

CONTAINER STORIES ACTIVITY



<http://www.theseaconnection.eu>



Participating in this creative writing activity the students were free to use their imagination. Their texts could be about anything related to containers and their cargo, from a newspaper article to an interior monologue of goods or even people transported and shipped in a container.

If they decided to write a text from the point of view of a piece of cargo, they could also think about under which conditions it was produced, its country of origin, its final destination and incidents during its journey across the sea.



THE SEA CONNECTION TRADE, ENVIRONMENT, MIGRATION AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES AS LINKS BETWEEN FOUR EUROPEAN COASTAL CITIES. an Erasmus+ project funded by the EU by [Gymnasium Altona, Tyska Skolan, IIS Benedetti Tommaseo and Escola Pàlcam](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#).

CONTAINER STORY: “AN UNLUCKY BANANA”

Hello everyone, my name was Pina, and I was the biggest banana of the family. My father, was so proud of me, of my gaudy yellow, of my perfect edges. He told me that I shined more than the blinding sun. Well, he was right.

Everything my sisters felt envy towards me because I was the first to grow and mature while they were still green and unripe. I loved too much my position inside of the family. The others bananas respected me and my father worshiped me and also, I adore him too.

I liked very much spend the day kissed by the sun, and when I no longer wanted the latter's kisses, I asked to my lovely father to cover me with his big and sweet leaves. Was in this way that I became the most beauty banana of the world.

But, to be the most beautiful, isn't always the best thing. In fact, a day that seemed like the others, someone grabbed me and wildly tore myself away from my lovely father's protection. I heard him cry and scream my name, but I was deeply afraid for realize what was going on. That was the last time I saw him.

After an instant I found myself in a big steel box, crushed on the wall of this by the weight of hundred bananas, everything greener and uglier than me and I wandered what I had to do with them. The weight kept to oppress me and slowly, on my pure yellow peel, began to appear little brown patches. Suddenly everything moved and I breathed the gasoline's smell which comes from the steel box's drainpipe.

The days went by, and my peel became ever browner.

From a small box's hole, I was able to read on the side of another floating iron box “From Ecuador To Europe”.

Europe, I have heard about her from the story of the bird who rested from flight on my father's woody arms. They talked about Europe as a place in which the banana's trees don't exist, but the bananas are however there. I wondered how it was possible. But the bananas who are in Europe aren't like us. They are everything yellow, but not like mine, a dull and opaque yellow, covered by little and big brown dents. And sometimes, brown is the only one color of the banana. When they told to us these things, I thought how much I was lucky. Furthermore the “European bananas” lives inside boxes, or worst, chocked inside plastic packaging.

In the moment in which I read “Europe” my heart was broken and my peel become totally brown.

After countless days on board the container ship, the steel box containing Pina was unloaded at the port of Lisbon for the selection of bananas.

Pina, already mature among the leaves of her beloved father, had reached the dreaded Europe all dented and badly damaged, so much so that it was immediately discarded. His small carcass served to feed the fertile roots of the father she had loved so much.

Sara Ghezzi

3^AB

11.03.2020

A CONTAINER LIFE

Here I am, once again
In this big port came from Vienne
I'm a container ready to leave
Across the Europe even during the Christmas eve

I go to India, China and Japan
Travel with ship, plane and van
I'm transported by tower crane
And sometimes I also took a train

They put me on my containers friends
And with them my journey never ends
They position us according to our size
Two small over one oversize

In particular I carry adidas shoes
Which all have fantastic reviews
I'm so sorry but I can't stay
I have to leave so..... Have a good day!

Barone

My container story

One of my biggest passions has always been videogames.

Well, in truth this means you need to read lots of online-journals and watch vide reviews about the recommended people, cause buying a game costs usually 50 euros on Amazon, which isn't a very cheap price for a common hobby.

So, after something like 4 months of hype about new Kojima's work, Death Stranding (this is the game's name), I finally decided to pre-order it. The curious fact was that this decision went to my head at quarter past nine p.m. of the day before the release date, so I was in such a hurry to finish all.

So much, that, to buy the game from Amazon, I opened Amazon.com despite of Amazon.it, and this was a problem, because instead of waiting for the express courier from Milan to Venice, I had to wait for a cargo ship from England (not the best situation for me and my hype).

But the mess was already done, so after more than 5 days of the container's journey to Italy, at the end the game arrived and everything returned to normality, except for my pocket for the expedition costs.

Luca Bonato

Container story

If you think, for example at your pair of shoes, they do not come from Italy probably but from another country. How did they arrive here?

