

A photograph of two women, likely of Arab descent, looking at an open book together. The woman on the left is wearing a white patterned headscarf and a matching patterned dress. The woman on the right is wearing a brown headscarf and a brown dress. They are both smiling and appear to be engaged in reading. The book they are holding has Arabic text on its pages. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be an outdoor setting with a patterned rug.

THEIR STORY IS OUR STORY

LITERATURE & WRITING CURRICULUM
Grades 9-12



THEIR STORY IS OUR STORY

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Significant regional differences in ethnic representation will continue into the 21st century, with diversification playing a most significant role in the make-up of classrooms and workforces. According to the 2010 US Census, 31.1 million of the nation's population were foreign-born and by 2050 the US population is projected to have no single ethnic group that constitutes a majority of the population. This is just one example of how important it is for schools to teach the value of diversity since working with diversity will be a bottom-line issue for all future business in the global marketplace. As such, from a young age, students need to recognize the importance of appreciating diversity. This curriculum focuses on helping students understand and embrace diversity through the use of culturally relevant literature.

ACROSS THE CURRICULUM STANDARDS

This curriculum addresses these Common Core Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in word.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen detail, and well-structured event sequences.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.



THEIR STORY IS OUR STORY

UNIT CONTENTS

- Lesson 1: Identity. Everyone has a story.
- Lesson 2: Examining the news. How are our stories formed?
- Lesson 3: Learning to listen and interview.
- Lesson 4: How stories define identity.
- Lesson 5: Fair news or fake news. What is bias?
- Appendix

YOUR FEEDBACK IS CRITICAL

We would love your feedback! Help us broaden the scope of our education, advocacy, and integration programs by participating in our data collection initiative. Everything we learn from the feedback can be used to evolve and advance our programming.

TEACHER FEEDBACK FORM

Once you have utilized the lessons within your classroom, please share your experience!

Secondary Teacher Feedback Form: <https://forms.gle/JkgsF81rxJQXJoNe9>

LESSON 1

IDENTITY: EVERYONE HAS A STORY

The logo consists of the letters "TSOS" in a white, bold, sans-serif font, centered within a solid green square.

SUMMARY

Students will understand truths about their own traits and family history. They will learn how conflict (religious, ethnic, cultural, social) impacts basic rights and how basic rights directly influence a person's identity.

Students will further develop critical thinking skills by analyzing primary sources from refugees. Through exposure to others' stories, students will develop increased empathy for displaced populations.

MATERIALS

- Blank pieces of paper for the Identity Web activity
- Copies of "Where I'm From" poem
- Copies of "I'm From" templates
- Copies of "I am a Refugee Child" and "Stacks of Memories" poems

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

The lesson will culminate with a classroom discussion about identity and the importance of personal stories in recognizing and realizing identity. Students will develop a personal identity web and an identity poem that transitions to a discussion of refugee identities. Students will begin to make connections between global and local issues.

LESSON 1

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INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY 1: Create an Identity Web

1. Before beginning this activity, ask students to brainstorm a list of categories that could be used to define themselves such as: gender, age, physical characteristics, interests, personality traits, and hobbies as well as ties to a specific heritage, language, religion, or ethnic group. Feel free to include favorite foods, movies, books, activities, and aspirations.

Remind students that if sharing their identity charts with the class, they might want to keep some things private. Allow them to fully explore their identity by refraining from sharing with the class if they so choose. No student should be made to feel that they must speak for other members of their culture or family. These identity webs will help them start on the path of their "I'm From..." poem assignment.

2. Model the creation of your own identity web. Add personal identifiers such as your name, gender, personality traits, physical features, job, school, team affiliations, family titles, ethnicity, culture or customs, favorite food, interests, passions, religion, family background (refugee, displaced, immigrant - when and from where), favorite books, how do you treat your friends, pets, favorite place in the world, a place you want to visit.

LESSON 1

TSOS

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

3. Provide a blank piece of paper to each student to create their own Identity Web.
4. Once completed, as a group consider the many factors that shape how they see and define themselves. Discussion questions:
 - Do they have any common traits, interests, or passions with other people in the class? Which traits are inherited? Which traits are learned?
 - This activity is meant to highlight each student's individuality, to share their favorite parts of themselves, their family, and their heritage and culture. It is important to facilitate this discussion so that it is a safe learning space, and so that any one student doesn't feel responsible for educating the rest about their own culture.

ACTIVITY 2: *Where I'm From* poem and reflection

1. Pass out copies of George Ella Lyon's "Where I'm From" poem and read it to the class. (See appendix.)
2. After you read the poem share this contextual information about the author:
George Ella Lyon is a poet, writer, musician, storyteller, and teacher from the Appalachian region of Kentucky. Her experience in a small, coal-mining town motivated her to write about identity and belonging to a group or family while maintaining individuality. (Continued on next page.)

LESSON 1

TSOS

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

She wrote this poem to help her define herself by determining where she was from. In identifying all her childhood memories, she defined herself and her story through her poetry. We all have our own story to tell. This poem helps zoom in on the specifics of that story and allows exploration of background, home, childhood, upbringing, and family culture.

(source: <http://www.georgeellalyon.com/about.html>)

3. Read the poem aloud one more time. Pass out the "Create your own "I'm From" poem" worksheet (see appendix).
4. Instruct the students to refer to their identity web, and, using the worksheet, create their own "I'm from" poem.
5. Encourage students to share their poems.
6. Then, using the discussion questions below, guide students in a reflection of their story, their self-concept, and their identities a bit more:
 - Everyone has a story; what is your story?
 - What questions would you want someone to ask you?
 - If you had a portrait made of yourself, how would you want it to look? Which side of your face would you show? What type of expression? Why?
 - (Think about selfies you take and how you pose, which filter you use, the audience to whom you post.)
 - How do you want to be defined? How are you defined? Are you ever asked to be the voice of your culture, community, or your family? How does that make you feel?

LESSON 1

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INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY 3: Refugee Identity poems

1. Provide students with copies of each of the two identity poems from refugee youth. "I Am a Refugee Child" and "Stacks of Memories". (see appendix).
2. Read each poem aloud.
3. Lead a discussion using the following questions as guidance. Please note: take extra precautions if the classroom or school is home to forcibly displaced (e.g. refugee or asylum-seeking) students. Those students should not feel obliged to speak for all other displaced persons. Instead, focus your discussion points on the universal commonalities that relate to all students such as change, fear, family.
 - Referring to both of these identity poems, what do we know about Monsoor and Kaleeq?
 - (These are childhood poems with an unhappy theme, they represent the perspective of children who have been forcibly displaced from their homes, sometimes through violence.)
 - What is their life's experience thus far?
 - (The lives of these children and other refugees are a disrupted life, with every effort being made to survive. There is little food, shelter, or security.)
 - What do they know about themselves and the world around them?
 - (They know they are not safe and usually uncomfortable - hunger, cold, heat, thirst, etc. but there is very little chance of school or education, so the world around refugee children is very confusing.)

