

Yoto Carnegie Shortlist

2022 Shadowing Resources



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AWARDS

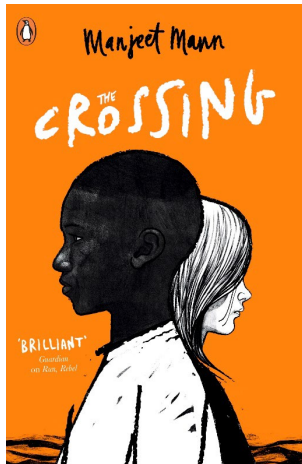


EMC
English & Media Centre

#CKG22

Yoto Carnegie Medal 2022

Activities Pack



Title: **The Crossing**

Author: **Manjeet Mann**

Publisher: Penguin Children's Books

Age: 12+

Note to Group Leaders

Shortlisted books may contain material that may not be suitable for some students. We recommend that group leaders read the books carefully before sharing or recommending them to students and/or seek parental guidance. We trust that Shadowers and other young readers will be guided by their group leader, librarian, teacher or parent to help them select suitable, enjoyable and age appropriate material from the lists.

General Activities

1. Create a HAIKU POEM of three lines using a syllabic structure [WORDS CUT UP INTO SOUNDS] of 5-7-5 to describe your experience reading each book.
 - Example:

Fantastical shapes	(Line 1- 5 syllables)
create patterns for the eye	(Line 2- 7 syllables)
to become amazed	(Line 3- 5 syllables)

Share your HAIKUS on Social Media using the hashtag #CKG22.
2. Search for book trailers for each of the shortlisted titles online. Use these as inspiration to create your own trailer to celebrate the book you are currently exploring through shadowing.
3. Create your own playlist to accompany a shortlisted book - you might want to highlight a particular theme, tap into the geography or time period of the book or choose a character and create a playlist that reflects them.
4. Create a moodboard for the shortlisted titles. Think about materials and colour palette, texture, shape and perspective. What do you want your moodboard to suggest or represent? Why?

5. Create a cake that reflects one of the shortlisted titles. Perhaps you will make one large cake, dozens of smaller cakes or a combination of both. Don't forget to share your bookish bakes on social media, using the hashtag #CKG22.
6. Have a go at building book spine poetry using the shortlisted books. Arrange the books in different ways, with the spines visible so that the titles can be read in a certain order. Share your poems on social media using the hashtag #CKG22.
7. Play charades, using nonverbal communication to act out the title of each book.
8. Use a shoebox to create a diorama inspired by a shortlisted title. Your diorama should include key items which reflect the themes, plot, characters and mood of the book.
9. Think of some questions you would like to ask the shortlisted authors and share them on social media using the hashtag #CKG22 and tagging the author.
10. Take one of the shortlisted titles and use it as a springboard to create a recommended reading list for wider reading. Your list should include books that will enhance the reader's experience of the shortlisted title by offering further information, exploration of the subject through a different medium - nonfiction or poetry, perhaps - or a different perspective. Share your lists on social media, using the hashtag #CKG22.
11. Redesign the cover of a shortlisted book. How would your creation differ from the existing cover? What would you include and why?
12. Make a list of the new words you've learnt when reading the shortlisted titles and add a definition for each one.
13. Give each of the following elements a mark out of 5:
 - Title
 - blurb
 - opening line
 - appeal of the cover
14. Now score each book out of 20 and rank the books accordingly. You could use this exercise to determine the reading order.

Book Activities

1. Undertake a sponsored activity to raise money for charity. You could complete a swim like Natalie, a walk, a readathon, a danceathon or even a sponsored silence!
2. Eat or research some Syrian-inspired food such as falafels, fattoush or baklava. You could try recipes from books like *#Cook For Syria* by Clerkenwell Boy and Serena Guen or *#Bake For Syria* by Lily Vanilli, Serena Guen and Clerkenwell Boy.

