

SCHOOLS OF SANCTUARY: GIVING A WARM WELCOME

Age range: 11 - 18

Time: 1 hour – 1 hour 50

Outline

Schools of Sanctuary: Giving a Warm Welcome supports young people to consider the importance of values like being welcoming and kind in relation to refugees and asylum seekers and respect for human rights. It enables young people to consider how to make their school a more 'welcoming' place and the purpose of the [School of Sanctuary](#) scheme.

The resource includes a PowerPoint presentation, this workshop plan and an action guide.

The PowerPoint presentation:

- introduces the terms *asylum seeker*, *refugee* and *sanctuary*,
- explains the realities of life for asylum seekers and what pushes someone to seek asylum
- makes the case for the UK to be a welcoming country
- asks young people what they can do to ensure their school is welcoming

The learning activities (below) will expand and develop on these points with an emphasis for building empathy. The **action guide** (download separately) seeks to turn this learning into school-based action.

The presentation and the learning activities in this plan can be delivered by young people themselves either in small group, classroom or assembly settings, with the support of a teacher. Those delivering this workshop can select as many or as few of the activities in this plan as time allows.

Learning objectives

- Understand the challenges faced by asylum seekers before and after arrival in the UK
- Know some of the key facts about asylum seekers
- Develop the skills and confidence to peer-educate others about asylum seekers and refugees

Key questions

- Why do refugees leave their homes to seek asylum?
- What conditions do asylum seekers face?
- Do you think the UK should be welcoming and supportive to asylum seekers?

Resources

- Video clip: [Rachel's Journey](#)
- [Online quiz](#)
- Print outs of 'Handout 1 – Refugee quotations' (separate document)

Curriculum links

England

KS3 & KS4 Citizenship (2014) – Purpose of study, aims, subject content.

Wales

ESDGC (Choices and Decisions) and PSE (Active Citizenship) – National Curriculum for Wales.

Scotland

Social Studies – Scottish Curriculum for Excellence.

Session outline

1. Warm up activity (5-10 minutes)

Think of five things you would take with you if you had to leave your country. Draw or write these items in an outline drawing of a suitcase. Discuss what you would take and what you would miss.

Optional: Challenge people to narrow it down to four items, then three and so on. Which item/s was everyone left with?

2. What do you know about asylum seekers and refugees? Online quiz (10-15 minutes)

Access the interactive quiz [here](#). Go through the quiz as a whole group or, if you have more than one computer, in smaller groups. There are ten questions.

As you go along, discuss any facts that particularly surprise members of the group.

By completing the quiz, participants will learn about the

- Definition of an asylum seeker, refugee and economic migrant
- Legal entitlements of asylum seekers
- Global spread of refugees
- Challenges involved in claiming asylum in the UK

3. Why do people leave their countries to seek asylum? (20-30 minutes)

Explain to the group that people migrate between countries for many different reasons. These reasons can be classified as **economic, social, political** or **environmental**:

Some people *choose* to migrate (for example, someone who moves to another country to enhance their career opportunities). Some people are *forced* to migrate, (for example, someone who moves due to war or famine). Refugees and asylum seekers fall into this second category of forced migration.

Push factors are the reasons why people leave an area.

Pull factors are the reasons why people move to a particular area.

As a whole group, or in smaller groups, create a mind map or list of potential push and pull factors pupils think might affect specifically asylum seekers. When participants have finished the activity you can run through the following push and pull factors and participants can tick off the ones they successfully listed.

Push factors	Pull factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of services • lack of safety • high crime • crop failure • drought • flooding • poverty • war 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more paid work • better services (for example, schools and health care) • good climate • safer with less crime • political stability • more fertile land • lower risk from natural hazards such as earthquakes, floods or storms¹

Remind the group that, under the United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention, a refugee is defined as someone with a *"well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion"* and who *"owing to such fear are unwilling to return to their country."*

Instruct the group to circle only the push factors that relate to someone who could legally be classed as a refugee.

Distribute Handout 1. Take some time to look at the stories on the worksheet. Select one or two of the stories and discuss the push factors involved.

