

The Breadwinner

Teacher's Pack

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NAVIGATOR

Chapter	Plot outline
Chapter 1	Parvana sits in the market with her father, and considers the family's history (including the death of her brother Hossain) and that of Afghanistan.
Chapter 2	Parvana completes her chores and helps to prepare dinner, and her father tells the story of Malali. Taliban soldiers burst in and take Parvana's father away, beating and terrorizing the rest of the family as they do so.
Chapter 3	Parvana and her mother go to the prison and demand her father's release, but are beaten by the guards until they leave.
Chapter 4	On returning from the jail, Parvana's mother sleeps for a number of days. Eventually the food runs out, and Nooria tells Parvana she is the only one who can buy more for the family.
Chapter 5	Parvana goes to the market to buy food, but is confronted by a Taliban soldier for not wearing a burqua. She escapes and runs into Mrs Weera, who comes home with her and helps to clean and order the house and get her mother dressed.
Chapter 6	The women transform Parvana into a boy by cutting her hair and dressing her in Hossain's clothes, and she is able to buy food unchallenged.
Chapter 7	Parvana sets up stall in the marketplace selling household goods and reading/writing letters. Her first customer is a Taliban soldier, who is brought to tears by a letter that belonged to his dead wife.
Chapter 8	Mother and Mrs Weera decide to start a magazine. Mrs Weera moves in with the family, and they all start to go out, escorted by Parvana. A woman from a nearby house leaves gifts for Parvana in the market. One day, she discovers a school friend, Shauzia, who is also posing as a boy.
Chapter 9	Shauzia and Parvana discuss business and Parvana invites her to visit. Mrs Weera, along with Mother and Nooria, have decided to start a secret school for girls. Shauzia tells Parvana she has found a way to make more money.
Chapter 10	Shauzia and Parvana dig up graves to sell to a bone broker. They make much more money than usual, but decide not to turn all of it over to their families immediately.
Chapter 11	Shauzia and Parvana earn enough to start selling cigarettes and gum in the afternoons. One day they stumble across a public punishment, where thieves have one of their hands cut off by the Taliban.
Chapter 12	Shauzia tells Parvana about her plan to escape to France the following spring. Parvana begins to weary of her situation, but tries to make the best of it. She hears a physical fight in the nearby house. The secret school is started, and Nooria is the teacher. Then her mother tells her Nooria is getting married.
Chapter 13	Mother, Nooria and the little ones go to Mazar for Nooria's wedding, leaving Parvana behind with Mrs Weera. Parvana has some time for herself with fewer chores. One day she is caught in a rainstorm and hides in a building, where she hears a woman crying.
Chapter 14	Parvana takes the woman, Homa, home with her and they discover she is a refugee from Mazar, which has been taken amid scenes of extreme violence by the Taliban. Parvana is very depressed, but eventually returns to work with Shauzia. One day she returns to the flat to find her father is alive and has come home.
Chapter 15	Parvana and her father decide to go to Mazar to look for the rest of their family in the refugee camps. Mrs Weera and Homa decide to go to Pakistan. Mother's magazine is published. Shauzia has plans to go to Pakistan with a group of nomads; she and Parvana make a pact to meet in 20 years' time at the top of the Eiffel Tower.

LESSON 1

Focus: Cover, blurb, preliminary/end matter
First impressions

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Share impressions about the novel based on the cover and blurb, and some of the contents
- Make predictions about the genre and text
- Skim and scan for information in the text

Engage

Explain to the class that they are going to read a novel set in Afghanistan. Ask them to think about what they know about this country. Then hand out copies of **WS 1** to students and ask them to fill in the first column with everything they can think of that they know about Afghanistan. Take feedback from the class and write it on the board.

Then tell students that the novel they will be studying is called *The Breadwinner*. Ask them what a 'breadwinner' is and establish that it is a term used to describe the primary wage earner in a family.

Explore

Hand out copies of the novel to the class and explain that they will be conducting a hunt to find ten pieces of 'treasure' – information that they will be able to find in or on the book. They will be working in pairs to complete this activity.

Then display **OHT1**, which has the ten clues needed. You may wish to time the hunt or offer an incentive to the first team to correctly find all ten pieces of information.

Once most pairs are finished, take feedback. Answers (as well as the place information can be found in the Rollercoasters edition) are as follows:

1. Ontario, Canada (author's biography, inside front cover flap)
2. 'To the children of war' (p. 3)
3. Parvana (back cover blurb or questions on inside back cover flap)
4. 2000 (imprint page, p. 2)
5. Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, China (map, p. 5)
6. Fifteen
7. Page 167

8. Oxford, New York, Auckland, Cape Town, Dar es Salaam, Hong Kong, Karachi, Kuala Lumpur, Madrid, Melbourne, Mexico City, Nairobi, New Delhi, Shanghai, Taipei, Toronto (imprint page, p. 2)
9. burqa, chador, Dari, Eid, karachi, kebab, land mine, nan, pakul, Pashtu, shalwar kameez, Soviets, Taliban, toshak (p. 169)
10. *Parvana's Journey* and *Mud City* (author's biography, inside front cover flap)

Transform

Ask students to think about the information they have just gathered and explain that they will be making predictions about the book they are about to read. Then, in pairs, ask them to discuss the following questions:

- What sort of book do they think it is? (A comedy, a romance, a thriller, etc.)
- Why do they think it has been called *The Breadwinner*?
- Who do they think will be the narrator of the story? (Parvana, another character, or an invisible third-person narrator.)
- How do they think the story will end?
- Why do they think Deborah Ellis chose to write this book? Why has she dedicated it to 'the children of war'?

When they have answered the questions, invite students to write down one or two questions they have about what will happen in the novel. They could use the questions on the inside back cover flap as prompts.

Take feedback.

Review and reflect

Return students to the question of why Deborah Ellis wrote this book. Hand out copies of the Reading Guide, where students will find a letter from the author on page 3, explaining some of her motivation. Read it together, and consider how Ellis might teach her readers about courage in the novel.

Homework

Ask students to return to their work at the start of the lesson, and to fill in the second column of their chart on **WS 1** with what they would like to know about Afghanistan, based on their prior knowledge and their work in this lesson.

Worksheet 1

Knowledge chart

The Breadwinner is set in Afghanistan. How much do you know about this country?

What I know about Afghanistan	What I want to know about Afghanistan	What I have learned about Afghanistan

OHT 1

Treasure hunt

You are going on a literary treasure hunt! Use your detective skills and a copy of *The Breadwinner* to find answers to the clues below...



1. Where was the author of *The Breadwinner* born?
2. Who did Deborah Ellis dedicate *The Breadwinner* to?
3. What is the name of the main character in *The Breadwinner*?
4. When was this novel first published?
5. Name two countries that are on the border of Afghanistan.
6. How many chapters are there in *The Breadwinner*?
7. On what page will you find the Author's Note?
8. Name three **cities** where you will find Oxford University Press.
9. Name two terms that you can find in the glossary.
10. What are the names of the sequels to *The Breadwinner*?

LESSON 2

Focus: Chapter 1
Context/Language

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Explore the link between the novel and its geographical and cultural setting
- Work out the meaning of unfamiliar words
- Identify narrative techniques

Engage

As homework for Lesson 1, students will have come up with a list of things they would like to know about Afghanistan. Ask them to feed these back to the class and gather the main ones on the board.

