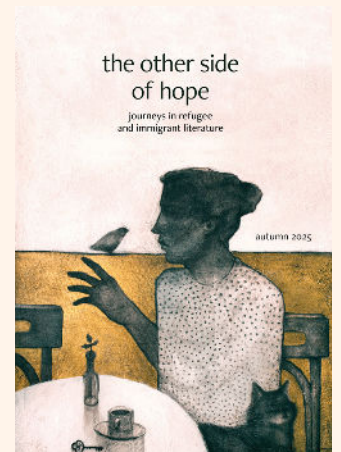
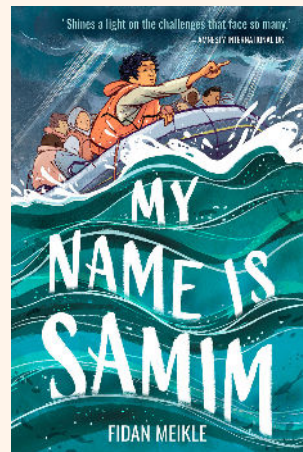
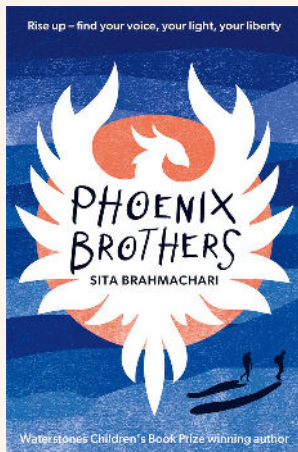
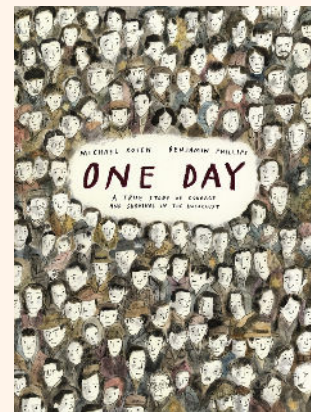
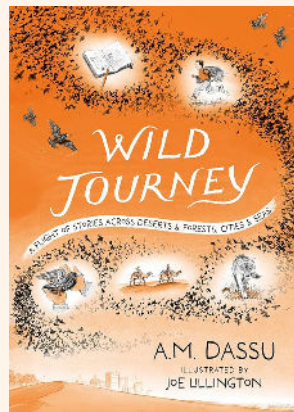


REFUGEE WEEK 2026

The COURAGE! Collection



Recommended books and media for schools, to build empathy
for those forced to flee their homeland and seek sanctuary



Stories connect us—to ourselves, to each other, and to the communities we build. Directly or indirectly, we all have links to stories of migration and displacement, and this June we encourage you to harness the power of stories to help create more welcoming, empathetic school communities.

June offers two key moments to focus on sanctuary and inclusion: **A Day of Welcome** (12 June) and **Refugee Week** (15–21 June).

These events provide a chance to highlight refugee and asylum seeker experiences and to foster a sense of belonging.

This collection has been expertly curated for schools: you might add our recommendations to your school library, explore a story in class, include a book in your staff CPD library, or share recommendations with your wider community.

Each resource has been chosen to reflect Refugee Week's theme of 'courage' and to build empathy for people forced to flee their homes in search of safety.



Illustration © Quentin Blake

EmpathyLab

EmpathyLab's mission is to ensure every child benefits from a powerful reading-based empathy education.

During the **Empathy Day Festival** (4-11 June), we invite children and young people to jump into someone else's story, to see things from another person's point of view – even if they don't agree. When we connect with others in this way, we strengthen relationships, build community and improve our wellbeing.

Find free resources, live events and on demand films with the nation's favourite authors.

[Register now](#)

[Our website](#)

Day of Welcome – Friday 12 June 2026

A Day of Welcome is an annual day of solidarity and learning in schools that aims to build a culture of welcome and understanding for people seeking sanctuary.

Celebrated by over 820 schools in 2025, it's designed to support teachers in kickstarting Refugee Week by providing free live events, resources and activities for pupils of all ages.

[Register now](#)

[Our website](#)

Refugee Week 2026

The theme for A Day of Welcome and Refugee Week 2026 is 'Courage', which comes from the Latin 'cor,' meaning 'heart.' For refugees around the world, courage is often a daily necessity. It is the courage to face unknown journeys, learn new languages, navigate unfamiliar systems, or simply to wake up each morning and step into an uncertain world.

