

Using 'Homeland'

Jackie Zammit

Jackie suggests ways you can use the music video of 'Homeland', which features our interviewee Seckou Keita (see pages 14–15) and fellow singer, Baaba Maal.

Explain to the class that you will be watching a video made in Senegal, West Africa. Locate Senegal on a world map, look at its location and zoom in to note how The Gambia bisects much of the country.

Explain that the video features two people singing and shows people and places in the south and the north of the country. Ask pupils to write a list of what Senegal might be like and what they might see in the video. Use prompts such as:

- Based on the map, what scenery might you see in this video?
- What animals might you see?
- What transport might you see?
- What colours might people be wearing?

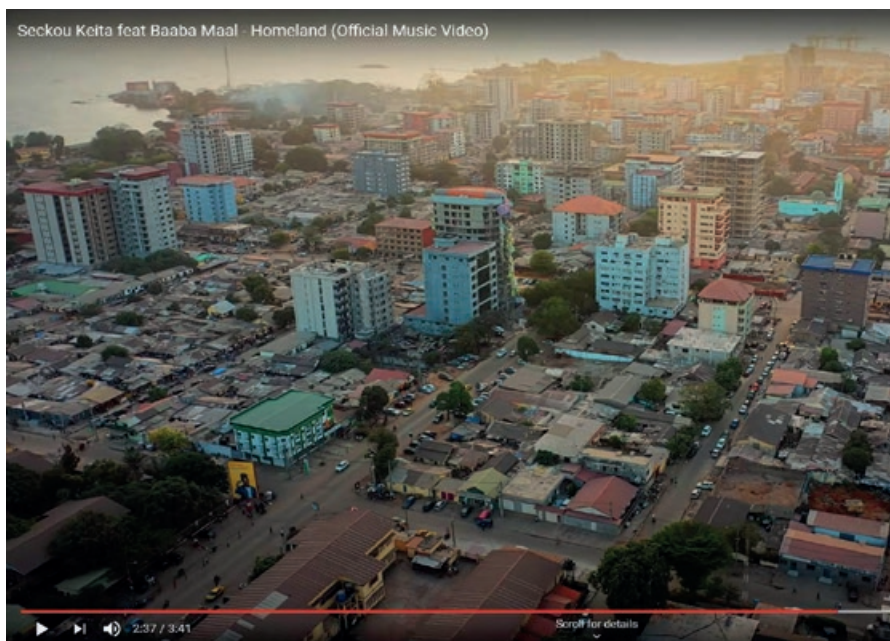


Figure 1: Still from 'Homeland' showing Dakar, Senegal.

- Ask pupils, 'what do you think the singers are singing about?' then share the lyrics (see web panel).
- At 1:37 (see video timer) a child is shown flying a kite on a beach. On one side of the kite, the child has drawn a picture of a house. Kites often represent freedom, innocence, play, unity (people come together to fly them) and even healing (Morpurgo, 2010; Fly Kites Not Drones – see web panel). Here, pairs of pupils could make a kite that represents both of their ideas about home.
- Encourage pupils to find out about Lake Retba (Pink Lake) in Senegal. This features in the video and is pink due to algae; plus its high concentration of salt means that people can float in the lake (see web panel).
- Ask pupils 'what X did you see in the video?' This could be food, e.g. vegetables at the market in Dakar, or transport, e.g. boats, bicycles and a mum carrying a baby, or another theme such as animals or play.
- Discuss what the video says about respect.
- Encourage pupils to think about who they would like to talk to in the video and what they would like to ask that person.
- Seckou is from the south of Senegal and Baaba is from the north and they each sing in their own languages (Seckou in Mandinka, Baaba in Halpular). Ask 'why do you think it might be important to them to sing about their homeland in their own languages?'
- Seckou spends most of his time in the UK and wrote this song during the Covid-19 pandemic. Why do you think he was inspired to write the song at that time?
- Explain that the 'Homeland' video was made by two film-makers – Mao Sidibé and Audy Valera – and through it they tell us a story about life in Senegal. Pupils could imagine that they are to work with a film-maker to create a video about their homeland that would be shared around the world, what story would they tell? Is there a musician from their homeland who they would like to write a song with?

Figure 2: A selection of follow-up activities.

Show the music video (see web panel). When it has finished, revisit the list to see how many similarities there were between the pupils' expectations and what was on the video, and how many surprises or differences.

An alternative – and a good way to generate curiosity and introduce an inquiry – is to display a series of stills (Figure 1) from different parts of the video and ask pupils to generate questions about what they see in the images. Then show the video and tell them what it is about. Extend the enquiry with a selection of follow-up activities (Figure 2). Keep an eye out for more information on a new Homeland Project at <https://www.seckoukeita.com/homeland>.

References

Morpurgo, M. (2010) *The Kites are Flying*. London: Walker Books.

Web Resources

'Homeland' lyrics: www.geography.org.uk/Journals/Primary-Geography
'Homeland' video: <https://youtu.be/k-YTkMaM62w>
Fly Kites Not Drones (activity pack): <http://www.flykitesnotdrones.org>
Lake Retba: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-africa-23759547>

Jackie Zammit is an educator working in peace education and global learning.