

Simple Acts Toolkit for Schools

“Ideas are funny little things. They don't work unless you do.”
Anon

Thanks for getting involved in the Simple Acts campaign!

The Simple Acts campaign is about **inspiring people to use small, everyday actions to change our perceptions of refugees**. It consists of 20 actions that can be done by anyone, of any age, and that encourage us to learn and do more with refugees. With every person who joins the campaign and does a small thing with and for refugees, we get a little closer to removing barriers between communities and to creating the kind of world we all want to live in.

Within the next year we hope to see hundreds of thousands of people doing at least one small action! Your school is a very important part of making that possible! The more schools that get involved, the higher the chances that we'll reach our goal and the bigger difference we will have made by 2010!

Just by downloading this toolkit you've already completed one.

Easy wasn't it?

The important thing is to let us know that your class has done it! So every time you and your class do a simple act, let us know what act you have done, how many times you have done it, and how many took part in it and we will add your contribution to the Action Tracker on the Simple Acts website. This will bring us one step closer to our goal!

This is where this toolkit comes in!

We have chosen five of our favourite simple acts, which we think are great ways for the students in your school to get involved. They fit in perfectly with National Curriculum objectives, and are great fun too! This toolkit explains all about them and is full of lesson and event ideas, useful tips, case studies and further resources to help get you started on the road to big changes.

Which Simple Acts could your school take part in?

- * Tell a child a story from another country
- * Share a song
- * Define the word refuge
- * Learn to say a few things in another language
- * Find five facts about refugees

Ways to Take Part in Simple Acts

Tell a child a story from another country

Telling children stories from other countries widens their horizons and boosts their ability to link distant things with what they see around themselves. It exposes them to experiences that can make them less fearful of the unknown. **As well as enhancing their cultural awareness; stories can also validate the children's own experiences.** That's why we think this is such a great act; it's simple to do too! There are plenty of ways that you can implement it; here are just a few of them:

- * Why not gather the school together and tell the kids (and grown-ups!) a story from another country? Or invite parents of the kids in your class to tell a tale from their culture. You can find loads of stories on our website, including a story about hidden treasure from Sri Lanka, and the reason why crocodiles have a rough back in a story from Angola (you can even discover why they're so grumpy!)



<http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk/simple-acts/twenty-acts/tell-a-child-a-story.htm>

- * We know what great imaginations kids have, so why not organise a creative writing competition to celebrate that imagination and give prizes or awards for the best stories? Encourage your class to learn about a particular culture or country, and write a story or poem as if they were from that country. They'll love discovering new cultures and countries whilst also exploring their talents. You could display their work in the library for all to enjoy. We can't wait to see what stories and poems they create!
- * You could take this a step further and get your class together to perform a play based on a story from another country; or they could even make up their own. They will have fun exploring new ideas, and the rest of the school will have a great time seeing the performance!



Share a song

It's easier to learn and remember when we learn through song. Scientists say that singing can also be used to teach challenging concepts and develop language, while our brain is fooled into thinking that we're having fun rather than learning. That's why we think it's a great idea to listen to some songs from other countries, or songs exploring refugees and exile. We learn something of other cultures, and we get to have a little bit of fun along the way. If you love the idea of sharing a song, but are not quite sure where to start, then here are some ideas to get you going.

- * Why not hold a 'World Music Day'? Get the class together to listen to some music, and learn some folk songs from some of the countries where the UK's refugees are from. You could also ask some local musicians and dancers to

come along and perform some songs or hold a workshop. Once the class has been introduced to new music and songs, you could encourage them to compose their own music. The class could also write their own song about refugees, or choreograph a dance!

- * You could get the whole school to participate in putting on its own concert of world music and music by refugees. Invite parents, friends, the community and local newspapers to attend! Encourage the school to perform some of the songs, music and traditional dances they have learned in classes. You could even invite local musicians or friends of the school to perform. This is also a great fundraising opportunity! The money you raise could be donated to a local refugee organisation.

Year Five, Godwin School Choir created a song about welcoming refugees to their community.



