

# Great Big Live Assembly



## SCHOOLS RESOURCE PACK

WORLD REFUGEE DAY  
2024



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For the first time in history the number of people who have fled their homes to seek safety somewhere else has exceeded **one hundred million people**. More than half of all displaced people and refugees around the world are children.

The **Great Big Live Assembly** will celebrate the role children and schools in the UK have played in welcoming refugees from Ukraine, Afghanistan and Syria and other countries in conflict.

This Great Big Live Assembly **Resource Pack** contains suggestions of materials for schools to use to follow up on the assembly so that children further understand the lived experiences of refugees in the UK and around the world.



## SPECIAL GUEST ONJALI Q. RAÚF MBE

Onjali is a multi award-winning children's author, best known for her bestselling book "The Boy at the Back of the Class". She is also a human rights activist, working to end the abuse, enslavement and trafficking of women and girls in the UK, with the charity she founded and directs "Making Herstory". She also helps to mobilise aid convoys and funds to help frontline refugee response teams across northern France and beyond.

"The Boy at the Back of the Class" won the Blue Peter Award and the Waterstones Children's Book Prize in 2019, the Sakura Medal of Japan in 2020 and the Janusz Korczak Prize in 2022. It has been adapted for theatre and is currently touring across England.

Onjali's follow-up stories include The Star Outside My Window, The Night Bus Hero, The Great Food Bank Heist, The Lion Above the Door, a non-fiction title, Hope on the Horizon, and most recently, Where Magic Grows: a book of seven original fairy tales inspired by her travels and best-loved sayings. Her latest release, The Letter with the Golden Stamp, celebrates the life-saving, hidden works of Young Carers and the unsung heroes of the Royal Mail.

Onjali was awarded an MBE in 2022 for her services to women's rights and children's literature, and in 2023 was the recipient of the NEU Fred and Anne Jarvis Award for services to education and her humanitarian works.

Onjali is also a Patron of VIP Reading, Facefront Theatre, and NIA Women; an Ambassador for Walk With Amal, and a regular contributor to BBC Radio 2's Pause for Thought. An alumnus of the Cambridge University Senior Faith in Leadership programme, she was listed as one of BBC's 100 most influential women from around the world in 2019.



# JOB

We are delighted that Job will be joining us for our Great Big Live Assembly for World Refugee Day 2024

After fleeing conflict in South Sudan, Job and his father found a new home in BidiBidi Refugee Settlement in Uganda. When he was given the opportunity to train as a 'mojo' – mobile journalist – through a World Vision project, Job jumped at the opportunity. Now, when he isn't playing football, Job interviews people from all walks of life who live within the Settlement, telling their stories using just a mobile phone.

Job's stories of how children within the settlement have adjusted to their new lives in Uganda and how they are innovating to bring their new communities together have reached hundreds of thousands of people around the world.

World Vision is a Christian relief, development, and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities to reach their full potential by tackling the root causes of poverty and injustice. World Vision works with children and communities in nearly 100 countries to create a better world, a world fit for children and their futures.



# TALKING ABOUT THE REFUGEE CRISIS

***Although the reality of the refugee crisis can be very sad and worrying for children, it is important to guide them through this difficult issue. We have the opportunity to help them grasp the situation behind the headlines, relate to those with lived experience, and develop an appropriate emotional and moral response to people in need. Here are some practical tips for tackling this subject with schoolchildren.***

## **1. Discover what they already know**

Children around the UK are very likely to have heard about the refugee crisis already. Perhaps they are a refugee themselves, perhaps their family is hosting refugees or know people who are. Perhaps they have watched the news on TV or social media, heard people talking about war, or picked up on the debate around small boats. We can't always protect them from being exposed to difficult things, however we can help shape healthy responses and relationships to those difficult things. Ask open-ended questions that can help children tell you what they think

## **2. Listen to what they think**

Listening to children is vital. It permits and enables them to process information they have heard, it helps them make connections for themselves, and reassures them that they and their opinions and memories are valuable. It can also reveal something of their beliefs, prejudices or experiences that may shape their reactions to the refugee crisis. Be curious - ask them often what they think and why.

