Special Issue: Europe’s Refugee Crisis

Civil War in Syria

Canada and Refugees

About Refugees

2015/2016: Issue 2

A monthly current events resource for Canadian classrooms

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TO THE TEACHER

What in the World?
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On September 2, newspapers around the world published a sad photo. It showed the body of three-year-old Alan Kurdi washed up on a Turkish shore. The Syrian boy had drowned, along with his brother and mother, while crossing the Mediterranean Sea from Turkey to Greece. The family had been trying to reach Europe.

The heartbreaking image focused the world’s attention on people who have been fleeing to Europe in recent years. **Humanitarian crisis**

Since January 2015, some 500,000 migrants have entered the European Union (EU). The United Nations (UN) says about 8,000 more are entering every day. As many as one million could arrive by the end of 2015. It’s the largest movement of people in Europe since World War II.

Most of these migrants are refugees. They’re fleeing from countries engulfed in violence, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Eritrea. Above all, they’re coming from Syria, where a civil war is raging.

**The road travelled**

The majority of migrants are following one of three routes across the Mediterranean. The most popular one involves crossing from Turkey to the Greek islands of Kos, Chios, Lesvos or Samos in rubber dinghies or small wooden boats. From there, migrants take a ferry to the Greek mainland. Then, they travel through Macedonia and Serbia, then on to Hungary, Austria and Germany.

**Did you know?**

Over 508 million people – 7.3 percent of the world’s population – live in the EU.

**Desperate journey**

The journey is long and tiring. People crowd onto buses, trains or taxis. When they can’t take transportation, they walk with their belongings for days in the heat or cold. Women carry small children. Families push elders along in wheelchairs.

The migrants sleep outside on sidewalks or train tracks. They wait in huge line-ups at reception centres for water and

**Definitions**

CIVIL WAR: a war between two or more groups within one country
EUROPEAN UNION (EU): a group of European countries that participates in the world economy as one economic unit, operating under one official currency, the Euro
MIGRANT: someone who travels to another country to work

REFUGEE: a person who flees his or her home country to escape persecution
UNITED NATIONS (UN): an organization encouraging peace, cooperation, social progress and economic stability. Created after World War II, it has 192 members, including Canada.
food. They are tired, sick, and despairing.

**KEEP MOVING!**
The EU has been struggling to cope with the huge *influx*.

Nations along the south coast, such as Greece, were quickly overwhelmed when migrants started arriving in the thousands in April. Then as the tide of refugees pushed north and west, other countries were unable to handle all of the people needing help, too.

Some nations blocked their borders, turning people back. They were concerned about security. Governments also worried that migrants, if they stayed, would take away jobs, and stretch resources. And allowing migrants to enter without permission might encourage other desperate people to set sail for Europe.

Hungary was especially hostile to the migrants. It built barbed wire fences to prevent them from passing through. It also sprayed crowds at the border with tear gas and water cannons.

“Those arriving have been raised in another religion, and represent a radically different culture,” said Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

**GERMAN HOSPITALITY**
By contrast, Germany welcomed the weary migrants. The government wouldn’t set a limit on the number it would accept. Thousands of citizens offered the travellers food, water and clothing.

“The... right to *asylum* for the... *persecuted* knows no upper limit; that also goes for refugees who come to us from the hell of a civil war,” said German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

However, at least 800,000 migrants could settle in Germany by year’s end. That’s one percent of the country’s population! Even if Germany is willing to take everyone in, the country can’t shoulder the entire burden.

**AN EU PLAN**
So on September 22, the EU approved a plan to share across its 28 states the 120,000 refugees now in Greece and Italy. This was a small amount compared to the number of people seeking asylum. But it was a start.

The EU will also increase aid for Syrian refugees in Turkey and the Middle East so they would be less likely to attempt the journey westward. Borders will also be tightened to make it harder for migrants to enter illegally.

These measures won’t end the crisis, but they are a step in the right direction.

“The refugee crisis can be brought under control, but it will take a tremendous amount of effort, it will take a long time, and it will take many steps in many areas,” said EU Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans. ★

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**DEFINITIONS**

*Asylum*: the right to stay in a country, given by a government to protect someone who has fled from trouble in his own country

*Influx*: a large number of people or things coming to a particular place

*Persecute*: to treat someone very badly, or to refuse them rights, especially because of their race, religion, or political beliefs
Answer the following in complete sentences:

1. How many countries belong to the European Union?

2. List at least two important facts about this political-economic union.

3. Explain what a refugee is.

4. How many migrants have entered the European Union since January?

5. Where are most of these migrants from?

6. Identify the most popular route that migrants are using to reach central Europe.

7. How did Hungary react to migrants who were crossing its territory?

8. How did Germany react to migrants who arrived in its territory?
BETWEEN THE LINES

An inference is a conclusion drawn from evidence. A plausible inference is supported by evidence in the article and is consistent with known facts outside of the article.

What inference(s) can you draw from the fact that about 8,000 migrants or more are entering the European Union every day?

JUST TALK ABOUT IT

1. In what ways could this story be considered ‘good news’? In what ways could it be considered ‘bad news’? Overall, would you say this is more of a good or a bad news story? Explain.

