

Unwanted, The: Stories of the Syrian Refugees



Author/Publisher/Website: Brown, D.
Copyright: 2018
Evaluation/Record Entry Date: Dec/2019
Submitting Suppliers: Not Available
Primary Identifier: 9781328810151

Recommended Grades: 9-12

Subjects/Courses: Social Studies, English Language Arts

ERAC Review

DESCRIPTION

This timely and engaging graphic novel focuses on the lives of Syrian refugees and the conditions they encounter as they flee their homes and head to Europe, seeking safety, refuge for their families, and a normal life. The author presents their stories by focusing on the human aspects of being a refugee rather than religious, political, and cultural issues, including their motivations for risking their lives, and how they are received in a number of European countries. The compelling visuals that accompany the text help students understand their plight and their motivations and make the story accessible to a wide range of learners in grades 9-12.

CURRICULUM FIT

Does the resource support BC curriculum? Extensively

This product supports the Core Competencies of the BC curriculum:

- Critical thinking
- Positive Personal and Cultural Identity
- Personal Awareness and Responsibility
- Social Responsibility

Comments:

20th Century History focuses on conflict in the century. The historical thinking concepts include looking at these events through the lens of "Cause and consequence" and "ethical dimensions". Social Justice includes the Big Idea: "The causes of social injustice are complex and have lasting impacts on society." As a graphic text, it could be used in a New Media 10 or 11 course as the curriculum states: "Recognize and understand how different forms, formats, structures, and features of texts enhance and shape meaning and impact".

SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Age:	Child labour occurs when children are forced to work in order to survive and to support their families, therefore access to school is restricted due to the circumstances.
Multiculturalism:	Refugees searching for safety through Europe are often discriminated against and seen as a drain on the society they have fled to (e.g. loss of jobs, draining hospital resources, and government supplying camps).
Belief System:	Only Christian refugees are accepted in Slovakia.
Socio Economic:	Refugees live in poverty.
Violence:	Images of war: tanks, protesters being beaten/tortured, burning homes, bombs/explosions. Bodies are implied in the periphery of images. Blood trails and human limbs are seen. People are shot and others kidnapped and/or beheaded.
Ethical:	Refugees break the law to escape Syria. Ethical issues posed of accepting vs. rejecting refugees, and how they are received around the world. Smugglers take advantage of refugees and citizens in Europe reject them and want them gone.
Safety:	Refugees flee an unsafe environment. They risk their lives to escape. This text shows kids stuck in barbed wire, drownings, shooting refugees, children being beaten, tear gas, and water canons.
Language:	Language of violence is used, such as death, killed, and murder.

Social Considerations Comments:

Do the social considerations support, rather than detract from, student learning? Extensively

Stories of refugees are explored. All elements explored really happened to people. They are presented factually, and precisely. They are shown with illustrations which add impact, but the violence is not clearly illustrated. The use of shadows, colour, symbolic imagery, and peripheral action lessens the impact of horrific violence, allowing it to be accessible for a high school audience without concern.

GENERAL CONTENT

Content:

Is the resource engaging?	Extensively
Is the content current for the intended curriculum and grade?	Extensively
Is the content accurate for the intended curriculum and grade?	Extensively
Is the content timely and important for student broad understandings?	Extensively

Audience:

GENERAL CONTENT

Is the content appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?	Extensively
Does the resource provide opportunities for creative and critical thinking?	Extensively
Is the level of detail appropriate?	Extensively
Is the language use appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?	Extensively
Are the visuals appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?	Extensively

Comments:

The text takes experiences of Syrian refugees and adds images. This makes the text engaging, and accessible to young adult readers. It is timely, as Syrian refugees are still struggling in 2019. The visuals depict violence but the worst elements of the stories are visually implied, rather than horrifically illustrated, making this appropriate for students. This is a non-fiction text, in graphic novel format, and reading levels cannot be adjusted.

TECHNICAL DESIGN

Does the resource make effective use of the medium?	Extensively
Is the location of illustrations appropriate?	Extensively
Is the resource easy to use?	Extensively
Is the use of font, text size and presentation uniform?	Extensively

Comments:

This is a graphic text. Images vary in size, intentionally lending impact to certain images. Text is uniform but varied, i.e. narration text boxes appear in type-set font, while speech bubbles are more script-print in appearance. Occasionally words appear in images as visual depictions of sounds (e.g. BAM!!, or BOOM!).

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Is the instructional design effective and appropriate for the intended audience?	Extensively
Is the resource suitable for a wide range of learning and teaching styles?	Extensively
Are the concepts clearly explained?	Extensively
Are the content chunking and sequencing appropriate?	Extensively
Does the resource support the transfer of learning to personal or applied contexts?	Extensively

Comments:

The text is in the form of a graphic novel telling personal stories of refugees. As such, it does not contain overt teaching strategies, instructional elements, or lessons. The marriage of image and text make the content accessible to a wide range of learners.

PRINT CLASSROOM

Does the reference cover topics with sufficient depth for the intended audience?	Extensively
Does the classroom reference have a bibliography and footnotes?	Extensively
Are the subject area list and/or subtopics extensive?	Not at all or slightly

PRINT CLASSROOM

Does the resource broaden students' experiences and understandings?	Extensively
Does the resource make effective use of visual elements?	Extensively
Are the images compelling?	Extensively

Descriptors:

Secondary reference material such as summaries or reviews of research

Comments:

The text is focused on Syrian refugees in 2017 and therefore does not cover an extensive catalogue of curricular points and topics. It provides specific examples, and examines the motivations of refugees, allowing students to understand the perspectives of others. The visuals are compelling and help students understand those motivations and perspectives.

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM USAGE

Comments:

This is a reference text for a social studies, history, or social justice course looking specifically at Syria, or even as a comparison between modern and historical refugee experiences. Within an English classroom the medium of a graphic novel could be assessed, for example, looking at the impact of visuals when paired with non-fiction texts.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Readability:

At intended grade level(s)

Comments:

2019 Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults Award. 2019 Sibert Award Honor. ALSC Notable Children's Books - 2019. Capitol Choices: Noteworthy Books for Children and Teens - 2019. CCBC Choices 2019 Choice: Contemporary People, Places, and Events. Kirkus Best Books, Young Adult - 2018. NYPL Best Books for Teens - 2018. Horn Book Fanfare - 2018. Nonfiction Detectives Best Nonfiction - 2018. Available in e-book format.