

Dear Educator,

Welcome to *Teachers' Corner*! Here you will find educational resources provided by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Created by the UN General Assembly in 1950 to help more than one million European refugees still homeless in the aftermath of World War II, today the UN Refugee Agency works in 126 countries assisting some 36 million refugees and other forcibly displaced persons.

Teachers' Corner is specifically designed for educators and students in grades K-12. We provide curricula and games, as well as print and electronic resources to 1) help teach the history of refugees and the work of the UN Refugee Agency, 2) further understanding of issues surrounding refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), human rights and tolerance, and 3) demonstrate the relationship between the protection of forcibly displaced populations and human rights.

The following lesson plan is specifically designed for middle school Social Studies students. The standards-based activities utilize various resources, including the video *To Be a Refugee*, which captures the refugee experience and UNHCR's work, and LEGO posters that help students understand the prejudices faced by refugees. Through these activities students will, among other things, learn new vocabulary and understand the situations that cause refugee crises.

The *Teachers' Corner* website features lesson plans targeted to students from elementary through high school. We encourage you to review all of the material in *Teachers' Corner* with the understanding that resourceful teachers will find instructional aids in many different places. In this regard, all of the material is presented as options to fit teachers' instructional needs. Captioning on some material can augment instruction in ESL and hearing impaired classrooms and for remedial readers. Learning objectives and key concepts are reinforced with assessment tools and extension activities. We also provide ideas for how your students can get involved in the refugee cause on our Students Helping Refugees page (www.UNrefugees.org/students).

We hope that you find this content of value to your teaching and for your students. We invite you to [subscribe to our monthly E-ALERT](#) where you can learn about the latest refugee news from around the world and find new **free** resources available to educators from UNHCR. Go to [www.....to](http://www.unhcr.org) register.

We also encourage you to consider that there might be refugees in your own classroom and to tailor your lesson plans accordingly. Many refugees have experienced physical and/or psychological distress that should be taken into account.

We want to hear from you. If you have comments or suggestions about *Teachers' Corner* and E-ALERTs please contact us at USAWAEDU@UNHCR.ORG.

Sincerely,

Lilli Tnaib
Teachers' Corner
UNHCR



Global Awareness: Refugees in Today's Society

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Global Awareness: Refugees in Today's Society

Grade Levels: Middle School (5-8)

Concept Areas: Social Studies

KEY CONCEPTS

Students will **identify** the differences between refugees and other migrants. They will **determine** the myriad of challenges refugees face in their daily lives. Students will also **analyze** the geographic changes and issues that may cause forced displacement. By using the Model United Nations format, they will **create** plans that could potentially help refugees.

KEY OBJECTIVES

The student will:

1. identify the different types of people seeking asylum in the world.
2. recognize the causes and the effects of being a refugee.
3. research a specific refugee-producing or refugee-hosting country..
4. create potential solutions to improve the refugee situation in the country..

KEY VOCABULARY

- **Refugee:** someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group; a refugee either cannot return home or is afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries. (Source: the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees)
- **UNHCR:** the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; office established in 1951 to protect the human rights of refugees and provide for their assistance through legal, social, economic aid. (Source: "Protecting Refugees & the Role of UNHCR" pamphlet)
- **Asylum Seeker:** When people flee their own country and seek sanctuary in another country, they apply for asylum – the right to be recognized as a refugee and receive legal protection and material assistance. An asylum seeker must demonstrate that his or her fear of persecution in his or her home country is well-founded. (Source: "Protecting Refugees & the Role of UNHCR" pamphlet)

- **Migrant:** a wide-ranging term that covers most people who move to a foreign country for a variety of reasons and for a certain length of time (usually a minimum of a year, so as not to include very temporary visitors such as tourists, business travelers, etc.) (Source: “Protecting Refugees & the Role of UNHCR” pamphlet)
- **Economic Migrant:** someone who leaves their country of origin for financial reasons, rather than due to persecution or violation of human rights like refugees (Source: “Protecting Refugees & the Role of UNHCR” pamphlet)
- **Immigrant:** someone who takes up permanent residence in a country other than his or her original homeland (Source: “Protecting Refugees & the Role of UNHCR” pamphlet)
- **Internally Displaced Person (IDP):** someone who has been forced to flee his or her home for the same reason as a refugee, but remains in his or her own country and has not crossed an international border. Unlike refugees, IDPs are not protected by international law or eligible to receive many types of aid. As the nature of war has changed in the last few decades, with more and more internal conflicts replacing wars among countries, the number of IDPs has increased significantly. (Source: “Protecting Refugees & the Role of UNHCR” pamphlet)
- **Stateless Person:** someone who is not a citizen of any country. Citizenship is the legal bond between a government and an individual, and allows for certain political, economic, social and other rights of the individual, as well as the responsibilities of both government and citizen. A person can become stateless due to a variety of reasons, including sovereign, legal, technical or administrative decisions or oversights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights underlines that “Everyone has the right to a nationality.” (Source: “Protecting Refugees & the Role of UNHCR” pamphlet)
- **Asylum:** the right to be recognized as a refugee and receive legal protection and material assistance. An asylum seeker must demonstrate that his or her fear of persecution in his or her home country is well-founded. (Source: “Protecting Refugees & the Role of UNHCR” pamphlet)
- **“Prima Facie” Refugees:** Refugees who are recognized as needing human rights protection on a group basis, rather than recognized on an individual basis (for example, a mass movement of refugees across a border during a widespread conflict) (Source: “Protecting Refugees & the Role of UNHCR” pamphlet)

