

We Refugees

Digitales Archiv zu Flucht
in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart

What is home?

Educational method to the We Refugees Archive

As of 10th grade (for schools with Abitur Stream orientation)

60 min

Impressum

What is home?

Educational method to the We Refugees Archive

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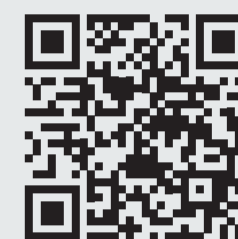
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We Refugees

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Goals

The participants think about their own definitions of home.

The participants learn that the definitions of home vary for each individual and develop an understanding for this.

Participants learn about the imagination of home from people who have left their homeland.

Material

In-person event

- 3 printed papers for the triangle (see attachment)
- Printed texts (see attachment)

Videoconference

- Files with the texts

In-person event

ASSESSING ONE'S OWN DEFINITION OF HOME (20 MINUTES)

The instructor positions three papers in the shape of a triangle in the room.

Paper 1: „Home is where I was born and raised.“

Paper 2: „Home is where my ancestors were from.“

Paper 3: „something else“

Participants are asked to assign themselves to one of the three corners.

Those who cannot decide, may position themselves between two corners.

The instructor will now ask the participants questions. „Why have you chosen to stand there? „, „What is home for you?“, „ What do you associate with home?“ All participants should have their say. It is important to note that there are no right and wrong answers in this exercise.

1

2

ASSESSING IMAGINATIONS OF HOME FROM PEOPLE WHO HAVE LEFT THEIR HOMELAND (40 MINUTES)

The instructor distributes slips of paper on which people tell about their conception of home. Participants are asked to read them.

One after the other, the participants read out their quote and then position it in the triangle. „Where would the person in the triangle be standing if they were present in this room?“

ASSESSING ONE'S OWN DEFINITION OF HOME (20 MINUTES)

The participants in the digital space are asked to find three objects, one each in the colors red, yellow and blue. Once all participants have returned with the items, the instructor explains to the participants that each color stands for a different position.

- blue: "Home is where I was born and raised."
- yellow: "Home is where my ancestors were from."
- red: "something else."

The speaker writes the colors and their meanings again in the chat.

The instructor now asks the question, "What does home mean to you?" The participants consider which of the three possible answers would most closely correspond to their own answer.

Participants are asked to hold the object with the corresponding color up to the camera. Those who cannot decide may position themselves with two objects.

The instructor asks the participants: "Why are you holding up blue (or yellow, red)?", "What is home to you?", "What do you associate with home?". All participants should have their say. It is important to note that there are no right and wrong answers in this exercise.

1

2

ASSESSING IMAGINATIONS OF HOME FROM PEOPLE WHO HAVE LEFT THEIR HOMELAND (40 MINUTES)

If possible, the instructor can put all texts in a cloud in advance and post the appropriate link in the chat, so that the participants can access them. The instructor can also send the texts to the participants in advance by email. Otherwise, the texts can also be placed in the chat as one file if the video conferencing system allows for this (see attachment). Then the instructor sets up breakout rooms for small group work, so that two participants at a time make up a small group. If the instructor has put the appropriate files into the chat, then the participants are asked to remember their breakout room number, as this number will be the number of their citation file.

In the ten-minute small group phase, participants are asked to read through the quote on homeland and discuss, "What is home to this person?" Back in the large group, participants read their quote one by one. You are asked to symbolize the position of the person with the corresponding color of the item and justify their choice. "What color of an item would the person have shown if they were here in the video conference?"

Where do the texts come from?

The texts are excerpts from testimonies of refugees in the We Refugees Archive. The We Refugees Archive is a growing digital archive and educational center on refugeedom in the past and present, especially during National Socialism in the past and present. It focuses on individual experiences and the microcosm of the city as a place of refuge and new beginnings. The complete testimonies from which the quotes were taken, as well as background information, sources and images, and other thematically relevant contributions can be found via the search functions on the website or via the QR codes inserted here at the appropriate places. All links to the articles used in this educational method can be found in the source reference as well as in the education section of our website as digital bookmarks. You can also create and share your own link lists with interesting articles using the “Bookmarks” function. General (socio-)political, historical, legal, and conceptual background information can be found on the city and topic pages and in the glossary.

Glossary



**“Home is where I was
I was born and grew
up.”**

**“Home is where my
ancestors were from.”**

“something else”

Widad Nabi

“Home are memories. Your childhood. The first test of your life vocabulary such as love, hate, forgetting, the pain, joy.”

Widad Nabi

“Could the new place become home for me?
Is it really impossible to regain the secureness of
the old place?”

Mascha Kaléko

Thus spoke to Mr. Goodwill

A German emigrant:

“Of course, it stays the same

If I say Land, not land,

If I say home, not Heimat,

and poem for Gedicht.

Of course, I'm very happy:

But I am not glücklich.”

Mascha Kaléko

“When I say “homesick,” I say “dreams.”
Because the old home’s hardly there, it seems.
When I’m saying homesick, much is said:
What in exile had us grieve and dread.
We feel strange in our hometowns today.
Just the “sickness” stayed.
The “home’s” gone.”

H.

“Before, they asked whether Castelnuovo could be a home. I can say no. Because home is where your books are, where your future is. Home is not where you eat and sleep. We could call the place where we are today home: The school.”

Issam Alnajm

“I belong to this city
Although I was born elsewhere
did not grow up here
I am proud of this city
here I found my first love
my first friendship
and the first freedom.”

Mahdi A.

