 What does it mean to be a refugee?

Task

Students watch the following video with closed captions and answer the comprehension questions below as part of a listening exercise.

[What does it mean to be a Refugee?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25bwiSikRsI): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25bwiSikRsI

Questions

1. How many people around the world have been forced to leave their homes and why?
2. What does the term ‘refugee’ mean? Where did the term come from and why is that significant?
3. What is the primary demographic of refugees and why is this concerning?
4. How is ‘refugee’ different to ‘migrant’ and ‘asylum seeker’?
5. Extension question: why do you think that when the term ‘asylum seeker’ is being explained, there is a picture of a person walking through the maze? Explain this use of visual imagery with a technique if you can.
6. What happens when someone flees their country?
7. Explain what a refugee camp is and why it may cause social problems.

Word Bank

humanitarian

xenophobia

discriminatory

internally displaced

financial

routes

perilous

traumatic

unbearable

principle demographic

exploitation

required

vulnerable

persecution

entrust

Answers

1. How many people around the world have been forced to leave their homes and why?

Around 60 million to escape war, violence and persecution. They have become internally displaced persons or sought shelter outside of their borders.

1. What does the term ‘refugee’ mean? Where did the term come from and why is that significant?

Someone who is outside their country of nationality and is unable to return to their home country as a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership to a particular social group or political opinion and is often related to war and violence. UN 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees as a consequence of the mass displacement and persecution of people during WWII.

1. What is the primary demographic of refugees and why is this concerning?

Roughly half of the world’s refugees are children, some of them unaccompanied by an adult. This is concerning because they are vulnerable to child labour or sexual exploitation.

1. How is ‘refugee’ different to ‘migrant’ and ‘asylum seeker’?

A ‘migrant’ refers to people who leave their country for reasons not related to persecution such as searching for better economic opportunities or leaving drought-stricken areas in search of better circumstances. An ‘asylum seeker’ is a displaced person who is applying for asylum usually from a refugee camp. They are not yet officially recognised as a refugee until the application has been accepted.

1. Extension question: why do you think that when the term ‘asylum seeker’ is being explained, there is a picture of a person walking through the maze? Explain this use of visual imagery with a technique.

There is an image of a person walking through the maze- a visual metaphor- because it is likening the process of applying for asylum to someone walking through a maze.

1. What happens when someone flees their country?

Most refugee journeys are long and perilous with limited access to water, shelter or food. Since the departure can be sudden or unexpected, belongings could be left behind and people who are avoiding conflict often do not have the required legal documents to legally enter other countries. They may only be able to travel by land and sea and this means they might need to entrust their lives to smugglers to help them to cross borders.

1. Explain what a refugee camp is and why it may cause social problems.

A refugee camp is intended to be a temporary structure, offering short-term shelter until the inhabitants can safely return home, be integrated into the community or resettle in another country. This may cause social problems because resettlement and long term integration options are often limited and many refugees are left with no choice but to remain in camps for years and sometimes even decades.