

What to do today

IMPORTANT Parent or Carer – Read this page with your child and check that you are happy with what they have to do and any weblinks or use of internet.

1. Read the start of a story

- Read *Opening*.
- What do we learn about the characters? Can you think of three important things that we learn about the narrator, Mum and Eric?

2. Think about being an outsider

- Read *When Did I Feel Like an Outsider?*
- Are any of these situations familiar to you? Are there other times that you felt like an outsider?
- Write about a situation that made you feel like an outsider. Explain what happened and how you would describe your feelings.

3. Listen to the whole story of Eric.

- Listen to the whole of the story of Eric and look carefully at the illustrations. Use the *PowerPoint Eric* or watch Ruth Merttens reading the book <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H71F0-QrpE> .
- Read *Story Talk Questions*. Think about your answers and then write some of them in clear sentences.

Try the Fun-Time Extras

- Can you find out some more about Shaun Tan? You could start at this website:
<http://www.shauntan.net/books.html>
- Can you interview other people to find out about the strangest visitor they've ever had to their house?

Opening

Some years ago we had a foreign exchange student come to live with us. We found it very difficult to pronounce his name correctly, but he didn't mind. He told us to just call him 'Eric'.

We had repainted the spare room, bought new rugs and furniture and generally made sure everything would be comfortable for him. So I can't say why it was that Eric chose to sleep and study most of the time in our kitchen pantry.

'It must be a cultural thing,' said Mum. 'As long as he's happy.' We started storing food and kitchen things in other cupboards so we wouldn't disturb him.

But sometimes I wondered if Eric *was* happy; he was so polite that I'm not sure he would have told us if something bothered him. A few times I saw him through the pantry door gap, studying with silent intensity, and imagined what it must be like for him here in our country.

from Eric – by Shaun Tan

When did I feel like an outsider?

When meeting new relations
who I haven't met before.

At a party where I didn't know
many people.

In someone else's family.

In a new shop or restaurant
where people seem to know
their way around.

When starting a new sport.

After moving house or school.

When travelling to a new and
strange place.

Feeling like an outsider



A large rectangular writing area with a decorative orange and black zigzag border. The interior of the rectangle is filled with horizontal lines, providing a space for writing.

Story Talk Questions

What did you like about the story? Is there anything that you disliked?

Does it remind you of anything you have ever read? Does it remind you of any situations or people in real life?

What patterns can you find in the story?

What puzzles or questions are you left with?