

Refugee Week 2023

Teacher Notes

This teaching resource has been created for use with learners aged between 10 and 19. Use the PowerPoint and accompanying notes to help learners understand what Refugee Week is and why it is important. Help them to empathise with refugees and asylum seekers, and to consider different perspectives.

The resource can be used in form time, assembly time, or in a PSHE, Citizenship or Enrichment lesson. Discussion time can be limited or extended, depending on the learners you are using the resource with and the time available.

Activities are intended to stimulate questions and provide an opportunity for young people to share their own thoughts and perhaps preconceptions about refugees in the UK.

With this in mind, educators should be careful to ensure activities do not further any negative or disrespectful viewpoints that young people may have been exposed to.

Educators should be especially aware if there are young refugees amongst their learners. Handled with care, any such first-hand experience can, of course, help others to build their own understanding.

See our detailed guidance on [how to talk to children and young people about conflict](#).

Background information on Refugee Week

[Refugee Week](#) is a humanitarian awareness event held annually in the UK, in June. It is a festival celebrating the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees and people seeking sanctuary (a safe place). The vision is for refugees and asylum seekers to be able to live safely within inclusive and resilient communities, where they can continue to make a valuable contribution.

The [British Red Cross](#) is one of the national partners involved in the event. We are the UK's largest independent provider of services for refugees and asylum seekers. We help ensure that people seeking protection in the UK are treated fairly and with dignity.

Find our other teaching resources on refugees and migration [here](#).

As part of the international Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the British Red Cross supports people who are forced to flee their homes overseas. Together, we help people find safe and legal routes to new countries and provide essential aid.

Learning objectives

- Learn about a humanitarian awareness event.
- Apply learning and empathy to understand why the event takes place.
- Share learning by discussing a debate topic, and showing active listening skills.

How do I use this resource?

Explore the UK's annual awareness event – Refugee Week – through a humanitarian lens. Use photos to explore the needs of refugees and asylum seekers and the positive impact support can have on those who have fled their dangerous environments.

Download the PowerPoint to deliver the activities. Use one, some or all of the activities, as suits you. Each one can be done in ten to fifteen minutes. Embed this activity into your lessons or use it in assembly or tutor time to engage learners with current events and humanitarian news.

Throughout the PowerPoint presentation, you'll find useful information in the notes under each slide. Use these to support your explanations to learners and develop discussions.

Session overview

Respond and discuss

Using the PowerPoint, explore the photos of Sudanese people fleeing their neighbourhood, Sudanese people at a camp in Chad, and people at a demonstration, with one woman holding a 'Refugees Welcome' sign.

- Support learners with their analysis of the photos and associated topics, through the "see, think, feel" framework.
- Discuss the questions linked to the photos on slides 3, 4, 5 and 6, ensuring all learners are able to share their responses.
- Use the notes on each PowerPoint slide to guide you and address misconceptions learners may have about the topic.

Discuss and debate the statements:

- People fleeing dangerous environments should be treated with compassion.
- All refugees and asylum seekers should be given protection, support and resources for their immediate needs.
- We can all help to make refugees and asylum seekers feel welcome.

Do learners agree or disagree? Why?

Support learners to listen to and respect others' viewpoints, and to explain the reasons behind their opinions. Where necessary, it may be useful to clarify the terms "refugee" and "asylum seeker" (find definitions in the slide notes).

The wider context

Ask learners to consider recent events they know of that have led to refugees arriving in other countries, as they have fled their own country. Look at Newsthink resources on Ukraine and Afghanistan for more context around refugees and why people seek asylum in other countries. Consider the themes of previous Refugee Weeks (e.g. 'Healing', 'We cannot walk alone', 'Imagine', 'Our shared future') and this year's theme – compassion.

Time to reflect

Encourage learners to reflect on their personal opinions and values in their own time. They may record their thoughts in a PSHE topic book, or they might add their thoughts to a display on Refugee Week. They could also be encouraged to write quotes to be placed on the school's website or to feature in a newsletter or the school's social media accounts during Refugee Week. Learners can be encouraged to consider the importance of empathy, kindness and compassion.

Next steps

Further discussion and reflection activities could take place in subsequent lessons. You could focus on the following questions:

- What emotions does this topic evoke in you, and why do you think you feel this way?
- What does it mean to be a refugee, and what challenges do refugees face when they arrive in a new country?
- Why do you think it is important for countries to welcome refugees?
- What actions can individuals take to support refugees and create welcoming communities?
- Have you ever met or spoken with a refugee, and if so, what did you learn from that experience?
- How can we overcome negative stereotypes and misinformation about refugees in our society?
- Can you think of any historical examples where refugees were welcomed into a new country and made positive contributions to their new communities?
- What can we do to ensure that refugees can access the resources and support they need to thrive in their new home?
- How can we create a world where all people are welcomed and valued, regardless of their nationality or background?

Explore further actions people can take to learn more about Refugee Week and support those affected, including raising awareness by sharing information with others. This could be through an event held at school, which could also raise money to help support people forced from their homes.