3. Imagine the conversation that would happen if Sammy and Natalie had met in real life. You could write it, act it out or discuss it as a group.
4. The concept of all humans being made of stardust is a recurring theme in the novel. Write a free verse poetry piece using the starting line 'We are all made of stardust'.
5. Research the Eritrean refugee crisis and think about how you might feel if you had to leave your home to find safety.

Wellbeing Activity

Go for a walk, run or swim. Allow yourself to be lost in the moment like Natalie. Exercise can help make us feel better physically and mentally. It helps to boost your mood, reduce stress or anxiety levels and can help you sleep better or improve your energy levels.

The Crossing **by Manjeet Mann**

The Crossing contains mild swearing and explores the themes of racism, homophobia, people-trafficking and grief at the death of a parent. It handles all of these themes in a sensitive way but, as with any text, we strongly advise teachers to be familiar with the book before recommending it to students.

The Crossing

by Manjeet Mann

All of these tasks are designed to be completed in small discussion groups. However, they can easily be done on your own too. Instead of talking about the tasks, you can write down and keep a record of your ideas.

Before Reading

10-20 minutes

- Discuss what you think *The Crossing* will be about based on these extracts. You should structure your discussion around the questions below.
 - What other novels do you think it will be like?
 - What genre of novel do you think it will be?
 - What sense do you get of where it will be set?
 - Identify three likely themes?

Extract 1

**My mouth dry,
unable to form words.**

Dad and I walk in silence.

Finally, I muster the courage to ask him...

We're going to be all right, aren't we?

I'll make sure we are.

Extract 2

I've seen the light
under the door fade and
wonder when it will be time to leave.

A few minutes later,
another man arrives.
He says his name is Farid,
and he's our smuggler.

Hurry up, he says. We leave now.

Extract 3

I fold over the newspaper
and push it away across the kitchen table,
needing a physical distance
from it, but
I can't ignore it.
I pick it back up
read the story.
The full horror of it.

Extract 1

I am breathing through a gap in the window.
The sun rises and we roast.
A baby cries out in hunger.

I am breathing through a gap in the window.
The truck starts and stops
yet the doors never open.

I am beathing through a gap in the window.
The ground is hard and rocky.
We go up and down, our bodies battered.

During Reading

WARNING: DON'T READ THE QUESTIONS BEFORE READING EACH SECTION!

Read up to the page number listed and then answer the questions. You should spend about 5-10 minutes answering each set of questions.

Page numbers are taken from the Penguin edition, 2021

▪ Read pages 1-3

- What is interesting or surprising about the book so far? What is happening in these pages? You might like to think about:
 - The speakers' voices
 - The use of fonts
 - The use of poetry – layout, poetic features, and so on.

▪ Read to the end of page 42

- What parallels have you noticed between Natalie's story and Sammy's? You might like to think about:
 - Parents and other family members
 - Friends
 - Personal circumstances
 - Personality
 - Future prospects.
- What are the main differences between them?

▪ Read to the end of page 98

- Both Natalie and Sammy say these words: *The chance to live / is worth dying for*.
 - What do the words mean in the context of their lives?
 - What do you think about these words? For example, do you agree with them?
- Natalie's and Sammy's narratives 'cross' all the time in the book. You can tell how it happens by the change in font and the use of bold lettering. What's your experience of reading the book so far, with this in mind? Are you finding it easy to follow? Are you enjoying it?
- Are any new parallels starting to emerge between Natalie and Sammy? You might like to think about:
 - Housing and shelter
 - Memories of the past
 - Commitment to friends and family
 - New problems in their lives
 - Worries and regrets.