Through art, stories, and community, we celebrate the courage that lives within us all – and how connection helps it grow. Join us for Refugee Week 2026, 15–21 June 2026

For all the ways to take part visit:

www.refugeeweek.org.uk/about

Picture books



The Bicycle

**Patricia McCormick,
Mevan Babakar &
Yas Imamura**

Mevan's real-life story starts in Iraqi Kurdistan – her family is forced to leave, making a perilous journey to eventual safety in the Netherlands. A wonderful caretaker nurtures refugee families, bringing Mevan a bicycle. For her, the kindness is transformative.



Noah's New Home

**Zeshan Akhter &
Nabila Adani**

Noah is safe, having escaped war in the Middle East. But he has lost his father, and fireworks terrify him, reminding him of dangerous explosions. A wonderful picture book, helping us understand the feelings of a traumatised child, and the difference kindness can make.

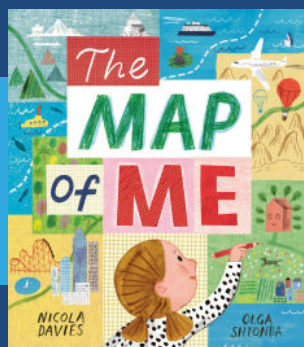


The Big Journey

Michael Rosen

In this heartwarming sequel to their acclaimed picture book The Big Dreaming, bestselling author Michael Rosen and award-winning illustrator Daniel Egnéus tell a story of hope, love and resilience: a modern classic for our times.

[Register for Day of Welcome's free live event for schools: Storytime with Michael Rosen on 12th June](#)



The Map of Me

Nicola Davies

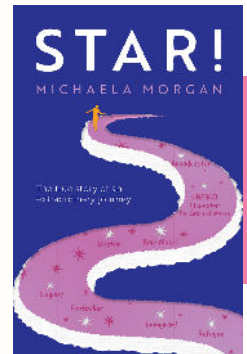
A young girl adjusts to a new country by drawing a map of her neighbourhood, friends and special places—while expanding it to include the loved ones she left behind. As others add their own stories, she learns how connection helps her navigate change and uncertainty.

Non-fiction

Star!

Michaela Morgan

The biography of Nadia Nadim who, with her mother and siblings, escaped the Taliban in Afghanistan. As an adult, Nadia has championed girls' education, been a celebrated football star, a surgeon and role model. Her inspirational story shows the power of human determination to overcome extreme challenge.



Why Are There Wars?

**Katie Daynes, Mairi Mackinnon &
Oksana Drachovska**

These thoughtful 'Lift the Flap' books from Usborne explain complex social issues sensitively to children. This title explores why wars happen and the impact on individuals, but also highlights the peace-keepers and those who risk everything to keep people safe. Great for discussion and sharing perspectives.

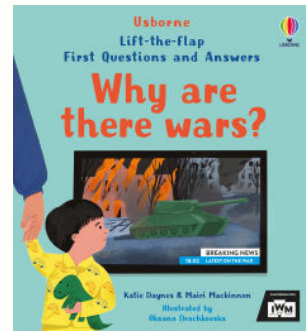
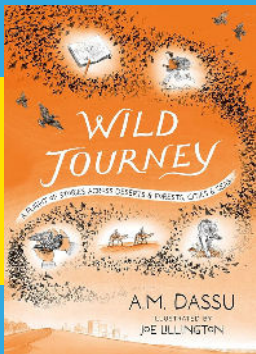


Illustration © Quentin Blake

Novels



Wild Journey

A.M. Dassu

Five children across Egypt, Morocco, Spain and France witness the sweeping movement of starling murmurations. As the birds migrate, their stories of adventure, danger and discovery unfold, linking the children's lives and marking the beginning of their own transformative journeys.



Mayowa and the Sea of Words

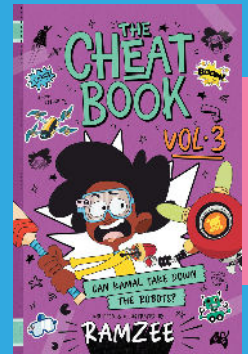
Chibundu Onuzo

Ten-year-old Mayowa discovers she can "book jump," using the emotions in stories to affect the real world. When she sees a chance to help refugees, she leaps into action—but other book jumpers have darker plans. An imaginative adventure about empathy, courage and the power of stories.

The Cheat Book: Vol 3

Ramzee

Refugee kid Kamal joins the first group to trial a futuristic Smart School with robot teachers and talking scooters—but everything goes hilariously wrong. Armed with his trusty Cheat Book, he fights back in this fast-paced, illustrated adventure perfect for fans of Wimpy Kid and Loki.



