



- **Kahaani** – this word means **story** in **Hindi कहानी**, **Urdu کہانی**, **Punjabi ਕਹਾਣੀ** and **Bengali কাহিনী** .
- In this lesson, we are going to meet one of the people interviewed for a film called Kahaani, about their experiences as people of South Asian heritage now living in the South West of England.

Key themes we will be exploring in this lesson:

Kahaani

belonging

identity

culture

change

resilience

Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and Bengali are some of the main languages spoken across South Asia and spoken by the South Asian diasporas (groups of people who have migrated – some who were forced to move, some who chose to move) living in many regions across the world including Europe, North America and the Middle East.

The Kahaani Project collected 50 powerful stories from first and second generation South Asian people who made Somerset, Dorset, Swindon, and Wiltshire their home over the last 40–70 years.

Kahaani 3: Balwinder's Story

Rahaani

Vocabulary starter:

Match the words and terms with their correct definition



words and terms	definitions
visual literacy	using your voice and actions to support people in marginalised groups or situations
being an ally	countries across the globe controlled by Great Britain from the late 16th to the 20th century
resilience	the ability to understand and share the feelings of someone else
empathy	the ability to 'read' and make meaning from photographs, film/video and pictures
British Empire	the ability to recover quickly from difficulties

Learning intentions:

- **explore** the meaning of **resilience**
- **understand** and **practise** visual literacy
- **respond** to a media product by listening, thinking, discussing, empathising and writing.

belonging | identity | culture | change | resilience

The issues in this lesson - as throughout this Kahaani series - deal with some challenging experiences which may trigger trauma responses in the young people we are working with.

It is essential to read all background and preparatory guidance and information in the Teachers' Notes pdf and to take the necessary actions to organise class groupings to support young people who might be impacted by watching, discussing and exploring the focuses in these sessions.

For Vocabulary starter see Teachers' Notes for Kahaani 3: Balwinder's Story - this can be copied and given out for pairs to match words and terms with definitions

Visual Literacy

Have you ever heard the saying,
“Every picture tells a story”?

What can we ‘read’ from this image?

We can’t necessarily know who the little girl is, but can we use clues to work out things like:

- **How** is she feeling? (Clues: gesture codes like her facial expression and folded arms)
- **What** kind of character is she? (Clues: we are very used to ‘reading’ people’s faces – what might hers tell you?)
- **When /where** was the picture taken? (Clues – black and white photo, large building and railway track in background, short-sleeved dress...)

Now imagine who might have taken the photo / who is she looking at?
Again, imagine what she might just have said or what is she just about to say?



Fill in the Inference Grid with some ideas and share them with your partner.

Kahaani

Give out Inference Grids - see Teachers' Notes for Kahaani 3: Balwinder's Story

A couple of questions to discuss, before getting started on this activity, as whole class or in small groups:

Are words the only thing we read?

What can we learn from an image?

**Write and talk...**

- While watching and listening to Balwinder telling us about where she spent her early childhood, fill in some of the sections on her StorySharer sheet.
- Make a note of any questions, notes and thoughts about what she tells us of the country where she grew up.
- Talk together about what you think she means saying, *"...we had a very, very close community ...and we used to look out for each other."*

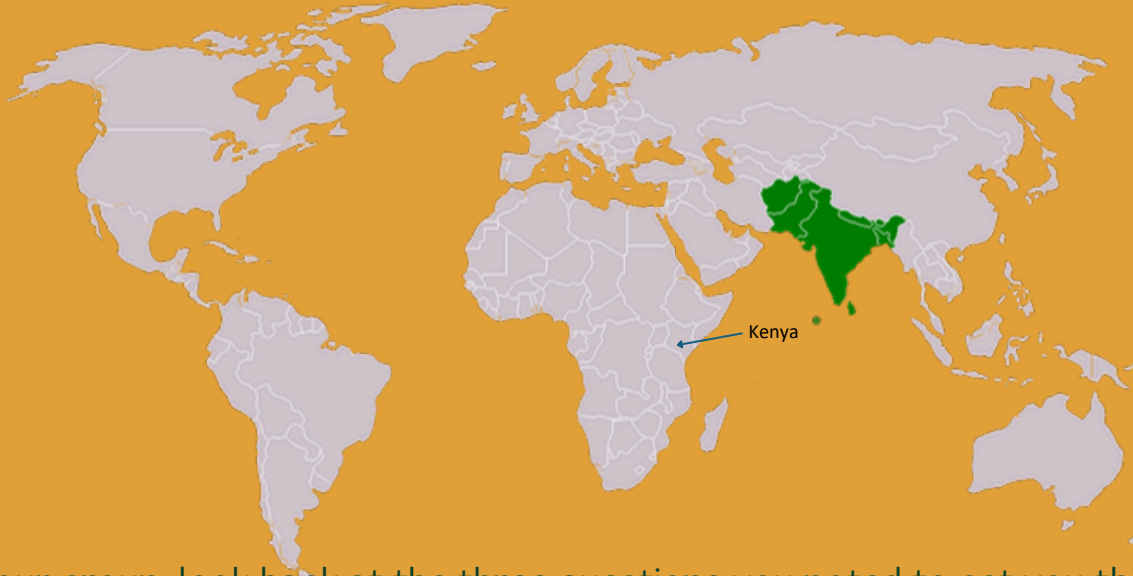


Give out Balwinder's StorySharer sheets.

