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Introduction

Room to Breathe is an immersive exhibition inviting you and your students to discover stories from generations of new arrivals to Britain. We invite you to journey through four rooms; a bedroom, a kitchen, a classroom and a barbershop, where students can discover the personal stories of people who have made Britain their home through a series of objects, videos, animations and oral histories. This is a tactile, highly interactive experience in which students are encouraged to explore in order to discover the stories hidden within.

This exhibition explores the experiences of people making a home and life in the UK; the hardships overcome, the friendships that have helped, the communities that have been built. Through discovering snippets of people's lives and experiences in familiar, everyday spaces, this exhibition encourages visitors to think about shared experience, empathy and understanding. It also allows students to reflect on their own experiences.

The stories we have collected are all from real individuals who arrived in Britain from the 1930s to today. Some tell of experiences of hostility, prejudice, racism, and discrimination. All stories highlight how resilient people are, as well as the objects, foods, activities and friends that help them build their resilience. You can use these stories to explore how Britain has changed throughout the last 100 years; how welcomed were different migrants and migrant groups? Why and how has the reception of migrants changed? How do government policies and developments affect how welcoming Britain is today?

Please ensure your students are mindful and respectful of the stories and the people who generously shared them with us, as well as the space and the objects within. Some of the objects in the exhibition have been loaned to us by the storyteller themselves, others are replicas, all need to be handled carefully to ensure they can continue to tell the stories for future visitors.

We recommend you limit the number of students in each of the four rooms in the exhibition, to 15 students per room. This is due to limited space. This is due to limited space and also to ensure that students get a meaningful opportunity to discover and interact directly with the stories and exhibition content. We expect students to be supervised by a responsible adult in every room. We know that because it is a highly stimulating, tactile environment, students can often get excited; it is the responsibility of the adults accompanying the trip to ensure students are exploring the space sensibly and are encouraged to read and listen to the stories within.

This exhibition guide is designed to help you get to know the exhibition, where best to look to discover stories that relate to your learning goals. We have highlighted the stories for Primary students in each room, you can find these in the green boxes. If you have any further questions about the exhibition and how to explore it with your students please contact our Education Manager, Liberty Melly liberty@migrationmuseum.org

Leading a discussion

Room to Breathe is a brilliant exhibition to start a conversation about the experience of migrating. Many students will be able to relate to the stories and experiences in different ways. They might have migrated from a similar place at the same age, or they may recognise their favourite ingredient in the kitchen, they might recognise a shared emotion or feeling from a point in their life. The immersive nature of this exhibition allows students to explore and interact with the stories they find and in doing so provokes a deeper connection. Encouraging students to discuss and share the stories increases the impact they have; it allows students to reflect and formulate their own ideas and responses.

We recommend that you begin your discussions with students by asking about the meaning behind the phrase (and title of the exhibition) 'Room to breathe'. Students will often talk about this meaning space, or time alone, they also think about spaces of safety, and places they feel themselves. Encourage the conversation further by asking them what areas they go or what activities they do the give themselves 'room to breathe'. Ask them to guess which four rooms we have recreated for the exhibition (bedroom, kitchen, classroom, barbershop); can they get all four?

We recommend that primary students are led to specific stories to read them as a group, dissecting the different elements as you go. For example;

- Who was this person? What age were they when they migrated?
- What type of migration is this? Did they come here as a refugee or asylum seeker? Did they come here to study or for work? Or a combination of different things? What other motivations and reasons are there to migrate?
- What did they bring with them? What would you bring? What did they miss the most?
- How did they communicate with the people they left behind? What forms of communication do we use to keep in touch today?