Then ask students to turn to pages 4–5 of the novel and look at the maps of Afghanistan. Ask them look at its geographical situation – the fact that it is in Asia, that it is landlocked, and that it is surrounded by six other countries. Ask them what they think it might be like to live there. What language might be spoken? What might the climate be like? Students will probably have picked up some impressions from war reporting, but try to get them to imagine what life might be like for an ordinary person living in Afghanistan.

Explore

In pairs, students read the Author's Note on pages 167–168. Once they have done so, tell them that *The Breadwinner* was written shortly before the War in Afghanistan, which began on 7 October 2001 following the 9/11 attacks in the US.

Put students into groups and distribute the cards on **WS 2a** (which replicates and expands the activity on page 5 of the Reading Guide) as well as a sheet of A3 paper and a marker pen. They then have ten minutes to draw a timeline on the paper and stick the cards on to the timeline in the correct order.

Transform

Still in groups, students read Chapter 1. As they do so, ask them to write down any words they come across that they do not recognize and to write next to each word a guess at what they think that word might be, based on its context. When they have finished reading, distribute **WS 2b**, which is a card matching activity.

They will need to match each word up with its definition. Some of the words will not have appeared in Chapter 1 – they should guess the definitions of these words based on a process of elimination.

After reading, students should also discuss the following questions in their groups:

- What are your first impressions of Parvana and her family?
- What is your impression of daily life in Afghanistan?
- What is your impression of life before the Taliban took power?

This is an appropriate point to undertake a session of guided reading. **WS 2c** provides a suggested plan for doing so.

Review and reflect

Now that students have considered their first impressions of the text, ask them why they think that Deborah Ellis chose to include so much history (of both the country and of Parvana's family) in her first chapter. How does it contribute to the first impressions they have already considered? Then ask them to consider why they think Deborah Ellis chose to open her novel in the marketplace. They might suggest, for example, that it is a vibrant atmosphere in the market, which adds to the interest of the opening, or that, as it is outside the home, it provides Parvana with an opportunity to introduce the restrictions placed on the family and to contrast this with the relative freedom she describes from her earlier childhood.

Homework

Parvana and her family are forced to sell even precious and necessary possessions, such as her father's false leg. For homework, students each make a list of the ten material possessions that they value the most, and bring this list to the following lessons.

Worksheet 2a

Afghanistan timeline



<p>1747 Afghanistan is established as an independent nation</p>	<p>1838–1842 and 1878–1880 First and Second Anglo-Afghan Wars</p>
<p>1919 Independence is declared from Britain</p>	<p>1933 Zahir Shah becomes king</p>
<p>1973 The king is overthrown in a coup and Afghanistan is declared a republic</p>	<p>1978 The Afghan president is killed in an army coup. There is violent protest throughout the country</p>
<p>1979 Soviet Union invades Afghanistan</p>	<p>1989 Soviets withdraw; civil war breaks out</p>
<p>1996 Taliban take over Kabul, the capital city</p>	<p>1998 Taliban control 90% of Afghanistan</p>
<p>2001 (September) Leader of main Taliban opposition is assassinated</p>	<p>2001 (October) US-led military force invade Afghanistan. Taliban regime collapses</p>
<p>2005 First parliamentary elections for 30 years but violence continues</p>	<p>2006 NATO forces try to keep peace</p>
<p>2010 NATO agrees plan to hand full control to Afghan security forces by 2014</p>	<p>2012 Taliban move towards peace talks with the US and Afghan governments</p>

Worksheet 2b
Glossary definitions

<p>chador</p>	<p>A piece of cloth worn by women and girls to cover their hair and shoulders. Girls wear this outside.</p>
<p>Taliban</p>	<p>Members of the ruling party in Afghanistan at the time the novel was written.</p>
<p>Dari</p>	<p>One of two main languages spoken in Afghanistan.</p>
<p>Pashtu</p>	<p>One of the two main languages spoken in Afghanistan.</p>
<p>burqa</p>	<p>A long, tent-like garment, which the Taliban have decreed women must wear whenever they go outside. It covers them completely and even has a narrow mesh screen over the eyes.</p>
<p>Soviets</p>	<p>The Soviet Union before its break-up, including Russia and the other Communist countries.</p>
<p>nan</p>	<p>Afghan bread – flat, sometimes long and sometimes round.</p>
<p>toshak</p>	<p>A narrow mattress used in many Afghan homes instead of chairs or beds.</p>

Worksheet 2c

Guided reading plan: Lesson 2

Teaching intention

To consolidate the skill of using context to deduce the meaning of new vocabulary.

To introduce the skill of relating texts to their historical context.

To consolidate the skills of re-reading and finding evidence in a text.

Introduction

Remind students that they will be reading the opening chapter of the novel, and that the function of a good story opening is to interest the reader and make them keep reading. Story openings can describe a character, a setting, or an event, but they will set the mood or tone for the rest of the book. After reading, they will need to answer the following questions:

- What are your first impressions of Parvana and her family?
- What is your impression of daily life in Afghanistan?
- What is your impression of life before the Taliban took power?

Remind students that, as they read, they should write down any words that they are unfamiliar with, along with a guess at what they think that word might mean.

Strategy check

- Check that students understand there are two parts to their task: to answer the questions by referring closely to the text and to identify and try to define unfamiliar words in the chapter.
- Check that students understand that they should guess at the meaning of the unfamiliar words based on context or evidence in the text.
- Check that students know that they should not use the glossary at the back of the book at this point.

Independent reading

Students read Chapter 1 independently, making notes about unfamiliar words as they go. Then, as a group, they discuss the questions. Support them as they do this.

Return to the text

Hand out the cards from **WS 2b** and ask students to work in groups to match up the words with their definitions from the glossary. Not all of the words can be found in Chapter 1, so they may have to deduce the definition of these through a process of elimination.

Review

Ask each group to report back to the class with the results of their discussion, and their first impressions of the characters and setting.

LESSON 3

Focus: Chapters 2 and 3
Building character

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Identify the narrator of the text
- Infer and deduce information from the text
- Empathize with the main character
- Skim the text to retrieve information

Engage

Ask students to have ready the lists they prepared for homework at the end of Lesson 2, of their ten most precious material possessions. Tell them that they are going to imagine that they are living under the Taliban regime, and that they will need to remove any of the items that have been banned. These include: cinema, televisions, books, modern clothes, photographs. They can replace the banned items with other items to form a new list of ten, and may wish to consult with a partner as they redraft their lists.

Tell students that in this lesson they will be looking at the character of Parvana. Remind them of the concepts of first and third-person narration, and elicit that *The Breadwinner* is written in the third person with Parvana as the central character (protagonist) of the novel. Although it is narrated by this third person, we see everything through Parvana's eyes.

Explore

Remind students that, as readers, we use the active reading strategies infer and deduce. We deduce information from the evidence we find in a text (for example, if someone puts on a raincoat, we might deduce that it is raining outside). We make an inference by reading between the lines and guessing that something is probably true, based on what we know (in this case, we might deduce that the person was prepared for bad weather). Read Chapters 2 and 3 as a class.

