

DEMINIUS: THE ORIGINS SERIES · BOOK I

THE SILENT ONE

Classroom Curriculum Unit

● ○ ○ BOOK I OF III

English (KS3) · PSHE / Citizenship

YA · ages 13+ · 6-lesson unit · 45–60 minutes per lesson

Companion resource: The Silent One Discussion Guide

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FRONT MATTER

Unit Overview

This six-lesson unit uses *The Silent One* (Deminius: The Origins Series, Book 1) as a lens for exploring identity, heritage, silence, belonging, power, and self-knowledge, alongside an introduction to the West African (Yoruba) and English traditions the novel draws on. Lessons are designed to flex across a YA classroom audience (ages 13+). Pacing, discussion depth, and extension activities can be adjusted up or down for the group.

Duration	6 lessons, approximately 45–60 minutes each, suited to a multi-week unit (e.g., one lesson per week).
Subject lens	English (Key Stage 3), integrated with PSHE and Citizenship (identity, belonging, resilience).
Core text	<i>The Silent One</i> . Students should be reading or have recently finished the novel; discussion content is spoiler-light.

Unit Objectives

- Identify and discuss major themes in the novel: identity, silence, found family, power, and self-knowledge.
- Explore how dual heritage can be framed as a source of strength rather than division.
- Build introductory cultural awareness of real-world Yoruba traditions distinct from the novel's fictional world.
- Practice close reading, discussion, and reflective writing skills.
- Connect the protagonist's journey to students' own experiences of identity and belonging.

Materials Needed

- Class set of *The Silent One*
- *The Silent One* Discussion Guide (companion resource)
- Journals or reflection notebooks
- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Printed glossary (see below)

A NOTE ON PERSONAL REFLECTION

Several lessons invite students to reflect on their own identity, heritage, silence, family, or sense of power. Always make clear that students may answer using a fictional or hypothetical example instead of personal disclosure, and are never required to share a personal reflection aloud or in a way that identifies them, unless they choose to.

Unit at a Glance

No.	Lesson	Focus
01	Worlds Within Worlds	English (KS3)

02	Dual Heritage as a Gift	PSHE
03	The Power of Silence	PSHE
04	Found Family & Belonging	PSHE
05	Power: Gift or Burden?	PSHE
06	Self-Knowledge and the Journey Ahead	Synthesis

FOR EDUCATORS

Cultural Context Note

The Silent One draws on both Yoruba and English traditions to build its fictional world. The novel is a work of fantasy, not an ethnography. Its magic system, characters, and events are invented, even where inspired by real traditions. When teaching this unit, distinguish clearly between the fictional world and real Yoruba culture, and treat the novel as an invitation to learn more about the real tradition, not a substitute for it.

Consider inviting students to research real Yoruba oral storytelling traditions, cosmology, or history as an extension activity (see Lesson 1), using reputable cultural or academic sources. The Yoruba have a documented civilisation stretching back well over a thousand years, including ancient kingdoms such as Ile-Ife, long predating European contact and the British Empire. Approach the material with the same care and respect you would bring to any living culture's traditions.

Student Glossary & Pronunciation Guide

Share this glossary with students before or during Lesson 1. Add novel-specific character and place names as needed.

Term	Say it	Meaning
Yoruba	<i>yoh-ROO-bah</i>	A West African ethnic group and language (primarily Nigeria, Benin, and Togo) with a rich oral storytelling, cosmological, and spiritual tradition that inspires elements of this world. The Yoruba trace their origins to ancient kingdoms such as Ile-Ife, with civilisations dating back well over a thousand years.
Deminus: The Origins Series	–	The book series that begins with The Silent One.
The Silent One	–	The name given to the protagonist, reflecting his choice not to speak.
Dual heritage	–	Having two distinct ancestral or cultural backgrounds, framed here as a gift rather than a division.
Fire and Frost	–	A symbol in the novel for the protagonist's two heritages, held together as one gift rather than opposing halves.
Mystic realm	–	The place the protagonist is raised in, apart from his birth world, for safeguarding and training.
[Character/place name]	<i>[add pronunciation]</i>	Space for the teacher to add novel-specific names and terms.