2. Consider the following quote by German Chancellor Angela Merkel: “If Europe fails on the question of refugees, then it won’t be the Europe we wished for.”

   a) What is your understanding of this quote?

   b) Respond to this quote. What connections can you make? What questions do you have? For what reasons do you agree with the speaker? For what reasons do you disagree?

3. What is your understanding of the terms ‘migrant’ and ‘refugee’? In what ways are these two terms similar? Different? Explain.

ONLINE

Visit our student website at www.news4youth.com and click on the What in the World? tab to:

1. Watch a video called “Most Shocking Second A Day Video” that depicts one second out of every day for a child that is fleeing war (or visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBQ-IoHfimQ).

2. See a warm welcome for refugees that are arriving in Austria and Germany by watching the YouTube video “Refugees cheered into Germany and Austria” (or visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=txdKyT2tscU).

3. Watch a brilliant six-minute animated explanation of the refugee crisis called “The European Refugee Crisis and Syria explained” (or visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvOnXh3NN9w).

4. Read the 1951 Refugee Convention that defines who is a refugee, their rights, and the legal obligations of states (or visit http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49da0e466.html). ★
YOUR TASK:

Examine the editorial cartoon. Then, answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper:

1. What do you already know about Europe’s refugee crisis? Explain.

2. Describe what you see and read in the cartoon. Who is featured? What is this person doing? What symbols can you find? What else do you notice?

3. As you see it, what might the cartoonist be saying about Europe’s refugee crisis? Explain.

4. For what reasons do you agree with the cartoonist’s perspective? For what reasons do you disagree? ★
Imagine that you are an investigative reporter interviewing the person in this scene. Generate two powerful questions to ask in your interview. (A powerful question is not easy to answer, is specific to the situation, is open-ended and requires further research.) Then, record plausible answers – those that are most likely to be given, believable, and supported by evidence in the image.
Map Assignment

Complete this map assignment to better understand the article *Europe’s Refugee Crisis*.

**Instructions**

1. Obtain the required resources and read all the instructions before starting.
2. Colour your map after all labelling is completed.
3. Print in pencil only first, then go over the printing in black ink.
4. Work carefully and neatly.

**Resources Required:** pencil, black pen, pencil crayons, ruler, eraser and an atlas.

**Part A** Locate and label the following countries in CAPITAL letters and shade each as indicated:

United Kingdom (yellow)  France (orange)  Germany (purple)
Poland (orange)  Hungary (green)  Romania (red)
Bulgaria (green)  Greece (purple)  Italy (green)

**Part B** Locate and label the capital city of each country above and underline each city name.

**Part C** Locate and label the following countries in CAPITAL letters and shade each as indicated:

Netherlands (pink)  Belgium (brown)  Russia (red)
Belarus (green)  Ukraine (yellow)  Slovakia (pink)
Czech Republic (red)  Austria (brown)  Switzerland (yellow)
Spain (red)  Algeria (pink)  Turkey (red)

**Part D** Shade the following Balkan countries as indicated:

1. Slovenia (orange)  2. Croatia (yellow)  3. Bosnia and Herzegovina (purple)
4. Montenegro (red)  5. Albania (pink)  6. Macedonia (brown)
7. Kosovo (yellow)  8. Serbia (orange)

**Part E** Locate and label the following German cities:

Hamburg  Munich  Frankfurt

**Part F** Locate and label the following and shade all ocean water dark blue:

English Channel  Mediterranean Sea  Adriatic Sea
Ionian Sea  Aegean Sea  Black Sea

**Part G** Locate and label the main land route migrants are using to travel across Europe.

**Part H** Shade all remaining territory grey.

**Part I** Complete your map with a frame, title and compass. ★
A civil war with no end in sight has claimed between 200,000 and 300,000 lives in the Middle Eastern nation of Syria. It has displaced nearly eight million people within the country’s own borders. As well, some four million refugees, including two million children, have fled to neighbouring countries and Europe over the past four years.

HOW THE WAR BEGAN

The roots of the war go back to March 2011. That was when the Syrian people rose up against their government. They were angry with President Bashar al-Assad, a harsh dictator, who has ruled Syria since 2000.

Mr. Assad banned opposition parties and severely restricted freedoms. Torture and corruption were widespread. People wanted change, but he refused to give in to their demands. He vowed to stay in power and ordered his powerful military to attack his own citizens.

HOSTILITIES ESCALATE

His opponents fought back. By August 2011, the rebels had loosely organized into a group called the Free Syrian Army. The fighters had different beliefs, but they all wanted to see an end Mr. Assad’s government.

One year later, the conflict had become a full-scale civil war. Violence has been escalating ever since. Worse still, a ruthless extremist group called Islamic State (IS) has been able to take advantage of the chaos to gain control of huge sections of northern and eastern Syria and neighbouring Iraq.