▪ **Read to the end of page 153**

- Sammy remembers these words from his father: 'No matter how dark it gets, Sammy,/ there are still stars in the sky.'
 - What do you think his father meant by these words?
 - How are they relevant to *The Crossing*?
- Fazel calls Natalie and Mel 'white saviours' when they visit him in hospital.
 - What do you understand by this term?
 - Do you think it applies to Natalie and Mel?
 - How do you think their relationship with Fazel will develop as the novel goes on?
- Natalie sees Sammy on television, after he is interviewed by a journalist in Tripoli.
 - What are your thoughts about this?
 - How do you think the novel will progress from this point on?

▪ **Read to the end of page 180**

- At one point Fazel says 'loss is loss' to Natalie. What does he mean by this? What does it mean to you in the context of reading this novel?
- Sammy's father once said to him, 'There are binary stars that orbit each other from birth ... Eventually they join.' What significance do you think these words have for the novel so far? How might they be significant for what is to follow?
- Discuss your thoughts about what you have just read. You might like to consider:
 - How the EDL march and dinghy sinking were written about side-by-side.
 - Your reaction to what happens to Tesfay.

▪ **Read to the end of page 249**

- Natalie and Sammy's lives begin to cross more and more as the novel goes on.
 - What recent examples of their lives crossing can you recall?
 - How convincing do you find it that they are now in contact via social media?
 - What are your predictions about what will happen in the final sections of the novel?

▪ **Read to the end of the novel**

- How would you describe the tone of the final sections of the book? Were they what you were expecting? You might like to comment specifically on:
 - What happens to Ryan
 - What happens to Zamir Raja (see page 279 and try to work this out)
 - What Sammy tells Natalie before her swim
 - What happens to Sammy and to Hamid.

After Reading

Initial Thoughts?

- Spend 15-20 minutes discussing some or all of the questions below.
 - What are your overall impressions of this novel?
 - Which moments most stick in your memory?
 - Which characters did you like best and why?
 - Which other novels did it remind you of and why?
 - How gripping did you find the story?
 - What are your thoughts about the way it was written?
 - What are your thoughts about how the difficult subject matter is handled in this novel?
 - Based on reading *The Crossing*, how likely are you to read other novels by Manjeet Mann?

What's *The Crossing* about?

- Spend one or two minutes writing down a single sentence that begins: '*The Crossing* is about ... '
- Share your different sentences and discuss.
- Next read the sentences below that give further ideas about what the novel is about.
- Spend 5-10 minutes sorting the sentences out, from the one you agree with most to the one you agree with least.
- Finally, decide on the statement you agree with most. It can be one from the list or your own. Write down a few ideas about how *The Crossing* relates to your chosen statement.

The Crossing is about...

- The importance of standing up for what is right
- How all lives are interconnected
- The complexity of the modern world
- How the chance to live is worth dying for
- Crossing borders
- Injustice
- The importance of forgiveness
- The importance of hope
- Friendship and family
- Dealing with loss, both big and small

Exploring the book further

Use one or more of these tasks to explore *The Crossing* further.

The power of poetry

The Crossing is a verse novel. Rather than writing the story in continuous prose, the writer, Manjeet Mann, has chosen to use free verse.

- Discuss your thoughts about reading a novel written in verse.
 - How does it compare to reading a prose novel?
- From memory, which sections work particularly well because they are written in verse? Why is this?
- Flick through the novel and find a section you want to look at more closely. Read it two or three times and try to work out how it works as poetry. You might like to think about:
 - Line breaks
 - Use of different fonts
 - Positioning of words on the page
 - Patterns, such as repetition.

Spend 15-20 minutes on this activity.

Parallel Lives

The Crossing is used as the title of this book because the lives of Sammy and Natalie, along with those of other characters, cross in many ways, even though they are often thousands of miles apart geographically.

- What are your thoughts about how the narrative crosses continuously – so Sammy's voice switches over to Natalie's and then back again throughout the novel?
- Which of the storylines did you find most convincing or interesting and why?
- Discuss these statements, exploring your view about how well the book uses the concept of 'crossing'.

I think the book did a brilliant job of showing how lives cross over and intersect no matter where we are in the world – it showed that we have more in common than we think and have a shared responsibility to each other.

