

Unit Plan: Refugee by Alan Gratz

Grade 7

Duration Approximately 8 weeks

Edition (ISBN)

Unit Overview

High level overview of the text at the core

Refugee is a historical fiction novel that tells the stories of three young people and their families. Josef Landau is fleeing Nazi Germany in 1939. Isabel Fernandrz is fleeing from the Castro regime in Cuba in 1994. Mamoud Bishara is fleeing from the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria in 2015.

All three young people go on difficult journeys to find refuge in a new country, but they never lose hope for a better life. The stories are told in different time periods and different countries, but readers will be surprised to see how all of the stories tie together at the conclusion of the novel.

Big Ideas

Conceptual understandings from the unit

- Refugees are forced to flee their homelands due to economic and political crises, and each journey presents unique decisions and challenges along the way. Refugees are often faced with choosing visibility or invisibility in order to keep themselves safe.
- The way a person or community responds to a refugee crisis can dramatically change outcomes. Small acts of kindness and empathy give the refugees renewed hope while moments of prejudice can make refugees feel dehumanized.
- Growing up involves facing both external and internal conflict; when facing challenges, our perspectives are shaped by our decisions, actions, and consequences.
- As we get older, our role in the family can change as people change and grow.
- Motifs used in *Refugee* draw parallels and connections between different refugee experiences.

Essential Questions

Questions driving the Big Ideas

- Why do people make the decision to flee their homes and seek refuge elsewhere, and what are they willing to sacrifice to find safety?
- How do people respond when they see others in need?
- What does it mean to have cultural identity?
- What impact do refugees have on society?

Culminating Task

Assessment that demonstrates mastery of unit content

A refugee's journey involves overcoming external challenges while also confronting the internal conflict that comes with leaving one's home country. Write about a time in your life when you experienced displacement; a time when you had to leave behind what was familiar and walk into a situation or experience that felt new and uncomfortable. In your narrative, be sure to convey both the external and internal conflict that may have been part of the experience.

Key Background Knowledge

Core knowledge that students will build throughout this unit

Contextual Knowledge

- Overview of Nazi Germany
- Overview of 1994 Cuba
- Overview of Syria in 2015

Literary Knowledge

- Theme
- Symbolism
- Vocabulary

Historically Responsive Literacy Framework

Dr. Ghody Muhammad's Five Learning Pursuits

Identity

- *Students will be able to empathize with and see commonalities among the characters in the book and themselves.*

Skills

- *Students will be able to identify literary elements such as theme and motif and understand how these elements lead to critical thinking and a deeper understanding of the text.*

Intellect

- *Students will become more aware of the world around them and more able to see ideas and concepts from multiple perspectives.*

Criticality

- *Students will be better able think critically and form their own opinions in order to become advocates for the injustices that they see occurring around them*

Joy

- *Students will be able to find small moments of joy even in the most difficult circumstances so that they can continue to follow their dreams.*

Connections to Core Instructional Resources

Click [HERE](#)

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Alignment between unit content and SEL goals

Skill Objectives: Students will learn to...

- predict others' feelings and perspectives in a variety of situations
- analyze how one's behavior may affect others
- explain how individual, social, and cultural differences may increase vulnerability to oppression and identify ways to address it
- analyze the effects to oppose oppression based on individual and group differences

Career Education and Work (CEW) Connection

13.3.8 Career Retention and Advancement

B. Analyze the role of each participant's contribution in a team setting.

Naviance Task

A Naviance task is not assigned. This CEW connection is made throughout the text with each character's continuous change and growth through ongoing experiences. Teachers can demonstrate the connection in this unit with student's being able to analyze the role of each person within a team and team member's contribution when in the classroom or workplace.

Unit Development

Alexis Fallen (Lead), Alex Kerensky, Chelsea Kimmel

Unit Supports

Vocabulary	English Language Development (ELD)	Multi Level Student Supports (MTSS)	Special Education	Career Work and Education/ Naviance	Social Emotional Learning
Jennifer Donohue	Trish O'Neill	Stacey Edwards	Denise Baumbach and Jenn White	Cathey White	Jaimie L. Piotrowicz