



Monsters to Destroy

A talkumentary about
refugees and security

By Ben Tumin

DISCUSSION
GUIDE

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Letter from The Director



My goal with Monsters to Destroy is to use comedy to push students to think differently about their own personal stories and to relate them to broader attitudes throughout U.S. history. In my travels around the country, I learned that one of the most interesting parts of M2D for younger audiences was the slide with polls showing how consistently Americans have opposed welcoming refugees here.

To me, this speaks to how students often disengage from history, either because it's boring, glosses over the bad stuff, or leaves a lot of people out (or all of the above). My aim is to make refugee resettlement history more engaging so that we can better learn the lessons from my grandfather's time, and now Rukan's, Muhannad's, Ahmad's, Nafee's, and Ali's.

Thank you so much for watching. I hope you learn a little and laugh a lot!

Ben Tumin

About the Film

MONSTERS TO DESTROY is a documentary film that uses humor and personal narrative to engage audiences, encouraging them to rethink their attitudes about refugees, history, comedy, and national security. M2D is based on the multimedia talk that comedian, writer, and producer Ben Tumin toured around the U.S., which explores the issue of refugee resettlement and the real security impact of refugees and connects these findings to his own family history. Weaving history, statistics, personal stories, and documentary-style interviews, Ben argues for expanded refugee resettlement on national security grounds. Through a series of humanizing – and often humorous – interviews, he introduces the audience to five young Syrians living in Germany, as well as a retired marine working in human rights advocacy. Their struggles, hopes, and passion come into even sharper focus as Ben recounts the story of his grandfather, a German-Jewish refugee who fled the Nazis just prior to World War II.

Recommended Audiences

MONSTERS TO DESTROY explores the nuances of complex issues including xenophobia, international policy, refugee resettlement, human rights, national security, and war, and therefore may be challenging for much younger viewers. M2D is an ideal film to begin an informed dialogue about history, the power and strength of the individual, current events, and personal responsibility. It is recommended for middle school aged students and older, and can be used with young adult and adult audiences alike. This film provides an opportunity for families, classroom educators, and community organizers to explore many important issues, including human rights violations, international policy, and refugee resettlement. Particularly for educators, the film also fits into a number of traditional subject areas, including civics, world history, art, media studies and media literacy, language arts, world cultures, and social studies, just to name a few.

How to Use This Guide

Don't pigeon-hole this guide
...there's a variety of uses!



This Discussion Guide was created with communities and classrooms in mind and can be used in a variety of ways, both in the classroom as well as informal educational settings like library events, family workshops, after-school programs, community screenings, or professional development sessions. The film has a running time of 50 minutes, which makes it perfect for classroom use. To provide context, this Guide includes some very cursory background information on the different cultural and political experiences represented in the film.

The Screening Guidelines provide a framework for a screening event, including conversation starters that can be used before watching the film and afterwards, to provide an opportunity for analysis and making connections. The section of Classroom Activities provides more specific classroom procedures that drill down into some of the important themes and topics that the film presents, making connections to national curriculum standards for a variety of courses. There is a section containing Questions for Further Discussion that can be used for classroom dialogue or a post-screening Q&A.

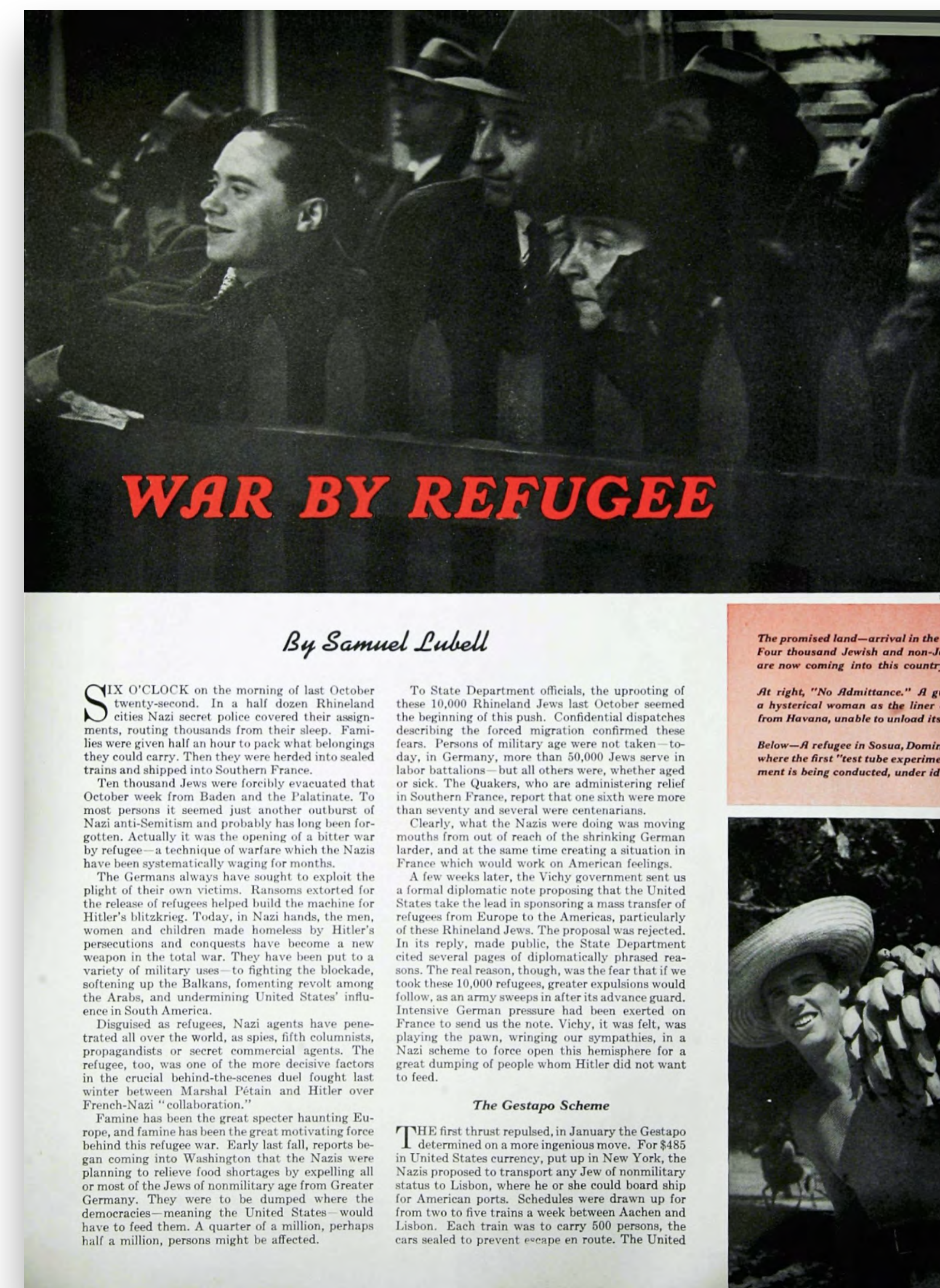
And because one of the main messages of the film is the importance of activism, there is a comprehensive section of social action project prompts that provide educators and students opportunities to deepen their exploration of the topics that the film and this Guide raise, and turn their understanding into action – both locally and globally.

About the History

MONSTERS TO DESTROY is a personal exploration of contemporary issues that are steeped in long and complicated histories. M2D introduces the audience to six people familiar with the refugee experience - five from Syria and one who escaped from Germany at the very beginning of World War II. While it helps to have some background knowledge in order to understand their stories, it is impossible to summarize these histories in any meaningful way without simplifying, minimizing, or overlooking important information. The paragraphs below touch on some of the events that are mentioned in the film - Kristallnacht, some facts regarding refugees before, during, and after World War II, and Syria's long, complicated history - but do not serve as an overview or proper history.

