



EXPEDITIONARY
LEARNING

Grade 8: Module 1: Unit 2: Lesson 19

Launching Researching: Reading for Gist and Gathering Evidence Using the Research Guide



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Long-Term Targets Addressed (Based on NYSP12 ELA CCLS)

I can conduct short research projects to answer a question. (W.8.7)

I can use evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. (W.8.9)

I can express my own ideas clearly during discussions, and I can build on other's ideas during discussions. (SL.8.1)

Supporting Learning Targets

- I can find the gist of informational texts.
- I can select the strongest evidence in an informational text about who the refugees were, where they fled from, and why they had to flee.

Ongoing Assessment

- Research Guide



Agenda	Teaching Notes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Unpacking Learning Targets (2 minutes) B. Introducing the Research Guide (5 minutes) 2. Work Time <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Reading All Research Texts for Gist (15 minutes) B. Rereading One Research Text to Identify “Who? Where? Why?” Details (8 minutes) C. Gathering Evidence on Research Guides (10 minutes) 3. Closing and Assessment <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Sharing Evidence (5 minutes) 4. Homework <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. For the text you read with your partner, finish recording the strongest Who? Where? and Why? evidence onto your Research Guide. Read other texts if you choose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although this lesson is in Unit 2, the research conducted will apply toward the final performance task and assessments in Unit 3. (This sequence was done to provide you time to read and give feedback on students’ draft End of Unit 2 assessments.) Students begin working in their research teams to gather information aligned with the final performance task. The students will be using this research to write “inside out” and “back again” poems about specific refugee experiences from Bosnia, Afghanistan, or Kurdistan. The work in this lesson aligns with W.8.7 and W.8.9. • Students begin their research with their teams using Research Folders that contain a small number of previously selected research materials for each of the countries identified (see Lesson 18 supporting materials for the list of texts). • Have these folders ready in advance. Each team needs a Research Folder containing the materials relevant to the group of refugees they have chosen to research, including a glossary of words they may not be familiar with. Have enough of each text for every student in the group, so students can self-select texts. • Students read each informational text in their folder first for gist. It is important that students have a general sense of the article as a whole before they go searching for specific details. • Students then reread and use a color-coding system to underline evidence answering the “Who?” “Where?” “Why?” questions on the Research Guide. • Be sure that students are aware that in Unit 3 they will create a fictional narrator for their poems, just as Thanhha Lai did in creating Ha. They will use evidence and details from the research materials as a basis for creating this fictional character, so they need to collect as much of the strongest evidence as possible. • Help students choose text that will challenge them at the appropriate level. Students also may partner read. • In advance: Select one text from a research folder to model underlining evidence. See Work Time B for more information. • Post: Learning targets, list of research teams (from Lesson 18).



Lesson Vocabulary	Materials
gist, strongest evidence; see the glossary in each Research Folder for vocabulary for each of the informational texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of research teams (from Lesson 18) Research Guide (from Lesson 18) Articles for Research Folders (for teacher reference) Research Folders (one of each text per student on the research team; see Teaching Note above) Research Task Card (one per student) Informational text (one to display; see Work Time B for more information) Colored pencils (one red, blue and green per student) Document camera

Opening	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>A. Unpacking Learning Targets (2 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post the list of research teams (from Lesson 18). Be sure students are sitting with their teams. Focus students on the first target and invite them to Think-Pair-Share: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "I can find the gist of informational texts." Students should be quite familiar with the term gist. Cold call a student to remind the class what it means. Listen for: "getting an initial sense of what a text is mostly about." Explain to students that real researchers read a lot of text and need to be able to do a first read just to get a basic sense of the text and determine whether it is relevant to their research questions. Focus students on the second learning target and invite them to read it with you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "I can select the strongest evidence in an informational text about who the refugees were, where they fled from, and why they had to flee." Ask students to Think-Pair-Share: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "What does it mean by strongest evidence?" Listen for students to explain that the strongest evidence is the best evidence: evidence that is most relevant to your particular questions or task. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning targets are a research-based strategy that helps all students, especially challenged learners. Posting learning targets allows students to reference them throughout the lesson to check their understanding. They also provide a reminder to students and teachers about the intended learning behind a given lesson or activity.



