



# LESSON PLAN

## WRITING IN IMPOSSIBLE CIRCUMSTANCES

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This resource is made up of two lesson plans, which we recommend you use together, although Lesson 1 can be used as a stand alone lesson plan with 11+. We suggest Lesson 2 for use with 14+.

### ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

In June 1942, a 12-year-old girl living in Amsterdam spotted an attractive red check notebook in a bookshop window. She hinted to her father that it would be a lovely gift for her upcoming 13th birthday. He duly returned and secretly bought the notebook. The girl, born Anneliese Marie Frank, better known as Anne, was thrilled to receive it on her birthday, 12 June. This simple act by a loving parent was to have profound and lasting consequences.



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Anne Frank decided the notebook would be her personal diary. The first words she wrote in it were: **'I hope I can confide everything to you, as I have never been able to confide in anyone, and I hope you will be a great source of comfort and support.'**

Just three weeks later, Anne and her family, who had fled from Germany during Hitler's rise to power, were forced into hiding to escape Nazi brutality against the Jews.

*Writing in Impossible Circumstances* is a new teaching resource jointly produced by the Anne Frank Trust UK and Amnesty International. It marks 70 years since Anne Frank began to write the lines that would become her world-famous diary. For generations since, that little red notebook has become testament to the power of words to challenge oppression. The suffering of Anne, and of the millions slaughtered in the Holocaust and by the Nazi, Fascist and Soviet tyrannies, provided the catalyst for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

John F Kennedy said: 'Of the multitude who throughout history have spoken for human dignity in times of great suffering and loss, no voice is more compelling than that of Anne Frank'. Nelson Mandela also has spoken of the comfort and inspiration he derived during his long years of captivity from reading Anne's diary.

The other writers featured in this resource showed great courage and made great sacrifices because of their belief in the fundamental rights of humanity. With the luxury of living in a democracy, we may find it hard to comprehend the selflessness and strength needed to speak out against oppression – and then to continue that struggle despite the perils of writing in incarceration. With the exception of Victor Jara, the writers featured have survived to enjoy what we now take for granted – freedom.

## AGE

Lesson 1: 11+. For younger children please adapt the lessons accordingly.

Lesson 2: 14+.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the two lessons students will:

- learn about Anne Frank, her life and legacy;
- consider and learn about human rights and in particular about the human right to freedom of opinion and expression;
- find out about an actual case of repression;
- read and evaluate a powerful piece of writing;
- undertake a piece of persuasive creative writing themselves;
- consider and develop a creative and practical solution to break the silence and take action against being censored;
- know about the work the Anne Frank Trust UK does;
- understand how Amnesty International campaigns to protect human rights across the globe.

## KEY SKILLS

Empathy, reflection, literacy, communication, taking practical action, listening, working in a group, evaluation.

## TIME

Two periods + homework.

## WHAT'S IN THIS PACK

Teacher's notes 1 Anne Frank: Her Life and Legacy

Teacher's notes 2 About Amnesty International

Resource sheet 1 Universal Declaration of Human Rights summary version

Resource sheet 2 Case studies

Resource sheet 3 Extension activities/homework

Zarganar film clip (five minutes) [www.vimeo.com/56016348](http://www.vimeo.com/56016348)

Writing in Impossible Circumstances PowerPoint presentation (13 slides)

Curriculum links

## RESOURCES REQUIRED

### Lesson 1

Teacher's notes 1 Anne Frank: Her Life and Legacy

Teacher's notes 2 About Amnesty International

Resource sheet 1 Universal Declaration of Human Rights summary version (one per student)

Writing in Impossible Circumstances PowerPoint presentation (13 slides)

Film clip: Zarganar

Candle

Flip charts (one per group)

### Lesson 2

Resource sheet 2 Case studies (one per group)

Resource sheet 3 Extension activities/homework

Writing in Impossible Circumstances PowerPoint presentation (13 slides)

Materials, depending on case studies used (see over)

Materials required for each writer, place in an envelope, one per group or more if working individually.