## **3. Identify how they feel**

Give children space and opportunity to express their worries as they talk to you. Ask them 'How do you feel about that?' or 'How do you think refugees might be feeling about that?'. Name your own feelings in a calm and simple way to help children understand that it is okay to feel upset, frustrated, or cross when bad things happen. Write down strong emotions to help children learn not to bury their feelings. Point out children's facial expressions and body language to help them recognise their own emotional reactions.

## **4. Encourage empathy**

When children put themselves in other people's shoes, consider their perspectives, circumstances or feelings, this builds the empathy they need to develop strong and healthy relationships. Praise and encourage empathetic behaviour to help embed it. Model empathy with people from different cultures and backgrounds to promote the building of safe, diverse and rewarding communities.

## **5. Warn about wrong attitudes**

The refugee crisis can highlight the worst of humanity. This is an opportunity to point out lack of compassion and its consequences. Affirm that it is not right that people are forced to leave their homes. It is not kind when countries won't share their privileges with others. It is not okay to exclude people because of where they come from. Look out for social media posts, news items or playground jokes that are cruel or unkind and help children know what they can do when that happens.

## **6. Make them feel safe**

It is important that all children feel safe. Reassure those who have fled war that you want them to feel safe. Talk about what can be done to help them feel safe. Reassure those who are concerned they might lose their homes or families in the future. Talk about how they can feel safe. Create a safe environment in your classroom where people can talk freely and experience compassion, understanding and support.

## **7. Explore and explain**

The better you understand the various situations around the world, the better you'll be able to explain issues in ways that are appropriate. There are a number of resources that can inform you and your school, and others that you can explore with the children in your class.

# SIGNPOSTS FOR TEACHERS

**We highly recommend teachers look at some of the following resources in preparation for the Great Big Live Assembly.**

## **1. A teachers guide to supporting children with Trauma (8 minutes)**

Dr David Trickey offers five key principles to help anyone that has contact with vulnerable children to better understand trauma and support. You can access it for [free here](#).

## **2. The Refugee Support Course (60 minutes)**

From safeguarding to trauma and from cross-cultural communication to community integration, this course provides essential basic training for all those living, working or volunteering with refugees. The six-part free course is designed to be followed online in your own time. Each lesson will take you around 20 minutes and includes video segments and interactive elements to aid learning. [You can access the course here](#).

## **3. Programme on supporting refugee children in the classroom**

This is a new 7-session fully online teacher education programme equipping teachers to facilitate educational thriving, both academic and psychosocial, for the refugee children in their classrooms. The programme draws on more than a decade of charity Refugee Education UK's research and practical experience supporting refugee children in UK schools, and the framework of 'safety, belonging and success' developed by Professor Joanna McIntyre, author of 'Refugee Education: Theorising Practice in Schools'. Each of the 7 sessions has a distinct thematic focus, covering topics including English as an Additional Language for refugee children; accelerated learning and preparation for exams; psychosocial wellbeing and trauma; and progression to further study. You can read more [here](#).

## **4. Healing Classrooms UK (90 minutes)**

The Healing Classrooms programme is a trauma informed approach that focuses on expanding and supporting the positive role schools and teachers can play in making and maintaining healing learning spaces. The free teacher training programme and resources help teachers to develop inclusive and nurturing learning spaces where refugee and asylum-seeking students can gain the necessary academic, social, and emotional skills to develop their full potential. The programme is developed by the International Rescue Committee and draws on over 90 years' experience supporting displaced communities. [For more information, check here](#).

