

A LEARNING RESOURCE



# MIGRATION TALES

For Key Stages 3 & 4  
Ages 11-16

- Lyric analysis
- Creating characters
- Poetry/lyric writing
- Learning about refugees and migration



**MINISTRY  
OF STORIES**

# MIGRATION TALES

## INTRODUCTION

This writing pack is brought to you by Ministry of Stories to help young people investigate stories of migration and those seeking refuge. Young writers will be able to create their own poetry inspired by song lyrics. **At the heart of these writing exercises is the question of what is it that would make someone leave their home and their loved ones and how do you start to build a new life after that?**

The pack contains activities that will support learners to:

- define refugees and migrants
- analyse song lyrics and rhyme patterns
- write a new poem or song about the push and pull factors for refugees and migrants

The central writing activity is around creating a poetry dialogue between two family members: one of whom wants to leave their home country and the other who wants them to stay. Ministry of Stories young writers (aged 10-15) took part in our Migration Tales Summer Writing Club and tested all of these activities, producing incredible poems with backing tracks which you can listen to [here](#).

## ACTIVITY 1

### WHAT ARE REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS?

Ask the group to discuss these questions in pairs of threes:

- What is the definition of a refugee?
- What is the definition of a migrant?  
How is this different?

Hear feedback from the group and then share and discuss the legal definitions of migrants and refugees in Resource 1.

## ACTIVITY 2

### ANALYSE NATIVE SUN LYRICS FOR INSPIRATION

Play the song 'Mother and Son' by Native Sun to the class and ask them to think about what the song is about.

Play the song a second time and hand out the lyrics and ask them to discuss in pairs:

1. What do you think of the song?
2. What do each of the characters think/want? Why?
3. Underline any favourite lines.
4. Highlight the rhyming words.

Group feedback.

In the rap there are 4 beats per line with the 4th particularly stressed, get the students to tap the table to the rhythm.

Mother<sup>1</sup> I know<sup>2</sup>  
Why you telling<sup>3</sup> me for<sup>4</sup>?  
The things<sup>1</sup> that you say<sup>2</sup>  
I heard<sup>3</sup> them before!<sup>4</sup>  
I'm a grown man  
No more in my teens  
Wanna travel the world  
And follow my dreams

**ACTIVITY 3**  
**RHYMING**  
**WORD BANKS**  
**FOR YOUR**  
**POEM**

Using rhymes from the lyrics, put as many rhyming words in the grids as possible. Try to keep them within the theme, or the poem will take a strange direction!

**ACTIVITY 4**  
**WRITE A**  
**DIALOGUE POEM**  
**INSPIRED BY**  
**THE MOTHER**  
**AND SON SONG**

Write a poetry dialogue, like in Mother and Son, between one family member who wants to go and the other who wants them to stay.

Get into pairs and decide who the family members are: mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter, auntie, uncle, niece, nephew, grandmother, grandfather.

Use the table to collect ideas for why your character wants to stay/go.

- Use the rhyming word grids IF you want to use rhyme
- If you want to, replicate the rhythm in the rap part of the song and have four beats per line, with the large stress on the eighth count
- One idea is to write in four – six line stanzas, e.g:

**Character 1**

Line 1  
Line 2  
Line 3  
Line 4

**Character 2**

Line 1  
Line 2  
Line 3  
Line 4

Once the dialogue is complete, pairs may want to try and write a chorus which reflects the themes of their poem. Practice performing the poem dialogues before sharing with the group.

# RESOURCES

## ACTIVITY 1 RESOURCE 1

### WHO IS A REFUGEE?

A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee their 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.

Two-thirds of all refugees worldwide come from just five countries:

Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, Somalia

(UNHCR UN Refugee Agency website)

### WHO IS A MIGRANT?

The UN Migration Agency (IOM) defines a migrant as:

**Any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from their habitual place of residence.**

Regardless of whether they are legally able to do so or whether the movement is forced or voluntary. There is no specified length of stay in the UN migrant definition either.

## ACTIVITY 2

### RESOURCE 2

## Mother & Son Lyrics

by Native Sun

**Son where are you going to?**  
**My son where does the road lead to?**  
**Son listen to what I say**  
**My son why so far away.**

Mother I know  
Why you telling me for?  
The things that you said  
I've heard them before!

I'm a grown man  
No more in my teens  
Wanna travel the world  
And follow my dreams

**Fresh food from the Earth is Free**  
**Sweet Sun and the blues sea**  
**Land Green so abundantly... now**  
**Who will plant the seeds with me?**

Our little village is  
No longer for me  
The world is so big  
So much to see

Europe America  
The land of the free  
Home of the brave  
And that's where I'll be

**Things not always what they seem**  
**Grass on the other side not green**  
**See truth with a wise man's eyes**  
**Don't be confused by the lies**

I'm not confused  
I've made up my mind  
Sat with the elders  
Then prayed for a sign

And late last night  
I saw a vision  
It felt so real  
With so much precision

The fast cars  
Bright city lights  
Big tall buildings  
Large satellites

The money I can make  
In the land of the Rights  
Feel the heartbeat  
in a city so alive.

