

Refugee Background

Introduction. Refugee by Alan Gratz is three voices that alternate throughout the novel. They are fictional characters based on real, historical events in Germany, Cuba and Syria :

1. **Josef** is a Jewish boy living in 1930s Nazi Germany. With the threat of concentration camps looming, he and his family board a ship bound for the other side of the world.
2. **Isabel** is a Cuban girl in 1994. With riots and unrest plaguing her country, she and her family set out on a raft, hoping to find safety in America.
3. **Mahmoud** is a Syrian boy in 2015. With his homeland torn apart by violence and destruction, he and his family begin a long trek toward Europe.

What is a Refugee?

A person forced to flee their country because of violence or persecution.

Who is a refugee?

A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries.

Seeking *refuge*-- *definition* --

1. shelter or protection from danger or distress
2. a place that provides shelter or protection

You generally "seek refuge," "take refuge," or "find refuge." Religion may be a refuge from the woes of your life; a beautiful park may be a refuge from the noise of the city; and your bedroom may be a refuge from the madness of your family. Another country can be a refuge from your own that is divided by war, violence, poverty and prejudice.