Refugee Hotel Curriculum

Curriculum Map

Themes	Images and Examinations of Home	Assigning Labels	Creating a Heart Journey Map
Language	English	English	English
Standards	Speaking and Listening SL.9-10.1, SL.11-12.1, SL.9-10.2, SL.11-12.2, SL.9-10.4, SL.11-12.4 Writing W.9-10.2, W.11-12.2	Reading History RH.9-10.1, RH.11-12.1, RH. 9-10.2, RH.11-12.2, RH.11-12.7 Speaking and Listening SL.9-10.1, SL.11-12.1, SL.9-10.2, SL.11-12.2	Reading History RH.9-10.1, RH.11-12.1, RH. 9-10.2, RH.11-12.2, RH.11-12.7 Speaking and Listening SL.9-10.1, SL.11-12.1, SL. 9-10.2, SL.11
Recommended Narrator(s)	Rup Khatiwada Prem Khatiwada	Orenie Ndayishimiye Do Lian Zam aka Elis Tsehai Wodajo Heinay Moo Susil Ghalley	Do Lian Zam aka Elis Abdullahi Musa & Sadia Adem Farah Ibrahim & Mahmmoud Dawoodi Susil Ghalley
Student Objectives	Students will explore personal and political definitions of home, family, and resettlement through an analysis of, and creative response to, the photographs and written narratives in Refugee Hotel.	Students will develop self-awareness and critical thinking skills by exploring assumptions and the power of labels using written and visual narratives from Refugee Hotel.	Students will foster empathy and identification with the refugee experience by engaging a framework based on personal, emotional experience. This lesson seeks to highlight the plight of displaced people who, in most cases, end up far from the people, places, and things they care about.
Ethnic Studies-Aligned Topics	• Origin, Identity, and Culture • Self-Reflection and Examining Multiple Perspectives • Transformation and Change	• Empathy and Understanding Others • Origin, identity, and Culture • Self-Reflection and Examining Multiple Perspectives	• Empathy and Understanding Others • Origin, identity, and Culture • Self-Reflection and Examining Multiple Perspectives

		• Stereotypes and Assumptions • Counter-narratives	• Implicit Bias • Counter-narratives

Theme	**Exploring the Refugee Convention**		
Language	English		
Standards	Reading History RH.9-10.1, RH.11-12.1, RH. 9-10.2, RH.11-12.2, RH.11-12.7 Speaking and Listening SL.9-10.1, SL.11-12.1, SL.9-10.2, SL.11-12.2		
Recommended Narrator(s)	Psaw Wah Bah Abdullahi Musa Rup Rhatiwada & Prem Khatiwada Feliz Lohitai Osman Mohamed		
Student Objectives	Using the narratives from Refugee Hotel and the Refugee Convention, students will make personal connections to the narrators' stories and use critical thinking skills to analyze the efficacy of the Refugee Convention.		
Ethnic Studies-Aligned Topics	• Civil Rights and Government Responsibilities • Systems and Power • Empathy and Understanding Others		

VOICE OF WITNESS

Ways to Explore

Our lesson plans create several "points of entry" for teachers and students to explore the visual and written narratives contained in *Refugee Hotel*. Here are a few additional suggestions. Many more are possible!

- "Reading" the book's images in the sequence they appear and then creating a
    - narrative based on that sequence.
- Rearranging the images in different sequences and creating different stories to go
    - with them.
- Explore the book back to front.
- Arrange the text and images by country of origin.
- Arrange images by resettlement communities.
- Choosing images and text by creating themes—here are a few suggestions:
    - Isolation
    - Hope
    - Home
    - Reflections: Windows and Mirrors
    - Generations
    - Fear
    - Shadows and Light
    - Ritual
    - The American Dream
    - Family
- Read one story; then look at a ten images and so on until you get to the end of the
    - book.

Images and Examinations of *Home*

Time Needed: 2 class periods

Materials: Refugee Hotel, journals, cameras.

Objective: To explore personal and political definitions of home, family, and resettlement through an analysis of, and creative response to, the photographs and written narratives in Refugee Hotel.

Related Core Curriculum Standards: Speaking and Listening SL.9-10.1, SL.11-12.1, SL.9-10.2, SL.11-12.2, SL.9-10.4, SL.11-12.4 Writing W.9-10.2, W.11-12.2

Connections: This activity can be adapted for narratives from Out of Exile, Underground America, Hope Deferred, and Nowhere to Be Home with a set of related photographs or images.

