

A young Black male student is the central focus, sitting at a desk in a classroom. He is wearing a white collared shirt and a dark green vest with a crest on the left chest. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. In the background, there are computer monitors and other students, slightly out of focus. The top left corner of the image features a diagonal band of colorful stripes in shades of pink, orange, blue, and green.

COMMONWEALTH CLASS

COMMONWEALTH CLASS EDUCATION PACK

53 countries working towards a common future

In collaboration with



Introduction

'We recognise the positive and active role and contributions of young people in promoting development, peace and democracy and in protecting and promoting other Commonwealth values, such as tolerance and understanding.'

The Commonwealth Charter.

The Commonwealth is home to one third of the world's population, 60% of whom are under the age of 30, * and it is these young people who represent the future of the Commonwealth. This pack has been designed to support young people's education and facilitate dialogue between teachers and young people across the globe, so that they will come to have a deeper knowledge and understanding of the Commonwealth and its values and be able to help shape it for the future.

Towards a Common Future is the new theme for the Commonwealth. It explores how Commonwealth countries can work together to address global challenges and deliver a more prosperous, secure, sustainable and fair future for all its citizens, particularly its young people.

The pack has been designed to support this theme. The activities can be used as starting points for individual lessons or as elements of larger cross-curricular joint projects involving collaboration over a number of subjects, to develop knowledge and understanding, alongside important skills and competencies, essential for young people growing up as Commonwealth and global citizens.

The resources are designed to be flexible and adaptable for use in a variety of settings. Each unit contains background information, ideas for discussion, and cross-curricular activities. There are links to curriculum subjects and Commonwealth values along with suggestions of activities that you might carry out with a partner school overseas.

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCING THE COMMONWEALTH

This is an exciting time for the Commonwealth, with the Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) taking place in the UK and the Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast in Australia in April. The resources and activities in this section help schools to learn, think and talk about the Commonwealth and its values.

What is the Commonwealth?

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 53 countries that support each other and work together in the common interests of their citizens for development, democracy and peace. It is home to 2.4 billion people of all faiths and ethnicities and member countries come from Africa, Asia, the Americas, the Caribbean, Europe and the South Pacific and represent one quarter of the countries of the UN. *

In 2013, every country in the Commonwealth signed a shared charter, or set of values. These include commitments to holding fair and free elections, respecting human rights and promoting tolerance, respect and understanding.

* Source - Fast Facts on the Commonwealth



Welcome to the Commonwealth

Age range: 7–14 years

Commonwealth values: Developing tolerance, respect and understanding.

Curriculum links: Geography/Citizenship/ English

Key skills: Critical thinking and problem solving, communication and collaboration, digital literacy.

Learning outcomes: An introduction to the Commonwealth and some of its constituent countries. Creating a baseline of your pupils' initial knowledge and understanding about these subjects.

Introduce learning about the Commonwealth to your pupils by showing them the Guess Who PowerPoint presentation at <https://thercs.org/assets/AtoZ-Education-Resources/1r1-Guess-Who-presentation.pptx>. Pause between slides for your pupils to try and identify the countries from the clues and ask them to try and work out the connection between the countries on the slides. If you want the task to be a little more competitive, you could divide the class into teams and score them on correct answers. If pupils are not able to identify the countries, try giving some additional clues to help them out.

Once you have reached slide 14 and identified the Commonwealth connection, ask your pupils to write down on a postcard how they would reply to the question "What is the Commonwealth?" Record your class responses as a baseline to capture their initial knowledge of the subject. Return to these postcards at the end of the project and ask your pupils the same question to compare how much your pupils have learnt.

Use the last slide on the PowerPoint, (slide 15) to briefly explain the history and current work of the Commonwealth, including the signing of the Commonwealth Charter in 2013.

Ask your pupils to work in groups to carry out some detailed research about a Commonwealth country of their choice. They could explore the climate, landscape, native flora and fauna, the capital city, languages spoken, and find out about the athletes who have represented the country in previous Commonwealth Games events. Encourage your pupils to use appropriate geographical vocabulary, a variety of trustworthy sources for their investigations and to present their information in interesting and innovative ways. They could create a wiki page or poster; make a slideshow presentation or a short film or a



book for the class or school library. They could also share their research with other classes by teaching a lesson, creating their own Guess Who slideshow quiz or preparing a display of their work with food, music and artefacts from their chosen country. Discuss what they have learnt, and what they found most challenging when preparing their final presentations.

Partner school activities

If you are working with a partner school, your pupils could share their responses to the question what is the Commonwealth? by creating and exchanging their post cards and a word cloud containing all their ideas. They might also devise their own Commonwealth quiz for their partner school and exchange their presentations about the Commonwealth country they have researched.

*A number of these activities are adapted from the Royal Commonwealth Society education resources called Getting to Know Your Commonwealth. You can find additional resource materials from this publication at: <https://thercs.org/youth/teaching-resources/>.

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM)

Age range: 10–14 years

Commonwealth values: Developing tolerance, respect and understanding, importance of young people in the Commonwealth, freedom of expression.

Curriculum links: English, Personal, Social and Health Education, Citizenship.

Key skills: Communication and collaboration, digital literacy.

Learning outcomes: Demonstrating understanding and expressing opinions about issues related to the Commonwealth and Commonwealth values. Developing oracy skills.

Explain to your pupils that every two years, all the leaders from the member countries of the Commonwealth meet to reaffirm their shared values and discuss global issues affecting the Commonwealth and the wider world. The meeting is called a CHOGM (Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting) and a different Commonwealth country hosts it each time. The decisions made at the meeting, shape Commonwealth plans and encourage governments to think about what the Commonwealth nations can achieve together. Decisions are normally reached by consensus (with the agreement of all) and, at the end of the meeting, a series of statements are issued on behalf of the leaders.

