

Activity #1: Understanding the Syrian Conflict and Refugee Crisis

More than 60 million people are displaced around the world, due to violence, war, or persecution. That statistic can be overwhelming, and distract us from the individual stories of people who leave their homes and the reasons they become refugees. In this activity, we'll investigate what it means to be a refugee, migrant, or internally displaced person (IDP).

Journal/Write

<p>What are some reasons that you and your family might move or leave your home?</p>	<p>What would <u>force</u> you or your family to leave your home?</p>
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Key Vocabulary: Who is a Refugee?

Refugees **Refugees** are people who leave their countries to seek safety in another country, because of violence from war or conflict, or fear of persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, political views, or membership in a social group. Refugees have rights under international law, and cannot be forced to return to their country.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) **IDPs** are people who are forced to leave their homes, but move within their country. This could be because of war, conflict, or natural disasters.

Asylum Seeker **Asylum seekers** are people who have left their country, arrive in another country, and apply to stay because of danger at home. Governments and international organizations evaluate their applications, to see if they fit the criteria to be refugees. If approved, asylum seekers become registered refugees and are allowed to stay in the new country.

Migrants **Migrants** are people who immigrate to another country for reasons such as employment or education. They do not face a direct threat of persecution or violence, and are thus not protected by the same international laws as refugees.

Journal/Write

Who are Syrian Refugees? Why have they left their homes?

With your class, use the following resources to learn about the Syrian war and refugee crisis:

Background on the Syrian War	http://www.syriadeeply.org/background/basics/ (Syria Deeply) You can also use this site to explore the major players and current news.
Refugee Crisis	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvOnXh3NN9w (Kurzgesagt, UNHCR)
Impact of War	http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/03/12/world/middleeast/syria-civil-war-after-four-years-map.html (NY Times). Analyze the charts/images.
Syrian Youth Voices (Optional)	http://studentsrebuild.org/blogs/international-rescue-committee and https://www.youtube.com/StudentsRebuild

Despite local and international efforts, the situation in Syria has continued to worsen since 2011. In order to understand the conflict, we must explore: How has the war affected the humanitarian situation in and outside Syria?

Instructions:

Working in small groups, use what you learned to fill out the chart below. Think about:

- How has the Syrian war affected Syrians inside and outside the country?
- How has it affected citizens of host countries?
- What is the impact of war and displacement on education, healthcare, the environment, and economics?

Mapping the Human Impact of the Syrian Crisis

Look for and Discuss	Education	Health and Environment	Economics
Syrian people who remain in Syria: How are children and their families affected?			
Syrian people who leave Syria: How are children and their families affected?			
Host countries: How has the crisis affected countries hosting Syrian refugees?			