

# Curriculum Development Template

## Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad: Balkan Borderlands

Secondary Educators

### **Title:**

What Does It Mean To Be A Refugee?: The Bosnian Wars, 1992-1995

### **Author:**

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### **Purpose/Connection to the Curriculum:**

- Identify and describe the terms “refugee”, “migrant”, and “forced migrant”.
- Analyze video, graphic novels, and personal memoirs for standard narrative techniques (plot, perspective, theme, style, etc.)
- Participate in simulations designed to show what it is like to flee a country.
- Examine the historical circumstances pertaining to the break-up of the former Yugoslavia and the resulting wars, particularly in Bosnia.
- Describe life in the Bosnian capital Sarajevo during the siege from 1992-1996.

### **Overview:**

This curriculum unit is designed to provide students with insight into the experience of a refugee, highlighting the experience of Bosnians during the international armed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992-1995. American high school curricula typically focus on European peoples displaced by the World Wars, and often within this narrow exploration, the Balkans are largely ignored. Exposing these students to stories of a refugee experience from a time and place they otherwise may not be aware of offers an alternative and updated view that may help them better connect to and empathize with the plight of those forced from their homes by more current and/or ongoing conflicts.

The provided curriculum introduces students to a general definition of “refugee” along with an introduction to a generalized experience of a displaced person. Students will participate in a range of activities including multimedia simulations, analysis of case studies, and personal accounts. A brief introduction to Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian vocabulary (as well as the phonetic and Cyrillic alphabets) will be applied to aid in the reading of selected texts

### **Grade Level:**

Grade 9, easily modified for Grades 10-12.

### **Time Required:**

6-7 days

## Targeted Skills - Based on Arizona State Standards:

### Arizona High School ELA Standards:

9.10. RI.2 - Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development

9-10.RI.6 - Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric

9-10.SL.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions

9-10.W.2 - Write informative/explanatory texts.

b. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary

### Arizona High School Social Studies Standards:

Concept 1: The World in Spatial Terms

PO 2. Interpret maps and images (e.g., political, physical, relief, thematic, Geographic Information Systems [GIS], Landsat).

Concept 3: World in Transition

PO 3. Compare the development of empires (e.g., Roman, Han, Mali, Incan/Inkan, Ottoman) throughout the world

## Suggested Procedures:

### *Step #1: What is a refugee?*

- Warm-up: Prior to watching the video, ask students to take a couple minutes to write down any words, pictures, thoughts that come to mind when they hear the words: migrant, forced migrant, or refugee.
- Activity: Video "Introduction to the International Refugee Regime"
  - This video, created for this project by Georgetown University student Grace Benton, aims at introducing students to the international refugee regime and the historical definition of refugee. It focuses on demonstrating that refugees and forced migrants alike are not just mouths to be fed.
  - Student will [complete worksheet as an activity](#) while watching the video followed by short answer responses to comprehension/critical analysis questions.

***Step #2: “Against All Odds” – understanding the refugee experience***

Students will follow through guided sections of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees’ interactive online game “Against All Odds” paired with selected activities designed to promote collaboration, discussion, and to enhance the experience of what it is like to flee one’s home for the safety of a foreign country.

The “Against All Odds” interactive game offers 12 separate lessons from various stages in the experience of a person forced to leave their home. Below is an example of selected lessons as part of a specific unit. Different lessons may be selected to enhance different focuses.

- STAGE 1: “THE INTERROGATION!”

*This opening section of the game is set in a very claustrophobic and seemingly dangerous environment. The player sits face to face with a member of the ruling regime and must assert their stance on a number of statements.*

*Goal: To appreciate the value of human rights in their lives and how little it takes for an unscrupulous regime’s actions to become devastating for the country’s citizens.*

- Awareness Exercise
  - Divide the class into groups of 4-5 and ask them to discuss different situations in which oppression may arise. Different groups can work with different themes, such as: being bullied, being subjected to gossip, what you are allowed to like/dislike within the class, how to look or not to look at school, being ignored, being threatened or any other subject you think is relevant to your class.
  - Hold a discussion with the class about how it might feel to be the oppressor or the oppressed in the above scenarios.
  - Goal: To generate knowledge about the possible consequences a regime which undermines its citizen’s human rights.
  - Discussion: Should everybody be free? Do students have the right to criticize their classmates? Where should the line be drawn?
- STAGE 2: “LEAVE THE COUNTRY NOW!”

*Goal: To allow students to experience the practical difficulties a refugee faces when trying to escape. It is also intended to make them aware of the decisions one must take in order to leave safely.*

- Interactive Exercise
  - 1. Split the class into four groups.
  - 2. Assign each group a category, such as relatives, close friends, neighbours and acquaintances.
  - 3. Assign some members of each group different characteristics, such as disability, chronic illness, old age, a very young age, etc.

- 4. Give each group the same scenario: they must flee but three people in each group (or equivalent number depending on the size of groups) must be left behind.
  - 5. Place each group in different corners of the room.
  - Can everybody in the group flee together? Should they risk the whole group's safety? Each group must agree on which members will be left behind so as not to put the entire group in jeopardy. Those picked out must stand in the middle of the room and each in turn present reasons why they should be allowed to stay in the group. The group must then decide whether to accept, or reject, their pleas.
  - Discuss with your class how it felt to have to leave people behind, knowing that it could be fatal for them to stay in the country. Discuss how it felt to be outvoted and left behind.
  - Goal: To increase understanding of the difficult choices a refugee faces.
- STAGE 3: "FIND THE INTERPRETER!"

