



THE
MEMORY
BOX

VISAS AND PASSPORTS





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PASSPORT PROBLEMS

A standard passport looks for a limited amount of basic information – surname, forenames, date and place of birth, sex. What if you were asked to fill out a passport that asked for other, more detailed information about you?

YOUR PERSONAL PASSPORT

Name:

Nationality:

Sex:

Age:

Height:

Colour of eyes:

Now choose eight or nine additional words to put on your passport that you believe best describe you, or that you would be happy to use.

Discussion:

How difficult or easy was it to select these descriptive words? Did you describe yourself as a member of a team or group? Did you describe yourself in terms of your religious affiliation? How comfortable are you describing yourself in these ways? Can you think of words to describe yourself which might be dangerous to use if you lived in a different country or under a different political system? How might it make you feel to have to withhold information about yourself or your family group? Can you imagine what it might be like to have to deny certain personal information in order to secure your personal safety?

AN ILLUSTRATED CULTURAL PASSPORT

This is an alternative to that explained above and is possibly best suited to senior classes.

You will need:

- flipchart or whiteboard/blackboard and writing materials
- a large piece of paper; at least one marker or pen per child

The self-portrait may be a rough sketch and/or may contain drawings representing various aspects of the child's daily life that help to illustrate their culture.

The children should be encouraged to use items found in their schoolbags or lunchboxes in addition to or instead of drawing, if these items help them to show something significant about their cultural background. Explain that culture affects everything about us, including

our assumptions about life and the world, our values, our patterns of behaviour and our relationships with others. The items or drawings to represent culture might include representations of the foods the children eat, the clothing and/or jewellery they wear, national symbols (eg flag), music preferred, favourite artists, books and TV programmes, and family traditions, customs, etc.

- Complete a whole-school cultural passport project. Each child prepares their own passport. Then each class selects a country and prepares a project on that country, using common themes such as facts and figures, natural world, customs, etc. They also design a stamp for 'their' country. The children can then go on a 'world-tour' through the school – and get a stamp for each 'country' they visit as well as learning about that country.
- Imagine you are obliged to leave your country for one that is totally unfamiliar. You might have to leave with – or even without – your family, depending on the reasons for your leaving: you might be sent away for your own safety as were the Kindertransport children, or, more recently, children from Iraq. If you could fill in one of the pages of your passport with your hopes for life in your new country, what might you list? Think of your rights recognised under the Convention on the Rights of the Child – would you list any of all of these? Which rights would you most want in your new country?

The Convention on the Rights of the Child can be found at: www.childrensrights.ie/fulltext.php

KUNLE'S VISA

- Kunle's application for a visa was denied. Can you suggest reasons why? (www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/ExplanationJune2006.pdf/files/ExplanationJune2006.pdf).

Do you think he felt powerless, aggrieved, angry, as well as sad when he found out that he couldn't travel to his daughter's graduation ceremony? Could you try to describe his emotions and his immediate reaction? Do you think he would have shared these feelings with Abbi, or might he have pretended to be more cheerful than he really was? Could you write an e-mail from Abbi to her dad, possibly one in which she tries to make light of the situation and expresses her hope to see him soon? Or you might write a greeting card from Kunle to Abbi, in which he regrets that his visa application was denied. What else might Kunle say in this card?

