

Primary | Year 3 +

Diversity Role Models Teachers Resource

Theme: Migration



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Overview

How To Use This Resource

This resource accompanies a video or series of videos from one of our inspiring Role Models sharing their personal story. Each resource covers a different topic area and comes with discussion questions, challenge questions, suggested activities and challenge activities. Further notes for teachers are written in italics or in boxes.



Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- List reasons why people migrate.
- Define key terminology in relation to migration.
- Describe the similarities and differences that exist in different cultures and countries.
- Generate practical steps they can take to welcome newcomers and support respectful relationships.

Curriculum Links

- **Citizenship/PSHE:**
Reflecting on moral, social and cultural issues, using imagination to understand other people's experiences; celebrating difference and building respectful relationships.
- **History/Geography:**
Historical and contemporary case studies exploring causation, experiences and impact.

Notes

The activities suggested in this resource can be adapted to increase complexity and depth to suit more advanced year groups. This topic could be sensitive for students who are from a migrant or refugee background.

Suggested Age

All materials should be reviewed by teaching staff to ensure they are appropriate and can be adapted to suit your class needs. **Diversity Role Models recommends this resource for Year 3+**

Overview

Summary of story

Abdi's story

Abdi left war torn Somalia when he was a child, travelling alone across Africa and Europe to live with his Aunt, first in the Netherlands and then in the UK. He describes the challenges he faced as a refugee as he tried to make friends and fit in at school where he spoke a different language. Abdi offers advice to young people about how to create a welcoming and supportive environment for new arrivals.

This story discusses migration, adoption, and the challenges faced as a refugee in a new country.



[**▶ Watch Here**](#)

Top Tips

For facilitating positive discussions in your classroom

1. Working Agreement

As a group, set some simple agreements for how to engage with the lesson. This could include:

- The importance of listening to each other and respecting all of our views
- Taking turns and not having to answer if you don't want to
- Using appropriate and respectful language
- Trying to build dialogue not debate

Cover the importance of confidentiality, but be sure to explain the school's safeguarding policy and explain when, why, and with whom you may need to share something that is said in the lesson.

2. Facilitate: Basketball Not Tennis

Create space for young people to explore and express their views with each other, not just with the teacher.

- Consider including small group or pair discussion, plenary, role play or creative approaches.
- Consider the layout of the room and how small groups or circles can help build dialogue between students. We're aiming for ideas to be bounced around the room like a basketball, not back and forth with the teacher like tennis!

Be sensitive to the needs of each individual and share clear ways young people can get support if they have been impacted by any of the issues discussed. Be wary about sharing your personal views but ensure that you reflect the school values, policies and laws in relation to equality and inclusion.

3. Managing Questions

It's important that young people feel empowered to ask the questions that are important to them. Consider some techniques that could give young people the confidence to ask questions, such as by writing them down rather than asking them aloud.

Not all questions need a whole class answer on the spot. If you need more time to think, or feel that a question would be better answered outside of a whole-class setting then say: *'That's a brilliant question and deserves a good answer, let me take some time and get back to you with an answer'*.

4. Distancing Techniques

Our videos are a great way of sharing an engaging and impactful narrative, that is relevant to pupils' lives while not making the issue too personal for pupils. This allows young people to engage in an objective way, avoiding defensive reactions, while still exploring ideas around empathy, allyship, and identity. It will also help you manage challenging questions as you could suggest some of the ways others might feel rather than having to share your view or your personal experiences.

5. Questions For Dialogue And Deep Engagement

Ask open and stretching questions, or better still, get the young people to come up with their own. You could ask young people to generate questions for the role models featured and then consider how each might answer.

We've compiled some questions aimed at building empathy and encouraging discussion on the key themes. Remember to ask probing questions to draw out more depth and reflection from pupils such as *'That's brilliant, could you expand and tell us why you think that?'*. Consider asking philosophical questions such as *'Why do you think that is right/ wrong?'* too.

Suggested Questions

See Appendix 1 for a worksheet featuring these questions.

Abdi's Story

1. Why did Abdi and so many members of his family have to leave their country?

There was a civil war that would have made them feel very unsafe.

2. Can you find the continents, regions and countries that Abdi mentions in his story on a world map?

Somalia, the Middle East, Europe, The Netherlands - Abdi refers to this country as 'Holland,' Amsterdam, Britain

3. Abdi describes himself as a 'refugee'. What does this mean?

Someone who was forced to flee their own country to find safety in another country who can't return home because it is too dangerous. This might be because of war or because they would suffer persecution. The government of the country they have fled to can allow them to stay where they are safe for a long time or forever.