[Register for Day of Welcome's free live event for schools: The Cheat Book with Ramzee on 12th June](#)



Illustration © Quentin Blake

Poetry



Courage in a Poem

Cecilia Knapp

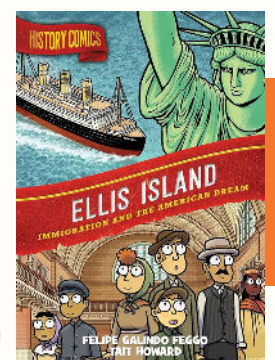
A vibrant, beautifully illustrated poetry collection exploring courage, self-belief and kindness. Through powerful, uplifting poems by Kate Wakeling, Matt Goodfellow, Sophia Thakur and others, young readers are encouraged to recognise their inner strength and celebrate themselves.

Graphic novels

Ellis Island: Immigration and the American Dream

Felipe Gallindo Feggo

An engaging introduction to Ellis Island, once America's busiest immigration centre and a symbol of hope for millions seeking refuge and new beginnings. This book explores how the island came to process over 12 million arrivals and how it became an enduring landmark of freedom, history and human journeys.



Graphic novels

Refugee

Alan Gratz & Syd Fini

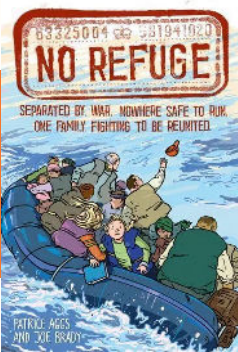
A gripping graphic novel following three refugee children—Josef in Nazi Germany, Isabel in 1990s Cuba and Mahmoud in war-torn Syria. Their dangerous journeys, decades apart, reveal courage, hope and unexpected connections, brought vividly to life with powerful, atmospheric illustrations.



No Refuge

Joe Brady and Patrice Aggs

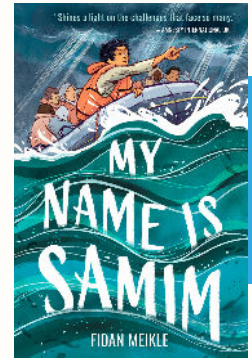
A Phoenix Comics sequel to No Country: sisters Bea and Hannah flee war with their baby brother Dom, following their dad's plan to find safety. As hunger, danger and soldiers closing in push them to the edge, their promise to protect each other is brutally tested.



My Name is Samim

Fidan Meikle Dassu

It has never been more important to help young people understand the experience of people forced to flee their homes. This story is inspired by a true event. Samim is a boy carrying unimaginable trauma, so thank goodness for the compassion of the new family and friends who fight for him and help him heal.



Phoenix Brothers

Sita Brahmachari

Mo and Amir arrive in the UK as refugees. Two friends trying to make sense of their new lives whilst dealing with such loss. They react differently – Mo is angry, Amir is quiet and fearful. But through people who open their hearts to the boys, they finally find hope and joy.

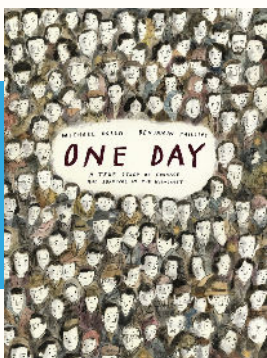


Non-fiction

One Day: A True Story of Courage and Survival in the Holocaust

Michael Rosen & Benjamin Phillips

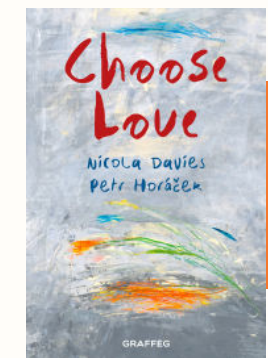
This picture book for older readers tells the true story of Eugène and Oscar Handschuh, a father and a son who escaped transportation to Auschwitz and joined the resistance. A story of human endurance and courage and a reminder of the intense cruelty that follows when empathy is lost.



Choose Love

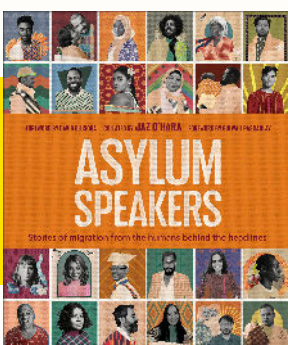
Nicola Davies

A compassionate poetry collection by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Petr Horáček, offering powerful glimpses into refugee experiences—leaving home, facing fear and searching for safety. Evocative poems and artwork invite readers to understand, empathise and choose love.