Play 00.00-01.46 'My name is...and build up a good relationship.'

This introduction from Balwinder presents a context of division (apartheid?) in which she grew up and the importance of looking out for each other - which may well have given her the strength and resilience which is so much a part of her family's story.

It will also put into sharp contrast the school experience in the UK she shares on slide 6.



In your group, look back at the three questions you noted to get you thinking about Kenya's connections with South Asia – answers will be revealed!

Returning to questions from Jayanti's Story lesson, about how Kenya is connected to South Asia. The detailed exploration of the historical connection in this lesson – Balwinder's Story – should answer many of the questions students might have.

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**Talk...**

- **What** happened to Balwinder in school?
- **How** did she react initially and why?
- **What** helped her to be resilient and to stand up to the bullies?
- **What** do you remember from last lesson, when we met Jayanti, about being an 'ally'?
- If you have ever been an ally to a friend who was having a hard time, **what** did you do?



Play 13.47-15.07 'The school I went to I was the only Asian girl...me getting used to them.'

This extract from Balwinder's Story will need sensitive exploration as there may be young people in the class who have experienced racism, or been involved in racist behaviours.

It is essential to read all background and preparatory guidance and information in the Teachers' Notes pdf and to take the necessary actions to organise class groupings to support young people who might be impacted by watching, discussing and exploring.

Resilience – we talk about this quality a lot, but what does it actually mean?

- You have a perfect life with no problems.
- You have challenges in life but you learn ways of dealing with them, often with the support of others.
- You always expect the worst to happen so you protect yourself by not trying new things.
- You help your friends and family by being kind and caring when they are struggling.
- You look at other people's lives online and compare / feel disappointed in yourself.
- You learn from making mistakes and from working through problems



Pick a statement from this list and be ready to explain to the class why this does or does not represent **resilience**. **Hands up** to share ideas.

Rahaani

This activity can be done in small groups or as a whole class.

Linking in with the next slide, discussion can build around what we know about the StorySharers and their families so far met (Shahina, Jayanti and now Balwinder), in terms of resilience.

Reflect and talk...

- **Think about** how the people we have met so far in **Kahaani – Shahina, Jayanti**, and now **Balwinder** – have shown **resilience**. What kinds of problems have they been faced with and overcome?



Read and write...

- **Read through** the definitions on the next slide and choose the one that you feel sums up **resilience** for you.
- **Write** it down: '**Resilience to me means ...**', then an example of a time you or someone you know showed **resilience**.

Kahaani

This activity can be done in small groups before sharing with whole class. Leading to a broader discussion to develop understanding about resilience - and further lead to wider critical thinking about resilience.

What is being **resilient**, and why is it important?

...being able to learn to deal with difficult life events and to become stronger from it. It means we can adapt when we are faced with trauma, stress or any kind of adversity or emotional suffering.

...being aware that it is normal to struggle with painful emotions when a crisis occurs. Allowing ourselves to feel however we feel, knowing that eventually these feelings will pass and happier times will arrive, is key to coping.

...understanding that we cannot escape difficult situations in life. There will always be challenges to overcome and if we are resilient, we will be able to face these challenges effectively; we will know that we can make it through to the other side.

...feeling pain and hurt in tough situations, but being able to experience the difficult times and emotions and get through them. We face challenges by building trust in ourselves and others.

Rahaani

Continuation from previous slide.

This activity can be done in small groups before sharing with whole class. Leading to a broader discussion to develop understanding about resilience - and further lead to wider critical thinking about resilience.

Generations of Resilience: 1

Talk...

- **What** is an extended family?
- **What** might be the benefits of living in an extended family?
- Can you think of any drawbacks to living in an extended family?



Write...

As you listen to the following extracts of Balwinder talking about her mother, note down, on Balwinder's StorySharer Sheet, examples of her mum's **resilience**, and what helped her to be strong.



'My mum was a single parent...'



'... independence is to come here'

Talk...

In your group:

- **share** some examples of Balwinder's mum's **resilience**?
- **talk about** what helped her to be strong?

Kahaani

Give out Balwinder's StorySharer Sheets - see Teachers' Notes for Kahaani 3: Balwinder's Story

Watch: 1:50.00 - 2:25.00 'I was growing up in Kenya...we had no problems.'