- **Repatriation:** the process of returning to one's home country. The majority of refugees prefer to return home as soon as it is safe to do so, after a conflict and the country is being rebuilt. UNHCR encourages voluntary repatriation, or return, as the best solution for displaced people. The agency often provides transportation and other assistance, such as money, tools and seeds. Occasionally, UNHCR helps rebuild homes, schools and roads. (Source: "Protecting Refugees & the Role of UNHCR" pamphlet)
- **Resettlement:** the process of helping a refugee find a new, permanent home when they cannot safely reside in a country of first asylum or return home. The United States resettles more refugees than any other country. (Source: "Protecting Refugees & the Role of UNHCR" pamphlet)
- **NGOs:** non-governmental organizations

MATERIALS

- UNHCR LEGO posters: "Spot the Refugee"; "How Does It Feel?"; "What's Wrong Here?"
- UNHCR video: "To Be A Refugee"
- Handout: UNHCR Vocabulary: What is a refugee?
- Handout: UNHCR Vocabulary: What is a refugee? (accommodated sheet)
- Handout: Universal Declaration of Human Rights (abbreviated) (available at: www.umn.edu)
- Handout: Note-taking Sheet for "To Be A Refugee"
- Handout: Resources and Refugees: Research
- Handout: Resources and Refugees: Analysis
- UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (full version): <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>
- UNHCR Original Refugee Artwork: <http://www.unrefugees.org/site/c.lflQKSOWFqG/b.4803695/k.9CB5/RefugeeArtwork.htm>
- UNHCR Global Appeal 2010-2011 – "Populations of Concern" Map: <http://www.unhcr.org/4b04002b9.pdf>
- *Time* magazine photo essay: "The Urbanization of the World's Refugees" - <http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1969434,00.html>
- "How to write a position paper" informational page: <http://www.unausa.org/munpreparation/positionpapers>
- Paper, Pens, Pencils, Colored Pencils

BACKGROUND

Imagine the following scenario: You are a citizen in a nation where political factions have been at war with each other and where civil war has been standard over the past two years. The fighting has officially reached your city, and you know that you are a member of the faction that your townspeople have been sworn to fight. You are no longer safe in your city, so you are forced to leave. With bullets buzzing by your head and soldiers moving in swarms around you, you pack what little you can assemble in twenty minutes and you leave your home. After a long and treacherous walk through your country, you arrive, exhausted, terrified, and hungry, at the border of the neighboring country. Will the other country turn you away? Will you be treated with respect, or will you be treated poorly before you are callously sent back to your own country to face persecution or even death?

In this scenario, you would be considered an **asylum seeker** because your refugee claim has not been definitively evaluated by UNHCR or the host country. If your claim that you are a refugee is accepted, then you are granted **refugee** status and so are accorded the rights that refugees are guaranteed. A refugee is someone who “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his or her nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself to the protection of that country” (from the 1951 *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*). Refugees flee their home countries because their human rights are in jeopardy; it is often their own government that threatens to persecute them or the government is unable or unwilling to protect them. They often flee their own countries because of armed conflict, generalized violence, or human rights violations.

Governments have prime responsibility for protecting refugees, but UNHCR, host countries and local non-governmental organizations provide assistance as well.