## **5. Policy briefing on refugee education in the UK**

This policy brief from Refugee Education UK and the University of Nottingham asks the question "What policy changes are needed to enable schools and educational settings to be more inclusive and welcoming places for refugee and asylum-seeking children". It draws on the experiences of young people with lived experience of forced migration, teaching staff, teaching union representatives, Virtual School head teachers, CEOs of Multi-Academy Trusts and staff from local authorities and third sector organisations supporting refugees and asylum seekers with education-related outcomes. You can read the briefing [here](#).

# FOR PARENTS & CARERS

***We recognise that many children across our schools will have refugee experience and we are keen to let parents and carers know in advance that the assembly will be taking place. Here is a model letter you could use.***

Dear Parents and Carers

This year, in honour of World Refugee Day, our school will be taking part in the Great Big Live Assembly. This is a 20-minute virtual assembly that will connect together around 500 schools representing 200,000 children at 9.05am on Tuesday June 20th.

The Great Big Live Assembly will celebrate the ways that schools up and down the UK have welcomed new arrivals from war-torn countries around the world into their classrooms and communities.

The Great Big Live Assembly has been organised by refugee charity Sanctuary Foundation. Dr Krish Kandiah, who leads the charity and will be hosting the assembly, has been working with refugees and children for over twenty-five years. He is an inspirational communicator, children's author and diversity trainer. He is also an experienced foster carer who has received trauma training and will ensure the event is led in an engaging and sensitive way.

We recognise that this event may prompt questions about some of the injustices in our world, and we have prepared some of our teachers to handle these sensitively.

Yours sincerely



# LINK AND TECH

The technical set up for the Great Big Live Assembly is very simple.

The link to join the assembly is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OKFyJMJPaco>

This link is for a closed YouTube channel.

Simply project this channel using your usual set up. You can adjust the volume and brightness in the usual way.

The channel will be broadcasting on a loop until 9.05am so you can get everything ready ahead of time.

At 9.05 we will begin the broadcast of our Great Big Live Assembly.

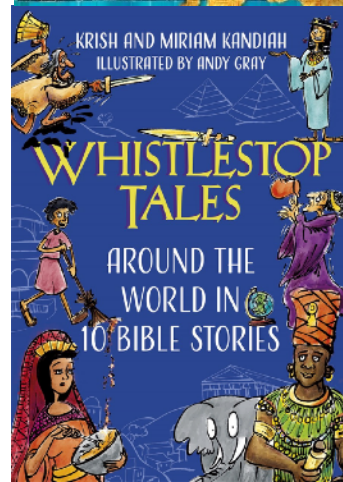
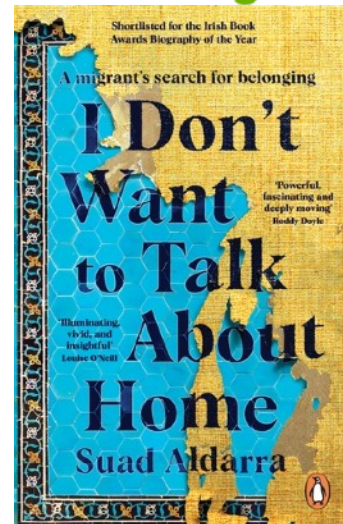
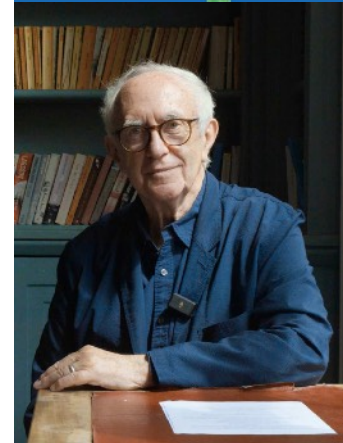
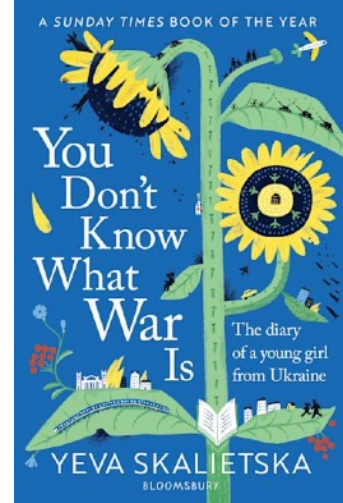
It will last approximately 20 minutes.