4. What were the key difficulties that Abdi faced when he arrived in a new country?

Being away from his family, being different and feeling like an outsider, not being able to speak the language, struggling to make friends and to fit in at school, and encountering new and different things - like when Abdi saw his first escalator!

5. What did Abdi mean when he said his arrival in Europe gave him 'a better shot at life'?

The Netherlands and then the UK provided safety and an education.

6. What ideas does Abdi give us about how to help new people feel included and welcomed?

Being patient, sitting with them or doing activities such as listening to music, drawing or playing football that do not need language and help them feel like they belong and are connected to the people around them.



Challenge Discussion Questions

Abdi's Story

1. True or False? Study the definitions list (see Appendix 1) then look at the following statement: 'All refugees are migrants but not all migrants are refugees.' True or false?

2. Do you 'agree' or 'disagree'? Set up a dividing line across the classroom with children invited to stand on one side of the line or the other to show whether they agree or disagree with the following statements:

- Everyone feels uncomfortable when they meet someone new and different.
- You can only get to know someone if you speak the same language
- It is easier to understand people if I know their history
- I can't understand people if we have lived really different lives
- Hearing stories makes me think about my own life and feelings
- Once I understand a person, it is easy to be friends with them
- I can always respect someone who is different to me

Gather some reasons for the positions children have taken. If they hear anything that makes them change their mind, ask them to explain what it was they found persuasive. As the discussion develops, allow the dialogue to flow by allowing each speaker to choose the next speaker.

3. What important journeys have you made in your lives? (e.g. moving house, visiting a family member, travelling or moving abroad). Share your story with a friend. What emotions did you feel before you left? During the journey? When you arrived? Compare your story with Abdi's: Do you think you can understand how it felt to take such a difficult journey better now?

BONUS

You can explore the theme of inclusion with students using Abdi's video through [our Creating an Inclusive School resource](#).

Challenge Discussion Questions

Abdi's Story

4. Reflect upon times when you felt sad, angry, annoyed or frustrated.

Remember that this is how newcomers may feel as they are learning a new language and new things about their class and country.

What types of things can you do in order to calm and process difficult feelings in yourselves and to help others do the same? Make a list of the children's ideas and put them up on the wall.

5. How can we welcome and include everyone in our school? Can you suggest a set of guidelines that could benefit everyone, including newcomers?

Record the children's ideas and keep the guidelines up in the classroom all year long. Refer to them and encourage the children to refer to them during the day.

6. Would like to live somewhere else (migrate) in the future - possibly to work, live, be with family, study or learn new things? What journey do you hope to make in the future?

Activities

1. Invite the children in pairs or small groups to reflect on and discuss one or more of the **'How would you feel if..?'** cards (see Appendix 2). The cards are linked to the different stages of Abdi's journey and are designed to encourage understanding and empathy.
2. To further develop empathy, divide the class into small groups and invite them to create a sequence of three **tableaux or 'frozen images'** to illustrate key moments from Abdi's story. They should give each tableaux a caption e.g. 'Saying goodbye', 'Escalator trouble!' or 'Help me to be your friend.' They should be clear about who the characters are in each tableaux and prepare a 'hidden thought' for each of the characters represented. When each group performs their work, invite volunteers from the audience to interact with the tableaux; activating a character's **'hidden thought'** which they speak out when tapped on the shoulder. Examples from pupils could include: 'Is 9 too old to cry?' 'The stairs are alive!' and 'I feel so alone'.
3. Give each child a set of questions in **a language they do not understand**. Alternatively, you can create questions and then jumble, flip or reverse the words using [this website](#). Give the class 5 mins to attempt the questions before asking them to discuss in small groups why you might have asked this task of them. As a whole class, reflect upon the experiences of newcomers who don't speak the language of their classroom.
4. Play a game of **Human Bingo***. Select a character card (see appendix) and read their story. On the Base Board, tick the squares that your character can say 'yes' to. If you are in a group, you can each pick of different character. Being able to say yes to each of these things is a step in creating a safe and comfortable environment. Invite the children to reflect on each character: What are the similarities and differences between each of them? Can you understand and relate to any part of their story? If you couldn't answer yes to all of these statements, how would you feel?
5. **Write a letter to a refugee** your age who is in the UK without their family, imagine how they might feel. What supportive words and helpful advice would you give? Think about how you deal with things when you are sad or lonely. Think about what kind of letter you would like to receive if you were them.