UNHCR, or the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, was created in 1950 in Geneva, Switzerland, and implemented in 1951 so that states who were recovering from the disastrous effects of WWII would have help in protecting refugees. (For a map containing Geneva, please go to: <http://www.unhcr.org/4b0508839.pdf>, pg. 3.)¹

According to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, refugees are granted the same basic civic, economic, political, and social rights and freedoms that all human beings should have. These include, but are not limited to: the right to safe asylum; freedom of thought and of movement; freedom from torture and degrading treatment; access to medical care; the right to work; the right to attend school, and to avoid recruitment into military service or prostitution. In situations where there are few resources available

¹ Refer to Facts and Figures worksheet

from governments of the country of asylum for large influxes of refugees, UNHCR provides assistance to those refugees. UNHCR coordinates the provision and delivery of necessities (food, water, shelter, medical care and clean water) in addition to helping the refugees and displaced people return to their homes (**repatriate**), integrate into the country to where they fled or **resettle** to a third country. At times, UNHCR provides start-up packages that may include grants or income-generation projects.

ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Introduction *(one 45-minute class period)*

Step 1: The students should move into groups of three to four people. Each group should receive either of the [UNHCR LEGO](#) posters: “What’s Wrong Here?” and “Spot the Refugee”; use the versions without text so that the students only see the LEGO people and the title of the poster.

Within their small groups, the students should discuss the following questions. Students should write their answers on a sheet of paper.

Discussion questions:

1. What does the title imply? For what should you be looking?
2. Are there any differences between the various LEGO characters? If so, what are they?
3. What may be the purpose of this poster?

Step 2: Reconvene as a class. Have each group present their discussion results to the rest of the class. The teacher should write the results in two separate columns on an overhead sheet – one column should be for the “What’s Wrong Here?” poster and one column should be for the “Spot the Refugee” poster.

Step 3: Show the students the posters with text. Based on what they have seen and read on the posters, the students should discuss the potential implications of being a refugee. Before the class ends, have students come up with a definition for what they think a refugee is.

Activity 2: What is a refugee? *(one 45-minute class period)*

Step 1: Give each student a copy of the handout titled “UNHCR vocabulary sheet: What is a refugee?”

****Note to teachers:** If you are teaching lower-level students, you can use the attached accommodated handout titled “UNHCR vocabulary sheet: What is a refugee? (Accommodated sheet)” so that students do not need to spend the entire class period writing definitions.

As a class, write and discuss the definition of each vocabulary word.

After the students write down each definition, have them think of real-life examples of the terms they have defined. Discuss these examples as a class before moving to the next definition.

****Note to teachers:** Students do not need to include a real-life example of UNHCR because UNHCR is already a specific entity.

Give out the handout titled [“Universal Declaration of Human Rights \(abbreviated\)”](#) and discuss what rights each person is entitled to have as human beings.

****Note to teachers:** You may also want to use the [unabridged version](#) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for students who are advanced learners.

As an exit card, have the students complete the following statement: “The most important right that all humans should have is _____ because _____. Without this right, I would feel _____ because I would not have _____.”

Activity 3: Who are refugees? *(one 45-minute class period)*

Step 1: As a warm-up, post a copy of the UNHCR LEGO poster “How does it feel?” (non-text version) on the overhead. Have students answer the following question in a journal entry format.

Look at the poster. How would you feel if you were the isolated LEGO person in the striped shirt? Write down at least five emotions that you would likely feel, and explain why you might feel that way.

Discuss the students’ answers as a class.

Step 2: Show the students the UNHCR video “To Be a Refugee.” Have the students take notes on the video by using the handout titled “Note-taking Sheet for ‘To Be a Refugee’”. Tell students that they should identify the emotions and the experiences each child in the video feels during his/her time as a refugee.

Step 3: Have a class discussion about the similarities and differences between refugees and the students within the class.

Step 4: In pairs, have the students work together to analyze the *Time* magazine photo essay, "The Urbanization of the World's Refugees" -

<http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1969434,00.html>

Each pair of students should be assigned to one picture from the essay. The students need to answer the following questions:

1. Identify the living conditions of the person in your assigned photo.
2. What details within the photo make it evident that refugees do not have easy lives?
3. Why do you think the photographer would choose this setting for his picture? What is the photographer's purpose?

ASSESSMENT #1: For homework: Each student will go to the UNHCR Original Refugee Artwork website

http://www.unrefugees.org/site/c.lfIQKSOwFqG/b.4803695/k.9CB5/Refugee_Artwork.htm.

They will choose one of the children's pieces of art. For the written assessment, students should write a journal entry from the perspective of the person who drew the picture; the journal should describe what experience the author of the picture must have had to draw that specific picture.