Young people will be at the heart of the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) hosted by the UK in April. The summit will seek to find solutions to some of the most pressing global challenges of today and goals will include promoting young people's engagement with and understanding of the Commonwealth.

Things to talk about:

What can young people add to the debates and the work of the Commonwealth?

Ask your pupils to work in small groups and decide what they feel are the most important issues affecting their schools and communities that should be discussed by the heads of government. These might be related to environmental concerns such as the effects of climate change, or pollution, social or political issues such as access to quality education or countering extremism. Ask each group to offer their own suggestions and present their reasons to the rest of the class. Gather your

pupils' responses and decide what top five messages they would send as a class to the leaders at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting. Encourage them to use inventive ways to promote their ideas. They might take photographs and add captions, make presentations, posters or short films to support why these issues are important to the global community.

If you were your country's Head of Government for the day, what actions would you take to build a better future for young people?

To make their voices heard clearly and effectively, it is vital that young people across the Commonwealth develop the knowledge and skills they need to become confident, effective communicators who can articulate their thoughts, reach consensus in a variety of situations and become inspirational future leaders. To develop their skills, try out some of the activities from the Commonwealth oracy pack. (<https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/resource/downloads/bc-resource-oracy-lessons-aw.pdf>) You might try using discussion guidelines, sentence stems and tokens to help your pupils develop their speaking and listening skills. Pupils could also research and make a one-minute speech about an issue related to one of the Commonwealth Values. They might choose to talk about protecting the environment, (Value 10) why it is important to accept, respect and understand different cultures (Value 4) or try out the following Down the Line activity.

Down the Line

Move classroom furniture or work outside so that you have a large space in which pupils can stand and move around. Use masking tape or chalk to create a line running across the space with a sign saying '**Strongly agree**' at one end, and '**Strongly disagree**' at the other.

Read out one of the statements from the list below and ask the pupils to move to a point on the line that best represents their opinion on the statement.

- There are more differences between young people around the Commonwealth than similarities.
- It is more important for the Commonwealth to support sustainability and protecting the environment than promote gender equality.
- There should be a separate Commonwealth Games for Para sports.

Once pupils have stopped moving, ask one or more of them to explain why they have chosen their position. Give them a chance to change their minds and move up or down the line if they are convinced by other pupils' ideas.

Repeat the activity for other statements and add some statements of your own.

Ask different pupils to explain their opinions each time.

Talk with pupils about the flexibility of their opinions – even if they form an opinion today, with more information, further dialogue and changing circumstances it is fine to change opinion and that this is an important part of being an astute, open-minded individual.

The Commonwealth Games

Background information to share with your pupils:

Every four years the Commonwealth Games, known as 'the friendly Games' take place. The event was first held in 1930 and is an international, multi-sport event. As well as many Olympic sports, the Games also include other sports such as rugby sevens and netball that are widely played in Commonwealth countries. There are 10 core sports, and each host city is also able to select up to 7 additional sports and a number of Para sports for athletes with a disability. Glasgow 2014 saw the introduction of the biggest-ever number of Para-Sport events in Commonwealth Games history.

Gold Coast 2018

This will be the fifth time that Australia has hosted the Commonwealth Games. The Gold Coast games will see the reintroduction of basketball, and the introduction of women's rugby sevens and beach volleyball and an equal number of events for men and women for the first time.

Commonwealth Games

Age range: 7–11 years

Commonwealth values: Rule of law, gender equality.

Curriculum links: English, PE

Key skills: Communication and collaboration, digital literacy.

Learning outcomes: To find out about some of the sports and games played in Commonwealth countries and traditions linked to the Commonwealth Games.

Many Commonwealth countries have their own traditional games. Encourage pupils to find out about some of these games, such as Daria Bandha –a traditional tagging game from Bangladesh or Mundo, a hopping game from Mozambique and try them out. Discuss which games they found the easiest and hardest to play. Why do they think rules are needed in sports and games? Is it ever ok to break these rules? How can they ensure that rules are followed and play is fair?

Encourage your pupils to talk in pairs about their own favourite playground games and record the different types of games played in their school playgrounds. They could carry out interviews with other children, make tally

charts, take photographs, write descriptions, and film or create sound recordings of the games being played at playtimes and lunchtime.

Ask your pupils to find out about the traditional games that were played by their parents or grandparents when they were younger or were common in their local community in the past. Invite your pupils to record the rules of these games or perhaps make a short instructional film to teach these to other pupils in school.

Discuss what has changed and what has stayed the same about games in a modern playground.

Talk to your partner school(s) about the classroom games they play.



The Queen's Baton Relay

In the lead up to The Commonwealth Games, a special relay baton leaves Buckingham Palace in London and travels to make its way to the opening ceremony. During the journey thousands of people run through all the nations and the territories of the Commonwealth carrying the baton. Traditionally the baton carries a hidden message from Queen Elizabeth II, which is read out when the Games are opened. Ask your pupils to design and make their own special Commonwealth relay batons and create their own message to the Commonwealth hidden inside.

Commonwealth Athletes - The Fastest Man on the Planet

What do you think you would need to do to become the fastest runner in the world? Although he has now retired from competition, Jamaican athlete Usain Bolt still holds the world record for 100m in 9.58 seconds, which is faster than most cars travel! Ask your pupils to investigate what they can achieve in 9.58 seconds. How far can they run? How many times can they write their name or bounce or catch a ball?

Usain Bolt went to an ordinary school in Jamaica and trained on the school's dusty playing field. He did not have lots of hi-tech equipment but he did have talent, dedication and people that cared about him. As well as running, he loved playing cricket and wanted to be a cricketer when he was young. One of his teachers spotted his athletics talent and persuaded him to focus on running.

