Lesson Plan: Refugees and The Island of Lesbos

by Seiler Smith

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Refugees climb out of their dinghy on the shores of Lesbos after having crossed from Turkey, about seven miles away. Image by Tzeli Hadjidimitiou. Greece, 2015.

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A refugee girl is rushed to an ambulance in Lesbos, Greece. Image by Jeanne Carstensen. Greece, 2015.

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A view from the hillside above Assos, Turkey, where several smuggling camps are located. Two dinghies filled with refugees are heading toward Lesbos as a Turkish Coast Guard ship looks on. Image by Peter Bouckaert. Greece, 2015.

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Syrian refugees and others go to the Basmane neighborhood in Izmir, Turkey, to find smugglers to take them across to one of the Aegean islands. The Sinbad Cafe is a central meeting point. Image by Jeanne Carstensen. Greece, 2015.

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Nineteen-year-old Nour from Damascus, Syria, has tea at the Sinbad Cafe in Izmir. He has paid a smuggler and is waiting to be transported to the coast to cross over to Greece. Image by Jeanne Carstensen. Greece, 2015.

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Smugglers overload the dinghies with people paying around $1,200. One boat with 50 people is worth 60,000. On the day in October when this photo was taken approximately 5,000 refugees arrived to Lesbos, earning $600,000 for the smugglers— $18,000,000 in one month. Image by Peter Bouckaert. Greece, 2015.

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A boat full of refugees arrives in Lesbos. Refugees buy their own life jackets in Turkey but investigations have shown that many of them are fake. Image by Jeanne Carstensen. Greece, 2015.

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Volunteers from all over the world have joined with local Greeks to help the refugees when they arrive on Lesbos. Image by Alison Terry-Evans. Greece, 2015.

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A doctor and volunteers attend to new arrivals. Image by Jeanne Carstensen. Greece, 2015.

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The local municipalities have been overwhelmed by discarded lifejackets, rubber dinghies and other detritus left by the thousands of people walking through their beaches and towns. Image by Jeanne Carstensen. Greece, 2015.

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At Moria refugee camp near Mytilene, the capital of Lesbos, refugees recharge their cell phones. Image by Jeanne Carstensen. Greece, 2015.

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Dimitris Avramopoulos, Commissioner of Migration for the European Commission, visits Moria refugee camp. Refugees outside the fence protest poor conditions at the camp. Image by Jeanne Carstensen. Greece 2015.

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Around 60 percent of the population of Lesbos descends from the Greek refugees who fled Asia Minor in 1922, including these three women from Skala Sykaminia. Image by Alison Terry-Evans. Greece, 2015.

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Greek refugees flee Smyrna (Izmir) in 1922 as the city burns. Boats head for Lesbos and other Greek islands. Photo courtesy of "The Pappas Post."

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The “grandmothers of Skala Sykaminia,” all daughters of Greek refugees from 1922, have become famous for the help they offer to Syrian refugees. Screenshot from October 20, 2015 article in "The Greek Reporter."

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Spanish lifeguards from Proactiva Open Arms plunge into rough seas off Skala Sykaminia, Lesbos, to rescue refugees. Image by Jeanne Carstensen. Greece, 2015.

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A Swedish doctor, a local fisherman (carrying the oxygen tank) and other volunteers carry a refugee girl suffering from severe hypothermia to an ambulance in Skala Sykaminia. Image by Jeanne Carstensen. Greece, 2015.

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The body of a male refugee lies on the beach in northern Lesbos. Image by Jeanne Carstensen. Greece, 2015.

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A group of refugees who have been rescued from a sinking boat in stormy weather wait to hear the fate of their loved ones still trapped inside. In the end, over 60 people died that night. Image by Jodi Hilton. Greece, 2015

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An Imam (far left) speaks with Greek Orthodox priests after an interfaith service on Lesbos held to mourn the deaths of refugees as Spyros Galinos, mayor of Lesbos, looks on. Image by Jeanne Carstensen. Greece, 2015.

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A Syrian refugee woman in Chios, Greece, enjoys smoking her hookah. Image by Jeanne Carstensen. Greece, 2015.

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Αρχή φόρμας



Τέλος φόρμας

Objective:

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to analyze various forms of media about a specific subject and develop a coherent understanding of that subject.

**Introducing the Lesson:**

You will be looking at several articles by Jeanne Carstensen about the Island of Lesbos, a small population of people seeing thousands of refugees passing through their island every day.

Warm-Up:

Imagine a family of strangers in need, who could not speak English, showed up at your house tomorrow with only the clothes on their backs. Would you help them or turn them away? Why?

If you did decide to help them, what do you think you could do to help the family?

**Introducing the Resources:**

After reading the articles and viewing the photographs and video, answer the accompanying comprehension questions and the following summary questions.

1. How are the three resources, all told by the same journalist, different? How are they similar?
2. Which resource did you like best? Why?
3. Why do you think that the author, Jeanne Carstensen, chose to use pictures as well as a written article to report on the refugee crisis?

**Extension:**

If you were the mayor of a city, and refugees were trying to come into your city for help, what would you do?

Write a two paragraph (3-5 sentences each) response on your answer. Make sure to defend your answer with examples you have read in the resources.