



What's going on this week?

New research has shown that fewer than 1% of authors that feature in exam texts in English secondary schools are from an ethnic minority background. The publisher, Penguin and the Runnymede Trust, analysed data from exam boards relating to more than half a million pupils in England. Other research conducted by BookTrust Research and CLPE last year, showed that the number of children's books published in the UK between 2017 and 2019 featuring characters from an ethnic minority background was 10%.

Main question:

Are we all reflected in the books we read?

Listen, think, share

- Look at this week's poster. Share some of our favourite books and characters. Can we describe the characters? What is it we like about them? Are they similar to or different from us?
- Think about the word 'diverse'. What do we think we mean by this? Talk about all of our similarities and differences. Do we think it's important to read books with characters who are different from you? Is it also important to read books with characters who are similar to you? Explain your reasons why.
- Watch this week's useful video (link found overleaf), which shows 11-year-old Keziah share her thoughts on why books should have more diverse characters. Do you agree? Share your thoughts.
- Read through the information about Efu Traoré found on the assembly resource. Think about the reasons why you think Efu decided to write a book about Nigeria.
- Can you think of books you have read where you have learnt a lot about another place or people who have different experiences from your own? What did you learn from the book? Do you think it's important to hear and read stories which we can also learn from?

Reflection

Books can play an important role in shaping our lives. Different stories and characters can affect how we see ourselves and the world around us.



KS1 Focus

Question:

Who are our favourite book characters?

Listen, think, share

- Think about the books we enjoy reading. Record a list of the titles. Do you know who the author is? Can you tell somebody what the story is about? Who are the characters?
- Focus on the characters we find in the stories we enjoy. Do you have a favourite character?
- Look at resource 1, where some children share their favourite book character and why they like them. Which of these characters do you like best? Why?
- Think about your favourite book character. Can you describe them? What do they look like? What do they enjoy doing? How do they behave? Why do you like them?
- Explain that one of the reasons Imran likes Rocket so much is because he shares her passion of looking after our environment and Rhys likes Billy because he is also scared of the dark. Are there any book characters that you think are similar to you?
- Look at Emilie's comment about Meg. She would love to cast spells and ride on a broomstick just like Meg. Would you like to be able to do the same things as some of your favourite book characters?
- Does everyone have the same favourite book character? Why do you think this is?

Reflection

We all like different book characters for many different reasons. It might be because they are like us or it might be because we admire them or because we find them funny. It is good to be different!



KS2 Focus

Question:

Do fiction books need to represent real life?

Listen, think, share

- Think about fiction books. What is a fiction book? What was the last fiction book you read? Do you have a favourite fiction book? Why is it your favourite?
- Record a list of fiction book titles on the board. Do any of these books represent real life? Do you think they should?
- Look at resource 2, where some people share their opinions about whether fiction books should represent real life or not. Who do you agree with most? Why?
- Think about one of your favourite books. Which parts of the book could be real life and which parts could not?
- Can you think of any stories that are very unlike reality? Did you enjoy this story? Do you think it is possible to give younger children the wrong messages or false hope if a story doesn't represent real life?
- Sebastian thinks that although fiction books are made up, they still represent some reality as we can identify with characters and the story messages and lessons. Do you agree with this? Can you think of a character that you identify with? Why do you identify with them?

Reflection

Fiction books are made up. The characters, places and events are imaginary. Some of us may enjoy fiction books that represent real life; others may prefer to escape to a fantasy world.

KS2 Follow-up Ideas

Option 1: Remind the children that fiction books are not real. The characters, places and events are imaginary. Ask the children to close their eyes and picture an imaginary place/setting. It could be anywhere in the world, universe or somewhere entirely different!

- What can you see?
- Where is this place?
- What is the sky like?
- Can you see any trees, buildings, landmarks?
- Does it look like it could be somewhere real?

Create a rough sketch of their imaginary setting.

- Can you describe the setting to someone?

Ask the children to write a paragraph to describe their imaginary setting. Encourage them to include a range of vocabulary, which will help anyone reading their description create an image in their mind!

Option 2: If possible, spend some time looking at the books in your classroom. Give the children a pile of books and ask them to look at the front covers and read the blurbs. Discuss the following:

- Have you read any of these books before? Which did you enjoy/not enjoy?
- From the books you haven't read, are there any you would like to?
- Can you find a way to sort your books? E.g. genre, characters.
- Which fiction book do you think represents reality the most? Which represents it the least?
- Where in the world is the story set?
- Do you think you would identify with any of the main characters? Which main character sounds most like you?
- Do you think the characters in your books represent everyone?

Share responses and use this as an opportunity to discover if there is a gap in your bookshelf!

KS1 Follow-up Ideas

Option 1: Recap favourite book characters with the children. Think about:

- Who is your favourite book character?
- What do they look like?
- What do they like/dislike?
- How do they behave?
- What is your favourite thing about them?
- Are they similar to you?
- Why do you like them the best?

Ask the children to draw a picture of their favourite book character and share some information about them. They could record the information using words and sentences or discuss with a small group.

Option 2: Select five books from your class bookshelf and show them to the children.

- Which of these books do you like best? Why?

Give each child a post-it note. Explain that the post-it note will represent them. Write the book titles on the board and ask the children to add the post-it note to the book they like best (put the post-its into columns so they begin to represent a pictogram or bar chart). Model adding the axis and adding a title to the chart. Use the information to answer the following:

- How many people like this book the best?
- Which book is the most/least popular?
- How many more people like this book than that book?
- Can you put the books in order from least popular to most popular?

This Week's Useful Websites

This week's news story

<https://bit.ly/3jub4WI>

This Week's Useful Videos

Campaigning for more diverse books

www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51826298

This Week's Virtual Assembly

www.picture-news.co.uk/discuss

This Week's Useful Vocabulary

Analysed – discover or reveal something through detailed examination or study.

The publisher Penguin and the Runnymede Trust **analysed** data.

Conducted – organise and carry out a particular task. Other research **conducted** by BookTrust Research and CLPE...

Diverse – including a great variety of people or things.

Think about the word '**diverse**'.

Ethnic minority – a group of people of a particular race or nationality living in a country or area where most people are from a different race or nationality. ...are from an **ethnic minority** background.

Published – when made available to the public. ...the number of children's books **published** in the UK...

Research – work that involves studying something and trying to discover facts about it.

New **research** has shown...