

CLASSROOM  
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BOOK

# ATCHING TAN:

An educational  
journey into the world  
of **Gypsies, Romanies,**  
and **Travellers**



LOTTERY FUNDED

*Romany Theatre Company*



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**Federal Archive**

I am very proud and excited that the Romany Theatre Company has produced this innovative and comprehensive education pack. It is not just for the Traveller community, but also aimed at the rest of the world. If we are to bring about positive and long-lasting change, it is vital that both the Traveller community and the settled community are aware of our rich and diverse heritage and history. It was with this in mind that we set about creating a pack that could inform, educate, and entertain whoever uses it.

The pack is aimed at Key Stages 2 and 3 and focuses on nine specific elements of Traveller life, from identity to employment. Each section benefits from extensive notes covering the topics as well as suggested activities for use in the classroom. Additional resources include poetry, photographs, and news articles. We are sure that whatever element of Traveller life is explored, this pack has something to offer.

# FORE-WORD

This pack is unique because Travellers have played a large part in creating it. All too often, and usually for the best of reasons, people have created teaching materials 'for' Travellers rather than creating materials 'with' us. In this project, however, Travellers have played a crucial role from the start, which has granted them ownership of the materials and has provided a more authentic set of learning resources.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the people who have worked on the pack, providing their expertise, time, and dedication. Those who deserve particular mention include Tim Everson from the Travellers Education Support Service in Suffolk and John Hardisty from the Traveller Support Service in Cambridgeshire, as well as members of the Traveller community: Maria Everett, Kelly Buckley, Damian Le Bas, Candis Nergaard, Linda Loveridge, and Dean and Sharon Loveridge.

A very special thanks goes to Daniela Bowker, our Project Manager, who has worked tirelessly and with tremendous skill and focus to pull together a wide range of people and overseen the creation of such a unique and outstanding piece of work.

You can all be proud of this wonderful achievement.

**Dan Allum**

*Atching Tan Project Director*  
Cambridge, February 2011



# INTRODUCTION

**Atching tan** (Romani) – place where fires are lit, stopping place

**E**very community has a story to tell. Some are more able to make their voices heard than others. This silence has multiple consequences for different communities.

For some, it can mean that their particular needs are not met. For many, it can result in their rich cultures and histories being overlooked. For others, it can lead to misunderstanding and misconceptions, which might in turn lead to intolerance and distrust. It can, of course, result in a combination of all of these.

For centuries the Traveller community has suffered from prejudice and ignorance. It has been treated on an unequal footing; Travellers have been regarded as unequal citizens. Their song, dance, and poetry – used to record their history and relate their stories – have been ignored. In many respects, the Traveller community has been a forgotten element of society.

**Atching Tan** was conceived as an attempt to bring an end to this silence, to let the voices of Traveller people be heard, and to let them not be a forgotten element of society.

**Atching Tan** is an ambitious multi-strand project conceived by the Romany Theatre Company (RTC). Its primary aim was to dismantle the barriers of mistrust and misconception that have been allowed to grow between the Traveller and settled communities. The **Atching Tan** project weaves together three different elements in order to help increase understanding of Traveller people: drama, words, and education.

## Drama

**Atching Tan** was a radio drama commissioned by the BBC and aired across the eastern counties each autumn from 2008 to 2010. Throughout the series it followed the relationships between

three Romany families and the residents of a small East Anglian village. The storylines especially explored how intolerance and miscommunication can ignite fear and hatred amongst people.

## Words

Travellers have a rich oral tradition: one of dance, music, poetry, and story-telling. To help preserve the vibrant history of the Traveller community in East Anglia, and help bring it to as many people as possible, RTC undertook a project to record the stories of 100 Travellers across the region.

These stories were captured by **Atching Tan** project volunteers, and have been made available to the public via the **Atching Tan** website and the Cambridgeshire Community Archive Network website, as well as being used to support the work of museums and libraries across the eastern region.

## Education

**Atching Tan**'s educational objectives were two-fold: providing qualification opportunities to Romany people and to improving the wider community's understanding of Traveller culture.

Volunteers for the **Atching Tan** project participated in learning modules accredited by the Open College Network. The modules linked directly to the activities of the project, demonstrating the practical application of learning.

A core principle of the **Atching Tan** project was dispelling the myths and misconceptions that surround Travellers, with the goal of facilitating a fairer and more tolerant society. The philosophy is that by creating a bank of diverse resources and extensive related information to be used in schools and other educational environments, understanding and acceptance can be fostered.

## Using the educational pack

**T**he **Atching Tan** educational pack is based on the information provided – and experiences shared – by members of the UK Traveller community as part of the information gathered through the **Atching Tan** project. The pack has been divided into nine key themes and provides a broad spectrum of resources covering the customs, culture, history, and lives of Romany people. Through the words of Travellers it explores their identity; travelling; homes; discrimination; the Romani language; school and education; work and employment; entertainment; and change, hope, and fears. Each of the nine sections is supported by extensive background information for use by educators as well as a selection of additional resources ranging from traditional poems and music, an episode of the RTC radio drama **Atching Tan**, pictures, and news articles.

These resources can be used to formulate a discrete scheme of work covering Travellers and their lives and heritage, or they can support and enhance teaching within the existing curriculum. For example, the poetry examples could be used when teaching English, whilst the resources relating to the Holocaust could support the Year 9 history curriculum. Further examples of lesson activities have been included to aid staff wanting to make the most out of the pack.





## Explanation of definitions

**K**nowing which description to use – Gypsy, Romany, or Traveller – can often be difficult for people who do not come from the community. In many ways, the world would be a far easier place, and probably a happier one, if we did not insist on labelling and defining people. However, if we are to use labels, using something appropriate is important. Ultimately, it is best to ask the people whom you are describing how they would like to be described.

A good starting point is to understand the origins and meanings behind names.

**Romany is used as an umbrella term for an entire ethnic group that originated in India. This group can be further subdivided, generally according to geographical and linguistic differences:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ■ <b>Kale</b> – Finnish, Iberian, and Welsh, with Iberian Kale also found in Latin American | ■ <b>Romanichal</b> – located largely in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia |
| ■ <b>Manush</b> – found in French-speaking Europe   | ■ <b>Romanisæl</b> – from Norway and Sweden   |
| ■ <b>Roma</b> – found in central and eastern Europe, and the Middle East                    | ■ <b>Sinti</b> – from German-speaking Europe.   |

The linguistic differences between these groups usually manifest themselves in the dialect of Romani spoken, which is frequently influenced by the local language. For example, Angloromani uses a Romani lexicon with English syntax and grammar.

‘Gypsy’ is a corruption of ‘Egyptian’. When Romany people first arrived in western Europe it was mistakenly believed that they had originated in Egypt. Hence the French equivalent term ‘Gitan’ and the Spanish ‘Gitano’, both derived from their words for ‘Egyptian’. Although the term has had pejorative connotations, it has come to be widely accepted and many Romany people self-identify as ‘Gypsy’.

