

## INTRODUCTION

# NASRO FROM DADAAB

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In 2013, the film *Girl Rising* won acclaim for its portrayal of nine girls around the world who pursue their educations in the face of natural disasters, poverty, and social ills like forced marriage and human trafficking. In *Brave Girl Rising*, another chapter is added to these stories when 17-year-old Nasro, in a refugee camp in Kenya after fleeing violence in her native Somalia, decides that she does indeed have a future, one that will be built upon her efforts to get an education. *Brave Girl Rising* can be used as a sequel to the full film *Girl Rising*, in conjunction with other chapters from the full film, or as a stand-alone unit.

The plight of refugees and the response we should make to them are daily topics debated by journalists, by politicians, and by ordinary citizens. The sufferings of Syrian refugees and other displaced persons fill our television screens. But the sheer numbers—68.5 million forcibly displaced people in 2019—can be mind-numbing. *Brave Girl Rising* examines the lives of a small number of young refugees so that the viewer can comprehend their daily challenges more insightfully.

To help teachers learn about the status of refugees so that they may be better prepared to guide their students, we have created a standards-aligned set of curricular materials, addressing key questions: “Why do people become refugees?” “What are conditions like in a refugee camp?” “What special challenges do displaced girls face?” Essential questions stimulate critical thinking by students and additional resources give them the opportunity to continue their explorations. Problem-based learning activities use collaboration and creative writing to extend student learning.

Students will be engaged by the narrative of one young person’s struggle in *Brave Girl Rising*, but through this narrative they also gain understanding of and empathy for the millions of people caught up in one of the greatest crises of our time.

### What’s Inside:

- A **Teacher Guide** provides background information that helps teachers provide context for students viewing the film; applicable Common Core Standards; suggestions for implementation in the classroom; and a film viewing guide for student observations and reflection. Both a one-day and a longer, fuller lesson are provided.
- An **Issue Fact Sheet on Refugees and Displaced Persons** supplies definitions, an overview of the global refugee crisis, and a consideration of the related impacts on families, education, and violence against women. It also describes organizations working to help refugees and provides resources for additional study.
- **Project-based Lesson 1: A Welcome for Refugees** encourages students to think about the problems faced by refugees, including children, in adapting to a new country; students examine ways that they can make a new student feel at home in their school.
- **Project-based Lesson 2: Assuming a Role in Dadaab** is a creative writing lesson that asks students to assume the role of someone involved in the refugee crisis, choose an appropriate format to express that person’s ideas, imagine an audience for their writing, and decide on a relevant topic. The result is a collection of writings that form a mosaic of the refugee experience.

*Brave Girl Rising has been rated PG for thematic elements by the MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America).*

# TEACHER GUIDE:

## NASRO FROM DADAAB

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### Summary of Nasro's Story

Nasro is a 17-year-old girl who has fled from civil war and famine in Somalia to a refugee camp in Kenya, where she copes, along with tens of thousands of other displaced persons, with scarcity and hardship. Although her living conditions are very difficult, she makes a life for herself there and builds a “family” of other girls who share both her privations and goals. Inspired by her dreams of the mother who died giving birth to her, Nasro attends school and becomes an excellent student. She has the courage to stand up to a group of boys who threaten her and her friend. She believes that “Love always finds a way to exist, / Even in here.”

### Note to Teachers

Girls around the world, but particularly in developing countries, face many difficulties, including gender-based violence, early marriage, and lack of educational opportunity. When girls become refugees, the dangers facing them are even greater, the opportunities fewer, the barriers higher. *Brave Girl Rising* focuses on a group of girls living in the refugee camp in Dadaab, Kenya. They are among the streams of refugees worldwide seeking shelter from civil violence, war, and religious persecution, or fleeing poverty and hunger in hopes of making a better life for themselves and their families. The film makes clear that their suffering is not only physical but is psychologically wounding as well; the specter of gender-based violence also appears and should be addressed. Yet Nasro and other girls of her acquaintance are strong and resilient; they encourage and protect each other. Students should consider both the enormous challenges faced by these young refugees and the strategies they devise to meet them.

Somalia lies in East Africa, with its coastline on the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean; it is bordered on the west by Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya. It is slightly smaller than the state of Texas. The climate is mostly desert, with alternating dry and rainy seasons. Turbulence in government, poverty, lack of educational and job opportunities, and environmental degradation have led to a low standard of living. Conflict, including civil war,

led hundreds of thousands of Somalis to flee in 1991, and more left beginning in 2011 because of drought, famine, and continued violence. According to UNHCR, as of 2018, more than 870,000 Somalis were registered as refugees in neighboring countries and 2.1 were displaced within the country. Terrorist organizations like al-Shabaab and ISIS have active networks in Somalia. More information about Somalia can be found under Resources, below.