Some possible responses to the questions about extended families:

More than your immediate family living in the same household /vicinity and supporting each other

Shared childcare / emotional support / practical help / financial help...

Lack of control and privacy / never being independent / expectations of duty

Watch: 5:35.00 - 6:54.00 'My mum was a single parent... she worked really hard.'

Watch: 6:58.00 - 8:42.00 'My mum was in a domestic violence relationship... independence is to come here.'

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Generations of Resilience: 2



What do we know so far?

Quick recap – copy down and fill in the gaps:

Balwinder's mum moved continents, from _____ in Africa to U.K in _____, when Balwinder was ___ years old.

Now let's go back another generation, to Balwinder's grandad. Like Balwinder, he also moved continents when he was 14 years old, **but not by choice**. Listen to her describe his story.

To find out more about why millions of boys and young men were taken from their homes and families and sent thousands of miles away, let's look at the next slide.

Kahaani

Answers: Kenya... Europe... 14

Watch: 2:53.00 - 4:12.00 "The reason they went to Africa was to build the railways ...is because of my grandad."

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Why were millions of young Indian men and boys, like Balwinder's grandad, forcibly taken from India to work across the British Empire?

Put the paragraphs in the correct order to find out

(Tip - check the connectives in each paragraph's opening sentence to work out the order.)

1. After the abolition of slavery, the British Empire used it extensively as a way of getting cheap, if no longer free, workers. They drew heavily from India and sent over two million people of Indian descent to various colonies across five continents, working in industries like sugar production and railways. The system often involved coercion, exploitation, and harsh conditions, making it a form of forced labour.
2. Between the late 1600s to the mid-20th century, Britain ruled a number of other countries around the world, including India, Kenya, Australia and Jamaica. These countries formed the British Empire, and Britain became incredibly wealthy profiting from their natural resources and the labour of their people (originally through the horrific system of slavery).
3. When Britain wanted to build railways in East African countries like Kenya and Uganda, they took advantage of the fact that many people in rural India lived in poverty, and took teenagers and young men from the villages to work 3000 miles away. These people had little choice and were paid very poorly - often just given their food and accommodation under a scheme called 'indentured labour'.

Kahaani

For groupwork activity sorting the sequence, see Jumbled Paragraphs sheet in Teachers' Notes pdf for Kahaani 3: Balwinder's Story.

The order should be 2, 3, 1

Sources: gathered and adapted from BBC Bitesize, British Online Archives, and Wikipedia

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Generations of Resilience: 3

Empathy writing...

- How would this have felt, being ripped from your family, your village, your country and continent to be put to work over 3,000 miles away – at the age you are now? Imagine this was you - **write down 3 sentences in first person to express your feelings.** *At least one of the sentences could be a question.*
- What character qualities do you think helped him to pull through and become a grandad with a happy extended family and a successful business, 50 years later?
- Now, try to imagine the thoughts and feelings of Balwinder's grandad as an old man. What might he say to his younger self, as he looks back over his life?
- **Write a short message from him at 64 to him at 14.**

Rahaani

This is a reflective, creative writing response for individual students to develop - perhaps from group work to get some starting points.

For young people who find writing a challenge, use voice recording, for scaffolding the writing - then extending the details from the voice notes; or simply present voice notes as powerful monologue pieces.

Plenary: Discover some of your loved ones' 'kahaanis'



Choose one of these family conversations to have (and if the other person doesn't mind, maybe record the chat) to find out more about **your** family's experiences:

- Ask a relative about their experience moving to a new place, whether it was to a new town, job, university, or even a different country. Discuss their feelings about the move, the challenges they faced and how they used to overcome those challenges.
- Sit down with a family member and go through old photos or videos from before you were born. Analyse the differences in how people dressed, their activities, and background details. If it's a video, listen for differences in music or languages spoken.
- Enquire if an older family member possesses an heirloom or a piece of clothing from ancestors. Explore the significance of this item, its history, and the emotions it evokes for them.

Add some of your thoughts from your conversation to your Identity Map.

Kahaani

This expanded collection of questions will serve as a useful guide:

Ask a relative – e.g. sibling, parent, guardian, grandparent about a time when they moved house, maybe to a new town, a new job, to university, or a new country.

- How did they feel about the move?
- What was difficult about it?
- How did they overcome their challenges?

Together with someone from your family, look at some old photos or videos from before you were born. Talk about:

- what the images show about life back then.
- What differences can you see from the images e.g. in the way people dress, what they are doing,
- what you can see in the background, and if video, sounds such as music or languages spoken?

Ask an older member of your family if they have an object or piece of clothing handed down from parents or grandparents.

- What is the object?
- Why is it special to them?
- Who did it come from?
- How do you feel seeing / wearing / holding it?