)

In small groups consider what the differences might be between schooling, education and learning

Feedback and discussion as a whole class and introduction of statistics from resource sheet 3

35mins – 50mins

Watch the Traveller Lincs DVD

This DVD clearly demonstrates the differing attitudes to education and how this has changed over time, as the lives of Gypsies and Travellers has changed. This is a great introduction which shares the stories of many families in Lincolnshire.

In small groups prepare the arguments for and against conventional school-based learning. Consider different points of view from both a parent and a young person's perspective.

50 -60 minutes - Plenary

What are some of the different views about going to school amongst the Gypsy and Traveller communities and why?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

ART & DESIGN

Using the idea of a map or journey as a template, create a visual, cartoon-style map of your 'learning journey' so far. You could start as young as you like and include all of what you consider to be 'key moments' (some of which may be in school, some of which may be out of school). For example, if you learnt to ride a bike, when did you first ride/balance without support?

RESOURCE SHEET ONE

SCHOOL

The first school I went to was Cowbit and it was a really small school, unbelievably small. Half of the kids that was in it were Travellers. There were only two classes, about 15 in each class. I didn't have no problems there whatsoever; all my friends, me cousins whatever was in that school, teachers were lovely, there were really nice teachers in that school.

The last primary school I went to was Weston St Mary's just up the road. I was in the second highest group in everything and it was perfect; there was just one problem. This school was miniature there were 16 kids in each class. My sister was in this school and my brother Donny was in it. He was not a bright child, he couldn't read or write. He's training to be a personal trainer now, if you see him you can see he lives and dies in that gym. But he was one of them kids; he used to fall asleep in school. The teachers were nice to him, they never used to shout at him and he had friends in school, he was just lazy. He says he can't read and write but when it comes to PlayStation or sending messages he can do that, just not big words.

My Isabella, there is no way I'd take her out of school at nine because the way things are going now for men and women, they will all have to go to school, college or whatever because in the next twenty years they'll need an education. It's getting hard for people, especially people who can't read or write. When me dad was little it wasn't so hard, he could go out calling an that. But my kids- every one of them will learn how to do something, they'll have to. Even maintenance on a house, you can do it now, you've just been learned to do it, always done it but they'll be a law to say you've got to go to college to do it, it won't be a choice.

So then I went up to secondary. The council came down and said do you want to try it and I was optimistic, I said I'd try it, I'll always try something. I started half way through the first year. It was alright but I was lonely, I'd always been in little schools up 'til then. Having to change classes, I found that hard.

I wish I'd stayed in school. In September I was going to go back to college but then we moved. I'm glad I'm a gypsy. A lot of people have very strong views on them from where they've been through a rough time. The way I've been brought up is to speak me mind, stand up for whatever you believe in, when people call you a dirty gypsy and things like that, you can ask them: "you calling me dirty?" they don't realise what they're saying, what does that mean? We're probably cleaner than a lot of people

Am I proud of being a gypsy? Yes and no. you know by people's attitudes if you bring it up, sometimes you feel awkward and you don't want people to know. Sometimes you keep it to yourself- I don't care what anyone says- it's not that you're not proud; you just don't know what people's reactions will be. You walk into some places, fancy shops and people get talking and they're buying designer shoes and so are you. They think because you live in a caravan you've got no money but it's not like that, it's your choice.

Linda, Spalding

Bullet points from Linda's Recall

- Half of the children in Linda's class were Travellers
- All Linda's friends and cousins went to the same school
- The teachers were lovely when Linda was at school
- Linda sends her children to school now as she feels it is important
- It is hard when you cannot read or write
- You need an education for all jobs now
- Linda didn't continue in Secondary School and she wished she had

RESOURCE SHEET TWO

EXCERPTS TAKEN FROM A GUARDIAN INTERVIEW WITH ROXY FREEMAN MONDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2009

“My upbringing was unusual, but not unique. Until I was eight my family lived on the road, travelling around Ireland by horse-drawn wagon. I was one of six children, with three more half-sisters, and our family was considered small. Having 12 or 13 children was common among Travellers in Ireland.

Marrying first cousins is also common among Gypsies (and a potential genetic time bomb), my parents come from very different backgrounds. My mother was born into an upper-class American family. On her gap year she literally ran away with a Gypsy – my father, who bred horses. Both are extremely intelligent and open-minded people who wanted to bring us up in a stimulating, free and fulfilling environment.

Instead of going to school, my siblings and I, like many children from travelling families, were taught about the arts, music and dance. Our education was learning about wildlife and nature, how to cook and how to survive. I didn't know my times tables but I could milk a goat and ride a horse. I could identify ink caps, puff balls and field mushrooms and knew where to find wild watercress and sorrel. By the age of eight or nine I could light a fire, cook dinner for a family of 10 and knew how to bake bread on an open fire.