'We enjoyed making this song and learning new facts about refugees, it is important to learn about new cultures and it's fun too!' Zarin Sarwar and Jessica Tuley

'My grandparents came from the Congo where there was a war. My family now welcome new refugees. People should remember that it could happen to anyone.' Alex Haydock-Wilson

'When my dad came from Pakistan he missed home. Lots of people in our school come from different countries, these actions will help them to not miss home so much' Maheen Hashmi

To see the choir perform their song, check them out on our website - www.simpleacts.org.uk

Define the word refuge

The more people who get involved and give us their definitions of 'refuge', the closer we are to finding out what the people we call "refugees" are about. By helping to create an even greater understanding and appreciation of refugees amongst your class, this is a great simple act to introduce in schools! Here are just some of the ways you could implement it:

- * You could hold a week of assemblies dedicated to uncovering the meaning of refuge. Students could recite some poems exploring the notion of refuge; or you could encourage classes to create their own presentations about what the word means to them; invite speakers from a local refugee organisation, or parents and friends of the school to give a talk; or encourage the children to create short dramatic pieces. Assemblies are also a good time for some reflection and contemplation, and with the whole school thinking about what "refuge" means to them, we're certain that we can get closer to an understanding of what the word really means!
- * Encourage your class to discuss what "refuge" means to them. You might explore issues such as what is a refuge? What makes a place feel safe? Why might people not feel safe in their home country? Why might the UK be a refuge for some people? How could we help refugees to feel safe here? What places do the class consider to be their own refuges? Following the discussion you may also like to encourage the class to write poems about refuge.
- * Some things can be explained just as well with pictures as they can with words. Your class could collaborate and put their artistic talents to use by creating posters using art and photos to explore the word "refuge". In 2000, children from all across Birmingham enjoyed creating an art wall on the subject of sanctuary. This was displayed in a local primary school for all to enjoy and learn from. Why not make one for your school on the topic of "refuge"?



To get you started, here are a few suggestions.

- Noun, shelter or protection, as from the weather or danger.
- Noun, any place, person, action, or thing that offers or appears to offer protection, help, or relief.
- A place inaccessible to an enemy.
- It is a shelter from the storms of life.
- It is a hug from someone who loves you.

Once your class has come up with some ideas - tell us and send us photos or videos recording their work! You can even share the class' definitions onto Wordia too.

You could even take this a step further and create a positive legacy for your school by designating an area within the school as a refuge, where the children can go to feel safe.

Learn to say a few things in another language

Scientists have discovered that learning just a few phrases in a new language can improve how you speak your own. **People who learn new languages are also better at things like maths, art, higher level thinking, reasoning and problem solving.** However, we think that the best thing about learning to speak a few sentences of another language is that it opens up the world of opportunity, possibility and chance encounters. Think about it like this: if there are 5,000 people in the UK who speak Albanian, by learning to say “how are you today?” or “want to dance?” in Albanian you increase the number of new friends you could make to 5,000. Here are just a couple of the ways your school could enjoy this simple act.

- * Divide the class into groups and teach each group a different word or phrase in another language. Encourage the class to create posters featuring the new words and display them around the school. Include phrases from all the languages spoken by children and teachers in your school. Alternatively, you could get the whole school involved; each class could learn a few phrases in a particular language.
- * Even though languages may differ from country to country, some traditions spread right around the world. You could introduce a “happy birthday” song in another language to the class. You’ll have plenty of opportunities to practice singing it during the year!
- * How about introducing a ‘word of the day’ or a ‘word of the week’ in a foreign language? That’s a whole lot of new words and phrases over the course of the term! Students in your class who speak a foreign language could also get involved and teach their classmates a word from their language.


If you haven’t practiced your Somali in a while, have a look at the Simple Acts website and find out how to say anything from “hello”, to “would you like a scone?” in Somali, Mandarin and Arabic! Find some new phrases here - <http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk/simple-acts/twenty-acts/language/>

Learn five facts about refugees

Having facts at hand is particularly useful when talking about refugees because there is so much nonsense and misinformation going around. That’s why this Simple Act is such a great one to get involved with. It is also a fantastic act to introduce as a homework project which parents can get involved with too. Not only will your class discover some interesting facts about refugees; but students will develop their research and I.T. skills in the process. You may even learn some interesting facts too!