This should include economic and geographic details. The following rubric should be used:

Name: _____ Grade: _____/30 **Journal Entry: Experiences of a Refugee Child**

IDEAS & DEVELOPMENT

- 3 The paper is clear, focused, and insightful. Relevant examples and details effectively support the main idea.
- 2.5 The paper generally maintains focus on the topic. Details appropriately support the main idea.
- 2 The paper has a recognizable topic, although development and support for the main idea may be uneven or inconsistent.
- 1.5 The paper lacks a clear topic. Support for the main idea is inadequate.
- 1 The paper lacks ideas, details, and purpose.

WORD CHOICE (Diction)

- 3 Words effectively convey the intended meaning in a specific and engaging way.
- 2.5 Words convey the intended meaning in a clear and appropriate way.
- 2 Words generally convey the intended meaning, but may lack energy and specificity.
- 1.5 Word choice is limited and may not convey the intended meaning.
- 1 Word choice does not convey the intended meaning.

VOICE

- 3 The writer's voice is individual and engaging, demonstrating awareness of and respect for the audience and the purpose.
- 2.5 The writer's voice is appropriate to the purpose and engages the audience.
- 2 The writer's voice is generally clear but may not be fully engaged with the audience or purpose.
- 1.5 The writer's voice is indifferent and unengaged with the audience and purpose.
- 1 The writer's voice is not evident.

ORGANIZATION

- 3 The organization enhances the main idea. The order, structure, and presentation of information effectively move the reader through the text.
- 2.5 The organizational structure supports the main idea and moves the reader through the text.
- 2 The paper has an organizational structure that helps move the reader through the text, although the structure may be uneven or inconsistent.
- 1.5 The paper lacks clear organizational structure. Ideas, details, or events are loosely strung together.
- 1 The paper has no discernible organization.

SENTENCE FLUENCY (Syntax)

- 3 The writing has an effective rhythm. Sentences are well developed, with structural variety, including parallel structure that supports the purpose.
- 2.5 The writing has appropriate sentence variety and structural clarity.
- 2 The writing is generally clear, but sentences may be mechanical or lack variety.
- 1.5 The writing demonstrates limited understanding of sentence structure.
- 1 The writing lacks appropriate sentence structure.

CONVENTIONS

- 3 The writer uses conventions effectively to support meaning.
- 2.5 The writer uses conventions with few or no errors that distract or interfere with meaning.
- 2 The writer generally uses conventions appropriately, although at times errors are distracting and may interfere with meaning.
- 1.5 The writer consistently makes errors in conventions that distract the reader and interfere with meaning.
- 1 The writer lacks control of conventions.

Social Studies Assessment Indicators:

- **Geographic Indicators:** Did the student choose a specific geographic location for the setting of the journal entry? Is the geographic location described with appropriate details, given the location?
- **Economic Indicators:** Did the student identify the specific economic issues that their "person" faces? Did the student choose economic issues that would make sense given their "person's" experiences?
- **Issues About Refugees:** Did the student describe specific issues that are unique to the experiences of refugees?

Activity 4: What geographic and political factors cause states to have refugees? *(two 45-minute class periods)*

Step 1: Hand each student a copy of the [map](#) found on the Additional Resources page.

Students should choose the answers to the following questions:

1. Which area has the largest population of people of concern? List at least four reasons that may cause this area to have such a large population of people of concern.
2. Which area has the largest population of refugees?
3. Which area has the largest population of IDPs?
4. Which countries resettle the most country and where to do asylum seekers go?

Step 2: Each student will choose one country that hosts a large number of refugees (the list can be found in a dropdown menu at the bottom of the [Additional Resources](#) page).

They will research the refugee situation in that particular country, in addition to reasons why that country may have additional refugees because of political or geographical problems. Students will use the handout titled “Resources and Refugees: Research.”

ASSESSMENT #2: Students will synthesize the information they have researched by answering the questions in the handout titled “Resources and Refugees: Analysis.” As a culminating activity, students will write a research report in which they analyze the causes of the refugee situations in the country that they have researched:

In a well-formed five-paragraph research report, explain how the country that you researched is more likely to have a high number of refugees and IDPs due to the geographical and political issues that the country may have.

The following rubric will be used:

Name: _____ Grade: _____ /30 **Research Report: Refugees and Resources**

IDEAS & DEVELOPMENT

- 5 The paper is clear, focused, and insightful. Relevant examples and details effectively support the main idea.
- 4 The paper generally maintains focus on the topic. Details appropriately support the main idea.
- 3 The paper has a recognizable topic, although development and support for the main idea may be uneven or inconsistent.
- 2 The paper lacks a clear topic. Support for the main idea is inadequate.
- 1 The paper lacks ideas, details, and purpose.