The largest refugee complex, with four camps, is called Dadaab and is located in neighboring Kenya. As of January 2018, close to 250,000 refugees lived there, in tents and in shacks built of thorn bushes, corrugated metal, and other found materials. Many refugees in the older camps arrived decades ago and have children and even grandchildren born in the camps. Dadaab is administered by the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees, aided by the Kenyan Red Cross and other agencies. In recent years, food rations from the World Food Programme to Dadaab have been cut because of need elsewhere. The Kenyan government, a reluctant host to the refugee camps, has tried to find a way to close them, sending refugees back to the very countries they fled from because of violence and hunger.

Nasro's story is told through five poems (actually six, if one counts the poetic language of the introduction). The poems are by Warsan Shire, a poet who was born in Kenya of Somali parents. Her family migrated to Great Britain when she was a baby and she grew up as a British citizen. She frequently writes about immigrants and refugees, people whose lives have been altered dramatically by circumstances beyond their control.

There are two forms of the lesson in this module. The full lesson is more detailed and would require three or four periods of class time; it allows for more student engagement and research. The abbreviated lesson is meant to be used in a single class period of 50 minutes.

One of the episodes in the film, the one marked “IV. Dreams in Which Mother Appears” (0:08:47-0:12:32), hints at the very serious problem of sexual violence that vulnerable refugees are exposed to. In the scene

when Nasro and her friend are confronted by three young men in an isolated setting, the camera angles and background music heighten the sense of threat. Although Nasro fights off one of the young men and frightens them with her henna tattoo, many students will be very aware of the potential for rape and/or murder in this situation. This topic is not addressed explicitly in the lesson. However, students may bring it up themselves during class discussions. For background information on this topic, see the Issues Fact Sheet. If you choose to address the topic fully, you may wish to team with a human development educator, guidance counselor, or other professional who has experience dealing with this subject.

Before using either of these lessons, identify any students in your classes who might have personal difficulty in viewing the film; for example, students whose parents are no longer living, students who have experienced sexual violence, or students who are immigrants who came to this country as refugees. Talk with them ahead of time to be sure they are emotionally prepared to view the film; have an alternate assignment available if necessary.

### **Curriculum Resources**

- Video of *Brave Girl Rising* (approximately 20 minutes)
- Introductory Lesson (full and abbreviated, below)
- Film Viewing Guide (below)
- Issue Fact Sheet on Refugees
- Project-Based Lesson 1: A Welcome for Refugees
- Project-Based Lesson 2: Assuming a Role in a Refugee Camp
- Directors' Q and A: <https://bit.ly/2TsTvta>

### **Internet Resources**

- Iceberg concept of culture image at <http://teachingy-ourells.weebly.com/socio-cultural-factors-of-ells.html>
- Country guide to Somalia at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>
- "Her Turn: It's Time to Make Refugee Girls' Education a Priority" from UNHCR at <https://www.unhcr.org/herturn/> and <https://www.unhcr.org/news/%20press/2018/3/5a9eb2024/turn-unhcr-report-reveals-%20critical-gap-education-refugee-girls.html>

- A changing collection of short films featuring residents of Dadaab at <http://www.dadaabstories.org/>. (Be sure to preview stories before using in class.)

### **Further Reading**

- *American Border Culture Dreamer: The Young Immigrant Experience from A to Z* by Wendy Ewald
- *Stormy Seas: Stories of Young Boat Refugees* by Mary Beth Leatherdale and Eleanor Shakespeare
- *Children in our World: Refugees and Migrants* by Ceri Roberts and Hanane Kai
- *First Generation: 36 Trailblazing Immigrants and Refugees Who Make America Great* by Sandra Neil Wallace and Rich Wallace
- *We Are Displaced* by Malala Yousafzai

### **Introducing the Film**

Students will learn about the challenges facing girls in refugee camps and discover how one girl, Nasro, is responding to those challenges and helping others to do so.

### **Time Needed for Lessons (see lessons below)**

- Full lesson: three to four class periods (50 min. each)
- Abbreviated lesson: one class period (50 min.)

### **Materials**

- Video of *Brave Girl Rising*
- A copy of the Film Viewing Guide (below) for each student
- Map of Africa at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:African\\_continent-en.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:African_continent-en.svg)
- Podcast "Muzamil's Day" at <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/podcast/dispatch/muzamils-day/>
- Copies of a selection from Warsan Shire's poem "Home," from the beginning to the line "No one chooses refugee camps." A copy can be found at <https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/home-433/>.