Opening (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>B. Introducing the Research Guide (5 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask students to refer to their Research Guide, with which they familiarized themselves for homework. Invite students to read the headings of the columns on the Research Guide, and then the titles of the rows, with you. Ask students to Think-Pair-Share:<ul style="list-style-type: none">* “Look at the left-hand column of the Research Guide. What do you think you are going to record in each row of this column? Why?”• Listen for students to explain that they are going to record the strongest evidence that explains who the refugee is, where the refugee fled from, where the refugee fled to, the time in history when it happened, and why the refugee fled. Students should notice that these are aspects of the universal refugee experience they learned about earlier in the unit (Lessons 4 and 5).• Highlight the words in brackets and explain that these are the specific details they will be looking for.• Focus students on the right-hand column, Source Information. Ask them to Think-Pair-Share:<ul style="list-style-type: none">* “What do you think you are going to record in the right-hand column of the Research Guide? Why?”• Listen for students to explain that they are going to cite the works they have used, as they did when writing their analysis essay.	
Work Time	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>A. Reading All Research Texts for Gist (15 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide the research teams with their Research Folders. Tell students that in this lesson, they get to dig into the research to find out more about a specific group of refugees. As a research team, they are going to find the gist of the materials within the Research Folders so that they can figure out what the text is mostly about before they begin looking for particular details.• Distribute Research Task Cards. Focus students on Part A: Reading for Gist.• Read the directions aloud as students read silently in their heads.• Emphasize that reading for gist is something real researchers do. Invite students to read the informational texts in their Research Folders for gist.• Circulate to assist students with reading.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refer students to the glossary for each of the texts in the Research Folders to help them understand unfamiliar words.• Providing students with task cards ensures that expectations are consistently available.• Encourage students to choose a text from the Research Folder that is most appropriate for their reading level—encourage students to challenge themselves within reason.



Work Time (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>B. Reading One Research Text to Identify “Who? Where? Why?” Details (8 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind students of the “Who?” “Where?” “Why?” questions on the Research Guide. Tell students that now that they have gotten a sense of the gist of the various texts in their folders, they will work in pairs to read just one text in more detail. Focus students on Part B of the task card: Rereading for Who? Where? Why? Answer clarifying questions as needed. Display one of the informational texts. Follow the directions on the task card to model for students how to underline the text as the task card directs. Distribute colored pencils and ask students to follow the Part B directions to identify and underline in colored pencils the specific information to answer the Who? Where? Why? questions. Circulate to assist students with reading to identify the details. Remind students of the guiding words in brackets on the Research Guide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graphic organizers and recording forms engage students more actively and provide scaffolding that is especially critical for learners with lower levels of language proficiency and/or learning.
<p>C. Gathering Evidence on Research Guides (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind students that in Unit 3, they are going to use the answers from their Research Guide to be creative and write “inside out” and “back again” poems. Model how to fill out the first row of the Research Guide using the information from the text you underlined as a model in Part B of Work Time. Focus first on the Who? information underlined in red. Transfer the information underlined in red onto the first row of the Research Guide. Show students how underlining in different colors should make scanning the text for this evidence easier. Record the details of the text in the second column and explain that next you would move on to the Where? evidence underlined in this same text and that you would finish working with one text before moving on to another. Invite students to follow along silently in their heads as you read Part C: Gathering Evidence on Research Guides. Invite groups to follow the directions to record evidence in each of the sections of the Research Guide. Tell students that they will finish collecting this evidence to answer the Who? Where? Why? questions for homework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When reviewing the graphic organizers or recording forms, consider using a document camera to display the document for students who struggle with auditory processing.

Closing and Assessment	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>A. Sharing Evidence (5 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to bring their texts and Research Guides and get into their original Numbered Heads groups (so students who are 	



<p>studying different refugee contexts get to share with one another). Ask students to pair Numbered Heads 1 with 2 and 3 with 4. Invite students to share their answer to the following question, based on the evidence they have collected so far on their Research Guides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* “Now that you have looked through the stories of refugees, who are the refugees from this specific time and place in history? What do you know about them?”• As time permits, invite a few students to share out whole group. Push students to keep thinking about the strongest evidence they collected as they researched today:<ul style="list-style-type: none">* “Which details seem most relevant given the poems you are preparing to write? Why?”	
Homework	Meeting Students’ Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For the text you read with your partner, finish recording the strongest Who? Where? Why? evidence onto your Research Guide. Read other texts if you choose.	



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Supporting Materials



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Articles for Research Folders
(for Teacher Reference)

Directions:

Before Lesson 19, prepare folders for each research team with enough of each text and the glossary for one per team member.

Kurdish Refugees Research Folder:

1. Faiad, Andrea. “A Place of Her Own.” *Current Health* Feb. 2007: 26–28. Print. (Includes vocabulary).
2. “People without a Land.” *Scholastic Update* 15 Nov. 1996: 16–17. Print.
3. Saeedpour, Vera. “Meet the Kurds.” *Faces* Mar. 1999: 8. Print.