Almost all shoes are made in China, because in China the workers are paid very little. After that the shoes must be delivered all over the world, but which way?

The cheapest way is with containers, which are iron boxes of two different sizes, the first one 6*2,5 and the second one 12*2,5.

Often inside the container there are not only shoes and other merchandise, for example the “narcos” use containers for transporting drugs. In Greece instead, more exactly in Athens port, the “pireo” the migrants hide in the containers to reach Europe.

Therefore when we buy shoes we have to think about their history, because they also speak about the life of man.

An adventure inside a container

Hello everybody, my name is Charles and this is my story.

I am a phone, I was designed in California and assembled in China.

To get from one country to the other, I had to travel inside a container.

It was 12th March 2018, the day on which my designer took me to the container: Mark.

I was so excited about this adventure and I was put next to a very friendly computer box.

His name is Georgie, he comes from Vietnam, a country in Asia.

Georgie told me about his experience inside a container, because this isn't his first time.

In fact, it was his 4th time, he had travelled throughout many seas and he has seen many objects from all around the world.

I have asked him whether all of the experiences were good and he told me no, there was a time when they got caught in a storm and all the objects got tossed left and right.

He was afraid to sink, but thankfully nothing bad happened and he arrived at his destination safe and sound.

After hearing this story, I was a little scared and Mark reassured me by saying that in all of his career as a naval transport container he has always arrived at his destinations with no problems because the container transport ship captain was one of the best.

After this we were about to leave the Los Angeles harbour, settled in San Pedro.

There were many boats, tower cranes, trucks and containers.

After we had left the port, the voyage lasted for 3 months, in which I had the opportunity to hear many others stories until we arrived at our destination where my future was waiting for me.

China is where I will be assembled and sent again to an unknown destination.

I can't wait to know where I will be sent!

Bottoni

Container story

If we want to speak about containers, we can speak about a lot of topics. We can speak about drugs, clandestine immigration and business. I'd like to tell you what I think about this topic.

Recently I saw a film called: "Mr. Nice" that is about an English university professor that has become a pusher. He made a lot of money putting weed in containers from Morocco to some different places. A few years after he decided to start a business with USA from England, but it didn't last too long; in fact, after the first container was sent to the USA, the American police found out where and who it came from. The film ends with the protagonist who goes to jail. This is a true story. I think that it's not too difficult to sell narcotic substances shipped in containers because there isn't too much control.

I also heard about a group of migrants that were hiding in a container for migrating. This happened in Venice 3 years ago in 2017 when in the port of Fusina a ship arrived from the west with three migrants inside. They were in really bad health, but fortunately they were transported to the Angelo hospital. For me this kind of migration is very dangerous because you risk your life.

Last but not least, the business. Almost everything we buy comes from outside. There are a lot of big companies, like Amazon, which use containers to dispatch their goods; they do a very long journey to reach their destination. I think that this kind of transport is very important for us but we shouldn't forget that in our city we have our shops.

Cora Fuso

CONTAINER

I remember it was a hot and sultry August day, the sun peeled high in a cloudless sky, then all of a sudden I saw it was dark. I was locked up in a metal container. I could not describe with words the heat I was feeling, but I know that I was not the only one closed in that big box, there were hundreds of us next to me, some of them were friends of mine, but the darkness made us indistinguishable. I spent 2 long weeks praying that this would end early, feeling relief only at night, where the fresh air came in from small wounds.

I was terrified, because I had no idea where they were taking me, and because, I'm extremely fragile and I could have broken at any moment. Then, after a long time, I heard human voices and a large crane lifted us for meters and meters. I felt a very strong shock when I arrived on the ground and I heard many of my companions scream and break in thousand of pices. I'm thankful to the dark for being able to avoid seeing the heart-breaking disaster.

Now, an year later, I'm in a very small but clean and elegant house of an old woman. She always eat on me delicious dishes and 3 meal a day.

NAME: Alberto
SURNAME: Novello
CLASS: 3^aB

Container Story – Finding the owner

It was very early in the morning, the sun was rising, a port worker, Mason, was opening a huge container, unloaded just a few minutes earlier, arrived in a ship coming from Russia. Mason spent almost all day to manage all the parcels because the shipment was very big, and he had some trouble with understanding the the real content of each carton because of the cyrillic language that he was unable to translate. For this reason he called a Russian worker, Igor, who helped him to understand the language and also for a better management of the remaining part of the shipment.

The container was almost empty when Mason found a little box, made of wood; inside was a necklace with a picture of a woman.

After an hour he went to the office to search the person who had sent the content of the container in the database.

He discovered that the sender was Bogdan Ivanov, who lived in Novgorod, a city near Moscow.