Traveller is used a more neutral, all-encompassing word that does not have ethnic connotations. As well as including Romany people, it covers show people, New Age Travellers, and travelling people of Irish and Scottish origin. It is not unusual to hear Romany people describe themselves as Travellers and the term is used politically in order to cover the needs and interests of all peripatetic (travelling) people. Throughout this education pack, the term Traveller will be used primarily. However, it is not unusual to hear Travellers refer to themselves as either Gypsy, Romany, or Traveller and if on occasion Gypsy or Romany is the most appropriate terminology, it will be used.

## History of Travellers in the UK

**T**racing the exact origins of the Romany people has not been easy. The most significant clue to their origins has come from the Romani language, which shares roots with Hindi, Gujarati, and Punjabi in Sanskrit. The noted linguist Dr Donald Kenrick suggests that the Romany people formed around Persia, between the seventh and tenth centuries CE, as different groups and tribes of Indian people congregated and intermarried, before moving westwards towards Europe. Other schools of thought suggest that the Romany people did not migrate from India to Persia until around 1000 CE, at the time of the Muslim invasion of India. Certainly the influence of Armenian, Greek, and Persian on the Romani language suggests a prolonged stay in the Anatolian region before moving further westwards towards Europe.

The first mentions of Romany people in western Europe can be authenticated to 1407 in Hildesheim, Germany. It took another hundred years for Romany people to cross the Channel into the British Isles. The first recorded Romanies in Britain were a group of dancers who arrived in Scotland from Spain. By the 1520s, Romanies could be found across the country, from East Anglia to the West Country.

Legislation frequently sought to expel Romany people or suppress their lifestyle, including transportation to the colonies as forced labour under Elizabeth I, James I, and Oliver Cromwell. Despite of this, they have persisted and established themselves as a significant minority ethnic community, currently approximately 100,000 voices strong.

In addition to the Romany community, several other groups of travelling people also call the UK home. Irish Travellers have an unclear history; their nomadic way of life is likely a result of a combination of factors. For generations many would have been tin- or silversmiths, and would have moved around selling their goods. Others, however, most likely took to the road owing to economic necessity – for example as an effect of the Potato Famine – or political upheaval, in particular the English subjugation of the Irish. While it wasn’t unusual for Irish Travellers to make their way to England for seasonal work, there was a noticeable increase in the 1960s. These Travellers have made England their home, leading to the growth of an English-born Irish Traveller community.

Economic deprivation and the Highland Clearances are the likely origins of Scottish Travellers, whilst the travelling traditions of Circus and Show People would have started in the eighteenth century as rides and acts became popular entertainment. New Age Travellers do not share the ethnic heritage of Irish, Romany, or Scottish Travellers, but arose in the 1960s and 1970s as people sought an alternative lifestyle that shunned consumerism and a growing disrespect for the planet.

A combination of legislation and socio-economic change has seen Traveller life evolve since 1950. Mechanised agricultural processes have reduced the need to employ itinerant people to perform the harvest, something traditionally undertaken by Travellers, and legislation has steadily eroded the freedom to travel. Consequently, more Traveller people are beginning to settle and to seek alternative employment. Regardless, there remains a strong sense of identity amongst all groups of Travellers, and a desire to protect their way of life and heritage.





## What does it mean to be Romany?

**T**he Romany pride in their culture ensures that they have strong sense of identity and community. The overwhelming opinion of Romany people is that one has to be born a Romany, it is not something that can be assumed. One does not need to live in a caravan to be Romany, or to undertake work that has been performed traditionally by Romany people to be Romany. It is the culture that one inherits and the community to which one belongs that is pivotal, as is explored in greater depth in the 'Identity' section of the pack.

## Discrimination and prejudice

From their arrival in the 1520s, the Romany people were not granted an easy transition into life in England. In particular, the English judicial and political system did not prove adaptable to their itinerant lifestyle. Throughout the Tudor and Stewart periods there was a general suspicion, or wariness, of aliens. State hostility to outsiders was not restricted to Romany people, but also covered Africans, Huguenots, and Jews.

The first manifestation of prejudice came in 1530, under Henry VIII, when all Egyptians (meaning Romany people) were ordered to leave the country or face deportation and the confiscation of their property. The Act was not wholly successful, and was redrafted under Mary I in 1554. The new act ordered Romanies to settle and assimilate into the resident population, and abandon their 'naughty, idle and ungodly life and company'. Failure to do so would result in their execution. This movement against nomadism – whether undertaken by Romany or any other group of people or person – was reinforced by Elizabethan legislation in 1562 and the Poor Law of 1596.

It was not until 1783 that Elizabethan laws were repealed and someone could no longer be executed for nothing other than being Romany – as happened to nine Romany men in York in 1596. Mary I's laws, however, remained on the statute books until 1856, despite having fallen into disuse.

Continued legislation passed to control migrant peoples – Traveller and other – throughout the nineteenth century, together with the Enclosure Act of 1899 sought to suppress a people whose way of life was dedicated to movement and travel.

The twentieth century did not, as a general rule, improve life for Traveller people in England. The 1959 Highways Act criminalised stopping on the roadside, and the 1960 Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act ensured that Traveller people were moved off of land where they were encamped if the landowner did not have a licence. Local Authorities were charged with making provision for travelling people in 1968 by establishing permanent sites. However, the Criminal Justice Act of 1994 repealed the obligations of the 1968 Act, and many Travellers suddenly found themselves illegally camped, unable to stop by the roadside, and unable to travel in convoys larger than six vehicles. ➤



This history so far has detailed state-sanctioned prejudice and the legal constraints on being a Traveller and trying to lead a life resonant of that culture. It has not taken into account the practical and social implications of prejudice and discrimination, the singular effects felt by individuals, every day of their lives, at the hands of other people.

In devising this collection of resources it is hoped that children and young people will be able to develop their understanding of Romany people and recognise that they are people like any other, people who enjoy a rich and individual culture, people who are worthy of their respect and their friendship, and their place in society, just as anyone else.



## The Romany Theatre Company

**T**he Romany Theatre Company (RTC) was founded in 2002 by Dan Allum. It is the only Romany-led theatre company in the UK, and aims to create rich, powerful, and inspirational drama for theatre, television and radio. The company's work is rooted in the culture and experiences of Romany people and focuses strongly on their struggle for equality and challenges negative opinions of them and the lives that they lead.

In addition to its focus on drama, RTC is committed to education. The company provides learning opportunities for Romany people by running accredited learning programmes that help to develop their communication and life skills. The company's productions and workshops also promote cross-cultural understanding for the Romany and settled communities. It is RTC's hope that by fostering a sense of pride in Romany heritage, it can help to break down barriers in society and allow for better understanding between communities.

RTC has four guiding principles that underpin all the work and activities that it undertakes:

- Promoting equality
- Celebrating identity and culture
- Providing education and understanding
- Inspiring through the arts.

RTC's vision is to be established as a production company with an associated media and arts academy providing learning and development opportunities for Gypsy, Romany, and Traveller people wishing to enter the media or arts professionally.



## Activity support

# IDENTITY

**‘What does it mean to be a Traveller?’ ‘How do you identify yourself as a Traveller?’ ‘How important is the Traveller identity to you?’**

**T**hese are not insignificant questions. They reach to the core of Traveller life. However, they cannot be answered with broad, sweeping statements.

These are questions to which every individual, when asked, will provide a personal response. There are, though, certain key themes that recur.