Case study	Materials	Age suitability
Armando Valladares	Old shirt Newspaper – copy of <i>Granma</i> (provided in Resource Sheet 2 <i>Case studies</i> ) Used toothpaste tube Pen Pin	14+
Wole Soyinka	Small sliver of wood Matchstick or Q tip cotton bud (to be used as a pen) Possible ingredients for homemade ink: iodine, powder paint, soot, beetroot, raspberry or blackberry juice, strong tea, vinegar, smashed or boiled walnut shells Teaspoon and bowl for mixing Sheet of greaseproof paper	14+
Irina Ratushinskaya	Sheet of embroidered flowers (provided in Resource Sheet 2 <i>Case studies</i> ) Soap Pin A sheet of cardboard Scissors Gluestick	14+
Victor Jara	Small scrap of paper Small, stubby pencil	14+
Hugh Lewin	A page from the Bible (provided in Resource sheet 2 <i>Case Studies</i> ) Pen	14+
Nawal El Saadawi	Hair rollers Sheets of greaseproof paper cut to size of toilet paper Pen	14+
Zarganar	Sheets of greaseproof paper cut to size of toilet paper Pencil stub Shirt Pin	14+
Partaw Naderi	Cigarette paper (Rizla) Small stub of a pencil	14+
Faraj Bayraqdar	Ink mixed with strong tea or onion juice Scrap of rolled up paper Matchstick	14+
Jack Mapanje	Pencil lead Soap wrapper	14+

\*Many of these writers wrote on toilet paper. This would be the hard shiny semi-transparent Bronco style toilet paper, not the luxurious soft toilet tissues that are used today. Their nearest equivalent would be greaseproof kitchen paper.

## LESSON PLAN

### PREPARATION

Rearrange the classroom tables and chairs to create a space the size of the bedroom Anne Frank hid in for two years – and did most of her writing. Arrange the chairs around this space so it is in the centre of the room. Measurements: 5.05 metres x 2.09 metres; height 2.83 metres.

TIME	ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES
5 minutes	<p><b>LESSON 1</b></p> <p>Talk through the learning objectives for this resource as appropriate for your class.</p>	PPT slide 2
15 minutes	<p><b>STARTER</b></p> <p>Read or summarise the Anne Frank story to students (as outlined in Teacher's notes 1).</p> <p>Invite two students to come into the Anne Frank space. Explain that she had to share this space. Turn out the lights, light a candle and ask students to be absolutely silent for effect.</p> <p>Ask students to imagine what it must have been like to live in such a confined space in virtual silence for over two years. Remind them that Anne was in hiding because she was Jewish and if caught would have been sent to her death.</p> <p>Prompt questions:            Why did Anne start writing a diary?            What comfort would she have gained from it?            Why was it so important?</p> <p>Explore students' own experiences of diary-writing (blogging, tweeting, Facebook, traditional diary entries) and what it means to them.</p>	<p>Teacher's notes 1 <i>Anne Frank: Her life and legacy</i></p> <p>PPT slide 3 and 4</p> <p>Candle</p>
15 minutes	<p><b>BACKGROUND</b></p> <p>Introduce Amnesty International to students (as outlined in Teacher's notes 2).</p> <p>Explain that Amnesty International was set up in 1961 and has worked to support and help people suffering from human rights abuses around the world. This includes many remarkable writers imprisoned for exercising their right to freedom of opinion and expression.</p> <p>Also introduce the Anne Frank Trust and what it does (as outlined in PowerPoint slide 6).</p> <p>Explain how some prisoners have managed to continue their writing in prison – at considerable personal risk – using ingenious ways.</p>	<p>Teacher's notes 2 <i>Introduction to Amnesty International</i></p> <p>PPT slide 5</p> <p>PPT slide 6</p>