Not that it was always idyllic: life on the road could be harsh. As a child with younger siblings I had to work hard: my daily routine included fetching water, cooking and changing nappies. We also struggled financially; my dad's passion has always been breeding Gypsy cobs. Sometimes he would get a good sale, but a lot of the time we were penniless. Then we worked as a family, fruit picking. One summer, I remember practically living off mushrooms as we worked on a mushroom farm. We also picked daffodils; after about five seasons I developed an allergy to the liquid in the stems and my skin would blister on contact with it. Any money we earned went straight to my mother and father.

Our life was always lived outside; working, playing and socialising was all done around the fire or in the woods and fields. Wet weather was a curse and we would huddle up around a wood burner in one of the caravans. For many years we had

no electricity, no television, no radio; nothing electrical. We had china dolls but no other toys. And we played cards – thank God for playing cards! If it wasn't for them, I would have no mathematical ability whatsoever.

Unlike some of my siblings, I learned to read when I was quite young. My mother and grandparents bought me books and, with mum's help, I could read by the time I was about nine. By the age of 12 or 13 I had devoured all of F Scott Fitzgerald, EM Forster, Louisa May Alcott and Emily Brontë. I bought them in charity shops or asked for them as birthday presents; together, books and cards gave me an understanding of words and numbers in the absence of any formal education.

Although I didn't go to school, some of my siblings did. And like so many other Gypsy children, they faced bullying. Often I would turn up at the high-school gates to find them in floods of tears because children had been picking on them.

It can be hard to reach your full potential without schooling, but compared with traditional illiterate Gypsy or Traveller families, we had good opportunities and were not expected to marry young, have lots of children and follow in our parents' footsteps. As a child, my passion had been flamenco (the music of the Gypsy community in Spain). My mother took me to a dance class after we settled in Norfolk when I was about nine, and I was hooked.

Finding peace and quiet had always been impossible. When I was a little girl I dreamed of living in a terraced house on a cobbled street, because in wagons and caravans you never get any peace. You live on top of each other, privacy is non-existent and the only place you find solitude is by hiding under a tree or walking across a field. As a child I would wander off alone whenever I got the chance, to find a patch of moss to sit on and spend the afternoon watching ladybirds and picking flowers to press.

My siblings and I were born into this lifestyle, but we weren't taught to carve clothes pegs and sell lucky heather. We were brought up with strict morals, values and guidelines. We don't look or act particularly different to anybody else. We just had a different path, and weren't brought up living in a house.

After completing my access course (thanks to a wonderful tutor, I got distinctions in all the units), I did a degree with the Open University, and that meant completely changing my way of life. Last November, at the age of 30, I moved to Brighton to study at Brighton Journalist Works. I live here with my boyfriend in a flat, which is bizarre and alien to me. My family are, admittedly, no longer truly nomadic, and my parents support my decision to transform my life, but I have never lived within bricks and mortar before, and I feel completely out of touch with nature now."

BULLET POINTS FROM THE GUARDIAN ARTICLE

- Until I was eight my family lived on the road, travelling around Ireland by horse-drawn wagon.
- Instead of going to school I was taught about the arts, music and dance.
- My education was learning about wildlife and nature; how to cook and how to survive. I could identify ink caps, puff balls and field mushrooms and knew where to find wild watercress and sorrel. By the age of eight or nine I could light a fire, cook dinner for a family of 10 and knew how to bake bread on an open fire.
- My daily routine included fetching water, cooking and changing nappies
- I learned to read when I was quite young. My mother and grandparents bought me books and, with mum's help, I could read by the time I was about nine.
- Although I didn't go to school, some of my siblings did. And like so many other Gypsy children, they faced bullying. Often I would turn up at the high-school gates to find them in floods of tears because children had been picking on them.
- As a child, my passion had been flamenco (the music of the Gypsy community in Spain). My mother took me to a dance class after we settled in Norfolk when I was about nine, and I was hooked.
- After completing my access course (thanks to a wonderful tutor, I got distinctions in all the units), I did a degree with the Open University, and that meant completely changing my way of life. Last November, at the age of 30, I moved to Brighton to study at Brighton Journalist Works

RESOURCE SHEET THREE

DATA

According to Government Data, in 2005 it was found that at the end of Key Stage 2:- 30% of Gypsy and Traveller children gained the expected levels at English, compared to 75% of all other children.

It was also found that 27% of Gypsy and Traveller children gained the expected levels at Maths, compared to 72% of other children.

The reasons for this are complicated and could include:-

- The Gypsy children don't attend school as regularly as other children.
- Their own parents may not be as highly educated as other children's, as they also may not have attended school much themselves.
- Negative experiences of school life – (prejudice & bullying).
- Cultural barriers to education
- Lack of proper access to health care.