Glossary for Kurdish Refugees Research Folder

Article: “People without a Land”	
solemnly	with seriousness
allies	countries that work together/are friendly
treaty	formal agreement between two or more states or countries
agitated	to cause to move with violence or sudden force
genocide	the widespread extermination of a religious or ethnic group
covert	secret



Articles for Research Folders
(for Teacher Reference)

Article: “Meet the Kurds”	
dynasty	a series of rulers from the same family
flourish	to do well; prosper
precipitation	moisture, rainfall



Articles for Research Folders
(for Teacher Reference)

Bosnian Refugees Research Folder:

1. “Welcome to Sarajevo.” *Skipping Stones* Jan. 2003: 25–26. Print.
2. Woodard, Colin. “Bosnia: The Children of War.” *Junior Scholastic* 12 May 2008: 12–14. Print.
3. “Hard Times in Sarajevo: Cold Weather Comes Early to Bosnia’s War-Torn Capital, Bringing More Hardship, Death.” *Current Events* 24 Oct. 1994: 1+. Academic OneFile. Web. 4 Feb. 2013.
4. “Peace Patrol: U.S. Troops Will Stay at Least Another Year in Tense Bosnia.” *Current Events* 9 Dec. 1996: 3. Print.

Glossary for Bosnian Refugees Research Folder

Article: “People without a Land”	
siege	a military blockade of a city
atrocities	extremely wicked or cruel acts
allied	countries that work together
per capita GDP	how much money the country makes divided by the population
Article: “Welcome to Sarajevo”	
uninhabitable	not capable of living in
desolation	a state of complete emptiness or destruction
Article: “Peace Patrol: U.S. Troops Will Stay at Least Another Year in Tense Bosnia”	
treaty	formal agreement between two or more states or countries



Articles for Research Folders
(for Teacher Reference)

Article: “Hard Times in Sarajevo: Cold Weather Comes Early to Bosnia’s War-Torn Capital, Bringing More Hardship, Death”	
persecute	harass or annoy based on someone’s race or religious beliefs
alliance	friendship between two or more parties
dictatorship	government ruled by one leader



Articles for Research Folders
(for Teacher Reference)

Afghani Refugees Research Folder:

1. Haidari, Karim. "Refugee Writing on the Journey." *New Internationalist* 350 Oct. 2002: 20–21. Print.
2. Baird, Kristin. "I Escaped the Taliban." *National Geographic Kids* July 2005: 1. Print.
3. Lehr, Rachel. "Town Mouse and Country Mouse." *Faces* Mar. 2006: unknown. Print.

Glossary for Afghani Refugees Research Folder

Article: "Town Mouse and Country Mouse"	
Vocabulary definitions included in text	
Article: "I Escaped the Taliban"	
Taliban	a fundamentalist Muslim group that controlled much of Afghanistan from 1995 until U.S. intervention in 2001



Research Team Task Card

A. Reading for Gist

1. Browse all of the texts in your folder; skim the titles and get an initial sense of what each text is mostly about.
2. Within your team, form pairs. (If there is an odd number of people in your team, you can either work in threes or someone can work on his or her own.)
3. Each pair choose one text to read more thoroughly. (Be sure each pair in your research team chooses a different text.)
4. On your own, read the text you and your partner chose.
5. With your partner, annotate the text for the gist one paragraph at a time.
6. As a research team, tell each other the gist of the texts each pair read.

B. Rereading for Who? Where? Why?

1. Keep working with the same partner and the same text you read in Part A.
2. For this step, don't fill out the Research Guide yet. Instead, just underline key details on the actual text.
3. Be sure you have colored pencils: red, green, and blue (or highlighters).
4. With your partner, focus on the Who? With your red pencil, underline information that tells you who the refugee(s) is/are. (Look at the Who row of the Research Guide, specifically the questions in parentheses, to help you know what details to look for.)
5. Still with your partner, focus on the Where? With your green pencil, underline information that tells you where the refugees had to flee from and where they fled to. (Look at the Where? row of the Research Guide, specifically the questions in parentheses, to help you know what details to look for.)
6. Still with your partner, focus on the Why? With your blue pencil, underline information that tells you why the refugees had to flee. (Look at the Why? row of the Research Guide, specifically the questions in parentheses, to help you know what details to look for.)
7. Share the evidence you have underlined on your text with the rest of your team.