IS wants to control the entire Middle East and rule it according to Islamic law. The group is responsible for hundreds of public executions. It has carried out mass killings of

DEFINITIONS

CIVIL WAR: a war between two or more groups within one country
CORRUPTION: dishonest or illegal behavior by officials or people in positions of power who accept money in exchange for favours

DICTATOR: a person who holds absolute power in government
DISPLACE: force to move to a new location
EXTREMIST: one who holds extreme views and is willing to act, often violently, in support of a belief

DID YOU KNOW?

Only ten percent of Syrian refugees have fled to Europe. The rest have sought shelter in neighbouring countries. Nearly 1.2 million are in Lebanon. About 2 million have crossed into Turkey. Jordan has taken about 630,000 refugees, 250,000 have fled to Iraq, and 125,000 are in Egypt. Other Middle Eastern countries, including Saudi Arabia, haven’t taken in any.
rival armed groups and religious minorities. The terrorist organization has also kidnapped and murdered hostages.

**IT’S COMPLICATED**

In Syria, IS is carrying out a “war within a war.” It is fighting the rebels as well as others with whom it doesn’t agree, including the Syrian government.

This has complicated the situation for nations who want to see Mr. Assad defeated. Why? Because a Western coalition led by the United States strongly opposes IS. It has been battling this group for over a year hoping to destroy it.

Yet destroying Islamic State would help President Assad – which is the opposite of what the West wants to see happen. In fact, France, Britain, Canada and the U.S. have provided logistic and political support to some of the Syrians who are fighting him.

**RUSSIA AND IRAN**

Meanwhile, Mr. Assad’s government receives strong support from Iran and Russia. Iran provides financial, technical and military assistance. Russia supplies arms and aircraft. It has also blocked United Nations Security Council resolutions aimed at reining in Mr. Assad.

In mid-September, Russia sent an additional 28 military planes and 15 helicopters to Syria. American authorities worried that the move would interfere with coalition air strikes against IS. It could also hinder efforts to find a political solution to the conflict.

‘WE’RE ALWAYS AFRAID’

Tragically, the 12 million Syrians still in the country continue to suffer. They desperately want an end to their pain.

“Kids cannot go to school or they risk getting hit by a barrel bomb. Children in refugee camps [don’t] have proper shelter in winter. A woman cannot deliver [a baby] in a safe environment. Children suffer from preventable diseases,” said Dr. Joanne Liu, head of the aid group Doctors Without Borders.

People need food, blankets, clean water, health care and other humanitarian aid. Some mothers are eating just one meal a day to have more to feed their children.

“We’re living on the edge of life,” said one Syrian. “We’re always nervous. We’re always afraid.”

No wonder millions have been risking everything, hoping for a new start in other countries. ★

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**DEFINITIONS**

- **Humanitarian aid:** help provided to ease suffering
- **Sect:** a subdivision of a larger religious group
- **Security Council:** the most important branch of the United Nations. It authorizes peacekeeping operations, sanctions and military action. There are 15 countries on the Security Council. Five – China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States – are permanent and can veto any resolution. The remaining ten are elected for two-year terms.
- **United Nations (UN):** an organization encouraging peace, cooperation, social progress and economic stability. Created after World War II, it has 192 members, including Canada.
Answer the following in complete sentences:

1. List at least three important facts about Syria.

2. Name the leader of Syria.

3. Describe what life has been like for people under his rule.

4. What happened in Syria in March 2011?

5. How did Syria react to anti-government protests that spread across the country four years ago?

6. Which group has taken advantage of the civil war and has occupied large areas of Syria?

7. How did some Western nations react to the spread of this extremist group?

8. Which two countries support Syria and what assistance are they providing?

9. List at least two consequences of the civil war for the people of Syria.
BETWEEN THE LINES

An inference is a conclusion drawn from evidence. A plausible inference is supported by evidence in the article and is consistent with known facts outside of the article.

What inference(s) can you draw from the fact that about half of Syria’s population has been displaced since the civil war began in 2011?

JUST TALK ABOUT IT

1. a) What is your understanding of the reasons for the civil war in Syria?
   b) For what reasons is the Syrian civil war complicated to solve? Explain.

2. As you see it, what is the significance of the Syrian civil war? Give reasons to support your response.

ONLINE

Go to www.news4youth.com and select the What in the World? tab to:

1. Watch a short animated explainer about Iraq, Syria, and the so-called Islamic State called “Iraq Explained -- ISIS, Syria and War” (or visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQPIREDW-Ro).


4. Read an article and hear a speech by the Secretary General of the UN, Ban Ki-moon, regarding the Assad regime’s use of chemical weapons (or visit http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/16/syrian-chemical-attack-sarin-says-un).

5. Go beyond the numbers with Doctors Without Borders in Syria (or visit http://reachofwar.msf.org/). ★
ACROSS

2. the U.S. is leading a _____ of countries against Islamic State
4. country that supports Syria
9. war between two or more groups inside one country (2)
11. 1.2 million Syrian refugees have fled to this country
12. leader of Syria
13. United Nations _____ Council

DOWN

1. dishonest or illegal behaviour by people in positions of power
3. country that supports Syria
5. number of Canadian fighter bombers deployed against Islamic State
6. a ruler with total power over a country
7. capital of Syria
8. IS = _____ State
10. most Syrian refugees have fled to this country
Complete this map assignment to better understand the article Civil War in Syria.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Obtain the required resources and read all the instructions before starting.
2. Colour your map after all labelling is completed.
3. Print in pencil only first, then go over the printing in black ink.
4. Work carefully and neatly.

