

# The Unknown Runner!

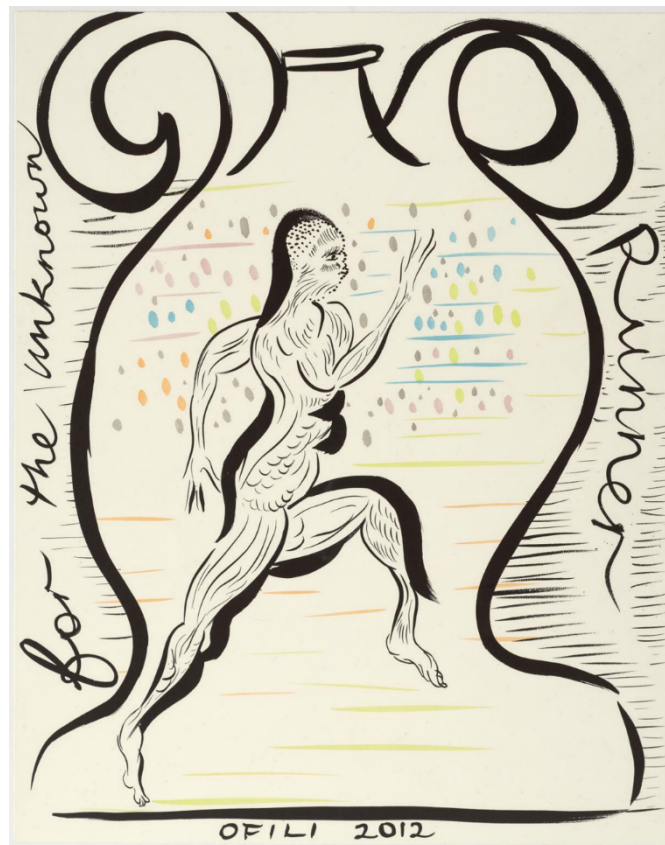
KS3 learning activities designed by Marvin Thompson

# Are you the Unknown Runner?

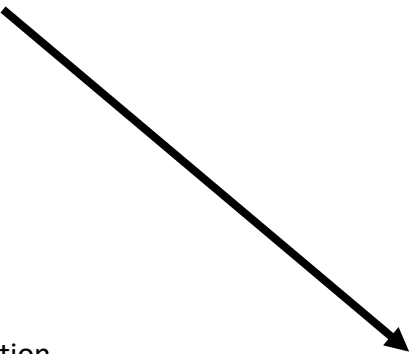
**What are we going to learn?** We are going to use this picture of the Unknown Runner to explore the topic of discrimination. This includes looking at issues of fairness, kindness and equality. By the end of this booklet, you will have completed lots of fun activities including creating your own anti-discrimination poster and even a short film!

**Warm Up 1:** The picture below was created by the Black British artist Chris Ofili. But who is the unknown runner? Where are they from? Have they got a disability? Are they male or female or neither? Are they old or young? Happy or sad?

To answer these questions, make notes in the space surrounding the picture. Aim for at least 7 ideas!



**Warm Up 2:** So that we can all share and understand the same vocabulary, have a go at this match-up activity!

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| 1) Society        | a) Treating people unfairly because they are somehow different to other people. |
| 2) Skin           | b) The flexible material that covers your bones and muscles.                    |
| 3) Discrimination | c) A large collection of people that live in the same area or country.          |
| 4) Equality       | d) When someone decides that they do not feel that they are male or female.     |
| 5) Gender neutral | e) Treating people equally and fairly.  |
| 6) Thoughtful     | f) Feeling all good inside.   |
| 7) Happiness      | g) Thinking about people's feelings before you act or say something.            |
- 

Answers: 1 = c, 2 = b, 3 = a, 4 = e, 5 = d, 6 = g, 7 = f

## Activity 1: What Would You Say?

Unfortunately, discrimination takes place in Britain. This is when groups of people are treated unfairly. They can be treated unfairly due to their gender, skin colour, religion, disability or other reasons.

Imagine someone was being discriminated against on social media? They might want to be a bit like the Unknown Runner who has no skin colour and no gender to discriminate against. What kind words would you say to someone like this to make them feel better?

### **Example: Social Media Message 1:**

You look strange. I would hate to look like you.

### **Example: A kind response:**

If you have nasty opinions keep them to yourself. You should not judge people on the way they look!

**Social Media Message 2:** I think you are lazy. I bet all your grandparents were lazy.

**Your kind response:**

**Social Media Message 3:** Anyone who looks like you must be unintelligent.

**Your kind response:**

**Social Media Message 4:** Are you a boy or a girl? Make your mind up!

**Your kind response:**

**Social Media Message 5:** Have you got a disability? You must feel sad. Go home and cry!

**Your kind response:**

## Activity 2: How Would You Feel?

In the next activity, you are going to read about an experience of discrimination that I went through when I was younger. It was a time when I wished that, like the Unknown Runner, I had no skin colour.

After reading each paragraph, you will have the opportunity to draw an emoji to show how I might have felt in that situation. Here are some emojis to give you some ideas.



## **When I was affected by discrimination:**

**1. When did this happen?** About fifteen years ago.

**Draw your emoji:**

**2. What happened?** I used to work in a pub in London. I was the only Black member of staff at the time. When I first started working there, some of the White customers kept asking me, 'Where are you from?'

One morning, when I answered, 'London,' one of the customers was not satisfied. He asked me, 'Where are you really from?' However, there was something nasty about the way was asking. When I said, 'I am from Tottenham, north London,' he was not satisfied.

**Draw your emoji:**

**3. How did it make you feel?** I felt angry and hurt. My stomach began to feel heavy and my lungs grew tight. The customer made me feel like I was not British and that I should not live or work in London.