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INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

- How are Monsoor and Kaleeq similar to you? How are they different from you?
 - (Like most people, they want peace, to laugh, and hope for the future with their families. They might differ from your students in the difficulty and traumatizing experiences during their early childhood.)
- What parts are missing from the poems that could help you better understand or connect to Monsoor and Kaleeq?
 - (Where do they live? Do they go to school? What do they like to do with their recreational time? What food do they like to eat? Do they have a favorite game or film they like to watch?)
- What opportunities are becoming more difficult to realize when people are forced from their homes?
 - (Forcibly displaced people might miss the opportunities to attend school, to remain together with their families, have job security, live outside a refugee camp, experience consistent feelings of security instead of fear.)
- How do our home and security add to our identity and the way we define ourselves?
 - (Think of how housing security and personal security allow you your recreational time, games, family activities, camps, lessons, meal times, and regular family visits.)

Please note: You will talk more about the classification of “refugees”, “asylum seekers”, and “forcibly displaced people” in our next class, but for right now they should read and examine these “identity” poems with the understanding you have built after having created your own “identity” poem.

LESSON 2

EXAMINING THE NEWS: HOW ARE OUR STORIES FORMED?

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SUMMARY

Students will begin to make a connection between their personal identity and the identities of people experiencing displacement. Students will understand the difference between titles assigned to forcefully displaced populations, and discuss legal rights, human rights, and children's rights. Students will explore news stories told with statistics and numbers and how those stories compare with individual, personal accounts. They will discuss ethical journalism through the lens of authenticity and opinion.

MATERIALS

- [Story Cards](#) or book [Let Me Tell You My Story](#)
- [Link](#) to Rohingya news article
- [Link](#) to "What is a Refugee?" movie
- Key Terms worksheet (see appendix)
- Links to statistics websites
- [Link](#) to "Doctor, Refugee. Violinist, Refugee. Model, Refugee" article
- [Link](#) to "Ethical Journalism - The 5 Core Values of Journalism" movie
- Interview packet (see appendix)

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will make connections between global and local issues through an examination of current events. Students will prepare to conduct interviews by generating ten interview questions that will be respectful of the refugee's experience, as well as considerate in understanding the truth of how and why the refugee is displaced.

LESSON 2

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INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY 1: Current events classroom discussion

1. Lead a classroom discussion focused on what types of news students have recently read or watched. Become engaged in this moment, but limit the discussion to 7-8 minutes.

- Discussion questions: What are you hearing, seeing in the news or around you that is affecting you? What is important to you? What have you been hearing about that concerns you?

2. Ask students to create a personal chart with two to three items. On a piece of paper or on the board in the classroom, write two columns: WHAT IS IN YOUR NEWSFEED? / WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT IT?

3. Have students refer to the Identity Web and poem they created in the last lesson.

Read the following writing prompt out loud or write it on the board:

- How does the news you consume reflect ideas from your identity web and poem?
- How do your opinions reflect the ideas in your web and poem?

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INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY 2: Examining global news

1. Without minimizing the import or gravity of the students' experiences, transition to a global perspective of examining news that other students across the globe may be reading or living. Let's consider youth in Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh and ask the question: "What is their news?"
2. Refer to the article "Bangladesh is deliberately blocking Rohingya refugee children from education, report says" article and have students read through it. (Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2019/12/03/asia/rohingya-children-denied-education-report-intl-hnk/index.html>).
3. Lead a classroom discussion using the following questions as prompts:
 - Everyone has a story. What is one of the stories for these school children?
 - How might they feel?
 - What are the consequences of what is happening to their schooling?
 - Why is this happening to them?
4. Pass out the Key Terms worksheet (see appendix), and share the following video entitled *What is a refugee?* <https://vimeo.com/178424449>

LESSON 2

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INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

Key Terms Answer Key:

- Refugee—A person who leaves his or her country due to a well-founded fear of persecution because of his or her race, religion, nationality, political views, or membership in a particular social group. People fleeing conflicts are also generally considered to be refugees since they are seeking refuge (safety). Refugees have specific rights and protections under international law. For example, refugees have the right to not be forced to return to the unsafe situation that they fled. Refugees have the rights of security and freedom of movement. They have the right to keep their family together. Similarly, countries that have refugees seeking asylum in their territory have specific responsibilities under international law for the treatment of those refugees.
- Asylum Seeker—A person who has moved across international borders in search of protection and filed a claim for asylum with the host country’s government. While the government reviews the claim, the person remains an asylum seeker. If the claim is accepted, the person becomes a “refugee” in the eyes of the government. For example, someone from Syria who is living in Germany and waiting to hear the outcome of his or her asylum application would be considered an asylum seeker.

The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR)—Established by the United Nations, the UNHCR is an international organization responsible for the protection of refugees worldwide.

LESSON 2

TSOS

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

Key Terms Answer Key:

- Internally Displaced Person (IDP)—A person who is forcibly uprooted within his or her country but who has not crossed an international border. IDPs may be forced from their home as a result of armed conflict, human rights violations, or natural or human-made disasters, yet remain in their country.
- Stateless Person - someone who is not considered as a national by any state under the operation of its law. Some stateless people are also refugees. However, not all refugees are stateless, and many people who are stateless have never crossed an international border. For example, when citizenship has been revoked or renounced for punishment or in the process of seeking asylum when a host country withdraws support, leaving a person belonging to no country.

**These definitions are not mentioned specifically in the video but could be important discussion points depending on the number of refugees living in the area, the background of refugees attending the school, and the region's exposure to refugee issues:*

- Migrant—A person who moves to a foreign country for various reasons—for example, for employment, education, or in order to reunite with family—usually for a year or more. Unlike refugees, migrants do not face a direct threat of persecution or death in their home country.
- Unaccompanied Minor - a child without the presence of a legal guardian, or those who have been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so.
- Host Country—The country to which a refugee relocates.
- Asylum—Shelter or protection from danger granted by a country to someone forced to leave their home country.

LESSON 2

TSOS

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY 3: Numbers vs. individual stories

1. Use the links below to present statistics to the class. Discuss how pervasive the refugee crisis is, and how many people, countries, economies it impacts:

- <https://www.unhcr.org/innovation/10-infographics-that-show-the-insane-scale-of-the-global-displacement-crisis/>
- <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/10/05/key-facts-about-the-worlds-refugees/>
- <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>
- https://www.choices.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Data_Sheet2018.pdf

2. Ask the students: What is the story told by these numbers and graphics? Then refer to the following article, which presents four very different refugee stories, "Doctor, Refugee. Violinist, Refugee. Model, Refugee". (Source:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/28/world/americas/doctor-refugee-violinist-refugee-model-refugee.html>)

3. Compare and contrast using the different sources of information.

- How is this news story different?
 - (Individual stories vs. Global snapshot)
- What is the importance of getting individual stories?
 - (In listening to individual stories, we begin to understand similarities across all stories.)