Resources Required: pencil, black pen, pencil crayons, ruler, eraser and an atlas.

Part A Locate and label the following countries in CAPITAL letters and shade each as indicated:

- Turkey (orange)
- Cyprus (yellow)
- Israel (orange)
- Syria (red)
- Lebanon (green)
- Jordan (brown)
- Iraq (purple)
- Cyprus (yellow)
- Lebanon (green)
- Jordan (brown)

Part B Locate and label the capital cities of these countries and underline each city name.

Part C Locate and label the following countries in CAPITAL letters and shade each as indicated:

- Bulgaria (purple)
- Armenia (green)
- Russia (brown)
- Iran (red)
- Georgia (pink)
- Saudi Arabia (yellow)

Part D Locate and label the following Syrian cities:

- Aleppo
- Homs (Hims)

Part E Locate and label the following and shade all salt water dark blue:

- Black Sea
- Mediterranean Sea
- Red Sea

Part F Locate and label the following rivers and shade them light blue:

- Euphrates
- Tigris
- Nile

Part G Locate and label the Dead Sea and shade it light blue.

Part H Locate and label the Suez Canal.

Part I Shade all remaining territory grey.

Part J Complete your map with a frame, title and compass.
Canada, like other countries, decides how many immigrants it will accept each year and who is eligible to live here.

For the past decade, the federal government has let in about 250,000 people every 12 months. Most have either had skills that Canada needs, or were joining family in Canada. Very few have been refugees. Fewer still have been Syrian.

A LONG ROAD

In 2013, the federal government pledged to take in 11,300 Syrian refugees by the end of 2018. Yet by late August, Canada had resettled just 2,374.

Why such a low number? Prime Minister Stephen Harper said the government has to screen applicants carefully to stop people who could be security threats from coming to Canada. This process takes time.

Applicants must first apply for visas to enter Canada. That can take up to 45 months. The applications are then sent to Winnipeg for processing, which can take several more months. Since 2012 some candidates have also needed proof that they are refugees. They must obtain this from another country or a United Nations agency.

MORE HELP COMING

However, in September, the Conservative government announced that it would speed up the process for Syrians. It would drop the requirement that they prove they are refugees.

As well, the government announced that it will bring in an additional 10,000 Syrian refugees over four years. That would make the total 21,300 by the end of 2019. It will also

REFUGEE SPONSORS

Canadians can sponsor refugees, but the process isn’t easy.

Community groups or groups of five or more permanent residents can apply to be sponsors. First they need to complete pages of paperwork. Then, they need to raise money to cover expenses and start-up costs for their refugee’s first year in Canada. About $30,000 is needed for a family of four.

Groups may sponsor a specific person or someone who has already been pre-approved by Canada. Sponsors are expected to help refugees learn our languages and customs, get jobs, find housing and settle into a community.

DEFINITIONS

IMMIGRANT: someone who comes to live in a country from another country

VISA: an official mark or stamp on a passport that allows someone to enter or leave a country
match donations made by Canadians – to a maximum of $100 million – to registered charities working to help Syrian refugees.

**Campaign Promises**

Opposition party leaders, campaigning for the October 19 federal election, said that if elected, they would do more.

New Democratic Party leader Thomas Mulcair said his party would bring in at least 46,000 Syrian refugees over four years. Liberal leader Justin Trudeau pledged to resettle 25,000 by January 1, 2016 if he wins.

**Can Canada do more?**

Others think we can do even better. Retired Lieutenant-General Romeo Dallaire said we should welcome up to 90,000 refugees. He believes they would be a valuable asset to Canada.

“Canada’s decision in regards to refugees is nothing less than atrocious and totally foreign to what and who we are,” he said.

Some people, however, argue that the Syrian war shows no sign of ending and we can’t fix that, no matter how many people we accept. Maybe it would be wiser, they say, to provide humanitarian relief to people living in refugee camps instead.

**And other countries?**

Meanwhile, other nations are helping, too. The U.S. government says it will accept 100,000 Syrian refugees by 2017. Australia is planning to accept 14,200 Syrians. For its part, the United Kingdom has taken in 5,102 refugees, and will accept 20,000 more from refugee camps over the next five years.

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**Definitions**

**ATROCIOUS:** exceptionally bad or displeasing

**COMMUNISM:** a form of government in which all factories, farms, and natural resources are owned in common

**HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION:** a failed 1956 uprising against communist control in Hungary

**PERSECUTION:** the act of treating someone very badly, or refusing them equal rights, especially because of their race, religion, or political beliefs

**USSR (UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS):** a confederation of communist states led by Russia from 1922 to 1991
ON THE LINES

Answer the following in complete sentences:

1. List at least three examples of large-scale immigration to Canada.

2. How many people have immigrated to Canada over the past ten years?

3. In 2013, how many Syrian refugees did Canada promise to admit?

4. How many Syrian refugees has Canada admitted since 2013?

5. Explain why this number is so low.

6. Describe the two main steps involved in applying for refugee status in Canada.

7. What changes aimed at helping Syrian refugees did Ottawa recently announce?
TRUE OR FALSE?

Mark each statement T (True) or F (False). If a statement is false, write the word or words that make it true on the lines below.