**Draw your emoji:**

**4. Why do you think the customer was being unkind?** I think, like a lot of bullies, the customer got pleasure out making me feel unhappy.

**Draw your emoji:**

**5. Who made you feel better about what happened?** I talked to my mum and dad about what happened. They reminded me that they had gone through similar experiences when they first came to London from Jamaica in the 1960s. I felt comforted that they understood what I was going through. However, I felt confused and angry. Why did I have to endure the same pain as my parents?

**Draw your emoji:**

## Activity 3: Writing a list poem about discrimination

Some people who are discriminated against might wish they were like The Unknown Runner. The Unknown Runner has no skin, visible disability or gender to discriminate against.

With this in mind, let's collect some ideas for writing a list poem. The title of the poem will be: **What it Could Feel Like to be the Unknown Runner**

**Task 1:** First of all, list 7 things that might make you smile (one has been done for you).

1. A warm hug from my grandmother

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

### Ideas:

- Hearing a golden saxophone
- Slurping my mint choc chip ice-cream
- Laughing and laughing and never stopping
- Giving my best friend a high five when we are playing netball
- Dancing to fast music with a mermaid

**My example poem:**

**What it Could Feel Like to be the Unknown Runner**

Like slurping my favourite ice-cream

Like laughing and laughing and never stopping

Like dancing in the waves with a dolphin! best friend a high five

**Task 2:** Now re-write your list in the space below. See if you can re-order your list so you end on your most emotional or most powerful idea!

**Your Poem**

**What it Could Feel Like to be the Unknown Runner**

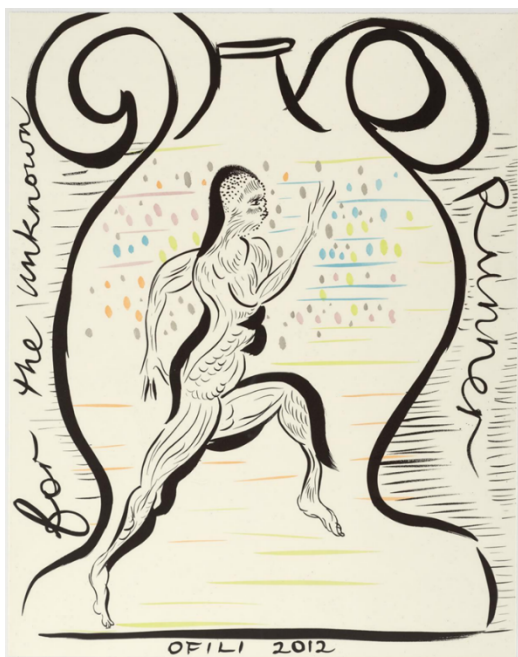


## Activity 5: An Anti-Discrimination Poster

We all have the power to be kinder people who celebrate difference. With the knowledge you now have, it is time to create an anti-discrimination poster. Who knows, your poster could even be used in your classroom or around your school!

### Slogan ideas:

- Live with Love
- Humans need Hugs!
- Watch your Words
- Friendship + Fairness = Fun
- Hurtful words cause anger: let's be kind!
- We are all people!



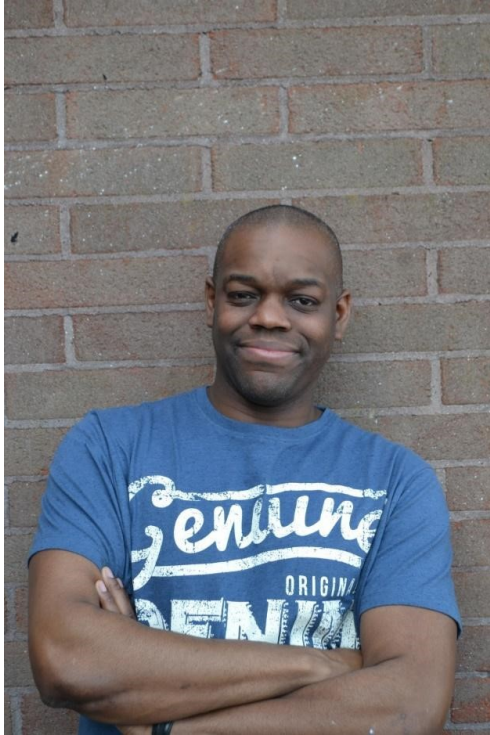
**Your ideas page!**

**Your final poster design!**

## **Challenge: turn your poster into an advert!**

- 1) Work in groups of three.
- 2) Write a script.
- 3) You could act it out as a play.
- 4) Or, using tablets or phones, you could film your advert
- 5) Think about location, different camera angles, lighting and sound.
- 6) There are lots of free apps and programmes to help you edit your finished advert.
- 7) You could show it to friends, family, or in a school assembly!

## About Marvin Thompson



Marvin Thompson was born in Tottenham, London to Jamaican parents and now lives in mountainous south Wales. His debut collection, *Road Trip* (Peepal Tree Press, 2020), is a Poetry Book Society Recommendation. In June 2020, the Poetry Society selected *Road Trip* as one of five Black Lives Matter Inspiration books.

In addition, *Road Trip* was one of 40 officially recommended collections and anthologies for National Poetry Day, 2020. *The Guardian* described *Road Trip* as an 'invigorating journey through the complexities of black British family life.'

In 2019, Thompson was one of only eight writers to be awarded a grant by Literature Wales as part of the Platforming Under-Represented Writers Funding Scheme. In addition, he was shortlisted for the 2019 Manchester Poetry Prize.

In 2016, Thompson was selected by Nine Arches Press for the Primers 2 mentoring scheme. He also has an MA in creative writing.