Watch the short film about Usain's school in Jamaica to see how his teacher helped him become the world's fastest man at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldclass/15355319>

In the film we see how important Usain's teacher Laura Thorpe was in helping him to achieve his dreams. Invite your pupils to discuss the sporting idols that they admire. What qualities and skills do they think elite athletes need to make it to the top of their sport? What do they think is more important in training winning sports stars, hi-tech equipment or an inspirational coach or teacher?

The Commonwealth Games includes disability events rather than holding separate games as happens at the Olympics. Invite pupils to discuss this arrangement. Do they think that full integration would be positive way forward for other events like the Olympic Games or do they think that the Paralympics should be kept as a separate event?

During the debate, encourage your pupils to remember their discussion guidelines and sentence stems and listen carefully to what others are saying. Do they agree? Disagree? Have a counter-point or follow-up? Encourage the use of phrases such as "To expand on Rebecca's point, I think..." or "To counter that argument you could say..."

Partner school activities:

If you have a partner school, learn to play some of the traditional games that are popular in their country. Find out which sports and sports men and women are admired in their country?

Fun with flags

Age range: 7–14 years

Commonwealth values: Valuing the importance and contributions of young people across the Commonwealth, developing tolerance, respect and understanding.

Curriculum links: English, Art and Design

Key skills: Creativity and imagination, communication and collaboration.

Learning outcomes: To become more familiar with the flags and symbols from Commonwealth countries and design and create their own Commonwealth flag and logo.

Every country in the Commonwealth has a unique flag as a national symbol and these will be paraded at the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games. The design for the Commonwealth flag reflects the diversity of the Commonwealth, incorporating an image of the globe and spears making the letter “C” symbolizing the many facets of Commonwealth cooperation around the world.

Show your pupils the flag designs from Commonwealth Countries on the poster on [Appendix B](#) or use the following link: http://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/inline/P14879_COM_FLAG_Poster_Oct_2016.pdf

Discuss the following:

- How many flags can you recognise?
- Do you know why specific colours and images used on certain flags?

On the flag from The Bahamas for example, the yellow stripe represents the sandy beaches of the 700 Bahamian islands, the blue represents the water, and the black triangle represents the Bahamian people along with their desire to develop the land and the sea. On the flag of Bangladesh, the green symbolises the green topography and youthfulness while the red symbolizes the rising sun and the sacrifices its citizens have made.

Show your class the Commonwealth flag:



Ask your pupils to discuss what they think the different parts of the design might represent.

A new Commonwealth logo was unveiled recently. The design features 52 hexagons reflecting each of the member states. The various colours are drawn from each country's flags. And the hexagons have six equal sides reflecting that each member state has an equal voice and the six continents represented in the Commonwealth.

If your pupils designed a new flag or logo for the Commonwealth of the future what would they include to symbolise different aspects of the Commonwealth? Have a look at the suggestion from a school in India before designing their own in a media of their choice.

Partner School Activities



If working with a partner school, exchange your designs and ideas behind your suggestions for Commonwealth flags and logos. Perhaps you could then make a flag of one of your partner's designs on fabric.

Traditional tales and poems from the Commonwealth

Age range: 7–14 years

Commonwealth values: Sustainable development and protecting the environment, Valuing the importance and contributions of young people across the Commonwealth.

Curriculum links: English, Art and design, Drama, PSHE

Key skills: Creativity and imagination, communication and collaboration, critical thinking.

Learning outcomes: To increase knowledge and understanding of stories and poems from Commonwealth countries and issues related to sustainability and water conservation.

Every Commonwealth country has a rich heritage of storytelling. Read with your class the Malaysian story *The Messenger of the Moon* retold by Mervyn Skipper. The story is taken from *A River of Stories: Tales and Poems from across the Commonwealth* (www.ariverofstories.com) © Jan Pieńkowski. You can find the story in [Appendix C](#).

In this story, the elephants discover that fresh water is not evenly distributed in their land. When the elephants find the river, they probably feel there is enough water for everyone, but the monkeys see the situation in a different way.

Invite your pupils to discuss with a partner the reaction of the monkeys when they hear the elephants are coming. Why might they feel that way? What do they think is the moral of the story?

Divide a sheet of paper in half. On one side write the heading 'Elephants' view: why the monkeys should share', and on the other side write 'Monkeys' view: why we should not share.' Half the class could draft a letter from the baby elephant to the Monkey king, using the ideas from the elephants' perspective and the other half could write a letter from the baby monkey to the Elephant King, using ideas from the monkeys' perspective.

Perhaps organise a role-play debate with speakers from the two opposing sides. Who has the most convincing argument? How might they come to an agreement? Discuss with your pupils their own views about sharing the Earth's resources fairly and consider whether the river should be sufficient for all the animals in the land.

Share copies of the poem *Woman's World* by Botswanan poet Barolong Seboni with your pupils. This can be found in the Appendices. Discuss the language features the poet uses such as alliteration and the layout of the poem. In parts of the world where people cannot turn on a tap to get fresh water, they may have to collect water each day and then walk a long way home. For these people, every drop of water counts. The shape of the poem *Woman's World* replicates the zigzag path the women have to walk up the hill to collect water.

Discuss the evocative style of Jan Penkowski's illustrations in these pieces of writing and the theme of the importance of water conservation that appears in both.

Show the pupils a picture of a dripping tap. Why is it a problem? A tap that drips once every ten seconds will waste about 315 litres of water in a year, that's about two large bathtubs full of water. Ask pupils to keep a log of the amount of water they use each day. Discuss how they could use less by making small adjustments to their routines such as turning the tap off when cleaning their teeth (this could save four litres a day) or showering for less time. Use a storyboard grid to create a short comic strip to persuade other children to save water. Perhaps they could invent a superhero figure as the hero or heroine of the comic to drive their message home. Alternatively encourage pupils to write their own shape poem, based on the idea that every drop of water counts using shapes that match the message of the poem. For example, if they are talking about dripping taps, their poem could be in the shape of a water droplet.