Using **OHT 3**, model deduction and inference for students. Then split them into pairs or small groups, and ask them to complete **WS 3**, finding evidence in the text to support each statement either implicitly or explicitly. Take feedback from each pair or group.

Transform

Students will now use the information they have gathered about Parvana's character to produce a homepage for her on a social networking site. They could use the outline on page 9 of the Reading Guide to help them, or they could follow a different format if they prefer. They will need to include the following information:

- a drawing of Parvana
- Parvana's likes and dislikes
- her friends
- her family.

Students should be creative in completing the profile. They could draw or search for images Parvana may have added to her photo albums, add websites or social networking pages Parvana may have 'liked'.

Before completing the exercise it's important that students understand this is a way of teasing out Parvana's character, but that in the world of the novel, Parvana would never have had access to social media. In fact, her lack of social interaction is a key challenge for her as the story progresses, and she feels very lonely at times. All interaction outside the family has to be done in secret. In addition, photographs were not allowed by the Taliban.

Review and reflect

Once they have completed their profiles, invite students to share them with the class. Discuss Parvana's experiences thus far. How well do students feel they would have managed in a similar situation?

Parvana's father calls her 'Malali' after the Afghan girl heroine. Ask students to reflect on how Parvana is also a heroine.

Homework

Students read Chapters 4 and 5.

OHT 3
Infer and deduce

“Instead of just sitting there, you could help us over here.” Mother and Nooria were cleaning out the cupboard again.

The way Nooria speaks to Parvana shows a tense relationship between the two girls.

“You cleaned out the cupboard three days ago!”

“Are you going to help us or not?”

Parvana feels rebellious sometimes, but is a dutiful daughter.

Not, Parvana thought, but she got to her feet.

Shows frustration of other women in Parvana’s family – is Nooria jealous of her freedom?

Mother and Nooria were always cleaning something. Since they couldn’t work or go to school, they didn’t have much else to do.

“The Taliban have said we must stay inside, but that doesn’t mean we have to live in filth,” Mother was fond of saying.

Parvana is jealous of Nooria’s beautiful hair and resents having to bring her water to wash it.

Parvana hated all that cleaning. It used up the water she had to haul. The only thing worse was for Nooria to wash her hair.

Worksheet 3

What we learn about Parvana’s character

In the table below are some of the things we learn about Parvana in Chapters 2–3. Go through the chapters carefully, and find evidence for each of these statements, then fill the quotations into the table.

What we learn about Parvana	Evidence from the text
Parvana is sometimes a little lazy	
Parvana is jealous of her sister Nooria	
Parvana has mixed feelings about her responsibilities	
Parvana and Maryam have an affectionate relationship	
Parvana misses the lifestyle her family used to have	
Parvana feels lonely	
Parvana feels empathy for her mother	
Parvana is brave	
Parvana is loyal to her family	
Parvana is clever	

LESSON 4

Focus: Chapters 4–6
Setting

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Empathise with characters
- Understand the effect of setting on atmosphere and tension
- Skim and scan text to retrieve information
- Develop descriptive writing skills

Engage

Once again, begin the lesson by asking students to look at their lists. Tell them that today they are going to imagine they have to sell one of these items for food money. Give them a few minutes to decide which item to lose, then get feedback from a few students about which item they have chosen and why.

For homework, students will have read Chapters 4–5. Check their comprehension by asking the following questions:

- What happens in these chapters?
- Which new character is introduced?
- What happens in Parvana’s dream and what do you think it means?
- What does Parvana buy in the market?
- How has Mrs Weera’s former career as a physical education teacher influenced the way she talks?
- What is the effect of Mrs Weera’s words?

Explore

As a class, read Chapter 6, up until the line ‘She spun around and went outside, slamming the door behind her’ on page 70.

Then tell students that they will be taking a guided tour of the marketplace where Parvana is going to work. Ask them to close their eyes and try to relax. They will need to imagine that they are the transformed Parvana. What might they be feeling as she turns to go outside? (Anger at Nooria/fear that she might be discovered/curiosity) Tell them to imagine they are walking carefully down the dilapidated staircase and out through the doorway, into the light and heat and dust of the outside world. Ask them to imagine they are walking down the road to the marketplace, and that with every step they feel more nervous of being discovered. The ground is hard beneath their feet, which are still painful from the walk to the prison, and the road is full of potholes and broken in places. As they reach

the market, what can they hear? There will be lots of movement, of people and carts, as well as lots of talking as people negotiate with sellers in two different languages and as vendors try to sell their wares. Almost all of these voices will be male, except for the voices of women outside shops calling in to ask for what they want to buy. What will they see? They might see: Lots of colour and activity, men dressed as Parvana is now dressed, women in burqas; different stalls, with narrow corridors like a labyrinth, and tea boys running back and forth to their customers. They might see people like Parvana’s father, with their goods to sell laid out on blankets on the ground, waiting for customers; broken buildings, such as Parvana’s apartment block; Taliban soldiers, carrying sticks or other weapons. What will they feel and smell? For example: the sun will be very hot on their skin; they will be able to smell food from the stalls, as well as the less pleasant smell of animals. Allow time between these descriptions for students to imagine their surroundings properly.

Then, when they have had a chance to let it sink in, ask the class to open their eyes and write down how it felt to be in that situation. Hand out **WS 4**. Students should use this worksheet to record what they experienced during the ‘tour’.

Then read the rest of Chapter 6. Are students surprised by any of what Parvana feels in the rest of the chapter?

Transform

Students will now use their notes, together with the picture in their imagination, to write a description of the marketplace. They will need to write at least two paragraphs, and should use adjectives and adverbs to reflect what they see, hear, touch and feel, as well as figurative language if they can. Support them in making their writing as rich as possible, and in including all their senses.

Review and reflect

Reflect on the impression they have of the marketplace at this point in the novel. How do they think Parvana feels about it? Elicit that it is still a dangerous, but also exciting place.

Homework

Students draw a map of either Parvana’s family apartment or of the marketplace.

Worksheet 4

Kabul marketplace – building a description

Use this table to record what you could see, hear, feel, smell and taste during the tour of the marketplace; also add information about what you think Parvana is thinking and feeling at this point in the novel. Remember to use descriptive adjectives and adverbs.

Things to consider	Notes	Description
sight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Broken/bombed buildings</i> • <i>People – lots of males; no/few females</i> 	<p><i>The buildings were ghosts of their former selves, broken and decaying.</i></p>
sound		
smell/taste/ touch		
Parvana's thoughts and feelings		

LESSON 5

Focus: Chapters 7–9
Character development

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Develop empathy with characters
- Use role-play to explore emotional conflicts
- Skim and scan text to retrieve information
- Infer information from the text about characters and events
- Track character development

Engage

As in earlier lessons, students start off with their list of precious possessions. Today, they will need to make two choices. First, they must choose one item that they can swap with something on another student's list. Then, they will choose an item to sell for food. They should think carefully about which item they choose to trade, as well as which item they choose to receive in return. Allow a few minutes for negotiations. Some may be wise enough to swap one item from their list and then sell the item they receive in return, thus only losing one of their original favourites – this is allowed.

Explore

Read Chapter 7.