Essential Questions:

- How do we define "home?" Is it where we were born, where we spent most of our lives, the country of our origin?
- Why is it that certain objects- artifacts, heirlooms, memorabilia- are irreplaceable, and carry with them such strong feelings of home?
- How is home defined in a political or institutional context?

Narrative Excerpt: "Because we'd lost everything, it didn't matter where we went, so we decided to keep moving. Our family signed up, and it took one year to be called. Then we came to Fargo."—Rup Khatiwada

"It's hard to balance my American experience—working, living like an American—and my Nepali and Bhutanese traditions."—Prem Khatiwada

Day One

Overview
In this lesson, students will consider the concepts of home and how it is altered by resettlement in a group discussion, and then spend time with photographs in *Refugee Hotel* to identify how themes of family, isolation, hope, etc are conveyed visually.

Step One: As a warm-up activity, ask students to write silently in their journals, reflecting on the following prompt (5 minutes):

> If you were forced to leave your country of origin and could only carry a small suitcase, what would you carry with you and why? What would you deem as necessary? What would be

crucial reminders of home?

Step Two: Have a "pair share" conversation based on the warm-up activity, encouraging students to share out from their journal reflections (5-7 minutes).

Step Three: Briefly introduce *Refugee Hotel* using information/context from the introduction and/or A Brief Guide to Resettlement from the back of the book. Suggested information includes: Introduction: Please Pardon Our Dust, *What is a Refugee* (pg. 290), Refugee Status (pg. 290-291), *The Resettlement Process* (pg. 291), and *Assurance and Arrival* (pg. 293). After reading this background information, have a group discussion using the following suggested prompts (15 minutes):

- Using the Brief Guide to Resettlement as a jumping off point, how does the idea of home change during the act of resettlement?
- Where do "home" and "resettlement" connect, converge, or diverge?
- In the Assurance and Arrival section, there is a "laundry list of necessities." Did some of the items on the list surprise you? What do you think should be included or excluded?

Step Four: What Do I See? (adapted from Project Zero)
Refugee Hotel has two large photographic sections. Have students look through the first set of photos in the book. Just looking – no talking or writing. Encourage students not to rush through the section too quickly (10-12 minutes).

Step Five: Have students go through the first section again and write down what they notice in the pictures – what they actually see (roads, beds, windows, illuminated signs, etc). Encourage them to look for various themes or motifs (the American Dream, family, isolation, hope, etc.). Creating a "T Chart" with what students see on one side and themes/motifs on the other will help students distinguish between the two (15 minutes).

Step Six: Have a brief class discussion related to their observations, using the following suggested prompts (7-10 minutes):

- What did you observe in these photographs?
- Were there recurring themes in the photographs? If so, what were they?
- How do these themes communicate the refugees' resettlement experience?

Step Seven: For homework, have students read Rup and Prem Khatiwada's narrative from *Refugee Hotel*. Encourage them to use active reading strategies (15-20 minutes).

Day Two

Overview
In this lesson, students will create a photo essay based on those from *Refugee Hotel*, displaying items from their own homes that they deem necessities for resettlement. Students will share

their photo essays with the class, and discuss how they relate to the themes of *Refugee Hotel*, then writing a reflection framed by a narrative quote from the book.

Step One: As a warm up activity, have students do a pair share discussion using the following suggested prompt (5 minutes):
Describe a time in your life when you felt disoriented, out of place, or needed to adjust to new surroundings. You can describe this experience from a variety of perspectives—- emotional, physical, environmental, or spiritual, just to name a few.

Step Two: Have a class conversation based on the warm-up activity, inviting students to share out from their pair share conversations. Encourage students to reference the Assurance and Arrival section of Refugee Hotel and Rup and Prem Khatiwada's narrative (10 minutes).