For more information and resources, including a robust toolkit, go to [girlrising.org/brave](http://girlrising.org/brave)

## Full Lesson

(3 to 4 Class Periods, 50 minutes each)

### Part One: Introducing Dadaab

1. Explain to students that they are about to see a short film about Nasro, a 17-year-old girl who lives in a refugee camp. Work with the class to elicit definitions of “refugee” and “refugee camp.”
2. Write the word DADAAB on the board and tell the class that this is the largest refugee camp in the world. Then tell them that they must learn about life in Dadaab by watching the film carefully, without sound.
3. Have students draw a vertical line down the center of a notebook page. Ask them to label the first column “My Observations” and the second one “My Questions.” Tell students that they are to take quick notes in the left-hand column about anything that they observe about life in the camp; for example, housing, food and water, the people, clothing, etc. Explain that you will stop the film as necessary so that they can record their answers.
4. Show the film without sound, stopping occasionally to allow students to jot down notes.
5. When the film is over, arrange students in pairs so that they can compare notes. Have them then fill in the right-hand column with questions they still have about what they have seen.
6. Have a whole-group discussion about their observations, using the following guide questions. (Some sample answers are provided.)
  - What kind of housing is provided at the camp? (Some people live in tents, others in shacks made of scrap metal and thorn bushes from the local area. The houses don’t appear to have electricity or running water.)
  - How do they get water? (They have to carry it from common faucets to their homes in big jugs. Water seems to be a precious commodity and must be used carefully.)

### Common Core State Standards addressed by this Full Lesson

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.1

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.2

Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.1

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.2

Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence



- What did you notice about the people who live in the camp? (A great many of the people shown in the film are young. Point out that fully 50% of Somalis are 18 or under. They look poor.) Where do you think they are from? (Most students will probably guess Africa without naming a particular location.)
  - What is Nasro's school like? (Crowded)
7. Show the map of Africa and point out the location of Somalia and Kenya. Explain that beginning in 1991, Somali refugees fled to neighboring Kenya. Share additional information from the Note to Teachers (above).
  8. Ask students to think about what it would be like to be a refugee. What would you feel if you were in that situation? (Homesickness, fear of the unknown, anger at the causes of your loss of your home, sorrow at the loss of friends and relatives)
  9. Give students the rest of the period to work in groups to write down questions that they still have about Nasro's life in the camps. Explain that in the next class period they will watch the film again, this time with sound, to answer those questions.

## **Part Two: Nasro at 17**

1. Sketch a simple drawing of an iceberg on the board, with most of the ice hidden below the water line. Then review with students the things that they learned from the visual aspects of the film (housing, clothing, water use, school, etc.) and write those topics on the top part of the iceberg. Explain to the class that the culture of a society is like an iceberg; some things are easily visible while others, the majority, lie beneath the surface. Project the iceberg image at <http://teachingyourells.weebly.com/socio-cultural-factors-of-ells.html> and share some of the items below the water line with students.
2. Explain that you are going to show the video about Nasro again, this time with sound. Ask them to watch carefully and note down the additional information they learn about Nasro, as well as their own reactions to her story.
3. Show the film, stopping at the end of each segment as follows to allow students time to write their notes:
  - Introduction  
(0:00:00-0:04:00)

- I. Sowdo Gives Birth to a Girl  
(0:04:00-5:52)
  - II. The Lost and Found of Humanity  
(0:05:54-0:07:01)
  - III. Girl Must Find a Way to Survive  
(0:07:03-0:08:46)
  - IV. Dreams in Which Mother Appears  
(0:08:47-0:12:31)
  - V. How to Bloom in Dark Places  
(0:12:32-0:17:26)
4. Conduct a discussion to clear up any questions your students have about the film and to share their responses to it. If you wish, you can use the reflection questions on the Film Viewing Guide as a tool to guide the discussion.
  5. Tell students that the film clearly focuses on girls. What elements of Nasro's story would apply to boys in Dadaab as well? How would boys' experience in the camp be different?
  6. For homework, have students listen to the PBS Frontline podcast "Muzamil's Day" at <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/podcast/dispatch/muzamils-day/>. Ask them to list ways the life of this 12-year-old Somali boy is similar to or different from Nasro's life.

## **Part Three: A Global Problem**

1. Ask students to share their homework from the previous class and discuss how boys fare in Dadaab compared to girls. What reactions did they have to the podcast?
2. Play a section of the podcast (14:28-15:30) and be sure students understand that Dadaab refugees may lose part of their food rations when there is increased need from new refugees. Ask students if they know of any other refugee situations going on in the world today.
3. Divide students into teams and assign each team to research what is happening in these places:
  - Bangladesh (Rohingya)
  - Uganda (South Sudanese)
  - Jordan (Palestinians)
  - Europe (Syrians)

Have each group research to find out why people have fled their home country, how many people are involved, what is happening to them, and who is trying to help them. Encourage them to pay particular attention to how being a refugee affects girls caught in this situation. (This research may take an additional day.)

