



Stories of sanctuary in Wales - critical thinking about the Welsh welcome for refugees past and present

Introduction

The world is facing the biggest refugee crisis on record with millions of people being forced to leave their homes every year. Over 68 million were forcibly displaced in 2017. Most refugees go to neighbouring countries, but the media in the UK can give the impression that most come to Europe and the UK. There is often a misunderstanding about what it means to be an asylum seeker or refugee, and strong and conflicting views on asylum matters. Wales has a history of welcoming refugees to rural and urban areas which continues today.

This set of resources aims to develop learners' understanding of, and empathy with, those seeking sanctuary, and includes:

- 4 activities that can be used on their own or in combination; all are suitable for Key Stages 3 and 4 and activities 1 and 2 are also suitable for Key Stage 2.
- a PowerPoint quiz ideal for assemblies
- 5 case studies about asylum and refuge in Wales, each with a selection of suggested activities

You can also find links to other inspiring and thought-provoking resources.

Learning objectives

- Build knowledge and understanding about what it means to be a refugee, where refugees come from and go and the challenges they face along the way
- Develop critical thinking and enquiry skills
- Develop understanding of how they can take action to make a difference

Resources and links

- [‘Stand as One’](#) : Oxfam video highlighting the similarities between refugees and everyone else
- [‘I am just like you’](#) : Video summary of the refugee crisis and refugees in the UK
- [‘Refugees’](#) a poem by Brian Bilston
- [Links to multiple teaching resources](#) and stimuli relating to refugees from specific subject lesson plans to online games to empathise with refugees
- Up-to-date statistics about refugees globally from [UNHCR](#) the [International Organisation for Migration](#) and, in Europe, from [The European Border Agency](#)
- [Interactive map](#) showing where migrants come from and go to
- [Video](#) exploring detention of asylum seekers in the UK



Activity ideas

1. Quiz: testing your knowledge of asylum seekers and refugees in Wales and the world

Quiz questions and answers are on the 'What do you know about asylum seekers and refugees' PowerPoint. To explore where migrants come from and go to, explore [this interactive map](#).

2. Pack a suitcase

Refugees often have to leave their homes immediately. Some don't even have a chance to go home to pick up their belongings before leaving.

- Imagine you have to leave your home and have 5 minutes to grab what you can. You might be walking a long way, so only take what you can carry. What would you take with you?

When refugees try to claim asylum, they find it easier with some form of identification. They also use mobile phones to stay in touch with family and friends. If they are granted refugee status in another country, they may need evidence of their qualifications to find work.

3. Media coverage of refugees

Media coverage of refugees can be negative and reinforce stereotypes. But there are also positive stories captured in the UK and Welsh press.

- Have you seen coverage of refugees in the news? Is it positive or negative? How does it make you feel?
- Do you think coverage of refugees in the news is accurate? How can you tell?
- Does the media influence how you think and feel about different issues?

Some examples of media coverage:

- [“So is it a refugee crisis?”](#) (Open democracy) Critique of the 'refugee crisis' suggesting it is not a crisis, relates to refugees in Swansea
- [“Refugee and asylum-seeking families welcomed to the National Eisteddfod”](#) (Wales Online)
- [“From helplessness to hope: inspirational tales of the Refugee Olympic Team”](#) (The Guardian)
- [“Windrush Generation: ‘I’m living a stressful life’](#) (BBC) with member of the Windrush generation living in Pembroke Dock
- [“Send in army to halt migrant invasion”](#) (Daily Express)
- [“The Battle of Calais: Police use tear gas to repel 300 migrants as they try to storm a road...”](#) (Daily Mail)



4. Taking action for refugees

Many people in Wales and across the world take action to support and welcome refugees. There are several examples from Wales and the world below.

[Feeding the children of Boko Haram's victims](#)

[Lobbying Councils to take more asylum seekers in Wales](#)

[Fundraising phone credit for refugees](#)

[Taking part in rallies to welcome refugees](#)

[Becoming a School of Sanctuary](#)

- What action are people taking to support refugees?
- What is their purpose? To raise awareness, make refugees feel welcome, change policy or something else?
- Is it an easy action to take? Is it something you could do?
- What do you think the impact of the action has been? Do you think this is effective? Could it cause any harm?