A FEW DATA POINTS REGARDING THE REFUGEES EXPERIENCE DURING WWII

Ben's grandfather's story as a refugee begins to intensify right around an event called Kristallnacht. Kristallnacht (the night of broken glass) was one of the Nazi Party's first widespread uses of violence against Jews, and therefore created urgency within the Jewish community and strained the limits of existing immigration quotas in surrounding countries. During Kristallnacht, Nazis attacked and ransacked Jewish homes, hospitals, businesses, and schools, and sent 30,000 Jewish men to concentration camps. Approximately six months later, in May 1939, more than 900 Jews fled Germany aboard the SS St. Louis, heading for Cuba. They were turned away by Cuba, and subsequently by the United States at President Roosevelt's order.



WAR BY REFUGEE

By Samuel Lubell

SIX O'CLOCK on the morning of last October twenty-second. In a half dozen Rhineland cities Nazi secret police covered their assignments, routing thousands from their sleep. Families were given half an hour to pack what belongings they could carry. Then they were herded into sealed trains and shipped into Southern France. Ten thousand Jews were forcibly evacuated that October week from Baden and the Palatinate. To most persons it seemed just another outbreak of Nazi anti-Semitism and probably has long been forgotten. Actually it was the opening of a bitter war by refugee—a technique of warfare which the Nazis have been systematically waging for months. The Germans always have sought to exploit the plight of their own victims. Ransoms extorted for the release of refugees helped build the machine for Hitler's blitzkrieg. Today, in Nazi hands, the men, women and children made homeless by Hitler's persecutions and conquests have become a new weapon in the total war. They have been put to a variety of military uses: to fighting the blockade, softening up the Balkans, fomenting revolt among the Arabs, and undermining United States' influence in South America. Disguised as refugees, Nazi agents have penetrated all over the world, as spies, fifth columnists, propagandists or secret commercial agents. The refugee, too, was one of the more decisive factors in the crucial behind-the-scenes duel fought last winter between Marshal Pétain and Hitler over French-Nazi collaboration.

Famine has been the great specter haunting Europe, and famine has been the great motivating force behind this refugee war. Early last fall, reports began coming into Washington that the Nazis were planning to relieve food shortages by expelling all or most of the Jews of nonmilitary age from Greater Germany. They were to be dumped where the democracies—meaning the United States—would have to feed them. A quarter of a million, perhaps half a million, persons might be affected.

To State Department officials, the uprooting of these 10,000 Rhineland Jews last October seemed the beginning of this push. Confidential dispatches describing the forced migration confirmed these fears. Persons of military age were not taken—today, in Germany, more than 50,000 Jews serve in labor battalions—but all others were, whether aged or sick. The Quakers, who are administering relief in Southern France, report that one sixth were more than seventy and several were centenarians. Clearly, what the Nazis were doing was moving mouths from out of reach of the shrinking German harber, and at the same time creating a situation in France which would work on American feelings. A few weeks later, the Vichy government sent us a formal diplomatic note proposing that the United States take the lead in sponsoring a mass transfer of refugees from Europe to the Americas, particularly of these Rhineland Jews. The proposal was rejected. In its reply, made public, the State Department cited several pages of diplomatically phrased reasons. The real reason, though, was the fear that if we took these 10,000 refugees, greater expulsions would follow, as an army sweeps in after its advance guard. Intensive German pressure had been exerted on France to send us the note. Vichy, it was felt, was playing the pawn, wringing our sympathies, in a Nazi scheme to force open this hemisphere for a great dumping of people whom Hitler did not want to feed.

The Gestapo Scheme

THE first thrust repulsed, in January the Gestapo determined on a more ingenious move. For \$455 in United States currency, put up in New York, the Nazis proposed to transport any Jew of nonmilitary status to Lisbon, where he or she could board ship for American ports. Schedules were drawn up for from two to five trains a week between Aachen and Lisbon. Each train was to carry 500 persons, the cars sealed to prevent escape en route. The United

The promised land—arrival in the Four thousand Jewish and non-Jewish are now coming into this country

At right, "No Admittance." A hysterical woman on the liner from Havana, unable to unload its

Below—A refugee in Sassa, Danzig where the first "test tube experiment" is being conducted, under id



About the History (cont)

A FEW DATA POINTS REGARDING THE REFUGEES EXPERIENCE DURING WWII (cont.)

Many later died in death camps after having no choice but to return to Europe. Another large refugee effort that began shortly after Kristallnacht was a Great Britain-sponsored refugee resettlement effort called the Kindertransport, which brought thousands of unaccompanied children - without their parents or guardians - from Nazi Germany to Great Britain. Approximately 9,000-10,000 children were rescued, educated, and housed with private families in schools, hostels or on family farms. Most of these children never returned to their home countries or reunited with their parents. Of course there were many other efforts to help refugees - large and small. And yet still, at the end of the war, there were an estimated 11 million people who were homeless - either refugees or displaced. Allied forces established camps throughout Europe for those not easily classified or repatriated. This refugee crisis was complicated by the fact that most if not all of these people were Holocaust survivors who had suffered severe trauma and were in desperate need of medical care and food. It is unknown how many displaced people or refugees were never able to return to their home country and therefore remained homeless.

For more information about the Holocaust, and about the refugee experience during World War II, visit:

www.ushmm.org

www.yadvashem.org

<https://sfi.usc.edu/watch>



About the History (cont)

A FEW DATA POINTS ABOUT SYRIA AND ITS POLITICAL AND HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

Ahmad, Rukan, Nafee, Muhanned and Ali come from Syria, a country located on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Syria is home to one of the oldest and most advanced civilizations in the world, with a rich artistic and cultural heritage. The area saw the evolution of the earliest literature, art, religion, and sculpture, as well as stone tools, hearths, and domesticated crops and cattle. Built from a rich and diverse history, Syrian culture is an eclectic mix of different influences, including Turkish, Greek, Southwest Asian, Arab, and Southern Mediterranean - evidenced in Syrian music, cuisine, and festivals. And yet, perhaps due to this rich diversity, Syria also has a long, complicated, political history as well.

In the last 100 years, Syria has been occupied by both Britain and France, been divided into various autonomous regions, survived numerous nationalistic uprisings, seen the end of a centuries-long Ottoman rule, drafted a constitution, elected a president and, briefly, been fully independent. In recent times, the Syrian people suffered at the hands of a violent administration first led by Hafez al-Assad, the father of the current President of Syria, and now, by his son. Hafez-al-Assad's presidency was marked by violence and war.

In 1999, President Ashad died and was succeeded by his son, Bashar. The current "Syrian Crisis" began in earnest in 2011 with peaceful protesters seeking a functional democracy, and escalated to a full-blown war after Assad's government responded to the protests violently. ISIS (the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) seized upon the resultant instability and tried to start its own terrorist-run, genocidal revolution, further complicating things.

About the History (cont)

A FEW DATA POINTS ABOUT SYRIA AND ITS POLITICAL AND HUMANITARIAN CRISIS (cont.)

From there, the Syrian conflict became a proxy war, with Russia propping up the Assad regime, which led to many more Syrians dying and fleeing their homes. Over 1.2 million Syrians have been arrested and detained since the start of the conflict. More than 11 million Syrians have lost their homes, either displaced within Syria or as refugees who have fled to other countries. The true number of Syrians systematically tortured and murdered will not be known until after the crisis has ended.

For more information about the Syrian Crisis and the Syrian refugee emergency, visit:

<https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/refugees/>

<https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/syria-emergency.html>

<https://www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/museum-exhibitions/syria-please-dont-forget-us>



About the People in this Film



Ahmad is a journalist, and at the time of filming *Monsters to Destroy*, was studying in Berlin, where he still lives today. Ahmad and Ben met a few months before their interview through a mutual friend.



