



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

TEACHING ABOUT REFUGEES

AGES
9-12

PRIMARY
CURRICULUM

Find more materials at: unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

A note about inclusion of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants in lesson-planning



Before undertaking any activities on the topic of refugees, asylum, nationality and migrants please take some time to think about the students in your class. Are some of them refugees, in the process of seeking asylum, or are they stateless? If so, think about talking to them and their parents depending on their age.

If possible include ideas and feedback from parents and the children in sessions and refer to them to answer questions if and only if they have expressly explained that they are interested in answering questions or speaking about these issues.

Stateless persons do not have the nationality of any country. Statelessness can occur in many different situations. For example, certain ethnic or religious groups may be not recognized under national laws as citizens of

that country, some children are born outside of the country of their parents' citizenship and are not able to obtain citizenship from their parents' country or the one they were born in. A number of countries globally have laws which do not allow mothers to pass their nationality to their children.

Stateless persons may have difficulty accessing basic rights such as education, healthcare, employment, freedom of movement and others. Without these things, they often face obstacles and disappointment.

Be careful while using words such as "country" and "nationality" if you have any stateless children in your class. Instead you may use the words "your home" or "your culture".

OVERVIEW

This curriculum has three sections:

1. Celebrating diversity

This section introduces cultures from around the world and encourages children to explore and play with the ideas, games, music, greetings and food that belong to these cultures. Children are encouraged to compare, contrast and rejoice in the similarities and differences between people.

Learning Objectives

Understand that people in different parts of the world have different ways of interacting and expressing themselves.

Understand that these differences are what makes our world diverse and rich.

Explore, discover and discuss new cultures in my home life.

2. Understanding new arrivals

This section focuses on the classroom experience of new arrivals in the classroom. It focuses on what it might be like to learn a new language, play new games, make new friends and experience a school day as a new arrival in school.

Learning Objectives

Understand the reasons why, when children are new in our school and classroom, it can be a scary and exciting experience.

Foster empathy for new children in the classroom.

3. Creating a peaceful environment

This section encourages children to develop and abide by a classroom code that keeps a peaceful classroom. It encourages children to reflect on their behavior and how it may impact other members of the class and also to cherish positive behavior in themselves and others.

Learning Objectives

Understand feelings that arise in me on a daily basis in the classroom.

Understand how these feelings can cause me to react in different ways.

Understand how together our class can work to create a happier and improved experience for everyone.



UPPER PRIMARY

1. Activities to learn about and cherish diversity from different cultures and countries

This is an opportunity to expand children's horizons and embrace the similarities and differences that exist in different cultures and countries. Find an opportunity to speak with parents of the children in your class that come from different places and ask if they are willing to participate in activities described below.

In these activities, you may want to replace one of the activities or customs of one country or culture with activities of their country or culture if they are willing and have time to work with you. Take time to make sure the parents are comfortable with you teaching about this topic and invite them to join the sessions that you do.

1.1 Different ways to greet

State the rule, “Once you have been greeted you must then go on and greet at least four other people in the same fashion.” You then demonstrate an old-fashioned way of greeting someone by choosing a child and saying or doing the greeting. You can then practice a more contemporary greeting in the same way.

Ask children to greet each other and reflect about how these greetings are different. Then ask about greetings in their country or culture. How do they greet their grandparents or parents and how do they greet their friends? Can they draw parallels in the old and new ways of greeting, or in greetings from other countries or cultures?

You could try an activity where the children need to greet at least four people with one of the greetings each morning for a week.

1.2 Greetings on the map

Once you have established greetings from all the different times, cultures and countries you want to study, take a look at a world map with your class and look at where the greetings come from. Alternatively, do this culture by culture or country by country. Put a sticker on each place.

Split the children into groups to discuss and have them write down what they might know about these places.

Encourage them to discuss and note everything they think, believe or know about the countries, including their own country. If they are struggling, try asking them about language, food or music.

Ask them if they have met anyone from there or if they have been there. Keep notes for later use.

