

Michael Rosen



The Missing

The True Story of
My Family in World War II

SCHEME OF WORK

PERFECT FOR: Ages 10+; a moving, heartbreaking, hopeful exploration of the impact of war on families; analysing newspaper articles; history research into World War II and family history; learning about the Holocaust.

KEY FOR CROSS-CURRICULAR OBJECTIVES:

English: Reading comprehension;
Creative Writing; Poetry; Writing to Inform
Drama, Speaking and Listening
Design Technology & Art
Religious Education
History
Geography
PSHE & Citizenship

Cover Images: Michael Rosen. Published by Walker Books. Used with permission.

WEEK 1 (CHAPTERS 1-4) NOT JUST FOR THEM

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES

Reading: Comprehension

- Ask questions to improve understanding of a text.
- Identify how language, structure, and presentation contribute to meaning in poems.
- Retrieve, record and summarise information from non-fiction.

History: World War II

- Order and understand the main events that occurred during World War II.
- Use research methods to extend historical learning.
- Make links to the current refugee crisis.

PSHE & Citizenship

- Explore your own personal history by creating a family tree and interviewing a member of your family.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Before beginning, note down or discuss everything you already know about World War II. How do you know about what happened? Is there anything else you'd like to find out?
2. What do you think Michael Rosen means when he says that 'this is about Jews' but also 'this is not about Jews'?
3. How would you feel if a member of your family suddenly disappeared? What would you do?
4. Michael Rosen talks about his Dad's experiences of war – a colonel growing mushrooms and the discovery of dinosaur skeletons in ruins. What might these symbolise? (page 14)
5. When Dad is asked where 'the brothers and sisters' are, he shrugs. Why? Why do people shrug? What might Dad be thinking and feeling? (page 23)
6. 'The camps' are mentioned on page 23. What were they? What mistake does Michael Rosen initially make about them?
7. How can people be like 'gaps' or 'blanks' in your life? What role does 'the words of my life' have in honouring these absentees? How does this poem make you feel when you read it? Is there anything about how it is set out that is interesting? (page 25)
8. Summarise the themes of 'Mein Kampf' in three sentences. (page 26)
9. How would you feel if you were told you could no longer go to school, own a house or have a job? (page 28)
10. Look at the poem on pages 30 and 31. Who might the 'they' in the poem refer to?

EXTRA ACTIVITIES

Michael Rosen encourages readers to look into their family history. Create your own family tree, including interesting information about each member of your family. You may like to conduct research at your local library or interview older family members.

Create a timeline showing the main events that occurred during World War II. You may wish to include:

- Germany's invasion of Austria and Poland
- Neville Chamberlain declaring war
- Battle of Britain and the Blitz
- The creation and operation of Auschwitz
- Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

Explore newspaper articles reporting on the current refugee crisis. How are Syrian refugees being represented by the media? Why? Are there any powerful photographs which show what is happening and why? Perhaps you can use a Venn Diagram to draw parallels between the events in *The Missing*?

WEEK 2 (CHAPTERS 5-9)

I'M NOT ON THE LIST

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES

Reading: Comprehension

- Use dictionaries to check the meaning of words and understand words in context.
- Create captions and subtitles to summarise information.

Religious Education

- Appreciate and appraise the different traditions and beliefs of the Jewish religion.

Geography

- Plot a journey and locate places on maps and atlases.

PSHE & Citizenship

- Create a class collage or display to explore the themes of hope and despair and war and conflict and their impact on families.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Look at the poem on page 37. Which words and phrases are repeated? Using what you already know about World War II and what Michael Rosen has discussed about the 'Vichy' government, think about why these lines have been repeated and their effect.
2. Use a dictionary to write a definition of these words in Chapter 7: *looted, spanned, advancing*. What do the words mean in these chapters?
3. What does the verb 'pored' suggest about how Michael Rosen was feeling when he read the letters? Why might this be? (page 47)
4. Why was Oscar's money 'getting less every day'? (page 50)
5. Imagine you are a passenger on the St. Louis. Write a short diary about your experiences on the ship. (page 55)
6. How is the second letter from Stella similar to the first? How is it different? Why might this be? (page 56)
7. How does the map on page 59 help your understanding of what is happening?
8. How is the word 'Aryanized' similar to the word 'dehumanised'? How is it different? (page 67)
9. Can you create chapter titles for this part of the book and explain your choices?
10. What is the most important piece of information on these pages? Summarise the contents of these pages in three sentences. Can you summarise the information now in one sentence?

EXTRA ACTIVITIES

Read pages 32 and 33. Imagine you have spent a summer at the 'colonie de vacances' and write a postcard or letter home about your exciting experiences.

A number of Jewish traditions, such as Hanukkah, are mentioned throughout. Conduct research in small groups into different aspects of the Jewish religion and prepare a class presentation about an area of interest. You may wish, for example, to explore the role of the synagogue and use a variety of ways, including drawings and ICT, to show what you've discovered.

Design your own map to label some of the places mentioned, including Brittany, Pyrenees, Manchester, Connecticut, Metz, Niort, Sedan, Nice. On your map, record the importance of each place in Michael Rosen's journey of discovery.

Create a class display using photographs, artwork, poems and writing to explore the themes of hope and despair of past and present wars and conflicts.

WEEK 3 (CHAPTERS 10-14) TODAY; ONE DAY

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
Reading: Comprehension - Identify how language, structure, and presentation contribute to meaning. - Discuss the main themes in a text and order their importance. Writing to Inform - Write a biography, including a range of features to engage the reader. Drama, Speaking and Listening - Perform a poem, using actions and instruments to convey meaning. Art and Design Technology - Explore the style and techniques used in Holocaust artwork, then use these to paint a piece of artwork which represents the themes in the book.	1. Look at the structure of Chapter 10. How does Michael Rosen manage the information about Oscar and Rachel? When is their fate revealed? Why? What impact does it have? 2. Why do you think Michael Rosen includes so many questions in 'Dear Oscar'? (pages 80-82) 3. Think about why Michael Rosen's family 'clammed up'. Were they right to keep this story 'hidden away'? Is it understandable? (page 85) 4. What do we learn on page 89? How did you feel when you read it? How do you think Michael Rosen felt? 5. Read Chapter 13 and then work as a small group to make a list of any questions you have about Martin. 6. Why do you think the phrase 'who have done nothing wrong' is repeated in the poem 'Martin Rozen (1890-1944)'? 7. How are the words racism, prejudice, antisemitism, discrimination, xenophobia and supremacism similar? How are they different? Are they words that only describe past events? (page 102) 8. Look at the layout of 'Today; One Day'. How should the poem be read? How do these themes link to the story? 9. How do you think Michael Rosen feels about the Holocaust? Why do you think he wrote this book? 10. Which of these do you think is the most important theme in the story? Think of examples in the story where each of these themes is pivotal: <i>family, memory, war, injustice, remembrance, erasure, memory.</i>	Use information from these chapters and your own research to write a biography about Angelo Donati. Include all the important events in his life and his role in World War II. Choose a poem to perform from the book. Discuss what you like, anything that puzzles you and what the poem reminds you of. Work in groups to perform the poem, thinking about how you can use your voice to convey the feeling of the poem. You may wish to use musical instruments to bring the poem to life. Spend some time exploring the 100 pieces of Holocaust art, which were loaned by Yad Vashem, from Israel's memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe. Use a variety of media to create your own piece of artwork that represents the themes explored in <i>The Missing</i>.