Rukan is a graphic and visual artist. She and Ben met a year before filming through a long string of connections. She knows even more about TV than you'd expect and is active in arts and advocacy in Berlin.



Nafee is a student and musician. He and Ben met at the time of their interview (he's a friend of Ahmad's). Nafee has given tours about the refugee experience in Germany, and for the record, his hair is usually longer than it is in the film. He takes great pride in making it look perfect every morning.



Muhannad is a political philosopher who actually enjoys heavy metal music. He studies things that are way too intellectual to describe here, and Ben contacts him from time to time when he needs a smart opinion on Middle Eastern politics. Muhannad and Ben also met at the time of their interview.



Ali prefers not to share more information about himself.

About the People in this Film (cont)



After serving in Italy and North Africa during World War II, **PopPop, aka Werner Ignaz Klugman (1920-2014)**, Ben's grandfather, received a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Columbia University. He later ran a pigments company for many years with his business partner. Werner moved from Manhattan to Pleasantville, New York (which is a real place), serving as President of the American Ethical Union from 1962-1967 and founding the Ethical Society of Northern Westchester with his first wife Phila, another German immigrant. Even when at his most mischievous, which happened frequently, Werner's sense of humor, sense of adventure, and unwavering love of those around him marked all that he did.

Screening Guidelines

The following guidelines can be used by classroom educators and community organizers in a variety of contexts – from an independent study assignment to a formal classroom setting or an evening program or workshop. Pre-viewing prompts can help facilitators make the most out of the screening, preparing viewers to look for specific topics as they watch the film. Post-viewing discussion questions can help transition viewers from absorbing information to broader analytical thinking, taking action, and social justice activities. Below is a step-by-step guide to help you plan a thoughtful and productive viewing of Monsters to Destroy.

BASIC THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING A SCREENING

The first step is to decide what sort of screening you will host. Do you plan on showing the film in your classroom? If so, then many of these variables have already been decided for you. Do you want to assemble a student group, or organize a community screening? If so, then you may want to think about some of these basic elements.



I hereby declare, on oath,
that I absolutely and
entirely commit to
screen this film.

Screening Guidelines (cont)

PICK A TONE

Your screening can be anything you wish - from a student assembly to a professional development workshop, from a community awareness event to an evening of conversation at church or synagogue. It can be a call to action for your neighbors, or an educational opportunity to start a meaningful conversation. Be creative! And don't be afraid to customize your approach. The most important thing is to create an environment that feels welcoming and safe, so that participants are open to viewing, discussing - and finding humor - as they explore this important content.

CONSIDER TIMING & AGENDA

This film can be used in a variety of settings, depending on your own needs and restrictions. Time is one of the most important considerations. The film itself is 50 minutes, and for an effective event, you need to add at least 20 minutes before the film to set the tone, and a minimum of 45 minutes to an hour after the film for a follow-up discussion and dialogue. To assist with the post-film discussion, you might consider inviting a moderator, or assembling a panel of local experts or stakeholders, such as diversity mediators, experts from the refugee resettlement community, religious leaders, or an instructor from a local college or university. You might also consider a series of two or three convenings. By allowing your group more time to meet, you could: provide an in-depth follow-up, implement some of the group work featured in the Classroom Activities section of this Guide, and/or develop an ongoing community action plan. As you begin to envision your event, you should set the agenda and format depending on your desired outcomes.

Screening Guidelines (cont)

CHOOSE A DATE

If you're using M2D in the classroom, the date on which you screen the film will be contingent on how it fits into your curriculum. However, if you're picking a date and time for a screening event or standalone workshop, you should consider holidays and local events, as well as the general preferences of your intended audience.

A weeknight evening is often a good time to host an adults-only event, as it allows professionals to come straight from work and does not conflict with major weekend plans. A weekend day or weekday afternoon is ideal for hosting an event with a student audience, such as a campus event or a student film screening.

During school is great for assemblies and after school works well if your student club or organization is hosting the movie. If you are choosing between days, do not hesitate to ask an expert, such as an administrator at your school, your club faculty advisor, or an organizer at your church or synagogue, about when they've had the most success with attendance.



Screening Guidelines (cont)

GENERAL TIMELINE

Now you have the basics covered! If you've decided to screen Monsters to Destroy outside of a classroom setting, you might want to use this general timeline to help you prepare for your event.

2-4 Weeks Prior

- Distribute an invitation or flyer. Make sure your flyer outlines all the details of your event: including the name of the film, and a description of the activities you have planned (panel discussion, moderated Q&A, open group dialogue, small group activities, etc.). If you are planning to provide refreshments, let folks know - that's always a big draw!

2 Weeks Prior

- Prepare an agenda for your event. This can be as formal or as informal as you wish, but you should decide on the timing for arrivals, introductions, starting the film, and starting the post-film discussion or supplemental activities. Be sure to allow time for a bathroom and refreshment break after the film ends. This guide provides questions and discussion prompts for creating a unique, dynamic dialogue.

1 Week Prior

- Send out reminders to stay front-of-mind with your intended audience.
- Consider sharing links to the film's website to garner involvement in the issues, and get your audiences excited about the screening.

Screening Guidelines (cont)

GENERAL TIMELINE (cont.)



suggested seating arrangements?

3 Days Prior

- Purchase the necessary food, drinks, and other event supplies.
- Set up your technology - whether it is a projector and screen or a TV and DVD player, you want to ensure you have it up and running before the day of the event.
- Confirm and remind! In this day and age, everyone is busy and it's easy to forget about an event - even one as exciting and hilarious as a screening of Monsters to Destroy.
- Prepare and practice an introduction to the film and a welcome to your event.

The Day of Screening

- Test the tech before guests arrive. Give yourself ample time to test the DVD player, projector, and/or sound equipment to make sure everything will run smoothly.
- Arrange your space to accommodate your guests, and to create a welcoming environment for a meaningful event and discussion.
- Don't forget your agenda. Make the most out of your time by following the agenda you created. Introduce the film and explain why you are bringing it to the group. Before the film starts, let your guests know that there will be a short discussion, panel discussion, or activities in small breakout groups afterwards.

Screening Guidelines (cont)

GENERAL TIMELINE (cont.)

The Day After the Screening

- Send a thank-you to all your guests and encourage them to continue the discussion and/or the action plan that was started at your screening.
- Think about the ways that you will continue to work towards the ideals and goals the film sets forth - even after the movie ends. Refer to the Social Action and Community Service Prompts section of this guide for ways that you and your attendees can get involved.

Extended Followup

- This film will likely bring up a lot of questions and reactions, many of which will not get resolved immediately. Encourage your audience to make time in the coming weeks to revisit the conversation and continue to think about the ways that they can work towards the ideals and goals the film brought up - even after the movie ends. Refer to the Extension Activities section of this guide for ways to continue reflecting and get involved.

let's give them something to talk a-boat!



Screening Guidelines (cont)

CONTEXT AND FACILITATION STRATEGIES

Whether your screening is a structured event for a large audience, or a simple and more limited classroom lesson, once the logistics are decided, you'll want to provide facilitation and context that supports the viewing of the film. You can use the following pre and post viewing guidelines to help.

Preparing for a Discussion

Before screening for any audience, watch the film yourself. Consider and take note of places that would be good to stop the film for interim discussions. In addition, consider and create a list of the film's main points. These points might include, among others:

- The psychological impact on an individual when they survive or escape from genocide or mass atrocity
- The importance of humor as a coping mechanism and mode of intercultural connection
- The importance of personal narrative and family history as a lens to understanding the world
- Man-made distinctions, such as race, nationality, borders - and how these distinctions have real-world consequences
- The difference between an immigrant and a refugee
- The psychological and physical experience of being a refugee
- The responsibilities and role of a host nation to their refugee communities
- The physical, psychological, and cultural importance of "home"
- The impact and legacy of genocide, mass atrocity crimes, and the refugee experience on society and culture - both immediately and as time elapses
- "Starting over" i.e. rebirth as a form of coping with tragedy
- Activism as a form of coping with tragedy

Screening Guidelines (cont)

CONTEXT AND FACILITATION STRATEGIES

Preparing for a Discussion (cont.)

