



For Richer, For Poorer

by Adam Hughes

A Play in a Day for Primary School pupils about the causes and effects of malnutrition.

Staging

Due to every school being different, their stage set up will undoubtedly vary. However, we suggest using six PE style mats to help place the children three at the front where the three groups will sit and three at the back which are for the two 'India' figures and the Indian flag.

Cast

In a typical class of 30, the students should be divided up as so:

Mr India.

Mrs India.

10 make up **Group 1** - Representing the poorest regions of India.

10 make up **Group 2** - Representing the most affluent parts of India.

8 make up the **Mixed Group** – These children will play the various roles throughout the play including the vegetables, fast-food workers and shopkeepers.

In the event that there are slightly more or less than 30 students in the class, how these roles are assigned is down to the teacher's discretion.

The dialogue spoken by **Groups 1** and **2** (unless specified as 'all') should be assigned to a student within that particular group. That said, the dialogue is by no means fixed and should rather form the basis of the story and its themes.

Setting

While the setting in the script is referenced as being India, it could be set in any developing country i.e. Mexico, South Africa or Guatemala, Ecuador, Brazil, China, Philippines, Egypt etc.

Sadly, undernutrition and overnutrition affects the lives of thousands and thousands of families around the world and this is an important point to explore with your classes. So, if in geography or any other aspect of the curriculum, you are teaching about a developing country e.g. Latin America, all you have to do is change the names of Mr and Mrs to your chosen country i.e. Mr and Mrs Brazil, or Mr and Mrs South Africa.

Costume

As time is of the essence, the costumes must be kept as simplistic as possible. Therefore, we would suggest wearing hats containing some sort of image which denotes the character that the **Mixed Group** are portraying. For instance, the students playing the potato could wear a hat with a simple image of a potato drawn on. Alternatively, they could even enter wearing a sack with a piece of paper saying 'Potato' attached. Similarly, with a carrot, this could be a hat with a large orange C inscribed. The fast-food workers could also wear caps and carry paper bags or empty food boxes.



Movement and Sound

The movement suggested should be used throughout the piece. That said, if the teacher finds something more fitting to represent say the rice or the animals, then they are free to substitute what is suggested with their own choice. Also if a teacher feels that a certain group could enter slightly earlier or leave slightly later than is stated in the text then this is entirely down to their own judgement when staging the piece.

Take a look at Movement Director Robin Guiver's movement videos for ideas and starting points; you can always teach the movement in the week leading up to your Play in a Day performance so the pupils are familiar with it.

Download and use Alex Parson's original music and sound effects for your performance; it is clearly marked in the script where to use the music or sound cues. However, feel free to add your own spin on things on incorporate the pupils own live sound effects for certain moments.



For Richer, For Poorer

MUSIC: FOR RICHER FOR POORER.MP3

The students representing the poorer regions of India (Group 1) struggle to their mat whereas those representing the rich regions (Group 2) bounce onto theirs.

Mr and Mrs India walk onto the stage.

On the stand at the back of centre-stage, they pin up a flag of India (or your chosen country). They then each take to their own stand on either side of the stage.

Mrs India: This is India. (*Or Brazil, Mexico etc.*)

Mr India: Our beautiful country!

Group 1: From the poorest parts of Bihar to Orissa.

The students shiver and wave weakly.

Group 2: To the richest parts of Assam to Delhi.

The students bounce around, waving and smiling.

Mrs India: Our food industry is huge.

Group 1: The fastest growing in the world.

Group 2: We send our food to all different countries!

MUSIC: TOO MUCH FAT AND SALT.MP3

Group 1: Wheat!

Group 1 sway their arms from side to side to represent the wheat.

Mixed Group: Vegetables!

The Mixed Group mime digging away at the ground.

Group 2: Meat!

Group 2 cluck like chickens.

Mr India: We want India's children to grow up fit and strong.

Mrs India: Which means eating a variety of foods.

Group 1: But we don't.

Mr India: Of course you do!

Group 1: Where we live there isn't a lot of choice.

Group 1: So we just eat what we can.



The Mixed Group carry over a sparsely filled bag.

Group 1 *scurries over, desperately grabs what they can from inside before moving back to the mat.*

Mr India: Get some meat and vegetables too!

Group 1: They don't sell them in our village.

Group 1: We just eat bread and rice.

Mr India: What about keeping a balanced diet?

Group 1: We want to.

All of Group 1: But we can't!

Group 1: So our brains don't get the food they need.

Group 1: They cannot grow properly.

Group 1: So we cannot think or concentrate.

Group 1 close their eyes, tilt their heads and snore loudly.