SOURCES

Ethnicity and Education: The Evidence on Minority Ethnic Pupils
(Department for Education and Skills – January 2005)

Improving the outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils: final report
(Research Report DFE-RR043)

National Foundation for Educational Research 2010

RESOURCE SHEET FOUR

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION

RACISM

Many Gypsies and Travellers experience racism in schools. Bullying by pupils and staff, under achievement and a traditional lack of literacy skills have often placed Gypsy and Traveller pupils at a disadvantage in schools.

CULTURAL REASONS

There are also cultural reasons why Gypsies and Travellers do not value formalised education as highly as the settled population. Gypsies and Travellers expect to be discriminated against in the labour market and so value forms of self-employment much more highly than formal education and employment.

Education remains a double-edged sword for many Gypsies and Travellers. It is valued as a way of learning to read and write, but distrusted because of the “cultural pollution” that comes with it.

The parents of today’s young Gypsies and Travellers (many of whom received little or no schooling) are suspicious of what comes with education. They see school as a source of what can only be described as “gorgification” (becoming like a non-Gypsy): a process that weakens Gypsy and Traveller identity and values.

Parents feel that school introduces their children to drugs and courting with non-Travellers and can even affect the way they speak and see themselves. They also see schools as places where children will be bullied for being Gypsies and Travellers. For these and other reasons, Gypsies and Traveller parents keep their children away from school. There are economic reasons too, teenage Traveller girls are often expected to help at home or with caring for their younger siblings and teenage Traveller boys are often expected to be working with their fathers receiving in effect a de facto apprenticeship in how to earn a living. There are also Gypsy and Traveller children who do not want to go to school for their own reasons. Chief among these are they see it as being irrelevant, they view the teachers and children as being racist and don’t like the bullying they encounter there.

Source Jake Bowers, Travelling Times

www.travellerstimes.org.uk/downloads/lifestyle_history_and_culture_24052010111520.pdf

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

Every child has the right to education that is suitable to their age, ability and any special educational needs they may have.

Lincolnshire County Council actively seeks to work with parents and carers to ensure that children get the best possible opportunities to achieve their potential wherever they may be educated.

Parents/Carers have the right to home educate their children, but they also have a responsibility to ensure that their child receives a suitable education within the community of which he/she is a part and one which prepares them for life in today's society and enables them to achieve their full potential.

An increasing concern with regard to the education of Traveller children is, that whilst recognising the cultural reasons for the low take-up of secondary education, there are questions concerning Traveller parents' ability to provide an adequate academic component to their child's education which best equips them for adult life. Problems can arise when Traveller children that are being home educated do not reach a satisfactory standard of education and are therefore expected to return to school. In such cases the provision of a flexible alternative education such as that offered by Lincolnshire Traveller Initiative can be a solution.

RESOURCE SHEET FIVE

POSSIBLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Why do you think it would be better for your child to be in full time education?
- Why do you want your child to stay at home?
- Do you think that your child would lose your traditional values?
- Is there any pressure from others to have your child educated at school?
- How do you think the other children or parents would react to having a Gypsy or Traveller child in their class?
- What skills at home does your child learn that those in mainstream schools do not?
- Do you think that your child would eventually earn more money if they have been educated at school?

NB – Do we need to outline (at least to the teacher) what the law is re: attending school and how Gypsies seem to get around this?

RESOURCE SHEET SIX

ACROSTIC POEMS ABOUT SCHOOL WRITTEN BY LINCOLNSHIRE YOUNG GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

My school was educational and high in expectations,
Your food in school was healthy and nice,
School I found very hard coz I had a friend for six years and high school split us up,
Cousins of mine were there as well,
High school was the only way to get into the wrong crowd,
Only art and gymnastics were my favourite.
Only a couple of gypsies were there apart from my cousins,
Life at school was very strict, but I did like it a little bit!

By Naomi.

T is for trailer
R is for Romany
A is for the animals we keep,
V is for vardo
E is for earning money at fairs,
L is for living our own way and
L is also for learning.
E is for eating bacon pudin cooked in a pot on the fire
R is for respect for family.

by Oscher, Ethan and Shane

G is for Gorjas being different to us,
Y is for the yellabelly Prices,
P is for when we pull out and go different places,
S is for Sham which is Irish for "hello mate",
I is for I am the best!
E is for everyone hates us because we're Gypsies
(apart from the wido's who want to be us) and
S is for snobs who think they are better than us (but they're not!)

By Thomas, Demi Lea, Naomi, Shady, Fred, Martin and Charlie.

RESOURCE SHEET FIVE

ACROSTIC POEM TEMPLATE

M

Y

S

C

H

O

O

L

REVIEW SHEET

WHAT HAVE I LEARNED?

WHAT DID I FIND EASY?

WHAT DID I FIND HARD?

WHAT MORE WOULD I LIKE TO KNOW?

WHAT IDEAS HAVE CHANGED?

HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE MYSELF?