In this chapter, there is a moving scene in which Parvana is paid by a Talib to read her a letter that belonged to his dead wife. Ask students what they think of this scene, and why Deborah Ellis may have chosen to include it in the novel. Then read them the writer's comments from page 7 of the Reading Guide, which explain why she did include the scene. Discuss this briefly as a class.

Then split students into pairs and ask them to role-play Parvana and Shauzia talking about the incident. Parvana will have mixed feelings, and Shauzia will be curious – both characters should try to explain their feelings about the incident to one another.

Transform

Students should then read Chapters 8 and 9. Explain that, as they read, you would like them to notice how life has changed for the family

since Mrs Weera came to stay with them. She is an extremely positive force, with not only a practical sensibility, but also a great passion for improvement and encouragement. Try to get students to consider what might have happened had Parvana not bumped into Mrs Weera in the market. Would her mother have continued with her depression? Would Parvana have been caught by the Taliban another day? Or would the family have come up with the same plan themselves? There are, of course, no definitive answers to these questions, but it is useful for students to consider the impact a strong character can have in turning the mood of a narrative. Mrs Weera is a useful device in a story that deals with rather bleak themes, and allows Deborah Ellis to show how hope and courage can flourish under these circumstances.

This would be an appropriate time to work with a guided group. **WS 5** provides guidance on the format a guided session could take.

Once students have read the chapters and considered the changes, ask them to consider the lessons Parvana herself is learning. These will include the fact that she is not alone, and that there are other girls like her. This is part of her journey in growing stronger and more independent and empowered.

Review and reflect

The silent 'Window Woman' is never given a voice or real explanation in the novel, but she is an important presence, representing all the other silent women whose stories cannot be accessed. Ask students to reflect further on her situation. Why do they think she leaves gifts for Parvana? What is she trying to communicate? Why does she choose Parvana? Is it because she recognizes her as a girl, or is it simply that she wishes to communicate with someone in the outside world in some way? What would happen if she were found out? Is it worth the risk?

Homework

Students can continue this exploration of the Window Woman's story by writing a diary entry for her on the day Parvana sees her face.

Worksheet 5

Guided reading plan: Lesson 5

Teaching intention

To consolidate the skill of using context to deduce the meaning of new vocabulary.
To consolidate inference and deduction.

Introduction

Remind students that they will be looking at Chapters 8 and 9 and the changes that have taken place in the family since Mrs Weera's arrival.

Strategy check

- Check that students understand how they should complete the task. Check that they understand that they are to find evidence in the story that shows how life has changed for the family since Mrs Weera came to stay with them.
- Check that they realize that they will need to re-read parts of the story to find evidence.
- Check that students know they will need to make deductions about characters.

Independent reading

Students read Chapters 8 and 9. Guide them through the reading, checking their understanding in relation to the task and supporting them as they consider the effects of Mrs Weera's regime. When they have finished reading, they should prepare a list of these effects.

Return to the text

Ask groups to share at least one of their points and discuss these as a class. What do they think might have happened had Mrs Weera not bumped into Parvana?

Review

Ask the group whether they feel more confident in finding evidence in the text for a specific purpose.

LESSON 6

Focus: Chapter 10
Humour/Plot development

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Develop empathy with characters
- Explore humour as a narrative technique
- Infer and deduce information from the text
- Develop interview and reporting skills
- Develop listening skills
- Act in role as one of the characters

Engage

As before, start with students' lists. Tell them that today they will need to decide what the most valuable item on the list is (monetary value). Ask them to imagine that they now need to sell this item for food. They may be able to save it, but only by selling three other items from their list. As in previous lessons, make this a short speaking and listening task where they can discuss their decisions with a partner.

When this activity has been completed, ask students what an interview is, and ask them to come up with some examples. The main ones they will mention should be job interviews and news interviews. Ask them what these have in common (in both cases, the interviewer tries to get as much information as they can from the interviewee by crafting good questions, and then listening to the answers and following these up with more questions).

Explore

Read Chapter 10 with the class. It is a macabre chapter, in which Parvana and her friend Shauzia begin making good money by digging up graves and selling the bones. However, Deborah Ellis handles the chapter with delicate humour.

Once the class has read the chapter, ask them first to discuss the idea of digging up graves for profit. What do they think of Parvana's decision to do this? Do they agree with her idea that someone kind and generous wouldn't mind a pair of children digging them up to support their families?

Then ask them to look at the humour that the children use to deal with what is a traumatic situation. What examples can they find? (The children name Mr Skull and use him as their

mascot; they also joke about land mines when they need to use a building for a toilet.) What is the effect of this humour? What does it suggest about the children and their hope for the future? How does this humour contrast with the final statement of the chapter: 'But every time she closed her eyes, she saw Mr Skull and his companions lined up on the gravestones, grinning at her.'

Transform

Tell students to imagine that Parvana's mother has decided to interview Parvana and Shauzia about their experiences for her magazine, and that they will be role-playing the interview. Divide students into groups of four. Two of them will play the girls, and one will take the part of Parvana's mother. The fourth group member will either take notes during the interview or, if you have access to a video camera, can film the interview. Before performing the role-play, the whole group should work together to come up with a set of questions for Parvana's mother to ask, and to consider the answers that the girls might give to the questions. (For the purpose of the exercise, they can imagine that Parvana tells her mother about the bones, which she in fact does in the next chapter.) Remind them to use open questions (especially the 5Ws) and to listen to the interviewees' answers instead of just waiting to ask the next question.

Review and reflect

Ask students to reflect on the experiences of interviewing and being interviewed. Did they learn anything about Parvana and Shauzia's characters and experiences by hot-seating their characters? How well did they think the interviews themselves worked – did the interviewer ask good, open questions, listen to answers and build on them? Each student should come up with one thing that they feel went well, and one that they would improve.

Inform students that they will be turning the interviews into a magazine article for homework. **WS 6** provides them with all the information they need to get started.

Homework

Students write their magazine articles.

Worksheet 6

Magazine article

Imagine that you are Parvana's mother in *The Breadwinner*. You have interviewed her and her friend Shauzia about her experiences outside the home, including working in the market and digging up graves for extra money, and you are now going to turn the interview into an article for your magazine. You need to make sure that it is informative and interesting, and that it can be understood by readers who may not know very much about your family's situation in Afghanistan.

GETTING STARTED

- A good place to start with any journalistic writing is the 5Ws:
 - WHEN the action took place
 - WHAT happened
 - WHERE it happened
 - WHO was involved in the story
 - WHY it happened.
- Write a strong headline and key opening sentence – remember you will need to hook your readers in!
- You will be writing in the third person. This means that you will need to transform what Parvana and Shauzia told you in their own words into the third person, using pronouns such as he/she/they/their.
- Include at least one direct quote from Parvana – either something that she says in the book, or something that was said in your interview.
- Decide how many paragraphs you will need to tell your story, and what order these should be in. You should include a brief description of life under Taliban rule and a summary of how Parvana's disguise as Kaseem helped the family to earn money (remember to mention the different jobs she does, including digging up graves).
- Think of some connectives you could use to 'glue' your paragraphs together.
- Remember that your writing will show how well you know the story and characters in *The Breadwinner*, so refer to the text to help you where necessary.
- A good writer always proofreads their work!