Research Team Task Card

C. Gathering Evidence on Research Guides

1. Trade texts with the other pair in your research team.
2. For the text the OTHER pair underlined, record key evidence.
3. Focus on the evidence underlined in red. On the Who? row of your Research Guide, record the strongest evidence (left-hand column) and the source (right-hand column).
4. Focus on the evidence underlined in green. On the Where? row of your Research Guide, record the strongest evidence (left-hand column) and the source (right-hand column).
5. Focus on the evidence underlined in blue. On the Why? row of your Research Guide, record the strongest evidence (left-hand column) and the source (right-hand column).
6. Trade texts back, so you have the text you and your partner read. For homework, you will take this text home with you to finish gathering evidence on the Research Guide.



A Place of Her Own

By Andrea Faiad

Jihan Abdulla is happy to finally feel at home

Ever felt as if you didn't belong? Imagine your life was in danger because you were different from people around you. Millions of people around the world have faced this situation. And in their search for the safety to be who they are, many have become *refugees*.

A *refugee* is someone who has been forced to leave his or her own country out of fear of being out under enemy control or killed. Refugees' only crime is their race, religion, nationality, or political opinion.

One Refugee's Story

Jihan Abdulla wasn't yet born when her family fled their home in Iraq in 1988. The Abdullas were in danger because of their nationality. They are from Kurdistan.

Kurdistan is an area in the Middle East that includes part of the countries of Iraq, Turkey, and Iran. Kurds, as people from Kurdistan are called, are the largest ethnic group (about 25 million people) in the world today that does not have its own country. As neighboring countries continue to fight to make Kurdish land part of their own country, many Kurds continue to be harassed.

Now a high school student in Nashville, Tenn., Jihan told *Current Health* about her experience as a refugee.

Fearing for Their Lives

"I was born in a refugee camp in Turkey. My family lived in the camp for four years. I was too young at the time to now remember much about our lives there. But my family remembers.



A Place of Her Own

“When my family got to Turkey, the whole family—nine of us—lived and slept in a tent together. We struggled to find food and to stay safe. Sometimes we’d go for one or two days without eating. My parents were afraid we children would die. They worried about our relative still in northern Iraq. And they worried about what the Turkish soldiers protecting the refugee camp might do.

“We were fortunate when missionaries (people who are sent to help another group of people) sponsored us to come to America. We arrived in 1992.”

Life in America

“We didn’t know anybody or speak English. But the missionaries met us at the airport and helped us settle. They helped us find a home. They and other American friends we made also helped us learn about life in America. When you’re new to a country, language, and culture, it’s difficult to know what to do or how to do it—even things that seem simple, like buying groceries, enrolling in school, or filling out a job application, were new to us.

“We like our life in Nashville (about 8,000 Kurds live in the city) and America as a whole. But many cultural differences exist—from the food we eat to our faith to our general way of life. Because I grew up here from a young age, I understand both cultures, but sometimes it’s difficult for my parents and older relative to fathom how Americans can be so [likely to think for themselves]. In Kurdish culture, family is most important and comes first, and that sometimes means making sacrifices for the benefit of the whole family.

“I became a U.S. citizen when I was in middle school. In addition to the legal rights, like being able to vote, you are more respected in everyday life. It feels good. Not that I’m ashamed of where I came from or being a refugee—not at all. That’s who I am. [But] I am glad to be here, where I have many opportunities.

“For example, my mom never got to go to school, and my father only went through fourth grade. If I do well in school and work hard, I can become whatever I want to become. I want to be a fashion designer someday.”



Facing Challenges After 9/11

“Of course, we face challenges here too, especially after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. I am Muslim. After the attacks, some Americans began to think that all Muslims are terrorists. I wish my classmates and others would ask me questions about my culture and religion, instead of making these hurtful and harmful assumptions. If they did, I would tell them the truth. The vast majority of Muslims, like me, are as kind, loving, and peaceful as people of other faiths.

“Fortunately, only a small group was racist against me and other people of Middle Eastern heritage in my community. In fact, many of my teachers and classmates were supportive and offered to help me if anyone were to harass me. I feel safe in Nashville. And, mostly, I lead a normal life, like other teenagers. I go to school, hang out with my friends, and spend a lot of time with my family and work part-time.

“It makes me sad to know there are refugees all over the world who hope to live in a safe place full of opportunities like I do. I hope they get the help they need, like I did—I am grateful for my life. And I am proud to be a Muslim, a Kurd, and an American.”



