

# *The Runaway Children of Chennai*

## Year 6 English Scheme

### Sample Page

**Welcome.** This unit is designed to help Year 6 pupils engage deeply with *The Runaway Children of Chennai* through annotation, discussion, and structured writing. Every lesson is fully planned and ready to teach - created by the author and a former primary school teacher who understands the realities of mixed-ability classrooms.

This sample shows a genuine extract from Week 1 so you can see the structure, clarity, and pupil-friendly approach used throughout the scheme.

**Synopsis** *Mariam and Rish live with their parents on the crowded shoreline of Chennai. When home becomes unsafe, the siblings make a desperate decision to run - beginning a journey through railway stations, city streets, and hidden dangers. Along the way they meet helpers, predators, and other children whose stories reveal the realities faced by vulnerable young people in India. The novel explores courage, loyalty, survival, and hope, while remaining age-appropriate and sensitively written for Upper Key Stage 2.*

### The Full Unit Includes

- 6 weeks of fully planned lessons
- teacher notes and modelling guidance
- stretch and SEND options
- structured annotation tasks
- assessment opportunities
- all pupil-facing printouts
- safeguarding-aware discussion notes
- **a bonus 7th week of creative and reflective activities**

*The optional 7th week gives pupils space to explore themes creatively, revisit key moments, and produce a final piece of writing they're genuinely proud of. It also offers gentle opportunities to reflect on the real organisations supporting vulnerable children in India, helping pupils connect the story to the wider world in an age-appropriate way.*

### What You'll Need

The full scheme (**normally £450**, including all printouts) is completely free to schools until the **end of April**.

To teach it, you'll just need class copies of *The Runaway Children of Chennai*. Schools usually order these directly from me, and I'm always happy to arrange a class-set discount.

## WEEK 1 SAMPLE (REAL EXTRACT)

### FOUNDATIONS, FAMILY, AND FRICTION (Chapters 1–4)

Lesson	Focus	Reading & Comprehension Questions	Analytical & Writing Tasks
1	Two Worlds on the Shoreline (Ch. 1)	What do we learn about the two different parts of the beach? Which words show that the children’s lives are difficult? How does the author help us picture the setting?	Descriptive Writing: Describe the children’s end of the beach using sensory details. Challenge: Use a simple metaphor (for example, “The slum was like...”).
2	Mariam the Learner, Rish the Survivor (Ch. 2)	How are Mariam and Rish different? What does each sibling care about most? Why is school so important to Mariam?	Character Comparison: Create a T-chart for Mariam and Rish. Include one quote and one small drawing or icon for each.
3	Meeting Bapa (Ch. 3)	What do we notice about Bapa when he enters? How does his behaviour change the mood in the shack? Which words make him seem frightening?	PEEL Paragraph (Supported): Write about how the author makes Bapa seem threatening. Focus on his physical actions and the atmosphere in the shack.
4	The Moment Everything Changes (Ch. 4)	What happens that makes the children decide to leave? How does the writing show panic or urgency? How do you think Mariam feels about leaving Maa?	Internal Monologue: Write a short piece from Mariam’s point of view at the end of Chapter 4. Include her mixed emotions about leaving and her hopes for what comes next.
5	Assessment: First Impressions	What have we learned about the children so far? How does the author show their resilience? Who seems more prepared for the journey?	Structured Response (100–150 words): “How does the author show that the children’s home is unsafe?” Use the sentence frame provided.

## TEACHER NOTES (SAMPLE) FOR WEEK 1

### LESSON 1 NOTES

Focus on sensory detail and contrast. Encourage pupils to annotate for sounds, smells, colours, textures, and any words suggesting inequality or danger.

**Support:** Provide a sensory word bank and sentence starters. **Stretch:** Ask pupils to identify one symbol that might become important later.

**Homework:** Turn to page \_\_. Highlight three phrases that show inequality. Add a margin note explaining each choice.

**Model Answer (short):** *The children’s end of the beach feels crowded and unsafe. Words like “leaning shacks” and “smoke hanging low” show how difficult life is.*

## LESSON 2 NOTES

Highlight the contrast between Mariam's hope and Rish's practicality. Encourage annotation for character clues.

**Support:** Provide sentence starters such as "Mariam cares about..." **Stretch:** Ask pupils to predict how their differences might affect the journey.

**Homework:** Underline one sentence showing Mariam's hope and one showing Rish's realism. Add a margin note explaining each.

**Model Answer (short):** *Mariam's hope appears when she talks about school as a doorway to a better life. Rish's realism appears when he focuses on survival.*

**If you'd like the full Teacher Pack, just get in touch - I'd be delighted to share it with your school.**

Caroline Boxall

[www.carolineboxall.com](http://www.carolineboxall.com)