- The role of allies: allied countries during a war, as well as individual “upstanders” in society
- The definition of national security and how best to attain it
- Perceived vs. real threats to security and how public perception affects policy

Pre- Viewing Thought Prompts

Use some or all of the following questions to start your audiences thinking about the issues before they watch the film.

- What is a refugee?
- What is the difference between a refugee and an immigrant?
- What are some of the successes, failures, and the role of the international community when it comes to human rights violations and the treatment of refugees?
- What do you know about the historical background of the refugee experience? Who were the first refugees? How did the term “refugee” come about?
- Over time, what do you know about various societies’ reactions to the arrival of refugees at their borders? Are some cultures or countries more welcoming to refugees than others?
- What are your biggest concerns when you think about the issue of national security?



Screening Guidelines (cont)

CONTEXT AND FACILITATION STRATEGIES

Pre- Viewing Thought Prompts (cont.)

- What are your biggest concerns when you think about the issue of immigration?
- What do you know about the Syrian conflict and resulting refugee crisis?
- What do you know about the Holocaust and refugees that came out of Europe before and after World War II?
- Have you ever met, or do you know, a refugee?
- What is your family's history and cultural narrative? Where do you come from?
- What do you know about your family's story of migration? Where did they migrate from?
- Are any of your friends immigrants or refugees, or descendants of immigrants and refugees?
- Thinking personally, what is your definition of "home?" What does "home" mean to you - literally and symbolically?



Screening Guidelines (cont)

CONTEXT AND FACILITATION STRATEGIES

Post-Viewing Discussion Prompts

Use some or all of the following questions to guide your post-viewing discussion. You can use these with students in a classroom or to start off your Q&A with a panel of experts at a larger screening event. For a list of more in depth questions, refer to the [Questions for Further Discussion](#) section of this Guide.

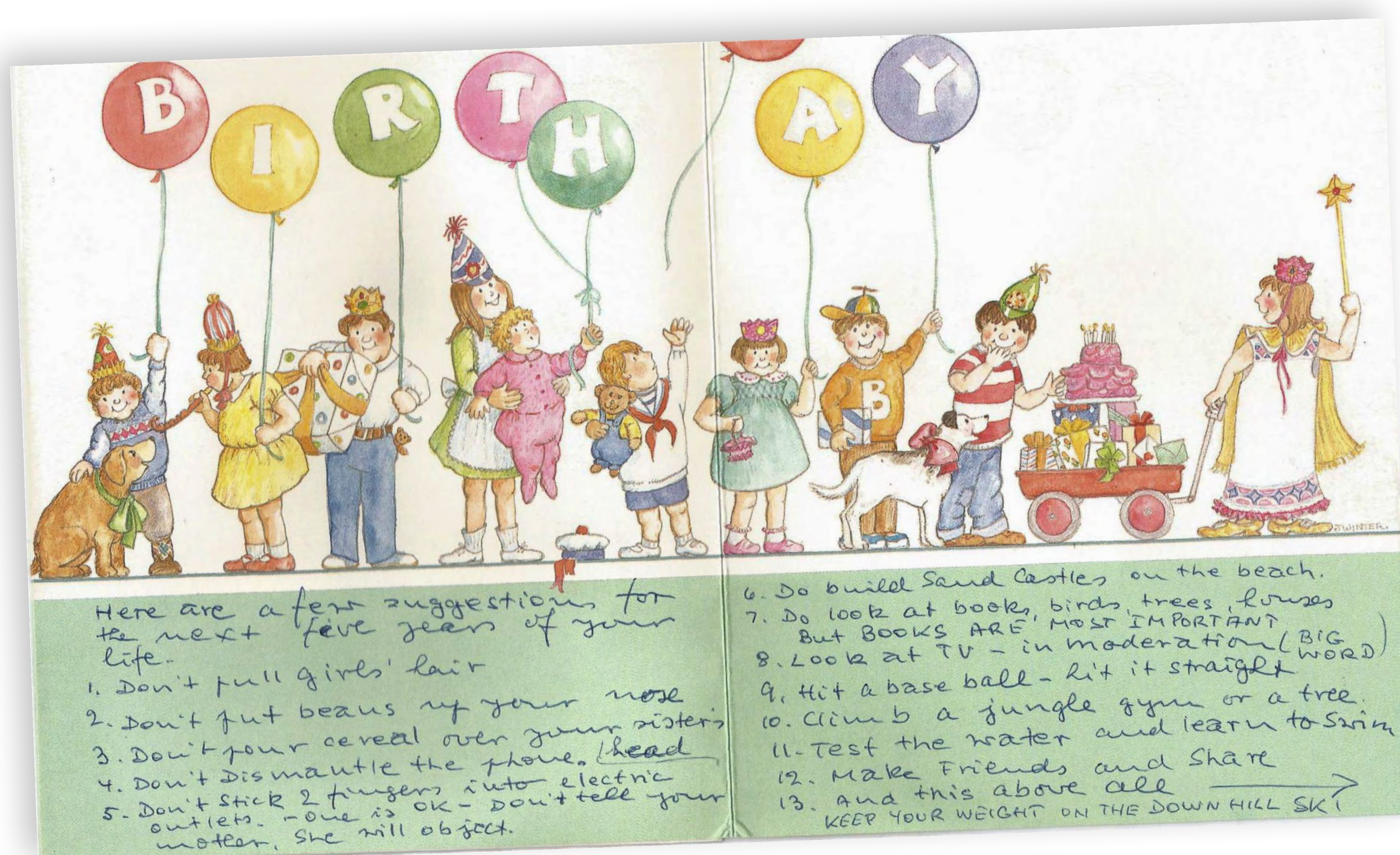
- What did you learn about refugees - past and present - by watching this film?
- What did you learn about the relationship between refugees, immigration, and national security by watching this film?
- How did watching the film lead you to think about, or think differently about, your family's history?
- How has your attitude about refugees and national security changed based on this film?
- Why do you think the film was titled "Monsters to Destroy?"
- How does Ben use humor throughout the film to not only break tension, but deepen his - and our - understanding? How does he use humor to forge deeper connections with the people in the film, and the subject he's exploring?
- How do you understand the psychological and physical experience of being a refugee from watching this film?
- Now what? You've learned a bit more about refugees, national security, the consistent reactions to refugees throughout American history, and the United States' policy around immigration. What can you do with this information to make a difference - in your community, the nation, and the world?

Questions for Further Discussion

Use the following questions to start a dialogue about M2D with viewers. These questions could be used as part of a classroom discussion, a panel Q&A, a family conversation, a community dialogue, or as writing prompts.

Personal Reflections / Media Literacy

- What surprised you about the refugees featured in M2D?
- What role does humor play in this film? How does Ben's use of humor add to the efficacy of the film?
- In your opinion, what is the funniest part of the movie? What makes this moment funny to you? How does humor heighten the impact of that moment, and of your understanding of the story, person, or content that it is highlighting?
- Who do you know who is an immigrant? Who do you know who is a refugee?
- What were your personal reactions to the advice that Ben's grandfather wrote in his birthday card? What does it mean to "keep your weight on the downhill ski?"



Questions for Further Discussion (cont)

Personal Reflections / Media Literacy (cont.)