People Without A Land

Attacked by enemies and betrayed by friends, the Kurdish people fight for survival

In the early morning hours of September 3, sailors aboard the U.S.S. *Shiloh* watched solemnly as tomahawk missiles sliced their way through the sky on their way to Iraq. The missiles slammed into air-defense sites in Southern Iraq. President Bill Clinton has ordered the missile strike as a warning to Iraq's dictator, Saddam Hussein.

What provoked the U.S. attack? On August 31, Hussein has sent 40,000 Iraqi troops to invade Kurdistan, an area in northern Iraq. That area—and the Kurds who live there—have been under the protection of the U.S. and its allies since the Persian Gulf war ended in 1991.

The U.S. had warned Iraq against such an invasion. But Hussein sent his troops in anyway, saying that he had been invited by the leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), one of two warring groups of Kurds.

The U.S. attaché focused world attention on the plight of the Kurds, one of the world's largest ethnic minorities without a country of its own. More than 20 million Kurds live in the mountains of Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Iran, Azerbaijan, and Armenia.

Unique Culture

The Kurds, who are Muslims, have their own language and culture. In 1920, after World War I, an international treaty called for the creation of an independent Kurdish state. Though the Kurds have agitated for the creation of such a state ever since, they remain under foreign rule. In all countries where they live, the Kurds have faced problems ranging from discrimination to attempted genocide. The Kurds have often played the role of political pawns in the violent chess games of their host nations, which has reinforced an old Kurdish saying: "Except for mountains, the Kurds have no friends."

Even the U.S., despite the September missile attack, has been an unreliable friend. In the early 1970s, for example, the U.S. enlisted the Kurds in a covert scheme to help overthrow Saddam Hussein, with the help of neighboring Iran. In exchange, the U.S. promised the Kurds independence. But when Iraq and Iran later signed a peace agreement, Iraq then crushed the Kurds, and the U.S. looked the other way.



People Without A Land

Help Promised

After Iraq's defeat in the 1991 Gulf War by the U.S. and its allies, President George Bush promised U.S. help if the Kurds in the north of Iraq would rise up in revolt. When they did, Hussein fought back—and the U.S. did not intervene. More than 1.5 million Kurds fled to Turkey and Iran, again feeling betrayed. In the midst of this crisis, the U.S. declared that those Kurds who remained in the northern Iraq would be protected by the U.S. and warned Hussein to stay out of the north.

But with Kurdish dreams of independence crushed, once-unified Kurdish political groups began fighting each other, until the U.S. brokered a cease fire in 1994. The division caused the rival groups to seek outside aid. One group—the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)—turned to neighboring Iran. In response, the other group, KDP, asked its former arch enemy, Iraq, to join forces to oust its Kurdish rivals from northern Iraq.

Although U.S. missile attacks prompted Saddam Hussein to remove his troops from northern Kurdistan, the pro-Iraqi KDP remains firmly in control. And the U.S. has made it clear that it will not fight a war to save the Kurds. As one anti-Iraqi Kurdish political official recently told a U.S. reporter: “The Americans are just interested in there being no fighting. They want ‘no war, no peace’—they want us to hang in limbo, as we always have.” —Steven Manning

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Meet the Kurds

When you think of the Middle East, you might imagine palm trees, camels, and deserts. This is not the Middle East of the **Kurds**. Kurdish country is a land of high mountains and great rivers.

The Kurds live in a region called Kurdistan, which appeared on maps prior to World War I. Much of the region consists of areas in the central and northern Zagros Mountains, the eastern two-thirds of the Taurus and Pontus Mountains, and the northern half of the Amanus Mountains. The 230,000 square miles that make up Kurdistan are stretched across the countries of Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran.

Kurds are the fourth largest ethnic group in the Middle East, but they have no modern nation of their own. Throughout this century and earlier, Kurds have fought to regain control over their ancestral territories. They want to be a respected nation among nations. The Kurdish independence fighters are called peshmerga (those who face death). As in every conflict the world over, the Kurdish civilians suffer most from the Kurdish struggle for self-determination. Until recently, Kurds in Turkey were not allowed to speak their own language in public or practice their customs.

About half of the world's 25 million to 30 million Kurds live in Turkey. Six million to 7 million live in Iran, 3.5 million to 4 million live in Iraq, and 1.5 million live in Syria. Others are distributed in such countries as Armenia, Germany, Sweden, France, and the United States. Kurdish communities also exist in countries of the former Soviet Union.

The Kurds are an ancient people who trace their history back several thousand years. Like the Highland Scots, who have a clan history, Kurds have a tribal history. Kurds, like Scots, are often fiercely loyal to other members of their tribe. There are almost 800 separate tribes in Kurdistan. One can often identify the tribe from which a Kurd comes by his or her last name.

