

## World Refugee Day June 20

### Overview and Purpose

This lesson is designed to teach children about World Refugee Day and the specific right of the child highlighted by this UN Day: the right to special protection and help if you are a refugee (CRC Article 22).

### Global Themes

- Images and Perception
- Interdependence
- Social Justice

### Background Information for Teachers

BC Ministry of Education—Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A Guide for Teachers and Schools

[bc.ed.gov.bc.ca/esl/refugees\\_teachers\\_guide.pdf](http://bc.ed.gov.bc.ca/esl/refugees_teachers_guide.pdf) (includes refugee definitions)

Grades  
K – 3

### Materials

Book entitled *Four Feet, Two Sandals* by Karen Lynn Williams and Khadra Mohammed  
Bag of Belongings worksheet (printable copy attached)

### Activity One

*\*\*Please note: it is important to know the background of the students in your class before you read the story.*

- Ask the students to remove one shoe and spend a portion of the day with only one shoe. Ask the students how it felt to only have one shoe. What were the challenges? What were the benefits, if any?
- Introduce June 20<sup>th</sup> as World Refugee Day—a UN Day celebrated around the world. The day has special significance in Canada because we have many newcomers who seek refuge in our nation. In 2008, Citizenship and Immigration Canada recorded that there were over 36,000 refugee claimants; more than 7,500 of the claimants were children younger than 14 years old ([www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)).
- Explain to the students that they will be hearing a story about two girls who live in a refugee camp and learn how to share their resources. Ask the students to think about what a refugee is while they listen to the story. Refugees, according to the author, are people who flee “their country because of fear of persecution.”
- Read aloud from the book entitled *Four Feet, Two Sandals* by Khadra Mohammed.
- Ask the students to describe the girls in the book (physical appearance, personality, characteristics). Ask the students to identify similarities and differences between themselves and the story characters.

- How is their friendship similar and/or different than the friendships you have?
- Remind the students that no matter where a person comes from or what their immigration status is, we all have the same basic needs and the same human rights.

## Activity Two

Begin with a visualization activity. Have the students close their eyes and imagine that the city has flooded and is no longer a safe place to live. They must flee to another country with their family. Each child is allowed to take along one bag of belongings that can carry five items. Imagine what those five items might be.

- Give each student the Bag of Belongings handout. Have the students draw the five items that they would select to bring with them.
- Think. Pair. Share. Ask the students if they included items that would be “needs” or “wants.” Why did you decide to bring what you did? How did it feel to select the items? How do you think refugees feel when they leave behind their belongings, family and country?

Now that the belongings are packed, it’s time to find out what Canada does to prepare Canadians in the event of an emergency to make sure children’s right to safety is met. Examples include: school tornado drills, school fire drills, school earthquake drills. For more information, consult [getprepared.gc.ca/index-eng.aspx](http://getprepared.gc.ca/index-eng.aspx).

## Discussion

Discuss the right of every child to have special protection if he/she is a refugee (CRC Article 22) in relation to the characters in the book. Ask the students why a refugee might need special protection. (Refugees are vulnerable because their governments can no longer protect their basic human rights.)

What can we do to support refugees who are part of our school community? Examples include setting up a welcoming committee, explaining Canadian school procedures, having a buddy system in place.

## Extensions

Role play: Ask the students to imagine that they are living in a UN Refugee Camp.

Go to [globalclassroom.unicef.ca](http://globalclassroom.unicef.ca) for a complete package of activities related to rights, needs and wants.

To learn more about UNICEF’s School-in-a-Box that supports children in refugee camps go to: [unicef.org/supply/kits\\_flash/schoolinabox](http://unicef.org/supply/kits_flash/schoolinabox).

**Additional Resources**

The UN Refugee Agency Teacher Corner

[unrefugees.org/site/c.lflQKSOWFqG/b.4803603/k.9BAB/Teachers\\_Corner\\_\\_Free\\_Lesson\\_Plans\\_and\\_Resources\\_for\\_Teachers.htm](http://unrefugees.org/site/c.lflQKSOWFqG/b.4803603/k.9BAB/Teachers_Corner__Free_Lesson_Plans_and_Resources_for_Teachers.htm)

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada Teacher and Youth Page**

[cic.gc.ca/english/games/index.asp](http://cic.gc.ca/english/games/index.asp)

Picture book entitled *How I Learned Geography* by Uri Shulevitz

Picture book entitled *Our New Home: Immigrant Children Speak* (Canadian content), edited by Emily Hearn and Marywinn Milne

## Refugee Definition Sheet

**Who is a refugee?** A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries.

**Who is an IDP?** An internally displaced person (IDP) is a person 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.

**Who is a returnee?** A returnee is a refugee who has returned to his or her 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.