“Berlin is my city. I am very proud that I live in Berlin. [...] Nowhere else is like Berlin. Berlin is multicultural, there are people from many different countries. The atmosphere in Berlin is simply more relaxed. That is why I like living in Berlin. I don't really long for Iran. I would like to visit my family sometime. But I have never missed Iran itself.”

Hussam Al Zaher

“I don’t feel foreign in Hamburg – I feel at home in Hamburg – but I am definitely still a foreigner in Germany.”

Alexandra Sadownik

“My identity and my home are a jigsaw puzzle made up of various factors. I feel safe in Germany because I grew up here. I also spent a few months in Israel and I felt at home there, but it’s not my home. I don’t speak Hebrew. I would like it to be, but it is not. We have a lot of relatives there, but at the same time I am not an Israeli.”

Alaa Muhrez

“In Germany, I often feel distant to others as a refugee. In your home country, you not only felt closer to your circle of friends and family, but also to society, where belonging felt much more natural.”

Dina

“Yeah, I guess, if I look at my whole past, this is the most settled down I have been in Istanbul, because I am working. I have a really good job and I have very nice friends around me but I don’t have this feeling yet, that I might stay here for a longer time.”

Isa Artar

“In the end, is it better to end up in prison at home than face uncertainty in exile? At least, prison is clear and predictable. 6 months in prison and then you can go back to your friends. In Germany, isolation awaits because you can’t even consume news in the foreign language. Is the lack of language access another form of prison?”

Architect Bruno Taut

“Yes, it is cursedly difficult everywhere, home does not exist for anyone on this earth today.

[...]

For me it is still valid: Where is the homeland?

-Answer: Building. Where is happiness?

-Answer: Building.”

Kefah Ali Deeb

“Forests, fields, valleys, rivers, streams, lakes, sun, moon and rain always exert a gravitational pull on me. They awaken my memory and bring my memories to life. What I want to forget becomes the present, the past brings me back and my country pulls at me. I try to flee, work a lot and often travel to exhaustion. And I ask myself: ‘Do you take the fatherland with you on the soles of your shoes?’”

Paydar H.

“That’s how Istanbul grew on me. It is that all my memories are from here and I can’t bring back memories from Aleppo. When I walk on the street I have the feeling that I belong to the street.”

Karam Almahad

“I belong both to Istanbul and to DeirEzzor, but when I think of ‘home’, I smell water, rivers and the ocean.”

Fritz Neumark

“We were homesick for the landscape and above all for ‘our language’. In spite of the difficulties I have described, some of which are quite special – above all: language and religion – in getting used to the country and understanding the peculiarities of its people, many, indeed probably most of the emigrants have come to know and love Turkey as a second fatherland.”

Nacibullah

“I feel quite like an Istanbulite. I am used to living in Istanbul and it is such a beautiful city. I am now used to its people.”

List of sources

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Link to archive article: <https://en.we-refugees-archive.org/archive/home-are-memories/>

Written interview with Widad Nabi in Berlin © 2020 We Refugees Archive / Minor Kontor.

Widad Nabi: Stories of a woman on the banks of the Spree (2017, Berlin)

Link to archive article: <https://we-refugees-archive.org/archive/geschichten-einer-frau-am-spreeufer/>

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Link to archive article: <https://en.we-refugees-archive.org/archive/i-belong-to-this-city/>

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Mahdi A. on Berlin (2020, Berlin)

Link to archive article: <https://en.we-refugees-archive.org/archive/mahdi-on-berlin/>

Interview with Mahdi A. in Berlin © 2020 We Refugees Archiv / Minor Kontor.

Hussam Al Zaher on the difference between Hamburg and Germany (2020, Hamburg)

Link to archive article: <https://en.we-refugees-archive.org/archive/hussam-al-zaher-on-the-difference-between-hamburg-and-germany/>

Interview with Hussam al Zaher in Hamburg © 2020 We Refugees Archiv / Minor Kontor.

Alexandra Sadownik: Germany - a new home for Jews? (2021, Berlin)

Link to archive article: <https://en.we-refugees-archive.org/archive/germany-a-new-home-for-jews/>

The interview was conducted by Daniel Heinz on March 26, 2021 with Alexandra Sadownik (last name changed) via Zoom in the Framework of a cooperation between Freie Universität Berlin and the We Refugees Archive.

Alaa Muhrez: „Is there chocolate where you come from? Are there houses?“ (2021, Berlin)

Link to archive article: <https://en.we-refugees-archive.org/archive/is-there-chocolate-where-you-come-from-are-there-houses/>

In an online workshop organised by the Exile Museum Foundation Berlin and the We Refugees Archive in January 2021, a group with refugee experience talked about their experiences of exile in Berlin and jointly developed an ABC of arriving.

Dina: To Live Without a Home (2021, Istanbul)

Link to archive article: <https://en.we-refugees-archive.org/archive/to-live-without-a-home/>

This interview was conducted in English via video call by Elif Yenigun for the We Refugees Archiv in 2021.

Isa Artar : “In the end, is it better to end up in prison at home than to face uncertainty in exile?“ (2020, Berlin)

Link to archive article: <https://en.we-refugees-archive.org/archive/in-the-end-is-it-better-to-end-up-in-prison-at-home-than-to-face-uncertainty-in-exile/>

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Kefah Ali Deeb: The Syrian coast in the nose (2019: Berlin)

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Nacibullah about his relationship to Istanbul (2021, Istanbul)

Link to archive article: <https://en.we-refugees-archive.org/archive/nacibullah-about-his-relationship-to-istanbul/>

This interview was conducted by Elif Yenigun for the We Refugees Archive in April 2021. It took place online, in Farsi and Turkish.

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