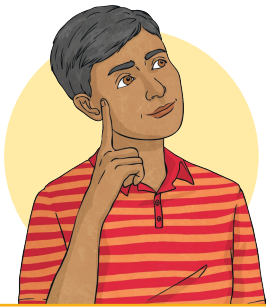




Refugee Week

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



Who are refugees?

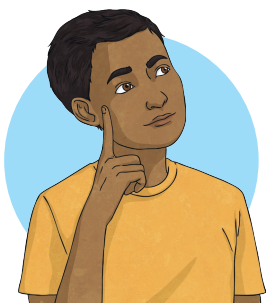
A refugee is a person who has had to leave their country to seek refuge because they are being persecuted or are in fear of being **persecuted** for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. Some people might also become refugees due to war.

Persecution - hostile (intimidating and aggressive) behaviour, harassment or ill-treatment.



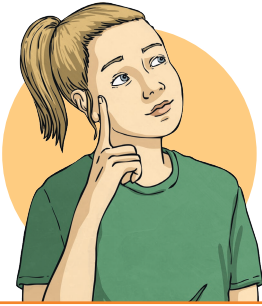
What is refugee week?

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 are displaced and the challenges they face when seeking sanctuary. 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?

Refugee Week is a nationwide celebration, with events happening in all kinds of different spaces across the UK. Refugee Week takes place in several other countries worldwide and include World Refugee Day on 20th June.



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. Events are held by a wide range of arts, voluntary, faith and refugee organisations and more. Schools are encouraged to take part in Refugee Week to help children gain a better understanding about refugees.



Why does this happen?

Refugee Week was founded in 1998 because there was some misleading information and ignorance about refugees and why they were coming to the UK, with the media reporting they were here for financial benefits and 'free housing'. This led to negative attitudes and hostility 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."



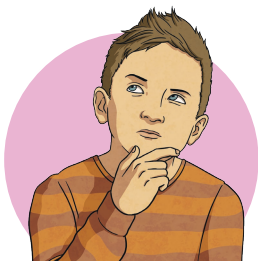
When is it happening?

Refugee Week is held annually and 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 diverse 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 outside their current circle.

Inspired by the theme 'We Cannot Walk Alone', people are also being invited to do one or more of these eight Simple Acts (everyday actions we can all do to stand with refugees and make new connections in our communities):

- sing a song;
- watch a film;
- have a chat;
- read a book;
- say it loud - decorate a 'We Cannot Walk Alone' poster and stick it in your window or on display at school,
- play a game;
- walk together - on Sunday 20th June, walk with others in celebration of the Refugee Week 2021 theme 'We Cannot Walk Alone';
- join the movement - although Refugee Week lasts for seven days, the movement for a kinder, fairer and more connected world continues all year round.

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

Did You Know...?

According to the UN Refugee agency, at the end of 2019 in the UK, there were:

- over 133,000 refugees
- nearly 62,000 pending asylum cases.

The definition of an asylum seeker, refugee and migrant explained.

- **Asylum seeker** - has fled their country and is seeking international protection. Their request for refugee status has not yet been decided.
- **Refugee** - has had their claim accepted and is therefore living outside their country of nationality (due to fear or persecution) and is protected by international law.
- **Migrant** - chooses to move not because of a direct threat or persecution but mainly to improve their lives, such as to find work.

