

New Internationalist

The people, the ideas, the action in the fight for global justice

Refugee stories

New Internationalist Easier English

Ready Pre-Intermediate Lesson



This lesson:

Speaking

Vocabulary

Reading

Who are these people? Where are they going? Why?



This is where they are now, in Calais: describe their life



Match:

1/ migrant

2/ tent

3/ refugee

4/ genocide

5/ famine

6/ persecution

7/ to crush

8/ ferry

9/ fence

a) No food – so people die



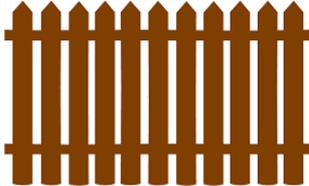
c) 

d) Killing a whole racial or ethnic group

e) To destroy or break by pressing

f) A person who has to leave their country because of war or persecution

g) A person who moves to a different area or country to find work or a better life

h) 

i) Treating people badly eg. because they are a different race or religion

Now read to check :

People call the large area of old tents and small old buildings just outside the French port of Calais 'The Jungle'.

It started in 2009, but then the French authorities destroyed it. Now the area is again a place for more than 2,000 migrants and political refugees. All of them here for one reason: to get to Britain or die trying.

Most of them come from Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Syria, Afghanistan or Palestine. All of them have run away from war, genocide, famine or political persecution. They want to begin life again in England.

Many of them die from crushing when they travel under lorries onto the ferries to Dover. Many of them die of cold when they swim in the English Channel to the boats. And many are often beaten when they all try to break down the fences of the port.

But the migrants all have personal stories.

[http://ewiki.newint.org/index.php/Welcome to The Jungle - refugees in Calais](http://ewiki.newint.org/index.php/Welcome_to_The_Jungle_-_refugees_in_Calais)

Questions:

1/ How old are they?

2/ Where are they from?

3/ Why did they leave their country

4/ Why are they in Calais?

5/ What problems

have they had?

5/ How do they feel?



Match:

1/ inflatable

2/ corruption

3/ brutality

4/ cruise ship

5/ asylum

6/ gangster

7/ discrimination

8/ preacher

9/ nail

a)



b)



c) A religious person who talks in public about the religion

d) A criminal in a gang

e) Treating people badly because of their group (or race, gender etc)

f) Something you can make bigger if you fill it with air or gas

g) Using power in bad ways

h) Protection given by one country to someone who has to leave their country

i) Physical violence

Now read about one man to tell your group:

From this link, or the next 4 slides:

[http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/Welcome to The Jungle - refugees in Calais](http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/Welcome_to_The_Jungle_-_refugees_in_Calais)

1/ Nahar



2/ Yassen



3/ Ahmed



4/ Whalid



1/ Nahar, 24, is a Zaghawa tribesman. He lived in a small, poor village looking after sheep and cows. One morning in 2013, Nahar was going to market. The Janjaweed militia (supported by the government) came and started killing the people with knives and guns. 'They burned my village,' says Nahar. He went home and found the dead bodies of his father and two brothers. His uncle and two sisters survived. They were afraid that the Janjaweed might come back. But they did not want to leave. 'My uncle told us he hid money in the earth under a [nearby] tree and we must use it to escape if the militia came back.'

A month later, the Janjaweed took Nahar's uncle and murdered him. Nahar quickly left on a horse. He went back to the village three hours later and he got the uncle's money. With £2,000 Sudanese pounds (\$351), he went to the village of Tina, on the border with Chad. In Chad, Nahar paid a Libyan goat farmer to take him in a goat lorry to Libya. He cleaned out the goats and slept standing up. Finally they reached Madama in Libya.

'When we arrived [in Madama] the Libyan militia took us to Sabha to a house. They told us that if you have someone in Libya you can call, bring us 2,000 Libyan Dinars [\$1,450] each and we'll let you go.' But Nahar had nothing.

After two months kept as a prisoner, a Libyan came. He told Nahar that if he worked for him he would be released. Nahar agreed, and they took him to a camel farm near Sabha. There, he worked all day and night for no money. Months later, Nahar escaped. He stole 1,000 Libyan Dinars (\$730) and got a bus to Tripoli. In Tripoli, human traffickers told him they could take him to Europe by inflatable boat. They took him to a house to wait with hundreds of other refugees in the dark.

'Libyans are bad people,' says Nahar. 'When I wanted to go to the bathroom, one screamed in Arabic and hit me in the stomach with his gun.'

That evening, on a beach, they put many refugees in tiny inflatable boats and crossed the sea to Sicily. Nahar got to Ventimiglia, then to Nice by train. Then he walked to the Calais migrant camp. He wanted to reach the safety of England and end his journey. Nahar has been living in 'The Jungle' for three months.

2/ Like many young people, Yassen, 24, wanted political change in Sudan. He wanted this even more after the many revolutions across North Africa and the Middle East in early 2010. Yassen studied illustration at the University of Khartoum. He made many cartoons and slogans about the protest movement in Khartoum. He showed the corruption and brutality of the Sudanese government. In 2012, Yassen was at a protest outside Khartoum University. Government officials saw him in the crowd and arrested him. The police beat him. Then they released him. 'I was scared for my future because there was no freedom and I was on a government blacklist,' explains Yassen.

But this didn't stop him. In September 2013, Yassen protested again in Khartoum, against low wages and government corruption. At the protest, Yassen saw a man wearing a dark suit and sunglasses, with a gun. The man was a government intelligence agent. Yassen told the crowd and the man shot Yassen's friend in the head. He died, the protestors panicked, and the government agents took Yassen.