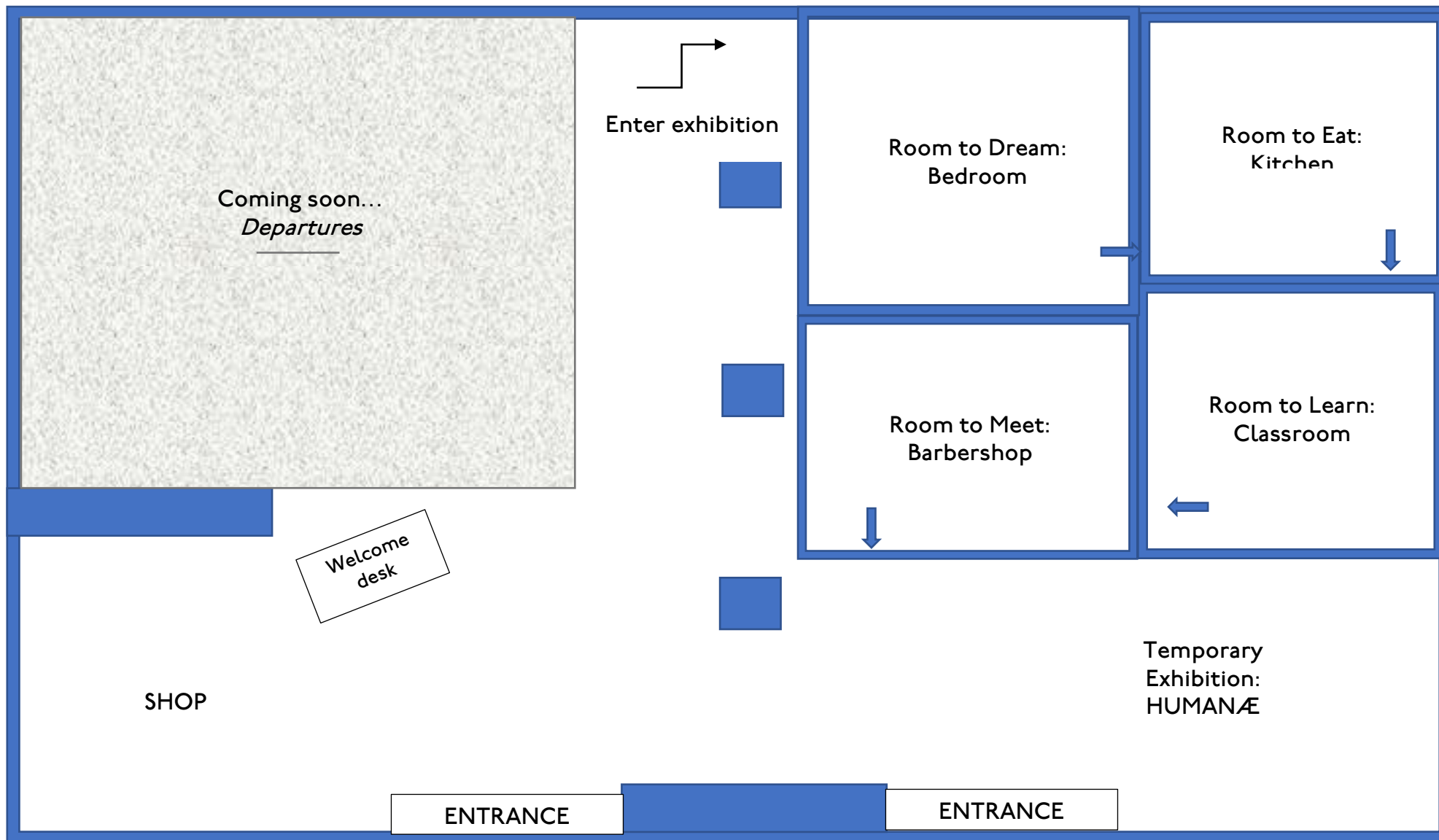
Allow time and space for students to share their experiences; perhaps they were once new at school, or a friend helped them in some way. This exhibition is designed for people to connect to the experiences on a human level regardless if they have experienced migration first-hand or not. We believe that it is through real and personal stories that migration is best explored, this allows the start of wider conversations to the topic to begin from a place of compassion. As you discover each room ask students why they think it might be an important element of creating a new home after migrating; why have we described the barbershop as a 'room to meet'? What experiences do your students associate with this space?

Please do feedback about the interesting discussions you and your students have had in the exhibition and let us know how this effects discussion in your classroom after the visit!

