

TEACHABLE BOOKS

Global Issues: Refugees

By Derek Acorn

GRADE LEVEL: Primary (K-3)

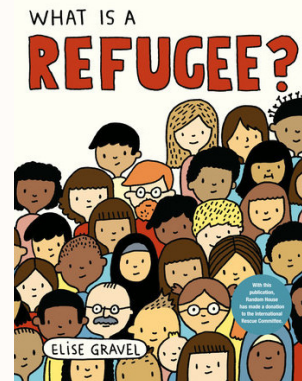
THEME: Global Issues

SUB-THEMES: Refugees

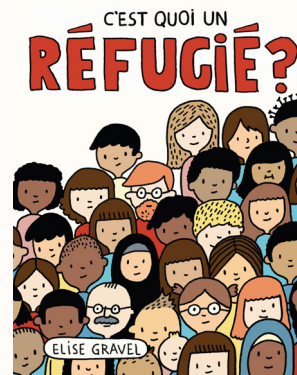
LEARNING FOCUS

What are refugees? Refugee children are among the most vulnerable children in the world and are often seeking safety and refuge from circumstances not of their making. Half of the world's refugees are children and many have come to make their new home in Canada. Students will use images and definitions to build their understanding of the situation of refugees and asylum seekers. Students will also connect their learning to how their local and national community works to support refugees who have come to live in Canada.

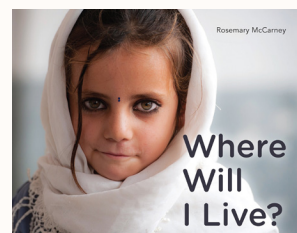
FEATURED BOOKS



What is a Refugee? by Elise Gravel
(Schwartz and Wade Books, 2019)



C'est quoi un réfugié? par Elise Gravel
(Courte Échelle, 2019)



Where Will I Live? by Rosemary McCarney
(Second Story Press, 2017)



Où vais-je vivre? par Rosemary McCarney
(Éditions Scholastic, 2017)



LEARNING EXPERIENCE

MINDS ON PROVOCATION

Select certain pages, or show all of the pages in the book “Where Will I Live?” by Rosemary McCarney. Use of a document camera would be a benefit for this activity. Do not read or show the text if using a document camera. Use the pictures only.

Ask students what they notice in the pictures. Provide them with a chart that has the headings “That’s Good,” “That’s a Problem” and “I Wonder.” For older students, they can fill out their charts independently. For younger students, work collaboratively. Display their words on a bulletin board, white board or in a document via a projector.

Tell the students that they will be learning about refugees. Using the bank of words that they created, help students compose a definition of what they believe the word “refugee” means.

READ, PLAN, AND PRACTICE

Read the book “Where Will I Live?” by Rosemary McCarney. This time, read the words and re-explore the associated pictures. Go back to the definition of “refugee” that was created in the previous section. Was it accurate, based on the text? Would the students make any changes? Adjust the definition if the students decide it is necessary.

Read the book “What is a Refugee?” by Elise Gravel as a mentor text. Students will use the following guiding questions: What is a refugee? Why might refugees have to leave their countries? How can our local community support refugees who arrive from other countries?

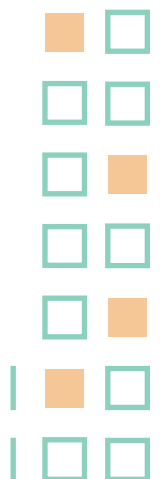
Teachers can choose one of the following activities to further explore the guiding questions. They can also choose to do several of the activities if they want to go deeper into the subject.

Draw your feelings: Students draw a picture to reflect their feelings while reading the book.

What’s the word? Students pick one word from each two-page spread to add to a blank piece of paper that they think reflects the idea of the spread. After reading, they can add small visuals or icons to the words to represent the ideas. For younger grades (K-1), start with images and add words as a class.

Guided Inquiry: Who helps refugees in your local community? What questions might we ask them to better understand what supports refugees need when arriving in a new country? What might we do to help local refugees arriving in our community?

Social Studies: On a map, identify countries that Canada has recently accepted refugees from.



MAKE, TINKER, AND MODIFY

Teachers will provide the students with an option of how they might present their learning and new questions that have been created over the course of the study. Educators should provide a list of choices to students that includes products they are familiar with and have had experience creating before.

Raise awareness for local refugee organizations using either a video or posters.

Create a [marble maze](#) to represent the journey of a refugee. To increase the connection, place related words from previous activities on levels of the maze.