In the database there was his phone number too, so he called Bogdan. Mason told him that in the container there was the necklace, so Bogdan thanked him because he couldn't find it anywhere.

Finally, Mason sent the box back to Novgorod and after a week he received a message from Bogdan, who was very excited for having his jewel back and he also invited him to be his guest in his house in Novgorod.

CONTAINER STORY

I was born in Thailand, about 2 weeks ago, my skin is pure silk, soft and comfortable, and it has the same colour as the sea. Within a few days of my birth, I have been packed up with strangers, similar to me but of different sizes.

I admit it, I am a bit scared because I don't know where I will arrive or even if I will reach my destination.

The only thing I am sure about is that I'm currently in a big red container and I am almost choking, since there is a lack of air... I've desperately tried to look for my parents, but it seems they are not in my cage.

Suddenly the sound of a crush broke the noise of my thoughts and the container fell off the boat. Panic.

The water swept me over a railing, it connected me to whatever was out there before.

This was my fate, no one could know it, but if one day you will see a whale wearing a light blue dress, please, admire the softness and the sheen of the material, and be aware that dress never reached its original destination.

MARLIN'S ADVENTURE

Lea Varini 3^B

My name is Marlin and I'm a lion of the Sydney's Zoo, actually I was. I was born in the zoo, never left it and never thought of doing it until last week, when I heard that "new animals were coming to the Zoo" so a lot of us were being transferred to another place. If I have to be honest, I wasn't scared or horrified by the idea of leaving that place: I had always been treated well, always eaten enough and never missed anything, but I wasn't living as a lion, I was living as a big fat cat in a cage, a huge cage but still a cage. I knew that my destiny wasn't to live free in the savannah, hunting animals through the scrub, but when I heard that I was going to move out of the zoo I thought that it could be a good opportunity to see another part of the world: well, that's not what happened. The journey was a mess: we were taken to the port in small cages and then hell began. Zebras, elephants, monkeys, parrots, penguins, giraffes trapped in wooden boxes without food or water. The boxes were placed without any layout in the containers and then the containers were moved onto the ship. The trip lasted 4 days and when we arrived at Melbourne's port we were so tired and weak.

CONTAINER STORY

Hi! I'm Coke (a bottle of coca cola) and now I can see a long stretch of white clouds... Yes I'm in paradise!

Now I will tell you about my short life and how tragically it ended...

I was born and I spent my first two days in a huge warehouse with all my twins. The morning after, very early, a strange thing got into the warehouse, called "crane for construction" and it carried us into a large container; then the container was loaded into a ship. The ship sailed to Europe, but I never reached it because I died during the crossing. In fact, while we were crossing the ocean, a great storm captured us and the ship started to crash into the waves and I erupted from the tossing.

Giada Scarpa

CONTAINER STORY

If you want to describe the life of a container, you may say it is a boring and plain one. Being a container myself, I will explain why your opinion is nothing but wrong.

First of all, containers certainly have a useful role in trade and therefore in your everyday life.

Thanks to our efforts, you can eat pineapples in December, get a brand-new phone and wear a pair of amazing shoes. Our job requires strength, both of the body and the heart, and resistance to face strains of carrying heavy items and long and uncomfortable travels. But when you see us, neatly heaped in harbours, I am sure you feel our greatness and find beauty in it. I have crossed the world several times on fast trains and dealt with ocean's waves on ships. I have been in harbours of every important city around the world; we stay there for a few days and then it's time to leave again. As I am made of strong metal, I often carry heavy items, so workers place me at the bottom of the pile. Not being able to look the features of the landscape changing outside while we travel, I have developed a sensitive hearing. I can recognise a place from the call of seagulls or from the noise of the harbour's crane.

Many people do extreme activities trying to add different emotions to their monotonous life. We don't need to do so, because we already live uncommon experiences. We sail through oceans; it doesn't matter which weather condition we may find. Every now and then, we leave a cold snowy place and get, after one day, to a hot and sandy one.

Unfortunately, we sometimes find ourselves involved in terrible situations of exploitation and mistreatments, as well as war and immigration. This part of my job makes me feel utterly ashamed and powerless. Except for these sad and wrong actions, I am very proud of being a container and would never change that.

Zheng Peng

My container story

Today my big sister gave me a present for my birthday, a little anti-stress toy.

I really like it. It probably came from China to Italy.

First, they put all of them in a container, then a tower crane put the container onto a particular ship with other containers. It travelled from China to Italy, then to Milan and from Milan to the official shop.