LESSON 1

Worlds Within Worlds

English (KS3): the novel's setting and real-world inspirations

OBJECTIVE

Students will identify the real-world cultural traditions (Yoruba and English) that inform the novel's fictional world, and distinguish between the two.

MATERIALS

- Copies of the novel
- Glossary handout
- World map
- Chart paper

WARM-UP (10 MIN)

On a world map, locate West Africa (Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Yoruba homelands) and England. Ask students what they already know about either region.

MAIN ACTIVITY (25–30 MIN)

- Introduce the glossary and pronunciation guide as a class. Discuss the difference between real Yoruba culture and the fictional world the author builds from it: the novel is inspired by, not a documentary of, Yoruba tradition.
- In small groups, have students brainstorm what a 'pre-modern, post-medieval' fantasy setting might include (technology, social structure, beliefs) and share out.
- Introduce the concept of 'overlords' hunting the protagonist from birth. Discuss what this establishes about the world's power structures before the story even begins.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did you already know about Yoruba culture or history before starting this book? What's new to you?
2. Why might an author blend two real-world traditions into one fictional world instead of inventing something from nothing?
3. What does it mean for a world to feel 'mythical and intimate' at the same time?

REFLECTION / ASSESSMENT

Journal: Write 3–5 sentences on what you're curious to learn about Yoruba tradition as you read.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Research one real element of Yoruba cosmology or oral storytelling and present a two-minute summary to the class.

LESSON 2

Dual Heritage as a Gift

PSHE: Identity

OBJECTIVE

Students will explore how the protagonist's dual heritage, symbolised by fire and frost, is framed as a strength rather than a source of division.

MATERIALS

- Discussion Guide questions 2–3
- Journals
- Two colours of paper/markers (e.g. red and blue)

WARM-UP (10 MIN)

Ask students to name something about themselves that comes from two different places, families, or influences (culturally, personally, or otherwise).

MAIN ACTIVITY (25–30 MIN)

- Read or revisit the passage(s) establishing the protagonist's fire-and-frost heritage.
- Fire/Frost activity: students fold a paper in half, writing 'fire' traits (bold, active, visible) on one side and 'frost' traits (still, protective, contained) on the other, then discuss where the two might work together rather than conflict, mirroring the protagonist's arc.
- Small group discussion using Discussion Guide questions 2 and 3.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What role does his mixed heritage play in how others treat him, and how he sees himself?
2. What does the book suggest about turning what could divide you into the very thing that makes you whole?
3. Can you think of a time when something that felt like a contradiction in you turned out to be a strength?

REFLECTION / ASSESSMENT

Journal: Describe one 'fire and frost' pairing in your own identity, and how holding both has helped you.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Have students design a symbol (like fire and frost) that represents their own dual influences, and share voluntarily.

LESSON 3

The Power of Silence

*PSHE: Voice and Choice***OBJECTIVE**

Students will analyse silence as an active choice in the novel, and consider what silence protects and what it costs.

MATERIALS

- Discussion Guide questions 4–5
- Journals

WARM-UP (10 MIN)

Silent minute: sit in complete silence as a class for 60 seconds. Afterward, ask what that felt like: comfortable, tense, powerful?

MAIN ACTIVITY (25–30 MIN)

- Discuss the difference between not being able to speak and choosing not to speak. Chart student responses on the board.
- Identify moments in the novel where silence communicates something dialogue could not.
- Group discussion using Discussion Guide questions 4 and 5.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. He does not speak by choice, not by inability. What do you think silence protects him from?
2. What might his silence be costing him?
3. How does the author use silence as a storytelling tool?

