

# THE ELEVENTH TRADE

ALYSSA HOLLINGSWORTH



TEACHERS' NOTES FOR KS2/3 TEACHERS

# INTRODUCTION

**Invite pupils aged 9–12 to meet twelve-year-old Sami, a refugee from Afghanistan as he searches for friendship, a place he can call home, and his grandfather’s most-prized possession . . .**

*The Eleventh Trade* by Alyssa Hollingsworth explores the challenges of the refugee experience, opening up both Literacy and PSHE objectives around what it means to ‘belong’ or to call somewhere ‘home’.

It is the perfect class reader for pupils aged 9–12 years, particularly for those in Years 6–7 making the transition from primary to secondary school key stages.

The Reading Group Questions and Activities suggested here focus on comprehension, inference, and retrieval skills, while also providing links across the curriculum. The activities included aim to improve pupils’ understanding of the text and to explore some of its most important themes – from friendship and football, to music and kindness and home.

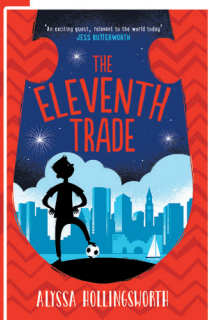
# ABOUT THE BOOK

*When his grandfather’s most-prized possession – a traditional Afghan instrument called a rebab – is stolen, Sami resolves to get it back.*

*He finds it at a music store, but it costs \$700, and Sami doesn’t even have one penny.*

*What he does have is a keychain that has caught the eye of his classmate. If he trades the keychain for something more valuable, could he keep trading until he has \$700? Sami is about to find out . . .*

From debut author Alyssa Hollingsworth comes a story about overcoming fear, being a friend, and finding a new place to call home.



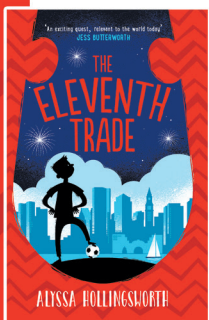
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**SHAPES**  
for schools

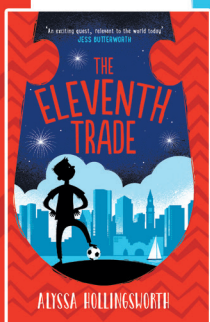


# READING GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What is a rebab? Why is it an important **symbol** in the story? What does it **signify** or **represent**? Look up the word 'rebab' – what does it mean? What other spellings does it have (e.g. rabab, rubab)?
2. What does Sami mean when he says, 'for the first time today, it feels like my skin fits' on page 1? What can you **infer** about his life and experiences from this sentence?
3. How can you tell that Sami has a **positive relationship** with Baba in Chapter 1? Pick out words and sentences to support your opinions.
4. Consider Sami's description of his home on page 5. What does he mean when he says, 'the world inside me expands'? Have you ever felt the way Sami describes here?
5. Sami feels 'too stunned to move' on page 6. Why? How does the author Alyssa Hollingsworth use **punctuation** to also create a sense of shock or surprise for the reader in this passage?
6. Why do you think the author switches between Sami's present life in Boston and Sami's memories of his old life? How does this technique help to show Sami's feelings about both places? (Chapter 2)
7. What are the important objects in the story? What do they each represent? Why is Sami's Manchester United key chain so significant, for example (pages 20 and 42)?
8. How is football important in Sami and Dan's relationship? Why do you think Sami is reluctant to speak to Dan at first? (pages 26–27).
9. What opinions does Dan have about Afghanistan? Why do you think Dan has these opinions? How do they **contrast** with the reality that Sami experienced? (pages 27–28)



10. How does the author show Sami's **conflicting feelings** when Peter asks him to trade the key chain? What are Sami's **motivations** for finally agreeing to the trade? (page 43)
11. What **tone** and **style** are Sami's 'Trade Logs' written in? Why do you think the author has decided to include these throughout the story?
12. Why does Sami find it so hard to accept Dan calling him 'friend'? (page 57). How does this change as the story progresses?
13. What does Sami mean when he says: 'It's a painful warmth. Hope' (page 67).
14. How is the threat of 'loss' important in the story? (pages 75–76). What prevents Sami from truly enjoying his new life in Boston? Does he overcome his fears? How?
15. 'The **theme** of 'home' is the most important theme in *The Eleventh Trade*.' Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Do you think Sami finds his home in the end?

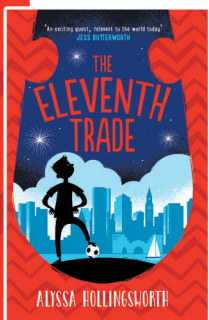


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# SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

## Literacy

- *The Eleventh Trade* includes important objects that act as symbols in the story. What are these important objects? Bring some of your favourite objects to class and put them into a story bag; take turns to pull them out and use them to describe memories or create your own stories. Which objects would you trade?
- Draw a plot graph to show the events of *The Eleventh Trade*. On the graph, mark the following things: the problem in the story; the rising action; the climax; the falling action; and the resolution. How does tension rise and fall in the story?
- Consider how Sami changes as the novel progresses. Write a letter from Sami at the end of the story to his previous self. How does he feel now? What does he want to say to his old self to give him hope? Refer to the different events of the story.
- Write a description of your home. What does it mean to you? How does it make you feel? Read Sami's description of his home in Afghanistan on page 5. Use this piece of writing as a model for creating your own piece, using as much sensory description as you can.
- Create a playlist of songs that you think suit the themes and ideas in the book. Explain your choices to the class.



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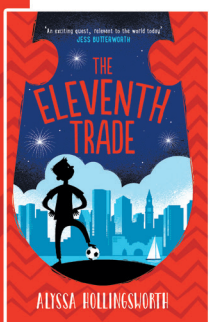


## Drama + Speaking and listening

- Conduct television-style interviews with the different characters in the story, asking them questions about the various events. How will you show the different characters' personalities through their body language, facial expressions and voice?
- In groups, create a dramatic performance entitled 'Home'. Consider how action, narration, props, body language, voice and volume contribute to meaning. Use musical instruments to accompany your piece and to convey the sound of home.

## Geography

- In pairs, carry out research into the history and culture of Afghanistan, splitting your research into three areas:
  - o Where is it? What are its geographical features?
  - o What is its history?
  - o What is its culture and identity?
- How does Sami describe Afghanistan on page 5 and throughout Chapter 2? Pick your favourite descriptive passage and use the author's imagery to draw the scene. Does it correspond to the picture you had in your head from your research into Afghanistan?
- Create a tourism guide or pamphlet for the country of Afghanistan. Why should people visit the country? What is interesting about it? What can you say about its history, culture and identity? Incorporate some of the Pashto and Arabic Phrases on page 329.

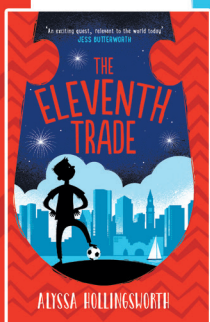


## R.E.

- There are several references to ‘Ramadan’ in the story. Find clues in the text to write a definition of Ramadan and how Sami experiences it.
- Carry out some research into Ramadan including: what it is, when and why it happens, which religion practices it, and how it is observed. Share ideas with your classmates. Present your findings to the class.

## Art & Design

- Using Sami’s memory of his house on page 5, draw the image that he describes.
- Draw an image entitled ‘Home’ and showing what the word means to you.
- Create a story box (diorama) for one of the scenes in *The Eleventh Trade* – for example when Peter demands that Sami trades his key chain (page 43), or when the rebab is taken from Sami at the end of Chapter 1.



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