______ 1. Over the past decade, the federal government has let in about 250,000 refugees each year.

______ 2. Community groups or groups of two permanent residents can apply to sponsor refugees.

______ 3. It costs about $30,000 to sponsor a family of four.

______ 4. Changes to Canada’s laws have made it easier than ever for refugees to settle here.

BETWEEN THE LINES

An inference is a conclusion drawn from evidence. A good inference is supported by evidence in the article and is consistent with known facts outside the article.

What inference(s) can you draw from the fact that it can take as long as 45 months for refugee applicants to Canada to obtain a visa?

JUST TALK ABOUT IT

1. a) Summarize, using your own words, the federal government’s plan to help Syrian refugees.

b) For what reasons do you agree with this plan? For what reasons do you disagree? Explain.

ONLINE

Visit our student website at www.news4youth.com and click on the What in the World? tab to:


2. Read more about the refugee crisis on the Canadian Red Cross website (or visit http://www.redcross.ca/). ★
In 2014 there were 19.5 million refugees worldwide. Another 38.2 million people were displaced in their own countries. Some 1.8 million more were waiting for asylum.

In all, the number of people forced to leave their homes in 2014 was 59.5 million, up from 51.2 million in 2013. That’s the biggest leap ever seen in a single year, and the most refugees since World War II.

**Fleeing violence**

Since early 2011, the main reason for the rising number has been the civil war in Syria. However, people in other regions are also fleeing instability and conflict.

Over the past five years, some 15 conflicts worldwide have broken out or started up again. At the same time, there is ongoing upheaval in other nations, including Afghanistan and Somalia.

**Where do refugees go?**

Under the 1951 Refugee Convention, countries that belong to the United Nations (UN) must protect refugees. Host nations must provide food, shelter, and medical care. As well, refugees can’t be forced to go back to a dangerous situation. Many choose to return home on their own when it’s safe.

However, some never go back. They apply for asylum in their host country or another nation.

**Tent cities**

When countries are overwhelmed by people seeking safety, living conditions for refugees can be far less than ideal.

Many become urban refugees. They live in extreme poverty in unheated shacks, chicken coops, abandoned and unfinished buildings – even old prisons. They can’t legally work, and receive little assistance or medical aid.

Others find shelter in one of 700 refugee camps worldwide. These camps are temporary settlements.

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**Definitions**

**Asylum:** the right to stay in a country, given by a government to protect someone who has escaped from war or political trouble in his or her own country

**Civil war:** a war between two or more groups within one country

**Displace:** force to move to a new location

**Extreme poverty:** living on $1.25 daily or less

**Refugee:** a person who flees his or her home country to escape persecution

**United Nations (UN):** an organization encouraging peace, cooperation, social progress and economic stability. Created after World War II, it has 192 members, including Canada.
meant to house refugees for a short time. 

Camps usually consist of tents or other makeshift shelters that provide little protection from heat or cold. Most have a source of water, bathing areas, a clinic or hospital, places of worship and a food distribution centre. The average camp holds about 11,400 people, but camps with over 100,000 residents are common. Zaatari Camp in Jordan, for example, is now that country’s fourth largest city.

Due to crowding and a lack of infrastructure, many camps aren’t clean. That leads to outbreaks of infectious diseases.

**School in the camps**

Although some refugee camps have schools donated by UNICEF, classes are not regular. Many children don’t even go to school. They must work in order to feed their family.

To call attention to this problem, Malala Yousafzai celebrated her 18th birthday in Lebanon on July 12 by opening a school that can welcome up to 200 girls aged 14 to 18.

“I believe that the voices of the Syrian refugees need to be heard and they have been ignored for so long,” she said in a speech.

“Today on my first day as an adult, on behalf of the world’s children, I demand of leaders we must invest in books instead of bullets.”

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Eighty percent of the world’s refugees are hosted in developing countries.

**Aid agencies at work**

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) is in charge of helping and protecting people forced to flee their homes due to violence, conflict and persecution. A staff of 7,750 works in more than 125 countries, providing shelter, food, water, medical care and other life-saving assistance to refugees.

Other agencies also play a big role in helping, including Doctors Without Borders, the International Red Cross, Oxfam, and Save the Children.

**More to come**

The UNHCR cautions that the number of refugees and internally displaced people will continue to rise in coming years. Moreover, many will want to seek refuge in Europe. It’s not surprising.

Compared to the Middle East and Africa, Europe is wealthy and peaceful. Its population is steady or declining. Its is not seriously affected by climate change. Human rights are generally respected. Women have equal rights.

**More help, sooner**

UNHCR chief Antonio Guterres says the refugee crisis in Europe wouldn’t have happened if developed countries had taken steps to help Syrians before the situation got so bad.