- The Mexican/U.S. border (Central Americans)

4. When they finish their research, ask them to make a poster or prepare a PowerPoint to share their findings with the class. Give them time in class for their presentations.
5. After the presentations, give students copies of the selection from Warsan Shire's poem "Home." (See Materials, above.) Remind them that Warsan Shire, who is Somali, is the writer who composed the poems they heard in the video about Nasro. Ask them to write a paragraph (or more) explaining how this poem reflects what they have learned in this lesson.

## Abbreviated Lesson

(One class period, 50 minutes)

### Ideas for Introducing *Brave Girl Rising*

Explain to students that they are about to see a short film about Nasro, a 17-year-old girl who lives in a refugee camp. Work with the class to elicit definitions of "refugee" and "refugee camp."

Ask students to discuss this question: How would you feel if you had to leave your home suddenly without knowing when or if you could return? What would you take with you? (Remember, you can only take what you can carry yourself.)

Point out Somalia and Kenya on the map of Africa; explain that Somalia and the area of Dadaab in East Kenya are largely arid lands, without regular rainfall. Ask students what they think would be the challenges of living as a refugee in a place like that.

### Watching the Film

Using the Viewing Guide below, ask students to answer the "Before You Watch" questions prior to watching the film.

## Common Core State Standards Addressed by this abbreviated lesson

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.2

Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.2

Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.

Encourage students to use the space in the "While You Are Watching" section for any notes, comments, or questions that they have as they watch the film.

After viewing the film, students should complete the "Reflection" section. Students can answer these questions on their own, or you may opt for a class discussion around them. [Note: If time is short, the teacher may designate specific reflection questions for students to respond to.]

## Film Viewing Guide

### Before You Watch

1. What is a refugee? Do you know of any places in the world that large numbers of refugees come from? Where do they go to?
2. How important is your education to you? Do you think your classes now help to prepare you for your future? What would school mean to you if you were a refugee?

### While You Are Watching

Record your thoughts, impressions, and questions as you watch Nasro's story.

### Reflection

1. How does Nasro feel about her life at the beginning of the film? Why? How has Nasro's attitude about her life changed by the end of the story? What do you think brought about this change? How did she keep her dreams alive? Do you feel that your life is determined by your circumstances or can you change it? How do you keep your own dreams alive?
2. Nasro's mother died when she was born. What effect has this had on her life? In what sense is her mother still alive? Have you ever lost anyone you loved? If so, how do you keep those memories alive?
3. Nasro says that her second loss was losing her home. What do you think she means when she says,  

"No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark"?

What do you think her journey to Kenya was like?

4. How are girls treated differently from boys in the camp? Do you think people have different expectations for girls compared with boys in your society? Are there limitations placed on girls? Do girls have to behave in certain ways?
5. How do you think the henna flower appeared on her hand? What does it symbolize? How does it help her respond when she feels threatened?
6. When Nasro and her friend are approached by three boys, why do they feel threatened? How do they respond? How did you feel watching this scene?
7. At one point in the film, Nasro says:  

*"There are many names for this place between heaven and hell -  
Limbo,  
Purgatory,  
Dadaab."*

What did the terms "limbo" and "purgatory" originally mean? What do they mean today? Why does Nasro compare Dadaab to limbo and purgatory?
8. How is Nasro's school similar to yours? How is it different? Why does her mother say that, if necessary, she must risk her life to get an education? Do you think she is right?
9. Although Nasro's life is different from your own, can it teach you anything about your own life?
10. What more would you like to learn about the topic of refugees?

# ISSUE FACT SHEET: REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

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## Did You Know?

According to UNHCR, The United Nations Refugee Agency, in 2019 there were 68.5 million forcibly displaced people in the world. Of these, 40 million had been forced from their homes but were still in their own countries. According to UNHCR, every 2 seconds, one person becomes displaced. That is 44,500 people each day who are forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution.

## Guiding Questions

1. What is a refugee?
2. Why do people become refugees?
3. What are conditions like for refugees in camps?
4. Who is trying to help refugees?