Even today, the isolation of the mountains has enabled local dynasties and tribes to flourish. In the absence of a central government, many Kurds consider their clan leaders to be their highest source of authority. At times, this has been an obstacle to Kurdish independence, as Kurds have been loyal to local leaders rather than to a Kurdish nation.

The Kurds are an Indo-European people with their own history, language, and culture. They are lovers of music, poetry, and dance. Most Kurdish villages and regions have their own dances. Men and women often dance together. Kurdish musicians play a type of flute (zornah] and drum (dohol]. Kurds are fond of folk legends that tell of heroism, romance, and the love of country.



Meet the Kurds

A love of flowers is reflected in the Kurdish native garb, which is as colorful as their mountain flowers in spring. Men wear fringed turbans, baggy pants, matching jackets, and cummerbunds tied around their waists, most in earth tones. Women wear long dresses of brightly colored fabric and coats often of brocade shot with silver or gold threads, baggy trousers, fancy vests, and headscarfs. To see a Kurdish woman in her home setting is to see a riot of colors.

The mountains have shaped Kurdish history and culture. Kurds are great walkers and mountain climbers. They have learned to survive in the often-harsh conditions of the region. The winters are cold (with heavy snows for up to six months of the year), and earthquakes are not uncommon. Compared with most areas in the Middle East, which are dry, Kurdistan receives a considerable amount of precipitation.

The rain and snow run down the rugged mountainsides spilling onto the lowlands, filling the great Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Some of the grandest gorges in the world are in Kurdish country. Many people think that Gall Ali Beg in central Kurdistan is the grandest of them all.

Most of the major rivers of the Middle East run entirely or nearly entirely in Kurdistan. However, non-Kurds control the flow of most of these rivers. They regulate the waters for agricultural and industrial use and to generate electricity. The area is also known for its natural lakes and exceptionally powerful springs.

Because of the amount of rainfall, the soil of Kurdistan is rich. The mountainsides are covered with blankets of flowers. The flowers make a delicious meal for grazing sheep. In ancient times, Vikings traveled to Kurdistan to buy Kurdish butter because Kurdish sheep ate flowers as they foraged, and the butter had a delightful scent.

Kurds have long used the land for agricultural purposes, and some scholars believe Kurds invented farming. About 28 percent of the region is arable (suitable for farming), and many Kurds use the land to grow wheat and other cereals.

Higher in the mountains, the land is unfit for farming. Here herders pasture their sheep. Some lands, especially those on steep slopes and hard-to-reach plateaus, would not be used if not for these herders. Kurds use sheep and goats for their meat and their wool.



Meet the Kurds

Water and fertile soil are not the only natural resources in Kurdistan. The region has some of the largest oil reserves in the Middle East and in the world. In ancient times, the Zagros and Taurus mountains were known as a great source for many metal ores, including copper, chromium, and iron. Though they are no longer considered a plentiful source of such minerals, the mountains are still mined.

Though today Kurdistan may seem isolated from the rest of the Middle East, at one time it was a center of civilization. It was located along the Silk Road -- the trade route that linked Asia and Europe. Traders passing through would buy beautiful Kurdish rugs and other handicrafts. After the 1500s, however, traders began using sea routes and Kurdistan fell into a long period of decline. In this decade, Kurds are making themselves known once more.

Gorges (GORJ-es) are deep, narrow passages between hills and mountains.

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By Vera Saeedpour

Dr. Vera Saeedpour is the director and founder of the Kurdish Library and Museum and is the consulting editor for this issue.



## Welcome to Sarajevo

As the bus entered the suburbs of Sarajevo, I felt my stomach flip-flop. It was getting dark, and the sky was filled with clouds. It was sprinkling a bit, and I could feel the cold through the thin glass windows of the bus. As far as the eye could see, on both sides of the road, were massive, uninspired cement apartment buildings. Many looked at least 30 or 40 stories high. Some buildings had huge chunks taken out of their sides or entire floors that looked burnt out and uninhabitable. Still, residents occupied the areas below, on top of, and to the sides of these destroyed areas. These crumbling gray buildings against the darkening sky looked anything but inviting. As if in support of this desolation, thick black wires cut through the blocks of apartments, guiding battered metal cable cars. Destruction, desolation and cold—as I looked out the window, these were the only three words the gloomy landscape inspired. My first thought was that I wanted leave this uninviting place.

