



## ZAIN'S SUMMER: FROM REFUGEE TO AMERICAN BOY

**DURATION:** 13 mins | **DIRECTOR:** Joshua Seftel

Zain's Summer depicts the sunny side of the refugee experience. Zain and his siblings and mother fled Pakistan 11 months before the period the film covers, a six-week summer language program to prepare young, new immigrants for the start of school. The possibility of a new life in America, relatively free from fear of violence and persecution, represents the very best of America in director Joshua Seftel's telling. Zain's openness to what the U.S. offers is old-fashioned and inspiring.



## STANDARDS

### *Literacy in History/Social Studies:*

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4 (Craft and Structure)**  
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7 (Integration of Knowledge and Ideas)**  
Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

### *Literacy in Science:*

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.2 (Key Ideas and Details)**  
Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; provide an accurate summary of the text distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.6-8.7 (Integration of Knowledge and Ideas)**  
Integrate quantitative or technical information expressed in words in a text with a version of that information expressed visually (e.g., in a flowchart, diagram, model, graph, or table).

### *Writing:*

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.E (Text Types and Purposes)**  
Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

**TAGS:** Immigration, refugee, education, English Language Learners, opportunity, equality

**VOCABULARY:** Immigration, refugees, education, opportunity, equality

## PRE-SCREENING ACTIVITY

*Zain's Summer: From Refugee to American Boy* is a wonderful film that all humans can relate to. It will leave you with tears in your eyes. Depending on your student population, several of your students may be English Language Learners. If you do have a handful (or majority) of Spanish-speaking students, send the English-speaking students into the hallway for a social experiment.

While the English-speaking students are out of the room, let all the Spanish-speaking students know that you will only be speaking in Spanish when the English-speaking students are invited back in. Have one student lead the rest of the group in a set of instructions and when you invite the English-speaking students back into the classroom ask them to follow along. The teacher should say discouraging comments to the returning students such as: "Why aren't you getting this?" or "Don't you understand?" Have the leader continue at a fast pace to encourage confusion! After the returning students are thoroughly confused, ask everyone to sit down and explain the purpose of the exercise.

Today you will be watching a movie titled, *Zain's Summer: From Refugee to American Boy*, and part of his journey is to learn English so that he is ready to participate in school. Ask the students to debrief on what it felt like to come into a room and not understand the instructions or be able to speak the language.

*(If you do not have a large Spanish-speaking population, send half of the students out into the hall and have the remaining half agree on a set of instructions they will complete together while not talking or giving directions (ex: everyone completes a worksheet in silence, or does a dance, while the teacher continues to ask discouraging questions such as: "Why aren't you getting this?" "Don't you understand?")*



## INTRODUCING THE FILM

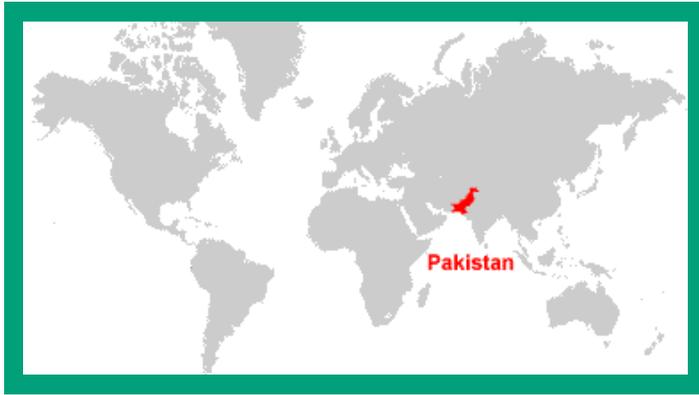


To strengthen vocabulary of the students and to see how it is used in the film, ask students to get out a sheet of paper and ask them to fold it in into thirds. The first column will be the vocabulary word, the second the definition, and the third examples from Zain's Summer: From Refugee to American Boy. It should look something like this:

VOCABULARY WORD	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE FROM ZAIN'S SUMMER
Immigration		
Refugee		
Education		
Opportunity		
Equality		

- Students should fill out the vocabulary word column and definition column prior to watching the film (Collinsdictionary.com is a great tool for English Language Learners)
- Then let students know that they will be asked to fill out the last column while watching the film. They will take the vocabulary word and give an example of it through the film. An example would be “Zain is a refugee from Pakistan.” or “Zain attends a summer school for refugee students.”
- If your class has a strong vocabulary foundation, you could change the last column to questions students have about Zain's Summer: From Refugee to American Boy while watching the movie, and then share the questions at the end of the movie.

Depending on your class, it is recommended to look on a world map where Karachi, Pakistan is in relation to your city, since this is where Zain's family is from.



World map showing Pakistan's location.