# FOLLOW UP

**To help the children reflect on what they have heard and seen in the Great Big Live Assembly, why not organise follow up activities that connect with World Refugee Day. Here are some ideas of ways you can connect the refugee experience with the curriculum.**

- 1. Creative Writing:** Watch this video of a poem [read by Sir Jonathon Pryce](#). Write a poem with the title "No Place Like Home" These can be uploaded onto the [Sanctuary Foundation website](#)
- 2. Literacy:** Use one of our recommended books for a comprehension and reflection exercise. Read an extract from **'You don't Know What War Is' by Yeva Skalietska** to inspire some creative diary entries. Write a letter inviting a refugee inviting them to come and live in your home.
- 3. Art:** Use art to imagine a better world. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/gallery/2019/dec/25/we-never-chose-this-refugees-use-art-to-imagine-a-better-world-in-pictures> Use your art to design a welcome poster
- 4. Language:** How many languages are represented in your class? Can you teach each other phrases in your language? Use the technology to have a go at Duolingo. How can language be a barrier and a bond?
- 5. Numeracy:** Look at the statistics of global migration. What do they mean? How can the big numbers be represented so they are easier to visualise? Create some infographics to display on the classroom wall. <https://www.unhcr.org/innovation/10-infographics-that-show-the-scale-of-the-global-displacement-crisis/>
- 6. Geography:** What countries are represented in your school? How quickly can you find them on a map? Plan a journey from Sudan (or another country) to the UK without using planes. How long would it take you on foot? What physical barriers would you have to tackle?
- 7. PSHE:** If you had to leave your home and could only take with you the things you would fit into a backpack, what would you choose? What would you need when you got to the UK? Make a list of who could help. Alternatively host a class debate: build the case for and against the statement "The UK has no space for refugees."
- 8. Drama:** "When Salim came to the UK, he had nothing except the clothes on his back and an empty stomach." What happens next? Sometimes fact is stranger than fiction. Discuss why real-life stories are so compelling.
- 9. Music:** Listen to, discuss, and then write a piece of music or song that reflects the refugee experience. For example, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fiNEEXbnPZk>
- 10. RE:** Read Chapter 4 of [Whistlestop Tales: Around the World in 10 Bible Stories](#). Compare it to the Bible account of Ruth and Naomi. Why is this story so relevant today?
- 11. PE:** Attempt a group virtual challenge that reflects the refugee journey. For example: walk the 36 miles from Morocco to Spain, or swim the dangerous 4km from Bodrum in Turkey to Kos in Greece.





# RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN

Helping students connect with refugee children around the UK and the world helps to humanise the increasingly polarised debates about immigration and asylum, build empathy and understanding, and work towards safe, cohesive communities where diversity is valued. The Great Big Live Assembly is a great opportunity to do just that, with the following menu offering additional resources for students to connect further with the stories and experiences of refugees.

## 1. Sky TV Videos

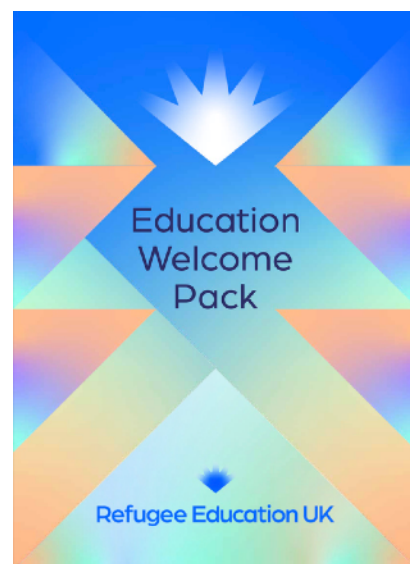
SKY TV's FYI have a series of videos on refugees and asylum for the classroom. An example is available [here](#).

