

Kindertransport & Child Refugees in Wales: Part 1 - Driving Forces



TOPIC

Kindertransport, Child Refugees
in Wales

AGE GROUP

Years 7-9 (ages 11-14)
Key Stage 3 / Progression Step 3

LENGTH

1 hour

SUBJECTS

History, Religion, Values and
Ethics, English, Health and Well-
being

DESCRIPTION

In this activity, students will consider the expression 'child refugee', what they think it means and why they think it means what it does. Students will then learn about Jewish child refugees during the 1930s. They will collect historical information about the Kindertransport and listen to the lived experience of a child refugee.

Students will discuss the British response to the Nazi persecution and will have the opportunity to reflect on why refugees flee their home country, to safety.

This activity forms part of the *Kindertransport & Child Refugees in Wales* module and it is recommended that Parts 2 and 3 are also completed to further understand the emotional impact of being a refugee.

LEARNING AIMS

As a result of completing this activity students will:

- Understand the meaning of the expression 'child refugee'.
- Learn about the historical facts surrounding the Kindertransport.
- Learn about the driving forces for the Kindertransport.
- Learn about the British response and the local connections in Wales.
- Reflect on the human experience behind the Kindertransport.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Whiteboard/markers, projector, computer to listen to testimony.



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Consider

Inform students that they are going to consider and discuss the expression 'child refugee'. On the board, draw a mind map and ask the class for words that automatically come to mind when thinking about child refugees.

Discuss, as a class, why the students associate those words with the expression 'child refugee'.

Teachers may wish to discuss the differences between refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. Write the three on the board and ask students what they know about the words. Students may already show an understanding of the differences but depending on the ability of the class, it may be necessary to go into a little more depth and offer appropriate contemporary examples.

In pairs, and on the student worksheet, students should write down five words they associate with the word SAFE (*Student Worksheet - Task 1*). As guidance, it may be helpful to ask students to think about what makes them feel safe, whether it be at home, at school, or in Wales.

Collect

One of the refugee children was sent to Gwrych Castle, in north Wales. As a general question, ask the students if they have ever heard of Gwrych Castle. Some may recognise the Castle as they live nearby, from a holiday or the filming of the television show, *I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here*'. The aim of the question is for children to make a local connection.

The students will listen to a testimony from a child refugee who came to Wales during the 1930s to escape Nazi oppression and persecution. In small groups/pairs ask the students to read the handout regarding the historical facts surrounding Kristallnacht and anti-Jewish measures.

Once they have read the material ask the students to write down on the worksheet five things that the text tells them about everyday life for Jewish people under Nazi rule (*Student Worksheet - Task 2*).

Next, the students will read the handout on the Kindertransport. Ask them to write down, on the student worksheet, three things that tell them about the British response to the situation in Nazi Germany (*Student Worksheet - Task 3*).

Students will read the biography of Mary Hochberg, a child refugee who came to Wales on the Kindertransport and listen to Mary's testimony, where she discusses her experience of being a Jewish child in Nazi Germany.



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Ask the students to work in pairs and complete Task 4 (*Student Worksheet - Task 4*):

- a) What information in the testimony reinforces what you have just read about *Kristallnacht* and anti-Jewish measures? List five pieces of information.
- b) Why do you think that Mary's parent decided to send her to Great Britain? Think about the information gathered from the texts and the clip and give two reasons.

Construct

After reading the handouts and listening to the testimony, ask the students to create a short poem about the refugee experience based on Mary's story (*Student Worksheet - Task 5*); they may wish to include the words they collected when thinking about the word SAFE and any additional words that they now think of after listening to Mary.

Communicate

Working in small groups, students should read at least one poem composed by their classmates and provide at least one comment focusing on the question: How does this poem add to your understanding of the Kindertransport or the child refugee experience?

Sources

USC Shoah Foundation, *Mary Hochberg*, interviewed by Lesley Nathan, video testimony, IWitness, 21 May 1997
<<https://iwwitness.usc.edu/testimony/31531?search=Mary%20Hochberg&category=landing&from=%2Fsearch>> [accessed 16 June 2022]