LESSON 7

Focus: Chapter 11
Eye witness/Plot development

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Continue to develop empathy with characters
- Relate the text to its historical context
- Explore how the author handles a difficult episode
- Develop report writing skills
- Work as a group

Engage

As before, start with students' lists of possessions. Today, they swap these lists with a partner, but are not allowed to indicate which their favourite possessions on the list will be. Their partner chooses two items on the list that they think are the least important, and removes them, then returns the list, and vice versa.

Ask for feedback from students on their magazine article writing. What did they find easiest and most difficult about this task?

Explore

Read Chapter 11. This is perhaps the most harrowing chapter, as it is the one in which Parvana and Shauzia witness the Taliban punishments in the soccer stadium.

Once the class has read the chapter, ask students to try to stand back and consider the effect of including this harsh event in the novel. Deborah Ellis has commented on why she did so, and you may wish to share this with them (it is on page 7 of the Reading Guide). Do students agree with her? Then look at how Ellis writes the scene. First, she creates a contrast between the festive event that Parvana at first assumes she is attending, and the anticipation the girls feel at selling out of their goods and what actually happens. It creates a shocking and tense atmosphere for the reader.

However, Deborah Ellis also helps her readers to handle this difficult scene. Ask students to look again at what she has written, and find how she does this (by using a 'kind voice' in the crowd, and by allowing the girls not to see everything that happens, although they hear it. While this doesn't shy away from the horror of

the experience, it does make it a little easier to digest.

Transform

Ask students whether they think it is important for this incident to be included in Parvana's mother's magazine. How should it be written? As an eyewitness report by Parvana herself, or a detached third-person report by her mother? Which would be more powerful?

Ask students to think about what else they might include in the magazine, if they were Parvana's mother or Mrs Weera and write down a few ideas. Then inform them that they will be creating a four-page magazine themselves (these can ultimately be printed on A3 paper and folded). Divide them into groups to form small editorial committees, and give them the tasks of first agreeing on a name for the magazine, and then coming up with a plan for the content. They should fill these in on the flat plan on **WS7**. (Remember to use pencil!) This content should include one of the articles from the previous lesson, but could also include an account of Parvana's experience in the stadium, as well as the experiences of the other characters. They can be creative about content (poetry would work well, for example) but should consider space – they will probably need to aim for six articles at the most. These can be assigned to pairs or individual students to write.

Remind them that magazines usually have a front cover, but that a newsletter, for example, only has a masthead. They should consider what to do with this space (remember: photographs are banned).

Review and reflect

Ask students to reflect on the process of coming up with the content for their magazines. How did they decide what information should be included, and what should be left out?

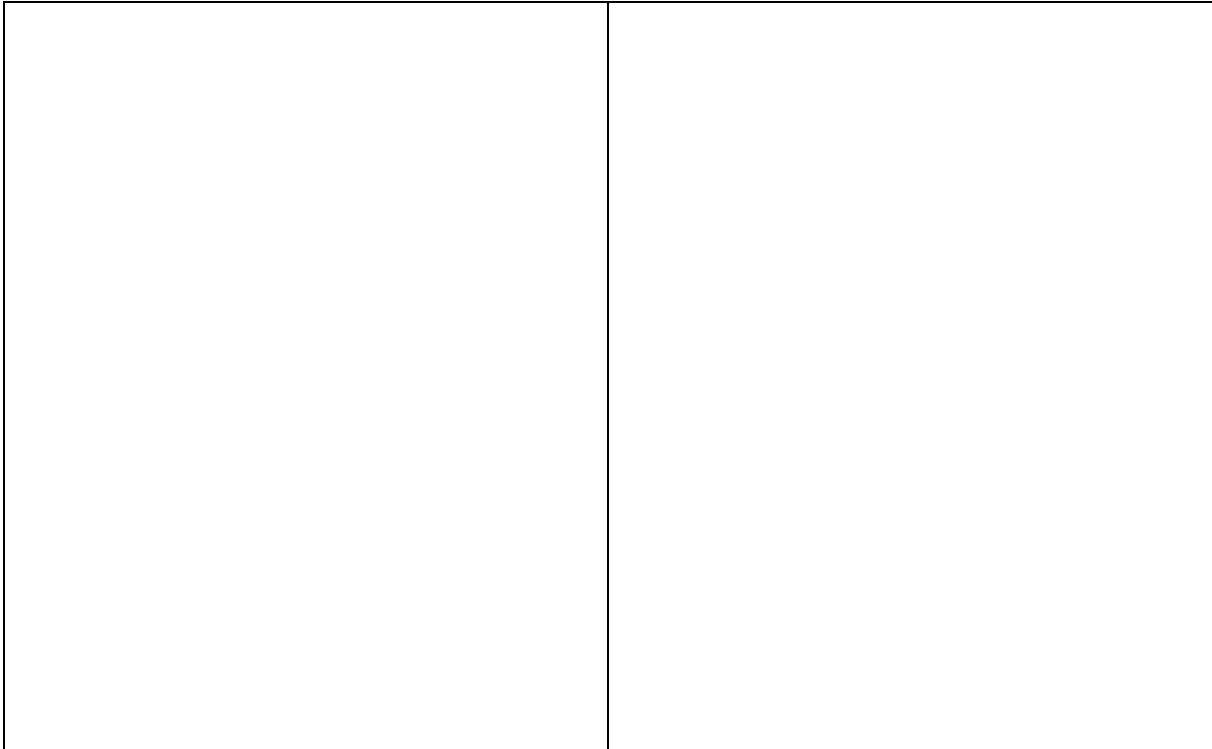
Homework

Students could complete their magazines as a project, or write their articles for homework and finish putting the magazines together in another lesson.

Worksheet 7
Magazine flat plan

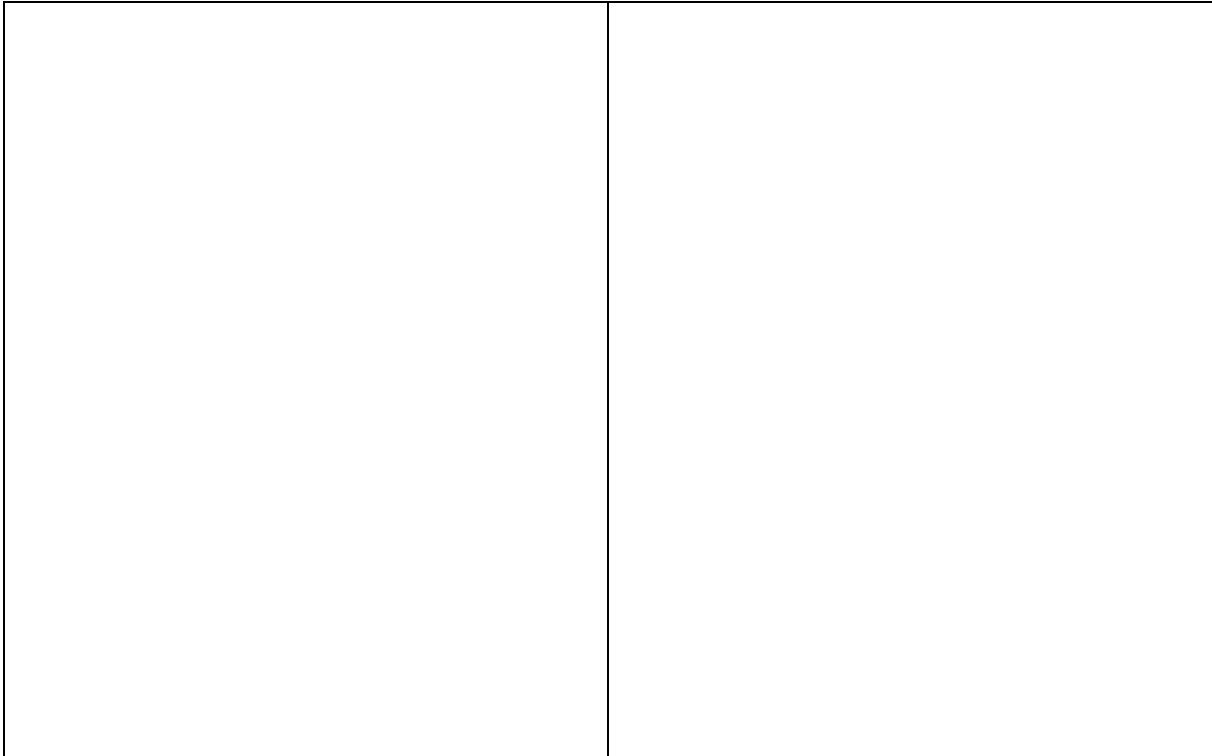
FRONT COVER (PAGE 1)