## 2. FYI News Club

If you have students who love investigating the world around them and who want to be skilled-up and ready to spot fake news, join the First News FYI News Club! It's completely free to set up and run! You will be given free access to FYI: For Your Information, the BAFTA award winning weekly news show from Sky Kids, as well as free resources to run your club! Find out more here. <https://schools.firstnews.co.uk/fyi-news-club-form/>

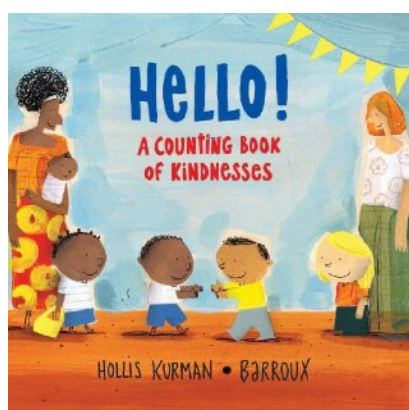
## 3. Welcome Packs for Refugee Children

Refugee Education UK's Education Welcome Packs: These free packs for children and their families include key information about the UK education system and how to access it, a welcome to school and classrooms, and lots of other sources of support, including information about helpful charities, resources, courses and interpretation services. You can download the pack in multiple languages [here](#). On this same page you can also find downloadable English language learning resources, and wellbeing exercises for refugee children in multiple languages.

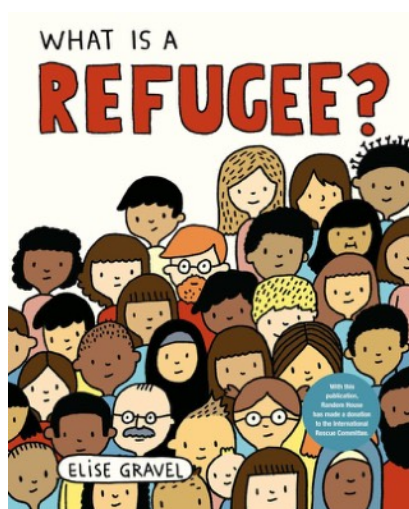




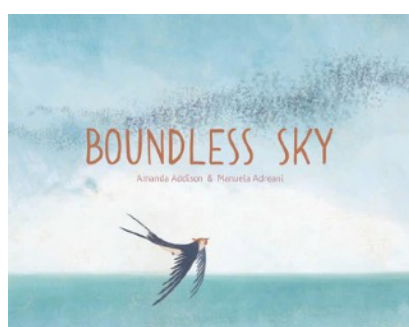
# BOOKS FOR KS1



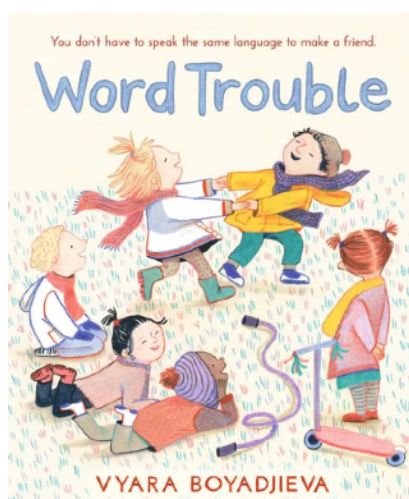
This is a counting book with a difference – each page counts through different acts of kindness that help a family who have been forced to leave their country. 2 hands lift the children to safety from the boat, 3 donated meals, 4 beds in a temporary shelter, 8 welcome gifts in the new home, 10 new friends to play with, etc. The simple format leaves plenty of space to think about and discuss the pictures, providing opportunities to discuss ways to be kind and to imagine what life might be like as a refugee.