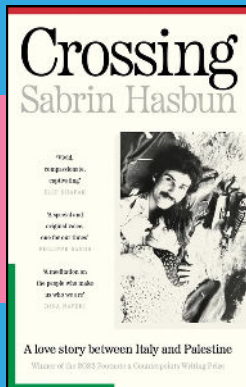
Asylum Speakers

Asylum Speakers is a collection of 31 migration stories from the voices behind the headlines. From Syria to Venezuela, it shares the experiences of those fleeing their homes and those helping them, transcending borders and connecting us all.



Poetry

Non-fiction



Crossing: A love story between Italy and Palestine

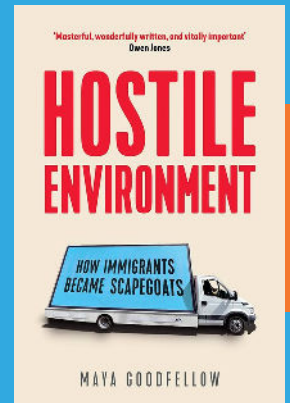
Sabrin Hasbun

A beautiful family memoir and winner of the 2025 Footnotes X Counterpoints Prize, tracing Sabrin Hasbun's half-Italian, half-Palestinian heritage. After her mother's death, she revisits her parents' love story and her dual identity, exploring grief, belonging and what it means to lose both people and place.

Hostile Environment: How immigrants became scapegoats

Maya Goodfellow

A sharp, accessible critique of the UK's immigration system, showing how decades of racist, xenophobic policy have created a punitive and dehumanising framework. Drawing on interviews and analysis, Maya Goodfellow reveals its human cost and makes a compelling case for a fairer, more compassionate approach.



Novels



Martyr

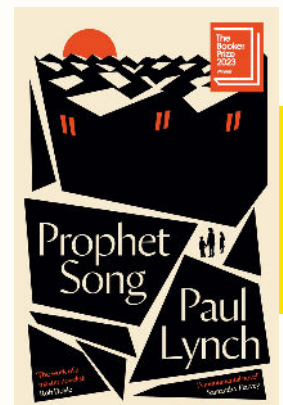
Kaveh Akbar

This award-winning haunting debut novel follows Cyrus, a young man grappling with grief, memory and identity as he searches for the truth behind his mother's death on a plane shot down over the Persian Gulf. Travelling from New York to Tehran, he uncovers revelations that challenge everything he thought he knew.

Prophet Song

Paul Lynch

A gripping Booker Prize-winning novel set in a near-future Ireland sliding into totalitarian rule. When secret police detain her husband, Eilish is pushed into a terrifying struggle to protect her children. A powerful portrait of a society unravelling and a mother's fierce resilience in the face of rising tyranny.

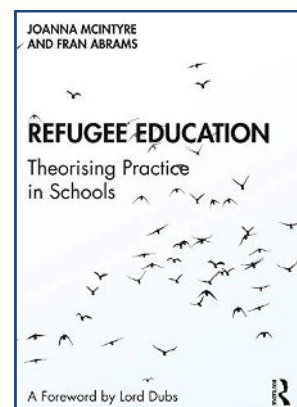


For educators

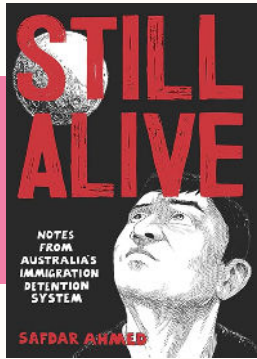
Refugee Education: Theorising practice in schools

Joanna McIntyre and Fran Abrams

A concise, justice-focused exploration of the barriers refugee children face in accessing inclusive education in the UK and Europe. Drawing on theory and research, the book examines the ethical and emotional complexities of supporting young refugees as they rebuild their lives, offering vital insights for educators and policymakers.



Graphic novels



Still Alive

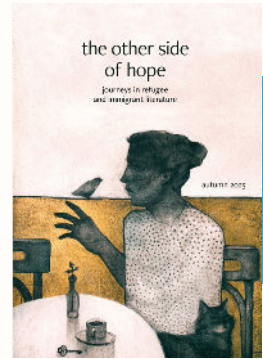
Safdar Ahmed

Weaving journalism, history, and autobiography, *Still Alive* is an intensely personal indictment of Australia's refugee detention policies and procedures, which are not unlike those in many Western nations. It is also a searching reflection on the redemptive power of art (and death metal).