Additional activities:

Help your pupils to find other stories or poems from Commonwealth countries and illustrate them in a similar style to Jan Penkowski using silhouettes and bold blocks of colour.

Encourage your pupils to read some of the stories written by children and teachers in different countries for the Commonwealth Story writing competition at: <https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/about-programmes/commonwealth-class/story-writing-competition>

Read the Top Tips for creating fantastic stories of their own by authors Anne Fine and Myra Zepf and enter the next competition. You may be the next winning author!

Partner school activities

Exchange ideas for conserving water and stories and poems from both countries. Share your illustrated stories or put on a display of readings or dramatised performances of traditional tales and poems from Commonwealth countries for pupils and parents.



SECTION 2: CHILDREN OF THE COMMONWEALTH

You can find out more about children's lives across the Commonwealth first hand, by watching the following films with your pupils and reading letters written by children from different Commonwealth countries in their own words.

Oli's Child Marriage Crusade - A film from Bangladesh

www.bbc.co.uk/worldclass/20045275

Oli is a 12-year-old boy from Bangladesh who campaigns against child marriage.

Bangladesh has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world with 20% of girls becoming wives before their 15th birthday, even though the law says that they should not get married before the age of 18.

Oli became fed-up seeing his friends dropping out of school and decided to try and do something about it. He and his friends talked to their elders in the local area about why their daughters should not be married so young. They halved the number of child marriages in the local area. Depending on the age of your children there are different versions of this film for primary and secondary pupils.



BBC website: www.bbc.co.uk/worldclass/20045275

Discussion points and activities

Age range: 11–16 years

Commonwealth values: Human rights, Gender Equality, Valuing the importance and contributions of young people across the Commonwealth.

Curriculum links: Geography, Citizenship, English, Drama.

Key skills: Citizenship, collaboration and communication, student leadership and personal development.

Learning outcomes: Finding out more about children's lives in Commonwealth countries. To examine ways in which young people can make a positive difference to their community.

Oli lives in Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. Provide your pupils with maps, globes or satellite images to help them to locate Bangladesh and Dhaka. What can they find out about the physical and human characteristics of the country and its capital city? How far is it from their home? Which direction would they travel to get there and which countries would they pass through?

Although he is only 12 years old, Oli and his friends have achieved amazing results. By talking with the elders in the village, explaining why their daughters shouldn't get married at such a young age and highlighting the benefits of staying in school, they halved the number of child marriages in their locality.

After watching the film, discuss the sensitive issues that it raises with your pupils. How do they think Oli and his friends feel when they tackle adults about such a challenging and difficult subject? Would you be nervous? What might you say?

In the first Harry Potter book Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, by JK Rowling, one of the characters says "There are all kinds of courage...It takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to our enemies, but just as much to

stand up to our friends." Explore what this statement means with your pupils. Ask your pupils to work together and devise role-play scenarios, in which a character has to stand up to friends or adults to prevent something happening that they believe is wrong. You could develop these ideas further by using 'forum theatre' methods. * This is a drama technique where members of the audience can stop the action at any time, using a particular signal and suggest the characters in the drama take different actions or say different things.

Have they ever encountered situations where they had to stand up to people if they thought something was wrong? How did they feel?

Help your pupils to find out about other real life stories of people from Commonwealth countries who have championed children's rights or showed courage in difficult situations.

* Forum theatre is a drama technique where actors or audience members can stop a performance, and suggest different actions for the actors to carry out on-stage.

School Journeys: Barefoot - A film from Kenya

How do your pupils get to school? Perhaps they travel by bus, bike or boat or maybe they walk to school. In the foothills of Mount Elgon in Kenya, the children walk to school and they walk barefoot. The roads are made of earth and rocks, and during the rainy season these turn into giant, muddy slides which makes getting to school really tricky. However, the area is famous for producing some of the best distance runners in the world. The high altitude means there's less oxygen in the air making it harder to breathe and run.

The children get used to running in these conditions, and become very resilient. Show your pupils the film about journeys to school at <https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/classroom-resources/schools-world-service-film-resources/kenya-getting-to-school-by-foot>



BBC website: www.bbc.co.uk/worldclass/15409675

Discussion points and activities

In the film Isobel talks about her morning routine getting up at dawn, walking or running to school in bare feet and cooking for her family. Talk with your pupils about their morning routines and journeys to school. How many walk to school? Compare and contrast their daily lives with those of the Kenyan children at Bishop Okiring School.

Use an atlas, maps, globes or satellite images to locate Mount Elgon in Kenya. What can your pupils find out about the location, physical features, climate and altitude in this part of the Commonwealth?

Some of the children in the film walk and run up to 15km to school every day with bare feet. Help your pupils to work out a route for an equivalent distance from your school. Can they walk that distance? How would they feel doing this twice a day in all weathers without shoes?

The Kenyan children talk about their ambitions. Dixon tells us; "I run to school as I want to try my luck in athletics" Isobel is also on a mission. She says, "What I'm hoping for is to become a journalist, so I can highlight people's problems and improve the condition of the roads around here."

What are your pupils' hopes and dreams for the future? What do they think they might need to learn in order to achieve them?

Can they find out more about Kenyan athletes who have been successful in previous Commonwealth games?

