

# SIMPLE ACTS

Help change the way we see refugees, and ourselves



## 1. Share a story

The experiences of refugees can feel very far away. But they are all around us, if we know where to look.

It is a sad fact that war and persecution are nothing new. People have had to leave their homes in search of safety for generations, bringing new perspectives, experiences and talents to the societies they join.

Britain is no exception. The stories of refugees are right here: in the music we listen to, the food we eat, the books our children read. And when we listen to these stories, it becomes harder to ignore the connections between us - the fact that the contributions and experiences of refugees are part of who we all are.

This Simple Act invites you 'meet' one person who has sought safety in the UK through the generations. To listen to their story and imagine life through their eyes.

[Click here](#) to read their stories and then share one with someone you know.



## 2. Find out who you really are

This one is a classic from Simple Acts history.

We used to introduce it with the surprising fact that the English word 'pedigree' comes from the French 'pied de grue' (= 'foot of the crane'), probably because a simply-drawn family tree looks a bit like the foot of a bird.

So, we asked, what about you and me? If we traced our lines back to their beginnings, would we find a big-footed French bird - or something equally as unexpected and entertaining?

The response was fascinating. Millie found out her surname was brought over by peasants from Ireland, while Dev discovered he had roots in Algeria.

Michelle at Salusbury primary school learned that her family were descended from Huguenots, the UK's 'first refugees', who fled France due to religious persecution in the 17th century.

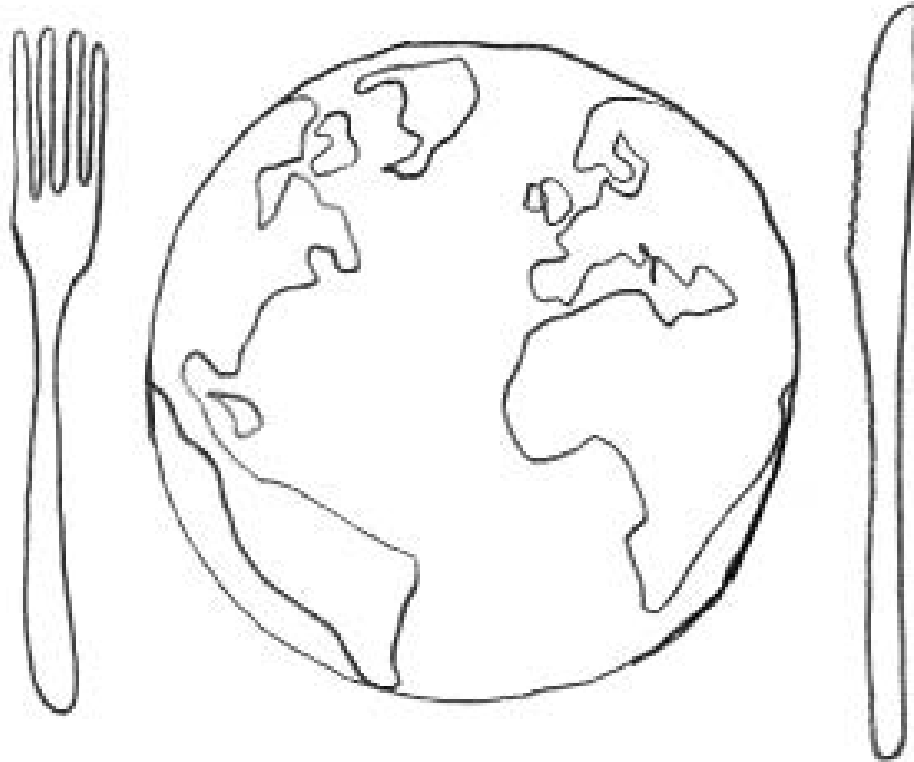
"I'm glad they found safety in England," said Michelle, "Otherwise I wouldn't be here!"

The theme of Refugee Week 2019 is 'You, me and those who came before', so we're re-issuing our call for you to do a little digging. Can you find a story of migration in your family or community that you didn't know before? Do you know where your name comes from, and what it means?

To help in your search, you might:

- Talk to your grandparents or older relatives
- Look up the meaning of your name or surname
- Do a DNA test!

Let us know what you discover! Share your findings on social media using the hashtags #SimpleActs and #Generations, or [email us](#).



### 3. Share a dish

"Whenever you get a bunch of people at a table, you learn about the people at that table. The young folks learn about their elders, they learn about their culture and listen to stories about the past." Mashama Bailey, Chef's Table

In a formerly segregated bus station in Savannah, Georgia, chef Mashama Bailey co-runs the restaurant 'The Grey', serving traditional Southern food with a twist. She understands that recipes hold stories, and that by sharing them in new ways, and with new people, we can create new ones.