Magazines

The Other Side of Hope

A UK-based, migrant-led literary magazine celebrating the voices of refugee and immigrant writers. Founded in 2021, the Other Side of Hope publishes fiction, poetry and essays, and has donated thousands of copies to refugee centres and libraries.



Podcasts

Asylum Speakers

Podcast — Asylum Speakers

The podcast takes you on a journey across the world, without you having to go anywhere. Asylum Speakers podcast exists to amplify voices, educate, inspire and debunk some of the common myths and misconceptions around migration today. A new season of this podcast is on its way!



The kind place: We are VOICES

The kind place: We are VOICES | British Red Cross

In this award-winning podcast episodes are produced by refugees and people seeking asylum. They share first-hand stories about life in the UK to build empathy and understanding of the experiences of people who have been forcibly displaced.



Join the Empathy Education movement

Whether you're a teacher, librarian, caregiver or community champion, there's a way for everyone to get involved! EmpathyLab gives you the tools to turn empathy into action and nurture a love of reading.

Help us grow

If, like us, you believe that empathy is the bedrock from which all positive change springs – whether social, political or environmental, join the Empathy Education movement, and support us to:

- ★ Reach and benefit 1 million children and young people every year
- ★ Train more teachers, librarians, parents and caregivers to supercharge shared reading
- ★ Campaign for empathy development to be included within formal education



Donate today

For just £3 per month - less than a cup of coffee - together we can make the world a better place for everyone.

Stay up-to-date

To find out more and be the first to hear about our latest news, events and training, sign up to our mailing list empathylab.uk



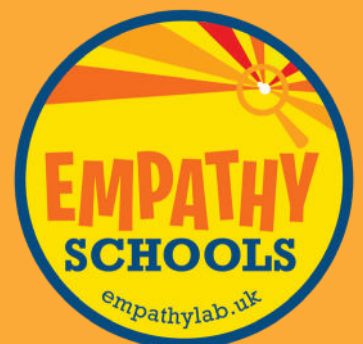
Take part in the Empathy Day Festival 4-11 June 2026

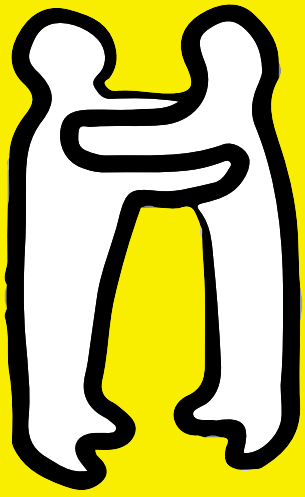
Join the nation's favourite authors and illustrators to jump into someone else's story. Featuring empathy-themed creative activities, live and on-demand author films, toolkits, and much more. From early years to teens, take part for FREE in your school, home or community setting.

Become an EmpathyLab School

Our evidence-based programme helps schools embed empathy as a core value, practiced through reading. Schools report lasting improvements in wellbeing, social and emotional development, community cohesion and reading enjoyment.

Join a community of primary, secondary and SEND settings across England, Scotland and Wales. Training dates coming up in June and November.





A DAY OF WELCOME

Friday 12 June 2026

A Day of Welcome is an annual day of solidarity and learning in schools that aims to build a culture of welcome and understanding for people seeking sanctuary.

Celebrated by over 820 schools in 2025, it's designed to support teachers in kickstarting Refugee Week by providing free live events, resources and activities for pupils of all ages.

[Register now](#)

[Our Website](#)

Why get involved?

- ✓ Build a culture of welcome, belonging and solidarity in your school for those seeking sanctuary
- ✓ Share stories of refugee migration, local and global, past and present, with your pupils Better educate and support your ref ugee pupils and their families
- ✓ A Day of Welcome helps your school to meet its legal and statutory duties.

THIS DOCUMENT GIVES AN OVERVIEW

of the various resources, live events, activities and ideas that we will be sharing for A Day of Welcome 2026.



Refugee Week

15–21 June 2026

The theme for A Day of Welcome and Refugee Week 2026 is "Courage", which comes from the Latin term cor, meaning "heart." For refugees around the world, courage is often a daily necessity. It is the courage to face unknown journeys, learn new languages, navigate unfamiliar systems, or simply to wake up each morning and step into an uncertain world.

Through art, stories, and community, we celebrate the courage that lives within us all – and how connection helps it grow.

[Refugee week website](#)

Organised by:

Anglia Ruskin University & Schools of Sanctuary



a.r.u. Anglia Ruskin University

Key partners::



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The World of Languages
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