- What does "home" mean to you? When you imagine leaving your home behind, what do you imagine? Describe what you think would be most difficult about leaving.
- What does family mean to you? Do you know your family history? Were they immigrants or refugees? Why and how did your ancestors come to America?
- In M2D, Ben says that the refugee crisis and the war on terror are both generation-defining issues. What does the phrase "generation-defining" mean to you?
- What are some of the immediate and long term consequences - intended and not intended, of the War on Terror?
- Throughout history, there have been many times when crisis or war has created large populations of displaced people. In each of these cases, the conflicts, the cultures, and the specifics were different - but most people in the U.S. opposed welcoming refugees each time. Why do you think this is so? What can we do to change this - through education? Governmental policy? The media? Our religious leaders?
- How does the format of Ben's talk lend itself to the subject he's exploring? How does his rapport with his subjects - and his audience - make a difficult conversation easier?
- What does it mean to feel human? What does it mean to be human?
- What role does humor play in this film? How does Ben's use of humor add to the efficacy of the film?
- Why do you think the film is called Monsters to Destroy? What is the meaning or significance of this title?

Questions for Further Discussion (cont)

Syria

- What did Monsters to Destroy teach you about the different players in the war in Syria? How did Syria become a war zone?
- How has political history in Syria created a huge displaced population?
- Why have many people tried to leave Syria? Why have many chosen to stay? What are the ways in which this can be a really difficult decision to make?
- What is ISIS?
- Who is the president of Syria? How did he gain power, and how long has he been president?
- Who are the warring factions in the war in Syria?
- How did Assad use ISIS to help keep himself in power?
- Is the current war in Syria a revolution, a civil war, or a different conflict? Why is this distinction important when discussing the Syrian refugee crisis? Why is it important when discussing the violence in Syria?
- What is radicalization and why is that concept important?

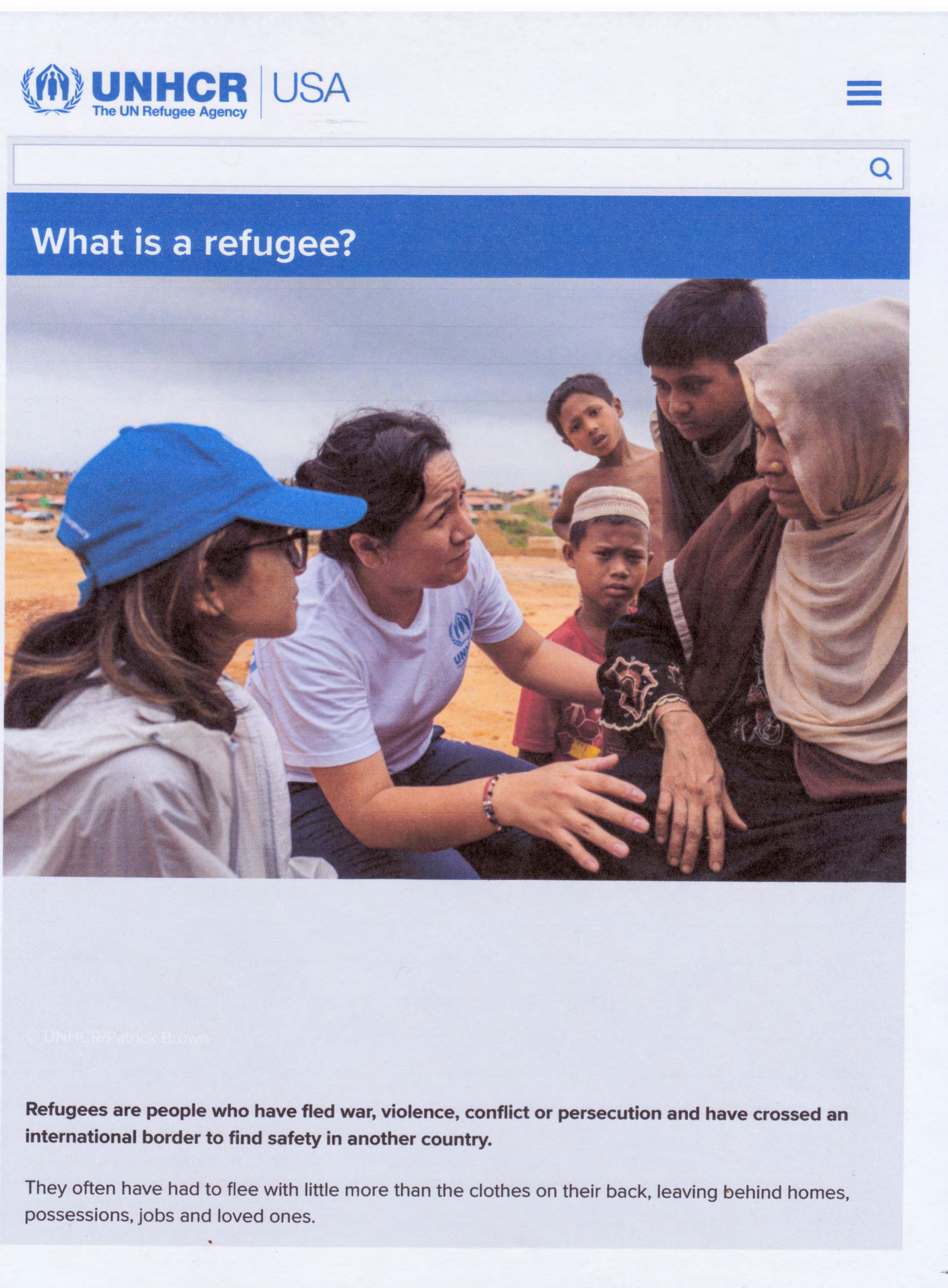
The Holocaust and World War II

- What was the Holocaust?
- Why was Ben's grandfather the first in his family to flee Germany?
- What happened to Ben's family on Kristallnacht?
- Why did so many Jews stay in Germany even as violence escalated?
- What are some parallels that can be drawn between the Holocaust and the war in Syria?
- What did you learn about the United States' attitudes towards refugees during World War II? Were you surprised by what you learned?
- What were America's national security fears in the late 1930s and 1940s? How do these fears around national security relate to today?

Questions for Further Discussion (cont)

The Holocaust and World War II (cont.)

- What did you learn about Ben's personal family history? How did learning about PopPop's story help you relate to Nafee's, Rukan's, Muhannad's, Ali, and Ahmad's stories?
- How might Germany's violent history affect their cultural attitudes towards refugees and immigrants?



The Refugee Experience

- What are some of the reasons that refugees leave their countries of origin?
- Why would a potential refugee choose NOT to leave their home country?
- What do you know about Nafee, Rukan, Ahmed, Ali's, and Muhannad's stories about escape and resettlement? What do you know about PopPop's escape and resettlement story?
- How are economics and national security intertwined?
- What do refugees add to the economy? Is there an economic policy that might actually maximize the positive impact that refugees have on the U.S. economy - for native born citizens and immigrants alike?

