

Welcoming a Refugee Visitor



Activities and resources for preparation and follow-up



Employability Forum



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Introduction

The UK has a long and proud history of welcoming those who are fleeing from persecution or conflict. Over the years, refugees have made extraordinary contributions to the countries that have given them sanctuary and the opportunity to build a new life. Amongst others, refugees have brought us fish and chips, the Mini, Marks and Spencer, the founding principles of psychoanalysis, the design for Hampton Court Palace, and, most famously, the theory of relativity.

Immigration is regularly cited as one of the most important issues for the British public. In February 2011 an Ipsos MORI poll¹ found that 75% of the people interviewed thought that immigration was a problem, and nearly half of those aged 16-24 thought that immigration would harm any economic recovery. British people are more likely than other Western countries to be negative about immigration and a significant proportion of public opinion is based on misconceptions.



The Refugees into Schools programme aims to dispel myths and increase children's understanding of why people become refugees, by listening to and talking with a refugee. We also work with refugee community organisations to increase their engagement with local schools.

Many schools aim to integrate the refugee volunteer's visit with curriculum activities. This approach is valuable as it provides an opportunity to link the learning from the visit to the knowledge and skills pupils are already developing.

Schools taking part in Refugees into Schools have asked for some ideas for preparation and follow up activities. This is the first issue of a publication that the team at Refugees into Schools will review and update in the 2011/12 academic year, building on comments and suggestions that schools are welcome to send to the following address: ris@employabilityforum.co.uk

¹ http://www.ipsos-mori.com/Assets/Docs/News/IpsosMORI_ImmigrationFeb2011.pdf

Preparation activities for all ages

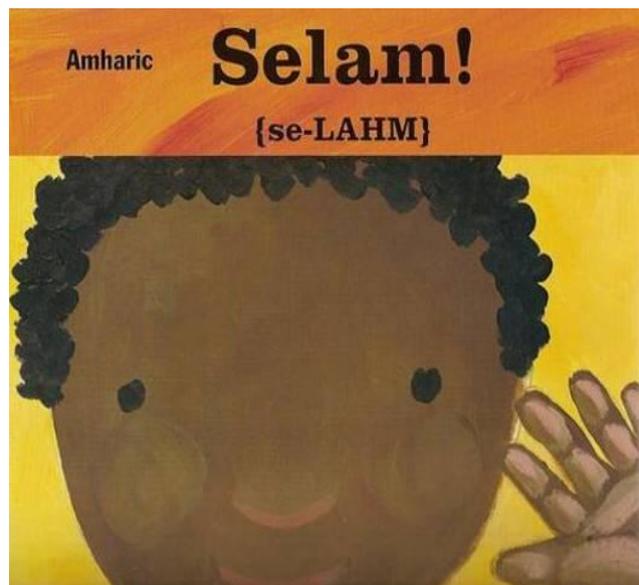
In your planning meeting with **Refugees into Schools**, you will find out where your refugee visitor comes from. Schedule some time to prepare the pupils for the forthcoming visit. You will need to tell them who will be coming and why the visitor has been invited. You can explain that this will be an opportunity for them to learn about refugees, their experiences, their life back home and in the UK.

Pupils can be asked to work in pairs or small groups to discuss on a range of topics and generate questions they would like to ask the visitor. Pupils can share their discussions and agree which questions they will bring to the session.

1. Find out about life in different countries

Once you know where your visitor comes from, pupils can explore different aspects of the country:

- Research key facts about the country and create a fact file or slide show. Information to include might be location, population, capital city, languages, flag etc. **RESOURCE 1**
- Learn about the history, the culture, the political environment, the resources and reasons why people flee that country (secondary schools only).
- Learn some words and phrases in one of the languages spoken in the country.
- Explore a day in the life of a child or young person living in that country. Pupils can think about how that person's day is different from theirs as well as the things they do that are similar. The results can be recorded on a grid.
- Try to reconstruct a trip from that country to the UK, focusing on the distance to cover, countries to travel across, languages to speak, seas, rivers and mountains to cross and other obstacles/difficulties one might find on the road. Then, secondary school students could try to think about barriers other than the geographical ones (legal status, safe third countries, the Dublin Regulation, etc.)



2. Why do people migrate?

This is an activity that can introduce discussion about why people migrate. It can be developed further to highlight the differences between people who leave their countries for economic reasons (no jobs available, scarcity of resources, poverty and underdevelopment) and those who are forced to flee their countries to be safe and to escape from persecution. For this activity you need:

- Reasons to migrate blank cards **RESOURCE 2**
- Reasons to migrate cards **RESOURCE 3**

Provide each small group of pupils a set of 'Reasons to migrate' blank cards and for five minutes ask them to think about reasons that might make someone leave home and also the reasons that may attract people to go to a new place. Prompt them to think about their own experiences of moving to a new place or that of family or friends. Write the reasons on the cards, one reason per card.

Now give each group a set of 'reasons to migrate' cards and ask them to cut these out and add any that they haven't thought of to their own reasons. You might want to link this activity with previous research you conducted on the country the visitor comes from.

3. What do you know about refugees?

Provide groups of pupils with large sheets of flipchart paper. Ask them to write the word 'refugee' in the centre and then create a mindmap, writing down words, phrases or understanding they associate with that key word using one colour of pen (suggestion: the mindmap could follow directions such as 'reasons for fleeing', 'things they left behind', 'things they hoped to find here', 'obstacles on the road'). Make a key using that colour and write 'before' next to it.



Make a key using that colour and write 'before' next to it.

Pupils can present their ideas to the rest of the class. The charts can be revisited after the refugee's visit and pupils can then agree what ideas and information they need to add. These could be recorded in a different colour, which can be indicated on the key with 'after'.

Preparation activities for primary children

1. Carly

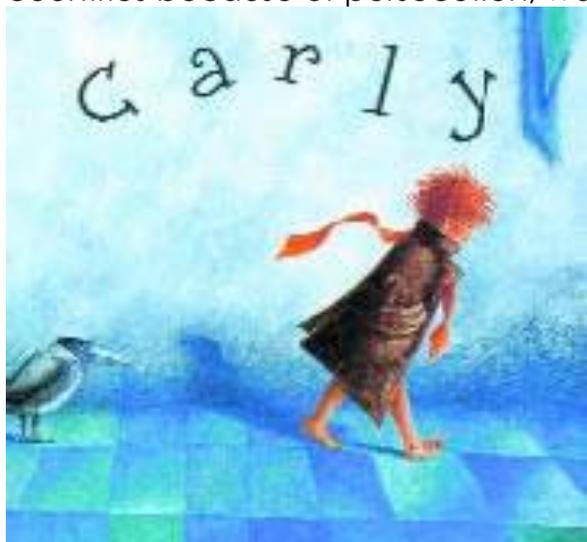
www.youtube.com/watch?v=oF1HGfg2bSo

This activity is based on the film *Carly*, which follows a young girl as she is forced to flee her home and look for a new place to live in an unfamiliar world.