- Traveller is not something that one can become; it is something that one is born.
- A Traveller does not have to live on the road to be a Traveller. A Traveller living in a house is still a Traveller.

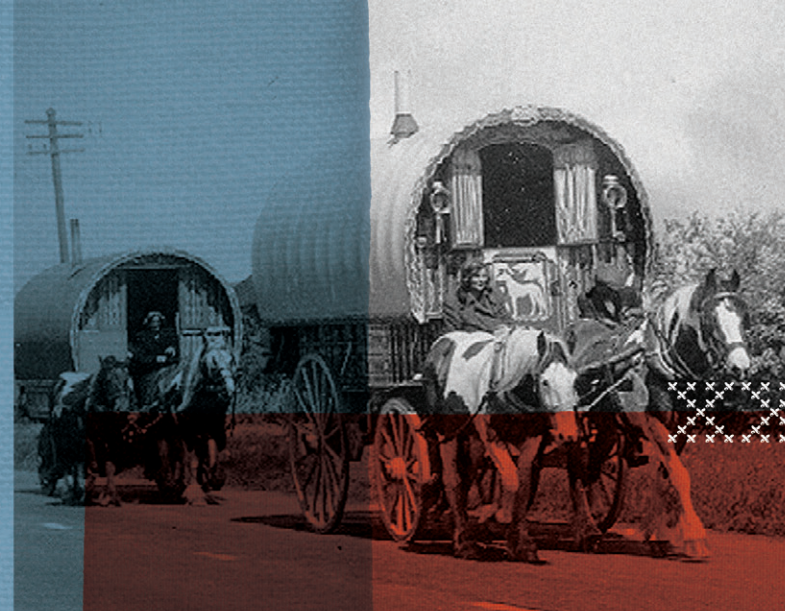


- 1. Recordings:** Track 1
- 2. Curriculum links:** art and design; citizenship; geography; history
- 3. Romany people enjoy** a very strong sense of identity, which manifests itself in their family values, their continued use of the Romani language, their lifestyles, and the decoration of their homes.
- 4. Although Travellers** might refer to themselves in a variety of terms (Gypsy, Romany Gypsy, Traveller), they refer to members of the settled community as gaujes. Members of the Irish Travelling community describe settled people as ‘country people’.

For Romany people, their identity is also an ethnic one that cuts across nations. British Romanies are often very proud of being British Romanies, but they feel a deep affinity for Romany populations elsewhere in the world.

As part of their cross-national identity, the Romany people have a flag. It was officially adopted by the World Romani Congress in 1971, although it has been in existence since 1933. Its design shows a red chakra (a spoked wheel similar to that shown on the Indian flag) on a split horizontal background: blue in the upper half and green in the lower half. The chakra is representative of the Romany people’s peripatetic lifestyle and heritage. The blue stands for the heavens and the green the earth. It is a flag clearly evocative of the Romany people and their relationship to the world around them.

Travellers are a proud people. They are proud of their families, their homes, of their achievements, of their survival. They are proud of their heritage and of not being gauje (a member of the settled community). They are proud to be Traveller.



## Activities

**Aims and objectives** – to introduce learners to Traveller people; to recognise that Travellers are a distinct group, with their own heritage, culture, and ideals, but are simultaneously people like any other.

**Skills:** comparison, empathy, listening

**Activity 1: Who are Traveller people?**  
(All ages)

✂ Ask the class how they identify and what they associate with Traveller people. Examples might include horse-drawn wagons, fortune-telling, and peg-making. (Some prompt pictures have been included.) How might we describe Traveller people, and by extension, how do we describe ourselves? What are the differences and the similarities?

**Activity 2: Listening** (All ages)

✂ Listen to the recordings.

✂ Use the prepared worksheets to explore Traveller identity, or discuss as a class how the self-descriptions of Travellers compare with any preconceptions of them.

**Activity 3: Different types of Traveller** (All ages)

There are many different types of Traveller, coming from different places and with different backgrounds.

✂ What are the different types of travelling people? Using the cards provided in the resources section, match the definitions to the names.

**Activity 4: Romany flag** (All ages)

Flags form an important part of people’s identity: we use them to mark out who we are and our allegiances, as well as allow others to identify us. The Romany people have had a flag since 1933, making the flag relatively young when compared to the heritage of the people.

✂ Look at the Romany flag. What does the class think the different elements of the flag represent? How might they relate to the Romany people? Is the red chakra (wheel) reminiscent of any other flag? Why might that be?

**Activity 5: Appearances can be deceptive** (All ages)

✂ It is very easy to jump to conclusions about people. We make judgements based on how they look, how they talk, how they’re dressed, what they’re called, where they come from, and so much more. What happens when we look beneath the stereotype and the initial impressions?

✂ Create a picture of an individual, with two layers. The upper layer shows how others might perceive or interpret a person. The lower layer shows how that person really is.

*The idea is to encourage learners that looks can be deceptive and also that what we think that we might know about a person or group of people does not always hold true. This activity can be organised by several means. Perhaps the easiest is to lay two sheets of A4 paper over one sheet of A3, covering it. The A4 sheets show the perceptions and open up to reveal the reality. Another is to use a base sheet of paper showing the reality, which can be covered with a sheet of acetate that details the perceptions. Placing learners in small groups to create a family is recommended.*



## Activity support

# HOMES

**Tents, wagons, caravans, chalets: all have provided accommodation for Travellers over the years.**

**B**efore the mid-nineteenth century, most Travellers would have lived in bender tents – simple tents constructed from flexible wooden poles and waterproof coverings – and transported their belongings as they moved from place to place in open carts. After then, what are now pictured as ‘traditional gypsy caravans’ – horse drawn wagons, which are known as vardos in Romani – became far more common. In Charles Dickens’ *The Old Curiosity Shop*, published between 1840 and 1841, Mrs Jarley lives in a vardo. The word vardo is Persian in origin, meaning cart.

Newly married couples would commission a vardo from a specialist coach-builder; Dunton of Reading and Bill Wright of Yorkshire were particularly famous. In southern England, Reading and Burton wagons – named after where they were built – were favoured, whilst lighter Bow Top wagons were preferred in the north, as they were easier for a horse to draw over hillier ground. Still, in particularly hilly areas, a second horse might have been needed.

Wagons were built to the owner’s specification, and would be ornately carved. They were almost always decorated in a dark red, called Crimson Lake, or green, with primrose yellow for the under-carriage, axle, and wheels. Just as cars need regular servicing, so did wagons. Roughly every ten years they would have been sent to a coach-builder for an overhaul. Wagon interiors were designed to maximise space, with storage beneath seating, and tables transforming into beds. Most wagons would have had a stove, but cooking usually took place outside. As space was limited, it was not unusual for children to sleep beneath the wagon.

**Recordings:** Track 2

- 1.
2. **Curriculum links:** citizenship; geography
3. **Travellers have lived in** tents, wagons, caravans, and chalets.

4. **Traditional stopping places** are known as atching tans.

5. **A shortage of legal stopping places** and an inability to access services such as education and healthcare has led many Romany people to move into settled accommodation.

6. **News article:** <http://bit.ly/atan-A> (The Independent: ‘What’s the extent of travellers’ sites and do they need tighter controls?’)