Challenge Activities

1. What's your name? Challenge the children to talk with their family members to find out what their own name, siblings' names(s) or their parents' names mean, and where they come from. If names can be written in different scripts, bring in examples. Invite the children in pairs to interview each other: "What is your name?" "Where does it come from?" "What does it mean?" The class could look at the names (or your class'/school's name) with different scripts and try and write them. Introduce how the same name can look and sound different in different languages (e.g. John (English) can be spelt Yanis (in French), Ivan (in Ukrainian) or Hänsel (in German). Are there children in the school who share a name in this way? Each child can draw a picture to represent their own name. Display the pictures around the classroom.

2. Saying hello: With the help of children in your class that come from different places [or from your own research] demonstrate greetings from different countries and cultures by choosing a child and greeting them in this language or culturally specific greeting. Then ask all the children to move around the class greeting at least four other people in the same way before you move on to a new greeting.

Ask the children what they found similar and different between the different greetings. Ask them if they had a favourite one.

See if the children can commit to greeting each other in one of the new ways every day for a week. Remind them before they leave the next day and be sure to greet the first student who arrives in the morning in that way.

3. A map of greetings: Take a look at a large world map with your class and look at where the greetings come from, placing a flag/sticker on each place. Play a game where you point to a sticker and ask children to remember/perform the greeting from that place. Split the children into groups to discuss and note down everything they think, believe or know about these places. e.g. language, food, music, clothing, customs, climate etc. Set them the challenge of finding out more about a chosen culture.

Challenge Activities

4. Play time! Introduce playground games from different countries and cultures to the children in small groups. Different examples can be found [here](#). Allow them 20 minutes to play the games of their choice and then rotate them around. Help the children to reflect on how the games are similar to others they have played before; what their favourite games were and how they might be improved or developed. In small groups, ask the children to write or draw the rules of the games together or develop their own game based on some traits of the games they have learned.

5. A welcome guide: Ask the children what things they have found out about the different countries and cultures that are the same or different from their original ideas. Ask whether they think students coming into their classroom from elsewhere might have pre-conceived ideas about what their country or classroom might be like. Working in small groups challenge them to write a guidebook to their country, school and classroom for new students and families. These guidebooks could be shared throughout the school for new families.

Note

Engaging the wider school community: All of these activities are designed to celebrate diversity and create a welcoming environment. Utilising members of the school community can help make these activities more real, help build empathy and foster good relations.

You may wish to engage parents, carers, governors, staff and the wider community and ask if they are willing to participate and share something about their culture or community with pupils. You could make this a whole school event celebrating the diversity of culture, race, heritage, faith and ethnicity that exist within the school.

Organisations

Organisations that provide further support and resources for staff and students on some of the topics raised in this resource. These links are to support teachers to access further information, lead discussions or to signpost to students for research and support. Diversity Role Models can take no responsibility for the content hosted on other organisations platforms or shared directly, and we recommend that all signposted resources be checked for suitability by staff before use.



UNHCR has a collection of **teaching resources** on refugees, asylum and migration for primary and secondary education, as well as some guidance for teachers working with refugee children in the classroom.

Visit their website here: **www.unhcr.org/uk**

BritishRedCross

British Red Cross has free migration and refugee **teaching resources** and **activities** to promote compassion, informed discussion, and an understanding of the challenges faced by refugees and migrants around the world.

Visit their website here: **www.redcross.org.uk**

Our Migration Story is a rich resource for teachers and students, which provides classroom and **teaching resources** that highlight the often untold stories of the generations of migrants who came to and shaped the British Isles.

Visit their website here: **www.ourmigrationstory.org.uk**



Useful Definitions

Asylum Seeker

Someone who leaves their homeland to go to another country because they don't feel safe in their own country. They ask the government if they can stay and submit an 'asylum application' so they can be allowed to stay in the country. They can stay in the new country while the government decides.

Refugee

Someone who was forced to flee their own country to find safety in another country who can't return home because it is too dangerous. This might be because of war or because they would suffer persecution. The government of the country they have fled to can allow them to stay where they are safe for a long time or forever.

Persecution

Mistreating someone because of who they are. It may be because of their race, religion, nationality, because they belong to a particular social group or their political opinion.

Migrant

Anyone who moves from one place to another in order to live in another country for more than a year.

Economic Migrant

A person who leaves their country and moves to another in search of better economic opportunities.

Appendix

Print out the following pages to use in your classroom

1. Suggested questions (Abdi's Story)
2. How would you feel if? cards
3. Human Bingo character cards and base board

Note: All resources can be printed out in greyscale to save on coloured ink.