Step Three: Photo Essay Project: Incorporating information from the prior share out, inform students that they will be assigned to select and photograph 8-10 items in their homes that they believe to be absolutely necessary in creating their own "laundry list of necessities" for resettlement (10 minutes). Any kind of camera is acceptable (disposable, digital, phone, computer, etc). Encourage students to consider how their choices will reflect the following themes:

- Transition
- Resettlement
- Family culture/traditions
- Home

The following narrator quotes from Refugee Hotel can inspire and help frame student work on the assignment:

"To me, home is a place where you can stay forever: you don't have to leave or move around."—Farah Ibrahim, p. 113

"I feel safe here. I can think about my future and my family's future – I can plan for tomorrow, next week, next month. In Iraq, all we cared about was surviving one more day." —Farah Ibrahim, p. 116

"For me, it's difficult because I have family in Iraq, so it will always be my home. But at the same time home is where you feel safe, and where you find all that you love: family and friends." —Mahmmoud Dawoodi, p. 117

"My parents were born in Burma, and I was born in Thailand, but I'm not sure I belong anywhere. I can't go back and live in Thailand now that I've come to America. I live here in Charlottesville, but I have no real home; lots of Karen people are leaving this place. But for now this is my destiny, it's what has happened to me. And you never know what will happen to you." —Heinay Moo, p. 120

Step Four: Once the assignment has been completed (time to complete the assignment will vary),

students will present a brief slide show of their selected photographs. After all students have presented, have a class discussion using the following suggested prompts (15-20 minutes):

- How did the photographs and narratives from Refugee Hotel inspire your photo essay? Can you cite specific examples?
- What differences and similarities did you see in comparison to the Refugee Service checklist?
- What similarities arose, and what differences appeared within the photo essays?
- How were the themes of the assignment (transition, home, etc.) expressed in the photo essays? Please cite several examples.

Step Five: Written Reflection (can be done as homework assignment): Students reflect on the lesson by responding to one of the narrator quotes used to frame the photo essay project (15+ minutes). Encourage them to make personal connections to the narrators and reference photographs from the book as well as their own, in addition to reflecting on themes and definitions of home, resettlement, and the challenges that arise from adjusting to new environments while maintaining ties to family culture and traditions.

Possible Oral History Project: Students in the class can conduct oral history interviews with friends, family, or community members who have recently resettled to the U.S. Interview questions can be based on themes, motifs, and ideas from the lesson. Students can also interview each other and share personal stories based on the images they photographed for the photo essay assignment.

Assigning Labels

Time Needed: Two class periods.

Materials: *Refugee Hotel* (with selected images), stickies (2 colors), red markers, pencils, whiteboard.

Objective: To develop self-awareness and critical thinking skills by exploring assumptions and the power of labels using written and visual narratives from Refugee Hotel.

Related Core Curriculum Standards: Reading History RH.9-10.1, RH.11-12.1, RH. 9-10.2, RH.11-12.2, RH.11-12.7 Speaking and Listening SL.9-10.1, SL.11-12.1, SL.9-10.2, SL.11-12.2

Connections: This activity can be adapted for any narrative from the Voice of Witness series with a set of related photographs or images.

Essential Questions:

- How do we label others?
- What assumptions do we bring with us when interacting with new people—especially those who are different from us?

Narrative Excerpt: "To be called a refugee is bad. It means I have no country, no home, and thatI'll always be running away…That's why I came to the United States, in 2009, with my husband and children. This is a good country for refugees; once I become an American I can get everything an American has, and I will never be called a refugee again."—Orenie Ndayishimiye

Day One

Overview
In this lesson, students will reflect on their own experiences with being labeled, and with making assumptions about others based on appearance or background. Students will then discuss the dissonance between the legal definition of a refugee and what the label might signify now, using Orenie Ndayishimiye's story as an example.

Step One: As a warm-up activity, ask students to write silently in their journals, reflecting on the following prompts (5 minutes):

- What is an assumption?
- What are ways that we make assumptions about other people?
- Why do we do this?

Step Two: Have a class conversation based on the warm-up activity, inviting students to "share out" from their journal reflections (5-7 minutes).

Step Three: Introduce labels by facilitating a short class discussion using the following

suggested prompt (5-7 minutes):

When we encounter someone who seems different from us—different country, age, ethnicity, and personality—we automatically try to understand them, so we fill in the blanks about who they are. This is natural—but do we sometimes make assumptions that are wrong or unfair?

Step Four: Have students do a "pair-share" in which they discuss the following with a classmate (5-7 minutes):

Talk about a time when you have been LABELED—when someone made an assumption about you. What happened? What was that like? What was your response?

Now talk about a time when you've labeled someone else, and have maybe felt badly about the label you put on him or her. What was that like? Did you learn anything from that?

Step Five: Have a short class discussion allowing students to share out from their pair-share conversations. During the share out, encourage students to explore and investigate how and why we label things, in order for them to transform and expand their understanding of people different from themselves.