*This section of the game is set in a refugee center in a country of asylum.*

*Goal: To make students understand how alienated and vulnerable people become when they cannot communicate with the people around them, yet they need their help. In their home countries asylum seekers have family and a social network. Now, they are often completely alone in their country of asylum. Many asylum seekers also worry about their family's well-being back home.*

- Comprehension Exercise

- Ask students to discuss amongst themselves what they would need in order to start their life anew. Many refugees have few belongings with them when they arrive in their new country. Make the class pretend that all they have is the clothes on their back. Then ask each member of the class to explain one additional item that they need. But they are not allowed to talk – only gesticulate, draw on the black board or mime/dramatize without using words.
- Discuss with the class what feelings you might develop for your homeland if you were forced to move elsewhere. List the items pupils say they would miss on a flip chart.

- STAGE 4: "SORT BY ORIGIN!"

*In this section of the game, the user gets a chance to realize that much of what we assume to have originated from our country, actually has not. Trade, population movements and travel have all contributed to customs and products being spread between countries and cultures.*

- Awareness Exercise
- Our names are a good example of how cultures from around the world have influenced our own over the course of time. Bring books about the origin of names into class, or ask students to search the meaning of their own names and where they come from on the internet. Then ask the students to present their findings to the class and discuss which cultures, countries and religions etc. have influenced their name.

Discuss the significance of a person's name in relation to their identity, how we react to unusual names and how an employer might react to a foreign name.

Many of the most popular names for babies born today in the United Kingdom have foreign origins.

- Jack: This most probably comes from the French 'Jacques.'
- Thomas: This comes from the Greek 'Thomas', which itself comes from Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus.
- Oliver: This comes originally from Middle Low German, the German language as written and spoken c.1100-c.1500.
- Joshua: This comes from the Hebrew Yehoshua.
- Daniel: This also comes from Hebrew; it literally means "God is my judge;" and comes from the Old Testament of the Bible.
- William: This comes from the Norman Willaume, which comes from the French Guillaume, which itself comes from which comes from Old High German, the ancestor of the modern literary German language. It comes from willio "will" + helma "helmet."
- Samuel: This popular boys name originates from Late Latin, which came from the Greek Samouel, which came from the Hebrew Shemiel- 'the name of God.'
- Olivia: This comes from the Italian Olivia, from the Italian word for Olive- 'Oliva.'
- Jessica: This comes from the Latin Jesca, itself a version of the Greek Ieskha, which in turn comes from Hebrew!
- Chloe: This name has a simpler history; it originates from the Greek name Khloe, which is the poetic name for "young green shoot" and also the name of a character in Greek mythology.
- Lucy: This comes from the French Lucie, which comes from the Latin Lucia.

- Hannah: This means “graciousness” and comes from the Hebrew language; it originates from the word Hanan which means "he was gracious."
- Isabel/ Isabelle: A form of Elizabeth that is thought to have developed in Provence, in the south of France.
- Abigail: This also comes from the Hebrew Abhigayil, literally "my father is rejoicing," from abh "father" + gil "to rejoice."
- Amy: This romantic name comes from the Old French Amee, meaning "beloved."
- Freya: This comes from the UK’s Viking ancestry- Freya was the goddess of love and beauty in Norse mythology.
- Goal: To stimulate conversation and provoke thought over how different cultures, countries and people have affected each other’s customs and social development over the course of history.
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### ***Step #3: Experiences of Bosnian Refugees, 1992-1996***

Students will discover the plight of Bosnians during the Bosnian war via multimedia resources including printed memoir, poetry, video, music, and various selected art pieces.

- Analyze Illustrated Map of Sarajevo during the years of the siege
  - Identify landmarks of the city
  - Identify and discuss the significance of
    - Geography/Terrain of the city
    - “Sniper Alley”
    - The airport
    - The Tunnel
- Screen [\*Suad I Zivot\*](#), a student documentary film chronicling the experience of a refugee of the war now living in Phoenix, Arizona. (18 minutes)
  - Discuss with students which parts of the refugee experience they saw in Suad’s story that were also reflected in the “Against All Odds” simulation.
- Read & Annotate selected passages from *The Siege of Sarajevo: 1992-1996* by Amir Telibećirović
- Analyze and discuss the role of artist & musicians during the siege by viewing and interpreting selected works and passages in *Enjoy Sarajevo: Postcards from Sarajevo* by The Trio Design Team

#### ***Step #4:***

Students will be introduced to the Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language (BCS) as a phonetic language, its alphabet, and the Serbian Cyrillic alphabet.

- Begin by teaching students the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)
  - Students will write their names in the phonetic alphabet. This will allow students to practice identifying sounds and reinforce the concept of each sound being represented by a symbol.
  - Once students are confident in the IPA, introduce the Bosnian Alphabet. In the same way as the IPA, The Bosnian Alphabet in phonetic- every letter represents only one sound, and every sound has only one matching symbol.
    - Use a series of symbol Bosnian language words to practice identifying and pronouncing Bosnian letters
      - *dobar* = good
      - *loš* = bad
      - *lijep* = beautiful
  - Once students master pronunciation of Bosnian letters, introduce Serbian Cyrillic alphabet. Challenge students to decode words and short phrases from Cyrillic → Bosnian → English.

#### **Extending the Lesson:**

To extend the lesson or modify to accommodate Gifted/ESS students, incorporate the following texts:

Trebinčević, Kenan, and Susan Shapiro. *The Bosnia list a memoir of war, exile, and return*. New York, NY, Penguin Books, 2014.

*The Fixer: A Story from Sarajevo* by Joe Sacco