

Introduction

This support pack accompanies the magazine article:

Refugees

To read or listen to the article online, go to:

<http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/magazine/refugees>

This support pack contains the following materials:

- a pre-reading vocabulary activity
- the article
- a glossary
- a comprehension task



Before you read / listen

Match the words and phrases in the table to their definitions.

1. refugee	2. armed conflict	3. asylum	4. detention centre
5. legislation	6. influx	7. minority	8. persecution

Definitions:

- a. an official law or set of laws
- b. a disagreement between people where weapons are used
- c. a large number of people or things arriving at the same time
- d. protection or safety
- e. being treated unfairly or cruelly because of race, religion or political beliefs
- f. a person who has left their country for political, religious or economic reasons or because of a war
- g. a place where people who have entered a country without right documents can be kept for short periods of time
- h. a national or racial group living in a country or area which contains a larger group of people of a different race or nationality

Refugees by Claire Powell and Dave Collett

What is a Refugee?

A refugee, defined by the United Nations, is a person who is unable or unwilling to return to their country because of a well-founded fear of persecution based on their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or because they belong to a particular social group.

Why Do They Come?

Most refugees flee their country to escape armed conflict. They often leave with their families and apply for asylum in another country. Many of them do not want to leave their own country, but have no choice. The journeys they undertake to reach a safe place may be almost as risky as staying in their own country. They would do anything to escape their suffering: crossing deserts, mountains, seas and rivers, sometimes using dangerous means of transport. They also hide in parts of ships that are too cramped, too hot and too smelly for anyone to check. Many never arrive.

World Refugee Day

On the 20th of June each year people celebrate World Refugee Day. An important part of this celebration is the award given to a person or group who excels in helping refugee causes.

To Help or Not To Help?

There are an estimated 14 million refugees and asylum seekers in the world. Some countries in the world, especially the rich, are adamant against allowing too many refugees coming into their country. One worry is that there may be too many of them seeking asylum therefore causing a great problem for these developed countries. Their next worry is resources. These refugees may fill their hospitals, their schools, take over their jobs as well as abusing their social welfare system. At the end of the day, some fear there could be no more resources left for the people of these developed nations.

Another worry is the thought that the refugees might not be genuine. Also, the fact that the country they flee to is culturally different from their own makes the citizens of these developed nations feel that their culture is being stolen from them.

Criminal activity seems to be a growing concern. People worry that asylum seekers who arrive penniless and without any documents might be criminals or involved in acts of terrorism. In many countries, new anti-terrorism laws have made migration legislation much stricter. Increasingly, governments are locking asylum seekers in detention centres regardless of their status. Unfortunately, this causes further criminalisation as genuine asylum seekers resist what they see as injustice. However, protests and riots lead to criminal charges and prison sentences.

These negative assumptions are not true. First of all, numbers indicate that Asia and Africa have the world's highest influx of refugees. Secondly, most rich or developed countries' economies rely on these refugees as they are the ones who are often more than willing to do the kind of work that no one else would even think of. Furthermore, the migrants tend to be very hardworking and highly motivated at their jobs and are the backbone of agricultural labour. Thirdly, governments like to play with words such as 'crime' and 'immigration' to gain popularity with their citizens during elections. Moreover, after all the problems a refugee has faced fleeing his own country, the last thing he wants is to be mistrusted. Finally, it is absurd for the rich nations to claim that their culture is being swamped by refugees, considering that the refugees are in a minority there.

Perhaps politicians should remind themselves of the fact that, whether they are dealing with genuine asylum seekers or economic migrants, they are dealing with human beings, not numbers, and the people should be treated humanely.

Glossary

absurd (adj): ridiculous or unreasonable.

adamant (adj): impossible to persuade, or unwilling to change an opinion or decision.

armed conflict (n): an active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles where weapons are used in the disagreement.

assumption (n): something that you accept as true without question or proof.

asylum (n): protection or safety, especially that given by a government to foreigners who have been forced to leave their own countries for political reasons.

asylum seeker (n): someone who leaves their own country for their safety, often for political reasons or because of war, and who travels to another country hoping that the government will protect them and allow them to live there.

backbone (n): the part of something that provides strength and support.

cramped (adj): not having enough space.

detention centre (n): a place where people who have entered a country without the necessary documents can be kept for short periods of time.

influx (n): the arrival of a large number of people or things at the same time.

legislation (n): a law or set of laws suggested by a government and made official by a parliament.

minority (n): a national or racial group living in a country or area which contains a larger group of people of a different race or nationality.

persecution (n): from the verb persecute (v): to treat someone unfairly or cruelly over a long period of time because of their race, religion, or political beliefs or to annoy someone by refusing to leave them alone.

status (n): an official position, especially in a social group.

swamped (adj): If something swamps a person, system or place, they receive more of it than they can easily deal with.

well-founded (adj): based on facts.

Comprehension Task

Multiple Choice

Read the statements and select the right answer according to the text.

1. A refugee is someone who...
 - a. doesn't want to return to their country.
 - b. can't afford to return to their country.
 - c. is afraid to return to their country.

2. The majority of refugees leave their country because...
 - a. they can't find a job in their country.
 - b. there is war in their country.
 - c. their family is in another country.

3. The following reason is suggested as one explanation for why people don't want to help refugees:
 - a. People think refugees won't be able to integrate into their host culture.
 - b. People are afraid of refugees.
 - c. People think refugees will take up all of the country's resources.

4. It has become more difficult to seek asylum since...
 - a. new laws to combat terrorism were introduced.
 - b. stricter airport controls were introduced.
 - c. the cost of travel increased.

5. Rich, developed countries benefit from asylum seekers because...
 - a. refugees enrich the cultural diversity of a country.
 - b. refugees will do unpleasant jobs.
 - c. refugees bring skills and knowledge from their countries.

6. Politicians in rich, developed countries...
 - a. use people's fear of refugees to win political support.
 - b. like to help refugees.
 - c. want refugees to settle and vote for them.

Answers

Comprehension Task: 1 - c, 2 - b, 3 - c, 4 - a, 5 - b, 6 - a

Before you read: 1 - f, 2 - b, 3 - d, 4 - g, 5 - a, 6 - c, 7 - h, 8 - e