



Refugee Week

The Who, What, Where, Why and When of Refugee Week



Who are refugees?

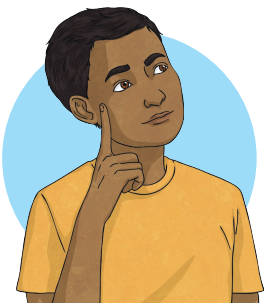
A refugee is someone who has had to leave their country to seek safety because they are being mistreated and afraid of being hurt, or even killed. The mistreatment or **oppression** might be due to their religious beliefs, political opinions or because of their race. Some people might also become refugees due to war.

Oppression - unjust treatment, often involving severe restrictions on an individual or group.



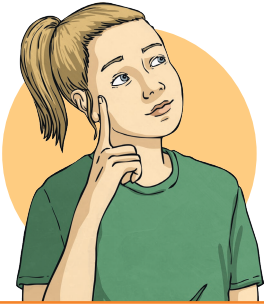
What is refugee week?

Refugee Week is a festival celebrating the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees. One of the main aims of the week is to promote a better understanding of why people have to become refugees. The festival involves a programme of arts, cultural, sport and educational events and activities, including art exhibitions, film screenings, theatre and dance performances, concerts, football tournaments and public talks.



Where does it take place?

Although Refugee Week is a UK wide celebration, with events happening in all kinds of different spaces across the UK, people all around the world also take part in Refugee Week every year.



Who can take part?

Refugee Week is an umbrella festival, meaning anyone can get involved by holding or joining in with an event or activity. Schools are encouraged to organise events for Refugee Week to help children gain a better understanding of refugees.



Why does this happen?

Refugee Week was founded in 1998 because there was a lot of misleading information and ignorance about refugees and why they were coming to the UK. Many newspapers reported that refugees were here for financial benefits and 'free housing', which led to negative attitudes and behaviour towards refugees.

The Refugee Week organisers state:

"Our ultimate aim is to create better understanding between different communities and to encourage successful integration, enabling refugees to live in safety and continue making a valuable contribution."

Integration - people from one country or culture living comfortably in another country or culture.



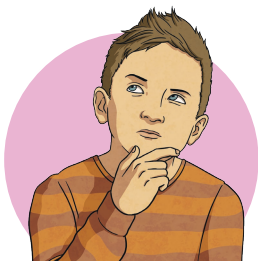
When is it happening?

Refugee Week is held every year around World Refugee Day, which is on 20th June. This year, it is being celebrated in the UK from 14th – 20th June.



What can we learn from refugees?

The countries refugees are fleeing from are often vastly different in comparison to the UK. They speak different languages, have different food, traditions, religions, artistic and creative skills, and much more. We can learn a great deal from people of different cultures and with different experiences to our own.



What is the theme for Refugee Week 2021?

The theme of Refugee Week is 'We Cannot Walk Alone'. For the duration of the week, people will be invited to reach out and extend their hand to someone new. Whether that be by listening to someone who has had a different experience to them or by connecting with someone who is fighting for a cause they would like to get involved in.

Ultimately, the aim of Refugee Week is to promote a better understanding of why people have to relocate and the challenges they face when seeking safety. It provides refugees with a stage to be seen and heard - to enable them to share their stories and experiences as well as celebrate their contributions.

Did You Know...?

According to the UN Refugee agency, UNHCR, there were over 133,000 refugees in the UK at the end of 2019.