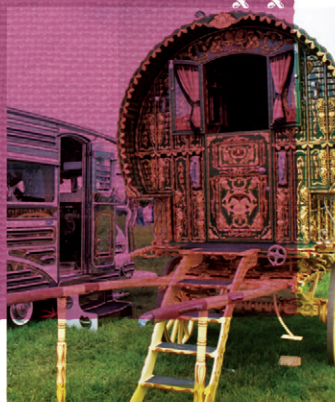
The heyday of wagon-building ended as the First World War started. Many coach-builders were killed during the conflict, or their skills were channelled into building motor vehicles instead. As a consequence, those looking for wagons began to convert milk floats or delivery drays into covered wagons, known as Open Lots. To compensate for the lack of ornate carving, they were richly painted instead. The leading wagon painters were

Jimmy Berry and Teddy Nixon. Jimmy Berry was known as the king of the wagon painters, a title that has been inherited by his apprentice John Greenwood, who is also known as ‘Yorkie’. Current wagon painters will have been taught by someone who learned their craft from Berry or Nixon. Their designs will reflect traditional travelling life – dogs, horses, fruit, and flowers – as well as their own style. When a wagon’s owner died it was common for the wagon to be burned. Although it would be unusual to burn a caravan today, it remains traditional to burn someone’s possessions following her or his death.

Following the Second World War, there was a gradual shift from vardos to trailer caravans, pulled by a car or van rather than a horse. The space provided by one caravan is often insufficient for an entire

family, and thus extra touring caravans might be used for older children. A stopping place for a caravan is known as an atching tan in Romani. Atching tan translates literally as ‘place where fires are lit.’ Until the mid-to-late twentieth century, most families would have engaged in seasonal work, moving from place to place as the harvest demanded picking fruit, vegetables, and hops. As a consequence, they would have had customary atching tans in the different areas where they worked throughout the seasons. However, mechanisation has led to the decline of manual farm labour and instead scrap metal dealing, roofing, drive-laying, and landscape gardening are preferred.

There has been a steady decline in the number of families adhering to a traditional travelling way of life. In 1959 the Highways Act criminalised stopping on the roadside, and the 1960 Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act ensured that Romany people were moved off of land where they were encamped if the landowner did not have a licence, meaning that many traditional atching tans became illegal. In 2004 a duty was placed on Local Authorities to assess the housing needs of travelling families in their areas. This included sites provided by councils, privately, and by housing associations. Ensuring that all travellers have adequate accommodation is vital towards ensuring that their needs – such as education and healthcare –



### Activity 1: What makes a home a home? (Years 3-6)

- ✂ How much of what is considered necessary to make a house a home is universal?
- ✂ Ask small groups to consider what it is that a home needs, what it is that makes a home a home, and how different types of home – for example houses, caravans, communal living, floating houses – compare? Invite them to share their ideas as a class.

### Activity 2: Listening (All ages)

- ✂ Listen to the recordings.
- ✂ Use the worksheets to explore the different ideas behind Travellers’ homes, or as a class discuss the variety of homes and the different experiences that go with living in them.

### Activity 3: Life in a wagon (All ages)

- ✂ Using either diagrams on paper, or plans marked out in chalk in an outside space, have learners consider the size and space afforded by a traditional wagon.

- ✂ No wagon is exactly the same as another, but the dimensions are approximately the same for all of them:

**Height:** Between 8’ and 10’ (245cm - 305cm)

**Width:** 6’ (180cm) internally; 7’6” (230cm) externally

**Length:** 9’ (274cm) internally; 12’6” (380cm) externally

Most wagons would contain a small double bed, plenty of storage, a table, seating, and a stove. How would learners arrange the interior of a wagon?

are met, whilst they can enjoy some integration into the wider community. Many privately owned sites are plots of land that have been bought by travelling families and developed for use with caravans or chalet bungalows, which are otherwise known as static mobile homes. However, there remains a problem with adequate provision of plots, as planning permission can be refused, leaving many travelling families without somewhere to stay. When living on-site, families will have access to running water and electricity. Bathrooms, toilets, and laundry facilities will usually be located in permanent, stand-alone buildings, whilst water for cooking can be piped into chalet bungalows. When on the road, water is usually collected from garages or farms in stainless steel jacks for use in cooking or for washing. Most families will keep separate bowls for washing up, for washing clothes, and for washing themselves.

Some families have chosen to move into settled accommodation, but this is often the least desirable option and can lead to a sense of claustrophobia or isolation. All the same, these families often preserve their Traveller heritage within their homes by displaying lace curtains, stainless steel water jacks, and traditional china, such as Crown Derby.

## Activities

**Aims and objectives** – to understand that all people have basic needs.

**Skills:** communication, comparison, listening, persuasion, problem-solving, role-playing

### Activity 4: Wagon identification (Years 3-6)

- ✂ Using the photographs and the descriptions of different types of wagon, learners must attempt to correctly identify wagon styles.

### Activity 5: Boardroom role play: ‘Where to build a Travellers’ site?’ (Year 9 upwards)

- ✂ See resources section



# Activity support

# TRAVELLING

Although it is far from definite, it is possible that the Romany people were not originally nomadic.

The Romani language has words for house and wheat – obvious indications of a settled lifestyle – that descend from Sanskrit, its mother-language, whilst words such as vardo, or caravan, are later adoptions. In this instance, vardo is derived from Persian, but other examples include drom, meaning road, which comes from Greek and grast, which is an Armenian word meaning horse. Regardless, the Romany people have been on the move for approximately 1,000 years and travelling is a key marker in their identity.

In the past, before mechanisation superseded manual labour, Traveller people would move according to the seasons, undertaking farm work as the harvest required. Families would have pulled up at traditional atching tans – or stopping places – which, in the past might, have been owned by friendly farmers or been communal land. Legislation has, however, restricted Travellers’ rights to stop like this. The 1899 Enclosure Act took vast tracts of land out of common use and the 1960 Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act demanded that anywhere caravans were pitched had to be licensed.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

**Recordings:** Track 3

**Curriculum links:** citizenship; English; geography

**It is possible** that the Romany people have not always been nomadic.

**Their peripatetic lifestyle** has mostly been associated with the nature of their work, in particular seasonal agricultural labour.

**The travelling lifestyle** is becoming less common.

**News articles:** a) <http://bbc.in/atan-F> (BBC: ‘Evicted Somerset Gypsy family move to roadside’)  
b) <http://bbc.in/atan-H> (BBC: ‘Audio slideshow: Appleby Horse Fair’)



However, the combination of the decline in the availability of seasonal work and concerted efforts to prohibit a nomadic lifestyle has led to change in the travelling community. Some Travellers have expanded into other trades, such as scrap metal dealing, drive-laying, and roofing, whilst others have shifted towards a more settled lifestyle, perhaps by moving into a chalet bungalow on a permanent site. Some families have chosen to move into houses, but this is relatively uncommon. Whilst adopting a more settled approach has had some advantages for Travellers, for example better access to education and healthcare, it is also regarded as a cultural loss and can have emotional implications for people who are accustomed to moving at will.