“Unfortunately only when the poor enter the halls of the rich, do the rich notice that the poor exist,” he stated.

The solution, according to Mr. Guterres, is to devise a plan now to help all the people who are being forced from their homes. Waiting to help will only make the problem worse.

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**Definitions**

**Infrastructure:** basic physical and organizational structures and facilities such as buildings and roads  

**Makeshift:** serving as a temporary substitute; sufficient for the time being  

**Malala Yousafzai:** a Pakistani activist for female education, and the youngest winner of the Nobel Peace Prize  

**Persecution:** the act of treating someone very badly, or refusing them equal rights, especially because of their race, religion, or political beliefs
ON THE LINES

Answer the following in complete sentences:

1. How many refugees were there in the world in 2014?

2. How many people were displaced inside their own countries in 2014?

3. In total, how many people in 2014 had been forced to leave their homes?

4. What was the main reason for the large increase of displaced people in 2014 compared to 2013?

5. How are UN member countries required to help refugees?

6. Which UN agency is in charge of helping and protecting refugees?

7. Describe what this UN agency does and how it operates.

8. How many refugee camps are there throughout the world?

9. Describe the conditions in many refugee camps.
**BETWEEN THE LINES**

An *inference* is a conclusion drawn from evidence. A *plausible inference* is supported by evidence in the article and is consistent with known facts outside of the article.

What inference(s) can you draw from the fact that 80 percent of the world’s refugees are hosted in developing countries?

---

**JUST TALK ABOUT IT**

1. *What if...* the world’s developed countries ignore the refugee crisis? Give reasons to support your response.

2. Consider the following quote: "*Refugees have been deprived of their homes, but they must not be deprived of their futures.*" UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon.
   a) What words are you unsure of the meaning of? Look up the meaning of these words in a dictionary.
   b) What is your understanding of this quote?
   c) For what reasons do you agree with the speaker? For what reasons do you disagree?

**ONLINE**

Visit our student website at [www.news4youth.com](http://www.news4youth.com) and click on the *What in the World?* tab to:

1. Go inside Jordan’s Zaatari refugee camp as it marks its third anniversary by viewing the YouTube video “Jordan’s Zaatari refugee camp marks sad milestone” (or visit [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKmieQD24SM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKmieQD24SM)).

2. Meet the children of the Kilis refugee camp in Turkey, home to thousands of Syrian refugees, by viewing the YouTube video “The Syrian Children of the Kilis Refugee Camp” (or visit [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGPRmDqDkR4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGPRmDqDkR4)).

3. View the locations of refugee camps on a world map, and see satellite photos of each (or visit [http://storymaps.esri.com/stories/2013/refugee-camps/](http://storymaps.esri.com/stories/2013/refugee-camps/)).

4. Visit the website for the UN High Commission for Refugees (or visit [http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home](http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home)).

5. Learn more about the Malala Fund (or visit [https://www.malala.org/](https://www.malala.org/)). ★
**EUROPE’S REFUGEE CRISIS**

Write the letter that corresponds to the best answer on the line beside each question:

_____ 1. How many migrants have entered the European Union since January?
   a) 75,000          b) 500,000
   c) 650,000         d) 800,000

_____ 2. Which country are most of these migrants from?
   a) Turkey          b) Afghanistan
   c) Syria           d) Iraq

_____ 3. What is the most popular route for most of the migrants who are entering the EU?
   a) from Western Africa to Spain  b) from Libya to Portugal
   c) from Hungary to Germany       d) from Turkey to Greece

_____ 4. True or False? The European Union has 28 member countries.

_____ 5. True or False? Hungary welcomed many of the migrants that passed through its territory.

---

**CIVIL WAR IN SYRIA**

Write the letter that corresponds to the best answer on the line beside each question:

_____ 1. What was the population of Syria before the civil war started?
   a) 4 million          b) 8 million
   c) 12 million         d) 22.5 million

_____ 2. Which extremist group has occupied large parts of northern and eastern Syria?
   a) al-Qaeda        b) Islamic State
   c) Hezbollah       d) Hamas

_____ 3. Which two countries support Syria?
   a) France and Egypt  b) China and Iraq
   c) Germany and Turkey d) Russia and Iran

_____ 4. True or False? Most Syrian refugees have fled to Turkey.

_____ 5. True or False? Canada is part of the U.S.-led military coalition against Syria.
Quizzes

Canada and Refugees

Write the letter that corresponds to the best answer on the line beside each question:

1. Which of the following groups was NOT readily accepted as refugees to Canada?
   - a) German Jews in the 1930s
   - b) Hungarians in the 1950s
   - c) Vietnamese boat people in the 1970s
   - d) refugees from the Balkans in the 1990s

2. How many people have immigrated to Canada over the past ten years?
   - a) 250,000
   - b) 800,000
   - c) 1.3 million
   - d) 2.5 million

3. Refugees who want to come to Canada must first apply for:
   - a) visa
   - b) passport
   - c) criminal record check
   - d) sponsor

4. True or False? Most new immigrants to Canada are refugees.

5. True or False? Only the federal government can sponsor refugees who want to come to Canada.

About Refugees

Write the letter that corresponds to the best answer on the line beside each question:

1. In 2014, how many people worldwide had been forced to leave their homes?
   - a) 1.8 million
   - b) 19.5 million
   - c) 47.3 million
   - d) 59.5 million

2. Which UN agency is in charge of helping and protecting refugees?
   - a) UNHCR
   - b) Red Cross
   - c) Doctors Without Borders
   - d) UNICEF

3. How many of the world’s refugees are living in developing countries?
   - a) 20 percent
   - b) 35 percent
   - c) 65 percent
   - d) 80 percent

4. True or False? The number of refugees worldwide has decreased in recent years.

5. True or False? There are over 700 refugee camps in the world.
MATCH THE CAPITALS: INSTRUCTIONS

1. Using an atlas, match the capital city with the correct province, state, and country.
2. In front of each city, list the letter on the map associated with that location.

Provinces and Territories
- Toronto
- Quebec
- Whitehorse

U.S. States
- New Mexico
- Albany
- Montana

Countries
- Hungary
- Riyadh
- Italy
- Berlin
## Europe’s Refugee Crisis

1. **How many countries belong to the European Union?** 28 member states belong to the EU.

2. **List at least two important facts about this political-economic union.** 1. European Union countries participate in the world economy as one economic unit. 2. The EU operates under one official currency, the Euro (although nine members do not use this currency). 3. Over 508 million people – 7.3% of the world’s population – live in the EU. (In 2014, the EU had the largest economy in the world.)

3. **Explain what a refugee is.** A person who flees his or her home country to escape persecution. (Someone who flees violence but does not leave his or her country is called an ‘internally displaced person’. A person who travels to another country to work is called a migrant. All refugees are migrants but not all migrants are refugees.)

4. **How many migrants have entered the European Union since January?** Some 500,000 have entered the EU. (About 8,000 are arriving every day. It’s the largest movement of people in Europe since World War II.)

5. **Where are most of these migrants from?** The main source countries are Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Eritrea. Most of these migrants are refugees.

6. **Identify the most popular route that migrants are using to reach central Europe.** The most common route involves a water crossing from Turkey to nearby Greek islands then taking a ferry to the Greek mainland. Migrants then travel through the Macedonia, Serbia and Hungary to try Austria or Germany.

7. **How did Hungary react to migrants who were crossing its territory?** Hungary’s government was hostile. It built barbed wire fences along its border and security forces sprayed crowds at the border with tear gas and water.

8. **How did Germany react to migrants who arrived in its territory?** Germany welcomed the weary migrants and wouldn’t set a limit on the number it would accept. Thousands of people offered the migrants food, water and clothing. (At least 800,000 migrants could settle in Germany by year end. However, recent reports suggested that Germany was hesitant to keep accepting large numbers.)

## Editorial Cartoon

1. **Since January 2015, some 500,000 migrants have entered the European Union. Most are refugees fleeing the Syrian civil war. This influx has generated controversy among the European Union, with some countries refusing to allow the migrants to enter and others, such as Germany, welcoming them. Many states are overwhelmed and unable to cope with the sheer numbers of people needing assistance.**

2. **An old man looms large in the cartoon. He has unnaturally thin arms and legs, and is walking with an exaggerated stoop, perhaps to emphasize his age and weakness. He is supported by a broken arrow / cane and he is looking down at the ground. His body posture suggests he is very tired. He is wearing a European Union emblem on his jacket to signify that he represents the EU in this cartoon. Meanwhile, boats on the water labelled ‘Migrants’ are carrying people to shore who are then climbing on the old man’s back, weighing him down even further.**

3. **The cartoonist may be suggesting the migrants are overwhelming the European Union, which is straining under the burden of supporting so many people in need.**

4. **Answers will vary.**
1. List at least three important facts about Syria.
   1. It is one of the oldest nations in the world. 2. At 185,180 sq. km. it is more than twice the size of New Brunswick. 3. Syria is made up of fertile plains, mountains and deserts. 4. The capital is Damascus. 5. Arabic is the official language. 6. The population before the civil war began was 22.5 million. 7. Most of Syria’s citizens are Muslims.

2. Name the leader of Syria.
   President Bashar al-Assad (He has been in power since 2000.)

3. Describe what life has been like for people under his rule.
   He is a harsh dictator. Under his regime, opposition parties were banned and freedoms were severely restricted. Torture and corruption were widespread. (His father who preceded him ruled from 1971 to 2000.)

4. What happened in Syria in March 2011?
   The Syrian people rose up against their government.

5. How did Syria react to anti-government protests that spread across the country four years ago?
   Mr. Assad refused to give in to protesters’ demands. He vowed to stay in power, and used his powerful military to attack opponents. (The Syrian people fought back, and by July 2012, the conflict had become a full-scale civil war.)

6. Which group has taken advantage of the civil war and has occupied large areas of Syria?
   Islamic State (a.k.a. Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant - ISIL)

7. How did some Western nations react to the spread of this extremist group?
   A Western coalition led by the United States, which strongly opposes Islamic State, has been fighting this group for over a year. (However, destroying IS would help President Assad – whom the West would also like to see deposed.)