The following suggested prompts can be used during the discussion (10 minutes):

- Where do our labels come from?
- Why do we label things?
- Is this a natural or unnatural thing? How can it be positive—and how can it be
- negative?

Step Six: Briefly introduce Refugee Hotel using information from the introduction and other sources, if desired. Create a frame of reference for the book that centers on refugees being a group that has been both socially and legally "labeled." On the whiteboard, write the following quotes and definitions (5 minutes):

- "To be called a refugee is bad. It means I have no country, no home, and that I'll always be running away." Orenie Ndayishimiye from *Refugee Hotel*
- Definition of a refugee: "A refugee is a person who has fled persecution based on his/her race, religion, political opinion, nationality, or membership in a particular social group."

Step Seven: In small groups, students reflect together on the differences and similarities between the legal definition of a refugee, and Ndayishimiye's experience of being labeled as "a refugee." (7 minutes) Suggested guiding questions:

- What is persecution? What might some examples be?
- What is the connection between being persecuted and being "labeled"?
- What does Orenie Ndayishimiye mean when she says "to be called a refugee is bad"?
- What are labels we often assign to refugees?
- What are labels we often assign to refugees?

Step Eight: Have a short class discussion allowing students to share out from their small group

conversations. Possible discussion prompt (10 minutes):

> Refugees have essentially been "labeled" as different, and persecuted because of that label. And then they have been re-labeled as refugees. What else came up in your conversations?

Day Two

Overview
In this lesson, students will assign labels to photographs from *Refugee Hotel* with post-it notes before reading the narrators' stories. After reading the stories, students will reexamine their initial assumptions, adding more nuanced labels to the photos before reflecting on the experience in writing.

Step One: Hang a dozen or so photographs from Refugee Hotel (from both parts of the book) around the room. Class then does a "gallery walk," examining and exploring the photographs. If needed, remind students that these are images of refugees who have come to rebuild their lives in the U.S. (5-7 minutes). As students engage the photographs, encourage them to consider the following:

- Who are these people?
- Where do they come from?
- What are they experiencing?
- What are their emotions?
- What is their background?

Step Two: Each student is then given 3 or so sticky notes that will serve as "labels." They will then attach a one-word label to a photograph of their choice. Remind students that the activity requires courage and honesty. Sharing examples such as sad, confused, missing, alone, etc., may be useful in getting the activity started (5-7 minutes).

After students have placed all of their labels, the class does another gallery walk, reexamining the images and the labels that have been assigned to them (5 minutes).

Step Three: In groups of 3-5, students are assigned to read aloud different narratives from *Refugee Hotel* (10-15 minutes). Suggested narratives: Do Lian Zam (aka Elis); Tsehai Wodajo; Heinay Moo; Orenie Ndayishimiye; Susil Ghalley.

After reading, groups discuss their stories using the following suggested prompts (7-10 minutes):

- What are the ways in which the narrator has been labeled?
- What labels did you assign to the narrator at the beginning, when you first started reading? Did these change by the end?
- What labels did the narrator assign to others in the story?
- What labels does the narrator put on his/her home—on America?

Step Four: Re-labeling: After reading and discussing the narrator's stories, students may feel

that their initial labels might be deepened or rounded by knowing more of their background. Using different color sticky notes, encourage students to add additional "labels" to the photographs (10 minutes). Before starting the activity, provide the following instruction:

- What is missing from the previous labels?
- If a previous label seems truer, now, use the marker to make a red star.
- If a label seems wrong, put an X on it (not over the writing).
- Not all original labels will become irrelevant or wrong, but knowing more of the narrator's story might deepen the initial label.

Step Five: Class does another gallery walk, silently reexamining the images and additional labels (5 minutes).

Step Six: As a class, discuss the Assigning Labels lesson using the following suggested prompts (10 minutes):

- Did reading the stories change our opinions and assumptions about the photographs? If so, how?
- Did the stories make us more or less compassionate towards the people in the photographs?
- What does knowing details about someone change about our understanding of them?

Step Seven: Written Reflection (can be done as homework assignment): Students reflect on the lesson by responding to the following prompt (15+ minutes):
How can we be mindful about the labels we assign ourselves and each other?

Possible Oral History/Photo Essay Project: Students conduct oral history interviews with friends, family, and members of their school community, creating interview questions that reflect the essential questions of the labeling lesson. Students can build on themes from their pair shares, group discussions, readings and written reflections. The project could also include a photo essay that visually represents these themes.