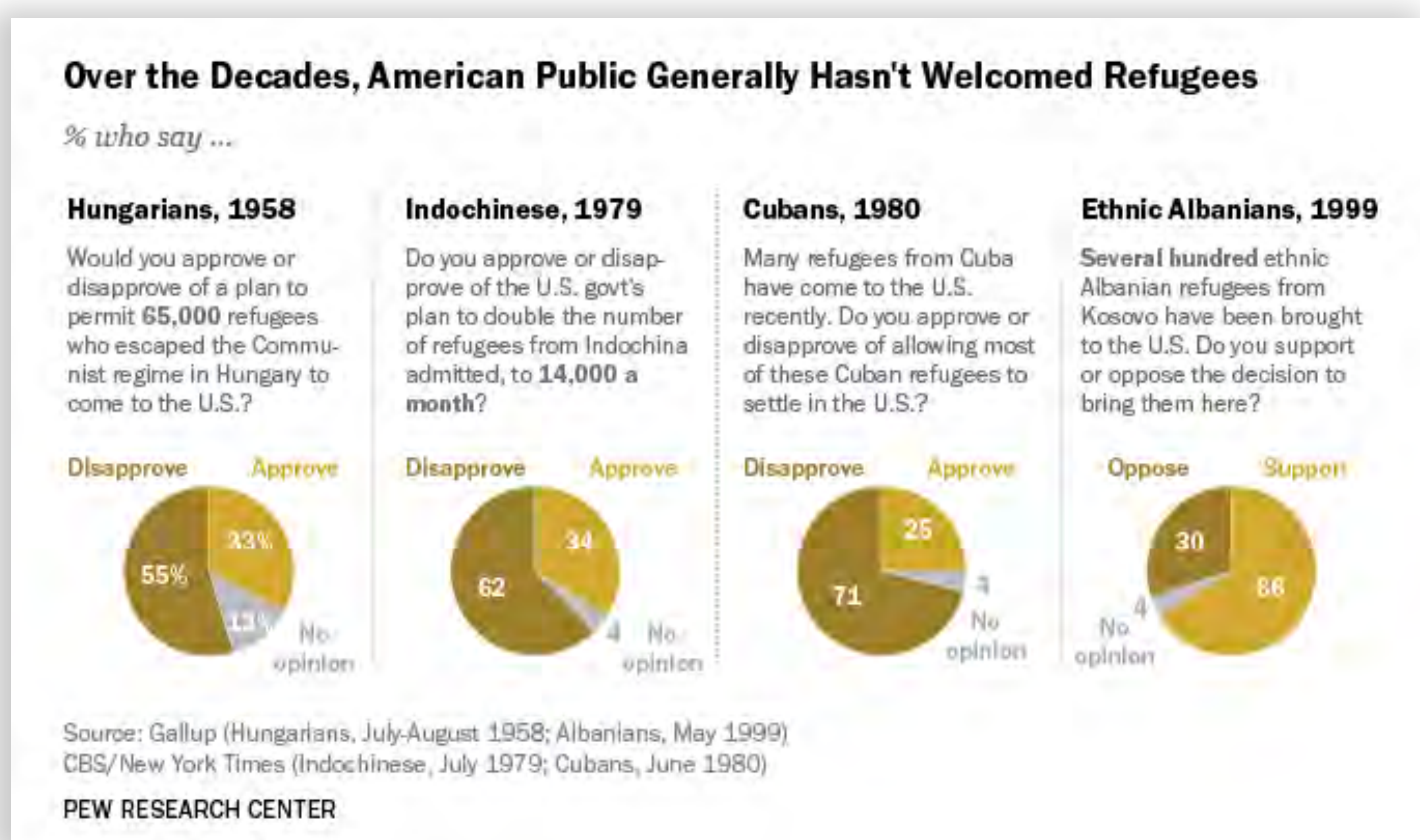
Questions for Further Discussion (cont)

The Refugee Experience (cont.)

- Explain what the "Net Fiscal Impact" of refugees is. Do refugees take jobs from native workers? Do they affect wages of native workers?
- According to M2D, are refugees a security threat? What statistics did Ben cite that supports your statement?
- What are some of the psychological and physical challenges of living as a refugee?
- Why did Muhannad say that he does not do interviews anymore?
- What are the responsibilities and role of the host nation for a refugee?
- How might a policy of welcoming refugees bolster a host country's national security?
- What sort of policies does Germany have in place to welcome refugees and help to transition them into German society?

US Policy on Immigration and Refugees

- What is the Diversity Visa Lottery?
- Should the United States have a refugee policy specific to student (college-age) refugees?



Questions for Further Discussion (cont)

US Policy on Immigration and Refugees (cont.)

- How does the U.S. policy towards refugees relate to our national security? How might a permissive refugee policy leave the U.S. vulnerable to, or safer from, terrorist attacks?
- What is isolationism? What role does isolationism play throughout U.S. history?
- Do you agree or disagree with Scott Cooper when he says the United States is a "force for good?" Explain.
- Why might Ben be surprised that a former Marine is advocating for refugee rights?
- What is the travel ban? How has watching Monsters to Destroy affected your opinion of the travel ban?
- Why do Americans continue to view refugees as a threat, even when statistics show that they are not? How has American popular opinion on refugees varied (or not) throughout the various refugee crises in our history?
- Who is Sayfullo Saipov and what did he do? How did Saipov gain entry to the United States?
- List a few of the ways M2D shows that refugees contribute to American society. Should refugees be allowed to enlist in the U.S. Military?
- What is the U.S. vetting process for Muslim refugees? How many resettled refugees have committed terrorist acts? Does this statistic confirm or contradict what you thought you knew about refugees before watching M2D?
- Does U.S. immigration policy validate anti-Muslim propaganda? How do terrorists benefit from that propaganda? How does this contribute to radicalization?

Classroom Activities



These activities are formatted for classroom use, and can be used in middle school, high school, or college classes. They can also be used for breakout groups or subsequent convenings at a screening event or workshop. They can be used as standalone lessons or as an opportunity to focus more closely on one segment of the film after watching it in its entirety. These activities align with Common Core and C3 teaching standards. Please refer to the [Sample Standards Alignments](#) section of this Guide for specific standards alignments.

Classroom Activities

ACTIVITY 1: Keeping Your Weight on the Downhill Ski

1. Begin by writing a sporting skill in the center of the white board, smart board, or on chart paper - something the entire class might respond to. Examples might be: "shooting baskets," "catching a fish," or "hitting a baseball."
2. In a quick, whole-group discussion, ask the class to volunteer advice for the skill. As students call out examples, write them on the board or chart paper, creating a word web. Examples might be: "use your legs," "plant your feet before you shoot," "lean into it," or "keep your eye on the ball".
3. After a few minutes, ask students to survey their responses. Ask the class how these bits of advice might be perceived as life lessons, not just lessons about a particular sport. How could "plant your feet" be an approach to general problem solving, as well as to shooting baskets or hitting a baseball?
4. Allow 5-10 minutes for discussion. Encourage crosstalk and creativity.
5. Cue Monsters to Destroy to timecode 15:25 and screen the next 5 minutes, stopping at timecode 20:44.
6. Ask students - how did Ben's grandfather PopPop use skiing as a metaphor for life? How might downhill skiing relate to PopPop's life experience? Refer to the Questions for Further Discussion section of this guide for additional discussion prompts to guide a 5 minute debrief.
7. Allow time for students to write in their journals or for homework: using a sport that you love as a metaphor for your own life, write 1-page letter of advice to your future grandchildren.

Classroom Activities

ACTIVITY 2: K/W/L

1. Begin by asking every student to take out a blank piece of notebook paper and fold the paper into thirds, lengthwise.
2. Along each fold, students should draw a line, so there are 3 equal columns down the page. At the top, students should label each column "Know," "Wonder," "Learn."
3. Break students into small groups or pairs and allow 5-10 minutes for discussion. Ask pairs or small groups to talk about what they know about refugees, particularly refugees who come to the United States. How do they get here? How do they gain entry? Why did they leave their homes? What do they do once they arrive? How are they impacting our country, and our local communities? How do they get access to services, such as public school? Small groups or pairs should write their findings in their "Know" column.
4. Explain to the class that they'll be watching a funny, personal film about refugees. Tell students that they should take notes in their "Learn" column as they watch - listing new information that they learn about refugees from watching the film.
5. Screen the film for the class.
6. Afterwards, reassemble in pairs or small groups. Ask students to work together to go through their "Know" column. Is there anything written there that they now realize was false? Circle any "false facts" from the "Know" column that were debunked by M2D. If they can, they should replace their false facts with the correct ones.
7. Next, allow 10 minutes for students to work in small groups to populate their "Wonder" column. What are they still wondering after having watched the film? What do they still want to know? Reconvene as a whole group to debrief.
8. For homework or as an extension, ask students to research one or more of their "Wonder" topics and present their findings to the class, small group, or to their partner.