Migration Museum
Exhibition Guide for teachers

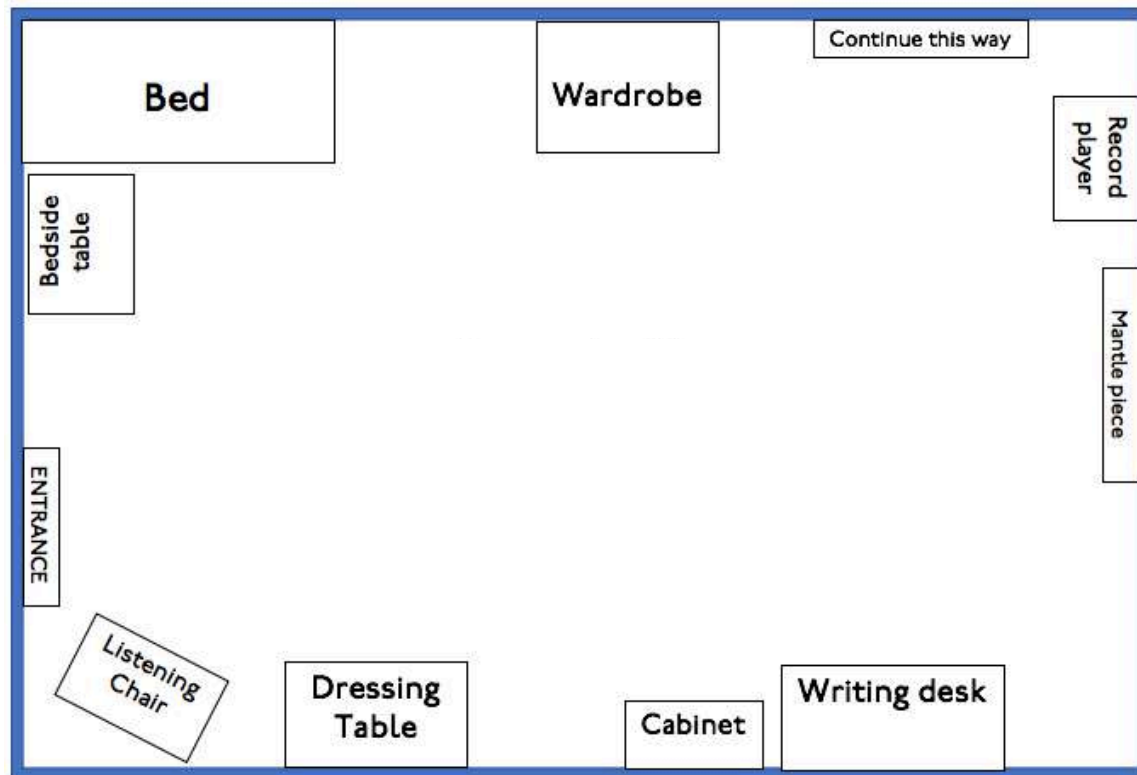


Migration Museum Map



Room to Dream: The Bedroom

A bedroom is often a place of familiarity and safety, and where we spend our alone time. Many migrants have vivid memories of their first homes and bedrooms, the spaces and the objects they filled them with often grounding them. Sometimes a person's first room is in a hotel or hostel, or even a detention centre. This room explores the early memories of arrival and settling in; these stories highlight the power objects, special clothes, or activities like reading, writing and drawing, listening to music, have over our feeling and sense of home. We can uproot ourselves, but we often bring with us our mementos, keepsakes, our favourite music, or a regular hobby. These things can be packed with memories or be an expression of our identity.



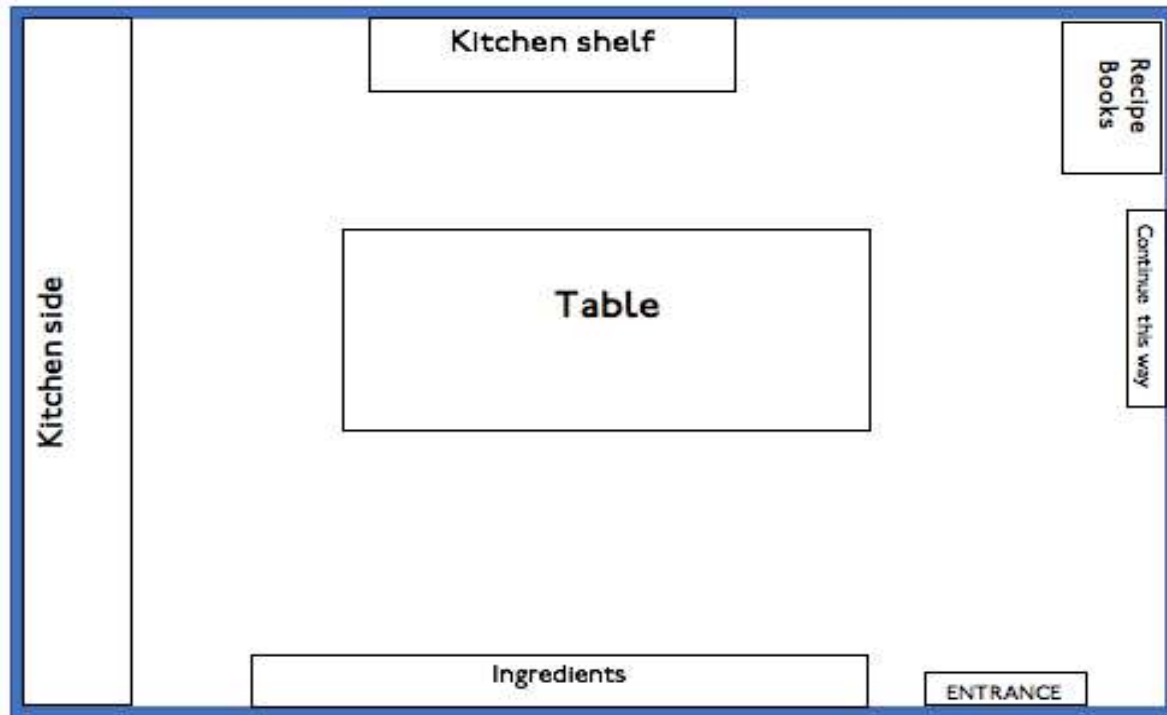
Egbert Cornwall: found on the writing desk, in the wardrobe, and a family photograph above the mantelpiece.
Facts: Born in Jamaica in 1922. Joined the RAF in WWII. Immigrated to Britain in 1945. Got a job with the railway.
Met and married an English woman who he had a daughter called Liz. Liz donated his story including his real jacket and shoes! You can see Egbert wearing them in the photograph with Liz as a child
Discussion points: Why Egbert migrated to Britain. The hostility and racism he faced. How he overcame the negatives with family, friends, letter writing, his job, travelling and art.
Activity: Write a letter or postcard to someone imagining you are living in a different country to them.