Creating a Heart Journey Map

Adapted from Georgia Heard's book *Awakening the Heart*

Time needed: 2 class periods

Materials: *Refugee Hotel*, 11x17 paper, colored pens or pencils, magazines for cutouts of images, a large, long piece of butcher paper, and other basic art supplies. This lesson can also be done using computers (PowerPoint, etc).

Objective: To foster empathy and identification with the refugee experience by engaging a framework based on personal, emotional experience. This lesson seeks to highlight the plight of displaced people who, in most cases, end up far from the people, places, and things they care about.

Related Core Curricular Standards: Reading History RH.9-10.1, RH.11-12.1, RH. 9-10.2, RH.11-12.2, RH.11-12.7 Speaking and Listening SL.9-10.1, SL.11-12.1, SL. 9-10.2, SL.11

Connections: This activity can be used as a warm up for any of the lesson plans for Refugee Hotel and can be adapted for any narrative in the Voice of Witness series, with a set of related photographs.

Essential Questions:

- How can I use the construct of a map to communicate what's most important to me?
- How can I develop empathy for the lives and experiences of people I've never met?
- How can I personalize and better understand the realities of forced displacement?

Narrative Excerpt: "Always in my heart, I will miss my village. But we can't go back again. I miss my family; I still have a lot of relatives living in Burma and Thailand, some are in the camp and some in other places. It still hurts my heart."––Psaw Wah Baw

Day One

Overview
In this lesson, students will create Heart Journey Maps to illustrate what is most important to them, and the memories/experiences/journeys which affected them most. Students will then be introduced to *Refugee Hotel*, and consider, based on photographs from the book, what kinds of journeys these people might have been through.

Step One: Hand out a large piece of plain paper, (11 x 17), to each student.

Step Two: Introduce the Heart Journey Map activity by explaining the following (5 minutes):

This activity requires that you take a journey. The purpose of the heart journey map is to map all things that are important in it, the things that really matter: the people, places, and things you care about, moments/memories, things you love to do, things that hurt you, things that make you sad, happy, laugh, or cry. Our emotions and memories cover distances and various types of terrain. Your map should include the mountains, rivers, oceans, and deserts that helped you arrive at your various destinations.

Step Three:
Use the following questions to help students guide and develop ideas for their heart journey maps. They should not answer the questions, but use them to help organize their thoughts (10 minutes).

- What has really affected your heart?
- What people have been important to you?
- What places have been important to you?
- What are some experiences or central events that you will never forget?
- What are some of the literal or emotional journeys you've taken that have had an impact on you?
- What happy or sad memories do you have?
- What secrets have you kept in your heart? (Don't share the secret, find a metaphor.)
- What small things or objects are important to you – a tree in the backyard, a stuffed animal, a trophy, etc.

Students then use the following ideas to help organize their heart maps:

- Should some things be outside your heart and some inside?
- How can you use real geographical features (mountains, rivers, etc) to suggest your feelings and your journey?
- What is at the center of your heart?
- What is on the outside and around the edges?
- Do different colors represent different emotions, events, relationships, etc.?
- Do you want to create a "key" or "legend" to help others read your map?

Step Four: Using the above information and ideas, students create their personal heart journey maps using colored pens and pencils, images cut out from magazines, and more. Explain that a heart can look many different ways to different people. It could be a traditional valentine heart, a broken heart, a scientific/anatomical heart, or a symbol that represents hearts/life/love, etc. Encourage students to create at least fifteen items within their maps. If desired, students can create their maps using PowerPoint or similar programs (20 + minutes).

Step Five: Working in small groups, students share their heart journey maps. If desired, all of the maps can be posted around the classroom and students can do a "gallery walk" before joining their small groups. During their presentations, encourage students to discuss the following (10 minutes):

- How did your use of color convey meaning?
- How did mountains, rivers and deserts reflect your emotions or your journey?
- Did any of your choices surprise you? How?

- Did you come across any challenges in creating your map? What were they?
- Are there challenges in sharing your "heart" map with others? If so, what are they?

Step Six: Introduce students to *Refugee Hotel*. Reading excerpts from the introduction can provide students with enough context to engage with the images and stories in the book. Choose 8-10 photographs that specifically relate to movement or travel (coming or going from a place), and show them on the overhead projector. While viewing the photographs, ask students to consider the following questions (15 minutes):

- What kinds of emotional journeys do you imagine the people in these photos are taking?
- What aspects of home are the people in the photos carrying with them? (ex: clothing, artifacts, rituals, language, etc.)