1.3 Music from around the world

Choose one of the cultures or countries you have discussed. Put some folk music on and ask the children to draw it, describe it, tap a rhythm to it or dance to it. Ask them the following questions:

What emotions do they feel?

What colours do they hear?

If they were to imagine the music as an animal, what animal would it be?

Once you have listened to the music, ask the children to guess where the music comes from and then identify the right culture or country out of the cultures and countries you have learned so far. Continue this activity with other folk music and then with more contemporary music.

Repeat the same with a piece of folk music and contemporary music from the region you are in.

Put the students in small groups and ask them to draw parallels between folk music in their own culture or country and the contemporary music in their own area. Ask them to do the same for the other pieces they have listened to. Finally ask them to draw parallels with the folk music in the place they are from and the new pieces they have listened to.

Discuss these activities with any music teachers you have access to and, as an additional activity, they can write lyrics to a song and even create music in their music class in the style of one of the pieces of music listened to.

1.4 Food from around the world

In small groups, ask the students to talk about what they usually eat for breakfast. Make it a class discussion by getting one person to report back to a whole group conversation about what everyone eats.

Make a list of the foods and ask the students if they know how to prepare all of these. Ask them to write down recipes for anything they know how to prepare for breakfast. Put these on the wall and make copies for everyone.

Introduce the popular breakfasts from the countries you have looked at already.

If it is possible, set up a cooking class where the students can cook the breakfast and eat the foods for a snack time. Display the recipe in the classroom with the others and give everyone a copy of it.

You could set a homework where the students make their family one of the breakfasts. Consider that some families might not have the budget to do this. If so, find out if it is possible to cook together in the classroom.

1.5 Games from around the world

Introduce games from different countries and cultures to the children in small groups. Allow them 20 minutes to play the games of their choice and then change them around.

If the games are outdoor games, see if you can be outdoors for 20 minutes before or after established break time and play the game together.

At some point, bring together the class in a group to re-cap the rules of the games and how you played.

Ask the children if these games are similar to others they have played before?

Ask them what their favourite and least favourite things about the games were.

In small groups or individually ask the children to write or draw the rules of the games together or create their own game based on some traits of the games they have learned.

2. Activities to help understand the experience of new arrivals in the country and classroom

2.1 Learning a new language

Give each child a worksheet with a text in a language they do not understand. Ask them to fill out some accompanying questions, for example: **“What does the first sentence mean?”** **“Is it a question or a normal sentence?”**

Give them 10 minutes.

As an alternative to giving children text in a language they do not understand,

you can make a worksheet by typing some random questions and reverse and flip the words using this website: textmechanic.com/text-tools/obfuscation-tools/reverse-text-generator/.

When they finish answering the questions, take back the papers and mark them. Break the class into small groups and ask them to think about why you might have asked this task of them. Bring them into a group discussion.

Ask them to reflect upon the experiences of newcomers who don't speak the language to their classroom.

Ask the students to think of other things that would be different as a newcomer coming to the school and talk about these together as a class.

2.2 What have we learned?

Take the notes the children made of what they thought about different countries and cultures from activity 1.2. Ask the children what things they have learned about

different countries and cultures that are the same or different from their original ideas. These could be greetings, language, games, food or music.

Ask whether they think students coming into their classroom might have pre-conceived ideas about what their country or classroom might be like.

Finally, ask the children to break into small groups and write a guidebook to their country and classroom for new students and families. This guidebook could be shared throughout the school for new families.

3. Activities to create a peaceful classroom and constructive learning environment for everyone

3.1 Creating peace in me

As a group, ask the students to reflect upon times they felt sad, angry, annoyed or frustrated.

Remember that this is how newcomers may feel as they are learning new things about their class and country.

Make a list of what types of things they can do themselves in order to calm and process these feelings. Put this list on the wall.

3.2 Creating a set of classroom rules

Building on previous activities, as a whole or small group activity, ask children to create rules for the classroom. Encourage them to think about rules that can benefit everyone, including newcomers.

Once each rule has been created, write it down on a large piece of paper and keep the rules up in the classroom all year long. Refer to them and encourage the children to refer to them during the day.

Find more materials at: [unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees](https://www.unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees)

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