

## Child Refugees

At the latest since the body of 3-year-old Alan Kurdi was washed ashore the Turkish coast after he had drowned fleeing Syria across the Mediterranean Sea and his picture went viral, child refugees are an immanent part of the debate about migration and refugee politics in Europe.



Now read the following excerpt of a speech delivered by the British politician Helene Joanne Cox in 2016.

### VIP FILE

**Helen Joanne "Jo" Cox** (22 June 1974 – 16 June 2016) was a British Labour Party politician. She was a Member of Parliament (MP) and campaigned on behalf of child refugees. Cox was killed by a Scottish man with ties to white supremacist groups. He has been sentenced to life in prison.



- <sup>02</sup> to be scattered to be dispersed in various directions
- <sup>05</sup> to persecute to continually harass sb
- <sup>05</sup> perilous dangerous
- <sup>08</sup> to be recruited to be persuaded to enlist: in work, usually the military
- <sup>10</sup> to witness to see; to notice
- <sup>10</sup> life and limb existence and serious injury
- <sup>16</sup> to be scarred to be marked by sth forever

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We all know that the vast majority of the terrified, friendless and profoundly vulnerable child refugees scattered across Europe tonight came from Syria. We also know that, as that conflict enters its sixth barbaric year, desperate Syrian families are being forced to make an impossible decision: stay and face starvation, rape, persecution and death, or make a perilous journey to find sanctuary elsewhere. 05

Who can blame desperate parents for wanting to escape the horror that their families are experiencing? Children are being killed on their way to school, children as young as seven are being forcefully recruited to the frontline and one in three children have grown up knowing nothing but fear and war. Those children have been exposed to things no child should ever witness, and I know I would risk life and limb to get my two precious babies out of that hellhole. 10

I am deeply proud of the government for leading the way internationally on providing humanitarian support to Syrian civilians. Their commitment in terms of finances and policy to help people in the region, and across the Middle East and North Africa, will save lives. However, in the chaos caused by the Syrian conflict and many other conflicts, many thousands of already deeply scarred children have become separated from their parents and carers, and they are already in Europe. The government's generosity to date has not extended to those vulnerable children. 15

We know that identifying the exact number of unaccompanied minors is difficult, but the latest estimates suggest that there could be up to 95,000 such children in Europe tonight – four times the number we thought. That means that, if we decide tonight to take 3,000 of them, that will be just 3% of the total. That is our continent's challenge, and we must rise to it. 20

*From: Remarks by Jo Cox to the House of Commons, April 2016*

## Tasks:

### 1. First impressions

How do you feel after reading the excerpt of Jo Cox's speech? **Name** three adjectives to describe your first impressions.

### 2. Comprehension

**Outline** Jo Cox's demands concerning child refugees and sum up her arguments why the UK should accept 3,000 child refugees.

### 3. Analysis

**Analyze** Jo Cox's use of stylistic devices to evoke the audience's emotions.

If you need further help with this task, use the following questions as a guideline:

- Focus on the use of personal pronouns and its effect on the audience.
- Look for rhetorical questions in the speech and describe the effect.
- Focus on the use of adjectives when Cox speaks about child refugees. Explain the effect of her choice of adjectives on the audience.
- Concentrate on facts and figures in her speech. How does she use them to convince the audience?

#### TIP

Most elements in a speech have at least one of these four functions

- to establish contact with the audience;
- to place emphasis on certain ideas;
- to present ideas and convince the listener to agree with the speaker
- to convey a certain image of the speaker (self-presentation).

### 4. Your choice: Creative task (text production and evaluation)

Choose one of the following tasks:

- You are a member of the "Teens4Teens" organization and participating on a conference about teen refugees from war zones. **Write a speech** in which you point out why child refugees should be accepted in every country of the European Union.
- Imagine you are an unaccompanied child refugee waiting to be accepted in Germany. **Write a diary entry** about your fears and hopes.

For both task, use some of the new knowledge you gained while working on Cox's speech.