

Geography and English

Work



"The right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development."

CRC - Article 32

The majority of street children, like many children in developing countries, take part in some form of economic activity, often to support themselves and their families. Many street children work in the 'worst forms of child labour' (as defined by the International Labour Organisation such as heavy manual labour, drug trafficking and prostitution). It is this type of work that children need to be especially protected from because it is exploitative and damaging to their health, both psychologically and physically.

What kinds of work do street children do, and what are the associated risks?

Scavenging on the streets or from rubbish dumps is one of the most common and also one of the most hazardous types of street work. Children are exposed to dangerous items, such as broken glass and syringes. They also risk serious illnesses such as respiratory diseases and skin rashes from the unsanitary conditions.

↔ See also: Section B6, 'Health'

Selling things – either in markets or by the roadside is also very common.

www.streetchildren.org.uk

Street children also work as:

- Bus conductors
- Beggars
- Car washers and watchers
- Drug dealers or couriers
- Porters
- Cooks and dishwashers
- 'Rag-pickers'
- Prostituted children
- Shoe shiners
- Street performers
- Street sweepers

"Yes I would like to change my situation and stop begging – because begging is hard work. I want to stay at home and grow rice like other families. Begging is embarrassing. I am too shy to ask for money."

Street boy, aged 15
– Lao PDR¹

The risks faced by children working on the streets are extreme. They are exposed to traffic accidents, exhaust fumes, fatigue, violence, sexual abuse and drug addiction.

Legislation

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, written in 1989, aims to protect children involved in child labour by setting out that:

- They do not work excessive hours;
- They have safe employment conditions;
- They do not work when they are too young to do so;
- They do not do work which interferes with their education.

The reality is that children in many developing countries *have* to work for a variety of reasons. Attempts to outlaw all child labour in these countries by means of legislation can have far more negative than positive effects. For example, if child labour is banned by law, it no longer exists in the eyes of the government and therefore protective measures for children working cannot be introduced.

Everybody agrees that children must be protected from the worst forms of child labour and every child should have the chance to get an education. Where children *have* to work they should at least be able to choose the kind of work they do and be protected from work that is bad for their health.

Fair working conditions should be sought for children working just as they are for adults, and children should be protected from exploitation and should be encouraged to form and join trade unions.

In the UK, children are protected by the Children and Young Persons Act (1993, updated in 1998).

This law says that young people of school age are not allowed to work if they are under 14 - except for some specific jobs like paper rounds which can be done from age 13, and even then only at certain times, for limited periods. For example they must not work for more than two hours on a school day, or before 7 am or after 7pm. (They are only allowed to do work which does not damage their health).



Footnotes: see page 76

B4a Geography

What work do street children do?



Key learning points: ■ Street children do many different kinds of work.
■ Some work is much more harmful than others.



Instructions

1. Video and worksheet activity

Show the 'Work' section of the video and then ask the students to fill in the handout. It is best to prime them with some of the things you want them to look out for before they watch the video.



Answers

List for task one to include:

- selling flowers
- selling toys / small items
- rag and litter picking
- juggling
- prostitution
- drug trafficking

2. Discussion activity

Once students have completed the handout they can share the ideas they have with their neighbour or the rest of the class.

3. Teacher presentation

Teachers can use the list of activities discussed to talk about the different ways work can be classified, for example:

- Legal and illegal
- Formal and informal
- Primary (agriculture and mining), secondary (manufacturing) and tertiary (services)
- Teachers may want to explain the terms and then ask students to give examples of what street children might do in each of these categories or which categories they do and don't work in.



Street boy mending bicycle, Afghanistan



National Curriculum

(6h.i) types and classifications of economic activity.

Geography

What work do street children do?

1. Write a list of all of the different types of work you saw / heard that children did.

2. Now number the activities above from best to worst (using number one to show the best, two to show the next best until you get to your worst).

3. Give reasons for the 2 you put as the best kinds of work and 2 you put as worst.

Best:

1.

2.

Worst:

1.

2.

B4b Geography

Different work



Key learning points:

- Street children do many different kinds of work.
- There are positive and negative aspects of child labour.



Instructions

Show the video and then ask students to discuss the positives and negatives of the following jobs that children do. Ask them to complete the handout, and share some of their ideas with a neighbour.



Answers (examples)

Positives and negatives of being a ...

<p>Windscreen washer</p> <p></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Easy to set up – low cost ■ Can do with friends ■ Have some control over work <p></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Poor pay ■ No security ■ Chance of accidents as often done on busy roads at traffic lights etc. ■ Can be caught and punished by police 	<p>Street performer</p> <p></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Easy to set up – low cost ■ Can do with friends ■ Have some control over work ■ Can be more fun than other jobs <p></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Poor pay ■ No security ■ Can be caught and punished by police
<p>Rag-picker</p> <p></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No costs involved in set up ■ Flexible hours <p></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Poor pay ■ No security ■ Poor self-esteem ■ Unhygienic – can lead to infections ■ No protection by unions 	<p>Drug trafficker</p> <p></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can earn more money than some other activities ■ Gain status <p></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Can be put into prison ■ Can mean children also become users ■ Lots of violence



National Curriculum

Geography: h i) types and classifications of economic activity.