Classroom Activities

ACTIVITY 3: M2D2 - DIY

1. After watching M2D, ask the class why they think Ben used the medium of a personal talk and slideshow to teach about refugees.
2. Ask the class to discuss what the elements of his talk were. Focus on some of the main elements, such as humor, personal narrative, facts and statistics, interviews, photos and drawings.
3. Allow time to list all of the student responses on the board, and to explore how each of these elements affected the audience or the individual viewer. Did they help your comprehension? Did they increase your feelings of compassion for the refugees in the film? Did you feel a connection with Ben? Did you feel inspired to get involved and make a difference?
4. Discuss the relationship between viewer and the film vs. Ben and his audience during one of his live performances. As a viewer, you're able to sit back and watch. You are also able to observe his relationship with the live audience as it is depicted in the film. Discuss these two dynamics, and how they affect the viewer. Does it add to your understanding of the content? Does it detract? As a viewer do you feel more engaged with Ben because of his rapport with the audience? Is your experience of his content and of his presentation different than, or the same as, the live audience? Explain.
5. After this debrief, ask students to think of a social or political issue that is important to them, and one to which they feel personally connected.

Classroom Activities

ACTIVITY 3: M2D2 - DIY (cont.)

6. Individually or in pairs, students should answer the following 5 questions using their own stories and experiences as part of their answers: What is the issue you want to explore? What is your personal relationship to this issue? What are 3 funny experiences or memories that you have which relate to this issue? What do you want people to know about this issue? Why do you want people to know about this issue?
7. Once these questions are answered, students should start piecing together their own "M2D2". How will they approach the topic? How can they creatively weave their stories throughout? What artistic supplementation might they use (drawings, music, video clips, photographs)?
8. For a shorter-term project or for homework, students can present their "M2D2" as written portfolios, a hard-copy compilation of written stories, photographs, and art.
9. To make this into a longer-term project, students can interview people from their family or extended community who also has experience with this issue, and conduct some research and collect data to supplement their content. Combining their personal responses and stories, the interviews, and the data, students should assemble their "M2D2" - and present it as a multimedia project however they wish (visual art and written word, video, and more).

Classroom Activities

ACTIVITY 4: M2D and the UNDHR

1. Start with a short discussion about the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR). What is it? When was it written? Why was it created? Who spearheaded the effort?
2. Download, print, and distribute copies of the UNDHR to the class.
3. Allow time for students to peruse the document in small groups or pairs.
4. Ask each small group or pair to choose one article that they think best relates to the film Monsters to Destroy. Make sure each group or pair selects a different article.
5. Allow time in class for students to work in pairs to deconstruct their article. What does it mean? Why is this human right so important? How does it relate to the people in the film? Have any of the people in the film been denied this right? What was the context for this denial, and the outcome? Is this right worth fighting for? Worth leaving home for?
6. For homework, students should write their own expository essay about their chosen article and how it relates to the refugee crisis. Using specific examples from the film, and from additional research, students should explain in writing why the UNDHR and this particular article are important.

Classroom Activities

ACTIVITY 5: Cultural Jigsaw

1. Divide the class into 5 groups.
2. Assign each group a different refugee experience. Assigned groups can include but need not be limited to: Southeast Asian refugees in the 1970s; Syrian refugees in the 2000s to today; Jewish refugees in the 1930s and 40s; Cubans in the 1980s, Sudanese refugees in the 2000s, Central Americans in the 2000s to today, Rwandan and Congolese refugees in the 1990s, and Ethnic Albanians in the 1990s.
3. In class or for homework, have students work in their small groups to research their assigned refugee experience. Topics that should be included might be: the reasons they were forced to leave their homes, the reception they got upon arrival in the US or other countries, if there were displaced persons or refugee camps, and if so, what they were like, and the current state of their home countries. This research can be done outside of class as well.
4. When research is complete, 'jigsaw' the class so that new groups are formed, comprised of one student from each of the original groups. Now, the small groups consist of students who each have researched a different refugee experience. Allow time for these new groups to share their research with each other. Encourage students to explore the similarities and differences between these refugee experiences, particularly how they were received in other countries, and the reasons they were forced from their home countries.
5. Relate what you learned in your research to what you learned in the film. How did PopPop's, Nafee's, Rukan's, Muhannad's, Ali's, and Ahmad's experiences compare to those in your assigned refugee group?
6. Reconvene as a whole group to debrief.

Classroom Activities

ACTIVITY 6: John Quincy Adams

1. Write the following quote on the white board, smart board, or chart paper, or, alternatively, make copies and distribute to the class:

"If the wise and learned philosophers of the elder world ... should find their hearts disposed to enquire what has America done for the benefit of mankind? Let our answer be this... America, in the assembly of nations, since her admission among them, has invariably, though often fruitlessly, held forth to them the hand of honest friendship, of equal freedom, of generous reciprocity. She has uniformly spoken among them, though often to heedless and often to disdainful ears, the language of equal liberty, of equal justice, and of equal rights. She has, in the lapse of nearly half a century, without a single exception, respected the independence of other nations while asserting and maintaining her own. ...Wherever the standard of freedom and Independence has been or shall be unfurled, there will her heart, her benedictions and her prayers be. But she goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy. She is the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all."

- John Quincy Adams

2. Allow time to deconstruct this quote. What is Adams saying about the United States, and our role and responsibility as a global leader? Go line by line to decipher the meaning of his words. This can be done as a whole group, individually, or in pairs.
3. Once a consensus has been reached on the literal meaning of this quote, discuss its implied meaning.

Classroom Activities

ACTIVITY 6: John Quincy Adams (cont.)

4. Ask students: do you agree with John Quincy Adams? Why or why not? How do these words reflect the role that America SHOULD have? How do they reflect on actual U.S. policy? Should America be responsible to destroy monsters abroad?
5. Now, relate this quote to the film Monsters to Destroy. Discuss why this was chosen to be the title of the film. How does this quote relate to Scott's assertion in the film that being part of the solution is "who we are". How does it relate to the way the U.S. historically treats refugees? How does it relate to Jeff Sessions' statement at the start of the film? Allow time for the class to discuss and debate.
6. For homework, students can journal using this quote as their writing prompt.

Social Action and Community Service Project Prompts

- **Write, Tweet, Sign, Share:** Do you have 5 minutes and want to make a difference? Visit the Action Center on the Human Rights First website. They have quick and easy ways for each of us to write in and influence policy and programs for refugees and displaced persons in the U.S. and around the world. https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/action_center
- **Hold a "White Sale"** in support of the White Helmets. Together with your friends and peers, organize a bake sale where everything is WHITE - vanilla cupcakes, blondies, sugar cookies, lemon bars ... be creative! - and donate all the earnings to the White Helmets, a Syrian Civil Defense group of unarmed men and women who risk their lives to save any individual regardless of political or religious affiliation throughout Syria and Turkey. You can share sweets, raise money, and increase awareness about the plight of the Syrian people. To learn more and donate your proceeds, go to: <https://www.whitehelmets.org/en/>
- **Let's Go to the Movies!** A great way to start a productive dialogue about the refugee crisis and humanitarian emergency in Syria is by hosting your very own screening event of Monsters to Destroy. Use the screening guidelines in this Guide to think through all the details. Consider timing your event with World Refugee Day (June 20th), Yom HaShoah (April 20th), or Human Rights Day (December 10th). Your event can be as big as an all-school assembly or as small as an after-school screening for your student club. By introducing your peers to this film and to this conversation, you will be making a difference! If you'd like free support in organizing a screening, contact us at outreach@bigpictureeducational.com and we can help you get started.