Anita Rizzi
IIIB

CONTAINER STORY

My name is Gondrand and I am yellow, strong and made of iron. Since I was made I have always travelled up and down the country carrying every kind of goods.

I had to transport all sorts of items, sometimes also weird and funny things, like that time when I was charged with blankets for some monkeys of a zoo.

I have a lot of stories to tell you, but I just want to tell you about the most incredible one.

I was in Greece, in Pireo harbour, during the night waiting to leave with my cargo, when, all of a sudden, six young men entered inside. They hid among the boxes and they laid down. They were so tired and they soon fell asleep. I listened to their stories all night long, they were running away from home because of a war.

In the morning we left, but soon the temperature inside became very hot and I was worried about my passengers.

It was a very hot summer, I did not know what to do, I realized that the only way to save them was to open a little hole on my side.

I've seen a lot of suffering in these young men and I was glad to help them reach their destination and I hope that they can finally live a happy life.

BOBO, THE TEDDY BEAR

Hello, I'm Bobo, a funny teddy bear. My life begins in a turbulent night in a Chinese factory. When I was finished, they put me, with 500 other toys, into a yellow container to send us to Italy. Everyone described the trip as an odyssey. Initially they loaded us on a plane, which landed in Turkey, and then they transferred the containers to a freight ship, here the nightmare began. When we left the port, it started to rain very heavily. The wind rumbled frighteningly inside the container. We all trembled and cried for fear. A majestic wave crashed onto our ship causing all containers, including ours, to fall into the sea. The container started to fill up with water and we got wet. Fortunately, a Barbie Ken managed to open the container and saved us all. I passed out when I reached the surface and let myself be carried by the waves. I woke up on an African beach with seeing a girl running towards me. Delighted, she took me home with her: she cleaned me with the river's water and made me dry under the sun. Now I am living my life with Sally, the African child, who fills me with affection every day.

Emma Pianon
3 B

ENCLOSING STORY

Benedetta Bernardi 3^BB

The last thing I saw was the void in the brown eyes of a black boy. He was staring at me like a hopeless predator who's watching his prey being taken away without being able to do anything to hold on to it. He left me with hard regret in a big and half-empty can made of cold metal. He let me fall from his trembling hand to the hard edges of those with the same destiny as mine. When they closed the doors above us, oh that was the last time I felt the warm rays of the sun. The first part of my long path was the most difficult one: we had to be always alert, without knowing when you could fall, be overwhelmed or hurt by the others. The only sound I could hear when I let my guard down was a soft roar, the continuous noise of the motion of the metal box. After a long time I sensed that we were not moving anymore. I hoped someone would get us out of here, but in the end I lost hope. The silence was driving me crazy, so I focused on the background buzz. Finally, even the buzz stopped and expectation grew in my heart. But it didn't last long. Faster than it had come out, the sun disappeared due to a new prison, this time made of cardboard. Time passed faster skipping up and down on my "sit". I was so excited when I perceived that someone was unlocking me... I couldn't bare the light until I got used to it. The only thing I could see was the smiling face of a young white boy who was asking: "Mummy, may I add some tuna in the pasta?".

The special bonsai from Japan

One of my hobbies is gardening, but because I don't have a private garden, I'm always in search of small plants to put near the window on my desk.

One evening, while I was searching an interesting video on YouTube, I came across a video of the most famous bonsai grower in the world: Takeshi Kusokoma.

His bonsais are amazing, so I contacted him to buy one of them.

He sent it in a special container; inside there was an automated irrigation and lightning system and also the temperature was strictly controlled.

After a month of travelling on the seas the ship finally arrived at the Port of Venice and the bonsai was delivered to my home by a specialized postman.

The bonsai was really beautiful and it arrived with a letter signed by Kusokoma himself!

An adventurous trip container story

This is the story of a big container that has made an adventurous trip across the sea all around the world. It was made in the USA to bring stuffed animals to children on various continents.

In January it was loaded onto a huge ship with a lot of other containers, heading to Spain, India and New Zealand. Unfortunately, winter isn't the best time to sail across the ocean, because often there are storms, so our container got wet due to the heavy rain. Once it nearly fell overboard because of the storm, but almost miraculously it managed to remain on board.

After a long time it reached the last stop, New Zealand, where it was loaded from the ship, was opened, and all the stuffed animals inside it were distributed to a lot of little boys and girls and the toys made the children happy.

Container story

Gaia Criscione 3B

Koby could see the ocean from that little port hole,
But he hadn't drunk for days, did he know what that means?
With wide eyes he was dreaming about the sea,
He really wished to cross it and drink a cup of tea.