¹ [GCSE Bitesize](#) 'Migration trends' KS3 Geography

4. Rachel's journey (video discussion). (15-20 minutes)

Watch this video (six minutes long) about Rachel's journey to seek asylum in the UK.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00vdxp0>

Use these questions to help prompt discussion:

- What did you think of Rachel's journey? Did anything about Rachel's story particularly move you or stand out to you?
- What were the key push factors? What were the key pull factors?
- How easy was it for Rachel and her family to seek asylum in the UK?
- Do you think Rachel's case to seek asylum was handled well by the UK authorities? If not, how could it have been dealt with better?
- In 2012, 11.4% of all asylum applicants were held in detention centres in the UK despite the fact the UN refugee agency is against detainment². Do you think that the UK should detain people seeking asylum?

Context: *Although Rachel was held in detention, since 2010 children seeking asylum are no longer allowed to be detained. 'End Child Detention Now' was a short and successful campaign that was launched in 2009. In December 2010, Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg announced that the United Kingdom was to eliminate its policy of long-term detention of children³. This led to the government developing a new policy on family removals, aspects of which are now enshrined in the Immigration Act 2014. Under this policy, families with children are no longer detained in Immigration Removal Centres before removal from the UK, although they may be held for up to a week in secure "pre-departure accommodation". This accommodation facility, called 'Cedars', opened in August 2011⁴.*

Optional extra: Rachel's story comes from the BBC series *Seeking Refuge* which also includes [four more videos](#). Each video tells a child's story about coming to the UK to seek asylum. If you have time you could watch a few of them.

5. First day at a new school (30 minutes)⁵

Read out the introductory statement (in the box below). It asks participants to imagine that they have moved to escape some of the situations from which an asylum seeker could have fled and are joining a new school in the UK. It asks them to imagine what things would make them feel better, and what might make them feel more afraid or unhappy in this new environment. It moves them into thinking about how a school can be 'welcoming' to new people from difficult situations.

² The UN Refugee Agency [fact sheet about Asylum in the UK](#).

³ Article on [Global Detention Project.org](#)

⁴ Introduction to briefing paper on [parliament.uk](#)

⁵ This activity was kindly given to us for inclusion in this resource by Schools of Sanctuary. It was originally called 'Stranger in a Foreign Land'

Ask each person to complete the sentences (see box) individually. Advise them not to worry if they need to leave a section blank but to put the first things that come into their heads. If appropriate, you could add: "I left my country because..." after the second sentence which begins with: "I come from..."

Ask each person in turn to read out their answers to sentence one before moving on to sentence two. Repeat this for the other sentences.

After all the sentences have been read, ask the group if anything struck them about the answers they heard. What were the similarities or differences? Any surprises?

What implications might this have on how a school welcomes asylum seeking and refugee families into its community?

TO READ OUT

Imagine you have been forced to flee your country for fear of your life. Your family are claiming asylum because they want to be safe. You are facing your first day at a new school. Complete the following sentences.

1. My name is (the name of your character)...
2. I come from...
3. I feel...
4. I would like ...
5. I would not like ...
6. Sometimes, it seems...
7. Life in this new country is...

6. Summing up (5-10 minutes)

Go around the group and invite everyone to say one thing that shocked, amazed or interested them in this workshop.

You can prompt people further with more specific questions such as:

- What else have you learnt about asylum seekers and refugees?
- Do you think that the UK should be welcoming and supportive to asylum seekers?
- Do they think their school could be a more welcoming place for new people? How?

Optional: Ask the group to identify questions they still have. As a group organise these questions into those which will have only one answer, those which will have several answers, those which will be easy to answer and those which are harder. Do not try to answer the questions – the point is to generate curiosity for further learning. Finish the activity by discussing how you might find out some answers to their questions.

And next: Time to download the action guide

- The Action Guide asks learners to use the presentation and this workshop to teach other young people about asylum seekers and refugees.
- The Action Guide also provides guidance for young people to analyse their own school, paying attention to their school's diversity in comparison to their surrounding area, the welcome that they provide to newcomers and further steps they can take to improve this welcome. The guide then encourages students to take their findings to senior teachers and present the idea of becoming a [School of Sanctuary](#).

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