Mrs India: What about the other children?

Group 2: We have lots of choice where we live.

Mrs India: That's great!

Group 2: We eat as much as we want!

The Mixed Group carry over two huge, bulging bags.

Group 2 *run across and begin to stuff their faces.*

Mr India: Why are you just eating fast food?!

Group 2: It's delicious!

Mrs India: But it's full of fat and sugar.

Mr India: You need to eat something else too!

Group 2: But we can get this food easily.

Group 2: All of the adverts say we should buy it.

Group 2: So we'll just eat as much as we like.

Group 2: Until we get bigger.

Group 2: And bigger!

Group 2: And bigger!

Group 2 take slow, exaggerated steps as they expand, tipping off their mat as they increase in size (this can be indicated by outstretched arms and puffed up cheeks).



MUSIC: SAD MUSIC – NO MONEY NO FOOD.MP3

Mr India: Can't you go to another village and buy some better food?
(*To Group 1*)

Group 1: We'd love to.

Group 1: But we don't have any money.

The Mixed Group are dressed as various vegetables.

Group 1 slowly moves towards them but their path is blocked by the shopkeeper who counts some money (N.B. this can be cut-outs of paper).

Group 1: No money means no food.

Shopkeeper: Five rupees or no deal.
(*from Mixed Group*)

Group 1 all begin to shrink and cower together.

Mr India: What's happening?

Group 1: Without a variety of food, we become stunted.

Group 1: That means our bodies cannot grow.

Mr India: But that only happens in other countries.

Mrs India: Like Africa, China and Mexico.

Group 1: It happens here too.

Group 1: We'll grow up small and weak.

The stunted Group 1 all sit down together.

MUSIC: Dance, party-style music. 'FOR RICHER FOR POORER.MP3

The Mixed Group become fast-food workers, carrying trays with takeaway cartons and cans of pop. They are guided over to Group 2 by the Shopkeeper.

Group 2: But we have lots of money!

Group 2: We eat whatever we want.

All Group 2: Burgers, Pizza, Chips, Kebabs.
(*Chants*)

The burger and chips are grabbed by Group 2 and taken over to their mat.

Mr India: You should buy some vegetables.

Group 2 quickly stamp their feet, the pace forever increasing.

Group 2: They take too long to cook.



Group 2: We're always in a rush.

Group 2: All of our friends eat at the chicken shop.

Mrs India: But all that fat and salt is bad for your heart.

The stamping becomes faster and faster until....it stops. Group 2 fall to the mat.

There is a pause.

Mrs India: What is going on?!

Mr India: I don't think we realised the problems they both have.

Group 1 and 2 move towards each other, delivering the following lines like playground taunts ("na-na-na-na-na-na").

Group 1: You'll keep getting larger.

Group 2: You won't grow at all.

Group 1: Your organs will be damaged.

Group 2: You'll be small forever!

The two groups are about to reach one another when...

Mrs India: Stop!

Both Group 1 and 2 scurry back to their mats.

Mr India: So even though what you're both eating is different, it still damages your bodies?

Mrs India: Because you don't have a balanced diet?

Both Groups: Yes!

The Mixed Group holds up a piece of A3 paper containing the words BALANCED DIET. This includes pictures of an array of foods. The Mixed Group moves around the stage, past both Group 1 and 2 who all try to grab the paper yet fail to do so.

MUSIC: URGENT, POUNDING MUSIC - TOO MUCH FAT AND SALT.MP3

Both Mr and Mrs India leave their spots for the first time and rush around in a panic.

Mrs India: How has this happened?!

Group 1: We couldn't get the food we needed in our village.

Group 1: It was too expensive.

Group 2: Nobody told us fast food was bad for you.

Group 2: So we just kept eating.

Mr India: We need to stop this.



Mrs India: How?!

Mr India: Give them as much food as they want.

The Mixed Group grabs all of the bags of food from before and is about to distribute when...

Group 2: But that would make us even bigger!

Mr India: Let's stop all the food then.

The Mixed Group takes the bags away.

Group 1: But then we'd all starve!

Mrs India: So what should we do?

Both Groups: Make sure we have a balanced diet.

Mrs India: (*Runs to Group 1*) How can we do that?!

Group 1 turn their backs to Mrs India. Mr India runs to Group 2.

Mr India: How can we do that?!

Group 2 turn their backs to Mr India. The Mixed Group also faces away. Mr and Mrs India both look at one another before turning to the audience.

Mr and Mrs India: How can we do that?

The End

All of the students stand and take a bow.

MUSIC: FOR RICHER FOR POORER.MP3