LESSON 2

TSOS

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

- What is the importance of stories propelled by numbers?
 - (Numbers express the real nature of the dilemma - the more people affected, the more quickly and effectively countries should respond.)
- How do you get a story that captures a person's true identity?
 - (Interview and listening, observation - allowing identity for each section of a person's history: before conflict, conflict, journey, limbo, integration, becoming.)
- How does each kind of story affect policy change or a change of reception?
 - (It can help us treat people like people. We can see strangers as less threatening and imagine the kinds of policies that would be beneficial to us if we were living the same experience they lived.)

ACTIVITY 4: The importance of reporting news ethically

1. Watch "Ethical Journalism - The 5 Core Values of Journalism" (3:00)

<https://youtu.be/uNidQHk5SZs>

2. Discuss the phrase Ethical Journalist.

REMEMBER: ACCURACY, INDEPENDENCE, IMPARTIALITY, HUMANITY, ACCOUNTABILITY

LESSON 2

TSOS

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

3. Lead a discussion around these questions and topics:

- What does it mean to be ethical in journalism?
- What is ACCURACY in journalism?
 - (Fact-based information. Presenting facts as they happen without setting distorting the fact with opinion.)
- How does a journalist write INDEPENDENT stories?
 - (They gather facts for authentic news rather than provide a story filtered through a special interest - or on behalf of a political group or corporate interest.)
- What is the most important part of an authentic story?
 - (Pertinent facts with the contextual background.)
- How does IMPARTIALITY provide a more authentic story?
 - (Seeking out the many sides of a story helps the journalist report facts without bias, to allow readers to form their own opinion instead of being fed a story filtered through the author's agenda or bias.)
- What is editorializing?
 - (Definition - the process of editing according to opinion.)
- How does editorializing diminish both the subject and the reader?
 - (Editorializing only provides a story through the small lens of a writer instead of allowing readers to come to their own conclusion based on presented facts.)
- What kind of harm can a journalist do?
 - (In forgetting HUMANITY journalists can forget the consequences of repeating hate speech, showing photos of explicit violence, or pictures that could endanger the subject.)

LESSON 2

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INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

- How can conflation require ACCOUNTABILITY?
 - (When a writer merges their own limited understanding with the story they are reporting with the result of misinformation or inaccuracies that will require correction or engagement to repair misunderstanding.)
 - (For example: "the forceful conflation of two traditions" reporting could force an ancient Muslim religious text to be examined only under a 21st-century Christian lens, resulting in the misunderstanding of people practicing a different religion - such a conflation could be the basis for prejudice or bias).
 - In spite of their very best efforts, journalists often have to print retractions, corrections, revisions, and sometimes even apologies. Do you know any examples of this happening?
 - Do you have a journalist in mind whom you deem ethical? Why?
 - (Allow students to name anyone, and provide their explanation, then ask the following questions while considering their choice of a journalist. Your students may not have an opinion on this topic, but relate their answers to the above discussion questions and answers. Have them reflect if their journalist produces content for a trusted news source.)
4. Hand out the Interview packet (see appendix) and discuss this statement: *Authentic narratives start with an ethical interview.*
5. Have students examine the interview packet, knowing that they will soon conduct an interview with someone.

LESSON 2

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INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY 5: Interview question preparation

1. Assign each group of two students a TSOS Story Card or a story from the book.
2. Share with them that after refugees have integrated into a new home, found work, succeeded in learning a new language and culture, they often feel like the only question people ask them is, “What was it like to be a refugee?” Or “Tell me about the scariest moment you had fleeing your homeland.”
3. Tell the groups that their homework is to look over the interview packet, and create their own interview questions that do not define someone by their “worst” moment or experience. Consider how they would be “present” in the interview and respectful of the person they are interviewing (listening with curiosity). These questions are ones they would want to be asked if they were the ones answering the questions. The answers are what would define your story to the world.
4. Students are to come prepared to the next lesson knowing the story of the refugee they are representing (from the story card or book). The students are to be prepared to ask questions that will show their sincere interest as well as give the interviewee an opportunity to define themselves the way they would choose.

LESSON 3:

LEARNING TO LISTEN & INTERVIEW

The logo for TSOS (The Storytelling Organization) is a dark green square with the letters "TSOS" in white, bold, sans-serif font.

SUMMARY

Through discussion, modeling, and small group activities, students will utilize basic skills of writing, interviewing, and reporting. Students will learn to generate questions to discover truths about a person or event, will discuss using straight facts instead of opinions, and will develop connections between global and local issues of importance to forcibly displaced people. Students will also learn the importance of active listening during an interview, using respectful questions, and observing cues that might signal different interviewing needs. Using professional interviewing prompts, students will have the ability to recognize and explore perspectives born of the influence of global conflict and forced migration through a simulated refugee interview with other students using true refugee stories. Through this process, students will be briefed on the importance of confidentiality, and the consequences refugees and their families face when a story is published, respecting protective aliases and photo embargoes.

MATERIALS

- Story Cards or book Let Me Tell You My Story
- Interview packet
- Interviewee for the teacher to model experience (make sure they have had an opportunity to “learn” their story from the story card)
- Story Gathering Proposal Form

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

The lesson will culminate with students learning basic journalistic interviewing questions, then using those skills to conduct an interview with a “proxy” refugee, and gathering facts intended to be used in creating an authentic story without editorializing or opinion.

LESSON 3

TSOS

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY 1: Exploring interview questions

1. Lead a discussion about the 5 general questions covered in an interview (who, what, where, when, and how). Discuss qualities of meaningful interview questions:

- Journalists ask all these questions in an effort to report the true context and facts of a story. However, they are usually “thin” questions.
- Our hope is to tell the story of “why” and continue to ask questions that provide evidence for their story.
- Anticipate the many different answers to the same question, and ask open-ended questions that allow the interviewee to talk as much as possible.
- A good interviewer talks as little as possible.
- Further share that an interviewer that is actively listening can conduct an interview that inspires friendship.
- Here are some examples of good questions:
 - Tell me about your name, why did your family _____?
 - Can you talk more about that?
 - Just to be sure that I am understanding you, could you clarify _____?
 - I heard you say _____ can you give me an example of what you mean?
 - Did I hear you correctly when you said _____?
 - That is interesting. What makes you say that?
 - Can you explain how you came to that conclusion?- Allowing your subject to think and respond according to their process is respectful.

Note: Recording an interview can be helpful to provide audio and written notes. Apps like Voice Recorder can give an easy file to transfer audio, but an app like Otter will also provide a roughly written transcript while you are interviewing.