Activities

**Aims and objectives** – to understand what life is like for people who lead a travelling lifestyle.

**Skills:** empathy, imagination, listening

For many communities, food acts as a significant element of their identity. For Travellers, their traditional foods have been defined by their travelling lifestyle and the need to cook whatever is available over an open fire: for example, rabbit or pheasant might be stewed with vegetables. Although it wouldn’t be eaten today, hedgehog was once a staple for Travellers.

A key element of the travelling life that brings together the community from all over the country are the annual horse-fairs, which take place at Appleby in Westmoreland and Stow-in-the-Wold, Gloucestershire. These fairs are part of Romany tradition and an important element of their cultural identity. Here, families will gather to deal in animals, display their horsemanship, tell stories, and meet with friends and relatives. The key elements in the cycle of life – birth, death, and marriage – are also significant occasions that bring together members of the travelling community in celebration. Funerals perhaps bring together the largest number of people, who will pay their respects to the deceased with floral tributes and by telling stories, as well offering comfort to the living.

- Activity 1: Listening** (*All ages*)

  - Listen to the recordings.
  - Use the prepared worksheets to explore life on the road; or discuss as a class what are regarded as the positive and negative aspects of travelling.
- Activity 2: Life on the road** (*All ages*)

  - Using the recordings and the poems as a springboard, ask learners to write diary entries, imagining that they are part of a Traveller family living on the road. Perhaps they are living through a particularly cold, hard winter. Or maybe they are having difficulty finding a place to stop. What if they are moving into settled accommodation? How do they feel physically and emotionally? What are the positive and negative experiences?

**Activity 3: Place-to-place** (*Years 3-6*)

Travellers have traditionally moved from place-to-place looking for work. Certain areas were noted for particular types of land work.

Apples	Cambridge
Hops	Kent
Peas	Braintree
Plums	Bury St. Edmunds, Lavenham
Potatoes	Cambridge
Strawberries	Wisbech

Pupils can use the map provided to draw the crops in the appropriate area, showing where they were grown.

**Activity 4: This Travelling Life** (*Years 3-6*)

In pairs or small groups, create a board game showing the ups and downs of the travelling life.

**Activity 5: Community Conversations** (*All ages*)

How would the community react to a Traveller family pitching by a roadside in the area?

Seat the group in a large circle and lay down firm ground rules that allow people to speak freely and without interruption. Pose the question: ‘What would happen if a Traveller family pulled up at the roadside close to here?’ One member of the group then states something that would or could (as opposed to ‘should’) happen to this family or amongst the community. For example: ‘They might be reported to the police.’

From there, another member of the group continues the story. The story continues until a suitable conclusion is reached. At which point, the consequences of the story should be analysed. Perhaps if the family is forced to move on, the children miss out on another month of school, or maybe the mother is unable to visit a doctor and becomes very ill as a consequence. When the first story has been completed and analysed, begin a second story, which covers what should happen if a family pitches on the roadside.

*The theory behind this activity is to encourage learners to consider chains of cause and effect, as well as envisage how their actions can have a positive or negative impact on the lives of others and on their community as a whole.*



## Activity support

# EDUCATION

Since the passing of the Education Act in 1908, attendance in school for six months of the year has been compulsory for Traveller children.

**E**xemption for half of the year was granted in recognition of the impracticalities of attending school whilst the family would have been on the road, working to bring in the harvest.

Education was often not held in high regard amongst the Traveller community. For some families, it was seen as interference from the state in their lives, whilst others believed that everything their children needed to be taught could be learned amongst their own community and especially within the family. In particular, there was a very real fear of their children being subjected to bullying – at the hands of both other pupils and teachers – at school. As a consequence, there is a high degree of illiteracy and innumeracy within the Traveller community.

1. **Recordings:** Track 4
2. **Curriculum links:** art and design; citizenship; drama
3. **Since 1908** it has been law that Traveller children should attend school for at least six months of the year.
4. **For many Travellers**, school and education has been regarded as less important than contributing to family life and working.
5. **There has been an increasing** recognition of the value and necessity of education amongst the Traveller community.

Most county councils provide support for the education of Traveller children through dedicated teams of teachers. These teachers might provide support for children not attending school by visiting them in their homes, as well as supporting Traveller children who do attend school. They sometimes act as links between school and home and also provide resources for teachers covering Traveller topics. In particular they work towards cultural inclusion and the fair representation and attainment of Traveller children and young people.

Traveller families recognise that education is important for their children. Many families are making concerted efforts to ensure that children attend school and achieve qualifications that will benefit them throughout their lives. Nonetheless, it is not uncommon for Traveller children to attend primary school, after which girls are home-educated from the age of 12 or 13 and boys finish school at around 16 years old. Hopefully, a deeper understanding of each community by the other will allow for the continued recognition of the importance of education amongst Traveller people.

## Activities

**Aims and objectives** – to understand why Traveller people might not engage with the idea of school, to consider how to support a change in this attitude.

**Skills:** communication, empathy, listening



### Activity 1: Listening (All ages)

- ✗ Listen to the recordings.
- ✗ Use the prepared worksheets to explore Traveller attitudes towards and experiences of school. Alternatively, discuss the following as a class:

1. What are these people's different experiences of school?
2. Could it be said that they value education?

### Activity 2: School – positives and negatives (All ages)

Most things in life are a balancing act, with some elements that are good and some elements that are not so good.

- ✗ What's good about going to school? What's not so good?

### Activity 3: Your school and the Traveller community (All ages)

This team-based activity is designed to encourage learners' evaluation of their own opinions and behaviour as well as reflection on their environment. Is their school a good place, a welcoming place for Traveller children? What can they do as a group to improve it?

- ✗ Learners must imagine that a site for Travellers has recently been built in the area where they live. Many of the children from the site will now be attending their school. Working together in groups of around six they must devise a plan that will:

- a) Encourage children from the site that school is a good place to spend time and will be valuable for them

- b) Decide what they can do as fellow pupils to welcome and support the children from the site
- c) Think about what the school might need to do to support the Traveller children.

### Activity 4: Freeze-frame (All ages)

This is an activity that combines drama, observation, and an understanding of prejudice and discrimination.

- ✗ Ask four members of the class to act out scene 8 of episode 4 of **Atching Tan**. Other members of the class have the opportunity to halt the action when they spot something that counts as prejudice, discrimination, or just unfair treatment. If someone stops the scene, she or he has to explain her or his motivation for doing so, and describe how the characters might be feeling at this point.

- ✗ On completion of the first half of the activity, divide the class into small groups. They must then re-write the scene with a fairer outcome. Time permitting, these – or a selection – can be acted out to the rest of the class. Finally, ask the class to vote on the best re-written scene.



## Activity support

# WORK & EMPLOYMENT

The peripatetic life of Traveller people has led them to engage in employment that complements this, in particular hiring out their services at a daily rate or being self-employed. With no employer to whom they owe responsibility, they are able to move at will.

Whilst seasonal agricultural work has been the primary source of income for Travellers, especially across East Anglia and the south east, the mechanisation of farming has led to a decline in demand for human labour. As a consequence, Travellers have expanded into other areas of work that can also be carried out in conjunction with a transient lifestyle, for example landscape gardening and tree-surgery; drive-laying and roofing; and scrap metal dealing. Much of the work undertaken by Travellers is practically-inclined, which takes into account the frequently low levels of literacy and education within the community.

