

Why do refugees risk their lives to come to Europe?



Y6



The Big Picture

Refugees are people forced to flee their own country and seek safety in another country. They are unable to return to their own country because of feared persecution as a result of who they are, what they believe in or say, or because of armed conflict or violence. Many have been forced to flee with little more than the clothes on their back, leaving behind their homes, possessions, jobs and loved ones. They may have suffered human rights violations, been injured in their flight, or seen family members or friends killed or attacked. There were 42.7 million refugees globally at the end of 2024. Many refugees, especially those from the Middle East and Africa, see European countries as lands of freedom and opportunity but their journeys can be long and dangerous – and they are often not welcomed once they arrive.



5 Key Skills for a Geographer...

Investigating Places

Finding Places

Comparing Places

Asking Questions

Mapping Places



Key Vocabulary:

- refugee / asylum-seeker
- persecution
- human rights
- Aid agency (ies)
- civil war
- famine
- drought
- sanitation
- border
- economic / economy
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Key Enquiry Questions:

- What is a refugee and why do people become refugees?
- Where in the world are refugees currently fleeing and why?
- How do aid agencies try to help refugees? (What challenges do they face once they have left their homes?)
- Why do refugees want to come to Europe? (Why are some people in Europe against receiving refugees?)

Common misconceptions (misunderstandings):

- That all refugees in Europe come from Syria or Afghanistan
- That refugees are all just families looking for more money in a 'better' country
- That refugees all want to stay in the country that they escape to - never want to go back home again
- That nearly all refugees are men

Taking it further: Some children may also learn that:

- That climate change is causing mass migration and refugee crises
- Know that most refugees migrate within their own country
- Understand the terms 'Asylum' and 'Asylum-seeker'



Mapping The World's Refugee Population

Top 10 origin countries of refugees under UNHCR's mandate as of 2023