Koby has been traveling for a week in that container,
Between sacks of potatoes, he could not have a dinner.
He was literally surrounded by the water and encircled by food,
In spite of this, he was dying of hunger and thirst.

Koby is just a child who is trying to keep himself safe,
He just does not want to kill the enemies or to strafe.
The war is a sick game, a perverse disease,
And the child knew that death is not just a part of an invented phrase.

Koby was terrified and scared of being discovered and punished,
He heard two men talking about the illegality of his immigration,
But what is the law in front of the fight for survival, if not action?
Those men were very rich, he understood it from the clothes they
had.

How can a man who lives in peace understand what war is?
How can he understand why he had to escape?
Koby in that moment fell asleep, and he dreamed about a bar,
He was simply sitting there with his son, and he could offer him a
wonderful life.

Koby deserves it, because every child does, every man does.
There do not exist bad people and good people, we are always
children of the situation in which we grew up. It's luck!
Let's open our hearts and let's open our doors, brothers, you're
welcome to my life!

Emma Di Stefano

I AM A RED CONTAINER

8/5/2012

Hi, dear diary, tomorrow I'm going to leave from the U.S.A. to Greece on a big ship. I'm so excited and a little bit anxious because it is my first trip and I don't know what the journey and other containers will be like...

15/5/2012

Hi, dear diary, I'm travelling, everything is okay...

I have met a lot of containers but around me there are only containers that have done a lot of travelling, so they don't understand my happiness and my excitement, for these reasons they sometimes hate me...

The only thing that makes me happy despite my mates is thinking that I'm helping someone carrying something they will eat.

22/5/2012

Hi, dear diary...

I'm very sad; I'm a little bit panick-stricken because I don't know where I am, I don't know what has happened: I only know that now I'm at the bottom of the sea, now all the food I was carrying is lost!

I will be food for the fish and for the seaweed... I hope to find a way to be useful for someone...

31/12/2014

Hi, dear diary, finally I'm happy again!

Over these two years, the sea currents have dragged me to Greenland.

This is my new home, and I hope that it will be the last one but I don't know, we will see...

This place is very peaceful and charming; I usually see many big animals like belugas, whales, and narwhales.

One day a grey seal hid behind me running away from a grampus.

Now I don't contain food, but I am a "house" for fish, so I have definitely found a way to be useful.

Alone

I am old. Oh, so very old. It feels like I have spent an eternity in this cage. A shipping container is meant to be, or rather was meant to be my key to freedom, my wings of Icarus to fly far, far away. Now that I find myself in one, fate seems to have other plans for my poor little dreams of adventure.

A poor pair of shoes. An extremely old worn-out pair of shoes, with cracked leather, torn laces and covered in layers of grey dust. I was meant to be transported by a great vessel through crashing waves and miles upon miles of dark blue, kept safe and clean in sturdy steel containers, then let go unto a free market to be bought freely by a free man. Now I find myself lowly and bored. I have fulfilled no purpose, whether it be the aid in the discovery of new lands, vast lands or at the very least, worn like a shoe was made to be.

Abandoned in a port. Somewhere. I can hear the shore, the whisperings of the ocean, the loud laughter of a sailor, the scampering of rats, and the heartbeat of the universe. If only I was never made to be a shoe. Now I can only wait, in a cargo container, in a land far, far away from my purpose.

Hi guys, I'm Matthew and I'm an old container. I'd like to tell you a story about one of my many trips around the world. I've been on the biggest ships and I have carried lots of amazing things, but the most unforgettable time was when I transported the race bike of the one and only Valentino Rossi. I watched every race since he had started and I'm his biggest fan. Can you imagine it??? The bike with 46 on the front, the bike with which Vale became the world champion. I carried that from the USA to Italy, he had to race in the Mugello, and then I knew that he would win the race. During the trip I tried to talk with the bike, but it was focused on his goal: to win the race. At the end of the trip, Valentino wrote his autograph on my side wall, and went straight to the track to continue the legend of Valentino Rossi.

Nordio

CONTAINER STORY

Nowadays, but especially in this difficult period that has upset our routine, technological devices are practically indispensable. The impossibility to meet, to talk to each other in person and to go to school, forces us to use computers, tablets and smartphones to communicate.

Most of them come from China or other countries outside our continent and arrive here thanks to container ships. These ships carry containers, which are huge boxes that allow you to transport a large quantity of merchandise.

A few months ago I had ordered a pair of airpods, the bluetooth headphones, on the Apple website, and within a few days they arrived; when I picked them up and noticed the word "assembled in China", I thought how far they have travelled and it is truly amazing; I have an object in my hands that comes from the other side of the world, and it was probably days and days inside a container before I could touch it.