LESSON 3

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INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY 2: Conducting interviews

1. First demonstrate how to conduct an interview with a “proxy” refugee, one of your students in class. If the chosen student needs to be interviewed by another student as well, give the student a different identity for the student interview.
2. Working in the pairs assigned during yesterday's lesson, students will review the refugee story cards they were assigned and review the interview questions they wrote as homework. One student will then interview the other student, “recording” notes (either written or recorded on a device).
3. At the end of 10 minutes the students will switch places as interviewer and interviewee. This interview is essential in successfully completing the following homework assignment.
4. *Extension:* The interview is the primary source for the story, but encourage students to do extra research to confirm, verify, and clarify aspects recounted in the interview. Use reliable news sources to research possible events happening in the same geography during the time of their journey. Work to find similar stories that might corroborate the story of your interviewee (stories from the same or nearby refugee camp, or stories that entail the actions of border guards from certain countries such as Bulgaria or Turkey). Be sure that each statement is identified with correct punctuation.

LESSON 3

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INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY 3: Story proposal

1. Hand out the Story Gathering Proposal form (see appendix). This is a pre-writing organizer meant to help students write a story from their interview. Students should be prepared for their story to be peer-reviewed and “pitched” during an editorial board meeting deciding on the “front page” story.

2. Present the assignment: Create a news story from the interview, considering the context (history), while clarifying the story through exact quotes. The story should be verified with a series of events with corroborated accounts. This assignment needs to be completed before the next lesson begins.

Typically the final story will consist of:

- **STORY IDEA** - Get your main idea from synthesizing interviews and observations.
- **THE LEAD** - a compelling introduction sentence, or statement that hooks a reader to continue reading, while serving as a thesis for the whole story.
- **BODY** - the context and story of the refugee’s reason for leaving or the events of their journey.
- **RESEARCH & FACT CHECK** - Understand the context, dates, and possible corresponding events. Research the topic and background of your interview. Names, dates, locations should be included.
- **QUOTATIONS** - choose the best statements from their interviews explaining their experiences, their hopes, and aspirations for the future, how they see the situations (through their eyes). Use your interview notes - be sure to honor alias names or embargoed photos.

LESSON 3

TSOS

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

- EXPERTS & SOURCES - cite your sources and experts who might be explaining the situation on the ground - how does their assessment add or conflict with your observation? Make sure sources are good, unbiased, and are associated with fair news sources.
- TRANSITIONS - Smooth transitions through story and quotations that lead to a conclusion of their account, and make sure the story is balanced with all viewpoints represented.

The story should then go through the processes of:

- SELF EDIT - read it out loud to yourself. Double-check name and location spellings.
- PEER EDIT
- PUBLISHING (through Editorial Board) TO:
 - Art/Story Gallery
 - Newspaper (printing)
 - Website or Social Media
 - Television (Broadcast)

References and Journalistic Style guides:

- Associated Press Stylebook. Eds. Christopher W. French and Norm Goldstein. New York: The Associated Press
- Cappon, Rene J. The Associated Press Guide to News Writing. Lawrenceville, NJ: Peterson's, 2000.
- Schumacher, Michael. The Writer's Complete Guide to Conducting Interviews. Cincinnati, Ohio: Writer's Digest Books, 1993.

LESSON 4:

HOW STORIES DEFINE IDENTITY

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SUMMARY

Students will learn about Editorial Boards, the responsibility of presenting authentic news, and editing stories through a lens of identifying claims and sources while using direct interview quotes in a synthesized story. They will develop social comprehension by questioning the ethics of stories and their relevance to local, regional, and global issues. Students will learn about the risks to journalists and the threats that persist against people trying to tell accurate stories.

MATERIALS

- [Story Cards](#) or book [Let Me Tell You My Story](#)
- Interview packet
- News Story Survey
- [Link](#) to Refugee Journalist article
- [Link](#) to Journalist Protection Act
- *Setup suggestions: Have story cards printed and set up next to the student's written stories, displayed for a gallery experience.*

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to develop critical thinking skills by analyzing primary sources as a form of generating questions intended to understand multiple global perspectives.

They will investigate the refugee crisis through the eyes of first-hand witnesses, while practicing investigation through interview questions leading to greater global understanding. Students will be able to identify short and long term effects of conflict on human rights and the broader societal implications on local, regional, and global communities.

LESSON 4

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INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY 1: Creating an Editorial Board

1. Explain the purpose of an Editorial Board. Discussion points:
 - What is an Editorial Board?
 - (It is a group of journalists, writers, and editors who meet together regularly to discuss upcoming stories - their tone and subject, the sources and fact-checking of the stories, the timing of publication, and where the story will be published.)
 - How does an Editorial Board work?
 - (Writers meet together, then bring each story to the table for discussion. Ethical considerations of story and photography are combined to decide story priorities, which stories will go to print, and how to make each story better. It is a team effort to provide the most accurate and best-written stories for the public.)
 - How does it work for today's purpose of unbiased reporting and writing about the refugees' stories?
 - (Observe how the stories are written as first-person narratives - the most authentic re-telling of someone's story is to use their words as much as possible)
 - What are the ethical questions that should be addressed during an Editorial Board?
 - (Are we writing this story with an agenda other than presenting the facts? Are we keeping the story in context - historical, political, quotes and references? Is this story fact-checked? Are there two approved sources that corroborate events, timing, quotes, etc., and are we protecting sources and people who may be in danger for telling their story?)

LESSON 4

The logo consists of the letters "TSOS" in a white, bold, sans-serif font, centered within a solid green square.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

- Why is Ethical Reporting important?
 - (Besides telling a fair story with verified facts and reliable sources, it is crucial that journalism stories do not infuse their reporting with an opinion or tell their story with personal editorializing - those pieces are perfect in the Op-ed (opinion -editorial) section with clear labeling. News stories should report the truth so the reader can come up with their own opinion.)
 - What ethical questions get asked in an Editorial Board when reporting stories about refugees?
 - (Does this person need an alias, or their picture left out to protect their family? Will this story endanger the person's legal standing or citizenship process? Does this story put anyone in danger? Should we save the story and photographs for a future date when this person is in a safer situation?)
2. Create the Editorial Board. Put students into groups of six to eight, and explain that in preparation for the Editorial Boards they will switch stories within their group for a first "peer review" edit. Remind the readers that they are looking to:
- Shed the editorial comments and the opinions.
 - Use as many first-person quotes as possible.
 - Add extra geographical or historical context.

LESSON 4

TSOS

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

3. Discuss the roles of “Editors” and “Editor in Chief”. (They push the authenticity of the story by asking for claims, evidence, and synthesis of the facts.)
 - What additional questions would you ask to get this information?
 - What are your sources for this claim?
 - How can you back up this story?
 - What is the context of this story?
 - Where does the story go?
 - Current applications (locally, is there a similar situation happening right now?)
 - Should this be a front-page story? (Important.) Above the crease? (Most important.)