This Simple Act is an invitation to come together around a table - old and young, long-standing locals and those who have just arrived - and share in the aromas and flavours of the food you love best. Whether it's a childhood favourite, a beloved recipe 'from home' or a dish from a country you haven't yet seen, you'll be embarking on a shared journey, with your tastebuds as your guide...

And as the flavours begin to flow, you might find the stories do, too. Who taught you this dish? Who did you used to eat it with, and when?

You can bet that when the last mouthful is finished, you'll all know each other that little bit better.

We'll be inviting you to try a selection of recipes from around the world, or share your own using the hashtag #SimpleActs, or [email us](#) (please also share photos of your dishes, and you enjoying them!).

Recipes coming soon.



## 4. Feel the beat

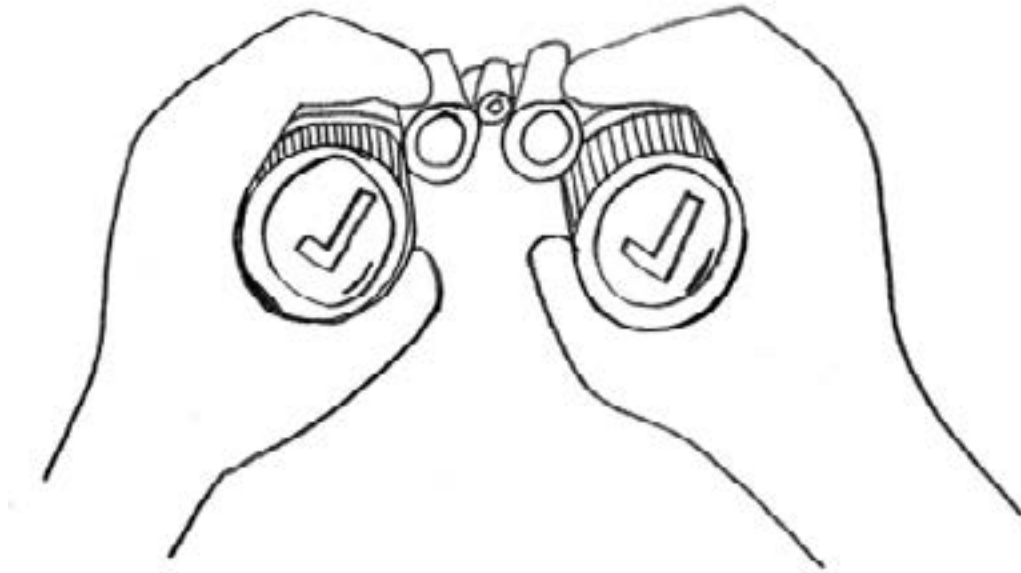
The melody rises. The drums kick in. Suddenly you're no longer on the dancefloor, or in your kitchen, or on the bus. You're transported somewhere else.

The role of displaced artists in shaping the history of music is far greater than most of us realise (Schoenberg and Freddie Mercury, anyone?) So this Refugee Week, we're creating a special playlist of tracks that are by artists from refugee backgrounds, or inspired by experiences of people on the move.

We hope that through the power of beautiful music, you might go somewhere you've never been before.

Put it on. Turn it up. Share it with a friend. Feel the beat.

[Listen on Spotify here](#)



## 5. Find one fact

Last Refugee Week, your fact-finding skills shone a light on some shocking and important truths about the way our country treats refugees - such as the fact that the UK is the only European country where people can be kept in immigration detention [without a time limit](#).

This year, we're asking you to find and share one fact about refugees through history that you didn't know before. It could be that the inventor of the Mini was a Greek refugee, or that we have Jewish refugees to thank for the fish in fish and chips (there you go, we just gave you two).

Use these websites to help you, or find your own trusted sources:

[Traces Project](#): Timeline of cultural contributions by people who have sought safety in the UK, Counterpoints Arts and UNHCR

[The Heritage and Contributions of Refugees to the UK](#), Refugee Week resource

Records of refugee history held in the [National Archives](#)

Refugee timeline and downloadable resources from the [Refugee History](#) website (click 'resources')

Did you uncover a fact that surprised you, or that you think more people should know? Tell a friend, or share on social media using the hashtags #SimpleActs and #Generations.



## 6. Write a poem

Our partners Amnesty International UK invite you to write a poem on the theme of 'family'

### Write a poem about family

This Simple Act is an invitation to write your own poem or collaborative poem about your family.

You could use one of these lines to get started:

Being with my family is like...

Family is...

Being without my family is like...

Or explore the theme 'time spent with my family' and take inspiration from spoken word poet Dean Atta's example:

[The Family Mystery](#)

### Speak out through your poetry

Where would you be without your family?