### CHORUS

**This journey for the gold**  
**We all desire for**  
**Sometimes the road we walk**  
**Is filled with heavy load,**

**Aint always what we need**  
**Our dreams we got to feed**

**Wherever we may go**  
**May angels guide our soul.**

It's been 6 months  
that have passed me by  
Away from my home  
exposed to the lies

Can't stop thinking  
My mother was right  
I feel so alone  
I cry through the night

Sleep in the streets  
whilst people walk by  
nothing to eat  
I wish I could fly

back to the place of my birth  
back to the place I'm worth  
close to my mum  
away from the land of the frozen Sun  
We respect the elderly and teach the young  
And people interact in my native Tongue.

No street lamps to provide us light  
We rely on the sun & the moon at night  
Eat from the earth never modified  
We share what we have with those in sight

When I close my eyes and search my soul  
Hear a voice telling me to come back home.

### CHORUS

**ACTIVITY 3**  
**RESOURCE 3**

**How many rhyming and half-rhyming words can you find for each word?**

Try and find words that are connected with migration - so 'trombone' wouldn't be right for 'home'.

**RHYMING**

**HALF-RHYMING**

**Home**

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**Free**

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**Live**

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**Go**

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**Need**

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**Please**

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**Land**

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## ACTIVITY 3 RESOURCE 3

## Poem extracts from the Migration Tales young writers

From **'Overseas Dreams'**

by Erica

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No Cudjoe, stay here please  
Because if you go away  
You'll come back, she'll be deceased  
This is serious, don't play

No Aunty, think about overseas,  
Better healthcare, better life  
And bigger dreams  
Away from all this strife.  
Along with money, I could bring a wife.

From **'Always asking Questions'**

by Jake & Yesna

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Listen sis, I love you to bits  
But you aint got a clue  
I want to perform  
Yet I still love you

My brother you are the only shine in our house  
To get the information  
I want you to stay  
Here you have everything  
If you don't feel this way  
I will give you anything

**Convincing my brother to stay**

by Yaqub & Ubaydullah

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Bro I have to leave  
I'm chasing job opportunities  
Let me follow my dreams  
Cause here I am wanted by the police

You have many responsibilities  
Mum is begging down on her knees  
Don't go I'm telling you please  
Just stay, it'll put our lives at ease

In this country there is war  
I don't want to suffer anymore  
So let me pull out my passport from the drawer  
And end this beef for once and for all

## ACTIVITY 4

### RESOURCE 4

#### REASONS TO STAY

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**Character:** \_\_\_\_\_

What can you see, hear, smell, taste, feel around you that could make someone want to stay? **There are...**

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What do you think the person should/could be doing in their home country?

**You could...**

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What will they lose if they go?

**You'll leave behind...**

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What does it physically feel like to lose what you care about?

**Without you...**

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*What is your future like without this person?*

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#### REASONS TO GO

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**Character:** \_\_\_\_\_

What is the situation that is making you want to go? (what can you see, hear, smell, taste, feel) **All I can see is...**

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What are the dreams you could achieve if you go? What is stopping them here?

**In another land I can...**

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What will you carry with you to the new land from your old life to help you build a new one?

**I'll take my...**

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What does it physically feel like to not be able to do what you want to do? Or to be living in fear? **Staying here I... Every morning I feel...**

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*What is your future like if you stay?*

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## FURTHER RESOURCES

- Refugee Week classroom resources: [refugeeweek.org.uk/resources/education-resources/classroom-resources/](https://refugeeweek.org.uk/resources/education-resources/classroom-resources/)
- Perform or record this piece together. For tips on how to record and edit your work, visit the Get Writing page on the Ministry of Stories website. [ministryofstories.org/top-tips-for-writing-scripts/](https://ministryofstories.org/top-tips-for-writing-scripts/)

## ABOUT US

**Ministry of Stories** champions the writer in every child. We were founded by Lucy Macnab, Ben Payne and best-selling author Nick Hornby, who wanted to create a space for young people in East London to become authors. Through innovative writing clubs, small-group mentoring and fun writing resources, we help young people discover and realise their own creative potential. Ministry of Stories centre was inspired by San Francisco's 826 Valencia and resides behind its own fantastical shop, Hoxton Street Monster Supplies, which has been selling goods such as Cubed Earwax and Thickest Human Snot to London monsters since 1818. All proceeds from the shop go back into the Ministry.

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## COUNTERPOINTS.

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