After viewing, the following questions can help discussion:

- How do you think Carly feels at the beginning of the film? How does she feel at the end?
- What types of problems does Carly face in her travels?
- Carly meets people and animals in her travels. Why doesn't Carly stay with the people or the animals she meets?
- Why does she decide to stay with Mr. Friendly and his family?

Explain that Carly is a refugee and that refugees leave their homes and their countries because of persecution, war or violence.



Now get children into pairs or small groups and give each group a copy of the handout 'Who Does Carly Meet?'

RESOURCE 5

Tell them they will be watching the *Carly* film again, but this time they will focus on the different groups/people Carly encounters. Get them to think about the following question: Why do the people, animals, or groups turn Carly away?

Play the video and pause after Carly meets each group so the class can discuss and fill out the handout.

Wrap up the activity by asking the children:

- How did Carly feel after being turned away from each of the groups?
- How could the groups have behaved differently?
- How can we welcome refugees?

In a follow-up activity children could rewrite the story, perhaps as a play, to show the groups Carly encounters as more welcoming and helpful.

2. Pack your bags: what would you take and what would you leave?

Refugees leave their homes because they are afraid and they may be in danger. Some of them have to run away quickly and have no choice but to leave many things behind.

Get children into pairs and provide each group with **RESOURCE 6**

Working together, each pair should choose 10 things that they would take with them if they had to leave their home suddenly. They can write or draw these items in the suitcase.

Children can discuss how they made their choices and how it felt to leave some things behind.

3. Spot the refugee

(You need a copy of the 'Spot The Refugee' poster **RESOURCE 4**. It can also be downloaded from: www.unhcr.org/4a5484999.html)

This activity can enable pupils to consider myths about refugees and the harm that can be caused by negative stereotypes.

Begin by asking pupils to brainstorm what the word 'refugee' means to them and consider what type of people become/are refugees. Pupils can work in pairs or small groups.

Now ask pupils to look closely at the rows of Lego people. Ask them to suggest an identity for each figure, beginning from the first Lego person in the first row. They can try to tell each person's gender, occupation and age. They can also add if they consider the person to be a British citizen or a foreigner, and in that case suggest the country or region where they think the Lego person comes from. (You might want to use only a selection of Lego people to shorten the activity and avoid repetition).

Now tell the pupils that one of the characters is a refugee. In pairs or small groups they must try to find the refugee and once they have made a decision they must also prepare a reason to why they chose that particular character. These reasons can then be compared with the definitions of refugee pupils have already generated. Let the pupils confront their ideas and engage in a conversation.

It is quite likely that children will not find a compromise. Explain them that their disagreement shows the real aim of the exercise. Emphasise that anyone can be a refugee and explain pupils that the poster was realised by the UNHCR.

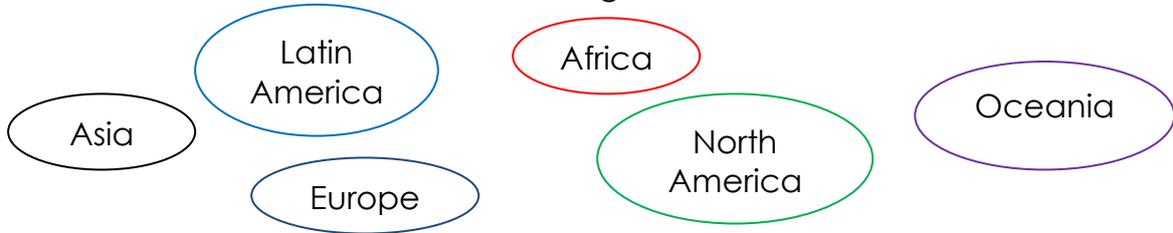
You can also share a simple definition of a refugee:

Refugees are people who have left their homeland because they fear that they will lose their lives or their freedom if they stay.

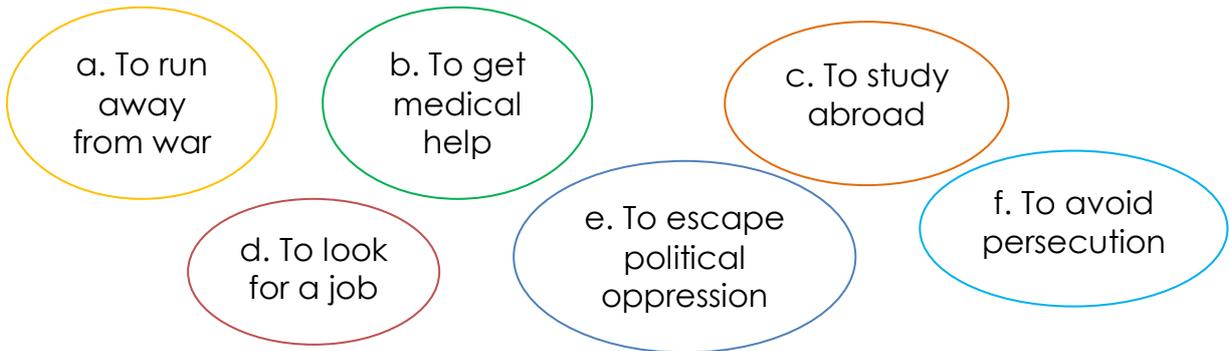
4. Refugee quiz for Primary School students

1. Name as many countries as you can where you think refugees flee from danger?

2. Which continent receives the most refugees?



3. Why do you think people become refugees and leave their countries?



4. How long do you think it takes for a refugee to get from their home country to the country of destination? What mode of transport do you think they use to travel?

5. What percentage of the world's refugees are living in the UK?

- a) 2% b) 12% c) 22% d) 52% e) 82%

6. Refugees come to the UK because they are looking for a job. True or false? Why?

7. What does the word 'asylum' mean?

8. At the end of 2010, how many refugees were there worldwide?

- a) Less than 1 million
- b) 5 million
- c) 10 million
- d) 15 million

9. Refugees leave their homes with very few possessions. True or false? Why?

10. Which of these famous people are refugees?



a. Mo Farah



b. Alek Wek



c. Robbie Williams



d. Mika



e. Naomi Campbell



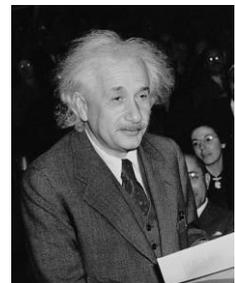
f. the Dalai Lama



g. Wyclef Jean



h. J.K. Rowling



i. Albert Einstein

Answers:

1. 40 million people are estimated to be displaced throughout the world. Only a fraction of these come to the UK to apply for asylum. In 2010, the most common nationalities of applicants were Iran (1,865), Afghanistan (1,605), Zimbabwe (1,410), Pakistan (1,400) and China (1,000). See the 'Refugees in the UK factsheet' in this resource for more details.
2. (in order) Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, Latin America, Oceania
3. a., e., f.
4. It depends. Some people travel by plane, others hide in a ship or in a lorry, others just walk across borders, often through a desert or other inhospitable border areas. Many of them use more than one means of transportation, and for this reason a trip can last one day if you are lucky, much more if you are not.
5. 2% (in fact, a bit less than 2%)
6. False. They are often forced to leave for the ideas they express in their workplace as teachers, government officers, academics, journalists, writers, artists. For example, one of our *Refugees into Schools* volunteers was a diplomat back in Iraq, another was a journalist in Iran. Both were forced to leave their countries.
7. A place that offers protection and safety
8. 15 million (UNHCR and UNRWA aggregated data)
9. True. Since in the majority of cases they are suddenly forced to flee overnight, it is quite unlikely that they manage to carry many things along. For example, one of our *Refugees into Schools* volunteers from Zimbabwe is showing the small bag he left home with during his visits; Paul Sathianesan, councillor for Newham and Sri Lankan refugee, has his own bag displayed at the Museum of London.
10. b., d., f., g., i.