4. Each “news organization” or group of students can begin the creation of their paper’s reporting on the refugee crisis (based on the stories they have written). Create an editorial board ready to present their front-page story by assigning roles:
 - One student is assigned Editor in Chief (responsible for maintaining journalistic standards).
 - Each student peer edits a story and will be responsible for pitching this story (it should not be their own).
 - Each student presents the story they have edited to the Editorial Board, and they discuss how to make it a stronger piece.
 - The team decides on one story to take to the “front page”. Be prepared to present.

LESSON 4

The logo consists of a dark green square with the letters 'TSOS' in white, bold, sans-serif font.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY 2: Gallery Walk

1. Conduct a Gallery Walk through the classroom. Present story cards alongside students' written news stories on the walls around the classroom.
2. Allow the students to walk around the displayed story cards and written stories.
3. Students fill out a survey (see appendix) for each story (hand in as a vote for the consensus story. They should consider: strengths, weaknesses, research, quotes, fact-checking, themes, and current applications (locally).
4. After the gallery walk, ask: What question comes to your mind after these lessons?
Talking points:
 - Everyone has a Story. It is an important part of how they define themselves.
 - Stories are how we define the world.
 - Your power in telling a story will determine how you see the world and the people who live in it.
5. A discussion should be held allowing students to ask questions of these final stories and discuss how to make them “authentic”.
6. Discuss: What is the greatest challenge facing journalists today?
Journalists can face violence and intimidation in performing their profession in gathering and presenting the facts of a story. More and more, journalists (especially women) face hostility, detention or prison, murder, kidnapping, harassment and trolling, and abuse and torture.

LESSON 4

TSOS

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

7. Discuss the risks of accurate journalism. Share the article "The Panel: What it's like being a refugee journalist". This story includes a graphic account of a Ugandan journalist who was forced to flee his home after having reported a story that the government did not want to be public. It is a conversation starter about how journalists can become refugees because of their profession. (Source:

<https://www.theguardian.com/the-guardian-foundation/2019/jun/20/the-panel-whats-it-like-being-a-refugee-journalist>)

8. Share the following stories from the book Let Me Tell You My Story (if you have a copy) about journalists whose work forced them to flee their home:

- Walid, p. 118-19
- Faroosh and Elina, p. 84
- Bilal, p. 42-43

9. Classroom discussion questions:

- Why would anyone want to obstruct authentic or true stories that have been carefully collected?
 - (They are ashamed of the information reported, there is a financial disadvantage for the truth coming out, there is a political disadvantage for a story coming to light.)
- What protections should be in place for the servants of the press? What is a shield law?
 - Journalists have a responsibility to protect their sources. However, shield laws (laws that protect information and sources gathered by journalists) vary from state to state.

LESSON 4

TSOS

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

- Physical protection for journalists is addressed in a new federal bill introduced called the “Journalist Protection Act” that would establish new criminal offenses for intentional acts (or attempts to commit acts) that cause bodily injury to a journalist.
https://www.cjr.org/united_states_project/journalists_privilege_shield_law_primer.php
- What requirements should be required for journalists to ensure the authenticity of their stories?
 - (First-person narrative, two reliable sources, peer editing, an editorial board, ethical considerations for the subject.)

LESSON 5:

FAIR NEWS OR FAKE NEWS? WHAT IS BIAS?

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SUMMARY

Students utilize critical thinking skills to analyze primary sources. They identify multiple perspectives and recognize these perspectives influence interactions, behavior, and decision-making. Students will learn to recognize media influence and media bias.

MATERIALS

- [Story Cards](#) or book [Let Me Tell You My Story](#)
- Students' printed stories
- [Link](#) to Covid news literacy article
- [Link](#) to Covid news literacy article
- Media Bias Fact worksheet
- Links to articles for examining a news story
- The 10 Stages of Genocide handout

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will analyze various resources to acquire information and draw succinct conclusions. Students will be able to cite specific evidence to explain the effect of bias on ethical and fair news and fake news.

LESSON 5

TSOS

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY 1: Fair News and Fake News

- 1. Read the following articles about news literacy surrounding Covid 19 topics:
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2020/04/01/no-coronavirus-doesnt-live-surfaces-17-days-no-queen-elizabeth-didnt-test-positive-that-more-news-literacy-lessons/>
 - <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2019/11/19/fighting-misinformation-pandemic-heres-help-teaching-students-distinguish-real-news-whats-fake/>
2. Lead a discussion on the question:
- What is the result of fake news?
 - (Distrust and uncertainty in news outlets in general. It feels impossible to really know the truth.)

ACTIVITY 2 Understanding Bias key terms

1. Pass out the Media Bias - Key terms worksheet (see appendix) and discuss the definitions for each term as students fill in the worksheet. (This can be a take-home, or a point by point classroom discussion for their notes.)

LESSON 5

TSOS

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

ACTIVITY 3: Discussing bias

1. Lead a discussion on these questions:

- What is our bias? How does it interact with our INDEPENDENCE?
 - (Everyone has their opinions that can be a source of potential bias in what they write. Bias can be conscious or unconscious. As the reader, you also have conscious and unconscious biases that affect the kinds of stories you choose to read, how you read them, and the news sources you choose to read.)
 - (To develop a more objective perspective and become better informed about world events, it is important to compare coverage from several news sources who might report the story with different political biases to help us understand our own “slant” or “bias.”)
- Other notes to discuss and consider:
 - We all have some bias based on a prior experience, our environment, or some part of our identity. Recognizing that some things make us uncomfortable is the first step of checking how we measure character and tell stories about people.
 - Sources of news also can be seen to write according to their political ‘view’ or bias, and that bias affects how they report their stories. Do you have a strongly held political view that might color the story you're reading?
 - Make connections to other stories you know. How has your media experience added to your opinion of these stories? Have you read The Diary of Anne Frank or learned Malala's story? Have you seen “The Sound of Music?” (This can include video games, genres of music, and fantasy literature with current themes).

LESSON 5

TSOS

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

- Have you already formed an opinion on these characters before? For example: do you know refugee characters in literature? Are they portrayed as heroes or villains? Do you already have an opinion about foreigners or people who don't speak your language well?
- How can you check if the news is an accurate portrayal?
 - (Look at the media source, the date it is originally posted, are there other news sources telling the same story, is the news source an organization that follows basic journalistic guidelines, is it an op-ed "opinion editorial?" A great resource: <https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/>

2. *Extension topic:* Microaggression

In a worst-case scenario, we participate in microaggressions. "Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership."

- Dr. Derald Wing Sue, Columbia University.

This means that the questions that we ask in an interview situation often determine the direction of the story, and how the interviewee is defined in reporting the story.