Additional activities

Explore the work of organisations and movements such as Design for Change or Send my Friend to School <http://www.sendmyfriend.org/>, which encourage children and young people to express their own ideas for a better world and put them into action. Watch or read some of the case studies on the websites, which show young people from Commonwealth countries devising and leading innovative ideas for change in countries all over the world. In India, for example, schemes led by children have included developing literacy programmes for parents and closing the streets to traffic on certain days to allow children to play.

Partner School Activities: Compare routines and journeys to school with your partner school. How safe is their journey to school? Exchange their ambitions and hopes for the future. What do they think they will need to learn to achieve their goals?

Letters from the Commonwealth

Encourage your pupils to find out more about children's lives across the Commonwealth by reading the letters written by pupils at schools in Commonwealth countries. See [Appendix E](#) or go to: <https://thercs.org/youth/teachers/teaching-resources>

Give out one or more letters to each group of pupils. Ask them to note:

- The name of the child who wrote the letter and what country and area they come from? Can they find where they live on a map or satellite image?
- Any similarities and differences between their lives and those of the letter-writers.
- What is the most interesting or surprising piece of information in the letters?
- If they could ask one of the letter-writers a question, what would it be?

Gather the whole class together to feed back their thoughts back to the rest of the class. Emphasise that these narratives are not representative of all the people in that country, just as their own lives will be different from those of their peers and those of others around their home country or region.

Encourage them to draft a letter about a day in their own communities and lives.

Partner school activities

Create and exchange letters or a short presentation or film about a day in their own life.



SECTION 3: I AM A COMMONWEALTH CITIZEN

Today global links are part of our everyday lives. Oxfam Education for Global Citizenship points out that we are linked to others around the world every day:

- Socially through the media and telecommunications
- Culturally through movements of people
- Economically through trade
- Environmentally-sharing one planet
- Politically through international relations and systems of regulation

Education for global and Commonwealth citizenship is about equipping the young people that we teach for the world they will live in as adults. We don't know for sure what the world will be like in the future but we can use our expertise to help young people to acquire the necessary outlooks, skills and attributes to realise these goals.

Global Links

Age range: 7–14 years

Commonwealth values: Developing Tolerance, respect and understanding

Curriculum links: Geography, English, Citizenship, Personal, Social and Health Education.

Key skills: Communication and collaboration

Learning outcomes: To increase knowledge and understanding of Commonwealth countries and global links.

Enhance your pupils' knowledge of the world and understanding of global links by playing games with an inflatable globe, passing it around the class and asking questions such as:

- What countries do you or your families have links to? Can you find them on the globe?
- What countries have you visited? Where would you like to go and why?
- Can you find a Commonwealth country beginning with B? An ocean beginning with I?
- Can you find Namibia and Tanzania? Which hemisphere are they in and which direction would you travel from your home to get there?

Invite your pupils to ask their own questions and develop and use appropriate geographical vocabulary.

Give each member of the class a copy of the Can you Find sheet on [Appendix F](#). Ask them to walk around the room and try to find the names of nine other pupils that fit the criteria on the sheet. Can they for example find the name of someone in the room who has visited another Commonwealth country or can sing a song in another language? Ask them to write the names of the people in the appropriate boxes and then compare with the rest of the class.

I'm a Commonwealth Citizen

Commonwealth themes: Tolerance, respect and understanding, importance of young people in the Commonwealth.

Curriculum links: English, Geography, Citizenship

Key skills: Communication, cooperation, critical thinking and problem solving.

Learning focus: Identifying and demonstrating skills and outlooks associated with Commonwealth citizenship values

Discuss with your pupils what they think the terms 'commonwealth citizenship' and 'Towards a common future' mean? What skills or outlooks should a Commonwealth citizen demonstrate? Ask the pupils to work together in small groups and draw a life-size outline on a large piece of paper of one of the pupils in their group. Use art and collage materials to create a big picture of a Commonwealth citizen. Around the outside ask them to write the qualities of a good Commonwealth citizen and display their completed pictures.

Young people are vital to the processes of development, democracy and participation. We as citizens of the Commonwealth, have the responsibility, as well as the right, to participate in making change." (Commonwealth Youth Summit)

Discuss this statement with your pupils and help them to find out about some of the programmes that are carried out by the Commonwealth Youth Programme around the world.

Encourage your students to design and undertake a real social enterprise project to make an improvement to an aspect of their local area. Discuss their ideas, choose one, find out what they will need to do and make it happen. Use the British Council [Social Enterprise resource pack](#) for inspiration.

Celebrate Your Learning

To conclude your project, why not invite parents and friends to a special event where your pupils can celebrate and demonstrate all that they have learnt about the Commonwealth. They could show some of the artwork they have created, retell their stories and share their learning.

You could link your celebration to the [Commonwealth Big Lunches](#) that are taking place to bring people together and celebrate and the spirit of the Commonwealth through friendship, food and fun.

Partner school activities:

Photograph your Commonwealth Citizen collages. Share with your partner school your ideas to improve your locality and your celebrations of learning.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Who Am I? Guess Who PowerPoint presentation

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GUESS WHO

See if you can guess **which countries**
are represented on each of the
following slides...



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Appendix B: Flags of the Commonwealth



Appendix C: Folktale from Malaysia, The Messenger of the Moon, retold by Mervyn Skipper, taken from A River of Stories: Tales and Poems from across the Commonwealth (www.ariverofstories.com) © Commonwealth Education Trust, Illustrations and JanPie Fairytale font copyright Jan Pierkowski.

MALAYSIA

The Messenger of the Moon

Adapted from a retelling by Mervyn Skipper



There was a drought in the Elephant country. There hadn't been a drop of rain for weeks. All the pools and the lakes had dried up, and instead of a beautiful broad river to bathe in, all the elephants had was a little muddy trickle of water which was hardly enough to give them each a drink, not to speak of a bath.