Data for this quiz retrieved from COMPAS Migration Observatory, 2010 UNHCR refugee statistics and UNRWA

Preparation activities for secondary students

1. Refugee Kids

www.youtube.com/watch?v=2N3ndNyuU2k

Ask students if they know what is meant by the term 'refugee'. Brainstorm ideas.

Now introduce 'Refugee Kids'. The film presents the testimonies of nine young people who arrived in the UK from five different countries:

- Ahmed from Tanzania
- Maheria and Zakiah from Afghanistan
- Amin and Fatia and Abdalla from Somalia
- Gulsen and Fidan from Turkey
- Valdemar from Angola

The young refugees talk about their experience of war and persecution, leaving home, coming to Britain, first days, fitting in, learning English, going to school and coping with their future.

Give out the Refugee Kids Viewing Grid **RESOURCE 7**. Ask students to fill it in whilst watching the film. The programme lasts for 15 minutes. You may wish to pause once or twice to give pointers to students filling in the grid.

It is important to give students the opportunity to share their feelings about the programme as it may trigger various emotions or comments. If appropriate, acknowledge that some of them may also have experienced similar difficult or even painful events, such as moving home, losing someone they loved, or being refugees themselves.



Return to the question you asked at the beginning: Who is a refugee? Review as to whether the pupils want to change any of their previous suggestions, or add to them. It is important that they include references to being forced to leave, coming to the UK for safety and protection and not through choice, and so on.

2. Refugee quiz for Secondary School students

1. Name three countries which most commonly apply for asylum to the UK?
2. 90% of refugees have come from employment in their home countries – True or False?
3. Roughly how many asylum seekers out of every 100 are given asylum and allowed to remain in the UK?
 - a) 88
 - b) 56
 - c) 19
4. How long does it take, on average, for the UK to decide over an asylum application?
 - a) 1 month
 - b) 3 months
 - c) 6 months
5. Look at the following three groups:
 - a) Asylum Seekers
 - b) Migrants
 - c) RefugeesNow match each one with a definition of what they mean:
 - i. A person who has left their country due to conflict or persecution, and has been given protection by another country
 - ii. A person who has left their country due to conflict or persecution, and who is waiting for a decision on whether they will be allowed to stay in another country
 - iii. A person who wants to move countries, to get a better quality of life
6. What does the UNHCR stand for and what do they do?
7. Britain has the highest number of asylum seekers in the world – True or False?
8. What is the UK Border Agency?
9. What percentage of social housing is occupied by refugees and other migrants?
 - a) 61.8%
 - b) 1.8%
 - c) 21.8%
10. Refugees can come from inside the European Union – True or False?
11. The number of people coming into the UK is falling, and has been since 2002 – True or False?
12. How many refugees find jobs in their first year living here?

- a) 3/10
 - b) 5/10
 - c) 7/10
13. Why do many asylum seekers face poverty and hunger in the receiving country?
14. Once refugee status has been granted, for how long is that person permitted to stay in the UK?
15. Of the 25 countries with the highest number of refugees, how many are rich countries like Britain?
- a) All 25 countries
 - b) 10 of the 25 countries
 - c) 0 of the 25 countries
16. At the beginning of 2011, how many refugees were there worldwide?
- a) 151,000
 - b) 1.51 million
 - c) 15.1 million



Answers:

1. In 2010, the most common nationalities of applicants were Iran (1,865), Afghanistan (1,605), Zimbabwe (1,410), Pakistan (1,400) and China (1,000), followed by Nigeria, Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan
2. True – most had professional jobs
3. a) 19% - in 2007 the UK Border agency granted asylum to 19 of every 100 asylum seekers
4. c) 6 months – although it can take much longer
5. a) = ii), b) = iii), c) = i)
6. UNHCR stands for Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. They are responsible for all the refugees in the world except those in Palestine.
7. False – the UK has about 20,000 asylum applications each year. In 2009, South Africa received more than 200,000 new asylum claims. The United States was the second most sought-after destination for new asylum-seekers in 2009 with an estimated 47,900 asylum applications, followed by France (42,100), Malaysia (40,100), Ecuador (35,500), Canada (34,000), and the United Kingdom (30,700).
8. The UK Border Agency is part of the Home Office. Their job is to decide who can stay in the UK and who should go home. If the decision is negative, the asylum seeker has a chance to appeal, but if this fails they should return home.
9. b) 1.8% according to the Equality and Human Rights Commission
10. False – EU citizens can move anywhere within the European Union. They do not need permission.
11. True – the number of applications for asylum fell from 45,000 to 10,000 between 2002 and 2007. It has continued to fall since then.
12. a) 3/10 – according to government estimates
13. Because they are prohibited
14. 5 years
15. c) 0 of the 25 countries, according to UNHCR
16. c) 15.1 million, if you include both refugees looked after by UNRWA

Data for this quiz retrieved from the Home Office, UKBA, UNHCR and Refugee Council websites

3. Questions for discussion

Refugee issues are sensitive, but when placed in the right context and with appropriate background knowledge, they can provide for rich and enlightened discussion. Below are some suggestions for questions that could form the basis of this discussion. It is recommended that this discussion take place once students are familiar with the information provided at the back of this resource pack. Either working in pairs or small groups, students are encouraged to debate the issues, and consider the economic, social, political and legal framework in which they exist.



How should we welcome asylum seekers? What facilities and services could, and should, we provide?



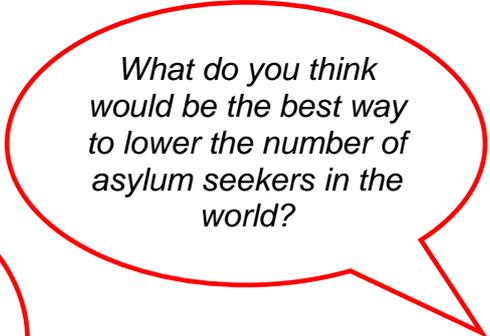
How would you feel if you were an asylum seeker in another country?



Should countries be responsible for taking in refugees?



Why would a country not want to accept refugees?



What do you think would be the best way to lower the number of asylum seekers in the world?