8. Which two countries support Syria and what assistance are they providing?
   Iran has provided financial, technical and military assistance. Russia has supplied Syria with arms and aircraft and it has consistently blocked Security Council resolutions aimed at reining in Mr. Assad. (In mid-September, Russia increased its military presence in Syria.)

9. List at least two consequences of the civil war for the people of Syria.
   1. The conflict has claimed over 200,000 lives so far (many of these were civilians). 2. Eight million people have been displaced within Syria’s borders. 3. Over four million refugees, including two million children, have left the country. 4. The remaining 12 million Syrians desperately need food, blankets, water, health care, and other humanitarian aid.

PUZZLE

Answer Key

CIVIL WAR IN SYRIA

1. List at least three important facts about Syria.
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1. List at least three examples of large-scale immigration to Canada. 1. In 1956, after the Hungarian Revolution, Canada accepted 37,000 refugees fleeing communism. 2. After the USSR invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968, 11,000 refugees settled in Canada. 3. In 1972, 7,000 Ugandans fleeing the dictator Idi Amin were admitted. 4. In the late 1970s, Canada admitted 70,000 Vietnamese ‘boat people’ who fled communism. 5. In the late 1990s, Canada rescued 5,000 from a war in the Balkans.

2. How many people have immigrated to Canada over the past ten years? 2.5 million - about 250,000 per year. (The vast majority are economic migrants or family reunifications. Last year Canada admitted 23,286 refugees.)

3. In 2013, how many Syrian refugees did Canada promise to admit? Ottawa pledged to take in 11,300 people from Syria by the end of 2018.

4. How many Syrian refugees has Canada admitted since 2013? By late August, Canada had accepted 2,374 Syrian refugees.

5. Explain why this number is so low. Prime Minister Harper said the government must screen applicants carefully for security reasons and this process takes time.

6. Describe the two main steps involved in applying for refugee status in Canada. Applicants must first apply for a visa – and that can take 45 months (over 3.5 years). Applications are then sent to Winnipeg for processing, which can take several more months. (Since 2012 Canada has also required another country or a UN agency to confirm the refugee status of some candidates. In recent years, various governments have also passed laws making it harder for refugees to settle in Canada.)

7. What changes aimed at helping Syrian refugees did Ottawa recently announce? The Conservatives announced that Ottawa would speed up processing Syrian applicants and drop the requirement that they prove they are refugees. The government also announced it will admit an additional 10,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugees over four years – 21,300 by 2019. Ottawa will also match eligible donations – to a maximum of $100 million – made by Canadians to charities working to help Syrian refugees.

True / False

ABOUT REFUGEES

1. How many refugees were there in the world in 2014? 19.5 million (People who are forced to leave their homes are not considered refugees until they exit their country.)

2. How many people were displaced inside their own countries in 2014? 38.2 million

3. In total, how many people in 2014 had been forced to leave their homes? 59.5 million (an increase of 8 million from 2013. The UN estimates that in 2013 an additional 232 million migrants had left their home countries.)

4. What was the main reason for the large increase of displaced people in 2014 compared to 2013? The civil war in Syria. (However, the number of people fleeing is increasing in many regions due to instability and conflict.)

5. How are UN member countries required to help refugees? Under the 1951 Refugee Convention, they must protect refugees. Nations are legally obliged to provide food, shelter, and medical care. Once refugees enter a new country, they cannot be forced to go back to a dangerous situation.

6. Which UN agency is in charge of helping and protecting refugees? The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

7. Describe what this UN agency does and how it operates. The UNHCR’s staff of 7,750 works in more than 125 countries, providing shelter, food, water, medical care, etc. (Other NGOs like Doctors Without Borders, The Red Cross, Oxfam, etc.) also help displaced people.

8. How many refugee camps are there throughout the world? There are some 700 refugee camps worldwide. (Most are located in Asia and Africa.)

9. Describe the conditions in many refugee camps. The average camp holds about 11,400 people. These ‘temporary’ settlements usually consist of tents or makeshift shelters that provide little protection. Most have a source of water, bathing areas, a clinic or hospital, places of worship, and a food distribution centre. Many children in camps do not go to school. Due to crowding and a lack of infrastructure, many camps are not clean and this often leads to outbreaks of infectious diseases.

QUizzes

Europe’s Refugee Crisis 1. b 2. c 3. d 4. True 5. False
Civil War in Syria 1. d 2. b 3. d 4. True 5. True
Canada and Refugees 1. a 2. d 3. a 4. False 5. False
About Refugees 1. d 2. a 3. d 4. False 5. True

MATCH THE CAPITALS

Provinces and Territories

U.S. States

Countries

20. F) Canada and Refugees

2015/2016: Issue 2 WHAT IN THE WORLD? • LEVEL 1
What in the world? • Level 1
2015/2016: Issue 2

Answer Key

Syria and its neighbours

NB: Israel proclaimed Jerusalem as its capital in 1950, but Canada, the U.S., and most other countries, maintain their embassies in Tel Aviv.
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