

Sharing stories

Listening to people's stories is an excellent way to build empathy and understanding. Sharing stories can create a connection. It can help you to imagine how they feel and imagine what it is like to be them.

This resource looks at the stories of a group of young refugees in the UK and shows other young people how they can create and share their own stories.

Learning objectives

Learners will:

- build empathy
- explore the importance of storytelling
- learn how to listen to other's experiences
- relate other's experiences to their own

Primary ages (7-11)

Starter activity: Who is a refugee?

We need to understand what the words people use mean when they talk about refugees and migrants. Look at the definitions below and on slide 9 of the PowerPoint. The definitions focus on the process in the UK.

You can test yourself by looking away and trying to remember or write down what the words mean.

Reflective activity: Listening to stories

These terms like 'refugee' and 'migrant' help to explain the situation people are in. Each refugee or migrant is a person, with their own personal experiences. Listening to their stories helps us to remember that we are all human beings.

Reading stories is an excellent way to feel like we understand a person. We can read the book and imagine that we can see them and can understand how they feel.

Think of your favourite character from a book, film or TV show. Close your eyes and imagine them. What do they look like? What do you know about them? Do you feel like you understand this character? Do you think you could be friends with this character?

If you knew more about people, do you think you could understand them and their situation?

Would this help you to be friends with them? Think about the activity in the empathy and understanding session again, on slide 12 of the PowerPoint.

Video activity: Leen's story

Leen and her sister come from Syria. Their dad left Syria to find a safe way to leave. They then followed him. They had to take a boat. It was scary. They arrived at a refugee camp full of people. With the help of the Red Cross they found their way to Germany.

Watch [this video](#) of Leen and her sister now they are in Germany.

- > How do they feel?
- > What do they like about Germany?
- > Can you understand why they feel this way?

Think about their journey. How would you feel if it was you?

Creative activity: Make your own storybook

Telling stories and listening to other people's stories can help build understanding and share experiences. Draw and write a storybook to tell Leen and her sister's story. You can tell the whole story or just one part of it that where you really understand how Leen feels.

After drawing the storybook, reflect on the story again. Can you understand how an asylum seeker on a journey like Leen might feel? Describe how she feels in the story or write the words around her picture. Think about how you can show her feelings in her face.

To help you, you can look in a mirror. Pull different faces like a sad face and a happy face. How does your face change?

Now draw your own story. Think about a journey that you have been on that was difficult but when you arrived you were really happy, like Leen and her sister. Draw this story and compare the two.

Do you think you can understand how it feels to take a difficult journey better now?

Secondary ages (11-19)

Starter activity: Who is a refugee?

We need to understand what the words people use mean when they talk about refugees and migrants. Look at the definitions on slide 9 of the PowerPoint. The definitions focus on the process in the UK. Match them up to the correct term. Check your answers on the next slide.

Discussion activity: Listening to stories

These terms like 'refugee' and 'migrant' help to explain the situation people are in, but they are not all they are. Each refugee or migrant is a person. Listening to their stories helps us to remember that we have a shared humanity.

Reading stories is an excellent way to feel like we understand a person. We can read the book and imagine that we can see them and can know how they feel. Read the statements below and see how far you agree or disagree with each one.

- > It is easier to understand people if I know their history
- > It is easier to understand people if I know the things they like and dislike
- > It is easier to understand people if we have things in common
- > I can't understand people if we have lived really different lives
- > Reading stories makes me think about my own life and feelings
- > I find it easy to understand the characters in books and films
- > I think I could be friends with my favourite characters
- > Sharing stories with other people is easy
- > Listening to other people's stories is a challenge
- > Once I understand a person, it is easy to be friends with them

Think about your answers. Why do you agree or disagree? Think about it like a scale from 1 to 10, 10 really agreeing and 1 disagreeing. Write the number down and give one reason why you picked that number. Share your answers with others and discuss it together.

Film activity: Leen's story

Watch the Leen's [film](#). She tells her story of her journey from Syria to the refugee camp. She is an asylum seeker.

- > How do you think she feels?
- > What does she say was scary about her journey?
- > Imagine you were Leen and you had to take this journey. How would you feel?

Now watch this second [film](#). See how different Leen and her life is now she is in Germany seeking refugee status.

- > How does she feel now?
- > What does she say is good about Germany?

Imagine you were Leen and you had arrived in a new place after your long journey. How would you feel?

Creative activity: Write your own diary

Telling stories and listening to other people's stories can help build understanding and share experiences. Write an imaginary diary entry to tell Leen and her sister's story. Draw their journey or just a part of their journey. Imagine you are Leen on the day you leave Syria, write a diary entry or draw a sketch to show your impression of how she felt that day.

Write another for the day she arrived safely in Germany. Remember she will still have to apply for asylum, so the journey is not over yet. How do you imagine she felt?

Now write your own diary entry. Think about a journey that you have been on that was difficult but when you arrived you felt safe and relieved, like Leen and her sister. Write a diary entry of this, or draw another sketch and compare your story to Leen's.

Do you think you can understand how it feels to be an asylum seeker or a refugee better now? Why?