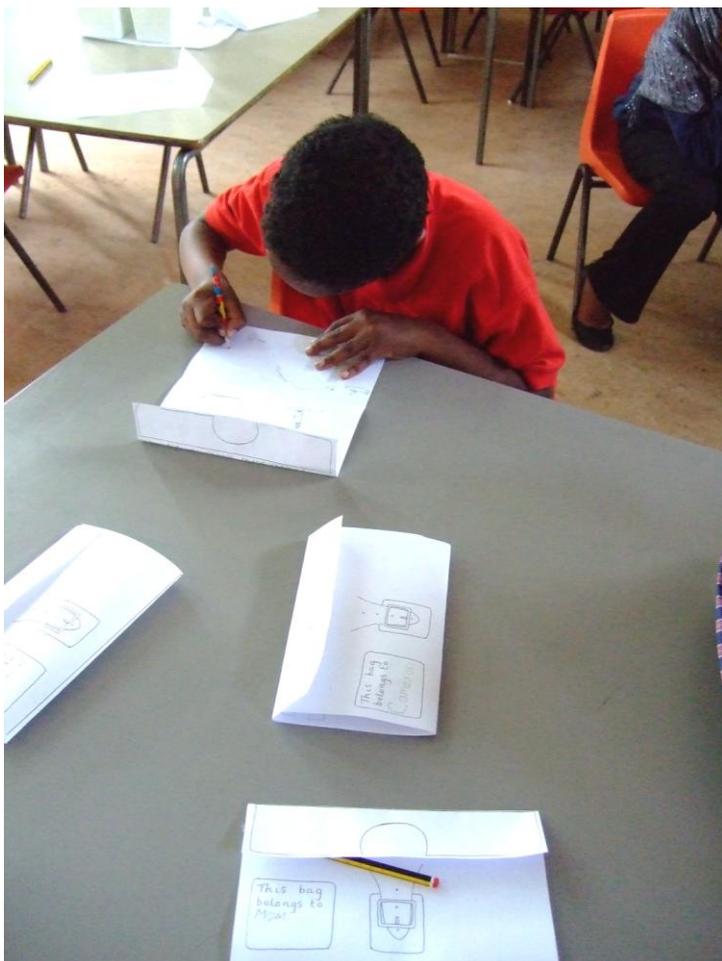


What considerations do you think politicians take into account when discussing policy on asylum and refugees?

Follow up activities

After a volunteer from **Refugees into Schools** has visited the school, follow-up activities can extend pupils' learning and understanding of refugees' experiences. They can also help teachers identify any further outcomes and impact from the refugee's visit.

1. Letter writing



Refugee volunteers are always keen to hear what children have learned as a result of the visit and are interested in finding out how it may have changed their understanding and attitudes about refugees. Pupils could collaborate in writing letters and include:

- Comments on what they learned
- Further questions they may wish to ask
- Any messages or thoughts they wish to share

Letters can be sent to the refugee volunteer via **Refugees into Schools**.

Letters can also be sent to:

- Your local MP, the government, the Mayor of London, local councillors and other authorities, asking what support is available for refugees locally and what they are doing to support the protection of refugees and asylum seekers.
- Amnesty International, the Refugee Council, Refugee Action and other organisations and charities to find out more about their work and campaigning for the rights of refugees

2. Displays and assemblies

Create a display of information, artwork and poetry that children prepare with the aim of increasing other children's understanding of refugee issues and human rights. Interactive displays can also provide questions, quizzes and brainteasers for the rest of the school and parents. Activities can be linked to the curriculum, especially to history and geography. They can also be used as topics for PSHE classes.

Pupil-led assemblies on the theme of refugees can include poetry, role-playing and also learning from the refugees visit. Some useful resources for planning assemblies are:

All You Need for a Refugee Assembly

www.risc.org.uk/education/risc_publications.php

Far from home assembly (Christian Aid)

<http://learn.christianaid.org.uk>

3. Report writing

Pupils could prepare:

- A summary report of the visit and what was learned
- A news article about refugees, drawing on the visit

The article/report could be sent to a local newspaper, or included in a journal to be distributed in the school, with elaborations on seeking asylum, the history of the volunteer's home country, the UN Convention on refugees, etc.

4. Complete a simple act

Simple Acts are small actions that everyone can do to make a difference to how refugees are viewed in the UK. The Simple Acts website has lots of ideas. These could be shared and discussed with children.

www.refugeeweek.org.uk/simple-acts

The Do One Simple Act film also provides lots of ideas for reflection and discussion.

www.youtube.com/user/simpleactscampaign

5. Fundraising

One way to show support for refugees could be to hold a fundraising event to benefit a local refugee community organisation or charity that supports refugees.

Pupils can research local charities and community organisations that might be supported. If you are not aware of a charity that you can support, **Refugees into Schools** can provide some ideas.

Here are some fundraising ideas:

- A sponsored walk, swim or run
- A quiz where everybody pays £1 to enter
- Put on a play, film show or a concert in aid of refugees
- Research on the internet or in the library some cake or biscuit recipes from other countries. Children can then make them and sell them at breaktime or lunchtime.
- A non-school uniform day ("muffi-day"), where pupils pay £1 to charity for the privilege of not wearing their uniforms.

6. Explore current world events

Encourage pupils to investigate current events, such as conflicts and refugee movements. There are several useful websites where news, pictures, information, resources, facts&figures and activities are available for pupils including:

Amnesty International website

<http://www.amnesty.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=11643>

Refugee Week website

<http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk/>

CBBC Newsround

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews>

BBC World Class

www.bbc.co.uk/worldclass



Definitions

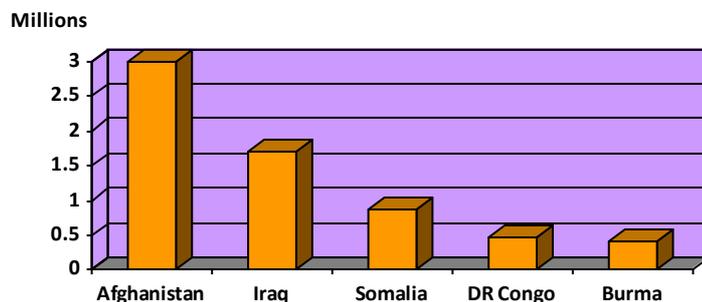
Refugee

A refugee is someone who, because of fear of persecution and their safety, has **fled from their home country to seek safety in another country**. This may be because of a well-founded fear of people belonging to a certain race, religion, nationality, or who holds certain political opinions. Because of the conditions in the country at the time of departure, it is common that those who flee do so in a hurry, with few belongings and often alone.

Countries which have signed the 1951 Refugee Convention have an obligation to consider whether or not a person who arrives in the country qualifies for refugee status. Until this decision has been made, the person is known as an asylum seeker. By receiving refugee status, individuals are guaranteed protection of their basic human rights, and while they have that status they cannot be forced to return to a country where they fear persecution. In the UK at present, this status is granted for 5 years temporary, after which there is the possibility that the UK Border Agency (UKBA) will make it indefinite.