So the King of the Elephants sent a messenger out to see if, in another part of the country, there was any water to be found. The messenger travelled for many days over the hills and through the jungle, and everywhere he found the lakes had all dried up and the pools were all gone and the rivers were just little muddy trickles of water.

But at last, after many days of travelling, he came to a river where the grass was still green and the water was lovely and deep, and after drinking a little and giving himself a shower-bath, he hurried back to the King to tell him the good news. As soon as the King of the Elephants heard it, he told all his people to follow him, and set off to find the wonderful river.

Now the river belonged to a tribe of monkeys, and when some of the monkey people saw the elephants coming they went to their King and said, "What shall we do, O King? The elephant people are coming, like mountains walking, to take our river from us."

The Monkey King called all his people together and asked the oldest and wisest monkeys to tell him how he could stop the elephant people coming and drinking up their river. Some said one thing and some said another, but none of them could tell him how the elephant people could



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be stopped from drinking up their river.

At last a little baby monkey jumped up and said, "I will stop these elephants from stealing our beautiful river and drinking it all up."

The monkey people all laughed at him and cried, "How will you, a little whipper-snapper that a baby elephant could crush under one foot, stop a whole tribe of elephants?"

"That is my business," said the little monkey, "just you wait and see!"

So the little monkey went off and climbed a tree that leaned over the river and waited for the elephants. Soon they came along, hundreds of big old-man elephants and hundreds of big old-mother elephants and lots of little baby elephants who could have crushed the little monkey with one foot; and the ground shook under their tread, and the trees bent as if a strong wind were blowing, and all the leaves trembled. The little monkey did not tremble. He said in his squeaky voice, "Stop! Stop, all you elephant people! If you go another step further you will be sorry for it!"

The elephants all stopped and looked up, and when they saw a little monkey on a tree branch they laughed, and their King said, "Who are you, small hairy thing, that tells the elephant tribe to stop?"

"I am the messenger of the Moon, and the Moon owns all this river," said the little monkey. "There she is, bathing in it at this moment, and if you dare disturb her she will be very angry, and will certainly eat you all up!"

The elephants all looked at the river, and there, sure enough, was the Moon bathing in it.

So they all gathered at the bank of the river and talked about what was the best thing to do; some said one thing and some said another, but before they had made up their minds, a little baby elephant, trying to push his way to the front so that he could hear what his elders were talking about, fell, flop! into the river.

At once the Moon stopped bathing and began to rush up and down and round and round, as if she was terribly angry. The Elephant King, thinking he was going to be eaten, gave a wild scream and rushed away; and all the elephant tribe, the big old-man elephants and the big old-mother elephants and all the little baby

MALAYSIA

elephants, rushed after him, falling over each other in their hurry.

The baby elephant who had fallen into the river pulled himself out as fast as he was able, and ran too. But after a while, noticing that the Moon wasn't following him, he stopped, and as he was very thirsty, he came tiptoeing back to the river, and there was the Moon, bathing herself quietly again. So he gently put his trunk into the water and took a little sip; and then, as the Moon did not seem to mind, he took a long gulp, and then he slipped down the bank, splosh! into the water and gave himself a shower-bath.

When he had had enough, he ran after the rest of the elephants to tell them that it was all right and that there was nothing to be afraid of. He had not gone very far when he met his mother, looking very pale and anxious. "You young rascal," she said, "wherever have you been? I was quite sure the Moon had caught and eaten you!"

"Caught and eaten me?" said the baby elephant, "No way! That Moon you were all so afraid of was only a reflection. I've just had a lovely shower-bath in her river, and if you all come back you can have one too!"

"Hold your tongue, you cheeky little thing, and come along," said the mother elephant, cuffing him over the head with her trunk, and hurrying to catch up with the rest.

So the elephant tribe went back to their own country and the monkey tribe kept their beautiful river.





Appendix D: Poem from Botswana, *Woman's World*, by Barolong Seboni, which is taken from *A River of Stories: Tales and Poems from across the Commonwealth* (www.ariverofstories.com) © Commonwealth Education Trust, Illustrations and JanPie Fairytale font copyright Jan Pieńkowski.

BOTSWANA

Woman's World


By Barolong Seboni

Silhouetted
against the setting sun
women
ascend
a hilly incline
balancing
barrels on their heads

talking laughing
with hardly a
splash...

the world
rotates
on the axis
of the earth's women

talking laughing
at life
with oceans
balanced
on their heads
without
a
splash...



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Appendix E: Copies of letters from pupils in Pakistan, Singapore, Tanzania and Trinidad and Tobago.

★ DIVERSE COMMONWEALTH LETTERS » Resource 1r4

Baddomalhi
Karawal
Pakistan

Dear Cousin,

I wanted to write to you to tell you a bit about my life in Pakistan, and to find out about your life too.

I live in a village north-east of Lahore, very close to the border with India. My village is surrounded by green fields and trees. Life here is very different from all the pollution and noise you have probably heard about in the big cities of Pakistan. My house is located in the centre of the village, and it is two storeys high. We have three bedrooms, a kitchen, a TV lounge and two bathrooms. We also have a room that is for guests. My bedroom is spacious and airy and it's on the top floor. Where do you live? What is your bedroom like? How does your village or town compare to other places in your country? Is there any overcrowding?

My bedroom faces the east, so in the morning the sunlight comes in and wakes me up. Once I am up, I usually have chapattis, butter and milkshake for breakfast before school. What do you have for breakfast? My mother is a housewife. She is a fantastic cook and she makes chapattis and vegetables for lunch, and dal (lentils) and rice for dinner. We are really lucky to have fresh vegetables. After school, I take our two buffaloes to the field for grazing and sometimes I ride on the brown one. The milk of the buffalo is very fresh and sweet it's really good to drink. Do you have any tasks to help your family with? What do you do in your spare time? Does the local government or anyone else provide activities for young people in your area? My village has a big playing field, where my friends and I play cricket and football.

