**The Dharavi Slums – Background Information**

Learning Intention: it is important that you understand how the lives of the people in the poem are very different to your own life in order for you to understand their reaction.

School Value: fairness

Please look carefully at the images below and read the information. Then consider how you feel about what you have learned. Do you think it is fair?



This is an image from The National Geographic showing the Dharavi Slums. It is a very poor area outside Mumbai (used to known as Bombay) in India, where people live in makeshift huts and access water at shared taps.

The city of Mumbai has grown prosperous in recent years and many new houses, flats and business premises have been built. The pipe you see here is a water pipe that carries fresh water to the wealthy people in the main city. In the summer, it can get to over 45 degrees here, so water becomes scarce. In order to ensure the wealthy people have water, the shared taps in the slums, which are connected to this pipe, are removed by the authorities so the poor people cannot access the water. The horrific thing is that as they are dying of thirst and disease, they can hear the water going through the pipe into the city.

The authorities claim that the Dharavi slum is not an official living area, so they do not have to supply them with water.

It is also interesting to note that Mumbai is still growing, and the authorities need more space to develop the city. The Dharavi Slum, and others that surround the city, are in the way and the land they are on is now worth a great deal of money to investors. Consider how withholding water could be used a weapon against the poor of the slums.



This image shows you the contrast between the new city in the background and the edge of the slum.

When water is available, it comes from a shared tap with a catch pool underneath, like the one below. People use whatever containers they have to hand to collect the water. Often children are sent to fetch the water. When water becomes scarce, the authorities begin by limiting the supply to a couple of hours per day. With so many people trying to get water at the same time, it gets dangerous and many fights break out. Every summer, people are killed in fights over water.



Stark images from Johnny Miller’s series “Unequal Scenes” highlight the uneven development of cities. Makeshift shacks butt against developments in Mumbai. It is a drone shot that clearly shows the difference between the living conditions of the rich and the poor. (Johnny Miller is a photographer based in South Africa) See more at: <https://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/photography/2019/03/want-visualise-inequality-view-cities-above>



REFLECT:

How does this information make you feel?

Do you think it is fair?

Does it make you think about your own access to, and consumption of, water?