In 2010, there were **15.4 million refugees around the world**, and it is estimated that 80 percent of refugees are women and children. According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the leading countries of origin for refugees in 2010 were¹:

- Afghanistan: 3 million
- Iraq: 1.7 million
- Somalia: 770,000
- DR Congo: 476,700
- Burma: 415,700



Asylum seeker

Asylum means safety. An asylum seeker is a **person who is seeking to be recognised as a refugee**, and the guarantee of safety that comes with it, but has not yet received formal refugee status. During 2010, a **world-total of 845,800 individual applications** for asylum or refugee status were submitted in 166 countries, with only 350,000 lodged in the 44 most industrialised countries of the world². The highest numbers of new asylum applications in 2010 were made by Zimbabweans, with 149,400 new claims. Large numbers of asylum-seekers also originated from Somalia, DR Congo, Afghanistan and Colombia.

In the UK we define an asylum seeker as someone who has fled to the UK, made an asylum application with the UKBA at the Home Office, and is awaiting a

¹ UNHCR Global Trends Report 2010

² UNHCR Asylum Levels and Trends 2010

decision on that claim. Those judged not to be refugees, nor in need of any other form of international protection, are likely to be sent back to their home countries.

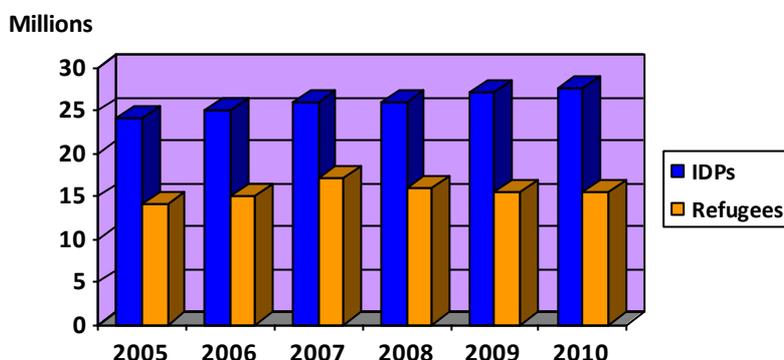
Internally displaced people (IDP)

Like refugees, IDPs have been forced to leave their homes for reasons such as war, or violations against their human rights. However, unlike refugees, they have **not crossed an international border**, and instead have remained inside their country.

Millions of other civilians who have been made homeless by natural disasters are also classified as IDPs.

In 2010, there were an **estimated 27.5 million people displaced internally** by conflict. The largest populations of internally displaced people are found in¹:

- Sudan: 4.5 – 5.2 million
- Colombia: 3.6 – 5.2 million
- Iraq: 2.8 million
- DR Congo: 1.7 million
- Somalia: 1.5 million



Returnees

For many people forced from their homes, a **voluntary return home** in safety and dignity marks the successful end to the trauma. Over the years, UNHCR and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) have managed numerous large-scale voluntary repatriation programmes that brought many millions of refugees home.

The world's newest state, South Sudan, created in July 2011, has received millions of returnees since the conflict in Sudan ended in 2005. Millions more are likely to return home over the coming years.

Stateless people

A stateless person refers to someone who is not recognised as a citizen of any state. It may be because that person belongs to a minority group, which can often happen when a state becomes independent, but does not include this group among its body of citizens. Stateless people may also be refugees, but the categories are distinct from one another.

Statelessness is a massive problem that affects an estimated **12 million people** worldwide, of whom 3.5 million are registered with the UNHCR¹. Statelessness also

¹ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre – global statistics

has a terrible impact on the lives of individuals. Possession of citizenship is essential for full participation in society and a prerequisite for the enjoyment of the full range of human rights, including the ability to work in that country, and vote in elections.

There are currently huge numbers of people in the following countries who are not recognised as belonging to a state:

- Syria: more than 300,000 denationalised Kurds
- Kuwait: 93,000 Bidoon
- Latvia: 320,000 non-citizen ethnic Russians
- Dominican Republic: an estimated 900,000 to 1.2 million undocumented individuals of Haitian origin, many of who are stateless or at risk of statelessness.

Migrant/Migration

Migrants are people who make choices about when to leave and where to go, even though these choices are sometimes constrained. Therefore, refugees do not fall under this category, due to the forced nature of the departure from their home country.

Migration is the crossing of the boundary of a political or administrative unit for a minimum period of time. It includes the movement of refugees, displaced persons, uprooted people as well as economic migrants. Internal migration refers to a move from one area (a province, district or municipality) to another within one country. International migration is a territorial relocation of people between nation-states. This means that tourism, which is temporary, does not count as migration.

Migration is an important factor in the erosion of traditional boundaries between languages, cultures, ethnic group, and nation-states. Even those who do not migrate are affected by movements of people in or out of their communities, and by the resulting changes. Migration is not a single act of crossing a border, but rather a lifelong process that affects all aspects of the lives of those involved.

UN Convention on Refugees

The **UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees** is an international agreement, first signed in 1951 and subsequently modified in 1967, that establishes a standard definition of refugee and lists the rights these individuals are entitled to, and the responsibilities for the states which grant **protection** to them.

The Convention also sets up limits to the definition of refugee (e.g. war criminals cannot be granted refugee status), a **moral obligation** for the countries that signed it to comply with it in good faith, and several principles that exempt refugees from some legal provisions of the host state. In these regards, a refugee shall never be returned to the country where their life or freedom were under

¹ UNHCR Global Trends Report 2010

threat (**principle of non-refoulement**); a refugee shall not be persecuted for entering a country illegally (i.e. without authorization, or a valid visa), whereas they were seeking protection and considered their life or freedom to be at risk.

The original Convention was drafted in 1951 as a direct consequence of **World War II**. For that reason, its scope was limited both in time and in space, referring to events that occurred in Europe before 1951. As of 1967, it was clear that the Convention's provisions had been outdated by world events, with war and persecution spreading in many countries all around the world and provoking massive flows of people seeking protection. A new **Protocol** was added, and the time and space clauses were withdrawn. Since then, 145 countries have ratified the Convention and its Protocol

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** is the agency of the United Nations that works to **protect** and **support** refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons all around the world. The UNHCR was established in 1950 alongside the drafting of the UN Convention on refugees, and countries that are party in the Convention are obliged to cooperate with the UNHCR in the protection of refugees. The UNHCR is one of the most influential guardians of these people's rights and takes direct responsibility in managing some **refugee camps**, helping refugees to **resettle** and integrate in a new country, coordinating and distributing **humanitarian aids**. It was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize twice, in 1954 and 1981.

