

## **Lesson 6 - What is the legacy of refugees in Britain today?**

### **Forging a Multicultural Past, Present and Future**

#### **Guidance Notes and Lesson Plan**

##### **Lesson Objectives:**

- To reflect on key issues relating to migration, displacement and integration
- To identify common thematic links between past and present Britain
- To encourage students to analyse and synthesise a range of information and summarise their findings within a student-centred research project
- To enable students to share their knowledge about refugees' and migrants' contributions to British society
- To identify and respond to issues that are meaningful to individual students

##### **Introduction**

The subjective experiences of refugees are diverse and varied, reflecting a wide breadth of challenges and obstacles that are both individually unique and yet continue to be barriers to refugees today. Students are empowered in this lesson to undertake a small research project about a high-profile/famous refugee or migrant (including non-British celebrities) so that they can connect these historic and enduring themes to present issues. This allows the students to take ownership of their knowledge, compelling them to share what they've learned with a more contemporary interpretation.

##### **Key Information**

This lesson is designed for students aged 12 and above. It is devised for History classes.

Timings are suggested on the basis of a one-hour lesson, and may need adapting based on circumstances.

This is the final lesson about wartime refugees coming to Britain, although significant prior knowledge is not needed. This exercise is a student-led research project about a famous

refugee or migrant. Students may arrive with previous knowledge, ideas and preconceptions, which should be utilised to explore, challenge and resolve misconceptions.

**Resources:**

**Provided:**

- Guidance Notes and Lesson Plan
- Lesson PowerPoint
- Print Out PowerPoint

**Needed:**

- Poster-making materials
- Access to the internet for research – computers/tablets etc.

**Pop Quiz! Starter (5 minutes):**

Start the lesson (slide 1) with the 'pop quiz' handout (slide 2 on the print outs PowerPoint). There are seven questions about refugees in Britain today. Students can answer individually or in pairs. These questions are designed to test students' knowledge about refugees and challenge common misconceptions students may have about refugees in Britain today.

**Slide 2 – Lesson Title: What is the legacy of refugees in Britain today?**

Go through the answers with the students (slide 3). These facts may surprise some students and challenge common misconceptions about refugees in Britain today.

There is an answer sheet on Slide 3 of the Print Out PowerPoint and are listed below:

1. 120 million
2. 0.6% or 387,000 people (data from Migration Observatory here: [https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migration-to-the-uk-asylum/#:~:text=People%20who%20originally%20came%20to,arrived%20earlier%20\(Figure%201\).](https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migration-to-the-uk-asylum/#:~:text=People%20who%20originally%20came%20to,arrived%20earlier%20(Figure%201).))
3. False
4. Afghanistan (data from 2023)

5. 2002
6. Germany
7. Turkey

### **Slide 3 – Lesson Title: Forging a Multicultural Past, Present and Future**

#### **Research Project (35 minutes):**

Slide 4 introduces the task to the students: they will research a famous person who at some point in their lives have been considered a refugee or migrant. Students will choose one of the famous people on slide 5 to work in pairs or small groups on a poster about their lives. All of these famous people were at some point categorised as refugees or migrants. Students may also choose another famous person that they are aware of who has been a migrant or refugee, as long as they can tell you who the person is and you are happy with their choice. The students are free to include any information they wish about their person but must respond to each of the Success Criteria on slide 4.

Students will share their posters with the rest of the class to teach them about their chosen person. Teachers need to facilitate conversation around the posters asking students to consider how the person's experiences have influenced what they later achieved and how it may have impacted their identity.

Located left to right, the individuals shown are: Rita Ora, Mika, Victor Moses, Jackie Chan, Judith Kerr, Mila Kunis, Yusra Mardini, Malala Yousafzai, Ncuti Gatwa, Luol Deng, Sir Mo Farah and Prince Philip the Duke of Edinburgh.

#### **Refugees: Past and Present – the same but different? Activity (10 minutes):**

Throughout the course we have explored refugees from the past and the present. Although they have many similarities there are also some differences. In this activity on slide 6 students will consider the similarities and differences that refugees in the past and present have. Give students 4 minutes to write as much as they can onto their handout (slide 3 of the Print Out PowerPoint). Now hold a group discussion to share students thoughts.

Some examples may fit in both similarities and differences. For example, refugees have to walk to safety – this is something that has happened to both refugees in the past and present.

Examples of similarities may include:

- Have to leave their home

- Sometimes on their own and sometimes with family
- Upsetting experiences

Examples of differences may include:

- Refugees today may have access to technology to help them
- Due to social media people may know more about what is happening and be able to help
- They can take faster methods of transport to safety such as planes

The goal of this exercise is to foster understanding, not only in a refugee's plight, but also about the context in which a refugee is compelled to migrate. This may help students discern why and how refugees' stories are told within media outlets today, and how communities can support refugees in ways that were not possible in the post-war period. This also allows students to consider the 'timeless' challenges that refugees and migrants face when fleeing prosecution, not only in terms of the journey and trauma itself, but also in terms of resettling and integrating into a new society. For example, technology today can help a refugee translate their language into a new language for simple tasks, but the refugee must ultimately learn the language in order to successfully integrate and feel a sense of belonging within a new community.

### **Summary: What is the legacy of refugees in Britain today? (10 minutes):**

Give students 2-3 minutes to discuss the following questions in pairs (Slide 7). Remind students to use evidence from across the lessons to support their answers:

- Is it possible to describe refugees' experiences in a simple way? Why/why not?
- Do you think your attitude towards refugees has changed? Why do you think that?
- What has surprised you most learning about refugees in Britain?
- How do you think that you could support refugees in your community?

Give students five minutes discussion time, they may wish to take notes or to focus on one or two questions only, then ask for feedback as a class.

These questions are designed to get students to reflect on all six lessons as part of this scheme of work. The previous lessons have opened up discussions around the attitudes and actions towards refugees by receptive nations, the experiences of migration (forced and voluntary), the challenges of integration in Britain, and the intimate impact those experiences have had upon these individuals and their identities.

By connecting the past with the present, this lesson enables students to acknowledge that some historical challenges we see both locally and internationally today are enduring. By being aware that there are historical precedents to these issues, students are empowered to use their own rational judgments when faced with simplistic narratives and reductive reasoning. Students are hopefully able to see how the personal, subjective experiences of migration and integration interplay with the grander narratives of history, using robust evidence and nuanced examples to foster empathy and compassion for those settling in Britain.

This could be taken as an opportunity by the teacher to reflect on local ways that students may wish to help refugees such as by volunteering or fundraising for a local charity.

*Learning Resources produced by Dr Chelsea Sambells and Hannah Randall, 2025.*