

# Carapace

## Introduction

'Carapace' is the ninth in the BritLit series of teacher resource kits.

**The Project.** The BritLit project was started in 2002 with the intention of providing Portuguese teachers of English in the state sector additional resource material for the extensive reading requirements of years 10 and 11. It is a joint venture between the British Council in Portugal and APPI (Associação Portuguesa de Professores de Inglês.) While aimed at the Portuguese market, the usefulness of the project as an international model is recognised and generic versions of the resources kits are being developed.

**The Resource Kits.** Much of the material provided is intended to be used with mixed ability classes and while the input from the materials is the same, the output from the students will vary considerably. Other materials are generally classed according to their degree of difficulty using the ALTE levels (Frame work) now adopted by many European countries through the Council of Europe as benchmark criteria for language assessment. ([http://www.alte.org/can\\_do/cef.cfm](http://www.alte.org/can_do/cef.cfm)). The resource kits provide a never-ending source of material for the teacher inasmuch as teachers are asked to contribute their own experiences and ideas to the project; we would like to see the materials mutate and mature with use. One of the advantages of using an electronic form is that each section can easily be personalised; we would be interested to see examples of this approach.

**This Kit.** The materials presented for class work on Romesh Gunesekera's story 'Carapace'. It is a short kit, produced in conjunction with 'A House in the Country' for a visit to Portugal by the author in 2004. Like other BritLit kits, it is intended for the development of language development and cultural understanding rather than as a source of literary study. There are four parts: **Pre-reading-Characterisation, Context, Word Work, After Reading**, plus a **teachers key – available on request** ([brit.lit@pt.britishcouncil.org](mailto:brit.lit@pt.britishcouncil.org)). As with all other BritLit productions, this is called a 'kit' to emphasise the fact that you, the teacher, are expected to assemble the component parts yourself, using the parts you require in the order you prefer. This is not, therefore, a course, simply a resource which can be picked over with some items used and others discarded. For this reason, each worksheet or worksheets within a sub-heading stand alone, and do not require work to have been done on any other worksheet. It is intended that the order in which the work is done is largely up to the teacher responding to the needs of their class. However, we would make the following suggestions:

- Some of the worksheets have been designed with preparation for reading the text in mind. In other words, the intention is that these worksheets are to be used **before** the students read the text. The reason is simply that by quoting from the text and dealing with language and content piecemeal in these sections, we assume that this will help the student to a more fluent reading of the text, without the need to break off and consult for meaning.
- We strongly advise that all the work in the section 'Characterisation' is done before the students are asked to read the complete text. This section is

designed to 'fast-track' students into an appreciation of the situation the characters in the story find themselves in.

- The 'Context' section can be done either before or after the text has been read, as can the work in 'Word Work', although we would recommend that this latter section is tackled after the text has been read.
- As the title suggests, the section 'After Reading' is to be tackled once all the other work has been completed. It attempts to 'wrap up' the work on the story, and to look forward to alternative texts.
- Some worksheets provide links to sites that are relevant to the work being presented and it is assumed that teachers will develop their own materials from these links. Please note, however, that some material may be subject to copyright restrictions, over which the BritLit Project has no control. Please help us by reporting any broken or disused links.
- Copyright permission has been obtained where applicable. All BritLit material is photocopiable.

We very much welcome your contribution to the project. Much of the material in the current kit has been contributed by state school teachers working in collaboration with the project team and we invite you to contribute your ideas and experience so that future versions of this material will present an even wider choice of opportunities for students to explore language and culture through literature.

**The story** 'Carapace' is a simple story of a Sri Lankan girl whose mother expects her to marry a stranger. The situation is complicated by two factors: she has a boyfriend, who has a very relaxed attitude to what is happening; she doesn't want to make any decisions. Does she really have a choice anyway? Or is she looking to Vijay to help her make a choice?

### **Acknowledgements**

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BritLit team June 2004: Carmo Leitão, Fitch O'Connell, Mark Howard

Porto  
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Section	Worksheet or Activity	Content	CEF
<b>Pre-reading Characterisation</b>	Story building	Answering questions to build a narrative	A2-C2
	The Narrator and Vijay	Quotes from some of the dialogue introduce us to the two principle characters	B1/2
	The Narrator and <i>Amma</i>	Quotes from the text introduce us to the other important figure in the narrators life, her mother.	B1/2
<b>Context</b>	Quiz and Text*	Assuming that most students knowledge of Sri Lanka is very slight, this light hearted quiz leads into a brief history	A2/B2
	Sri Lanka*	A series of texts from Sri Lanka give an opportunity to learn more about different aspects of modern Sri Lanka, and to present students with a challenging multiple matching reading task.	B2
	Arranged Marriages	Two texts, one for and one against arranged marriages lead naturally to a discussion on the topic	B1/2
	Romesh Gunsekera*	A brief biography of the writer	A2/B2
<b>Word Work</b>	Language in Use	Use of 'would' and 'will' to talk about habitual behaviour, using text as a source	B1/2
	Glossary	Contextualised meanings of some key words.	A2/B2
<b>After Reading</b>	Comprehension Check	Students have to design a dust-jacket plus blurb for the story	A2/B2
	Further Reading		

\* Material also appears in BritLit kit 7, 'A House in the Country' (another Romesh Gunsekera story)