'Because I saw who the killer was, the government made it terrible for me... they told me if you don't give information about other protesters, we will kill you and your family.'

In a small prison cell, guards broke both of Yassen's legs and beat him all day and night. After three weeks, they let Yassen go home and ordered him to obey them. When he got home, his family made plans for him to escape Sudan. Yassen walked for days in the heat to Sudan's South Eastern border with Libya. He gave the guards some money to cross the border. Then he walked to Kufrah. Here, his cousin found him a job clearing land. 'It was hard work – very little money.'

Yassen had to ask his cousin for money to help pay for a boat to Europe. He went to Sicily from Tripoli in Libya. Then he walked up through Italy and France. He got to Calais after two months of sleeping on roads, fields and streets. The police were after him all the time.

Yassen can never go back to Sudan, because the government want to put him in prison. He wants to go to England from Calais so he can finish his studies and express himself as he wants to, not controlled by corrupt governments. Yassen has been living in 'The Jungle' for three months.

3/ Ahmed, 25, has an MA in Food Security and Agriculture from the University of Khartoum. When he was a student, Ahmed was arrested more than eight times. A policeman stabbed him at a protest at Khartoum University. So he decided to leave Sudan.

‘The police and military intelligence are violent to me...I was fighting for the rights of people in rural areas. I chose my MA to get a few rights for those people... and this is a problem for the government,’ Ahmed explains.

In February 2014, he crossed from Northern Darfur into Libya and a group of Libyans took him to a house and promised a boat to Europe. But instead, they locked Ahmed in a basement and kept him prisoner for more than two months. Eventually, they put him on a truck to Kufrah. They made him work on a building site. ‘When I asked questions about money, food, a boat to Europe, the Libyans just beat me,’ says Ahmed.

On 7 August 2014, they gave him the address of a car park in Kufrah and told him to wait there. After seven hours, a young Libyan arrived with a gun. ‘He was maybe 14 or 15...but he had a gun and I knew he was dangerous.’

With five others from Sudan, they drove Ahmed at night to a house with hundreds of African refugees. They had to stand in silence for more than 20 hours. More Libyans with guns arrived. They forced us with guns to run to the sea in the dark. They walked in the water to some very small plastic boats, then to a larger boat. ‘They told us if we went back, they would shoot us.

After two days at sea, the boat’s engine started smoking. The refugees started crying and screaming for someone to save them from the rocking boat. The Red Cross took them onto a small rescue boat. Then they went on a nearby cruise ship, with tourists taking photos of them. The ship took them to Sicily and the UNHCR explained the process of asylum.

‘But I wanted to go England. My grandfather told us stories of the English...they are organized people. We know the English well from when our country was a colony, and they paid for many Sudanese to study at Oxford University. I wanted to go there.’

He walked to Calais from Italy. The French police beat Ahmed and took him to the Belgian border after he tried to get on a ferry. He knew it was getting more difficult, so he asked for asylum in France at the beginning of September 2014. His case is still going on. Ahmed has been in ‘The Jungle’ for one month and five days.

4 / 'The rulers of Sudan are gangsters who pretend to be religious. Because of their crimes, more than 10 million people are now refugees,' says Whalid, 28, as he begins to tell his story. He was a Christian, but there was a lot of ethnic discrimination from the Sudanese government and the Arab militias. The militia destroyed local villages and forced many Nuba tribespeople to leave and hide.

In one attack by the militia in 2011, they took Whalid and put him in prison. They beat him and ordered him to become a Muslim. 'I said no, so they covered me in ice-cold water and electrocuted me every day until 2am.'

Two months later, an Islamic group arrived at the prison. Each person took 10 prisoners, including Whalid, to work as slaves on local farms. 'When the farmer went to buy diesel fuel one morning, I escaped,' says Whalid excitedly.

He found a small, hand-operated rail car on a railway track and used this to travel about 80 kilometres. Then he got to Libya on a donkey. Four months later, a Libyan gang put Whalid in prison. They demanded \$2,000 for his release. He escaped again and ran to Ajdabiya, a port in Libya. There, he found work moving boxes of vegetables. After two months, he and other Sudanese refugees had 1,200 Libyan Dinars (\$870) - enough for a boat to Europe. The refugees went to a young Islamic preacher to help them. He sent the group to Tripoli.

'This man said he was Islamic, but he only wanted money. They locked in a small house near the water with about 300 others and they put us on a boat like cows,' says Whalid. 'They sent the Africans below deck and put nails in so we couldn't get out,' he continues. 'We made holes in the wood to breathe.'

The boat was small and had no GPS. It floated in the sea for eight days. There was no air below deck, so eight Africans died from the diesel fumes. The Libyan crew threw their bodies into the sea. They got to Sicily and the Red Cross got the boat and let them to go free. Whalid took a train from Ventimiglia to Nice and then to Paris. In Paris, he spent 10 days in prison for sleeping on the streets without documents. He then began the long walk north. Police arrested him a few times in Boulogne and Arras. Then he got to Calais. Whalid has tried to get on a ferry to England more times than he can remember. Last time he tried to break the fence, the French police beat him and sprayed him with pepper.

'I'd rather be killed in my own country than die here, but I will never stop trying to reach freedom,' he says smiling.

Whalid has been living in 'The Jungle' for three months.

Tell the story of the man you read about to your group – try to use these words:

migrant

tent

inflatable

refugee



corruption

genocide

brutality

nail

famine

fence

cruise ship

persecution

asylum

preacher

to crush

ferry

gangster

discrimination