A few minutes later, the bus pulled into equally gloomy, large cement bus station with about 20 cabs out front and a large group of cab drivers standing around waiting. My friend and I hopped off the buss into the cold. We had arranged to stay in the home of a former university professor. We were supposed to call her from the bus station when we arrived. However, our Bosnian phone card didn't work in Sarajevo. Fortunately we had her address. Since we had no idea where we were or how far away she lived, and we'd didn't speak Bosnian, we realized our only option was to take a taxi. I told my friend, "You have to speak to the drivers since at least you know about 10 words of Bosnian compared to my zero."

She groaned and said, "Okay." We approached them and after a few minutes of arguing among themselves about where the address was, we climbed into one of the cabs. By this time, it was almost pitch black outside.

The driver took us up a steep hill and stopped in front of a house set back from the street. We paid the driver and got out. We were incredibly nervous. We didn't know if we were still welcome, since it was late, or if this was even the right house. When we reached the glass front door, my friend said, "You have to knock, since I talked to the cab driver."

Lacking a good counter-argument, I smiled weakly and said, "Okay."





## Welcome to Sarajevo

I knocked, but nobody came. I swallowed and knocked again—still nobody. Looking through the glass I could see that the TV was on, so surely someone must be home. Maybe they just didn't hear. I knocked again, and we waited... Suddenly, running full-force, toward the door, in flowing purple robes, was a large woman, close to six feet tall, with curly, dark hair going in every direction. She was smiling and shouting gleefully and waving her arms like crazy. "I guess we're welcome!" I said as I eyed the most expressive person I'd ever seen.

She opened the door, pulled us into the entry room and hugged us vigorously, talking enthusiastically all the while in Bosnian. She pointed for us to take off our shoes, as this was a Muslim household, and led us into her living room.

Every inch of the place was covered with carpets. Carpets hung on each wall, and several layers of carpets covered the floors, including a small, bright pink rabbit pelt that had been spread decorously across the single stair that divided the dining and living areas. As she motioned for us to sit down on the couch, I noted that even the couch was covered in a carpet. "*Kava?! (coffee)*" she shouted forcefully.

Not about to refuse this woman anything, we immediately nodded yes. She flew into the kitchen and rattled pots and pans. Then she returned bearing a pair of slippers for each of us to wear. Amazingly, we all happened to wear the same size. We slid into these wedge-heeled plastic shoes and admired the gold and sparkly straps that crossed the tops of our feet, feelings almost like royalty. The second time she came back from the kitchen, she carried a tray with Turkish-style coffee (much thicker than American coffee), milk, sugar cubes, and an unopened pack of cigarettes.

My friend and I served ourselves sugar cubes using the tiny spoon inside the dish. But, when we handed it to her, she just reached in and grabbed the cube. She dipped the cube into the coffee, removed it and then sucked the coffee out before stirring the cube into her coffee. I was completely stunned, as was my friend. For the past few months, I had been performing this very same ritual each time I was served coffee. And each time, my friend has been making fun of me. What's more is that I'd never seen anyone else do it. But there we were in this lady's house in Sarajevo, and she practiced the very same habit! I wished desperately that we could tell her about it, but I knew gestures and expressions were insufficient for explaining this coincidence.



## Welcome to Sarajevo

Nevertheless, we talked with her for quite a while, her is Bosnian, us in English and French with lots of miming. She told us her son and husband had been killed in the war. The TV had been on since our arrival, so we even talked a bit about current events. Finally we had to go out to find some dinner. To show us where to go, she drew a map, complete with stick figures, one with wavy hair (me), one with straight hair (my friend).

We were very sorry when our last hours in Sarajevo came. The lady we stayed with seemed sad to see us go as well. She hugged us again and even began to cry as we went out the door. We kept turning back and waving to her again and again until she was out of sight.

As the bus pulled out of the city, I realized how quickly a single person could change my view of an entire place. When I arrived. All I could think about was leaving this dark, gloomy city, but in leaving, all I could do was wish that I were staying in this warm, welcoming place a little longer.

—*Nicole Degli Espositi, Eugene, Oregon.*

### On My Way to Nowhere

I come up a riverbed  
dried by the summer's heat.  
Rocks jutting from the ground  
make me a path to nowhere.

And I follow eagerly  
only to find my rocks, not rocks at all,  
rather toads; heads dug into the mud  
bathing their sultry skin in the heat.

And I walk nonetheless,  
feet bare and mind intent.  
The feel of their skin  
echoes in my mind.

They turn their heads  
to gaze at me.  
Pulled in, farther and farther  
into the deepness of those dark spheres.



## Welcome to Sarajevo

I see a girl, cradled by the moonlight  
sleeping on a star.  
Slipping through translucent bonds  
I enter her dream world.