REFLECTION / ASSESSMENT

Journal: Write about a time you chose silence over speaking. What were you protecting?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Write a short scene (5–10 lines) from the protagonist's point of view during a moment he stays silent, showing his internal voice.

LESSON 4

Found Family & Belonging

*PSHE: Relationships and Belonging***OBJECTIVE**

Students will examine the relationships that form around the protagonist after he is separated from his birth family, and what 'found family' offers him.

MATERIALS

- Discussion Guide questions 6–8
- Journals
- Chart paper

WARM-UP (10 MIN)

Ask: What's the difference between the family you're born into and people who become family by choice? Chart responses.

MAIN ACTIVITY (25–30 MIN)

- Map the protagonist's relationships in the mystic realm on chart paper as a class: who cares for him, teaches him, challenges him.
- Discuss the sacrifice his parents made in leaving him there for his safety and training.
- Small group discussion using Discussion Guide questions 6, 7, and 8.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who steps into his life as he's pushed from his home? What do those relationships offer him that his origins didn't?
2. What does this story suggest about the difference between the family we're born into and the family we choose?
3. What does the choice to leave him in the mystic realm cost all three of them, the parents and the child?

REFLECTION / ASSESSMENT

Journal: Who is someone in your life who has become 'found family' to you, and why?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Create a relationship web (visual diagram) of the protagonist's found family, noting what each relationship gives him.

LESSON 5

Power: Gift or Burden?

*PSHE: Ethics and Responsibility***OBJECTIVE**

Students will evaluate whether the protagonist's power is best understood as a gift, a burden, or both, and consider how perspective shapes that answer.

MATERIALS

- Discussion Guide questions 9–10
- Journals
- Sticky notes

WARM-UP (10 MIN)

Ask students to place a sticky note on a spectrum drawn on the board: 'Power is always a gift' to 'Power is always a burden.' Discuss the spread.

MAIN ACTIVITY (25–30 MIN)

- Discuss how the protagonist's abilities set him apart before he understands them.
- Contrast how the forces hunting him view his power versus how he views it himself.
- Debate-style discussion (informal): split the class into 'gift' and 'burden' sides and have them argue using evidence from the text, then find common ground.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is power in this story presented as a gift, a burden, or both?
2. How do the forces hunting him view his power differently than he views it himself?
3. Does having power always come with responsibility? Why or why not?

REFLECTION / ASSESSMENT

Journal: Describe a 'power' you have (a talent, skill, or role) and whether it has ever felt like both a gift and a burden.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Write a short persuasive paragraph arguing whether the protagonist should embrace or resist his power, using textual evidence.

LESSON 6

Self-Knowledge and the Journey Ahead

*Synthesis: Reflection and Series Connection***OBJECTIVE**

Students will synthesise the unit's themes and reflect on the protagonist's ongoing journey toward self-knowledge, connecting it to their own growth.

MATERIALS

- Discussion Guide questions 11–14 and Looking Ahead section
- Journals
- Unit theme chart from Lesson 1

WARM-UP (10 MIN)

Revisit the chart/notes from Lesson 1. Ask: What has changed in how you see this world and its protagonist since we started?

MAIN ACTIVITY (25–30 MIN)

- Whole-class discussion connecting the six themes covered: worldbuilding, identity, silence, found family, power, and self-knowledge.
- Discuss the novel's craft, its blend of Yoruba and English traditions, using Discussion Guide questions 12 to 14.
- Introduce the series' open question: what the protagonist grows into, and whether he'll find or choose his voice.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did that blended world feel like to you: familiar, unfamiliar, both?
2. What questions does the book leave open about who he might become?
3. Will he ever find, or choose, his voice? What is still unresolved about his identity?

REFLECTION / ASSESSMENT

Final journal/essay: Choose one theme from this unit (identity, silence, found family, power, or self-knowledge) and write a reflection connecting the protagonist's journey to your own.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Have students predict, in writing or as a short pitch, what they think happens in Book 2, then revisit these predictions if or when the class reads it.