- * Encourage the students in your class to learn five facts about refugees as part of a homework project. Parents can help the students to explore books and the internet to discover new ideas and information. Once the class have finished their project you could encourage a class discussion so that the students can tell their classmates what exciting facts they have learned. We’d love to see what they discover; so why not film the students revealing their facts and send it on to us so that we can share them!





* Set a class challenge! Next time you have an I.T. lesson, ask everyone to find a couple of facts about refugees and report it back to the class. In a class of 30 that's 30 people learning dozens of exciting facts! Your class can continue to make a positive contribution and create a "refugee facts" scrap book for the rest of the school to learn from too.

* Divide your class into teams and hold a quiz on refugees. This is a fun way for your class to learn about refugees, whilst they develop their communication and team - work skills! As an extra fun incentive, you could give a prize to the winning team!

To get you started with this Simple Act, here are a bunch of facts that might surprise them:



1 FIND
2 FIVE
3 FACTS
4 ABOUT
5 REFUGEES

- A refugee is someone who has fled to another country seeking protection from war or persecution. An economic migrant is someone who has moved to another country to work.
- Singer Mika is a refugee, and so was Bob Marley!
- 11 refugees from the UK have won Nobel Prize for science.
- The Great British meal of fish and chips was brought to Britain by refugees.
- Asylum seekers account for only 3% of net immigration to the UK.

For more interesting facts, links to useful websites and quiz ideas, visit our website www.simpleacts.org.uk

What do you do once you've done a simple act?

No matter how often your class does the same action, or how many people participated in doing it, we want to know! Once you and your class have completed an action, pat yourselves on the back and then let us know about it by following these three steps:

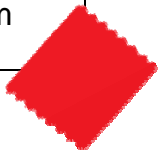
1. Visit www.simpleacts.org.uk
2. Find the action you've done
3. Tick it!


Alternatively, drop us an email and tell us what simple acts your class has done, how many times you have done it, and how many people got involved! We will then add all the Simple Acts your class has done to our Action Counter. That way you'll see just how far your school's small actions have gone towards making a big change to the way we see refugees, and it will hopefully inspire others to get involved also.

Spread the Word!

We have some beautiful promotional material to lighten up your school, such as posters, flyers and even badges and journals that would make fantastic competition prizes! To purchase them just send us an email to info@refugeeweek.org.uk or give us a call on 0207 346 6752.

Also encourage children and staff at your school to do some Simple Acts that are not part of this toolkit, at school and at home. For example, encourage your class to take part in Simple Act 16 and share their sweets, or enjoy Simple Act 1 at home with their family and cook a dish from





another country! You could even take your class to visit an event during Refugee Week, or hold your own school event for the local community!

Share your images, videos or thoughts!

Most importantly - we would really love to see how your class has participated in Simple Acts; so remember to take photos of the students' posters and art, video their performances and record their songs! We also can't wait to see what poems and stories they create, so send those to us too! You can upload your videos and pictures to the web, or send them into us and we will put them up for you! That way, your class will be playing a really important part in inspiring other schools to get involved too!

Once you've got your footage or photo, upload it onto the web and inspire people to do their own actions. Check out these sites:

www.wordia.com Search 'Refuge'

www.flickr.com Search 'simpleacts'

www.youtube.com Search 'simpleactscampaign'

Or join us on our websites and share the latest news on the actions your school has done. For example on:

www.facebook.com Search 'Simple Acts Campaign'

www.bebo.com/SimpleA2

<http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk/simple-acts/latest-news/>





Find out more about Refugee Week

This year Refugee Week will be held **15th-21st June**. It is a UK-wide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK, and encourages a better understanding between communities.

Every year during Refugee Week hundreds of events exploring refugee experiences take place across the UK ranging from big music festivals and art exhibitions to political debates and community events. Events can be organised by anyone and everyone - charities, local governments, refugee community organisations, schools, faith groups, arts organisations, day centres and umbrella networks have all organised events.

To find information about events, as well as a full range of information and resources relevant to refugees visit **refugeeweek.org.uk**

Contact us

Contact the Refugee Week team for advice, ideas or any other queries.

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