There is a railway station in our village that links us to Lahore and Karawal. In our village there is also a church where Christians go for worship and a mosque where Muslims go for prayer we have both. Christians and Muslims live together in peace and respect each other here, but this has not always been the case in Pakistan. What religions do you have in your country? Do they live peacefully together?

Write to me soon!

Love from,
Farhan

P.S. Look at this coin
from my country...
Do you know what the
crescent symbolises? →



1r4

RESOURCE 1r4
PAGE 1 OF 4

★ DIVERSE COMMONWEALTH LETTERS » Resource 1r4

Malan Road
Singapore, 109433

Dear Cousin,

I wanted to write to you to tell you a bit about my life in Singapore. I think you would love Singapore. There are so many things to do and see, such as the Singapore Zoological Gardens, and the Mustafa Centre, a shopping paradise that is open 24 hours a day!

We have great food. We live in a multi-racial society, with people from Chinese, Malay, Indian and European backgrounds. Each group has its own religion and festivals, and the different cultures mean we have a real mix of different foods. To promote tourism, there is an annual event called The Singapore Food Festival. It is held in July and you can try things like Char Kway Teow, which is wok-fried noodles in sweet dark sauce; Roti Prata, which is Indian fried leavened dough in curry; and Laksa, which is rice noodles in coconut gravy. What is the food like in your country and do you have foods from lots of different cultures? What's your favourite food?

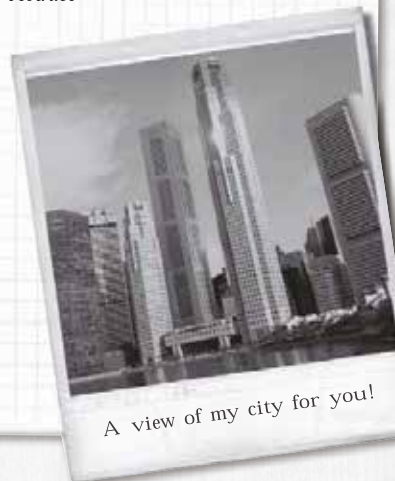
I go to a great high school. Life in school is fun. I learn Chinese and English, but I've also chosen to take Japanese lessons. I thought it would enable me to watch anime, which is Japanese animation, without the subtitles. Inashaimasu! Some people in Singapore speak a local non-standard English, which is known as Singlish. Do you have different dialects in your country? What languages do you know? Which ones do you study at school?

Let me tell you a bit about the history of Singapore. It was first known as Temasek, which means 'Sea Town' in Malay, because Singapore is an island off the tip of the Malay Peninsula. However, when a Sumatran prince, Sang Nila Utama, first landed in Temasek, he saw what he thought was a lion, though there were never lions in Singapore. Nevertheless, he renamed Temasek to Singapura, which means 'Lion City' in Malay. Can you tell me something about the history of your country?

Look forward to hearing from you again soon.

Love,

Jaclyn 😊



A view of my city for you!

★ DIVERSE COMMONWEALTH LETTERS » Resource 1r4

Mufindi,
Iringa,
Tanzania

Dear Cousin,

I hope you are well. I thought in this letter I would tell you a bit more about my life here in Tanzania. In my spare time I play computer games, watch cartoons and do my homework. Do you do the same kinds of things at home? I am planning to be a pilot when I grow up. Some people say this takes loads of time and is too hard but I am going to try anyway. Have you thought about what you want to do when you have finished school?

I live in a house with two other people. My parents passed away. I live with my uncle and his son Valentino, who is fifteen years old. My brother Harrison lives with my aunt in another town, Mtwara, which is about 13 hours' drive (1000 km / 600 miles) away from where I live. Harrison loves playing football. Valentino, my cousin, likes watching films and playing computer games so we get on really well. My uncle works for the Tea Research Institute of Tanzania. That is an organisation that deals with tea planting. Do people drink tea where you live? What are the main things that your country produces?

I go to a good school. It has good teachers, a good hospital, takes care of its pupils and has a big place for eating. It has primary and secondary sections and is for both boys and girls. It also has boarders and day pupils. Our school belongs to a big multinational company that grows tea. Who pays for your school? In Tanzania there are a lot of people suffering from HIV/AIDS. What are the main health problems in your country?

Tanzania is a big country that has twenty-four regions. The capital city is called Dodoma. There are some big international airports such as the Julius Nyerere International Airport in Dar-Es-Salaam and the Kilimanjaro International Airport. Mount Kilimanjaro is in northeastern Tanzania and is the highest mountain in Africa. The area where I live is called Iringa and has hills, valleys, lakes and mountains. It's quite cold here. In Iringa we have national parks such as Udzungwa. There are also many tribes in this region such as Hehes, Kingas and Benas. There are two main people who helped Tanzania (which used to be called Tanganyika) get independence and they are remembered: Mkwana Mkwawa and Julius Kambarage Nyerere. What are people remembered for in your country?

Your cousin,

Jackson

1r4

RESOURCE 1r4
PAGE 3 OF 4

★ DIVERSE COMMONWEALTH LETTERS » Resource 1r4

Southern Main
Cunupia, Chaguanas
Trinidad, Trinidad and Tobago

Dear Cousin,

How are you? I wanted to write to you to tell you a bit about life here in Trinidad and Tobago. This country is made up of two islands: Trinidad and Tobago, but most of the population lives on Trinidad, which is where I live too.

Trinidad and Tobago is a nation that embraces diversity. Its population is made up of a mixture of Indian, Afro Caribbean, British, Chinese and other people who have settled on the islands. What are the different cultures in your country? Do people support each other or are there conflicts between peoples? It makes me quite sad when people can't see beyond their differences and realise we are all human beings and we should work together to make the world a better place. Do you agree?