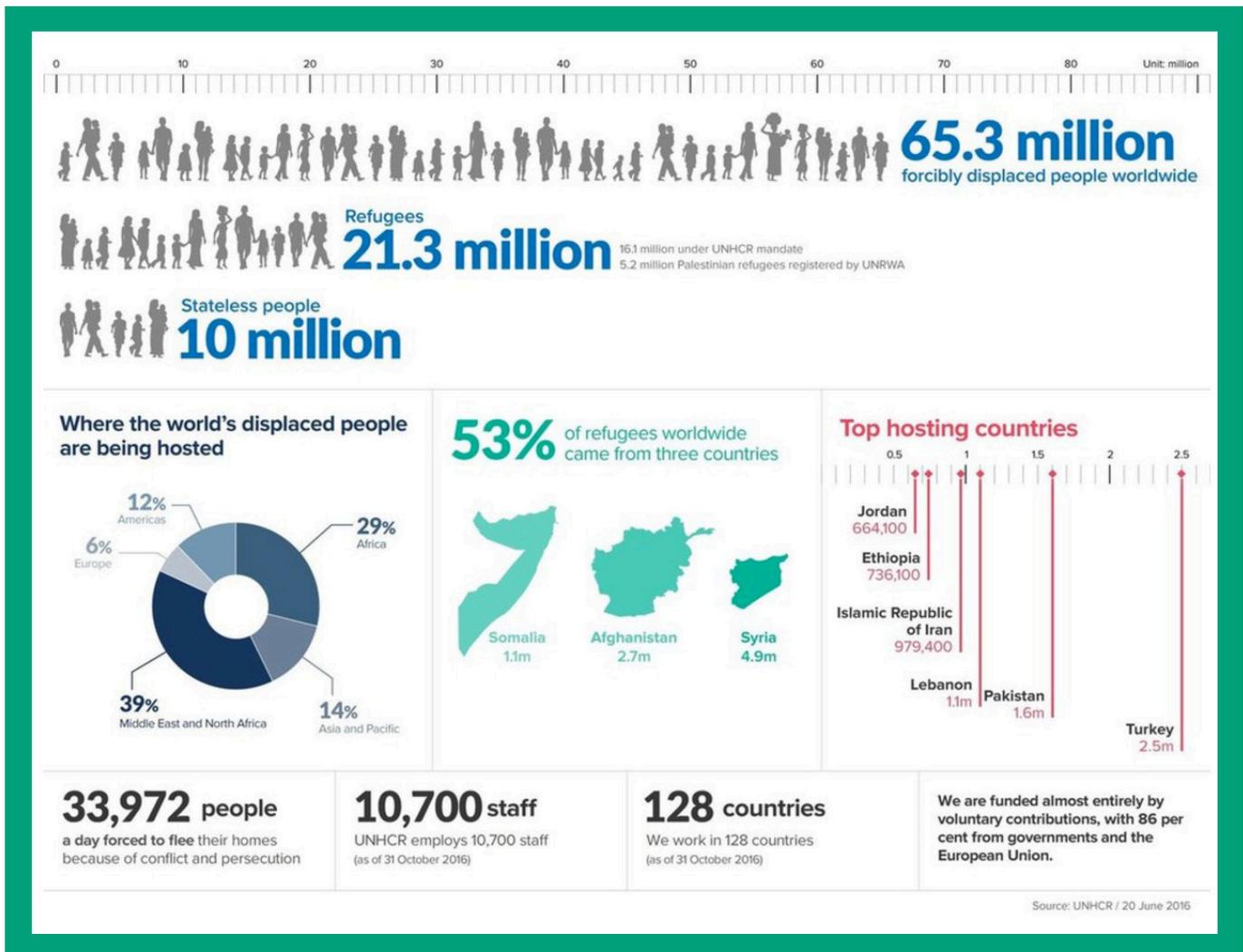


This map shows Karachi's location in Pakistan.

If you think your students could use more information on refugees, here are three great resources:

**RESOURCE 1**

Two infographics which effectively communicate the severity of the refugee crisis and the intensity of the vetting process:



## REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT FACTS

**Refugee:** A person forced to flee their home country to escape persecution, war, or violence.

**Resettlement:** The careful selection by governments such as the U.S. – for purposes of lawful admission – of vulnerable refugees who can neither return to their home country nor live in safety in neighboring countries.

### HOW DO REFUGEES GET RESETTLED?



During standard registration interviews UNHCR flags vulnerable cases for possible resettlement. **Refugees cannot apply for resettlement.**



UNHCR refers only the most vulnerable cases to host countries for possible resettlement. **Refugees cannot pick their country of resettlement.**



Only recognized refugees whose **life, liberty, safety, health, or other fundamental rights are at risk** in the host country are considered for resettlement.