Day Two

Overview
In this lesson, students will read full narratives from *Refugee Hotel,* and create Heart Journey Maps for their assigned narrator. Students will reflect on the differences between these maps and their own, considering how they conveyed different kinds of emotional journeys and life experiences.

Step One: As a warm-up activity, ask students to write silently in their journals, reflecting on the following prompt (5 minutes):

- Are there ways in which you can relate to the narrators in *Refugee Hotel*? How so?

Step Two: Share out. Ask for 5-7 volunteers to share their responses to the writing prompt. Note if there are ideas that multiple students are echoing (5 minutes).

Step Three: Assign students into groups of 4. Each group should read one of the following suggested narratives from *Refugee Hotel* (15-20 minutes): Do Lian Zam aka Elis, Abdullahi Musa & Sadia Adem, Farah Ibrahim & Mahmmoud Dawoodi, Susil Ghalley. Depending on time allowed, each student can read all of the narratives. Narratives may also be assigned as homework the night before this lesson. As they are reading, students should take notes on:

- Themes/motifs that emerge in their assigned narrative (ex: windows and mirrors, shadows and light, EXIT signs, family, the American Dream)
- Personal/emotional connections with their narrators based the previous day's heart journey map activity.

Step Four: When the groups have finished reading their assigned narrative, have one representative from each group give a short presentation on their narrator's journey and experience, highlighting themes, ideas, and motifs that relate to the narrator's refugee experience. Presenters can also make personal/emotional connections to their narrator

through the heart journey map activity (10 minutes).

Step Five: Students return to their groups, and each receives a piece of 11x17 white paper. Instruct each group to create a heart journey map for the narrator they were assigned, using whatever representation of a heart they choose. Remind them to reconnect with their map process from the previous class. List the prompts and questions from yesterday's assignment on the board or the projector for students to use as a guideline (15 minutes).

Step Six: Once the groups have completed the heart maps for their narrators, assemble them all onto a large, long piece of butcher paper that has been marked with the country/continent of each narrator. Students work together to create outlines of the continents around the heart journey maps, fill in the oceans, mountains, and rivers between them, and decide what pictures/elements should make up North America (15 minutes). Share the (age-appropriate) creative maps from this website on the overhead projector: http://www.hongkiat.com/blog/creative-world-maps/

Step Seven: As homework, students are to write a one-page reflection on the mapping process, using the following suggested prompts:

- How did it feel to create a personal heart journey map? What did you learn about yourself in the process?
- How did that differ from creating a heart journey map for a narrator? What did you learn about your narrator through the heart map activity?
- What was it like working with the other groups to assemble the large world map? What kinds of choices did you make to communicate the emotions associated with long journeys?
- Were they able to connect the shared experiences of the narrators as they journeyed to the United States? How?

Possible Oral History Project: Students create an oral history project around the concepts, realities and emotions associated with "journeys." These journeys can reflect what happens when people travel from one place to another and how they are changed or transformed in the process. Potential narrators can share stories about literal and/or emotional journeys and reflect the uncertainty, exhilaration, and many challenges related to traveling to new locales or environments.

Exploring the Refugee Convention

Time Needed: Two class periods

Materials: R*efugee Hotel*, copy of Refugee Convention (pages 13-19 of this document: http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html), notebooks/journals, 4 copies of each of the following narratives from Refugee Hotel: Psaw Wah Bah, Abdullahi Musa, Rup Rhatiwada & Prem Khatiwada, Feliz Lohitai, Osman Mohamed

Objective: Using the narratives from Refugee Hotel and the Refugee Convention, students will make personal connections to the narrators' stories and use critical thinking skills to analyze the efficacy of the Refugee Convention.

Related Core Curriculum Standards: Reading History RH.9-10.1, RH.11-12.1, RH. 9-10.2, RH.11-12.2, RH.11-12.7 Speaking and Listening SL.9-10.1, SL.11-12.1, SL.9-10.2, SL.11-12.2

Connections: This lesson can be used with any of the narratives from Refugee Hotel. Photographs from the book may be incorporated to enhance the lesson.

Essential Questions:

- What is the definition of a refugee?
- Why was the Refugee Convention developed, and who does it protect?
- Does it leave anyone out?

