

Syrian Refugee Crisis



Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What is a refugee?
2. Where is Syria?
3. Why have millions of Syrians fled their homeland since 2011?

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.

Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| ___ 1. movement | a) a battle between people or groups in one country |
| ___ 2. resignation | b) an effort to create change that spreads from one place to another |
| ___ 3. civil war | c) cruel and violent punishment |
| ___ 4. refugee camp | d) more than full |
| ___ 5. displaced | e) a person who illegally brings people or things into an area |
| ___ 6. torture | f) the giving up of one's job or position of leadership |
| ___ 7. smuggler | g) a temporary settlement for displaced people |
| ___ 8. desperate | h) public health issues related to sewage and cleanliness |
| ___ 9. sanitation | i) related to the basic survival needs of humans |
| ___ 10. overflowing | j) having very serious needs |
| ___ 11. makeshift | k) temporary, made quickly with little effort |
| ___ 12. humanitarian | l) not living at home due to war or a humanitarian crisis |

Reading

1. In the spring of 2011, anti-government protests spread across the Middle East. The **movement** became known as the *Arab Spring*. In Syria, protestors demanded the **resignation** of President Assad. Government forces answered with violence. This sparked a **civil war**.
2. As the conflict worsened between government forces and rebels, millions of Syrian civilians began to flee their homes. Within four years, nearly half of the nation's population had fled. Many have ended up in **refugee camps**.
3. **Displaced** people often flee in the dark with just the clothes on their backs. If they are caught, they are killed, **tortured**, or forced into battle. Some are forced to give all of their money to border guards or **smugglers**. In Syria, many left on buses in mass evacuations. The buses became targets, and evacuations were stalled.
4. Since March 2011, approximately 11 million Syrians have fled their homes. Close to half of these people have left the country. Many have made it to refugee camps in neighboring nations, including Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and Iraq. When the refugees arrive, they are exhausted from their journey. They are also in **desperate** need of food, shelter, and health care.
5. In camps such as Zaatari in Jordan, tens of thousands of Syrians have set up new villages. These camps have **makeshift** stores, schools, hospitals, and places to play football. Though a refugee camp is meant as a temporary place of settlement, Syrians don't expect to go home anytime soon.
6. Syria's neighboring countries don't have the resources to feed, shelter, and provide health care and education to millions of people. Water shortages and poor **sanitation** are two of the biggest problems. The refugee camps in Iraq have the worst conditions. They are already **overflowing** with Iraqis who have fled their homes due to war and hunger.
7. The Syrian civil war has resulted in one of the worst **humanitarian** crises in recent history. Approximately 470,000 people have been killed in the war. Some European nations have closed or restricted access to refugees, saying they have lost control of their borders. Other nations have responded by accepting more refugees than ever before.

“On World Refugee Day, 20 June, we honor the strength and resilience of the more than 50 million people around the world who have fled war, persecution, and human rights abuses.”

—Ban Ki-moon

Pronunciation Tip

The plural of *crisis* is *crises*.
Pronounce it like *cry-seas*.

What other irregular plural nouns can you think of?

Comprehension

A. Timeline

Place the following in chronological order (1-7).
One item is not mentioned in the reading.
Place a star beside it and guess where it belongs.

- _____ Syrians began arriving in refugee camps in border countries.
- _____ Border countries realized they didn't have the resources to support so many refugees.
- _____ Many Syrians began to flee their homes.
- _____ Syrians protested in the streets, and demanded that President Assad resign.
- _____ A group of teenage Syrians were arrested and tortured for writing anti-government slogans on a school wall.
- _____ The unrest in Syria developed into a civil war.
- _____ Rebel groups began to battle government forces.

B. Ask and Answer

Practice asking and answering the following questions with your partner.
Then write your answers in complete sentences in your notebook.

1. What was the Arab Spring?
2. What did many Syrian civilians do when a civil war broke out in their country?
3. Why is it dangerous for Syrians to flee their homes?
4. Why do many Syrians arrive at refugee camps with no money?
5. What happens when Syrians *seek refuge* in Iraq?
6. What is Zaatari?

Pronunciation Tip

To *seek refuge* means to look for a safe place. The word *refuge* is pronounced like *refugee* without the *-ee*.

Grammar Review

HOME

A. Reference

*“Though a refugee camp is meant as a temporary place of settlement, Syrians don’t expect to **go home** anytime soon.”*

As a Noun

The word “home” usually functions as a noun.

- I love my home.
- I forgot my keys at home.

As an Adverb

When paired with the verb “go,” the word “home” can function as an adverb, indicating a direction.

- The children want to go home.
- When can we go home?
- The refugees may never go home.

The word “home” can act as an adverb with other verbs, such as *stay, drive, fly, return, arrive, come, leave,* and *move*. When “home” acts as an adverb, no article, pronoun, or preposition is used.

B. Practice

Work as a class to make some sentences with the adverb “home.”

Use the verb “go” as well as some of the other verbs mentioned above.

Vocabulary Review

Choose the word or phrase with the closest meaning to the underlined word or phrase in the following sentences.

- The sewage facilities in the camps are in desperate need of repair.
 - serious
 - security
 - sanitation
- They were hungry and extremely tired after walking through the desert for three weeks.
 - displaced
 - exhausted
 - tortured
- The refugee camps in Jordan have grown so large that they are more like towns.
 - humanitarian effort
 - temporary settlements
 - displaced people
- The makeshift school has one teacher for three hundred students.
 - temporary
 - poor
 - busy
- When Syria's president refused to resign, a civil war broke out.
 - fight back
 - quit
 - apologize
- The family fled in the darkness and hid in war-torn buildings.
 - ran away
 - fought
 - protested

Discussion

- Have you been following this humanitarian crisis in the news? What other crises are happening around the world?
- What often happens to displaced people who try to seek refuge by boat?
- Whose responsibility is it to help bordering nations in a crisis like Syria's?
- How is Syria's civil war different from other wars in history?
- In January 2017, President Trump signed an executive order banning Syrian refugees from the US. Trump identified these refugees as a terrorist threat. How do you feel about this decision?