## Definitions

- A **refugee** is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.
- An **internally displaced person**, or IDP, is someone who has been forced to flee from home but never crosses an international border. These individuals seek safety anywhere they can find it—in nearby towns, schools, settlements, internal camps, even forests and fields. Unlike refugees, IDPs are not protected by international law or eligible to receive many types of aid because they are legally under the protection of their own government.
- An **asylum seeker** is someone who flees his or her own country and seeks sanctuary (safety) in another country. Asylum is the right to be recognized as a refugee and receive legal protection and material assistance. Asylum seekers must demonstrate that their fear of persecution in their home country is well-founded.

- A **refugee camp** is a temporary accommodation for refugees, where they can be protected and sheltered. In a camp, refugees can be provided with food, water, and medical attention as needed.
- A **refugee crisis** occurs when large numbers of people are forced to become refugees.

## Overview

Today we are experiencing the worst refugee crisis in history. Tens of thousands of people are forced from their homes *every day*, usually because of war, violence, or persecution. Children make up a large percentage of these refugees, sometimes without their parents to protect them. Traveling to a new and unknown location presents many challenges. Often, refugees can only travel with what they can carry, including food, water, and very small children. Many have to walk a hundred miles or more to a place of safety, often over difficult terrain.

Even when they arrive in a place of relative safety, life is difficult. In camps, shelter is often primitive, often without running water or electricity. They have no jobs, and therefore little means of livelihood, and they must depend on the host countries and international agencies for basic necessities of life. Most often, these host countries are developing nations themselves. Refugees must often learn a new language and new customs to adapt to their new surroundings. Difficult as life is, refugees often prefer it to the danger of returning to their own countries. In many cases, the “temporary” camp becomes a permanent home, sometimes for several generations.

## Related Impacts: Refugee families

One result of a refugee crisis is that families are greatly affected. Parents lose their homes and jobs and cannot support their families in the way they have in their home country. Leaving the only home they have known





can be very disorienting, even traumatic, for children. Older and beloved members of the family such as grandparents may have to be left behind because the flight is too arduous for them.

Sometimes families become separated during their journeys and, once they have been separated, reunion becomes very difficult. Even if the family stays intact, some family members may suffer from PTSD caused by the trauma of war, violence, and the stresses of the journey, and they may be unable to cope with their new lives. Anxiety and stress may affect family relationships even after physical safety is achieved.

To a desperate family, an early marriage for a girl can seem the best way to provide for her safety and well-being. But this “child marriage” usually spells the end of her education. According to a nonprofit organization called Girls Not Brides, the rate of child marriages (i.e., marriages when the girl is under 18 years of age) is 45% for Somalia. An article in the magazine *National Geographic* pointed out that “Some estimates now show child marriage rates to be four times higher among Syrian refugees today than among Syrians before the crisis.” Such early marriages often result in early pregnancies, often at an age that is dangerous for the young mother.

### Related Impacts: Education

When children go to school regularly, they are safer from forced child labor, sexual exploitation, and early marriage. Education for girls in particular has been shown to result in increased health and prosperity for their own future families. For all refugee children, education is the path to success in their new country of refuge. An education can give a girl greater confidence in herself and more independence. It increases her family’s standard of living and helps her safeguard the health of her own children in the future. An education can also help a girl to resist the pressure to marry at a very young age.

Around the world, about 92% of children go to primary school; among refugee children, that figure is only 61%, according to UNHCR. Only 23% of refugee children can attend secondary school, and only 1% are able to go to college. (The situation is even more dire for girls. For

example, in Kenya, where Dadaab is located and where girls make up half the child refugees, there are only 7 refugee girls in primary school for every ten refugee boys; for secondary school, there are only four girls for every ten boys.) Even for students enrolled in school, their education may be interrupted by changes in location, limited by a scarcity of books and supplies, and hampered by overcrowding in classrooms. The United Nations has declared that children have a fundamental right to education, yet the sheer numbers of refugees have precluded that from happening for many children around the world.

### What’s Working

How can we help to reunite families, provide the necessities for daily living, and give refugees the means to establish their new lives in their adopted country? How can we provide schools so that children can grow into successful and safe adults?

There are many agencies working in Kenya and elsewhere to help refugees.

- The **International Rescue Committee (IRC)** was Girl Rising’s NGO partner in the production of the film *Brave Girl Rising*. The IRC has 191 field offices in more than 30 countries that are in crisis, plus offices in 20 cities in the United States that help recently-arrived refugees adjust to their new homes. The IRC works to provide education, health care, and safety for all refugees.
- The **United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR)** and the **United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF)** try to carry out the mandate of the UN to provide food, health care, and education to all children, regardless of status. UNICEF’s Six-Point Program calls on nations and individuals to:
  - Press for action on the causes that uproot children from their homes
  - Help uprooted children to stay in school and stay healthy
  - Keep families together and give children legal status
  - End the detention of refugee and migrant children by creating practical alternatives

- Combat xenophobia and discrimination
- Protect uprooted children from exploitation and violence
- Many non-governmental agencies are also involved in helping refugees by providing food, education and services, and by trying to help them to establish themselves in their new homes. Examples are **CARE**, **Concern Worldwide**, **Doctors without Borders**, **Mercy Corps**, **Refugees International**, and **World Vision**.