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INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

3. Discuss how to change the bias and develop impartiality.

- Some information can help turn media bias on its head. Look at the three photos from the UK Holiday Ad Campaign (see appendix) and discuss how the World Wide Tribe is trying to change the bias in telling a refugee's story.
 - (Refugees are not defined by the most awful or difficult event of their lives. A story need not force a person to relive trauma or cause them to feel pain or shame. So, what other questions can be asked? What other information about their life story should be shared?)

ACTIVITY 4: Examining a news story

1. Use the following new story to determine the true facts about chocolate

consumption: <https://www.thedailybeast.com/11-reasons-chocolates-good-for-you>

2. Only offer up additional sources if asked by the students. If they do not ask, use the additional sources to illuminate:

- <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/food-and-drink/features/10-convincing-health-reasons-should-eat-chocolate-lowering-risk/>
- <https://www.everydayhealth.com/diet-and-nutrition-pictures/delicious-reasons-to-eat-dark-chocolate.aspx>
- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/expert-answers/healthy-chocolate/faq-20058044>

LESSON 5

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INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

3. Discuss the importance of confirming the sources of stories. Is it better to listen to the *Daily Beast* or the *Mayo Clinic* when seeking true facts on health and well-being (The Mayo Clinic is one of the leading sources for medical academic research, as opposed to the Daily Beast).
4. Discuss the purpose of the story (sales, propaganda, holiday filler). Compare the two almost identical articles and discuss the reasons for overlap. (Is it looking to increase shares and internet traffic, is it appeasing a sponsor?)
5. Discuss the timing of the story. Is this an outdated story? Have there been recent developments that change the context? Compare the dates of the sources.
6. Discuss the popularity of the story. Ask: why is this question being tapped by so many outlets? Why is this issue so abundantly addressed? (So many people like to eat chocolate - could it affect their bias for the good news that chocolate is actually a health food?)
7. Use the following news article to see how a newspaper organization worked to apologize and revise badly written articles about a lynching that could have led to more lynchings: <https://apnews.com/article/290b606c5ae248408031b803cefd927f>

LESSON 5

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INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

8. Ask: Can apologizing demonstrate strength in a news organization? (Yes.) Does repairing past new stories fulfill the code of ACCOUNTABILITY? How? (Being accountable for the bad stories as well as the good stories helps readers realize that mistakes are sometimes made, but should be reconciled to fact in order to restore trust in reporting.)

ACTIVITY 5: How media bias can distort our humanity

1. Explore the topic of dehumanizing language. The social constructs of our environment can lead us to “classify” or “label” people in a way to dehumanize them. Read the poem The Ten Stages of Genocide (see appendix), then overlay it on the media study that follows.

2. Discuss: What is the power of words, the power of language? How do we sometimes weaponize words in a way that dehumanizes our subjects? Why do we do it? (To create an enemy that isn’t “like us.”) What is the power of sharing stories that help us see our shared humanity? (We can address problems instead of people and talk about real solutions instead of finding blame.)

3. Explore dehumanizing headlines. Share with the class that professors at the Cardiff School of Journalism in the UK, spent two years studying news stories about asylum seekers. They studied newspaper articles and television stories by interviewing reporters and editors of national newspapers as well as asylum seekers and refugees. What they found:

LESSON 5

TSOS

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURE

- Unfavorable labels were used in news stories to describe individuals seeking refuge that included negative terms like ‘illegal refugee’ and ‘asylum cheat’.
- The numbers of asylum seekers fuels the debate focused on exaggerated numbers that are written without sources or without proper context.
- The news images are dominated by stereotypical images of violent groups of men crossing borders while refugee women and children are marginalized and seen as a drain on the economy.
- News on refugees and asylum seekers is often disseminated by politicians who want to promote policy instead of first-person quotes from individual refugees and asylum seekers.
- Refugees and asylum seekers often feel more alienation, shame, and hatred because of the media coverage of their crisis. On top of the trauma they experienced that forced them to flee their homes, they are now resettling in hostile areas, where the media can foment general outrage.

(Source: <https://irr.org.uk/article/its-official-media-coverage-of-asylum-is-distorted-and-unfair/>)

The following link provides a resource for students to check news they might suspect to be fake, biased, or filtered. Choose a current news topic and have your students “fact-check” the story using this free tool: <https://mediabiasfactcheck.com/>

Hey Students,

WHAT WILL YOU DO NEXT?

This curriculum unit explored identity, story-telling, story-sharing, ethics, and bias. Through the story cards, you met the brave people who shared their stories with us. You learned about their homeland, their families, their hopes, and their dreams. You learned how to ask better questions and to listen more actively. You learned that words matter, stories matter.

WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH THIS INFORMATION?

HOW WILL THIS INFORM YOUR ACTIONS?

HOW WILL THIS LEARNING IMPACT YOUR OWN STORY?

Want to get involved at the local level? What to dive deeper into advocacy?

Want to learn about more people's stories of migration and integration?

Visit our website: www.tsosrefugees.org or email hello@tsosrefugees.org.

THANK YOU

This concludes the Their Story is Our Story Literature and Writing Curriculum Unit. We hope you and your students have found the lessons beneficial and a worthwhile complement to your classroom teaching.

We are always hoping to improve the curriculum. We want to make sure it meets your expectations and is a useful resource to spark discussion, curiosity, and inclusion within your classroom and school. Please email us at hello@tsosrefugees.org to provide feedback about your experience, to showcase examples of student-produced writing, or to share pictures of your students engaging with the content.

You can also fill out the feedback form: <https://forms.gle/JkgsF81rxJQXJoNe9>

In solidarity,

The Education team at TSOS

APPENDIX

The logo consists of a dark green square with the letters "TSOS" in white, bold, sans-serif font centered within it.

TSOS

- “Where I’m From” poem
- “I’m From” template
- “I am a Refugee Child” poem
- “Stacks of Memories” poem
- Key Terms worksheet
- Interview packet
- Story Gathering Proposal Form
- News Story survey
- Media Bias Fact worksheet
- The 10 Stages of Genocide
- World Wide Tribe photos

WHERE I'M FROM

BY GEORGE ELLA LYON

I am from clothespins,
from Clorox and carbon-tetrachloride.
I am from the dirt under the back porch.
(Black, glistening,
it tasted like beets.)
I am from the forsythia bush

the Dutch elm
whose long-gone limbs I remember
as if they were my own.
I'm from fudge and eyeglasses,

from Imogene and Alastair.
I'm from the know-it-alls
and the pass-it-ons,
from Perk up!
and Pipe down!

I'm from He restoreth my soul
with a cotton ball lamb
and ten verses I can say myself.
I'm from Artemus and Billie's Branch,
fried corn and strong coffee.
From the finger my grandfather lost
to the auger,
the eye my father shut to keep his sight.