Abdi's Story

1. Why did Abdi and so many members of his family have to leave their country?

2. Can you find the continents, regions and countries that Abdi mentions in his story on a world map?

● Somalia

● Middle East

● Europe

● Holland (The Netherlands)

● Amsterdam

● Britain

3. Abdi describes himself as a 'refugee'. What does this mean?

4. What were the key difficulties that Abdi faced when he arrived in a new country?

5. What did Abdi mean when he said his arrival in Europe gave him 'a better shot at life'?

6. What ideas does Abdi give us about how to help new people feel included and welcomed?

How would you feel if...

How would you feel if...

you lived in a place
where there was a war
raging all around you?

How would you feel if...

you were separated from
you family and had no
idea when you would see
them again?

How would you feel if...

you had to leave your
country for ever and
leave most of your
belongings behind?

How would you feel if...

you were adopted in a far
off place by a relative
who you did not know
very well?

How would you feel if...

you were left out at
school because you
could not speak the
language?

How would you feel if...

just when you were
getting settled, you had
to move again, to a new
country?

Human Bingo*

Character cards

HAMID: You are from Afghanistan. You had to leave because it was too dangerous for you. Your dad paid for someone to take you to the UK alone. You're live in a big children's home with lots of other boys. You've started going to school but everything is different here – the food is strange and the weather is cold and you miss your family.

ALLANAH: Your mum couldn't get a job at home in Wales, and as she knew someone who ran a hotel in Spain, you have moved there so that she can work. You are going to a Spanish school, and it is hard to understand things, but every week is getting better and a girl has just started being friendly to you. You miss your friends and family but talk to them online.

SYLVIE: You are Polish and your family have been living in Scotland for about a year. You are starting to learn the language but a lot of people are really horrible to you as soon as you start talking. You don't want to go back to Poland as your parents couldn't get a job and so you didn't have any money, but you don't like it here as you don't have any friends.

ABDULLAH: You live with your parents and sisters in Homs, in Syria. Lots of the schools, shops and hospitals have burned down and your brothers have gone away to fight. Hearing gunshots is really scary. You need to leave home and try to find somewhere safe away from the fighting.

ALMA: You moved to the UK with your mother six months ago from Somalia. It was too dangerous to remain there. You haven't been to school for a few years as you have been helping your mum with the other children in the family. You've started at school but it's hard because you don't know much English and the house you've been placed in is small and damp. Because your family are asylum seekers you don't have much money, but you get food vouchers from the Red Cross.

LUCY: You are from the UK. You live with your parents, and your brother. You love gymnastics and dancing and want to study Computer Science when you're older.

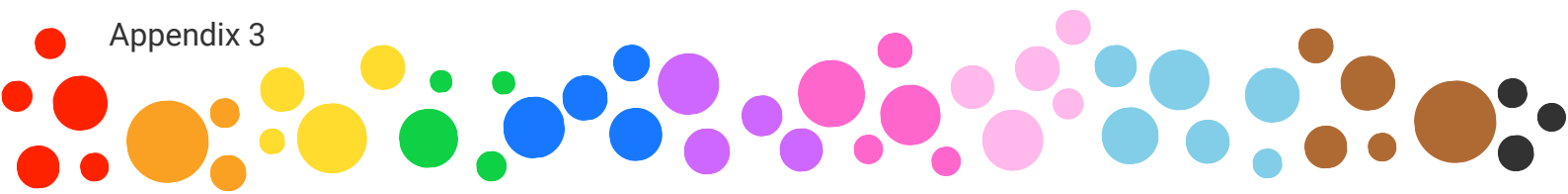
SOLANGE: You came from the Democratic Republic of the Congo three years ago because it wasn't safe there. You've been told that can't stay in the UK and you might have to leave. You won't get any help to buy food, it'll be harder to get treatment if you're sick and you could be forced to go back to the Congo. That makes you worry a lot, it was really scary there, and you still have nightmares about the journey.

Human Bingo*

Base Board


I can speak my own language at school	I can eat and drink when I need to	I can do things that are important in my culture easily	I can see my family
I can meet my friends	I can eat my favourite food	I can be successful here when I grow up	I can feel like I'm part of my community
I can join any group or organisation I like	I feel safe	I can go to school	When I am sick, I can go to the doctor


* with acknowledgement to The British Red Cross




Contact Details

Get in touch

 [Contact us via our website](#)


 Contact us via email at: education@diversityrolemodels.org

Find us online

 www.instagram.com/DiversityRM


 www.facebook.com/DiversityRM

 <https://twitter.com/DiversityRM>

 www.youtube.com/@DiversityRoleModels

 <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/diversityrolemodels>

 www.tiktok.com/@DiversityRM

 www.linkedin.com/company/diversity-role-models

Find out more

 www.diversityrolemodels.org