Persons found to have committed serious crimes or who might pose a threat to others **would not be referred** for resettlement in another country.

Vulnerability categories include:



·WOMEN & GIRLS AT RISK  
·SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE AND/OR TORTURE



·FAMILY REUNIFICATION  
·MEDICAL NEEDS  
·CHILDREN AT RISK



### GLOBAL RESETTLEMENT BY THE NUMBERS:

Less than  
**1%**  
of the world's refugees are ever resettled.

More than  
**30**  
countries around the world currently accept refugees for resettlement.

**140,000**  
Refugee resettlement spaces were made available by those governments in 2016

**8%**  
of the global refugee population is in need of resettlement

### RESETTLEMENT TO THE UNITED STATES

The United States has an exceptional history of welcoming refugees and is the top resettlement country in the world. Since 1975, the U.S. government has welcomed **over 3 million refugees** for resettlement from all over the world, and these refugees have built new lives and homes in all 50 states.

UNHCR screens and interviews each resettlement candidate. The United States then conducts its own vetting process and the U.S. alone decides whether to accept a refugee for resettlement. The entire process is conducted abroad, can take up to 2 years, and involves:

**8**

U.S. Federal Government Agencies

**6**

Different security databases

**5**

Separate background checks

**4**

Biometric security checks

**3**

Separate in-person interviews

**2**

Inter-agency security checks

After the U.S. government approves refugees for resettlement, each case is assigned to one of nine NGOs (six of which are faith-based) by the U.S. Department of State. That NGO helps them find work, integrate into their new communities, and adjust to life in the United States.

UNHCR refers a vulnerable refugee for resettlement

U.S. government screens the refugee and determines whether it would like to admit them for resettlement

The State Department assigns the case to one of 9 agencies



Church World Service



Episcopal Migration Ministries



US Committee for Refugees & Immigrants



Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services



HIAS



International Rescue Committee



Ethiopian Community Development Council



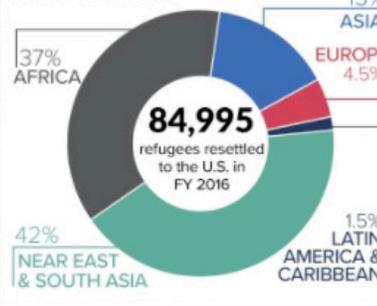
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



World Relief Corporation

### REGION OF ORIGIN FOR REFUGEES RESETTLED TO THE UNITED STATES IN FISCAL YEAR 2016

OCT. 2015 - SEPT. 2016



### TOP STATES FOR RESETTLEMENT IN FISCAL YEAR 2016

1	CALIFORNIA
2	TEXAS
3	MICHIGAN
4	WASHINGTON
5	NEW YORK
6	ARIZONA
7	ILLINOIS
8	VIRGINIA
9	NEBRASKA
10	TENNESSEE

### RESOURCE 2

This article from The New York Times gives insight into to what it is like to be a refugee and move to America. The article is formatted as an interview and outlines the complicated vetting process from the perspectives of two refugees, Faiz Khalil from Iraq and Mohamed Sharif from Somalia.

[https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/07/us/refugee-vetting-process.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/07/us/refugee-vetting-process.html?_r=0)

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS/CATEGORIES

## GENERAL/OPEN PROMPTS

1. Did watching Zain's Summer: From Refugee to American Boy change your perspective about the refugee crisis?

## EXPLORING SELF

1. What did you notice about the interactions between teachers and students in Zain's Summer: From Refugee to American Boy? How could this change how you interact with students and teachers are new to your school?

## EXPLORING THE WORLD

1. Zain was one of 70,000 refugees starting new lives as Americans in 2016. According to United Nations, approximately less than 1% of the world's refugees are ever resettled. What can we do as global citizens to increase that percentage?
2. There are 195 countries in the world today, yet only around 30 of the countries accept refugees. Is this fair? Why or why not?

## EXPLORING FILMMAKING

1. The filmmaker chose to show just Zain's story. Why do you think he chose Zain and his family?
2. After watching, describe how Zain's Summer: From Refugee to American Boy left you feeling. Why do you say that and how did the filmmaker help create that feeling? How would it have changed had Zain's Summer: From Refugee to American Boy been about another family and their struggles?

## EXPLORING SOCIAL ISSUES

1. Zain is one of less than 1% of refugees who has been successfully resettled. In order for a refugee to qualify for resettlement in the United States, he or she have to go through an extensive vetting process that can take up to two years. The vetting process asks the refugee to go through eight U.S. Federal government agencies, six different security databases, five separate background checks, four biometric security checks, three separate in-person interviews, and two inter-agency security checks. By definition, a refugee is a person who is forced to flee their home or country to escape persecution, so is it ethical to have them complete such an extensive and lengthy vetting process? What are the advantages and disadvantages to this system?

