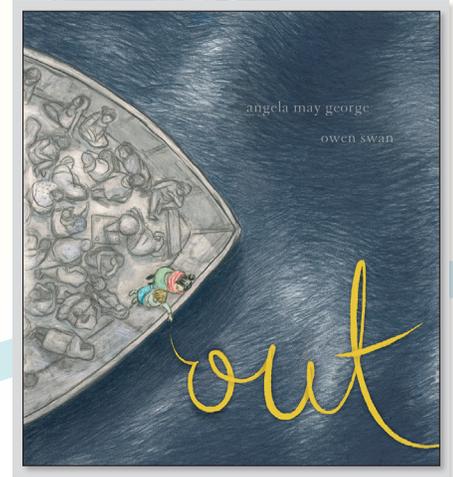


out

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TEACHER NOTES for Grades 2–3

Note: Teachers are advised to be mindful of students' individual circumstances when commencing this unit of study. Students could also encounter distressing information and images in their research—teachers should closely supervise any research and curate image and video collections for students.

"I'm called an asylum seeker, but that's not my name."
A little girl and her mother have fled their homeland, making the long and treacherous journey by boat to seek asylum. Timely, powerful and moving, *Out* celebrates the triumph of the human spirit in the darkest times, and the many paths people take to build a new life.

- 1 Before reading **Out**, look at the cover as a class. What do you think this book is going to be about? What gives you this idea? What does the title tell you? What does the blurb on the back cover suggest? What is the picture on the front and back cover? Have you seen an image like this before? Where?
- 2 Note that "asylum seeker" is a phrase used to refer to people who have sought protection as refugees. When they get this protection, they become refugees. Refugees are people who flee to other countries to be safe from war and other disasters. What do you know about refugees? What causes people to leave their homes and become refugees?
- 3 The girl in the story does not tell the reader what she and her mother are running from, but it is suggested in the illustrations and the text. Carefully reread the second, third, and eighth spreads of **Out**, asking students to pay attention to the illustrations. As a class, discuss what has happened to the girl.
- 4 When they are camping in the forest, the girl listens to the river "for the river knew the way out of the forest". Why would this be a comfort in an otherwise frightening situation? Have you ever been afraid but taken comfort in a certain noise or item (e.g., a soft toy)? What did you find comforting about it?
- 5 Describe the relationship between the girl and her mother. How do the text and illustrations work together to show their bond?
- 6 Although the girl and her mother finally settle in their new home, they both still feel like something is missing because the girl's father is not with them. Why is it important for the family to be complete before they can feel safe and at home?
- 7 The author of **Out** has deliberately not given the girl a name or otherwise indicated where she is from. Why do you think this is?

- 8** One of the biggest challenges that faces new immigrants is learning the language of a new country. How is language tied to the feeling of home? How do you see the girl's verbal expression changing as the story progresses (e.g., consider her use of "my mother" versus "Mum")? What does this suggest about her adoption of her new homeland?
- 9** What is the effect of the yellow ribbon motif that runs throughout the book and is incorporated into the title text? What does the colour yellow signify? How does this add an extra dimension to the story?
- 10** Follow the flying bird motif throughout the story. It appears on three spreads. Can you find all three appearances? What does this motif signify?
- 11** Look at illustration in the second-last spread. How does the illustrator use light in this illustration to draw the eye towards the doorway? Do you suspect who is on the other side of the doorway before you turn the page? How does the spread suggest what is about to happen even though there is no text?
- 12** According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), an organization that helps displaced people, almost half of the displaced peoples around the world are children. Consider that the girl and her mother are separated from her father before the story even begins. This is a very common situation for refugees, as well as children who are orphaned by conflict or poverty. How are children at a greater risk of danger when they are in situations of homelessness, conflict, or without their families?
- 13** What is a refugee camp? What are some of the challenges of living in a refugee camp for weeks or even years? Why are refugee camps a temporary solution for refugees?
- 14** Why is it so important for displaced peoples such as refugees to feel welcome in a new homeland?
- 15** What is being done in your community to help refugees settle there? What groups/organizations in your community help refugees, e.g., the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, etc.? What kind of help do they provide?
- 16** What do you think refugees settling in your community would need to live and to feel welcome there? In pairs, put together a welcome pack for refugee children who have just come to your city or town. What sorts of things do you think they will need to help them move past their bad experiences? What typically Canadian items would you give them? Include in your pack a letter introducing yourselves and welcoming them to your community.