Although more children from the Traveller community are attending school and achieving formal qualifications, there remains a strong sense of loyalty to the family and the need to support it. From a young age girls are expected to help with domestic tasks and later with the care of younger children. Boys will be prepared to join their fathers and other male relatives in traditional occupations.

1. **Recordings:** Track 5
2. **Curriculum links:** art and design; citizenship; geography; information technology
3. **Traditional employment for Travellers** has been seasonal agricultural labour, much of which has disappeared with mechanisation.
4. **Typical work for Travellers** today includes scrap metal dealing, landscape gardening and tree surgery, and drive-laying.
5. **Other traditional undertakings** include knife-grinding, peg-turning, and flower-making.



As some members of the community have now chosen to settle, other forms of employment are becoming more common, for example lorry-driving. Traditional crafts were also undertaken by Traveller families to supplement their incomes. Peg-turning and flower-making are perhaps the most famous of these, as the products could be made with easily accessed materials and sold door-to-door.

## Activities

**Aims and objectives** – to know what sorts of work Travellers undertake, or have undertaken in the past, and why.

**Skills:** listening, reasoning, arts/crafts

### Activity 1: Listening *(All ages)*

✂ Listen to the recordings.

✂ Use the worksheets to explore the work of Travellers; or discuss the following questions as a class:

1. What sorts of work have the Traveller community undertaken, both now and in the past?
2. How and why has work changed for them over time?

### Activity 2: Employment through time *(All ages)*

An extensive range of jobs were mentioned in the recordings. They included:

- |                     |                             |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Antiques dealing | 6. Lorry-driving            |
| 2. Flower-making    | 7. Peg-making               |
| 3. Flower-selling   | 8. Roofing                  |
| 4. Fruit-picking    | 9. Tarmacing & drive-laying |
| 5. Horse-dealing    | 10. Scrap-dealing           |

✂ How many of these can the class recall? Which ones are still carried out today and which are obsolete? Why did these jobs become obsolete? Which jobs could become obsolete in the future?

### Activity 3: Moving and working *(All ages)*

✂ How can travelling be linked to employment? What sorts of jobs can be undertaken by people who like to move around? Which sorts of jobs need a more permanent base?

### Activity 4: Advertising a business *(Years 3-6)*

✂ Ask the class to consider the different types of jobs that people from the Traveller community have undertaken. If they were going to advertise these businesses or services, how would they do it? Individuals then select one of the businesses or occupations mentioned and create some advertising materials for it: flyers, newspaper adverts, or perhaps even a webpage.

### Activity 5: Making paper flowers *(Years 3-6)*

✂ Use the instructions provided to make traditional crepe paper flowers.





## Activity support

# ENTERTAINMENT

**Life on the road, in close proximity to other family members, without electricity, and focused around a camp-fire, has had an important influence on traditional entertainment amongst the Traveller community.**

**F**or those who still lead a nomadic life, how they entertain themselves bears close resemblance to how their ancestors would also have filled their free time. Camping in a field or pulled up on the road-side does not present many opportunities for watching television or playing Wii! Entertainment amongst Travellers takes forms that we might associate more readily with a by-gone age: playing instruments, singing and dancing, and telling stories. For many members of the Traveller community, what they used to regard as essential skills for their survival – for example boxing, hunting, or keeping horses – have now taken on a more recreational feel.

For people with a long history but a high incidence of illiteracy the oral tradition is inevitably strong. Story-telling, whether traditional tales or personal anecdotes, is an art for which Travellers are renowned. Not only is it a compelling way to spend an evening seated around the glowing embers of a camp-fire, but it is an important means of keeping alive traditions and communicating shared history.

1. Curriculum links: English
2. The oral tradition is very strong amongst Travellers.
3. Music, poetry, and story-telling have not just been important forms of entertainment for Traveller families, but also a source of income.



Although it is easy to associate 'Gypsy music' with flamenco or klezmer, these are more likely to be heard when played by member of the continental European Traveller community. The music of the British community is much more similar to traditional English folk music. There's a yearning for the open road, a longing for freedom, and a lament for their oppressed existence in this music. Is there perhaps a link between this self-expression and the experiences of a persecuted people? Step-dancing was common amongst the Traveller community and is something that can still be seen performed at large gatherings, for example horse-fairs or weddings. The dance is akin to tap-dancing, usually performed individually to a hornpipe tune. Irish dancing – made famous by the show Riverdance – is a type of step-dancing.

The link between entertainment and employment has always been important for Travellers. The pocket money made from playing a few songs or performing a series of dances – for which no specialist equipment or particular qualifications are required – could have made the difference between going hungry or having a full belly. There is the natural fear that as the lives of Traveller people change with the times, many of their traditional entertainment forms will die out, but any visit to a horse-fair will confirm that they remain alive and well.

## Activities

**Aims and objectives** – to examine the art of stories and story-telling and to create and tell a story.

**Skills:** listening, creative writing, narrating

✂ Rather than create a series of potential lesson activities surrounding a particular theme, as provided in other sections of this pack, the entertainment section is based around a story-telling project. It is designed to encourage learners to consider what makes a good story, how writing a story differs from telling a story, to examine the history and purpose of story-telling, and finally to inspire them to tell their own stories.

Although this project is designed to be run over several lessons, it is of course possible to truncate it by focusing on given elements.

### ✂ Why do we tell stories?

Begin by asking the class why people tell stories. For classes that require more structure, use the cards provided and ask learners to rank in order of importance the reasons for which people tell stories.

One of primary functions of story-telling is for entertainment purposes: to amuse people around the dinner table, to spook people late at night, to bring people together when sitting around a camp-fire. Story-telling also has other functions: it is used to relate history and social mores; to tell people about their ancestry; and it can fill gaps in the unknown and explain the unexplainable. Telling stories

is closely related to the concept of identity.

*The Aeneid*, for example, was regarded as an important part of Roman history that explained the mythical origins of the Roman state – whilst simultaneously lending legitimacy to the rule of the Emperor Augustus for whom it was written – as well as being entertaining.

As well as fulfilling a historical function, albeit one based on myth, *The Odyssey* was an important teaching tool: it taught its listeners about appropriate behaviour, how to treat one's family, one's hosts, one's guests; it elucidated the impact of the gods in one's life; and it explained how to do battle in a dignified manner. None of this detracts from its primary purpose as being after-dinner entertainment.

It is traditional to tell stories about people at their wakes or funerals – not just to preserve the memory of the departed, but also to help people who did not know them well to understand them better. Similarly, telling stories about one's own youth or experiences is an important means of strengthening bonds with younger members of one's family.

Finally, the Bible is an important example of story-telling that is used to explain the unexplainable: why are we here and how did we get here? Woven throughout the Bible is also a code for living and acceptable behaviour. Whether or not the Bible is interpreted as a religious text, it is demonstrative of a people telling stories in order to forge an identity.

For Travellers, telling stories fulfils all of these functions: it brings together people, it provides entertainment, it is a means of communicating and relating history and social norms and it helps them to

develop and maintain an identity. All of this is, of course, doubly important for a people who have traditionally suffered from lower levels of literacy.