Argun: photo album on the bedside table
Facts: Born in Cyprus, Limassol in 1956. His parents migrated to Britain. When violence between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots increased resulting in Civil War, Argun migrated to Britain as a refugee, his photo album is one of the few things he brought with him on the boat. He now runs a successful stationary shop in Hackney, London.
Discussion points: What is a refugee and asylum seeker?
Activity: Draw a picture that you would want to take with you; of your family or friends, or something special. On the back of the drawing write the reason why. Add this to the photo album in the blue education suitcase.
Think about what else you would take with you, a stuffed toy, a mobile phone, or a favourite book?

Migration Museum Exhibition Guide for teachers

Room to Eat: The Kitchen

The Kitchen explores our relationship with food; making it, eating it, celebrating with it, the emotions food and drink can evoke, how it can help us communicate or heal. Memories of food can evoke strong emotional reactions; food can be part of our culture and our identity, it can affect our mood, it is something we take pride in and use to celebrate important occasions. Sharing food is an act of kindness, togetherness and often opens us up to conversation. Offering a guest, a drink like tea or coffee is a sign of welcome, tea is often offered to help cheer someone up or prompt deeper discussion. Our tastes are both unique and part of our shared experience in the world; some people love spice, others sour or sweet, food we're cooked at home is often our favourite.



Lem Lem's clay jebena: found on the shelf. Jebena must not be touched or handled.

Facts: Refugee from Eritrea, Jebena is a traditional pot for making coffee, which is drunk with friends over conversation.

Discussion points: Food and drink as a part of culture and cultural practise. Food and drink that brings people together and allows them to share and connect.

What is a refugee? Where is Eritrea and when did it have a war?

Table animation

Encourage students to sit at the dinner table, this will trigger an animated video. This contains three stories; Danny's Full English Breakfast, Ilka's Kitcheree and Ola's Cake. These stories explore the role of food in feeling at home in a new place.

This animation can be stopped and started using the red and green button on the wall. Each video is between 2-4minutes long. Students will need to listen carefully. Please ask a member of staff if you need to turn the sound on.

Ingredients shelf

Read the stories hidden on the labels of the ingredients.

Discussion points: What ingredients and flavours do we recognise? Are there any that you have at home? Why is this ingredient or flavour important to the person in the story?

Activity: Write an 'ingredient card' and leave it in the box; it may get turned into an ingredient on the shelf. Encourage students to think about what food or ingredients are important to them do they have a memory attached to a certain food or flavour?

Barry's Tea: found on the ingredients shelf.