TIME	ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES
	<p>Introduce Zarganar as an example. He is the Burmese writer and stand-up comedian who has spent many of the last 25 years in jail, imprisoned by Burma's military government for his ideas and jokes.</p> <p>Play the film clip or read the poem he wrote (on PowerPoint slide 7).</p> <p>Ask the class:            What is his poem about?            How could he have written it when no pens or paper would have been allowed in jail?            How did he get his work out of prison?</p> <p>You may wish to develop discussion around Burma.            Can students find Burma on a map?            Can they name anyone famous from Burma who has been in the news lately?</p> <p>Hand out copies of the <i>Universal Declaration of Human Rights summary version</i> (UDHR).</p> <p>Ask the class to read Article 19, the right to freedom of expression:            We can all think what we like, say what we think and share ideas and information with other people</p>	<p>Zarganar clip (5mins)  <a href="http://www.vimeo.com/56016348">www.vimeo.com/56016348</a></p> <p>PPT slide 7 and 8</p> <p>Resource sheet 1  <i>Universal Declaration of Human Rights summary version</i></p>
10 minutes	<p>Explain that Anne Frank and Zarganar were not able to demonstrate this basic human right.</p> <p>Ask students to work in groups of four. They should think of at least 10 reasons why free speech matters and record them on a flip chart using pictures or symbols if possible. Collect and display the responses.</p> <p>Discuss that whatever we think about our government, a comedian can poke fun at a leader without fear of imprisonment and torture. Bloggers in Egypt and China are being detained. Filmmakers are imprisoned in Iran. A rock band is imprisoned in Russia. Clear any questions.</p>	Flip charts
5 minutes	<p><b>PLENARY</b></p> <p>To consolidate learning, discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how the lesson has made them feel;</li> <li>• what they have learnt about Anne Frank;</li> <li>• what they have learned about Amnesty International and the Anne Frank Trust;</li> <li>• what they would like to do to help people who are not allowed to communicate freely.</li> </ul> <p>Review objectives on PowerPoint slide 2 and outline to students what they will be covering in Lesson 2.</p>	PPT slide 2

TIME	ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES
5 minutes	<p><b>LESSON 2</b></p> <p>Review objectives from Lesson 1. Ask students to think of their biggest learning from the lesson.</p>	PPT slide 2
5 minutes	<p><b>MAIN ACTIVITY</b></p> <p>Explain that they will now step into the shoes of an imprisoned writer.</p> <p>Divide the class into groups of two or four.</p> <p>Give each group one case study with an envelope containing the relevant materials they will need.</p> <p><i>NB: The 10 case studies have been selected to give a wide variety of contexts and stories of prisoners who have and continue to write in impossible circumstances. You may wish to use all of them, or select the most appropriate, according to knowledge/understanding/age of your class.</i></p> <p>Ask students to read their case study and the work their writer composed in prison.</p>	<p>Resource sheet 2</p> <p>Case studies</p> <p>PPT slide 9, 10 and 11</p>
5 minutes	<p>Encourage them to discuss:</p> <p>Where is their writer from?</p> <p>What is this piece of writing about?</p> <p>How did they write it while in prison?</p>	
15 minutes	<p>Students now have to complete their task. As a small group ask them to compose a short poem or piece of writing using the materials and methods provided.</p>	
5 minutes	<p>Now they must take their secret words and pass them onto a 'fellow prisoner' outside their group who will act as their mouthpiece.</p>	
10 minutes	<p>Ask each group to introduce their imprisoned writer and show their photo.</p> <p>The group should then invite a 'fellow prisoner' to step forward and present their smuggled composition to the rest of the class.</p>	
5 minutes	<p><b>PLENARY</b></p> <p>Bring the class together again. Check the emotions of the class and clear any questions.</p> <p>Ask students to review the questions on PowerPoint slide 11.</p> <p>Encourage students to think about how they can take action on behalf of people who do not have a voice/have had their freedom of expression curtailed.</p>	PPT slide 11

## EXTENSION/HOMEWORK IDEAS

### 1 Research Anne Frank

Ask students to discover more about Anne Frank. Hand out Teacher's notes 1 *Anne Frank: Her Life and Legacy* for reference, or direct them to [www.annefrank.org.uk](http://www.annefrank.org.uk)

### 2 Research writers

Ask students to carry out some research on their individual case study, eg finding out more about their poet/writer, the country they were/are in and the political context in which they were imprisoned. You may wish to direct students to [amnesty.org.uk](http://amnesty.org.uk) for help.

### 3 Write a message in code

Using Resource Sheet 3, write a message in code. Anne Frank wrote her diary in Dutch, but a number of famous diarists wrote theirs in code. For example, famous 17th century writer Samuel Pepys wrote in 'Shelton's code' so other people could not read his musings, and painter Leonardo da Vinci was able to write perfect mirror writing without the use of a mirror.

### 4 Write a message in invisible ink

Using Resource Sheet 3, ask the students to produce an invisible ink and write a message then share it with the class.