### ✂ What makes a good story?

Ask learners to name a book that they have read recently and enjoyed. Why did they enjoy this particular story? What makes for a good story in general?

They should mention elements of the story that include: characterisation, plot, pace, detail, and ability to relate to the story.

What about a told story, a narrated story? What makes a story good to listen to? All the elements that make a good written story relate to a good told story, but they are reflected slightly differently.

**Characterisation** – the characters still need to be fully formed, but it is possible to bring them to life even more vividly in story-telling, by using facial expression, body language, and different voices.

**Plot** – a good told story needs to build up to a punchline. It needs to have the traditional 'beginning, middle, and end', but it does not have the opportunity for sub-plots: 'That's a story for another time.'

**Pace** – a quick story is a good story!

**Detail** – embellishment is one of the great liberties of story-telling; walls can become higher, oceans can become choppier, baying packs of wolves can become louder; hordes of attacking soldiers can increase in number. It all adds to the excitement and drama.

**Ability to relate to the story** – there has to be some reason for listening to the story. Something about it must resonate with the listener.



✂ **Comparing different told stories**

Many famous stories were originally only spoken. It was only later in their evolution that they were written down. *The Odyssey*, *The Iliad*, and Robin Hood are perfect examples of this. In fact, just as there are variations on Norse myths and legends and some traditional fairy tales, there isn't a definitive version of the Robin Hood legend. The Brothers Grimm might have written down a vast collection of fairy tales, but they were originally folk stories and not the products of the brothers' imaginations.

Often, however, there are startling similarities that exist amongst these traditional stories.

Divide the class into pairs and assign to them a different told story to research. The following stories are recommended as ideal for the project:

1. *The Aeneid*
2. *Aladdin*
3. *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*
4. *Beowulf*
5. *The Firebird*
6. *Hansel and Gretel*
7. *The Iliad*
8. *Kwaidan*
9. *Noah's Ark*
10. *The Odyssey*
11. *Outlaws of the Marsh/Water Margin*
12. *Robin Hood*
13. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*
14. *Tain bo Cuailnge from the Ulster Cycle*
15. *Tristan and Iseult*

Their research should include the plot of the story, its history and origins, which purpose of story-telling the story might have fulfilled, and if there are any key learning points from the story (for example social justice in Robin Hood, or the mores of hospitality in *The Odyssey*), if there are any significant variations in different versions of the story, and if there are any significant similarities to other told stories.

From their research, the pairs should be prepared to give a short presentation about the story to the class. When each story has been examined, the class should look for any patterns that exist amongst the stories.

✂ **Preparing a story for telling**

Having looked at what makes a good written story, a good told story, and at famous examples of told stories, it is time for learners to prepare their own stories for telling. These stories do not need to be especially long, but they need to appeal to their audience. It must also fulfil one of the functions of story-telling. It is not necessary for the story to be based in fantasy – far from it – but it does need to include the traditional elements of story-telling.

✂ **Tell a story!**

Having prepared their stories, it is now time for the class to sit, to listen, and to be entertained by each other's stories. Who does it best?





## Activity support

# ROMANI

**The Romani language belongs to the Indo-Aryan group of languages and, like Bengali, Hindi, and Punjabi, is descended from Sanskrit.**

**I**t is this relationship to Sanskrit that has enabled anthropologists to trace the origins of the Romany people to India. Romani would have developed in parallel to its sister languages until roughly the 11th century, when the Romany people left India and began their migration westwards and after which its development has been influenced by other languages.

Just as English has evolved over time – Chaucer’s English sounds very different from Shakespeare’s English, which sounds different again from Pinter’s English – so too has Romani. Romani’s evolution is both temporal and geographical in nature. In addition to the changes any language can expect to experience through time, like for grammar, syntax, and pronunciation, Romani has also acquired loan words and grammatical influences from nearby languages. The most notable influences are from Greek, Armenian, and Persian, which would have been absorbed from across the Persian and Byzantine empires. In addition, distinct dialects of Romani have emerged as groups of Romany people have chosen to settle and the language has been exposed to sustained regional influences.

- 1.** Recordings: Track 6
- 2.** Curriculum links: citizenship; English
- 3.** Romani is the language of the Romany people.
- 4.** It exists in dialect form across the globe.
- 5.** It is an Indo-Aryan language that is descended from Sanskrit and is related to other Indian languages, for example Bengali, Hindi, and Punjabi.

Approximately 65% of modern Romani dialects’ vocabulary distantly derives from Sanskrit. The remainder of the language consists of loan words and neologisms that have formed to accommodate technological advances and local culture. For example, a habbinkehr is literally a food-house, or restaurant, whilst printisarel means to print. The development of Romani in isolation from its sister languages means that it is no longer mutually intelligible to speakers of Bengali, Hindi, and Punjabi, for example. Furthermore, the extent to which speakers of different Romani dialects are able to communicate depends on the degree to which they have evolved and localised.

Romani spoken in Britain is predominantly Angloromani: Romani words inserted into English-structured sentences. Until the end of the nineteenth century, Romani-proper does seem to have remained the first language amongst British Romanies. However, steady integration and inter-marriage has resulted in a preference for English. There are no official figures for the number of Romani or Angloromani speakers, but there are estimates of 40,000 people making use of Angloromani.

### Activity 1: Romani in English (Years 7-9)

Languages grow and evolve. Modern English is an amalgam of many different languages, and has, over the years, absorbed words from other cultures, too. Some of these words are Romani.

✂ Place the adjacent words and phrases on the board and ask the class what they have in common:

Word used in English	Comes from the Romani	Translation
chav	chavvy	child
kushti		good
cosh – as in ‘under the cosh’	koshter	stick, wood
mush		man
mockers – as in ‘put the mockers on’	moxado	to jinx
nark		to inform, irritate
wonga		coal (18th/19th English term for money was ‘coal’)
pal		brother

## Activities

**Aims and objectives** – to understand how languages evolve, blend, and borrow; to look at the influence of Romani, and by extension the Romany people, on English and English culture; to explore how language is significant to culture and identity.

**Skills:** comparison, listening, problem-solving

All words come from Romani and have been adopted into the English language, albeit in slang form.

✂ Can people think of other loan words from other languages?

### Activity 2: What is language? (Years 7-9)

Language is a complicated concept. It is used for communication, but is also an important element of identity.

✂ Pose the question to the class: ‘What is language for? Why is it important?’

### Activity 3: Listening (All ages)

✂ Listen to recordings.

✂ Use the prepared worksheets to explore attitudes towards the Romani language; or ask the class what can they learn about Romani from the people talking.

### Activity 4: ‘Can you rokker Romani?’ (Years 7-9)

✂ In pairs or small groups attempt to translate ‘Can you rokker Romani?’

### Activity 5: The evolution of language (Years 7-9)

✂ How do languages change over time? Compare a passage of Shakespeare to a passage from a contemporary playwright. What does this suggest about the evolution of Romani?





