

# Joha and the End of the World

## Teachers' Notes

Joha is a traditional figure in many North African folk tales, and frequently represents a somewhat contradictory figure - he can be fun, simple, intelligent, cunning, naïve and lucky, often all within the same story. In this story, Joha finds himself in a contemporary North African society and so the traditional story has something of a modern feeling about it.

This BritLit kit, written to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the project, is the first of what we hope will be many tales taken from the traditional and given a modern makeover. It is also a departure in that all earlier kits were based on stories which had a strong connection with Britain while this one clearly does not move far from the Mediterranean sea lapping gently against the North African coast. This deliberate shift is part of an attempt to widen the cultural experiences of the pleasure of reading. We hope that many more will ensue and would welcome similar stories with an updated traditional theme from teachers and others who are interested in the project.

This kit is the result of an intensive course for Tunisian teachers of English held under the auspices of the British Council Tunisia and the Tunisian Ministry of Education under the umbrella of the 'Reading Initiative' in early 2013. Particular thanks are due to all who took part in that most productive course, and, in particular, to Zied Kammoun, Anis Kherdani, Bilel Zelfany and Wassim Dakhli for the ideas that are included in this kit.

In common with all BritLit kits, the concept behind it is to give space for the students' creativity to flourish, which is based on the Samuel Johnson maxim that a writer only starts a book while a reader finishes it. The overarching message that teachers should take into the classroom, however, is that the students should enjoy the whole process.

# Pre-reading

In all the questions below, the ideas that the students produce are paramount. As long as their answers are honestly given then they must be considered correct, even if the English used might need some steering. You may project the pictures shown by using the Powerpoint provided.

1. Look at the picture of Joha with a goat. Guess what the relationship is between Joha and this animal. Why does he keep it? What is it for? How long has he had it?

Ask if Joha would be protective about the goat - why/whynot?

2. Look at the picture of Joha, his goat and the three boys. Guess who the boys are and what their relationship is with Joha. What do they want? Why do they want to do this?

Ask students to speculate on how the boys might (already) know Joha.

3. What has the mobile phone to do with Joha, the boys and the goat? Who does the mobile phone belong to? What information does it show? How is this information used?

Note that the picture on the mobile phone is also available on the Powerpoint.

4. Look at this fourth picture. Who is in the picture and what are they doing? What is the link between this picture and the three that went before it?

Ask why it is that the boys are enjoying themselves and Joha is working. Where is the goat?

5. Now, share your ideas with some colleagues and see if you can agree what happens in this story (you do not need to agree but you must choose one version of the possible story to tell the rest of the class).

Students should put their ideas together in small groups to share with the rest of the class.



## While Reading

Ask students to read until the end of the first page (line 41). They may do this silently or you may wish to play them the recording as they do so. Make the interruption as short as possible - it is simply a means of making sure that everyone has idea what has happened so far and can think about what might happen next, and give the slower readers a chance to catch up!

1. Read as far as line 41. What do you think will happen next? What will the boys suggest they do? What will Joha think? Now check your predictions with the rest of the text.

2. As you read the story, decide where the pictures you looked at in the Pre Reading Activity would be best placed.



## After Reading

Brainstorm possible adjectives with the whole class, and write down a short list (no more than 5) on the board. Then allow the students to work in groups to complete task one. They may use adjectives that appear on the board, as long as for each one they use they also find another one. The repeat the process for Q2

1. Now you have read the story you have a good idea about Joha's character. Which adjectives would you use to describe him? Complete the bubbles in the picture you're your own adjectives to describe Joha.



2. Now do the same for the boys. What adjectives would you use to describe them?

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All speculative ideas are to be welcomed. Make sure that this activity is oral only,

3. What do you think happened after the story you have read finishes?

*Do the boys eat the food?*

*How did they feel when they were going home?*

*What did they say to each other when they got home?*

*Did they try to trick Joha again?*

*Did they try to get revenge on Joha?*

*What did Joha do after they had eaten the food he cooked?*

*What happened to the goat?*

*What do Joha say to the boys the next time he saw them in the street?*

Create groups that each have an artist/designer and confident writer, if possible.

4. Design a cover for the book which contains this story to give the reader an idea of the story. Your design must include attractive design and pictures and a short descriptive text which would appear on the back cover of the book.

Remember that not everyone will feel confident about acting in front of their peers. Work with the whole class think about what other jobs there are in putting on a production - director, designer, props management, scenery etc and allocate roles accordingly.