INSIDE FRONT COVER (PAGE 2)



INSIDE BACK COVER (PAGE 3)

BACK COVER (PAGE 4)



LESSON 8

Focus: Chapter 12
Dilemma and resolution

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Explore and examine their empathy with characters
- Discuss a dilemma faced by a character
- Assess parallels and differences between characters
- Give a personal response to a difficult situation
- Develop their public speaking skills

Engage

Students should now have got the hang of the list activity, and will have either five or three items on their list. Ask them to rank them in order of preference and to share their top item and the reason why (if they are comfortable doing so). Then ask them to reflect on the activity, which has mirrored the way that Parvana’s family has slowly had to let go of so many of their favourite material possessions. How did students feel carrying out the activity? Was it better when they had a choice about which items they lost, or when the choice was made for them? Did the way they selected items change as the lessons went on? Did they make their decisions based on practical or emotional factors? Ask them to reflect on whether they have gained any insight into Parvana’s situation.

Explore

Read Chapter 12.

In this chapter, Shauzia and Parvana find it increasingly difficult to live under the Taliban regime. Their dissatisfaction contrasts sharply with the coming of summer, which usually brings a feeling of hope.

Shauzia informs Parvana of her plans to leave Afghanistan, even though it means leaving her

family, who are reliant on her for their income. She says: ‘I know that makes me a bad person, but what else can I do? I’ll die if I have to stay here.’

Inform students that they will be debating Shauzia’s choice and whether her decision to leave her family is the right thing to do.

First, divide students into groups and ask them to discuss the issue, using the cards on **WS 8** to start them off (they may also add their own arguments) – each group should get one of each of these cards and discuss both perspectives. When they have done so, write the following statement on the board: ‘Shauzia is right to leave Afghanistan when she has the opportunity, even though it means leaving her family.’ Ask students to line up according to how strongly they agree with the statement; from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Divide the line into three groups and ask the groups from either end of the line to act as speakers and the middle group to act as judges for the debate.

Transform

Give the groups some time to work out their arguments, and assign each of them to a different speaker.

Begin the debate. Each team member gets a set time to argue one point and then the turn moves to the other side. Students in the judging group can ask questions. At the end, this group can vote to select a winning side.

Review and reflect

Reflect on the issues raised during the debate and elicit a personal response from students. How free do they think they will be to make their own choices? Also reflect on the success of the debate itself. How could this have been improved?

Homework

Students complete the quick quiz on this chapter on page 13 of the Reading Guide.

Worksheet 8

Discussion cards



Shauzia is right to leave Afghanistan when she has the opportunity, even though it means leaving her family.

AGREE

- Shauzia has the right to determine her own future.
- If she doesn't act soon, she will no longer have the opportunity as she'll have to live as a girl again and would soon be married.
- Once she has started a new life, she may be in a better position to help her family.
- The situation in Afghanistan at the time was worsening. It would be best to leave the country immediately and start a new life somewhere new.

Shauzia is right to leave Afghanistan when she has the opportunity, even though it means leaving her family.

DISAGREE

- Leaving her family behind is disloyal and selfish.
- Shauzia's family will have no way of replacing the income she brings in – they need her to survive.
- Travelling alone is dangerous.
- There is still hope that things in Afghanistan will improve, but only with the help of the Afghan people.

Shauzia is right to leave Afghanistan when she has the opportunity, even though it means leaving her family.

AGREE

- Shauzia has the right to determine her own future.
- If she doesn't act soon, she will no longer have the opportunity as she'll have to live as a girl again and would soon be married.
- Once she has started a new life, she may be in a better position to help her family.
- The situation in Afghanistan at the time was worsening. It would be best to leave the country immediately and start a new life somewhere new.

Shauzia is right to leave Afghanistan when she has the opportunity, even though it means leaving her family.

DISAGREE

- Leaving her family behind is disloyal and selfish.
- Shauzia's family will have no way of replacing the income she brings in – they need her to survive.
- Travelling alone is dangerous.
- There is still hope that things in Afghanistan will improve, but only with the help of the Afghan people.

LESSON 9

Focus: Chapters 13 and 14
Perspective

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Assess how characters have developed and changed
- Explore different perspectives in the novel
- Write empathetically as one of the characters
- Examine atmosphere and mood in these chapters

Engage

Students complete a sequencing activity based on the story of Malali, as related earlier in the novel. Cut **WS 9** into strips and ask them to work in pairs to put them in the right order.

Then ask them to reflect how this story has been important to the story so far, and how much it has influenced Parvana. Do any of them have heroes or heroines who have influenced their behaviour or given them inspiration, especially in adversity?

Explore

Students read Chapters 13–14.

When they have done so, ask them to reflect on how Parvana's rebellion against going along to the wedding in Mazar would have been out of character at the start of the book. Have her experiences as the family breadwinner changed her? How have they changed her?

Working in groups, students create a list of these changes. They should create a table with 'What Parvana is like at the start of the novel' on one side and 'How Parvana changes' on the other. Take feedback from students and create a 'master' table on the board.

Students should also look at Homa's story in Chapter 14. Not only does she become another female voice in the novel, giving her 'testimony', but this story creates a central conflict for Parvana, who now fears that her mother and sister are in danger. In Parvana's story, what do students think is the worst thing that she has experienced? Some might feel that it was her father being taken to prison, or having to become the breadwinner, or perhaps the Taliban punishments or the graveyard. Whatever they think, it is clear that her father's return would be a huge relief for Parvana, and an important turning point in the novel.

Finally, ask students to consider the relationship between Parvana and Nooria. What new perspective do we gain in Chapter 13?

Transform

Letters, writing and testimony have played an important role in the novel, and have given Parvana an insight into the many stories of Afghanistan through her translation work. Students will now write a letter from Parvana to her missing mother, telling her everything that has happened since she left, and explaining how she feels about it. Students should mention Homa's arrival and her father's return, as well as Shauzia's plans. More important than the events, however, is how Parvana is feeling about all of them, and the worry she feels for her missing family as well as hope for the future and courage to face it.