Trinidad's soil and its ecology is distinctly South American, because Trinidad used to be part of Venezuela's coastline until the last ice age. We are only seven miles away from the South American shoreline at the closest point, which means birds travel back and forth between the islands and mainland. Often, you cannot even see Trinidad and Tobago on a world map but, despite their size, the islands have some of the most diverse wildlife populations in the world. Before Christopher Columbus landed and gave the island its name, Trinidad was believed to be called *Tere* by the native Arawak people, which means Land of the Humming Bird. It is home to more than 169 species of bird, at least 98 species of mammal, and many other animals, including some species that are close to extinction. What is the wildlife like in your country? Are there any endangered species there?

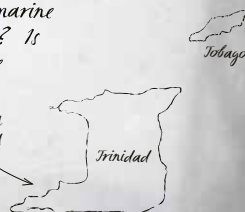
The government and people of Trinidad and Tobago take part in many conservation projects and efforts to protect our ecosystem. For example, we have the Nariva Swamp, which was designated a Wetlands of International Importance in 1992 and is a popular destination for tourists and nature photographers. However, Trinidad and Tobago's economy also depends on petroleum and natural gas, and sometimes wildlife habitats are destroyed by pollution from these industries and even by tourist activities. Tobago was once famous for its coral reef, but the snorkel and scuba diving industry has now reduced the reef to a marine wasteland. What are the main industries in your country? Is pollution damaging your countryside? Have you been able to do anything about it?

Write to me soon.

Love from,

Jessica xx

P.S I've drawn you a map of my country!



Appendix F: Global Links**Can you find someone who...**

Has visited other Commonwealth countries	Can speak more than one language?	Has friends or family who live abroad?
Can sing a song in another language?	Travels in a car that was built in another country	Enjoys food from other countries?
Is wearing or using something that was made in another country?	Enjoys playing or watching a sport that will feature in the Commonwealth Games?	Watches films or television programmes that were made in other countries?

Find out more

We hope you have enjoyed using the activities in this pack. The following resources contain additional information that may help you to organise your activities and projects.

The British Council creates international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and builds trust between them worldwide. Each year we work with millions of people connecting them with the UK's assets in English, the arts, education, and our ways of living and organising society. For schools globally we offer support, training and resources to support education for global citizenship and enrich teaching and learning. Find out more at www.britishcouncil.org/schoolsonline

The Royal Commonwealth Society is an international education charity with aims to promote understanding of international affairs and the modern Commonwealth. Our projects encourage young people to develop their skills, to realise their ambitions and, with an increased awareness of their role as global citizens, to engage with key challenges facing the international community www.thercs.org/youth/413 This website contains information and educational resources about the Commonwealth. It is largely aimed at secondary pupils.

<https://www.chogm2018.org.uk/> contains information about the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting taking place in the UK in April 2018.

<https://www.gc2018.com/> has information about the Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast in Australia.

You can also find out more about the Commonwealth by visiting www.youngcommonwealth.org where other resources and downloads are available.

The Department for Education in England has produced a pack in support of the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in 2018. You can find this at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/678960/DfE_-_Commonwealth_Education_Teachers_Pack.pdf

<https://www.voice21.org/> Voice 21 leads a movement teachers, schools and educators committed to ensuring all children and young

people have access to high quality oracy teaching and learning.

<https://thercs.org/assets/AtoZ-Education-Resources/Commonwealth-Flags-Poster.pdf> This resource contains the flags of Commonwealth countries.

A copy of the Commonwealth Charter can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-commonwealth-charter

UNICEF. See Kiran Bir Sethi's TED talk on developing the Design for Change programme and children's action projects in India here www.ted.com/talks/kiran_bir_sethi_teaches_kids_to_take_charge.html

Send My Friend to School brings together thousands of children across the UK to speak up for the right to education. The website has case studies and campaign stories of young ambassadors as well as fact sheets and stories. www.sendmyfriend.org

One Voice For All ([https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/sites/so/files/files/One%20Voice%20For%20All%20-%20Education%20Pack\(1\).pdf](https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/sites/so/files/files/One%20Voice%20For%20All%20-%20Education%20Pack(1).pdf)) is a set of teaching resources designed to help teachers discuss and explore human rights in their classrooms. Its key focus is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

A series of lesson plans about children's' rights for ages 8–10 can be found at Oxfam's Education resources webpages (www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/childrens-rights).

Visit www.ariverofstories.com to see information about A River of Stories – A collection of traditional stories and poems from each country of the Commonwealth, beautifully illustrated by Jan Pieńkowski.

<http://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org> has exciting learning global resources including Commonwealth Class, World Voice, Rivers of the World, Climate 4 Classrooms and Our Shared Past.

The British Council's Connecting Classrooms Professional Learning Site (<http://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/professional-development>) offers free online courses for teachers in Global Citizenship, ICT and English for international exchange and is available wherever you are in the world.

Perhaps you could also learn and perform some songs from Commonwealth countries.

Examples can be found on the British Council World Voice website at: <https://schoolsonline.britishcouncil.org/classroom-resources/world-voice/world-songbook>

Other resources available from the British Council's [SchoolsOnline](#) include:

- International Inspirations contains information on a range of traditional games from around the world for your pupils to try at: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/society/sport/current-programmes/international-inspiration>
- <http://www.bl.uk/learning/resources/pdf/playtimes-teachingpack.pdf> has information, ideas and printable resources about the history of playground games
- Watch the films of traditional rhymes and circle games such as Oranges and Lemons and In and Out the Dusty Bluebells on the British Library Playtimes archive at <http://www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/playground/browsegames.html>.

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