Create a comic in the style of Elise Gravel to represent the idea of what a refugee is. (Comic by Elise Gravel, [What's a Refugee?](#) to use as a mentor text during this activity.)

Here are some [Creative Tools for Making and Sharing](#).

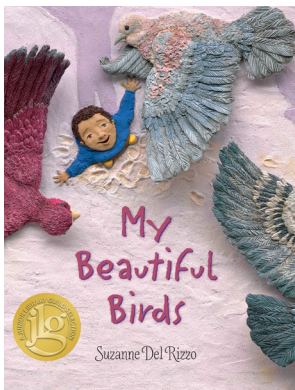
REFLECT AND CONNECT

Give students the opportunity to reflect back on the guiding questions:

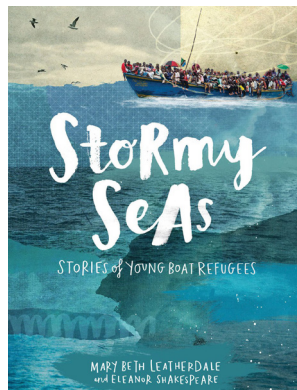
- What should our final definition of a refugee be?
- What do we know about why refugees might have to leave their home countries?
- Who helps refugees in our community when they arrive in Canada? What do they do to help?

If wanting to go deeper, connect with your local organization and write letters of welcome to refugees in the community.

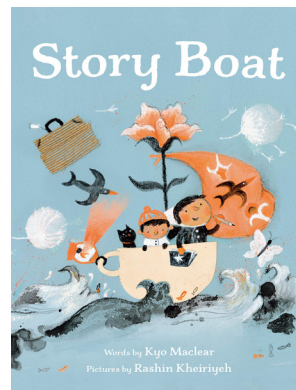
ADDITIONAL CANADIAN BOOKS AND BOOK LISTS TO SUPPORT THESE SUB-THEMES



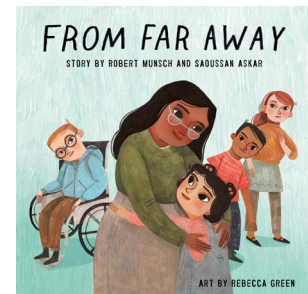
My Beautiful Birds by Suzanne Del Rizzo (Pajama Press, 2017)



Stormy Seas: Stories of Young Boat Refugees by Mary Beth Leatherdale and Eleanor Shakespeare (Annick Press, 2017)



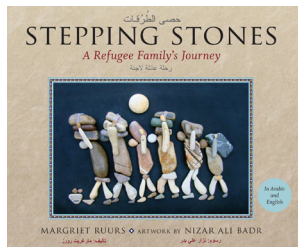
Story Boat by Kyo Maclear, illustrated by Rashin Kheiriyeh (Tundra Books, 2020)



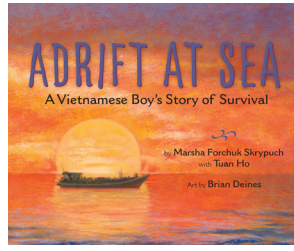
From Far Away by Robert Munsch and Saoussan Askar, illustrated by Rebecca Green (Annick Press, 2017)



Y'a pas de place chez nous par Andrée Poulin, illustrations de Enzo Lord Mariano (Québec Amérique, 2016)



Stepping Stones: A Refugee Family's Journey by Margriet Ruurs, illustrated by Nizar Ali Badr, translated by Falah Raheem (Orca Book Publishers, 2016)



Adrift at Sea: A Vietnamese Boy's Story of Survival by Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch and Tuan Ho, illustrated by Brian Deines (Pajama Press, 2016)

BOOK LISTS

- Annotated book list that highlights [refugees and immigrants](#) (Canadian School Libraries Journal)
- Annotated book list that highlights [social justice, diversity and refugees](#) (Canadian Children's Book Centre)
- [I Read Canadian: Six books about the refugee experience](#) – Annotated book list that highlights refugees (UNHCR Canada)
- [Immigrant and Refugee Families — Stories and Resources](#) – Annotated book list that highlights refugees (Parentbooks)

ADAPTATIONS FOR THIS LESSON

Lesson contains books available in both French and English.

MORE RESOURCES

- [United Nations Refugee Agency](#) – There are articles and videos on this site that can be used by the teacher. Preview carefully if wanting to use with students.
- Statistics on [refugees in Canada](#)
- [“Canada now resettles more refugees than any other country, mostly through private sponsorship”](#) (National Post article)
- [“Art project helps students understand life for refugees”](#) (CBC Kids article)
- [Canadian Resources to Support Inquiry Learning - 2021](#)