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Enrichment Activity: Model United Nations mock session of UNHCR

Step 1: Students can create position papers in which they create a position from the country that they have researched in Activity #4. (A “how to” guide for how to create position papers can be found at:

<http://www.unausa.org/munpreparation/positionpapers>).

Step 2: The students represent their countries in a mock UNHCR MUN session, in which they create working papers that present possible solutions to help the refugees that come from the country they have researched and other nations that are affected by refugees and IDPs.

Enrichment Activity: Letter to leaders of the countries who are of concern to UNHCR

Students can write a letter to the leader of the country that they researched in Activity #4, expressing concern over the issue of refugees.

RESOURCES

- UNHCR LEGO posters: “Spot the Refugee”; “How Does It Feel?”; “What’s Wrong Here?”
- UNHCR video: “To Be A Refugee”
- *Time* magazine photo essay, “The Urbanization of the World’s Refugees” - <http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1969434,00.html>
- UNHCR general website: <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/txis/vtx/home>
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights – full text version: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/> abbreviated version: University of Minnesota Peace Resource Center, www.umn.edu
- UNHCR pamphlet: “Protecting Refugees: The Role of the UNHCR”
- UNHCR Fact Sheet
- UNA-USA website: “Position Papers: Model UN Preparation Guide” - <http://www.unausa.org/munpreparation/positionpapers>
- UNHCR Global Appeals 2010-2011 - <http://www.unhcr.org/ga10/index.html#/home>
- UNHCR “Populations of Concern” Map: <http://www.unhcr.org/4b04002b9.pdf>
- UNHCR Original Refugee Artwork: <http://www.unrefugees.org/site/c.lfIQKSOwFqG/b.4803695/k.9CB5/RefugeeArtwork.htm>

STANDARDS

(Source: www.mcrel.org)

Topic: Natural resources

Standard 11: Understands the patterns and networks of economic interdependence on Earth's surface

Level III [Grade 6-8]

Benchmark 7

Knows primary, secondary, and tertiary activities in a geographic context

Benchmark 4

Understands the consequences of the use of resources in the contemporary world (e.g., the relationship between a country's standard of living and its accessibility to resources, the competition for resources demonstrated by events such as the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in the 1930s or the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1991)

Knowledge/skill statements

1. Understands the relationship between a country's standard of living and its accessibility to resources
2. Understands the competition for resources, demonstrated by such events as the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in the 1930s
3. Understands the competition for resources, demonstrated by such events as the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1991

Standard 45: Understands major global trends since World War II

Level II [Grade 5-6]

Benchmark 2

Understands the advancement of human rights and democratic ideals and practices in the world during the 20th century

Knowledge/skill statements

1. Understands the advancement of human rights in the world during the 20th century

2. Understands the advancement of democratic ideals and practices in the world during the 20th century

Level IV [Grade 9-12]

Benchmark 2

Understands causes of economic imbalances and social inequalities among the world's peoples and efforts made to close these gaps

Knowledge/skill statements

1. Understands causes of economic imbalances among the world's peoples
2. Understands causes of social inequalities among the world's peoples

Standard 22: Understands how the world is organized politically into nation-states, how nation-states interact with one another, and issues surrounding U.S. foreign policy

Level III [Grade 6-8]

Benchmark 2

Knows the most important means used by nation-states to interact with one another (e.g., trade, diplomacy, treaties and agreements, humanitarian aid, economic incentives and sanctions, military force and the threat of force)

Knowledge/skill statements

1. Knows that nation-states interact with one another through trade
2. Knows that nation-states interact with one another through diplomacy
3. Knows that nation-states interact with one another through treaties and agreements
4. Knows that nation-states interact with one another through humanitarian aid
5. Knows that nation-states interact with one another through economic incentives and sanctions
6. Knows that nation-states interact with one another through military force and the threat of force

Benchmark 3

Knows reasons for the breakdown of order among nation-states (e.g., conflicts about national interests, ethnicity, and religion; competition for resources and territory; absence of effective means to enforce international law), and understands the consequences of the breakdown of order among nation-states

Knowledge/skill statements

1. Knows reasons for the breakdown of order among nation-states
2. Knows that conflict about national interests is a reason for the breakdown of order among nation-states
3. Knows that conflict about ethnicity is a reason for the breakdown of order among nation-states
4. Knows that conflict about religion is a reason for the breakdown of order among nation-states
5. Knows that competition for resources and territory is a reason for the breakdown of order among nation-states
6. Knows that the absence of an effective means to enforce international law is a reason for the breakdown of order among nation-states
7. Understands the consequences of the breakdown of order among nation-states