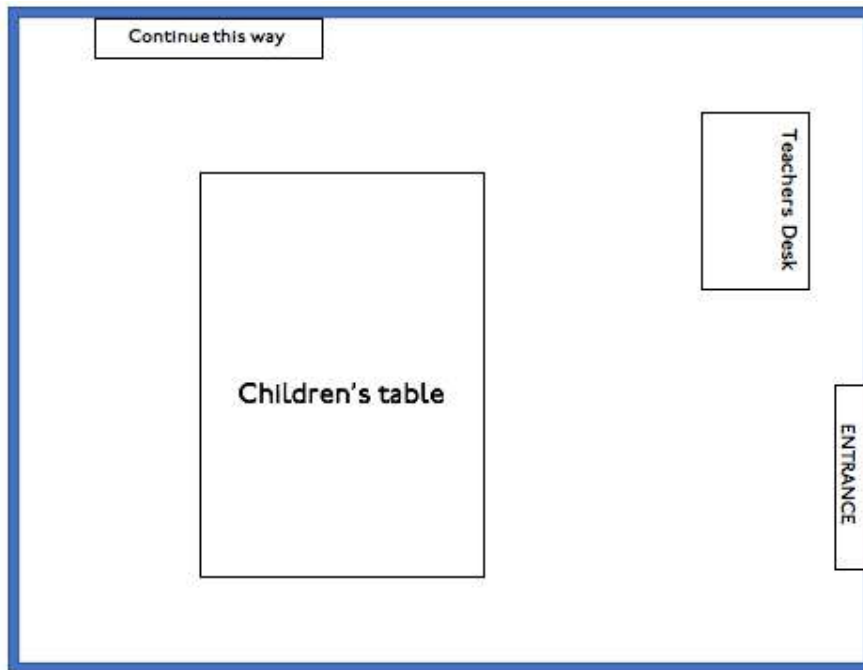
Facts: Aine O'Healy from Ireland migrated to the US then England.

Discussion points: Carrying a piece of home with you wherever you go. What makes you feel 'at home'? What do you think you might miss if you went to live abroad?

Migration Museum Exhibition Guide for teachers

Room to Learn: The Classroom

There are eleven spotlight stories in this room. Ten of these are on audio headsets with varying lengths of narration, ranging from 2 – 5 minutes long. Each story is voiced by the person telling it. These stories explore the role of school and learning environments like the classroom in formative early memories of arriving in a new country. Some stories discuss negative experiences of racism and bullying, others describe how a friend or teacher made them feel more welcome. In addition to the spotlight stories, the classroom is decorated with information about diversity in local schools, the languages spoken in Lewisham, student's artwork about when they feel settled, moving home and their identity.



World Map

This is a world map from 1981; it is a great tool to get students thinking about the formation of nations and borders.

Activity: Ask students to identify what changes to the map have happened. You can even get them to guess what year it was created.

Amarjit: Story by the desk the whiteboard.

Facts: Moved from Punjab, when she was 12 years old. Really liked maths which gave her confidence. She grew up and got a PhD in Physics and Chemistry!

Discussion points: Who has a favourite subject and why do they like it? How does it make them feel when they are good at their favourite subject? How did maths help Amarjit? Think about how alien other things felt to her; food, lessons, the weather, why might having something that you know and are confident at help you?

Lea: Story on the desk with a 2minute audio.

Facts: Migrated from Bulgaria with her parents after her dad got a job here. She was 7 years old and had to learn English. She first went to an unwelcoming school which she didn't like but moved to a nice school where she made lots of friends.

Discussion points: How was Leah's experience of school first shaped by her classmates when she first arrived? How can we be welcoming to newcomers? Is there a time you were new to school, or did someone in the class move here from somewhere else?