**Who is a stateless person?** A stateless person is 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."

**Who is an 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.

What is the difference between a refugee and an economic migrant? An economic migrant normally leaves a country voluntarily to seek a better life. Should he or she decide to return home, they would continue to receive the protection of his or her government. Refugees flee because of the threat of persecution and cannot return safely to their homes.

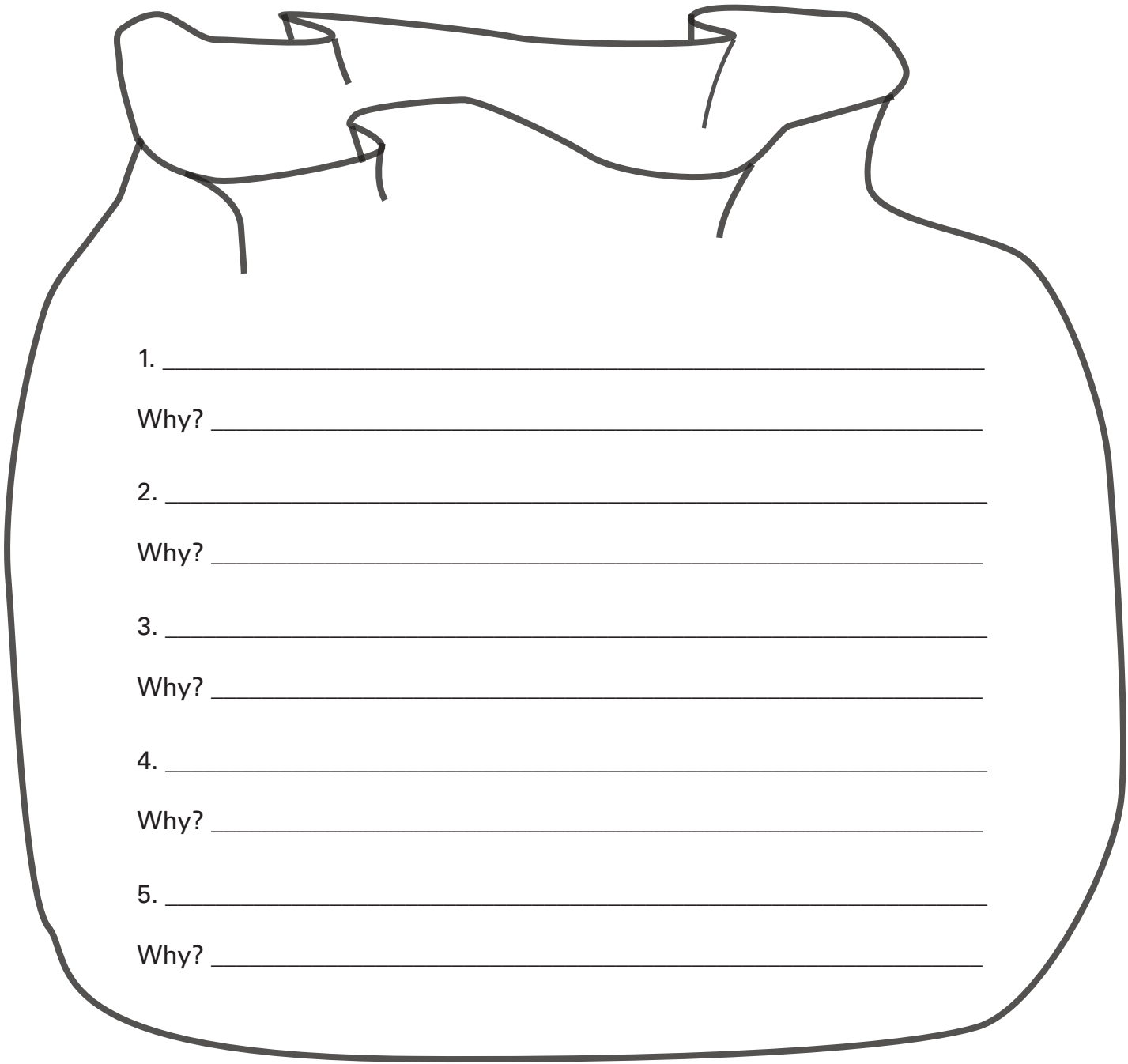
**What is the 1951 Refugee Convention?** The 1951 Geneva Convention is the main international instrument of refugee law. The Convention clearly spells out who a refugee is and the kind of legal protection, other assistance and social rights he or she should receive from the countries who have signed the document. The Convention also defines a refugee's obligations to host governments and certain categories of people, such as war criminals, who do not qualify for refugee status. The Convention was limited to protecting mainly European refugees in the aftermath of World War II, but another document, the 1967 Protocol, expanded the scope of the Convention as the problem of displacement spread around the world.

What Is a Refugee? Defined by *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*

### Bag of Belongings Worksheet

Imagine you have to flee from your home country. You are given one bag that can only hold five of your belongings.

What would you choose to bring? Why?



1. \_\_\_\_\_  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_