

# Welcoming a refugee visitor

## Summary of activities and resources for preparation and follow-up



Schools taking part in **Refugees into Schools** have asked for some ideas for preparation and follow up activities. The answer is a living publication that will be updated throughout the school year until June 2012. This has been put together following the feedback that we have had from schools who have taken part in *Refugees into Schools*.

Many schools aim to integrate a 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. It also means that pupils have an opportunity to build on their understanding of refugees.

The complete RiS Resource is packed with ideas for lessons, and includes photocopiable worksheets and games, individual and group activities, ideas for homework, and web links for further study. This summary provides an overview of the Resource.



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## ➤ **Definitions and Factsheet**

Who is a refugee? What is the difference between a refugee and an asylum seeker? What is the UNHCR? Some pupils might not have a clear answer to these questions. Some useful definitions and a Factsheet will provide them with the basic information they need to kick off their work on refugees.

## ➤ **Preparation activities for all ages**

There are lots of activities that can be tailored to provide stimulating classes for learners of all ages. Below are some of these (>> **RESOURCES** can be found in the full RiS Resource pack):

### **Research**

Make your refugee visitor feel really welcome by getting pupils to display their knowledge of his or her country. You could do this by:

- Researching key facts about the country. Where is it? How big is it? What is the capital city, the language, flag etc. >> **RESOURCE 1**
- Learning a word or two in one of the languages spoken in the country.
- Considering what a day in the life of a pupil in that country may involve. Perhaps identify the similarities and differences.
- Reconstructing 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.

### **Discussion**

Topics for discussion could include:

- 'Why do people migrate?' >> **RESOURCE 2**
- 'What do you know about refugees?' >> **RESOURCE 3**

### **Brainstorming**

With a better idea about what life is like in different countries, and why people become refugees, pupils can work alone or in pairs to plan what questions they would like to ask the visitor.

## ➤ **Preparation activities for primary children**

### **Short films**

Stimulate your class with a short film about a refugee girl who is forced to flee her home and build her life somewhere else. **Carly** is a 7-minute animation that can prompt an introductory discussion about refugees. Consider the following questions:

- 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?

See >> **RESOURCE 5** for a full worksheet.

The film can be viewed at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=oF1HGfg2bSo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oF1HGfg2bSo)

## Games

Spot the refugee: >> **RESOURCE 4**

This is a short game to get pupils to consider myths about refugees and the harm that negative stereotypes can cause. The answer is that anyone can be a refugee.

'What would you take and what would you leave?'

Remind students that refugees often leave their homes in a hurry and with little space to carry belongings. >> **RESOURCE 6** provides a helpful template of a suitcase on which students can draw or write the objects they would take with them. This can form the basis of a class discussion.

## ➤ Preparation activities for secondary students

### Short films

**Refugee Kids** is a 14-minute film that gives students an immediate insight into why people become refugees and what arriving in a new country is like. It features testimonies from nine people from five countries. >> **RESOURCE 7** is a worksheet based on this video. The film can be watched here: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=2N3ndNyuU2k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2N3ndNyuU2k)

### Refugee Quiz

Some challenging questions to add relevant information and figures on refugees while tackling some of the widespread myths on the topic.

### Questions for Discussion

Some "hot" questions to stimulate discussion, confrontation and brainstorming.

## ➤ 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.

**Letter writing** is a great way to stay in touch with the visitor, and can provide the opportunity to ask questions that were not asked during the visit. The Refugees into Schools team can happily pass these letters on. Letter writing can also provide a chance for students to engage with MPs, local authorities, NGOs and charities.

Writing up **reports** of the visit is another excellent way to practice a valuable and practical writing skill. Feel free to send these to the Refugee into Schools team!

**Assemblies** are another platform for a display about refugees. All you need for a Refugee Assembly can be found here: [www.risc.org.uk/education/risc\\_publications.php](http://www.risc.org.uk/education/risc_publications.php)

**Fundraising** can be an enterprising activity for students, with proceeds benefiting a local refugee organisation or charity that supports them. Ideas might include a sponsored walk or swim, a quiz, a play or show, a non-uniform day, or a mini-bakery featuring cakes and biscuits from other countries.

## ➤ News, films, and books

There is plenty of information and fiction available for students who want to learn more about refugees, as well as conflict and migration in general.

### **Refugee Week website**

Pictures, information, resources, facts&figures and activities are available on the Refugee Week website at this address: <http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk/>

### **Films**

#### **To Be A Refugee (8 minutes)**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpwqK3B2ac8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpwqK3B2ac8)

*Three refugee children vividly share their refugee experience*

#### **Courage: 60 Years of the UN Refugee Convention (2 minutes)**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtPXV8a\\_nil&feature=youtu.be&a](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtPXV8a_nil&feature=youtu.be&a)

*How conflict creates refugees, from the Second World War to the present day.*

#### **Storytelling through the eyes of refugees (4 minutes)**

[www.youtube.com/storytellingunhcr](http://www.youtube.com/storytellingunhcr)

*The stories and experiences of a range of refugees.*

#### **The Journey of Life (11 minutes)**

<http://vimeo.com/25397741>

*The astonishing story of Gulwali Passarlay, who at just 12 years of age travelled alone from war-torn Afghanistan to the UK.*

#### **Seeking Asylum (28 minutes)**

[www.schoolsworld.tv/videos/seeking-asylum](http://www.schoolsworld.tv/videos/seeking-asylum)

*14-year old Sara's struggle to get a place in an English school as she and her mother are moved from one temporary accommodation to another.*

### **Books**

#### **Refugee boy** (by Benjamin Zephaniah), suitable for ages 11 and over

*The story of a young refugee, whose parents are kept apart by the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea.*

The British Council created a kit to walk readers through the book. Ten session plans are available here: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/arts-literature-publications-and-resources-reader-development-2.htm>

#### **The Silence Seeker** (by Ben Morley), suitable for ages 5-7

*The experience of a boy neighbouring a refugee family.*

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

#### **Shadow** (by Michael Morpugo), suitable for ages 9 and over

*The special bond between an Afghan boy and the dog who helps him to get to the UK.*

**The Other Side of Truth** (by Beverley Naidoo), suitable for ages 12 and over  
*Two siblings run away from Nigeria after their father is shot dead.*

**My Childhood Under Fire: A Sarajevo Diary** (by Nadja Halilbegovich), suitable for ages 9-12  
*A powerful first-hand account of life during the Bosnian war through the eyes of a child.*

**Mai Ya's Long Journey** (by Sheila Cohen) suitable for ages 7-12  
*The journey of a young Laotian from a Thai refugee camp where she was born to the US.*

***...and many other activities, resources and information!!!***