Review and reflect

Students should read the letters to one another in pairs. How similar are the perspectives they have shared? Give them the opportunity to proofread one another's work and make suggestions for improvement.

Homework

Students redraft their letters to take account of their partner's suggestions.

Worksheet 9

The story of Malali



It was 1880.

In the dust around the city of Kandahar, the Afghans were fighting the British.

It was a terrible battle.

Many were dead.

The British were winning, and the Afghans were ready to give up.

Their spirits were low, they had no strength to keep fighting.

Surrender and capture were starting to look good to them.

At least they could rest and maybe save their lives.

Suddenly a tiny girl, younger than Nooria, burst out from one of the village houses.

She ran to the front of the battle and turned to face the Afghan troops.

She ripped the veil off her head, and with the hot sun streaming down on her face and her bare head, she called to the troops.

'We can win this battle!' she cried. 'Don't give up hope!
Pick yourselves up! Let's go!'

Waving her veil in the air like a battle flag, she led the troops into a final rush at the British.

The British had no chance. The Afghans won the battle.

LESSON 10

Focus: Chapter 15
Friendship/Plot development

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Infer information from the text about characters and events
- Discuss a dilemma faced by a character
- Make predictions about character and plot
- Act in role as one of the characters
- Understand the writer's purpose in writing the novel

Engage

Introduce the term 'refugee' and ask students if they know what it means (someone who lives outside their home country because they have suffered persecution). Also introduce the term 'asylum seeker' – someone who is in the process of seeking legal recognition as a refugee. Afghanistan has one of the highest numbers of refugees around the world. However, refugees can be an emotive word, and often people have strong negative views on the topic. Ask students whether they feel they have more of an understanding of the perspective of a potential refugee after exploring Parvana's story.

Explore

Read Chapter 15.

This chapter raises again the question of whether it is better to stay in one's home country, despite immense hardship, or if it is better to flee and seek a new life somewhere else. It also includes symbols of hope, such as the flower Parvana plants and the fact that it is an older man who defends her as she does so (remember that almost all the 'voices' of the novel have been women's), as well as the arrival of Mother's magazine.

Remind students of Parvana and Shauzia's deal to meet in 20 years at the Eiffel Tower in Paris. If the novel is set around 1999/2000, 12 years have passed since their deal was made. In that time, the US and allies have invaded Afghanistan, Osama Bin Laden has been executed and elections have been held, although the situation in the country is still far from stable. In groups, ask students to make a list of different outcomes for what might have happened to the two girls, and what might still happen in the next seven or eight years until they meet up. They should look at a range of different outcomes.

Transform

Students will now work in pairs to role-play the meeting between Parvana and Shauzia in Paris. They should consider the following:

- how the two will feel about seeing one another after all this time
- the stories they will tell each other about their lives after the time of the novel
- what they will remember together about when they worked in the market.

Review and reflect

Remind students of Deborah Ellis's dedication at the front of the book: 'To the children of war'. Having read the whole novel, what do they think she means? Do they think it is an appropriate dedication?

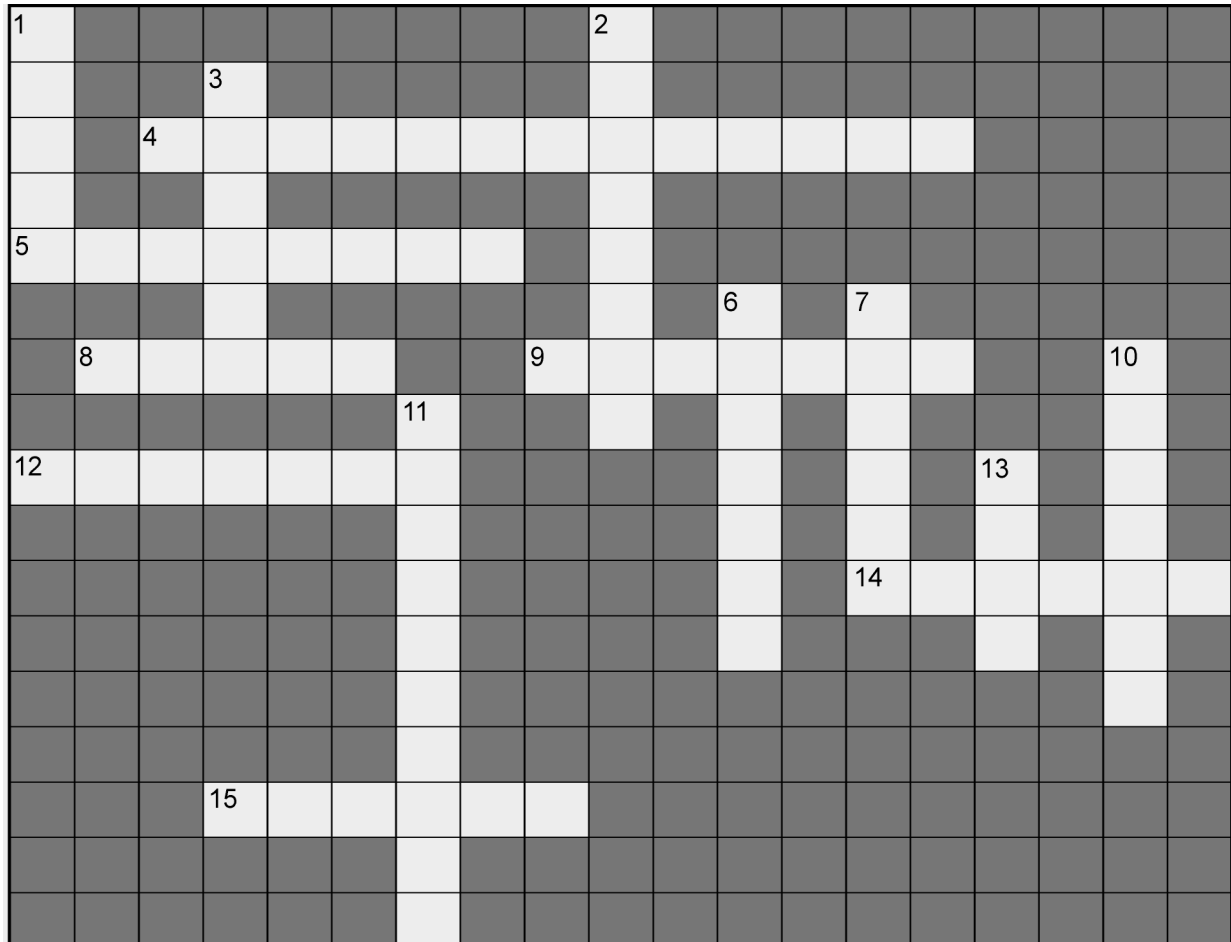
Homework

Students can complete the crossword quiz on **WS 10** to revise the events of the novel.

Worksheet 10

Crossword

The following crossword is made up from clues you will find the answer to in *The Breadwinner*.



ACROSS

4. Long, loose shirt and trousers, worn by either men or women.
5. How Parvana's brother dies.
8. A long, tent-like garment that women had to wear outside.
9. Means 'religious students'.
12. The author's first name.
14. The name of Parvana's little sister.
15. The girl hero in Parvana's father's story.

