

# Worksheet 1: What is a fair system for supporting immigrants who most need help?

In autumn 2016, children from the 'Jungle' Calais refugee camp were offered refuge in the UK. Some experts (e.g. politician David Davies) argued that these refugees should be age-tested – using dental checks or bone density scans. The idea of this testing was to work out which refugees were children, so that these children could be prioritised in terms of help from the UK. It was felt by Davies that some refugees were lying about their age in order to gain access to the UK. In other words, these lies were very unfair on actual child refugees.

Other experts (e.g. Rowan Farrell, founder of a charity based in the Calais camp) argued that age-testing was imprecise and therefore unfair. For example, a dental check can tell the difference between a 3-year-old and a 40-year-old but not between a 17-year-old and an 18-year-old. Farrell also pointed out that refugees/asylum seekers often look older than they are due to traumas they've experienced. The whole debate quickly created a social media 'storm', with celebrities such as Lily Allen and Gary Lineker putting forward their opinions.

Some members of the public felt that it was crucial to age-test any refugees who claimed to be children but looked older. Their opinion was based on ensuring that refugee children didn't 'miss out' because refugee adults were using up finite resources (housing support, school places, etc). Other citizens felt that it was morally wrong to put refugees through age-testing, due to the hardships that the refugees of all ages had experienced.

What are the advantages (pros) of age-testing refugees who are due to live in the UK?

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What are the disadvantages (cons) of age-testing refugees who are due to live in the UK?

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Weigh up both sides of the argument above. Are you in favour of or against age-testing refugees in the UK? Explain why.

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# What is a fair system for deciding which immigrants to help?

SPECIFICATION LINK: THEME A, LIVING TOGETHER IN THE UK – MIGRATION AND ITS IMPACT

## Objectives

- LO1** I can explore the types of help that different groups of immigrants need.
- LO2** I can consider whether a 'fair system' exists for supporting immigrants who most need help.

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|---------------|-------------|--------------|----|
| Class:        | Date:       | Last lesson: |    |
| G & T pupils: | SEN pupils: | M:           | F: |

## Connect

- Which recent **news headlines** are relevant to immigration?
- Discuss with **another student** what kind of help you might need if you moved to another country.

## Activate

- Put class into small groups. Give each group five minutes to write **definitions** for the following three main types of immigrants to the UK: (1) asylum seeker, (2) refugee and (3) economic migrant.
- Ask **spokespersons** from a few groups to feed back.
- Answers:  
***Asylum seeker** – Someone from another country who comes here for protection (under the 1951 Refugee Convention on the Status of Refugees). An asylum seeker is justifiably afraid that s/he will experience persecution and/or death by staying in their own country.*  
***Refugee** – An asylum seeker becomes a refugee if the government approves her/his application to be protected in a new country. Sometimes the media also use the term 'refugees' to describe people who are fleeing from a natural disaster or a civil war (in other words, they aren't necessarily facing persecution).*  
***Economic migrant** – Someone who leaves their own country to seek a better job or wage/better education/better health system than in their own country.*
- Put the class into three groups. Ask group 1 to write down which types of help an **asylum seeker** might need upon arrival in the UK. Ask group 2 to do the same for a **refugee**. Ask group 3 to do so

for an **economic migrant**.

- Useful vocabulary to prompt ideas:** access to phone/internet, accommodation, charity contact details, counselling, education (e.g. for children), emergency medical care, financial support, food, guidance on British laws, information on key tasks in Britain (how to pay bills, how to vote, how to pay taxes, etc.), language lessons, police protection, shelter, translation services, etc.

## Demonstrate

### Worksheet 1 What is a fair system for supporting immigrants who most need help?

- Tell students that they are now going to focus on a particular group of immigrants: **refugees**.
- Give students **Worksheet 1**. Ask a student to read out the three paragraphs from the top of the page.
- Ask students to fill in the **speech bubbles** and the **thought bubble** on the worksheet.
- Tell students to each **stick their work on one of the walls** and then to walk around the room **reading other pupils' work**.
- Hold a **class vote** on whether it's fair to age-test refugees. Invite two spokespersons with conflicting views to publicly **justify their vote**.
- Examples of good answers:  
***For age-testing:** We have to put children first when it comes to supporting refugees. Obviously, all refugees and asylum seekers are potentially very vulnerable. However, child refugees should always be the priority when it comes to access to a safe new country. If we don't age-test potential new refugees in our country, child refugees will miss out on healthcare, education, shelter, financial support, etc. This is because too many adult refugees will understandably lie about their age in their*

desperation to get safely settled somewhere.

**Against age-testing:** It is very intrusive and insulting to age-test refugees and asylum seekers who've lived through unspeakable horrors before being trapped in refugee camps like 'the Jungle'. To traumatise such people further is not only immoral but impractical! Many medical experts agree that bone density tests and dental scans give us nothing more than a rough idea of someone's age. These tests are therefore an expensive waste of time, channelling much-needed money away from finding shelter and healthcare for people who deserve our sympathy – not our prejudices.

## Consolidate

- **Circle-time activity:** remind students of **circle-time rules** (only one student speaking at a time whilst everyone else listens, everyone offers eye contact to the student speaking, everyone respects each other's views, etc).
- Choose students to **answer the following questions:**
  1. What is the difference between the type of help economic migrants need as opposed to the help needed by refugees and asylum seekers?  
*Example of answer: Refugees and asylum seekers move to another country because it's too unsafe and/or stressful to continue living in their own country. They often leave their own country in a rush without the time or ability to arrive with all necessary travel documentation, appropriate clothing, money, ID, etc. On the other hand, economic migrants can often plan their new life years in advance, e.g. finding a job before they arrive, learning the language before leaving their own country and travelling in a safe way. For this reason, support such as emergency medical care or access to subsidised housing is more likely to apply to refugees and asylum seekers.*
  2. Why do experts and members of the public have strong opinions on whether new refugees in our country should be age-tested?  
*Example of answer: Any debate about refugees tends to cause strong feelings. Some people believe in welcoming many more vulnerable global citizens to the UK. Others feel that our infrastructure cannot cope with additional citizens. The age-testing debate is particularly interesting to most UK citizens because it forces us all to consider how to choose which refugees to prioritise.*
  3. Why is it difficult to agree on a 'fair system' for supporting the UK's most needy immigrants?  
*Example of answer: Even if a 100% accurate way of testing age were to be invented, it would still be extremely difficult to decide on a 'fair' way to*

support refugees who live in the UK. For example, is it fair for the British taxpayer to contribute towards refugee children's education? Is it possible to 'put right' the harm caused to refugees by the prejudice and discrimination towards them in the UK? Is it appropriate for the government to fund language lessons for refugees in order to help them find good jobs? Are refugees living in a particular part of the UK at an advantage, in terms of access to housing or public transport?

4. What have you learnt/thought about in this lesson for the first time?

*Example of answer: I'd never considered before how desperate a refugee must have to be to pretend to be a child when they're actually an adult. It's made me think about how stressful it must feel to be living in limbo in a refugee camp.*

## Extra challenge

**Activate activity:** Ask G & T students to give three examples of the **types of persecution** faced by asylum seekers (persecution on the grounds of sexuality, religion, gender, nationality, political persuasion, etc).

## Extra support

**Demonstrate activity:** invite students to use simple **bullet points** in the speech bubbles, rather than writing whole paragraphs.

## Recommended websites

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/19/calais-child-migrants-pmqs-theresa-may-jeremy-corbyn-live/>

## Homework

Research **which countries** are currently using age-testing to screen refugees entering their country.