What can you do as a student? An obvious answer is to contribute to a refugee aid organization through activities like hosting a fundraiser at your school. You can find out if churches or other groups in your community have programs to help refugees get resettled. If there are immigrant children in your own school, whether or not they are refugees, you can help them by making them feel welcome, helping them get involved in school activities, and tutoring them if they have trouble in classes at first.

### Online Resources

- International Rescue Committee  
<https://www.rescue.org/>
- The Malala Fund for girls' education  
<https://malala.org/>
- Understanding refugee camps  
<https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/camps/>
- UNICEF's work with migrant children  
<https://www.unicef.org/children-uprooted>
- The five greatest refugee crises in the world today and how you can help  
<https://www.mercycorps.org/articles/worlds-5-biggest-refugee-crises>
- Definitions of terms and information about global crises from CARE  
<https://www.care.org/emergencies/global-refugee-crisis>
- Providing medical care for refugees  
<https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/global-refugee-and-migration-crisis>

- How schools can help refugees  
<http://www.welcomingrefugees.org/sites/default/files/documents/resources/Welcoming%20Schools%20PPT.pdf>
- "Her Turn: It's Time to Make Refugee Girls' Education a Priority" from UNHCR at  
<https://www.unhcr.org/herturn/>  
<https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2018/3/5a9eb2024/turn-unhcr-report-reveals-critical-gap-education-refugee-girls.html>
- Gender-based violence  
<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/gender-based-violence-against-women-both-cause-migration-and-risk-along-journey>
- Alexa Keefe, "Divorced at 15: Inside the Lives of Child Brides" in National Geographic  
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/photography/proof/2018/01/child-marriage-divorce-syrian-refugees-turkey/>
- A constantly changing collection of short films featuring the residents of Dadaab. (Be sure to preview stories before using in class.)  
<http://www.dadaabstories.org/>
- By The Numbers: The United States of Refugees  
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/by-numbers-united-states-refugees-180962487/>
- How Does the U.S Refugee System Work?  
<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/how-does-us-refugee-system-work>

### Further Reading

- *American Border Culture Dreamer: The Young Immigrant Experience from A to Z* by Wendy Ewald
- *Stormy Seas: Stories of Young Boat Refugees* by Mary Beth Leatherdale and Eleanor Shakespeare
- *Children in our World: Refugees and Migrants* by Ceri Roberts and Hanane Kai
- *First Generation: 36 Trailblazing Immigrants and Refugees Who Make America Great* by Sandra Neil Wallace and Rich Wallace
- *We Are Displaced* by Malala Yousafzai

# PROJECT BASED LESSON 1: A WELCOME FOR REFUGEES

## Summary

Students will create a plan to help a newly-arrived refugee family in their community. They will consider the needs of both adults and children in the family, identify potential problems the family may face, and ascertain the available community resources that can be tapped. They may then present their action plan to local government leaders. [Note: Insights gained in this lesson will be relevant to all immigrant families, not just those classified as refugees.]

## Objectives

Students will investigate the challenges that immigrant families, and particularly refugee families, face in acclimating to a new country. They will plan how best to meet these challenges by using community resources and preparing a welcoming school environment. Through this lesson, students may become more open and welcoming to immigrant students and other new newcomers in their school. They may become more active in pursuing ways to help new arrivals, perhaps gaining insight into opportunities for student service learning.

## Subjects

Language Arts, Writing, Social Studies (Civics)

## Time Needed

3 class periods plus time for research and creating presentations

## Skill Building

Research, collaboration in teams, presentation of material in a useful format

## **Common Core State Standards**

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.2

Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.2

Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the

## **Resources and Materials**

- Video of *Brave Girl Rising*
- Related teacher resources including Introductory Lessons and Film Viewing Guides and relevant Issue Fact Sheet, including Resources
- Handout on the refugee family (teacher-created)
- Country pages at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/>
- Local directory of available social services
- Publisher or similar desktop-publishing program (optional)

## **Essential Questions**

1. Does a community have a responsibility to help immigrant families assimilate?
2. What are the special needs of refugee families coming to my community?
3. What will happen in our community if we do not offer support to immigrants?
4. What resources does my community provide to help resettle refugee families?
5. How can my school help students who have arrived as refugees?
6. What will I myself gain from helping a refugee family?