Under my bed was a dress box
spilling old pictures,
a sift of lost faces
to drift beneath my dreams.
I am from those moments--
snapped before I budded --
leaf-fall from the family tree.

I'M FROM POEM TEMPLATE

Use this template to draft your poem, then write a final draft on blank paper.

I am from _____ (a remembered ordinary item from your past)

From _____ (product name) **and** _____ (product name - products frequently used in your home, things you've seen over and over)

I am from the _____ (house/apartment doorway description)

_____ (adjective) , _____ (adjective) ,

_____ (visual, audio, texture, smell details that explicitly describe that doorway)

I am from _____, (plant, flower, natural item)

_____ (description of above item)

I'm from _____ (family tradition) **and** _____ (family trait)

From _____ (name of family member) **and** _____ (another family name)

I'm from the _____ **and** _____ (two descriptions of family tendencies)

From _____ **and** _____ (two things people said to you as a child)

I'm from _____ , _____ (two representations of belief, religion or lack of), _____ (one personal manifestation of that belief)

I'm from _____ (Mother's last name) _____ (Father's or grandfather's last name) _____ (two food items that represents your family)

From the _____ (seven word specific family story details)

The _____ (a personal detail of family mementos you keep, where you might keep them, or what the family records are and where are they kept?)

_____ (what are your family treasures, mementos?)

I AM A REFUGEE CHILD

BY MONSOOR (AFGHANISTAN)

MORIA CAMP, GREECE (APRIL 12, 2016)

I am a refugee child

My wish is peace. I am innocent.

There is no question about that

We escaped away from threats

We were faced with bullets, guns, explosions, so many other things

We hope for peace, friendship, good behavior and good treatment

And my wish is peace, my wish is peace.

I am a refugee child

I lost my country

Because of pain, disasters and punishment

I'm in a grave

even though I'm alive

Disasters and sickness keep coming

But my wish is peace, my wish is peace

I am a refugee child

I will become calm

And my mouth will be sweet

When you laugh with me.

We didn't come here to eat and drink

Our decency was under attack

My wish is peace, my wish is peace.

You're broadcasting human rights.

Hey, merciful people

The refugees are with you

and part of that humanity

Tell me,

without helping the people

What is your wish? What is your wish?

STACKS OF MEMORIES

BY KALEEQ (AFGHANISTAN)

I remember my brother. He was killed and dropped at our door.

I remember when they stabbed daddy many times in the head.

I remember the first time the bombs came in our house.

I remember the other time more bombs came in our house.

I remember when Uncle opened our door and two men shot him with their guns.

I remember the cold nights in the mountains and sleeping on rocks.

I remember the night our tent burned up.

I remember...

KEY TERMS - FORCIBLY DISPLACED PEOPLE

While watching the video and during classroom discussion, try to discern the similarities and differences built into these words.

Refugee -

Asylum Seeker-

Internally Displaced Person-

Stateless Person -

Migrant -

Unaccompanied Minor -

Host Country -

LET ME TELL YOU MY STORY - INTERVIEW PACKET

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

THE PURPOSE OF THE INTERVIEW

Think about why we would gather refugee stories.

Our purpose: We help refugees to tell their stories in a way that is intimate and emotionally authentic and removes the “label” to show true humanity.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Understand the potential background of whom you are interviewing:

- What do you know about the individual you are interviewing?
- What do you know about the country they came from? What was going on in that area at the time they left the country? Were there political circumstances, wars, long-held prejudices, etc.?
- What do you know about the journey they may have faced?

Why it's useful:

- If someone comes from Idlib in 2012 and you've got no idea what happened there, you may not be effective in helping them to tell their story. They may also feel like you do not really connect with them at a basic level.

While researching:

- Write down questions that come to mind. Keep a notebook so that you can easily access your questions later.
- Your questions are a starting point. They're there to help you stay on course if needed, and provide a framework for the interview.

LET ME TELL YOU MY STORY - INTERVIEW PACKET

STAGES IN THE REFUGEE'S STORY

Understanding these stages can help you establish a mental chronology while doing your interview.

1. CONFLICT - Conditions at home and reason for departure:

- Tell me about when the situation at home started to deteriorate. What was it that finally made you realize you needed to leave your home?
- What preparations did you make?
- Describe your Home.
- Who were they before the conflict?
- How did they live their lives?
- Tell me about your home country.
- What do you love about it?
- What were the challenges?
- Tell me about a happy memory with your children (or parents) - a trip somewhere, a day at the beach, a school performance, etc.
- Help me understand more about the professional work you did before - did you work in an office/warehouse/retail shop/classroom, who were your clients/customers/students, what brought you the most joy in your work?
- What hobbies/pastimes did you have? What's a favorite food you made? Did you host parties at your house or have friends over to watch soccer/football games? Do you play a musical instrument or play a sport?

LET ME TELL YOU MY STORY - INTERVIEW PACKET

STAGES IN THE REFUGEE'S STORY

Understanding these stages can help you establish a mental chronology while doing your interview.

2. JOURNEY - Traveling over boundaries, towards help and safety, or in limbo:

- Tell me about a moment when you knew it was time to leave. What was that experience like? How did others in your family feel about the choice?
- Tell me about the journey. Were there times when you wondered if you made the right choice? Did you ever lose hope? How did you keep going?
- What was the hardest part of leaving your country?
- Tell me about friends/enemies you made during the flight. How did the fleeing change your perspective about people? Were other people more generous than you thought? more ruthless or uncaring? What specific things do you remember people saying to you?
- How did you get food, clothing, and other supplies during the flight? Did a local hand you a loaf of bread or a bowl of soup? Did an aid organization bring new shoes? To what degree were you able to tend to the basics like wash hands/face, brush teeth, bathe, comb hair, etc?
- What's one thing you missed more than you thought you would - running water? refrigerator? comfort food? a favorite pair of shoes? a pillow?
- What did you bring with you?

LET ME TELL YOU MY STORY - INTERVIEW PACKET

STAGES IN THE REFUGEE'S STORY

Understanding these stages can help you establish a mental chronology while doing your interview.

3. INTEGRATION - Arrival to a new home, finding a job/career, family reunification, education:

- What was your first impression when you arrived at your new home?
- How did it change?
- Tell me what's similar to your everyday life now as compared to before you fled.
- Who worked with you when you arrived? How did they help?
- What would you tell people who want to help "newcomers"? What is the best thing they can do to help "newcomers" settle in their new home?
- What do you do for a living? Is it the same as what you did before coming here?

4. BELONGING TO A NEW HOME - Feeling a part of a new community, success in finding friends and family with security and new hope for the future:

- What brings you the most hope now? the most fear/despair/worry?
- What's one thing you have now that you weren't sure you'd ever have again?
- Tell me about someone who helped you in an unexpected and generous way? How did that make you feel? How has that changed you?
- How have you overcome the challenges of resettling in a new country with a new language, culture, etc.? What motivates you to keep going when things are hard?
- How have your dreams changed from before you fled to now?
- What have you learned from your experience as a refugee?
- What do you hope is in the future of yourself and your family?
- What advice would you give to newly resettled refugees?
- What experience (if any) has helped you feel like you are accepted and belong to your new community?