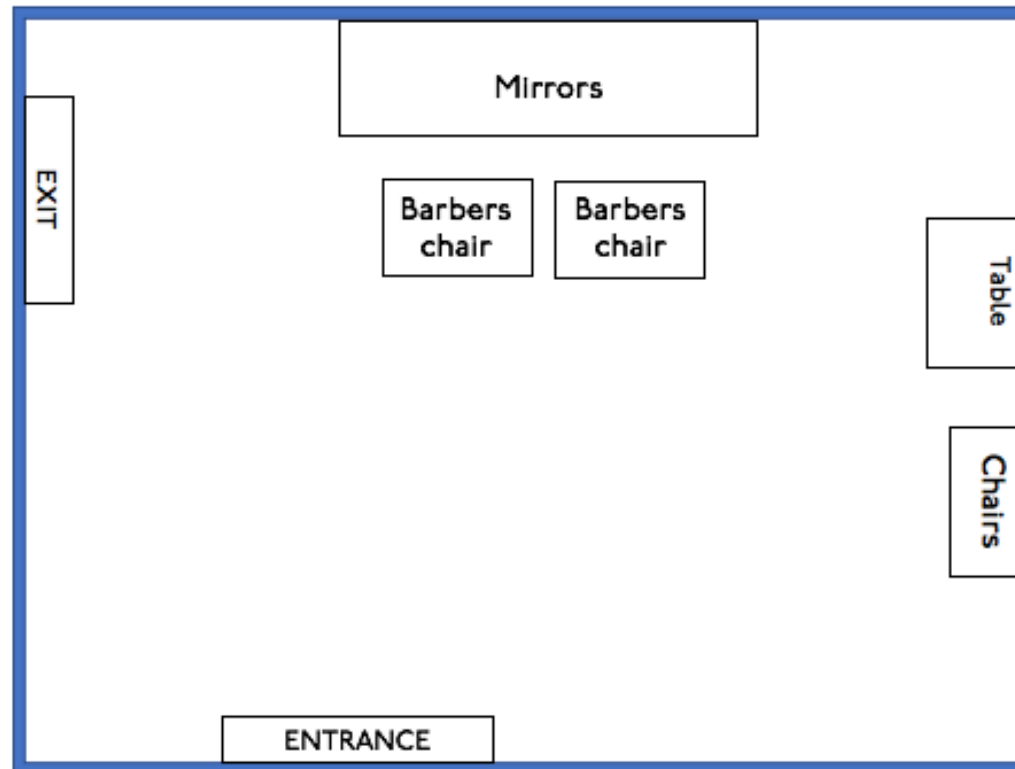
Ask students what they might feel if they had to leave Britain to live somewhere else. Would they be excited or nervous?

We recommend that primary groups spend 5 minutes listening the audio before having a focused group discussion about the stories highlighted above. Please note that Karamat's story uses a swear word which some students may react to.

Migration Museum Exhibition Guide for teachers

Room to Meet: The Barbershop

Barbershops and hairdressers are spaces in which people meet, commune and take care of ourselves. Hair can also often be connected to our culture and identity. The barbershop explores the everyday spaces which we occupy that encourage us to look after ourselves or to meet and create shared experiences with others. The stories on the wall explore stories of women who have a cultural relationship with their hair. The barber's chairs face mirrors that turn into video screens when students sit in them. These videos contain real-life conversations and stories from barbershops across London.



Women's hair stories:
On this wall we have a collage of stories from women about their relationship with their hair.

This room is not as suitable for groups of primary students due to the fact that only two students can listen to the stories at once, so it is hard to lead a group discussion.

Temporary Exhibition Humanæ

Humanæ is an ongoing project by artist Angélica Dass documenting every human skin tone through portrait photographs. The project illustrates that skin colour and race are far more complex than the labels and categories that we are so often forced to fit ourselves into, inviting us all to reflect on and rethink our identities and what we have in common. Hundreds of volunteers from dozens of countries worldwide have already participated in the project, which is a work-in-progress that continues to evolve and grow.

We are displaying a selection of portraits from the *Humanæ* series, including a number featuring Londoners taken by the artist, Angélica Dass, at the Migration Museum. We recommend you watch this [TedTalk](#) by Angélica Dass prior to exploring this topic with your students. You may also want to share this with your students in a pre-visit classroom session. You can find out more about this project on the *Humanæ* [website](#).

Activity

We have provided paper and colouring apparatus; we encourage you to engage your students in a discussion about *Humanæ* while drawing self-portraits. You can either leave these to be displayed at the museum, or you can take them back to the classroom.

Conversations board; we encourage students to reflect upon the installation through discussion. We have provided space for students to write a question (on the envelopes) or provide an answer (on a piece of card), or both. This allows for a safe and open discussion with a wide variety of people. If you do not have time to do this at the museum, we encourage you to try this in class.

Evaluation and feedback

In order to assess our work, it is essential that we get feedback from teachers and students about their visit to the Migration Museum. As we work towards the goal of establishing a permanent museum for Britain, we are keen to incorporate the voices and opinions of everybody who has visited our galleries. Education is core to all that we do here at the Migration Museum, so understanding how teachers and students use our exhibitions and galleries for learning is very important to us.

Please encourage your students to fill out the student evaluation form, and please ask all teachers in attendance to fill in the teacher evaluation form.

Primary school [evaluation form](#)

Secondary school [evaluation form](#)

University group [evaluation form](#)

Teacher [evaluation form](#)