## **Sample Content Questions**

1. Where do refugees/immigrants to my community tend to come from?
2. Why have the members of this family left their home country?
3. How difficult was their journey to my community?
4. What does this family need in order to start a new life and be successful in my community?
5. How can my school and community help this family? What resources are available?
6. What role can I personally play in helping this family?

## **Building a Foundation and Making Connections**

View the short film *Brave Girl Rising* and use the introductory lessons, film viewing guides, relevant country and issue fact sheets, and resources to engage students so that they begin to develop an understanding of the experiences refugees have undergone, their feelings about loss of home country and friends, and needs and goals they will have after immigrating to your community.

## **Project**

Before this project gets under way, teachers should do some research of their own. They will identify a refugee or immigrant group coming to their community and find out why people in this population have emigrated from their homes, whether they were in refugee camps first, etc. (Note: It is best not to choose a group represented by a student in the class, which might make that child self-conscious or embarrassed.) The teacher will create a fictional family consisting of one or both parents and one or more children. He or she will assign first names and ages to each family member, having at least one child the same age as students in the class. The parents can be given occupations that they might have followed in their home country. (However, students should understand that many parents coming to a new country will not be able to follow their former occupations; for example, a lawyer or doctor would not be able to practice in the new country without a license. This is another source of difficulty and even grief.) Finally, the teacher will make up a handout that includes a paragraph or more describing this family and a map showing the location of their home country. When introducing the project, the teacher will explain to students that this fictional family represents many real families.

[Note: If there are any students who are immigrants, the teacher may wish to discuss the project with them or their families beforehand to be sure that they are comfortable with it. Such students or family members might be willing to be guest speakers or participate in a Q and A session, through an interpreter if necessary.]

## Research Phase

The students' challenge is to prepare a positive reception for this family as they are moving to the local community. They should begin by researching conditions in the family's country of origin. What might have driven them to move to this country? What might they have to sacrifice to get here? What did they leave behind? How dangerous was the journey? What would they have been able to bring with them?

Students should then be divided into two teams: one to plan for the adults and the other for the children. (Teams can be subdivided to focus on particular issues.) Some sample questions they should consider are listed below, but the teacher should encourage students to make up their own questions in addition.

After learning more about the country of origin, the student team focusing on the adults in the family will identify the needs that the family will have when they come to their new home. What native language do they speak? How can they learn to speak your target language? How will they find a new home and furnish it? How will the parent(s) find a new job? How will they learn to shop for groceries or use a stove if it is unfamiliar? Students will put themselves in the place of the new family and imagine as many urgent questions as possible. They will then investigate the resources to be found in the community—ESL night classes, local job listings, nonprofits that work with immigrants, food banks (until established with a job), mental health if the immigrant has experienced trauma, physical health checks especially if prescription medications are needed, etc. If no such resources are found, they should propose a plan to establish one.

The second student team will consider how the children in the family can best adapt to a new school. How should they be welcomed? How should teachers be trained to understand the cultural norms the children are familiar with? If they don't speak English, should the children be placed in ESL classes only or given some ESL classes and mainstreamed in others? Who can help if they fall behind in their studies? How will they navigate the lunchroom on their first days? As with the first team, they should investigate options and establish a well-defined welcome/follow-up plan to help these students, with practical tools such as a map of the school showing the cafeteria, nurse's office, and bathrooms.

## Presentation Phase

When the project research is complete, each team should prepare a brochure summarizing their findings and present a draft to the other team, answering questions and taking notes on any suggestions the other team has. Then each team should refine and finalize their brochure.

It would be ideal if the team working on adult issues could present their ideas to a community leader such as a town council member, city manager, etc. The team working on school issues might present their ideas to the principal or at a faculty meeting. In both cases, even though the family that has been created is fictional, the issues raised should be of concern to any administrator into whose location a new family is moving.

## **Ideas for Encouraging All Learners**

### English Language Learners

When showing the film, be sure to turn on subtitles in the student's native language if available.

These students should be assigned to the second team, the one investigating best practices for welcoming newcomers to schools. Their experiences will become fundamental to suggesting steps to take, making them an integral part of the team and encouraging them to speak up. The teacher might model responses for these students ahead of team meetings to give them a chance to practice what they would like to say and to be sure they have the necessary vocabulary. The teacher should also provide a rubric to guide them.

### Gifted Students

A third team of gifted students could do the research into any environmental, political, and military crises in the family's country of origin before the rest of the class becomes involved in the project; they could then provide a briefing on their findings to other members of the class. Then the gifted team could split, with half the members assigned to each of the other teams to serve as resources on history, culture, etc.

