

PSHE and English - Gypsy, Roma and Traveller People

Exploring Culture and Tradition



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We are exploring the cultures and traditions of Romany Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller people.

Many different people and groups fit under the umbrella term
'Gypsies, Roma and Travellers'

This can include Romany Gypsies, Roma people, Irish Travellers, Scottish Gypsy Travellers, New Travellers, Live-a-board Boaters and Travelling Showpeople.

While all are traditionally nomadic (travelling) people, the groups have different origins, cultures and languages.

Some families live in sites while others live in houses.

There are over 50 sites across the U.K.

Some sites are called short-term Transit Sites where people can stay for up to 3 months.

Other sites have permanent sites plots - with a brick 'shed' (sometimes called a dayroom) which has a kitchen, bathroom and living area.

Families living on permanent site usually have a trailer (or more than one) and sometimes a mobile/chalet.

Families sign a license and pay rent and council tax.

Family

Family life is very important to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller People.

The relationship with wider extended family, like cousins, aunts and uncles is often very close.

For those families being raised together on a site, it means looking out for everyone. If one of the extended family members gets sick, everyone will help to look after them and travel to visit them.



Horses

Before cars, horses would pull the 'waggon' and vardos.

Even today, families living on permanent sites will often keep horses, as they remain an important part of the culture.

Some families work with horses to 'break them in' – teaching the horse how to let people ride it and how to race.

There are some very exciting horse races in the U.K. like the event at Appleby Horse Fair.



Dogs

Traditionally, and even today, dogs are used for hunting. The most common are Jack Russells, greyhounds, whippets, springer spaniels, and lurchers. As hunting dogs, they have 'good noses'.

Lamping is a type of hunting. Traditionally, owners would shine a lamp into a field, and when it reflected off a rabbit's eyes, the dog would catch it.

Today it's usually a mobile phone that's used!

Farmers often welcome Travellers on to their land to catch rabbits as it's useful in stopping them eating the crops.



Special Events

When baptised Christian and Catholic Travellers turn 7 - 8 years old, they can have a Holy Communion. This is a special religious ceremony and blessing.

Girls wear a big fancy dress like a wedding dress, and boys wear a suit. Afterwards, there is usually a large family celebration - a party with lots of people gathering.

Weddings, baptisms, and funerals are also very important family events with special traditions.

Weddings are usually large gatherings, with family coming from afar.



Different Ways of Living

Some people don't understand why Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children don't always go to school. This is because families may live in many places throughout the year.

We should accept that every family and way of living is different and to be respected.

This is something we can keep on thinking about in how we value and accept each other and the differences in how we all live our lives.

In your own explorations, what have you enjoyed discovering about Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultures and traditions?