## Activity support

# DISCRIMINATION

**Discrimination (noun):** *the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of age, race, or sex.*

**Prejudice (noun):** *preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience.*

**Racism (noun):** *the belief that all members of each race possess characteristics or abilities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races.*

**Institutional racism:** *the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people. (From the Macpherson Report.)*

**S**ince Romany people arrived in England in the sixteenth century they have been subjected to discrimination. This discrimination can take many forms, from personal attacks directed at individuals to sweeping, faceless prejudice that affects the broad sweep of Travellers as a group; from targeted, intentional racism to indirect, institutional racism.

1. **Recordings:** Track 7
2. **Curriculum links:** English; history
3. **Travellers** have been subjected to discrimination for centuries.
4. **It is estimated** that 500,000 Romany people died at the hands of the Nazis during the Holocaust.
5. **Discrimination** can take the form of verbal and physical abuse, refusal of goods or services, or institutional discrimination.
6. **News articles:**
  - a) <http://bit.ly/atan-B> (The Guardian: 'A burning issue in the village')
  - b) <http://bit.ly/atan-C> (The Telegraph: 'Gipsies victims of race crime')

How discrimination is experienced varies from person to person. It might take the form of bullying in school: name-calling, exclusion from games, activities, and groups of friends, even violence. Adults may experience desecration or destruction of their property, refusal of service in shops or pubs, and also violent attacks. Travellers also experience systemic discrimination, often as a result of their lack of a permanent address. They might be politically disenfranchised if they are not on the electoral roll and are, therefore, unable to vote. They might find it difficult to receive medical attention if they cannot register with a doctors' surgery.

Over the centuries, Travellers have also been subjected to wholesale discrimination at the hands of the authorities. A series of laws passed in Tudor England made being Romany effectively illegal. The last trial and execution of men convicted of being Romany took place in 1658, at the Bury St. Edmunds Assizes.



The 1899 Enclosure Act denied many Travellers access to traditional stopping places and communal land. In 1959 and 1960 further Acts of Parliament criminalised many aspects of the traditional travelling way of life, and whilst local authorities were charged with ensuring Travellers had somewhere to stay in 1968, this was repealed in 1994 under the Criminal Justice Act. Once again, the travelling way of life was made, to all intents and purposes, illegal.

Without doubt one of the greatest tragedies to affect the Romany community was the Nazi Holocaust, or porrajmos, which means 'Great Devouring' in Romani. It is almost impossible to determine the exact number of Romany people who were sent to

their deaths, whether in gas chambers at the death camps or simply shot and buried where they fell, between 1939 and 1945, but estimates are at 500,000.

There have, however, been attempts to protect Travellers from discrimination. In 1989 'Romany Gypsy' was recognised as a minority ethnic group in England and Wales, affording its members protection from racism. In 2008 a duty was placed on local authorities to ensure adequate site provision for Travellers. Much still needs to be accomplished to break down centuries-old barriers of distrust and prejudice, on both personal, political, and institutional levels. As many Romany people state: they are people like any other, they just have their own culture.

## Activities

**Aims and objectives** – to encourage learners to consider what discrimination is, how it manifests itself, and what the effects of discrimination are.

**Skills:** empathy, listening, imagination

### Activity 1: What is discrimination? (Year 7 upwards)

- ✂ Discrimination is a much-used word, but do people understand what it really means, and what it really implies?
- ✂ As a class, discuss 'What is discrimination?' How does the class define it? Can they list any examples of discrimination?

### Activity 2: Listening (All ages)

- ✂ Listen to the recordings.
- ✂ Use the worksheets to explore the idea of discrimination; or discuss the following questions as a class:
  1. What are the different types of racism, prejudice, and discrimination that Travellers have encountered?
  2. What sort of effects might this have had on their lives?
  3. Why do you think that people treat others like this?
  4. What makes people think that it is acceptable to treat others badly?

### Activity 3: A Wedding in Auschwitz (Year 8 upwards)

- ✂ Read the story *A Wedding in Auschwitz*.
- ✂ Divide the class into pairs. Each pair must write a scene or a poem that explores the story of two of the

characters further. For example: how did the characters reach a point in the story? What happens to them next?

**Rina and the narrator** – after they met (how did their relationship progress? What happened to Rina?)

**Dolores and her husband** – before or after their wedding (how did they meet? What happened to them?)

**Dr Kiss and the narrator** – at any of their encounters

✂ Pairs must then read out their poems or act out their scenes.

*Alternatively, this could be completed as an individual exercise, with learners writing a short story surrounding the characters.*

### Activity 4: Mystery game (Years 7-9)

✂ See resources section



## Activity support

# CHANGE HOPES AND FEARS

**The world is constantly changing. As human beings, we must evolve with it.**

**D**espite the conservative nature of the Traveller community and their traditional values, their transient life-style means that they are no strangers to change, especially over the past fifty years. They have felt the effects of mechanisation and industrialisation; they have suffered from persecution and also started to enjoy some degree of protection; how, why, and where they travel has changed, too.

Change has brought with it hopes and fears for the future of the Traveller community. There are hopes for better acceptance amongst the wider community, but a fear of complete assimilation and a loss of identity. Parents hope that their children will inherit a world safe and sustainable; children aspire to jobs, security, and families.

Whilst it is important to recognise how similar many of the hopes and fears of the Traveller community are to those of many other people, it is also necessary to reflect on the hopes and fears that colour their lives as a minority community. They fear discrimination and they hope for equality. They fear treatment as second-class citizens and they hope for acceptance. Despite all the changes they have lived through, they hope for even more change.

1. **Recordings:** Track 8
2. **Curriculum links:** citizenship; English
3. **Travellers' nomadism** means that they are no strangers to change or having to adapt to new situations and places.

4. **There has been significant change** for Travellers in recent years, as their traditional labour sources have dried up and their traditional stopping places have disappeared.

5. **For many Travellers** the future is filled with both hopes and fears: hope for acceptance, but fear for the loss of their traditional way of life.



## Activities

**Aims and objectives** – to recognise that the aspirations of Travellers are not necessarily that different from any other person's hopes; that Travellers have gone through significant change.

**Skills:** cause and effect, analysis

### Activity 1: Experiencing change (Years 3-9)

Change is something that comes to all of us. Sometimes, it can have unexpected consequences.

✂ As individuals, can learners cite occurrences where change brought about situations that were better or worse than anticipated?

### Activity 2: Listening (All ages)

✂ Listen to the recordings.

✂ Use the worksheets to explore the ideas of change, hopes, and fears; or discuss the following questions as a class:

1. What sorts of change have the people in the recordings experienced in their lives?
2. On balance, are things better or worse for them now?

### Activity 3: Key moments in Traveller history (All ages)

The Traveller community has experienced extensive change throughout its history. Some of this has been positive and a great deal of it has been negative.

✂ Using the 12 cards (or a selection from the 12), pairs or small groups must organise the events from most to least significant in the history of the Romany people. In doing so, they must justify why they have selected that position, and whether each event would have brought about change for the better or change for the worse for Travellers.

### Activity 4: Hopes and fears (All ages)

✂ What are the class' own hopes and fears for the future? How do these compare with the hopes and fears of the Travellers?

### Activity 5: Hopes and fears (All ages)

A great deal of change is still necessary to help improve the situation for Travellers.

✂ Working in pairs or small groups, what sort of change does the class see as being important for the future of the Traveller community? (Politically, socially, economically?) Can they do anything as individuals to help with this?





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