## PROJECT BASED LESSON 2: ASSUMING A ROLE IN DADAAB

### Summary

Any complex subject can be viewed from a wide variety of perspectives, through the lenses of different disciplines, and for many purposes. In this lesson, students create a booklet or blog that showcases a number of approaches to Nasro's story in Dadaab, using a technique called the RAFT strategy, one that allows students to assume multiple stances and tailor their writing to the particular stance.

### Objectives

Students will create either a booklet or an online blog that supplies additional information about Dadaab and provides insight into many different attitudes and views of the camp. They will choose a stance from which to write, imagine an appropriate audience, select a format for writing that reflects the role of the writer, and narrow the subject to a manageable topic. They will demonstrate the ability to choose language and writing structures that reflect their stance.

### Subjects

Social studies, English language arts

### Time Needed

Four to six 50-minute class periods

### Skill Building

- Choosing a stance and determining appropriate content, diction, and sentence structure
- Planning, writing, and editing an essay
- Preparing layout for print or online publication

### **Common Core State Standards**

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.5

With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 6 here.)

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of three pages in a single sitting.

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.5

With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 7 here.)

#### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and link to and cite sources as well as to interact and collaborate with others, including linking to and citing sources.

## Resources and Materials

- Video of *Brave Girl Rising*
- Related teacher resources including Introductory Lessons and Film Viewing Guides (found in the Teacher Guide) and Issue Fact Sheet, including Resources
- Country pages at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/>
- Publisher or similar desktop-publishing program (optional)
- Background on RAFT strategy at <http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/using-raft-writing-strategy-30625.html>
- Research materials on Dadaab

## Essential Questions

1. How do people in different roles perceive conditions at Dadaab refugee camp?
2. How does their roles in life influence their perceptions?
3. How do these differing perceptions influence writing?

## Sample Content Questions

1. What particular role will you assume for this project? What is it about this role that interests or appeals to you?
2. What format for writing would a person in your role be likely to use?
3. What kind of language would that person be likely to use? Would it be formal or informal? How will your sentence structures and word choices change with your role?
4. Who will be the likely audience for your writing? What effect do you think your writing will have on your audience?
5. How can you prepare your writing and that of your classmates for inclusion in a printed publication or online blog?

## Common Core State Standards

(continued)

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.5

With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 8 here.)

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

## Building a Foundation and Making Connections

View *Brave Girl Rising* and use the introductory lesson, film viewing guide, relevant country and issue fact sheets, and suggested resources to engage students and help them understand why people are in a refugee camp and what conditions are like in such a place.

If students are not already familiar with the RAFT strategy as a writing tool, explain it to them and give them several examples of role, audience, format, and topic for a subject unrelated to *Brave Girl Rising* such as a book you have read in class recently or a topic in the news.

## Project

The class will hold a general discussion of the project and brainstorm RAFT categories for writing about Dadaab while the teacher records suggestions on the

Role of the writer	Audience	Format	Topic
Nasro herself	Nasro's teacher	Letter	Her desire to go on to college instead of marrying early
Nasro's best friend	Herself	Diary entry	Description of a day in the camp
A nurse at the Dadaab camp	Administrator at the World Health Organization	A quarterly report on health conditions in Dadaab	Physical condition of arriving refugees
An American celebrity who is concerned with refugees and has visited the camp	Academy Awards television watchers and audience members	Speech	Need for additional funds for relief in Dadaab

board and conducts a discussion of their usefulness. A few samples to start with:

These are only a few possibilities; students will be able to brainstorm many more. The teacher should point out that the items can be mixed, matched, and supplemented as appropriate. For example, a nurse (role) at the camp might write a letter (format) to her sister (audience) asking her to send items the camp needs (topic).

Once students have an idea of their RAFT goal, they should meet with the teacher to plan any additional research strategy needed and discuss how the audience and format might affect their use of language and the appearance of their work. Teachers should allow some

in-class time for research, writing, and peer editing while writing conferences are occurring.

When all writings are completed and edited, they can be published in a printed booklet, with a copy given to each student, or published online, perhaps on the school's website. In either case, the publication can be illustrated with student-drawn artwork and/or the many public-domain images of Dadaab that can be found online.

## Ideas for Encouraging All Learners

### English Language Learners

Depending on their proficiency in the target language, the teacher may wish to allow ESL students to write in their native language and then translate it. They should be encouraged to choose a role and format commensurate with their current language ability. Additional help with vocabulary may be necessary.

### Gifted Students

Encourage gifted students to take on more challenging roles and formats. Help them align their syntax and diction with their RAFT choices when necessary. Some students may wish to volunteer as editors for the blog or print publication in addition to writing their own RAFT papers.