The Asylum Seeker Experience

B. Barry
The teacher issues the “hearts and items” A4 sheet, pencils and scissors.

The children have five minutes to decide what items they will take on their journey, and write them each into one of the five spaces on the A4 sheet.

Then they cut out four “lives” (heart shapes) and each of the five items. The scissors are collected.

Paper is distributed for the children to record their five journey decisions.

Children number 1-5 down the left hand side of their paper.

As each part of the journey is read to the class by the teacher, the children record their decisions.

If a life is lost, a slip is held up in the air for the teacher to collect.

The teacher can take the part of the soldiers and remove the “items” from the desks.

The teacher moves around the class, removing “lives” or “items” according to the childrens’ decisions.
THE ASYLUM SEEKER EXPERIENCE

Part one

Each player has four lives. No weapons may be taken, or hidden.

You have been given only five minutes to leave your home as enemy forces are occupying your town. You have no money, as the bank was blown up. Your parents have gone out and you are alone in the house.

1. Choose five items to take with you.

A lorry arrives to take you and other people away from your town to the border of the neighbouring country. The driver and guard are from the enemy forces. They demand one item from you as fare for the journey.

2. Do you
   a give them one item and take the ride?
   or
   b not trust them and slip away on foot yourself?

If you took the ride, you don’t get further than the edge of town where you are told to get out.

One life down

You start walking away from the gunfire in the direction of the neighbouring country, keeping off the road to avoid being seen. It is raining. As night falls you are tired, wet and hungry. You come to a house which is deserted.

3. Do you
   a seek shelter in the house?
   or
   b stay out of the house and get wet?

If you enter the house you are blown up. Your own troops had mined the house.

One life down
You are now very cold. You have not slept, but decided to keep on walking. You come to an occupied house. A woman from the enemy side lives there, but she offers to shelter you and give you food. She has a child of your age. You wonder if you can trust her.

4. Do you
   a) accept her generous offer?
   or
   b) refuse politely and go on?

If you chose to go on walking, instead of staying the night, you become very weak. Your body temperature plummets in the cold night air, you die of hypothermia.

One life down

If you chose to accept, when you awake in the morning the woman’s son offers to lead you to safety. He takes you to the crossing point. The enemy troops take away all your goods, except one, which you have hidden. They let you pass through but you are stopped on the other side.

The guards from the neighbouring country have been instructed to limit the number of refugees they admit. Their local food supplies are already low and there is an outbreak of cholera in the camp, a deadly illness, unless quickly attended to.

5. Do you
   a) Try to persuade them to let you enter, by offering them your last item?
   or
   b) Tell them a lie, that your father is an important person and they would be rewarded if you were let in?
   or
   c) Try to cross at another point?

If you tried to cross some where else, you are dead, as the border was mined.

One life down

If you tell them a lie, they let you enter, but when the lie is found out they hand you back to the enemy guards.

One life down
If you chose to offer the guards the last item, you get into the camp. You now have nothing to sell and you feel very lonely. You see a family drinking some water. They offer you a drink. You are very thirsty.

6. Do you
   a accept their offer?
   or
   b avoid drinking at all?

If you choose to avoid drinking, you suffer dehydration and fall seriously ill.

If you accept the water, you contract cholera.

The family takes you to the camp hospital, where the doctor manages to cure you.
THE ASYLUM SEEKER EXPERIENCE

Part two (Discussion)

A United Nations convoy arrives and takes you and others to a far off country.

You neither speak nor read the language, you have no relatives here. As your bus goes past a shop, a newspaper bill-board reads, "50% more immigrants get into Britain this year.

Close the Door!"

As your bus arrives at where you will be staying, a sign above the door reads, "Welcome to Scotland".

Now that you have completed the journey, you may wish to consider the following questions:-

1. What was the worst thing that happened to you, since you left your home?

2. What was the most surprising thing that happened to you?

3. If you could have read the bill board, how would you have felt?

4. Now that you are safe, what are some of your thoughts and feelings?

5. How would you prove who you were?

6. How would you feel if someone asked you for your passport?

7. What would you most need from the people in this new country?

8. What would you hope for from the children in your school?

9. How could these children help to make your life easier?

10. How could the teachers help you?
The Asylum Seekers Experience

part three

Extension work in Art

Discuss with the class the dangers, human generosity and resourcefulness involved in a war situation.

Make a list of five dangers one might encounter. Make a list of five good events one might experience.

Illustrate one of each type