

Scotland's Assembly
 World Refugee Day – 20 June
 School session plan



<p>Introduction</p> <p>What is World Refugee Day?</p>	<p>World Refugee Day is observed annually on June 20 to honour and recognise the resilience, strength, and courage of individuals who have been forced to flee their home countries due to conflict, persecution, or violence. Established by the United Nations in 2000 and first celebrated on June 20, 2001, it commemorates the 50th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention. More information below.</p> <p>Watch: The UN Refugee Convention in 60 seconds.</p>
<p>What is the difference between an asylum seeker, refugee and migrant?</p>	<p>Asylum Seeker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition: an asylum seeker is a person who has made a claim for protection to a state which has signed the UN Convention on Refugees 1951 and is waiting for a decision. • Example: a person arriving in the UK from Afghanistan and applying for asylum due to fear of persecution. <p>Refugee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition: a refugee is someone whose individual application for protection has been recognised under the UN Convention on Refugees 1951. • Example: a person fleeing armed conflict in Syria and unable to return due to ongoing danger. <p>Migrant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition: a migrant is anybody who moves from one region or country to another for any reason. • Example: an individual moving from Poland to the UK for job opportunities.

Myth busting

This activity is a great way to explore some of the myths about refugees and asylum seekers with a class.

Myth 1. Seeking safety is illegal

Reality: According to the UN Refugee Convention everyone has the right to ask for safety in another country. This is called seeking asylum, and it is a human right. No matter how someone travels to the UK, it is not against the law if they are coming to ask for protection.

Myth 2. The UK is doing more than its fair share

Reality: In 2023, only a tiny number of people in the UK were refugees. The UK is home to just 1% of all the refugees in the world, and it's not one of the top 10 countries helping the most.

The countries that have the most refugees are:

Iran – 3.8 million

Turkey – 3.3 million

Colombia – 2.9 million

You can find the most recent yearly figures and digestible analysis of new statistics in the following links:

<https://www.unhcr.org/uk/asylum-uk>

<https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/stay-informed/explainers/>

Myth 3. Refugees do not make a positive difference in society

Reality: Refugees contribute in various ways through their skills and talents. This includes businesses, community initiatives, working in the NHS and so on which makes the UK more interesting and diverse. Other contributions from refugees include music, food, art and languages.

If refugees got help to find jobs more quickly, it could bring in £1.2 billion to the UK over the next 5 years.

<p>Case studies</p>	<p>These are three case studies that can be shared with learners to focus on the themes of empathy, courage and celebration. Each case study can be followed with a series of questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What did you think of this? - How did that make you feel? - What stood out for you? <p>Empathy Inspired by real-life experiences of children that Save the Children worked with, 'Home' tells a story about how child refugees feel and what it's like to be separated from friends, family, and school in a new and unfamiliar setting. It also celebrates the possibilities for children to welcome new refugee friends and learn about different cultures.</p> <p>Courage Show Courage video.</p> <p>Courage: 60 Years of the UN Refugee Convention is a two-minute documentary featuring two people who have come to Scotland in very different circumstances, but who both fled for their lives.</p> <p>Celebration This music video by The Snuts was made to celebrate refugees in Scotland.</p>
<p>Action</p>	<p>Taking action for refugees is about standing up for humanity, justice and compassion. It is a chance to help people in desperate need and build a more caring, stable world for everyone.</p> <p>Primary schools are not just places of academic learning; they are vital in shaping compassionate, informed communities. Therefore, taking action to help refugees is vital.</p> <p>Here are a few ideas that can be done in class to mark WRD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make placards/postcards/videos/etc responding to the phrase 'On WRD I wish for...' which can then be posted on social media using the hashtag #AyeWelcomeRefugees

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invite a New Scot to speak: approach local charities and community groups in your area, you can use the New Scot connect map to find out about initiatives in different parts of Scotland: https://scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/new-scots-connect-map/ <p>For more ideas and examples of school projects, please see the Learning About Refugees presentation provided.</p>
--	---

Why WRD Matters

This day serves as a platform to raise awareness about the challenges faced by refugees and to mobilise support for their rights and well-being. It's a call for global solidarity, emphasising the need to create inclusive communities where refugees can rebuild their lives with dignity and hope.

How It's Observed

World Refugee Day is marked by various events worldwide, including cultural performances, educational programs, and public discussions. These activities aim to foster understanding and empathy, highlighting the contributions of refugees to their host communities. For the current WRD theme check out <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/get-involved/take-action/world-refugee-day>

Ways to Get Involved

1. **Welcome:** make refugee children feel welcomed in your school.
2. **Educate:** learn about the refugee experience and educate your learners to combat misinformation and prejudice.
3. **Organise:** facilitate a school activity to mark WRD - it can be an opportunity for cultural exchange, storytelling, multi-lingual learning or something else entirely.
4. **Advocate:** Use social media to amplify refugee voices and share their stories.

In Scotland, various events and initiatives take place around World Refugee Day, including cultural festivals, educational workshops, and community gatherings. These events aim to celebrate the diversity and resilience of refugees while fostering a spirit of inclusion and solidarity. You can find out more information [here](#).

Resources for teachers

UNHCR Guide for teachers

[UNHCR Teaching About Refugees 2021 - Guide for Teachers | UNHCR](#)

Wonder Foundation Policy Briefing

<https://wonderfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Access-to-Education-for-Migration-Children-WONDER-Foundation-Briefing.pdf>

Making refugee children welcome in schools

<https://theconversation.com/how-schools-and-teachers-can-make-refugee-children-feel-welcome-199345> (Uni of Winchester)

Bell Foundation Guidance on welcoming refugee children

<https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/resources/guidance/schools-and-leaders/welcoming-refugee-and-asylum-seeking-learners/>

Schools of Sanctuary resources

<https://schools.cityofsanctuary.org/resources>

International Rescue Committee: Healing Classrooms

<https://www.rescue.org/uk/irc-uks-healing-classrooms>