DOWN

1. The capital of Afghanistan.
2. The place where Mrs Weera goes at the end of the novel.
3. A piece of cloth worn by women and girls to cover their heads.
6. The subject Parvana's father taught before the schools were closed.
7. The boy's name used by Parvana.
10. Parvana's older brother's name.
11. The precious item saved by Parvana outside the prison.
13. One of the two main languages spoken in Afghanistan.

LESSON 11

Focus: Whole novel
Overview/Adaptation

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Identify the structure and organization of text
- Plan and discuss how to relay the same story through a different media
- Consider audience and purpose

Engage

Look at page 10 of the Reading Guide and you will find a sequencing activity (reproduced on **WS 11a**). Students should work in pairs to order the key events sequentially. They can leave the third column blank for the moment.

Explore

Tell students to imagine that they have been commissioned by a children's book publisher to rewrite Parvana's story for a younger audience. Hand out **WS 11b**, which is their brief, and gives them some starting points and things to remember.

Then, working in groups, students should work through some of the questions – what age group they are writing for and what this means, what form their writing will take, and finally which of the events they should include and which they should leave out. Ensure, for example, that the incident at the soccer stadium is removed from the 'included' pile! They can use **WS 11a** to add ticks and crosses to the key events and help them keep track of which they will be including and which they will not.

Transform

Give students time to write their adaptations. Some students may need support, but once they have the idea, it is an opportunity for them to have fun with the story and be creative in the way they tell it. Depending on how much time you have, you might want to allow for different media, such as comic strips, a short play, a poem, etc.

If they are really struggling, you could instead ask them to complete the activity on page 11 of the Reading Guide, where they consider a film adaptation and where they would begin. In this case, also ask them to come up with a cast list from famous actors and actresses to play all the main roles, and some suggestions for the soundtrack.

Review and reflect

Ask students whether working on an adaptation has given them further insight into the writer's process. Have they learned anything about the sort of decisions writers and editors make every day? What was their favourite part of the whole novel?

Also ask them to think back and reflect on the predictions they made in Lesson 1. Were any of them correct?

Homework

Ask students to look at covers, using the activity on page 14 of the Reading Guide. They can use this to design their own cover for the novel (or for their children's adaptation).

Worksheet 11a

Key events

The Breadwinner is a fast-paced, dramatic novel. The plot is driven by key events which change life for Parvana.

Here are some of the key events in the story, but they have been muddled up. Decide what order they should be in and write the number in the middle column.

Key event	Order number	Include?
Finding Homa		
Father's arrest		
Recognizing Shauzia		
Mrs Weera moves in		
Disguise as a boy		
Helping father to and from the marketplace	1	
Selling snacks, gum and cigarettes from a tray		
Father's return		
Leaving Kabul to find the rest of the family		
Nooria's engagement		
Digging up bones to sell		

Worksheet 11b

Author's brief



AUTHOR'S BRIEF: THE BREADWINNER CHILDREN'S STORY

You have been asked to adapt *The Breadwinner* into a book for much younger children, so that teachers at underground schools like Nooria can use it to teach their students about what has been happening in Afghanistan.

However, you will need to remember that younger children are a very different audience than the ones you are used to writing for. First, decide:

- What age group are you writing for?
- What factors will you need to take into account for this age group? (For example, reading level, how appropriate some material is, etc.)
- How will you present your story? It could be as a picture book, or as a dramatic reading, for example. Do you have any other ideas for how you would like to adapt it?

TIME TO GET WRITING!

- First, decide which events you might leave out of your story and why.
- Which are the most important events – make a list of what you have to include.
- Then, look at the language used in Father's retelling of Malali's story in Chapter 2. This is the right sort of level for your story.
- Decide how you might end the story.

LESSON 12

Focus: Whole novel
Review/Reflect

Learning outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Make predictions about character and plot
- Summarize information
- Work as a group to solve a problem
- Review their learning

Engage

Write on the board the word 'sequel'. Do students know what it means? Compile a list of sequels from film and literature. Do students believe the first book or film is always the best? This used to be a common perception, but for the Harry Potter generation they may feel that it is no longer the case. When do they think there should be a sequel to something, and when is it better to leave the original alone?

Ask them to consider whether they think that Deborah Ellis had a sequel in mind when she was writing *The Breadwinner*. Is everything resolved at the end? Or does she provide some closure, but with a whole new set of unanswered questions?

Explore

If students are not already aware, inform them that, in fact, Deborah Ellis did write not just one but two sequels to *The Breadwinner*. Without referring to the blurbs at the back of the Reading Guide, students work in groups to map out a sequel to *The Breadwinner*. They should answer the following questions:

- What happens on Parvana's journey with her father?
- Are they able to find her mother, sisters and brother?
- Where do they find them if so, and what stories do they tell?
- What happens to Mrs Weera, Shauzia and Homa?
- Does Parvana stay in Afghanistan, or does she leave to go somewhere else?
- Are there any new characters introduced along the way?

Transform

Remind students that the blurb at the back of a book is an important way to sell the book, as it will grab the reader's interest. As noted on page 14 of the Reading Guide, a good blurb will:

- give information about setting and/or main theme
- introduce the main character or characters
- spark the reader's interest and curiosity.

Students write a blurb for their sequel to *The Breadwinner*. As they do so, they should bear in mind that some potential readers may not have read the first book, so they shouldn't assume prior knowledge when writing about the book. However, they may wish to include the information that this is a sequel, so that fans of the first book know that this is the next instalment in the story.

Review and reflect

Hand out the reading assessment on **WS 12**. Ask students to think about all the reading strategies they have used during their study of the novel – which assessment focuses do they feel they have made progress with?

Homework

Students write the opening paragraph to their sequel.

Worksheet 12

Self-assessment sheet

Reading skills and strategies	You practised this when:	I do this well	I can do this sometimes	I need to practise this
Understand, describe, select or retrieve information, events or ideas from texts and use quotation and reference to text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You did this when you gathered information about key characters and events as the novel progressed. • You did this when you wrote articles for the magazine. • You did this when you wrote your adaptation. 			
Deduce, infer or interpret information, events or ideas from texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You did this when you inferred ideas about characters in the novel and how they developed. • You did this when you role-played characters. • You did this when you explored how to tell the same story through different media. 			
Identify and comment on the structure and organization of texts, including grammatical and presentational features at text level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You did this when you looked at how the author ordered events in the novel. • You did this when you predicted how the plot would develop. • You did this when you thought about the third-person narrator. 			
Explain and comment on writers' uses of language, including grammatical and literary features at word and sentence level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You did this when you analysed the writer's use of humour to manage a difficult scene. • You did this when you worked out the meaning of unfamiliar words using the context. 			
Identify and comment on writers' purposes and viewpoints and the overall effect of the text on the reader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You did this when you considered why the author wrote the novel and which ideas she was trying to pass on. • You did this when you considered the writer's use of setting. 			
Relate texts to their social, cultural and historical contexts and literary traditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You did this when you gathered information about Afghanistan and the Taliban. • You did this when you contrasted your own life to that of Parvana (and Shauzia). • You did this when you considered what might have happened to Parvana after the novel concluded. 			