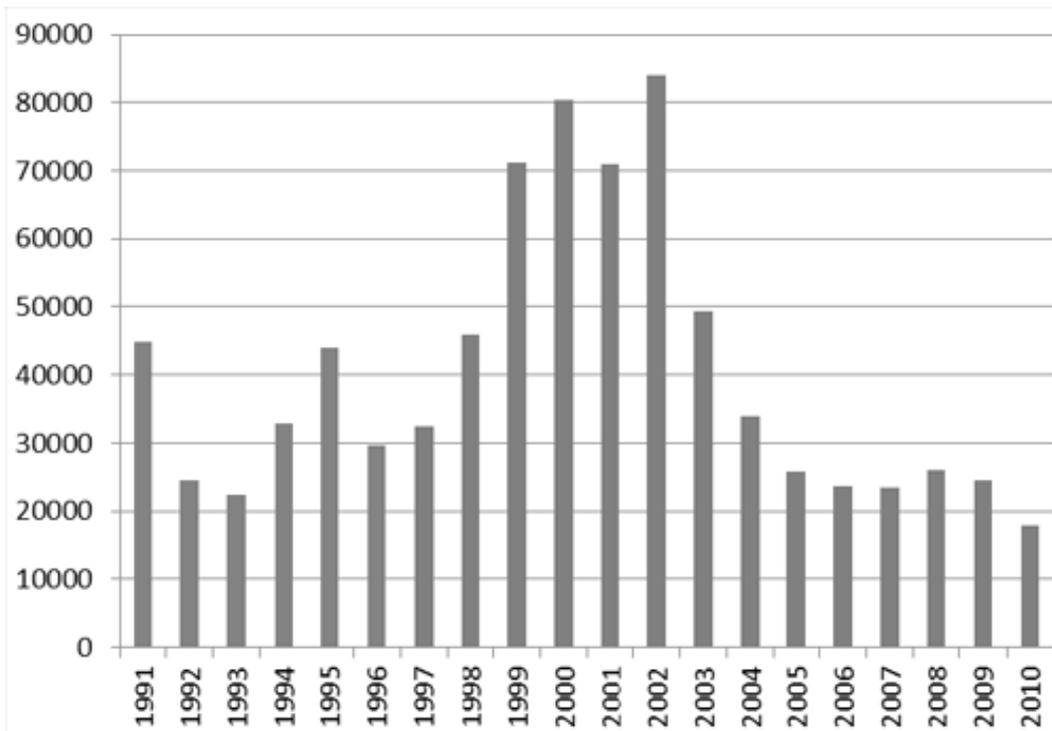


Refugees in the UK factsheet

Refugees and the UK

How many of the world's displaced come to the UK?

- People seeking asylum worldwide in 2010: 845,800¹
- Asylum applications in the UK in 2010: 17,790²



Asylum applications in the UK, 1991-2010²

How much of total immigration do asylum seekers account for in the UK?

- Total long-term immigration to the UK in 2010: 572,000³
- Asylum applications in the UK in 2010: 17,790

How many asylum seekers are allowed to stay in the UK?

- Total asylum applications to the UK in 2010: 17,790
- Total granted leave to remain in 2010: 5,190 (3,480 refugee status, 1,710 other forms of protection)³

Which countries do asylum seekers come from?

40 million people are estimated to be displaced throughout the world. Only a fraction of these come to the UK to apply for asylum. In 2010, the most common nationalities of applicants were:

- Iran: 1,865
- Afghanistan: 1,605
- Zimbabwe: 1,410
- Pakistan: 1,400
- China: 1,000

Other nationalities include **Nigeria, Eritrea, Somalia** and **Sudan**¹.

¹ UNHCR Global Trends Report 2010

² Parliamentary question 54493, 10 May 2011

³ COMPAS Migration Observatory, Migration to the UK: Asylum

The majority of refugees in the world **do not come to the UK**. The UK is home to less than 2% of the world's refugees – out of 16 million worldwide. It received 0.37 applications per 1000 residents, below the average figure for the EU (0.54 applications per 1000 residents)¹. About 80% of the world's refugees are living in developing countries, often in camps. **Africa** and **Asia** between them host more than three quarters of the world's refugees. Europe hosts just 14%.

The decision to grant refugee status

The Government decision by the UKBA whether or not to grant a person refugee status takes around 6 months, but it can take longer. If the asylum application is rejected, the asylum seeker has a right to appeal, but if this fails they should go home. In 2010, the courts **overturned Home Office decisions in 27%** of asylum appeals².

Life in the UK

Refugees do not come to the UK to find jobs. In fact, 90% of refugees were employed in their home country before they were forced to leave. **Refugees do not get large handouts from the state**. In fact, most know nothing about welfare benefits before they arrive and had no expectation that they would receive financial support.

Most asylum seekers are **living in poverty and experience poor health and hunger**. Asylum seekers are **not allowed to work** and are forced to rely on state support – **this can be just above £5 a day to live on**³.

Asylum seekers do not jump the queue for council housing and they cannot choose where they live. The accommodation allocated to them is not paid for by the local council.

Making a contribution

Since 2005 most people recognised as refugees are **only given permission to stay in the UK for five years**. This makes it difficult for them to make long-term plans, and does not encourage them to integrate into British society. Despite many being highly skilled, just 3 out of 10 refugees are able to find jobs in their first year living here⁴.

When given the chance, refugees make a huge contribution to the UK. For example, about **1,200 medically qualified refugees** are recorded on the British Medical Association's database. Unlike training a new doctor, which costs up to £250,000, refugee doctors need just 10% of this figure to support their retraining to practice in the UK⁴.

¹ COMPAS Migration Observatory, Migration to the UK: Asylum

² Home Office Immigration Quarterly Statistics, 4/2010

³ UKBA, cash support for a single asylum seeker aged 18 and over

⁴ Refugee Council Factsheet

Films

To be a refugee

www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpwqK3B2ac8

In this film made by UNHCR, three refugee children vividly show viewers the conditions in which they live and the experiences they have had leaving home.

Courage: 60 years of the UN Refugee Convention

www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtPXV8a_nil&feature=youtu.be&a

This Refugee Week film strives to connect two different generations and explains why refugees are here. It aims to build better understanding of the Second World War, which affected many lives in last century. It also explains the situation at present that appears in different forms of persecution happening in various countries.

Storytelling through the eyes of refugees

www.youtube.com/storytellingunhcr

A UNHCR YouTube channel that features the stories and experiences of a range of refugees.

The journey of life

<http://vimeo.com/25397741>

In this film teenager Gulwali Passarlay tells his astonishing journey as he fled from war-torn Afghanistan to safety in the UK, travelling alone 7,150 miles, through 10 countries, aged just 12.

Seeking asylum

www.schoolsworld.tv/videos/seeking-asylum

Fourteen-year-old Sara and her mother arrived in the UK from Kosovo a year ago in the back of a lorry. The film follows Sara's struggle to get a place in an English school as she and her mother are moved from one temporary accommodation to another.

Welcome to Newport

www.youtube.com/watch?v=qpFKpDpuWwA

A music video made by young people in Newport with support from Shared Futures, the Young Asylum Seekers Support Service and Welsh Refugee Council.

Books

Refugee boy by Benjamin Zephaniah

The story of Alem, a young boy forced to live in London with the support of Refugee Council and the social services, while his parents face the cruelty of separation from their son and from each other, being an Ethiopian and an Eritrean at a time when the two countries are at war. Suitable for children aged 11 and over.

The British Council has made available a reading kit to walk them through the book with ten session plans available here: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/arts-literature-publications-and-resources-reader-development-2.htm>

Shadow by Michael Morpugo

This is the story of Aman, a boy from Afghanistan fleeing the horror of the Afghan war. A dog will guide Amam and his mother through the endless journey to the UK. Mama names the dog Shadow, for he knows that she will always stay by his side. Once in the UK, Amam makes friends with Matt, with whom he shares a passion for football. But their friendship is interrupted when Amam and his mother are detained for deportation. For children aged 9 and over.