Who are refugees? Why are they called that word? Why do they need to leave their country? In this simple, graphic and bold picture book for young children, author and illustrator Elise Gravel explores what it means to be a refugee. This book is the perfect tool to introduce an important and timely topic to young children.

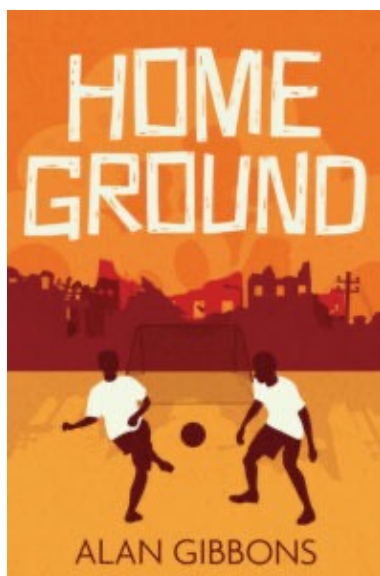


A gentle and lyrical picture book exploring what it means to undertake a long journey to find a peaceful place to settle. The story creates a clever mirroring between the tale of a tiny swift's mighty migration journey to find a safe nesting site with the story of Leila, a young girl who flees her home in Northern Africa and who also must travel thousands of miles in order to find a safe place of refuge.



"My name is four. I am Ronnie years old." A beautiful, moving and sensitively told picture book about language barriers, communication and a very young child's immigrant experience. Ronnie misses home and laughing with his old friends. But he doesn't stay that way for long. This authorial debut from Bulgarian author-illustrator Vyara Boyadjieva is honest and uplifting, with Ronnie ultimately discovering that kindness, and laughter, are universal.

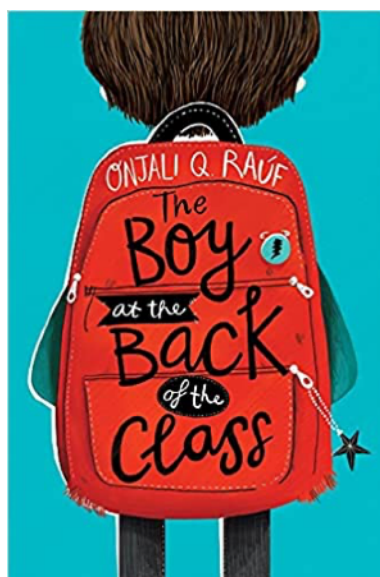
# BOOKS FOR KS2



A football-themed short story by Blue Peter award winner and Carnegie Medal nominated author Alan Gibbons. This book is set in a dyslexia-friendly format and offers an engaging story that can be enjoyed by those 8 and upwards. This is a story not only about football, but friendship and overcoming prejudice. It is a great book to introduce the importance of being tolerant and accepting others. Home Ground is packed full of interesting information about the journeys refugees have undertaken and their reasons, which helps to give context to this story. Children also learn fascinating facts about former refugees who have been successful in top-flight teams both here and abroad.



Award-winning storyteller Sir Michael Morpurgo offers us a heartwarming refugee story about hope and humanity in times of being without a place to call home. Omar is making the perilous journey across the sea to England after his home in Afghanistan has been devastated by war. After seeing his family torn apart, Omar and his mother walk for miles to reach the coastline in order to board a boat heading to a safer place to find refuge. Not having enough money to pay the fare for two, Mother persuades Omar to take the journey to England alone and wait for her there.



There used to be an empty chair at the back of my class, but now a new boy called Ahmet is sitting in it. He's nine years old (just like me), but he's very strange. He never talks and never smiles and doesn't like sweets - not even lemon sherbets, which are my favourite! But then I learned the truth: Ahmet really isn't very strange at all. He's a refugee who's run away from a war. A real one. With bombs and fires and bullies that hurt people. And the more I find out about him, the more I want to help. That's where my best friends Josie, Michael and Tom come in. Because you see, together we've come up with a plan. . .