## EXPLORING SOCIAL ISSUES

1. Approximately 33,972 people per day are forced to flee their homes around the world because of conflict and persecution. Pretend you could create a backpack full of supplies for each person. What would be included in that backpack and why?



## ACTIVITIES

### Some recommended activities for your class based upon *Zain's Summer: From Refugee to American Boy* are:

- At the beginning of the film, Zain states "I don't want to be embarrassed, I don't want to be afraid." His teacher reports the following about Zain and his siblings: "They're so nervous, they're so very quiet, well then that person just assumes well that person is just shy." Have your students draft a letter to Zain that would help him to be more confident on his first day of school. This could be done as a whole group, in small groups, as partners, or individually.
- So students can better understand the naturalization process, have students take a practice citizenship test at: <https://my.uscis.gov/en/prep/test/civics/view>. They can either take individually or with a partner. When done completing one practice test, you can have your whole class participate in Citizenship Jeopardy. Draw a 6x5 square frame on the board and label each section as follows. (You don't have to write all of the questions, as you will read to questions to the group).
  - Let students know that to pass the real U.S. Citizenship test, they would be asked 10 questions out of a list of 100. All questions would be asked in English, and in order to pass, they would need to get six correct.

A	B	C	D	E
<p>\$200</p> <p>When must all men register for the Selective Service?</p> <p>Answer: Between 18 and 26</p>	<p>\$200</p> <p>What is one reason colonists came to America?</p> <p>Answer: Freedom, political liberty, religious freedom or economic opportunity</p>	<p>\$200</p> <p>Name one right only for United States citizens?</p> <p>Answer: Run for federal office</p>	<p>\$200</p> <p>What is the highest court in the United States?</p> <p>Answer: The Supreme Court</p>	<p>\$200</p> <p>The House of Representatives has how many voting members?</p> <p>Answer: 435</p>
<p>\$400</p> <p>What is the name of the national anthem?</p> <p>Answer: The Star-Spangled Banner</p>	<p>\$400</p> <p>Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?</p> <p>Answer: Thomas Jefferson</p>	<p>\$400</p> <p>What are two rights of everyone living in the United States?</p> <p>Answer: Freedom of speech and freedom of religion</p>	<p>\$400</p> <p>Who is the Chief Justice of the United States now?</p> <p>Answer: John G. Roberts Jr.</p>	<p>\$400</p> <p>Who was the first President?</p> <p>Answer: George Washington</p>
<p>\$600</p> <p>Name one American Indian tribe in the United States.</p> <p>Answer: Cherokee</p>	<p>\$600</p> <p>Name one problem that led to the Civil War.</p> <p>Answer: Slavery</p>	<p>\$600</p> <p>When was the Constitution written?</p> <p>Answer: 1787</p>	<p>\$600</p> <p>Who does a U.S. Senator represent?</p> <p>Answer: All the people of the state</p>	<p>\$600</p> <p>Who is in charge of the executive branch?</p> <p>Answer: The President</p>
<p>\$1000</p> <p>Who lived in America before the Europeans arrived?</p> <p>Answer: American Indians</p>	<p>\$1000</p> <p>Name one war fought by the United States in the 1800s.</p> <p>Answer: Mexican American War</p>	<p>\$1000</p> <p>Who makes federal laws?</p> <p>Answer: Congress</p>	<p>\$1000</p> <p>What is the name of the Speaker of the House of Representatives now?</p> <p>Answer: Paul Ryan</p>	<p>\$1000</p> <p>Who is the "Father of Our Country"?</p> <p>Answer: George Washington</p>



## EXIT TICKET

Ask each student to nominate two to three people they think would benefit from watching Zain's Summer: From Refugee to American Boy and why they think it would be important for that person to watch this movie. Then list the sticky notes in the front of the room and organize by repetitions (ex: several students might nominate Donald Trump, so group all of the sticky notes into one column)

### RECOMMENDED EXTENSIONS:

- This article, Museum exhibit attempts to humanize refugee crisis and genocide (<https://newsela.com/read/holocaust-museum-refugees/id/27562>), describes a museum exhibit where people can participate in a 20-minute video conference call with refugees from Iraq. This article explains the experience of one such video conference. How can this humanize the refugee crisis? What if you could bring one to your school and how could that help to change people's perspectives? What would be the benefits and drawbacks of having such a portal? More information: <https://www.sharedstudios.com/sites>
- List from 5280 of six Colorado-based organizations that work to assist immigrants and refugees. Brainstorm as a class how to help support these local organizations – either through fundraising or donation lists. (<http://www.5280.com/2017/02/local-organizations-that-support-immigrants-and-refugees-in-colorado/>)

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