Social Action and Community Service Project Prompts (cont)

- **Clothing and Toiletry Drive:** An easy and impactful way to engage your peers in support of refugee resettlement in your local community is by launching a clothing and toiletry drive. When people are forced to leave their homes, often they must leave everything behind. This includes every day necessities such as clothing, food, and toiletries. Set aside a week or two where you can collect gently used or outgrown clothing and new toiletry supplies in the cafeteria during lunch or before or after school. Publicize the drive and encourage everyone to donate. Then, contact your local refugee resettlement agency (www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/state-programs-annual-overview) and inquire how and when you can drop off the donations.
- **Organize a Family Story Night.** Every family has a story - and every family story is unique, complicated, and fascinating. What's yours? Invite your local family members to join you at your house, in person or via Skype or FaceTime. What can you find out about your family's background, and the stories that make up your family history? Start sketching out a family tree. Who were the first family members to emigrate to the United States? Where did they come from? Why did they leave? What was their arrival like? Where did they settle? What work did they do, and why? Ask your grandparents and/or great grandparents what advice they'd give to future generations. Start a Family Keepsake Book that you can add to, and share with your children one day.

Social Action and Community Service Project Prompts (cont)

- **Send a #LetterOfHope:** As you learned from M2D, when refugees are forced to flee their homes, they want for more than just food, clothing, and shelter. Often they are leaving all of their friends and family behind with their worldly belongings. Imagine the trauma of escaping famine, war, and violence, only to find yourself alone in a strange country. Let a refugee who might feel alone, scared, and lonely know that someone is thinking about them by making a personal connection. To write, submit, and send your letter, visit **https://my.care.org/site/SPageNavigator/CARE_SpecialDelivery.html**.

Additional Resources

The following is a brief listing of some of the organizations and websites that are relevant to the refugee resettlement and international human rights conversation.

Human Rights First

<https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/>

Vets for American Ideals: A Project of human rights first

<https://www.vfai.org/>

US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

<https://refugees.org/>

#No Lost Generation - Student Initiative

<https://www.nolostgeneration.org/>

HIAS Welcome the Stranger Protect the Refugee

<https://www.hias.org/>

Every Campus a Refuge

<https://everycampusarefuge.net/>

UN Refugee Agency

<https://www.unhcr.org>

UNICEF

<https://www.unicef.org/>

Additional Resources (cont)

United Nations Together

<https://together.un.org/>

International Rescue Committee

<https://www.rescue.org/>

Doctors Without Borders

<https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/>

Alight

<https://wearealight.org/>

Refugees International

<https://www.refugeesinternational.org/>

Mercy Corps

<https://www.mercycorps.org/>

Shelter Box

<https://www.shelterboxusa.org/>

Sample Standards Alignments

The following are a sample list of standards that illustrate how the educational use of Monsters to Destroy and the content in this Guide supports standards-based instruction.

CONTENT AREA STANDARDS (MCREL)

WORLD HISTORY

- Standard 41** Understands the causes and global consequences of World War
- 41.2** Understands the Holocaust and its impact on Jewish culture and European society
- 41.4** Understands the rise of Nazism and how it was received by society
- 41.8** Understands the climax and moral implications of World War II
- Standard 44** Understands the search for community, stability, and peace in an interdependent world
- 44.5** Understands the role of political ideology, religion, and ethnicity in shaping modern governments
- 44.6** Understands the role of ethnicity, cultural identity, and religious beliefs in shaping economic and political conflicts across the globe
- 44.10** Understands the effectiveness of United Nations programs

CIVICS

- Standard 9** Understands the importance of Americans sharing and supporting certain values, beliefs, and principles of American constitutional democracy
- 9.1** Understands how the institutions of government reflect fundamental values and principles
- 9.2** Understands the interdependence among certain values and principles
- 9.3** Understands the significance of fundamental values and principles for the individual and society

Sample Standards Alignments (cont)

CIVICS (cont.)

- Standard 10** Understands the roles of voluntarism and organized groups in American social and political life
- 10.5** Understands issues that arise regarding what responsibilities belong to individuals and groups and the private sector, what responsibilities belong to the government, and how these responsibilities should be shared by the private sector and the government
- 10.6** Knows the historical and contemporary role of various organized groups in local, state, and national politics

LANGUAGE ARTS - WRITING

- Standard 1** Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process
- 1.5** Uses strategies to address writing to different audiences
- 1.6s** Uses strategies to adapt writing for different purposes
- 1.7** Writes expository compositions
- 1.8** Writes fictional, biographical, autobiographical, and observational narrative compositions
- 1.9** Writes compositions employing persuasion
- 1.10** Writes descriptive compositions
- 1.11** Writes reflective compositions
- 1.12** Writes in response to literature

VIEWING AND MEDIA

- Standard 9** Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media
- 9.1** Uses a range of strategies to interpret visual media
- 9.2** Uses a variety of criteria to evaluate informational media
- 9.3** Understands the conventions of visual media genres
- 9.7** Understands how images and sound convey messages in visual media
- 9.8** Understands effects of style and language choice in visual media
- 9.9** Understands how literary forms can be represented in visual narratives

Sample Standards Alignments (cont)

VIEWING AND MEDIA (cont.)

- Standard 4** Gathers and uses information for research purposes
- 4.2** Uses a variety of print and electronic sources to gather information for research topics
- 4.3** Uses a variety of primary sources to gather information for research topics
- 4.4** Uses a variety of criteria to evaluate the validity, reliability, and usefulness of primary and secondary source information
- 4.5** Synthesizes information from multiple sources to draw conclusions that go beyond those found in any of the individual sources

Common Core and C3 Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.B

Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives

Common Core and C3 Standards (cont)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

Media Arts/Media Literacy Standards

MA:Re7.1.IIa

Analyze and synthesize the qualities and relationships of the components in a variety of media artworks, and feedback on how they impact audience.

MA:Re8.1.II

Analyze the intent, meanings, and influence of a variety of media artworks, based on personal, societal, historical, and cultural contexts.

MA:Re7.1.IIb

Analyze how a broad range of media artworks manage audience experience, create intention and persuasion through multimodal perception.

MA:Re9.1.8

Evaluate media art works and production processes with developed criteria, considering context and artistic goals

About Bent Productions

Bent Productions is Ben Tumin's production company. He has performed his humorous, historical shtick in dozens of places around the country and is currently touring a sequel to M2D, called 1954.

In the similarly formatted, joke-filled piece, Ben examines the repercussions of the 1954 American coup in Guatemala, which sparked the migration we now see from Central America. Given that this is such a significant historical event, Ben examines why so few people talk about it today, an investigation that leads to education: specifically, to the poor state of U.S. high school history textbooks.

The role of textbooks in covering up our history and making it super boring for students is increasingly the subject of Ben's work. To follow his journey, sign up for his newsletter "The Question Less Traveled" at <http://www.bentumin.com>, and for booking inquiries, please reach out to events@bentumin.com



About Big Picture Educational Consulting

Big Picture is a leader in the fields of film education and media literacy, specializing in resource development and educational outreach for film and media projects of all kinds. We leverage film as a powerful educational tool to enlighten audiences, spark engagement, inspire social change, and cultivate new generations of filmgoers and filmmakers. Our leadership shares over 25 years of experience in film, media literacy, curriculum development, community organizing, and education, and we bring this experience to bear for our clients, using their films to teach and edify complex and inspiring issues inside and beyond the classroom in savvy, substantive ways. Learn more at

www.bigpictureeducational.com



Monsters to Destroy

A talkumentary about
refugees and security

By Ben Tumin

DISCUSSION
GUIDE