Day One

Overview
In this lesson, students will be introduced to the Refugee Convention, exploring which facets of identity are protected from persecution, and why. Students will make connections to current or historical events they are familiar with which concern persecution based on these facets, and discuss the rights of refugees.

Step One: As a warm-up activity, ask students to write silently in their journals, reflecting on the following prompt (5 minutes):

- How would you define a refugee?

Step Two: Pair Share—students find a partner and discuss their responses. While discussing, encourage them to consider the following:

- Are your ideas about what defines a refugee similar? Different? How so?

Step Three: Briefly introduce the Refugee Convention (5 minutes). Suggested contextual information:

In the wake of World War II, where millions of people fled for their lives from the Nazis and crossed into countries other than their own, the international community came together to develop an international law that protects these people. Representatives from 26 countries developed a definition of a refugee—and agreed to provide protection to people who are persecuted and have to flee their homes to save their lives. This is known as the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Step Four: Write the following definition on the board:

Persecute: *to harass or punish in a manner designed to injure, grieve, or afflict; to cause to suffer because of belief.*

Step Five: Refugee Definition Activity (20 minutes): The Refugee Convention decided on the following definition (write on board): A refugee is someone with a well-founded fear of persecution based on his or her:

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

5._____

Ask students the following:

- What do you think the five things they came up with are? Hint—the Nazis persecuted Jews. So the Refugee Convention protected ...? (religion)

Students then make guesses about the correct grounds for refugee status by the numbers (race, religion, political opinion, nationality, membership in a particular social group). All guesses are written on board. Any guesses not included in the convention (environmental, economic status, etc.) are written to the side.

Any guesses included in social group should be written as bullet points under number 5. Nationality and social group may need to be written in after the activity.
At this point, it may be helpful to explain the following:

A social group is like an umbrella term—the writers of the Convention were smart and realized they probably weren't thinking of all of the reasons that one group/individual would persecute another group/individual. "Social group" protects a wide-range of people—such as women victims of attempted honor-killings, people persecuted by gangs, and homosexuals.

Ask students to reflect on crises they are familiar with—either from history or today—where people are persecuted for each of the above reasons. Their responses should be written on board in different colors next to the grounds (i.e. Palestine, Rwanda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Burma, etc.).

Step Six: Hand out copies of the Refugee Convention, and facilitate popcorn read-aloud of:

- pages 14-Article I, Section A. Pause the reading frequently to check for understanding, and work with students to "translate" the more difficult/legal sections of language (10 minutes).
- Point out to students the convention was expanded to protect people outside of Europe, for events after 1951.

Step Seven: Have brief class discussion about Articles 2-6 using the following suggested prompts (5-7 minutes):

- What rights do refugees have?
- What must countries provide them?

Day Two

Overview
In this lesson, students will read full-length narratives from *Refugee Hotel* in groups, and connect the protections of the Refugee Convention to personal stories. Each group will share a summary their thoughts on their assigned story, and consider how the Refugee Convention could be updated in the modern day.

Step One: This section allows for students to connect the previous class activity to personal stories of persecution. Students break into groups of 3-4 and read the following stories (20 minutes):

- Psaw Wah Bah: race, nationality, political opinion
- Abdullahi Musa, political opinion
- Rup Rhatiwada & Prem Khatiwada: religion, race, nationality
- Feliz Lohitai: race, nationality, religion
- Osman Mohamed: race, social group, nationality

After completing the stories, each group creates reflections on a piece of paper to the following prompts:

- What was most striking about the story?
- What was confusing about the story?
- What grounds from the refugee convention might this person fall under? (It can be more than one).

Step Two: Students choose one representative from each group to give a short presentation to the class on the story they read. Each presentation should include (10 minutes):

- Summary of the story/narrator's journey

- Themes in each story that relate to the narrator's refugee status

Step Three: Group Brainstorm. Pose the following question to the class, and record their ideas on the board (15 minutes):

> *Given what you know about current refugee problems and issues, how should the Refugee Convention be updated to include more contemporary ideas?*

Step Four (optional): Assign students to read the narratives their group did not read in class. Ask students to create a Venn Diagram-like chart comparing the problems and obstacles each narrator faced. How are they similar? How are they different?

Possible Oral History Project: Using what they have learned about forced emigration, students create an oral history project around people from other countries who are living in the United States due to safety issues or persecution in their home countries. Groups of 3-4 students will identify one family or community member to interview about their journey to the U.S. and how the tenets of the Refugee Convention have impacted their experience.