

Memories of school

These ideas can be used for

- Cross-curricular topic work involving children's different languages
- Language classes in the community
- MFL classes

See also resources on powerpoint ([link](#))

Children studied excerpts from 'When I Lived in Somalia', a book in which Tower Hamlets primary school pupils interviewed their parents. They devised their own questions about memories of school, which they practised in class with an interview panel of parents and bilingual assistants, before translating their questions into mother tongue to ask parents and grandparents at home. In primary school, where the work was part of a topic on transition from primary to secondary school, Year 6 children devised powerpoint presentations for a whole school assembly on their findings.

'Hassan's mother came into school for the first time – she was very brave to go on the interview panel. Hassan translated children's questions into Farsi for her and translated her answers into English. At the end of the class we found out that he knows five languages! We managed to share our powerpoints in assembly after a lot of hard work and I even got Shuhan to translate the explanation of the project orally in Sylheti and both Mahomed (with Adnan supporting) and Hassan shared their work in their home languages...it was great!'
(class teacher's comments)

Resources

- 'When I Lived in Somalia', a book in which Tower Hamlets primary school pupils interviewed their parents
- Traditional Somali song 'Arday baan ahay' about why it's important to go to school (Somali words and English translation)

Lesson structure

- Own experiences of after-school/weekend classes
- Study examples of interviews from 'When I Lived in Somalia'
- Write questions for parents and grandparents on memories of school (in English and home language - transliterated if not sure of script)
- Practise questions with a panel of parents and bilingual staff in class
- Take questions home, bring back answers on school in different countries
- Share findings with rest of school via powerpoint
- Compose poem/song about own school experiences (Somali song as example)
- Interview each other and record on video their memories of Smithy Street

Aspects of learning

- Similarities and differences between school in different countries
- Developing writing and translation in English and other languages
- Creating word bank of school vocabulary in different languages
- Reflecting on own school experiences (transition to secondary)

Home-school links

- Parents coming into class to offer their knowledge as a resource
- Dialogue with parents/grandparents about childhood experiences and school
- Memories of environment in home countries (from parents/grandparents and own visits) - see interviews from 'When I Lived in Somalia'