Theme: Borders and bridges - Migration

In order to explore the theme of migration we have created three different sections of work. Each section investigates a particular aspect of the theme, offering different insights and challenges. The class and group activities take inspiration from the permanent exhibition at the House of European History.

Section 1 Why is migration such a ‘hot topic’ for the 21st century?
Section 2 Experiencing migration – a person at the heart of every story
Section 3 Media reporting on migrants and migration

Each section consists of:

- Teacher’s Guidance Notes
- Activities
- Supporting visual and textual resources
- Suggested online resources

Activities may include teacher-led discussions, group work, self-directed learning and use of primary and secondary source historical materials. Teachers can decide on which classroom and group activities are carried out.

Overview of Theme

Humans as a species have constantly moved, constantly migrated from place to place. But why do they do it and what does it involve? Is it for work, for leisure or for some other reason? Are their journeys long or short? Do they move voluntarily or are they forced to move by circumstances beyond their control? What happens to them when they arrive at their new destinations and how are they received by those already living there? These are just some of the questions that we need to ask ourselves when we deal with the issue of migration. Such questions are important as they can inform us about the many types of migrant experience that people can have. Examining examples from the past can also help us understand events taking place today. We can compare and contrast and assess whether there are continuing links between historical events and what we see happening around us in our contemporary world. Migration is an ancient process and we can find many echoes with today.
Definitions

Migration

The movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants and people moving for other purposes, including family reunification.

Source: As defined by the International Organisation for Migration, 2015

Migrant

At the international level, no universally accepted definition of “migrant” exists. The term migrant was usually understood to cover all cases where the decision to migrate was taken freely by the individual concerned for reasons of “personal convenience” and without the intervention of an external compelling factor; it therefore applied to people, and family members, moving to another country or region to better their material or social conditions and improve the prospect for themselves or their family. The United Nations defines a migrant as an individual who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate. Under such a definition, those travelling for shorter periods as tourists and businesspeople would not be considered migrants. However, common usage includes certain kinds of shorter-term migrants, such as seasonal farm-workers who travel for short periods to work planting or harvesting farm products.

Source: As defined by the International Organisation for Migration, 2015

Refugee

A person who, “owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country” (Art. 1(A)(2), Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, Art. 1A(2), 1951 as modified by the 1967 Protocol). In addition to the refugee definition in the 1951 Refugee Convention, Art. 1(2), the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention defines a refugee as any person compelled to leave his or her country “owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country or origin or nationality.” Similarly, the 1984 Cartagena Declaration states that refugees also include people who flee their country “because their lives, security or freedom have been threatened by generalised violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violations of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order.”

Source: As defined by the International Organisation for Migration, 2015
**Push Factors**

The reasons behind why people might want to leave the place where they are living.

**Pull Factors**

The reasons that attract people to a new location.