I think the idea of crossing was a bit forced at times. Natalie and Sammy didn't really have that much in common, beyond that they'd both lost a parent.

I don't think that the book was entirely realistic. Sammy and Natalie would never have set eyes on each other and realised who they were in real life. But that doesn't matter. It's a novel and novels are allowed to extend reality.

Spend 15-20 minutes on this activity.

Reading the reviews

The extracts, below, are all from reviews of the book.

- Read all of the reviews and discuss which comes closest to your own view of the book.
- Working individually, write your own paragraph to express your views about the novel. You can draw on the review extracts you have read if you wish.
- Share your reviews with a group.
- Submit your reviews to the Carnegie Shadowing Scheme website. This can be accessed at: <https://carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/books/the-crossing>

Give yourself up to an hour to complete this activity.

A. Heart wrenching and moving, this is a book that lingers with you long after you finish the final page. This was by no means an easy read, in fact, it was rather emotionally draining at times, but I commend Manjeet Mann from not shying away from the very real and tragic realities far too many refugees face. This was an emotional, powerful, heavy and painful read, which was highlighted all the more by being written in verse. This book won't be leaving my thoughts for a while to come.

Kate, www.goodreads.com

B. Wow. All I can say is this was amazing. The plot was super engaging and the issues it dealt with were dealt with really maturely and were all so important. The characters were all well developed, which is especially notable as this was a novel in verse. The reason for the slightly lower rating is that I didn't find the poetry/verse itself that well-written, but it didn't impact my overall enjoyment and I would still definitely recommend and would love to read the author's other work.

Teenwriting101, www.goodreads.com

C. I found this book a bit forced. It all built up to Natalie and Sammy crossing in the English Channel. It was a nice idea but there's no way that in reality they would have had some sort of connection before they both set off on (surprise, surprise) exactly the same day. The continual crossing of the narratives also got on my nerves a bit and was very hard to follow. Sometimes I was reading Sammy's narrative and I still thought I was reading Natalie's.

Anonymous

D. *The Crossing* is a book of humanity. Both the interconnectedness of people, irrespective of race and nation, and of the plight of those born into circumstances far beyond those we can imagine. It is also a book of inhumanity. A world that sees conflict, persecution, refugees forced to flee, facing brutality and hostility and danger towards their hope for a safe and better life.

Written in short prose, it is a powerful narrative that bounces between two main voices, Natalie and Sammy. A story that is powerful, moving, heartbreaking and thought provoking.

While aimed at the YA reader, it is a book we should all read and reflect upon. ... Beautifully written and highly recommended.

Tony Frobisher, www.amazon.co.uk

Writing Activities

On your own, or with a partner, complete one or more of these writing activities to help you develop your thoughts about *The Crossing* further.

You will need 30-60 minutes for each activity.

Imagine that one year after her channel swim and Sammy's death, Natalie and Hamid have been invited to give a presentation to politicians about the plight of refugees trying to reach England.

- Write the speech they might give. You might like to think about:
 - What kinds of experiences Hamid would draw on
 - How they both might draw on the experiences of Sammy
 - How they might highlight the responsibility we all have for each other.

Imagine that you are the writer of *The Crossing*, Manjeet Mann.

- Write a blog explaining some of your thinking behind writing *The Crossing*. You might like to focus on:
 - Why you chose to write in verse
 - What you wanted to suggest about how lives are connected
 - How you developed some of your characters – as well as Sammy and Natalie, you might like to think about Ryan, Natalie's father, Tesfay, Hamid, Mel and so on.
 - Your own thoughts about the treatment of refugees.
- Try to write a story, or the start of a story, in verse form. You can write about anything you like, or draw on one of these ideas to get you started.
 - Crossing from one place to another
 - Standing up for what is right
 - A remarkable journey
 - Overcoming adversity.
- Write a letter to Manjeet Mann explaining what her novel meant to you.

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