

## Lesson Plan Starter



### Why? Philip Prowse

#### Aims:

- To think about some of the characters in the book.
- To think about some of the ideas in the book.
- To stimulate students to read the book.

1. Tell students that the title of the book is “Why?” and that it is a human interest story. Ask them to say what they think a human interest story is. (A story about people and relationships.)
2. Divide students into pairs. Ask them to talk to each other about what they think will happen in a human interest story called “Why?” Ask them to write their thoughts down. When everyone has finished, ask each pair to share their ideas with the class. Write the main ideas up on the whiteboard. How similar are students’ ideas?
3. Ask students to read Extract 1. Now what do they think the book is about? How different are their ideas from those written on the whiteboard?
4. Ask students to choose either Sara or Alex. Now ask them to think about how their character (Sara or Alex) is feeling in Extract 1. Ask them to write down some words to describe this. (They can use bilingual dictionaries if necessary.)  
**Suggested answers:** Sara – afraid, worried, sad, confused, lonely, etc. Alex – afraid, excited, nervous, sorry, regretful, proud, etc.  
Ask students to share their words with the rest of the class.
5. Ask students to read Extract 2. As a whole class or in small groups, ask them to talk about the extract. Do they understand why there is fighting in Glossia? Do they think the fighting is right or wrong? How would they feel if they were Alex now? Tell students that Glossia is not a real place. Do they know of any other places like Glossia in the world where there is fighting?
6. Tell students that Alex sends his girlfriend Sara a text message with his phone. Ask them to read Extract 3, which is Alex’s message. Now ask them to rewrite this as a letter to Sara, giving more information about life in Glossia, what he is doing and how he is feeling. Share these letters either as a whole class or in small groups.
7. Ask students to work in pairs and to make up their own invented country name. Ask them to write a short ‘country profile’, inventing other facts about the country – e.g. where it is, what it is famous for, what the people are like, what its major language is, etc. Share these with the whole class.
8. Ask students to read Extract 4. Now divide them into small groups to talk about the extract. What is happening? How are the people in the extract feeling? (They can use their dictionaries if necessary.)  
**Suggested answers:** men – determined, ruthless, brave, etc.; children and Ada – afraid, terrified, alone, etc.  
Why do they think the tall man says ‘we have no names and no faces’?  
**Suggested answer:** He is telling Ada not to remember anything about them and not to tell anyone anything about them.
9. Ask for five volunteers to act the scene out in front of the class. Ask them to show some of the feelings previously discussed.
10. Ask students to read Extract 5. Now tell them that the young woman is doing something dangerous and ask them what they think it is. (She has a long gun hidden beneath the sleeping baby, but you might prefer to keep this information from the students and encourage them to read the book to find out!)
11. If there are enough copies of “Why?” to go around, give the books out and ask students to start reading.

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#### Extract 1

'Please don't go to Glossia,' says Sara. 'You're only nineteen.'

Alex is saying goodbye to Sara, his girlfriend.

'I must,' answers Alex. 'I'm a soldier – it's my job. I must go where the army says.'

'But why are you going there?' asks Sara.

'We're going to stop the fighting,' says Alex. 'Lots of people are dying.'

'But why are they fighting?' asks Sara.

'I don't know,' answers Alex.

'Why don't you ask?' says Sara. 'You never ask questions.'

'I know,' answers Alex. 'I'm sorry. I hate asking questions.'

'Please change, Alex,' says Sara. 'For me.'

#### Extract 2

'Why are they fighting in Glossia?' Alex asks.

'That's not an easy question,' Ken answers. 'I think it's like this. Some people have guns. They use the guns because they want something. Then other people get guns to fight back with. Now everyone has guns. And everyone forgets what they are fighting about.'

'But where do the guns come from?' is Alex's next question.

'People from other countries sell them to the Glossians,' Ken answers.

'Why?' asks Alex.

Ken smiles. 'Money, that's why.'

#### Extract 3

Hi Sara. It's very hot in Glossia! Sergeant Ken says we're here to help. But can we? I don't know.

All my love, Alex.

#### Extract 4

In the afternoon Ada puts away the lunch things and makes coffee. Happy is sitting on the floor in the living room with Marina. The brother and sister are laughing and playing with a doll. Ada doesn't hear the back door.

Two men come in. One is tall and one is short. The short man has a bag. They're wearing white T-shirts and black trousers. And they have black masks.

Ada looks at the two men. Then she shouts to her children, 'Come here now!' Happy and Marina run to their mother and stand by her. They're afraid of the two men in masks.

'Who are you?' Ada asks the men. They don't answer. The short man puts the bag down and the tall man looks at Ada.

'What are your names?' asks Ada.

'We have no names and we have no faces,' answers the tall man.

'We're not rich. What do you want?' asks Ada.

'Nothing,' answers the short man. 'All we want is your house for ten minutes.'

#### Extract 5

Half an hour later, two kilometres away, the young woman is walking with the baby. Two soldiers see her and ask her to stop.

'Where are you going?' asks one of the soldiers.

'To the shops,' answers the woman. 'I'm going to buy some food.' She smiles at the soldiers.

'What's in there?' the soldier shouts.

'My baby,' the woman says. 'Please don't shout. He's sleeping.' She smiles again.

'OK, you can go,' says one of the soldiers and smiles at her.