LET ME TELL YOU MY STORY - INTERVIEW PACKET

STAGES IN THE REFUGEE'S STORY

Understanding these stages can help you establish a mental chronology while doing your interview.

END THE INTERVIEW

Thank them for their time and tell them it's the end of the interview. Then ask them if there's anything they'd like to add, that they feel you missed, or wish you asked. This hands the power back to them to determine the last thoughts of their story, and to define themselves on their terms.

STORY GATHERING PROPOSAL FORM

To ensure well-constructed and vetted stories, start with the STORY GATHERING PROPOSAL form. The proposal will be decided on during the Editorial Board meeting.

Your name:

Is this a time-sensitive story? Explain:

Possible Title for Story:

Story Suggestion:

Story Idea:

How does this story fulfill the goal of telling stories of Conflict, Journey, Integration, or Belonging?

What is the strategy for gathering this story? Recorded zoom meeting? Recorded interview? Face-to-face interview?

Plans for Publication via social media, book, film, website, newspaper, magazine, etc.

Names, locations, contact info for people or organizations we will be highlighting:

CONSENT FORMS: All interviewers and interviewees must sign consent forms to protect both the interviewee (their story as well as their immigration process) as well as the interviewer.

NEWS STORY SURVEY

With each story you hear, read, or share, please answer the following survey to determine the strength of the information being shared.

1. What is the theme of this article? Is the theme accurately depicted in the Headline? Why or why not?

2. What information stands out to you? Can you fact-check the information to see if there is controversy in the claim, or if it is a well-supported truth?

3. Does the article have credible sources? How do you know? List the sources and how each ranks in conservative or liberal bias.

4. What is the date from the source material? Is it older than three months? Have dynamics changed since the publication?

5. Do the sources have well-regarded authors (journalists with experience) or is the source an organization?

6. Is any of the source information considered an Op-Ed (Opinion Editorial piece)?

7. What are the current and local applications of this article?

MEDIA BIAS FACTS AND TERMS

- **Claims** - What information can be corroborated? Names, location, nearby events during the same time period, date of publication, what is the underlying motive that obscures basic who, what, where, and when questions?
- **Evidence** - Facts, statistics, examples, and other information used to support reasons.
- **Context** - Compare other stories written by the same source. How do they report other stories? Do you trust How does this story measure with current events and conflicts, political trends or goals, or financial aspirations (motivating charitable or political contributions)?
- **Primary Source** - written in real-time of the actual story (not "historical")
- **Agenda** - with the goal of influencing the audience in what way? Who is the author trying to appeal to - look at use of pictures and word choices Facts vs. opinions (word choices with editorializations - lots of adjectives to influence the reader)
- **Source** - provider of story information, quotes, and expertise.
- **Media bias**- who wrote the story? What is the bias or prejudice of their newsroom? Can I trust their perspective or possible agenda? Do they link their stories with political groups or activists asking people to act upon the findings of the story?
- **Execution** - adjectives that suggest opinion such as: "deplorable" or "wonderful," "tremendous," "outrageous."
- **Personal Bias** - A judgment based on a personal point of view, opinion, or prejudice.
- **Reason** - A general statement that offers support for a claim made in a story.

THE TEN STAGES OF GENOCIDE

BY DR. GREGORY H. STANTON

1. Classification - dividing society into "us" vs "them", stripping the citizenship of targeted groups.
2. Symbolism - naming or imposing symbols on classifications (Jews, Tutsis, stars).
3. Discrimination - using legal or cultural power to exclude groups from full civil rights.
4. Dehumanization - portraying targeted groups as subhuman (criminals, a wave, terrorists, vermin).
5. Organization - organizing, training, and arming hate groups, armies, and militias.
6. Polarization - arresting moderate opponents as traitors, propaganda against enemies of the state.
7. Preparation - planning, identification of victims, training, and arming killers.
8. Persecution - expropriation, forced displacement from homes to camps or ghettos.
9. Extermination - physical killing, torture, mass rape, withholding food or medical care.
10. Denial - minimizing statics, blaming victims or war or famine to hide intent.

WORLD WIDE TRIBE PHOTOS



Mez ~~fled Eritrea in 2013~~
loves Tupac, hates olives

WORLD WIDE TRIBE PHOTOS



~~Bego left Sudan in 2017~~
loves watching Mr Bean

WORLD WIDE TRIBE PHOTOS



Awad ~~spent 7 years~~
~~crossing land and sea~~
likes painting watercolours

THEIR STORY IS OUR STORY

VISION STATEMENT

We transform the perception and reception of refugees worldwide one story at a time. Ultimately, we envision a world where there is no "them," only us.

MISSION STATEMENT

We share stories of the refugee journey to advocate and educate, and to actuate integration.

Advocacy

We amplify refugee voices so they can dispel misconceptions, live new lives in new lands, and contribute to their adopted communities in significant ways.

Education

Our story archive and educational curricula ignite curiosity, stir compassion, and guide toward connection. By humanizing the abstract and closing proximity, our stories also model how to build community and support initiatives that foster belonging and integration.

Integration

A strong social webwork depends on local citizens and refugees connecting with and learning from one another. Our stories are the unique fibers we all weave into one vibrant and strong fabric of community.



We began in 2015 as a handful of writers, artists, and humanitarians who wanted to put our talents to work on behalf of refugees entering Europe. By the spring of 2016, we had formed the 501c3 nonprofit, Their Story Is Our Story—or TSOS, and headed to Greece to film, photograph, interview, paint, and ultimately befriend refugees. Our plan was to capture maybe a couple of dozen stories during that week, but to our surprise, we finished with over 70 interviews encompassing nearly 200 people.

Since then, TSOS has expanded to include dozens of team members—including refugees and former refugees—across several countries. We have traveled the world documenting stories of refugees, refugee volunteers, and refugee-supporting organizations. We have gathered hundreds of stories, produced dozens of videos and painted as many works of art, taken thousands of photos, and have published our first photojournalistic hardcover volume of refugee stories, *Let Me Tell You My Story*.

We have made dozens of public presentations, including at UN gatherings, at institutes of higher education in the US, and in Europe. Our members have been guests on numerous television spots, radio shows, and podcasts. We are now launching our own podcast, educational curricula, and the Global Refugee Story archive housed at the largest private university in the USA. We have established strong partnerships and received generous grants from multiple foundations. This funding helps sustain our original but always-progressing mission of sharing first-hand stories to change the perception and reception of refugees worldwide.

**THEIR STORY
IS OUR STORY**

www.tsosrefugees.org