



UNHCR Teachers' Corner Reading List

The following books are suggested for elementary through sixth grade students. It is recommended that teachers and parents review the selections to determine whether these refugee-themed books are appropriate for young audiences.

Grades K-1

The Color of Home by Mary Hoffman, *ill. by Karin Littlewood*
ISBN 0711219915 Published by Frances Lincoln Ltd.

The story of Hassan's first day at an English school, after his family flee the war in Somalia. It describes his sadness, and how the school helps him to feel welcome and settled.

Petar's Song by Pratima Mitchell, *ill. by Caroline Binch*
ISBN 0 7112 2078 6 Published by Frances Lincoln Ltd.

Beautifully illustrated story of family separation caused by war.

The Librarian of Basra by Jeanette Winter
ISBN 0 15 205445 6 Published by Harcourt Inc.

The true story about a librarian's struggle to save her community's priceless collection of books during the war in Iraq

Grades 2-3

Playing War by Kathy Beckwith, *ill. by Lea Lyon*
ISBN 0 88448 267 7 Published by Tilbury House

Illustrated story about understanding what war can be like for families, and that war is not a game. It's also a sensitive story about the power of friendship and how children can learn from one another.

My Name was Hussein by Hristo Kyuchukov, *ill. by Allan Eitzen*
ISBN 1 56397 964 0 Published by Boyds Mills Press

Illustrated story sharing the life of a young Roma boy in Bulgaria, who is forced to give up his identity and his name as a result of government oppression

My Name is Bilal by Asma Mobin-Uddin, *ill. by Barbara Kiwak*
ISBN 1 59078 175 9 Published by Boyds Mills Press

The story of a boy who is able to come to terms with his heritage in a seemingly hostile environment

Grades 4-6

Refugee Boy by Benjamin Zephaniah

ISBN 0 7475 5086 7 Published by Bloomsbury Publishing

The story of Alem, a 14 year old refugee who has come to live in England. His mother is Eritrean and his father Ethiopian, and with both countries at war, he is welcome in neither place.

Zlata's Diary by Zlata Filipovic

ISBN 0 14 037463 9 Published by Puffin

Real diary of a young girl trapped in Sarajevo when war broke out in 1992. For nearly 2 years she recorded how war touched her daily life and robbed her of her childhood.

Hana's Suitcase by Karen Levine

ISBN 0 237 52630 1 Published by Evans

A biography of a Czech girl who died in the Holocaust, told in alternating chapters with an account of how the curator of a Japanese holocaust Centre learned about her life, after Hana's suitcase was sent to her.

The Other Side of Truth by Beverly Naidoo

ISBN 0 14 130476 6 Published by Puffin

A fast and vivid account of a family's flight from threat and murder seen through the eyes of 12 year old Sade and her 10 year old brother Femi. It traces their frightening experiences in both Nigeria and England.

Home is a Place called Nowhere by Leon Rosselson

ISBN 0 19 271914 9 £6.99 Published by Oxford University Press

The story of a young adopted refugee's attempt to find her real story.

The following books are suggested for high school students. It is recommended that teachers and parents review the selections to determine whether these refugee-themed books are appropriate for young audiences.

First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers. Loung Ung. Harper Collins, 2001.

Loung Ung recounts her childhood as a refugee fleeing Pol Pot's regime. The daughter of a high-ranking government official, Loung, her parents and six siblings were forced to flee and became separated with Loung working as a child soldier while her siblings endured labor camps. After the fall of the Khmer Rouge, Loung reunited with her family and faced the challenges of starting a new life.

God Grew Tired of Us: A Memoir. John Bul Dau and Michael Sweeney. National Geographic Society, 2008.

“Lost Boy” John Dau’s autobiography tells his gripping experience of surviving the Sudanese civil war. With an award-winning documentary of the same name, Dau traces his 1,000-mile flight into exile, walking barefoot with thousands of other “Lost Boys” from Sudan to Ethiopia, back to Sudan and to a refugee camp in Kenya. Enduring 14 years of hardship, Dau is finally resettled in America where he must adapt to a new home.

I am David. Anne Holm. Harcourt Trade Publishers, 2004.

Twelve-year old David escapes an oppressing Eastern European prison camp in the aftermath of World War II. Not knowing anything about his family or life outside of the prison walls, David escapes and travels alone across Europe to Denmark where he hopes to find safety and freedom.

Best-selling author Khaled Hosseini is Goodwill Envoy for UNHCR.

The Kite Runner, Khaled Hosseini. Riverhead Trade, 2005.

Spanning decades, *The Kite Runner* is the story of two boyhood friends in Kabul. Amir is the son of a well-to-do man and Hassan is the son of Amir’s father’s servant and belongs to an underprivileged ethnic minority group. Living in the same house, the two boys live incredibly different lives. Following the Soviet invasion, Amir and his father flee to America while Hassan stays behind in Afghanistan.

A Thousand Splendid Suns. Khaled Hosseini. Riverhead, 2007.

From the Soviet invasion to the fall of the Taliban and the rebuilding of Afghanistan, this is the story of two generations of family and friends affected by the hardships of war.

A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier. Ishmael Beah. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.

A former child soldier, Ishmael Beah gives his first-person account of brutal attacks by rebels and being forced into a world of violence by government forces at age 13.

The Lost Boys of Sudan: An American Story of the Refugee Experience. Mark Bixler. University of Georgia Press, 2006.

This is the tragic and inspiring story of four Sudanese refugees who make their way to the America to rebuild their lives.

Notes from My Travels, Angelina Jolie. Simon and Schuster, 2003.

Goodwill Ambassador for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and award-winning actress Angelina Jolie shares her memoirs from her visits to Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Pakistan, Cambodia, and Ecuador, where she worked on behalf of refugees.

Of Beetles and Angels: A Boy's Remarkable Journey from a Refugee Camp to Harvard. Mawi Asgedom. Little, Brown and Company, 2002.

A true story of a young boy's incredible journey from a Sudanese refugee camp to a Chicago suburb where his family survives on welfare, Mawi Asgedom overcomes many obstacles and receives a scholarship to Harvard.

One Day the Soldiers Came: Voices of Children in War. Charles London. New York: HarperCollins, 2007.

Charles London explores the lives of refugee children who have survived war, violence, family and poverty.

An Ordinary Man: An Autobiography. Paul Rusesabagina. Penguin Books, 2007.

An Ordinary Man is the story of the real-life hero who inspired the film *Hotel Rwanda*. Rusesabagina, a hotel manager, turned the Hotel Milles Collines into a sanctuary for more than 1,200 Tutsis and Hutus, while keeping the attackers at bay long enough to save their lives. This story recounts his childhood, his role in saving the hotel guests, as well as his own life as a refugee and activist in the years that followed.

Swimming Across: A Memoir. Andrew S. Grove. Warner Books, Inc., 2001.

Swimming Across is the personal account of Intel founder and CEO Andrew Grove's childhood in Hungary, the Nazi invasion and subsequent Communist rule. Grove fled to America where he pursued the American dream.

What is the What. Dave Eggers. McSweeney's, 2006.

Separated from his family, Valentino Achak Deng lives a dangerous life as a refugee in war-ravaged southern Sudan, dodging the perils of rebels, soldiers, wild animals, disease and hunger.

**We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families:
Stories from Rwanda. Philip Gourevitch. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux,
1999.**

This book dissects the 1994 Rwandan genocide when 800,000 people were killed in one hundred days, including the background of the genocide and the aftermath.