Restrictive UK rules are keeping refugee families apart. The [Families Together campaign](#) is calling for that to change.

### Support the campaign by

Sharing your poem on social media using the hashtags #SimpleActs #FamiliesTogether #WordsThatBurn

[Sending your poem](#) to Amnesty International UK for their website and the Families Together campaign

This Simple Act is supported by [Words That Burn](#) - Amnesty UK's national project challenging you to make a difference through poetry.

### Be inspired by

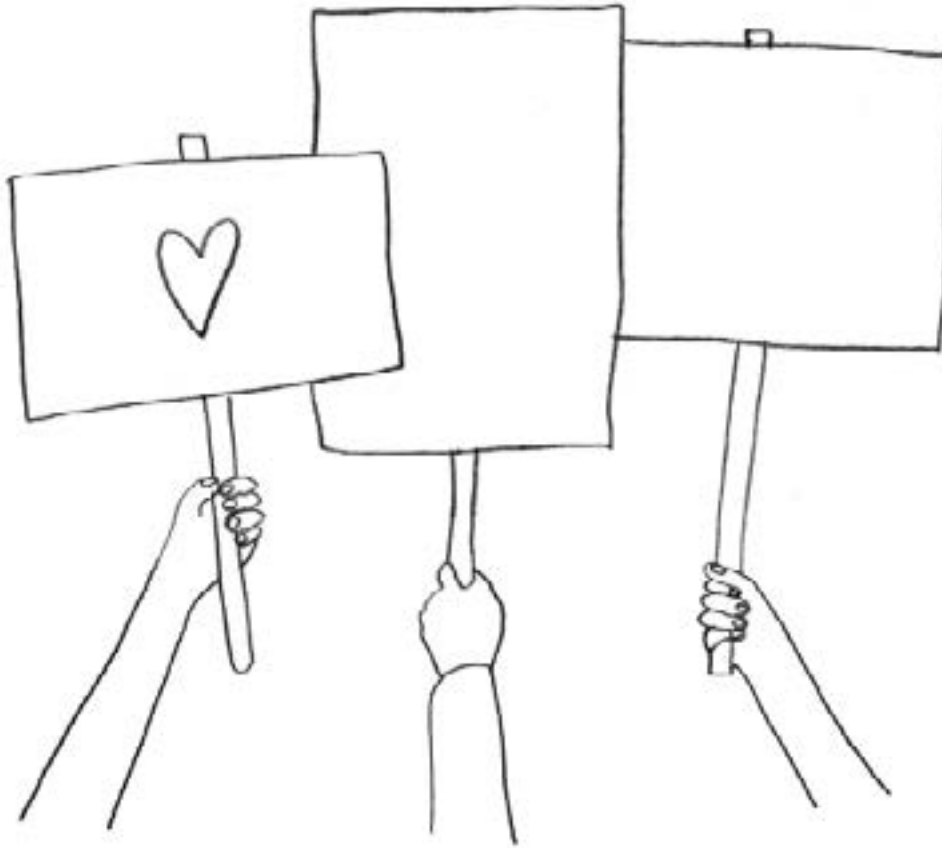
This collaborative poem by Amnesty UK staff and volunteers, written in support of the [Families Together Campaign](#)

Being with my family is like the sunniest day at the most beautiful beach

Being without my family is like being shipwrecked on an Island- alone!

Being with my family is like a life with purpose

Being without my family is like floating on a sea of uncertainty, unconnected, unprotected



## 7. Join the movement

More people are being forced to leave their homes today than ever before in history. And across the world, people are closing their front doors for the last time only to face life-threatening journeys, separation from their families and, all too often, detention, poverty or isolation when they reach 'safety'.

Refugees and asylum seekers need our support and solidarity all year round. So once June is over, we hope you'll carry the spirit and energy of Refugee Week with you, and continue to take a stand. By doing so, you'll be joining a huge global movement that says, enough is enough. We welcome refugees.

From campaigning to volunteering, here are some specific ways you can show your support in the run up to Refugee Week 2019 and beyond. Click on the links to find out more:

[Join Lift the Ban campaign](#)

Join the campaign to give people seeking asylum the right to work

[Join Families Together campaign](#)

Join the campaign to keep refugee children and families together

[Join your local City of Sanctuary group](#)

Help make your village, town or city a welcoming place of safety for all

[Get involved in your local Community Sponsorship group](#)

Help resettle refugees through Community Sponsorship in your area

[Join the STAR group at your University, or start your own](#)

Join the national network of student groups working to improve the lives of refugees in Britain

[Campaign for Equal Access to University](#)

Support the campaign for the provision of University scholarships for refugees and asylum seekers in the UK

[Join End Indefinite Detention campaign](#)

Call for a fairer immigration system and join the campaign to end indefinite detention in the UK