Geography

Different work

Positives and negatives of being a ...

<p>Windscreen washer</p> <p>😊</p> <p>☹️</p>	<p>Street performer</p> <p>😊</p> <p>☹️</p>
<p>Rag-picker</p> <p>😊</p> <p>☹️</p>	<p>Drug trafficker</p> <p>😊</p> <p>☹️</p>

Student handout

B4c

English

A day's labour



Key learning point:

- How it feels to be in the place of a street child.
- How to describe these feelings and imagined sensations.



Instructions

1. Worksheet activity

Ask students to complete the 'A day's labour' worksheet.

or

2. Photograph activity

a) Students are given / shown the downloadable photograph (of the Afghan street child on the market stall holding his hands up to his face) to look at.

This is available from www.streetchildren.org.uk/voicesfromthestreets.

Ask them the following questions either by reading them aloud or writing them on the board:

- What is his name?
- What is he doing?
- What is he thinking?
- What has happened in his past?
- What has just happened?
- What might happen next?
- Who is he with?

b) Ask students to write down their answers and then use these as a basis for a poem about this boy's life. (This activity can be given as homework).

c) Share some of the best poems in class.

3. Poem / creative writing activity

Extracts from *Oliver Twist* can also be looked at to give a different perspective on these issues. Here, Charles Dickens vividly describes the life of the many street children caused by the poverty and social upheaval of the Industrial Revolution. These extracts can help bring out that the UK and other developed countries have had, and still, have homeless people and children facing many of the issues faced by children living on the streets in the developing world.



See also: Activity B4b, 'Different work', p.32, which can be used as a stepping-stone to this empathy exercise.



National Curriculum

En3 Writing 1. Composition: Writing to imagine, explore, entertain: b) use imaginative vocabulary and varied linguistic and literary techniques; c) exploit choice of language and structure to achieve particular effects and appeal to the reader.

English

A day's labour

Choose one of the following street children and put yourself in their shoes as they go through their working day. Write a passage to describe...

a) the **feelings and emotions** they have as they do their work
and

b) the **sensations** they have - smells, views, sounds - as they do their work.

One:

Name: **Fabiano**
Age: 13
Sex: Male
Place: Beneath a bridge, Lusaka, Zambia
Work: Drug trafficker

Two:

Name: **Carlos**
Age: 8
Sex: Male
Place: Sewer pipe, building yard, Lima, Peru
Work: Windscreen washer

Three:

Name: **Dupe**
Age: 17
Sex: Female
Place: Rubbish tip, Lagos, Nigeria
Work: Rag-picker

Four:

Name: **Adnan**
Age: 10
Sex: Male
Place: Railway platform, Delhi, India
Work: Street performer

B4d

English

Child labour debate: OK or not?



Key learning point: ■ Child labour can have very negative impacts on the life chances of a street child but not all aspects of child labour are bad.



Instructions

This exercise can be done as a whole class debate or in small groups. It can be done as a formal debate or more casually in a class discussion.

Explain to the class that this is a very heated topic. Many people have very strong views on this. Some people think that all child labour is wrong because children should be at school. The students may have heard of boycotts on products that are made by children e.g. leather footballs and clothing. Others feel this is not being realistic as many children around the world have to work in order to help support their families (you could refer to the video here). This exercise is going to explore these issues and what is right and wrong.

Give handouts 1 and 2 to the two different sides. Give them time to prepare their arguments. Hold the debate. Then ask individuals to vote themselves (outside of their earlier roles) for the following options. Give each a vote on the blackboard / whiteboard.

- Child labour is OK
- Child labour is OK as long as the children have some choice and the work is not harmful
- Child labour is not OK in any circumstances

Bring out where decisions like this are made at a global level, i.e. at the UN, and at national government level. You might want to refer to the CRC to show where the UN decided to draw the line. You can ask the students who have watched the video if this being adhered to or not.



Terre des Hommes

Street-working child
in Afghanistan



National Curriculum

1. Speaking and listening; 3. Group discussion and interaction. To participate effectively as members of different groups, pupils should be taught to: a) make different types of contributions to groups, adapting their speech to their listeners and the activity; b) take different views into account and modify their own views in the light of what others say; c) sift, summarise and use the most important points; group discussion and interaction; 10. The range of purposes should include: a) exploring, hypothesising, debating, analysing.

English

Child labour is OK because....

It is the only way that many poor children can survive.



Children can become mature, responsible and independent.

Children can learn skills which might be more useful than some things which are taught in schools.

It helps poor countries to get richer. Without child labour, many countries would be even poorer than they are already.

Children can help their families to be less poor. They can feel proud of this.

Student handout 1

B4d

English

Child labour is not OK because....

It is easier to cheat children and pay them less than adults because they have less power to speak out.

It stops children from going to school so they have less choices to improve their lives in the future and they stay poor forever.

It is cheaper to pay children than adults to work, so there might be lots of adults who are unemployed. This keeps families poor.

Children often work very long hours in bad conditions.

It can be dangerous or bad for their physical and mental health.