The Silence Seeker by Ben Morley

When a new family moves in next door, Joe's mum explains that they are asylum seekers. Joe hears that they are silence seekers, especially as Mum adds that they need peace and quiet. When he sees a young boy from the family sitting disconsolately on the steps, Joe decides to help him find a quiet place in the noisy and chaotic city. For ages 5 – 7.

The publisher of the book, Tamarind, also offers a useful activity sheet downloadable at the bottom of this webpage: <http://www.tamarindbooks.co.uk/viewbook.asp?ean=9781848530034>

The Other Side of Truth by Beverley Naidoo

A shot. Two shots at the gate in the early morning and a car screeches away down an avenue of palm trees. A tragedy - and a terrible loss for Sade and her younger brother Femi, children of an outspoken Nigerian journalist. Now terror is all around them and they must flee their country. At once. And alone. Plans for their journey have to be hastily arranged. Everything must be done in secret. But once Sade and Femi reach England, they will be safe - won't they? Suitable for ages 12 and over.

My Childhood Under Fire: A Sarajevo Diary by Nadja Halilbegovich

Nadja's story is a powerful first-hand account of life during the Bosnian war, told through the eyes of a child. An eye-opening account of how children can cope living through conflict. Aimed at children aged 9 – 12.

Mai Ya's Long Journey by Sheila Cohen

This is the true story of Mai Ya, a young Laotian girl born in a Thai refugee camp after her parents were forced to flee their country in the Vietnam War. The story documents her journey from the camp to America, where Mai Ya is faced with a new challenge: balancing her heritage with her newly adopted culture. A book for readers aged 7 – 12.



The Colour of Home by Mary Hoffman, ill. by Karin Littlewood

The story of Hassan's first day at an English school, after his family flee the war in Somalia. It describes his sadness, and how the school helps him to feel welcome and settled. A beautiful picture book, suitable for ages 5 – 11.

The Librarian of Basra by Jeanette Winter

The true story of a librarian's struggle to save her community's priceless collection of books during the war in Iraq. Beautifully illustrated and inspiring. Suitable for ages 5 – 11.

Zlata's Diary by Zlata Filipovic

Real diary of a young girl trapped in Sarajevo when war broke out in 1992. For nearly 2 years she recorded how war touched her daily life and robbed her of her childhood. Very useful for Years 5 – 6, particularly in comparison with Anne Franks' Diary.

Glossary

Asylum seeker: a person who fled their home country to look for protection in another country, and is awaiting for a decision by the authorities in the host country.

Civil war: a conflict within a single state between two groups who aim to seize (or retain) power.

Detention: a measure adopted for non-UK citizens who are in breach of the immigration rules and are in the process of being removed or deported to their country of origin.

Human rights: the set of universal basic rights and freedoms that all people are entitled to regardless of nationality, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, race, religion, language, or other status. All people should enjoy equal rights everywhere they are for the simple fact of being human.

Internally displaced person: a person who has been forced to leave their home, but without crossing the borders of their home country.

Migrate: to move from one country to another with the intention to settle in the latter (i.e. you are not a migrant if you visit a foreign country as a tourist).

Persecution: the act of oppressing, harassing, threatening and criminalizing a person or a group of people for their beliefs, ethnicity, orientations, ideas.

Refugee: a person who fled from war, persecution, natural disasters in their home country and has been granted protection by another country's government.

Removal/deportation: the process of forced expulsion of a non-UK citizen who is found in breach of the immigration rules and refuses to leave the country voluntarily.

Social services: a range of provisions that a government or a local authority adopt to increase the welfare and quality of life of their service users. In the UK, this includes health care, education, housing, employment support.

Stateless person: a person with no citizenship. This might be because of their home country not existing anymore due to a conflict, or because they come from an ethnic or religious or other minority group which is not recognized by the authorities, or because they are born in a territory that is disputed.

UN Convention on refugees: an international agreement, first signed in 1951 and subsequently modified in 1967, that sets a universal definition of refugee and lists the rights these individuals are entitled to and the responsibilities for the states which grant protection.

UNHCR (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees): the agency of the United Nations that works to protect refugees, asylum seekers and displaced persons all around the world. The UNHCR is one of the most influential guardians of these people's rights and takes direct responsibility in managing some refugee camps and helping refugees to resettle.

UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East): the agency of the United Nations that works specifically and exclusively with Palestinian refugees. Created after the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1948, it provides humanitarian assistance in refugee camps in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and the Palestinian Territories.

Resource 1

Country:

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Flag:

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Capital City:	
Population:	
Languages spoken:	
Main religions:	
Currency:	

What else do you want to know?

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Resource 2

Reasons to migrate blank cards

Your idea:	Your idea:	Your idea:
Your idea:	Your idea:	Your idea:
Your idea:	Your idea:	Your idea:
Your idea:	Your idea:	Your idea:
Your idea:	Your idea:	Your idea:

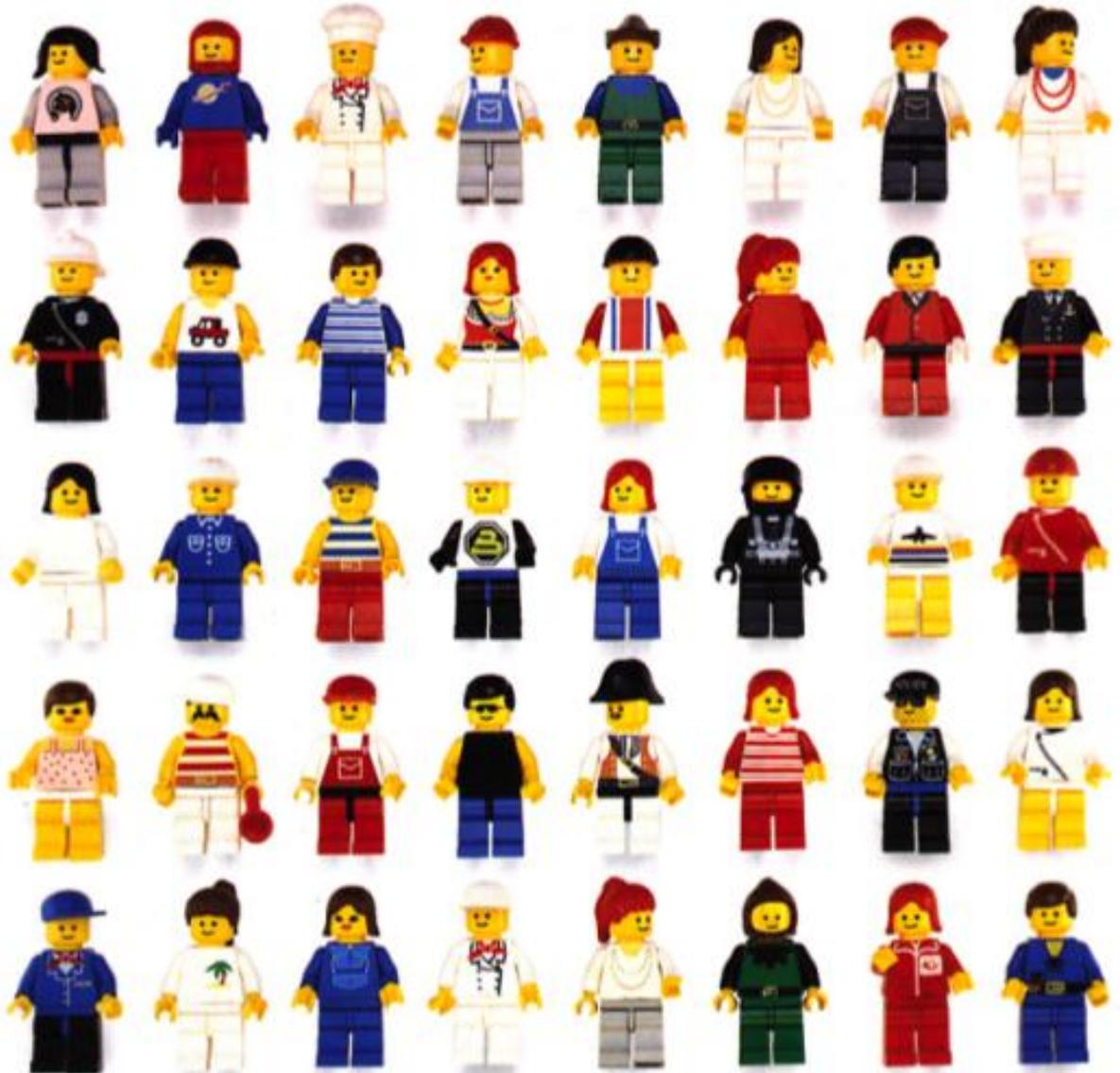
Resource 3

Reasons to migrate cards

 <p>Angelina Sumendjo/Canadian Red Cross</p> <p>To seek safety</p>	 <p>Anthony Teun Veleen (ICRC)</p> <p>Conflict/War</p>	 <p>Cruz Ropa-Chilena</p> <p>Earthquake</p>
 <p>Pavel Cugni (ICRC)</p> <p>Political climate</p>	 <p>Pico Shiyok/International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies</p> <p>Flood</p>	 <p>Gemunu Amarasinghe (IFRC)</p> <p>To get a better job</p>
 <p>Rene Clement (ICRC)</p> <p>Persecution</p>	 <p>Joana Caudon (IFRC)</p> <p>Famine/a shortage of food</p>	 <p>IFRC</p> <p>To seek a better life</p>
 <p>Pedram Yazdi (ICRC)</p> <p>No jobs</p>	 <p>IFRC</p> <p>Poverty</p>	 <p>IFRC</p> <p>Cyclone</p>

Resource 4

Spot the refugee



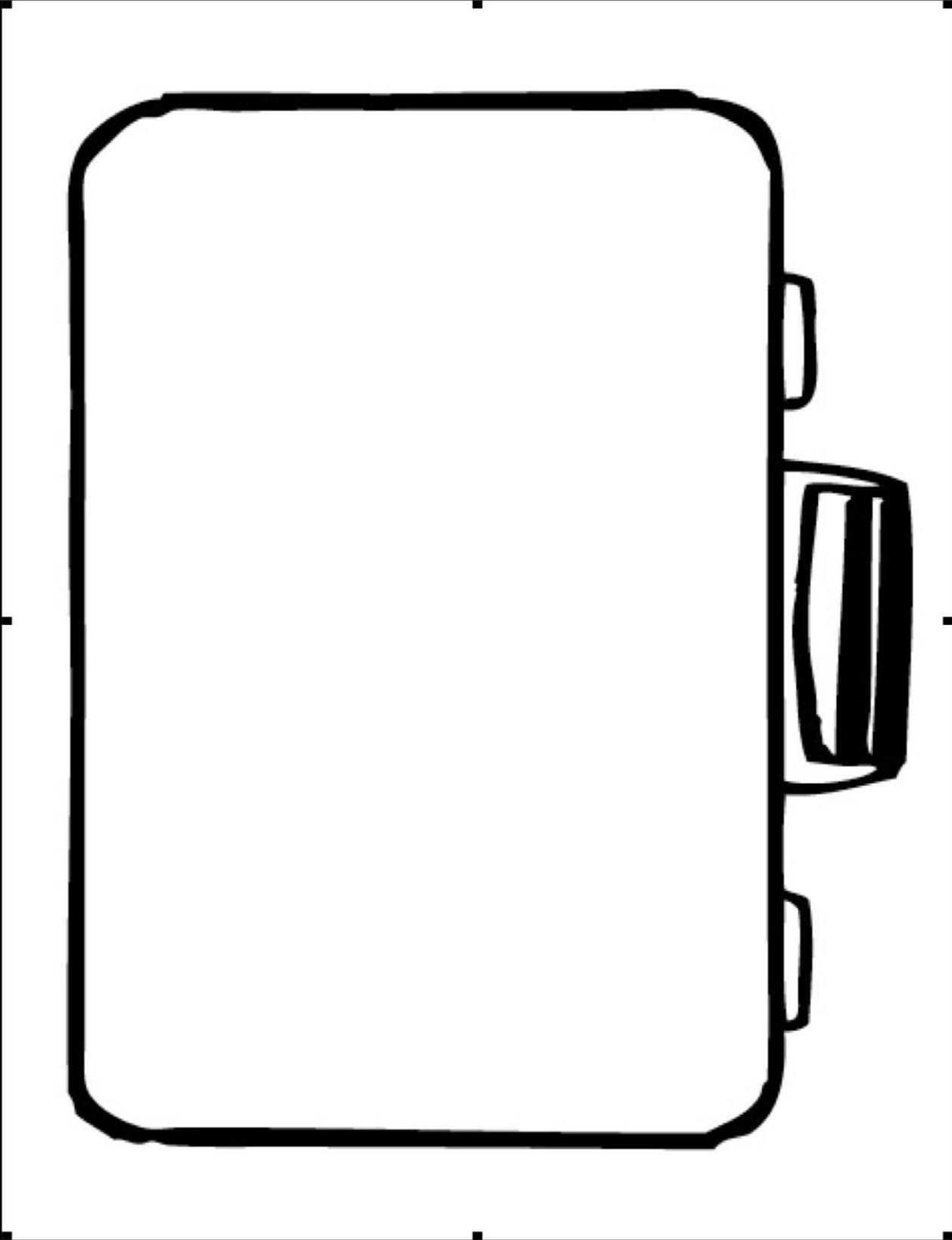
SPOT THE REFUGEE

Resource 5

Who does Carly meet?

Groups	How Do They Treat Carly? Why Do They Turn Her Away?
	Couple in the village
	Stone Eaters
	Silk-Tails
	Smoky Crows
	Greedy Managers
	Poor People

Resource 6



Resource 7

Refugee Kids Viewing Chart

The names of two of the girls	
The names of two of the boys	
The countries some of the young people are from	
What one/some of them said about the following:	
Leaving home	
Coming to Britain	
Finding a school	
First days	
Learning English	
Fitting in	
School and beyond	