



# Refugees and Human Rights

Grade Level: High School (9-12)

Concept Area: English/Language Arts

## **Included:**

Working with Refugees Viewing Guide  
Refugees at Center Stage: Dramatic Activity (with Peer Evaluation Form)  
    "Refugee Blues" Worksheet 1  
    "Refugee Blues" Poem  
    "Refugee Blues" Worksheet 2  
Exploring the Refugee Experience through Poetry:  
    Creative Writing

## **HANDOUTS**

## ***Working with Refugees***

### **Viewing Guide**

Part I: Pay attention for the following elements throughout the entire video and jot down what you notice below.

1. What are some visual images that stand out to you as you are watching? Describe a couple of these images in some detail below:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. List at least three of the countries that are mentioned in the video (listen for them and also look at the subtitles):
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Throughout the video, various reasons for refugees to flee their home countries are named. List at least three of those reasons below (again, listen as well as read the subtitles):

Part II: Answer the questions below for each segment of the video.

#### **Segment 1—What is UNHCR?**

1. What is UNHCR's mandate?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What are the criteria that an individual must meet to be defined as a refugee?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What was UNHCR's first task when it was established by the UN General Assembly in 1950?

## **Segment 2—What is Refugee Protection?**

4. What various activities does UNHCR engage in to ensure refugee protection?

5. What are the three main “durable solutions”? Which durable solution do most refugees prefer?

## **Segment 3—Exodus and Emergency**

6. What are some ways that UNHCR deals with emergency situations?

## **Segment 4—Refugee Women & Children**

7. How are refugee women supported in refugee camps?

8. How are refugee children supported in refugee camps?

9. Why is education for refugee children and adolescents important for their future?

## **Refugees at Center Stage: Dramatic Activity**

1. Look at your LEGO poster and have one person in your group read the text aloud to the group. Below, write 1-2 sentences that explain the message of the poster.

2. Your task is to collaboratively create a skit that conveys the same message as the poster. As a group, come up with a real-life scenario that illustrates the issue that the poster is addressing.

### Guidelines:

- Write out the basic scenario on a piece of paper as well as a working script (the script can be improvised when the skit is performed, but you should at least have some basic idea of what the characters will say/do).
- Assign roles in your group. Everyone should be involved in some way, either as an actor or a narrator. Consider the various individuals who should be represented in this scenario.
- Be sure that everyone in your group is contributing ideas to the interpretation of the poster and the development of the skit.
- Your skit should be (at least) approximately 5 minutes long.
- Please give your skit a title (you can use the title of the poster, or something else that you come up with). You will share the title with the class before you perform your skit.
- The audience (your classmates) should be able to easily access the message of the skit.

## Peer Evaluation

Directions: For each group's skit, write down the title of the skit, and what you think is the message of the skit.

**1. Title:**

**Message:**

**2. Title:**

**Message:**

**3. Title:**

**Message:**

**4. Title:**

**Message:**

**Refugee Blues**  
**by W.H. Auden**

Say this city has ten million souls,  
Some are living in mansions, some are living in holes:  
Yet there's no place for us, my dear, yet there's no place for us.

Once we had a country and we thought it fair,  
Look in the atlas and you'll find it there:  
We cannot go there now, my dear, we cannot go there now.

In the village churchyard there grows an old yew,  
Every spring it blossoms anew:  
Old passports can't do that, my dear, old passports can't do that.

The consul banged the table and said,  
"If you've got no passport you're officially dead":  
But we are still alive, my dear, but we are still alive.

Went to a committee; they offered me a chair;  
Asked me politely to return next year:  
But where shall we go to-day, my dear, but where shall we go to-day?

Came to a public meeting; the speaker got up and said;  
"If we let them in, they will steal our daily bread":  
He was talking of you and me, my dear, he was talking of you and me.

Thought I heard the thunder rumbling in the sky;  
It was Hitler over Europe, saying, "They must die":  
O we were in his mind, my dear, O we were in his mind.

Saw a poodle in a jacket fastened with a pin,  
Saw a door opened and a cat let in:  
But they weren't German Jews, my dear, but they weren't German Jews.

Went down the harbour and stood upon the quay,  
Saw the fish swimming as if they were free:  
Only ten feet away, my dear, only ten feet away.

Walked through a wood, saw the birds in the trees;  
They had no politicians and sang at their ease:  
They weren't the human race, my dear, they weren't the human race.

Dreamed I saw a building with a thousand floors,  
A thousand windows and a thousand doors:  
Not one of them was ours, my dear, not one of them was ours.

Stood on a great plain in the falling snow;  
Ten thousand soldiers marched to and fro:  
Looking for you and me, my dear, looking for you and me.

(Source: <http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/refugee-blues/>)



3. Choose two of the following nature images and explain the role that they play in the poem: the yew (a type of evergreen tree), the poodle and the cat, the fish, the birds.

4. How many lines are in each stanza? \_\_\_\_\_

What punctuation mark is used at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> line of each stanza? \_\_\_\_\_

How would you describe the structure of the last line of each stanza?

5. How does the speaker in the poem feel?



## **Exploring the Refugee Experience through Poetry: Creative Writing**

Now that you have learned all about refugees and the work of UNHCR, as well as seen one poetic representation of the refugee experience, you will be writing your own poem in the style of W.H. Auden to express what you've learned.

Your Task: Write a poem that explores a particular perspective on the refugee experience, using "Refugee Blues" as a guide. You will then share your poem with the class.

### Guidelines:

Your poem must:

- Have at least 6 stanzas of 3 lines each
- Have a discernable speaker and a specific person/group whom that speaker is addressing (ie, the "dear" in Auden's poem). Some individuals/groups to consider: a refugee (man, woman, or child), a group of refugees from a particular country/region, a UNHCR worker or UNHCR as a whole, a friend/family member/classmate of a refugee, a politician, etc.
- Follow the rhyme scheme of Auden's poem (AAB, CCD, EEF, etc.)
- Include vivid, concrete images (such as the yew, the passport, the fish, the building, etc.)
- Employ the repetition technique that Auden uses in the last line of each stanza
- Show careful choices in terms of words, punctuation, and line breaks
- Have a compelling title