She watches from a tree  
a man in a riverbed  
dancing on the backs of toads  
lost in a trance, leading him everywhere  
and yet nowhere.

—*Gabe Roth, 15,*  
*Fayetteville, NY.*

### The Moon

It's all knowing, all commanding.  
Some worship it; some fear it.

It holds the power to turn water into glass,  
Black castle walls into silver knights.

It is as mysterious as an owl, one of its followers,  
Yet still as revealing as its brother, the sun.

Be careful, for it may cast its binding spell,  
And pull you into an eternal trance.

It can transform and affect you,  
For it is the moon.

—*Elizabeth Kapp, 12, Gibsonia, Penn.*

"Welcome to Sarajevo" by Nicole Degli Esposti from *Skipping Stones*, Vol. 15, no. 1



## Bosnia The Children of War

How has a war affected a generation to young to remember it?

By Colin Woodard in Sarajevo

Before Reading

About Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Q.** What and where is it?

**A.** Bosnia and Herzegovina (*HURT-suh-GOH-vee-nuh*) is an independent nation in an Eastern European region known as the Balkans. It is called Bosnia for short.

Bosnia was one part of the country Yugoslavia. From 1945, a Communist government under Josip Broz Tito held Yugoslavia together. After Tito died in 1984, conflicts arose among Yugoslavia's six republics. During the 1990s, they began to split off into separate countries. Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence in March 1992.

**Q.** What are Bosnia's ethnic groups?

**A.** There are three main ethnicities: Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats. The chief distinctions among them are religious: Bosniaks are typically Muslim, Serbs are mostly Orthodox Christian, and Croats are usually Catholic.

**Q.** What was Bosnia's war about?

**A.** In 1992, a majority of Bosniaks and Croatians voted to create an independent Bosnia and Herzegovina. That angered Yugoslavia's President, Slobodan Milosevic, a Serb. He wanted to keep Bosnia and Serbia together as Yugoslavia. Bosnian Serbs took up arms against their fellow Bosnians. Bosnian Serbs, and later Croats, tried to create ethnically pure mini-states by killing or expelling other ethnicities.

About 100,000 of Bosnia's people were killed during the war. Another 1.8 million were driven from their homes. In December 1995, a U.S.-brokered peace treaty was signed in Dayton, Ohio, ending the war.



## Bosnia The Children of War

Damir Medunjanin (*MAD-oon-YAHN-in*) 12, lives with his mother and sister in Sarajevo (*SAH-rah-YAY-voh*), Bosnia and Herzegovina's capital. His life doesn't seem much different from that of kids in any European or American city.

An aspiring writer, Damir is plugged into the modern world. His friends all have cell phones and Internet access. A steady diet of foreign movies and cable-TV programs has helped make him fluent in both English and German.

Yet Damir lives in a country still recovering from a bitter war. Little more than a decade ago, people risked their lives simply by going outside. Today, kids like Damir can walk to school and play in the streets and parks of their neighborhoods. "I don't have any impression that there was a war," Damir tells *JS*.

### The City's Scars

Sarajevo sits in a valley surrounded by some of the world's most beautiful mountains. From April 1992 to February 1996, it was ripped apart by war. (See "*Before Reading*," at left) Bosnian Serb forces surrounded the city and bombarded it with artillery and mortar rounds. The bloody siege—the longest in modern history—killed more than 10,000 people. About 1,800 of those killed were children.

The most notorious atrocities in Sarajevo occurred in the city's Markale (*mar-KAH-lay*) market. On two occasions, mortar shells landed in the crowded square. The blasts killed more than 100 people and wounded hundreds of others.

News of the shelling horrified the world. The United States and allied nations sent their military to bomb Bosnian Serb positions. Eventually, Serbian leaders agreed to participate in peace talks.

By the time the war ended, Sarajevo was in ruins. Its office towers and high-rise apartment buildings had been reduced to burnt-out husks. Many centuries-old buildings were scarred by shells and bullet holes. Minefields in the outskirts of Sarajevo still pose a danger.

Yet, for the most part, the city has made a remarkable comeback. Most buildings have been repaired or replaced. New skyscrapers are under construction. Once again, the Markale market is bustling, with not traces of the war's carnage.



## Bosnia The Children of War

### “Our Generation”

To many young Sarajevans, the recent war is ancient history. Haris Begic (*hah-REESE BEG-itch*) 12, is one of them. Haris was born in the Netherlands, where his parents had fled to escape the siege. His younger brother and most of his classmates also were born abroad. The families returned to Bosnia after the war, when the children were still small.

Haris is glad that his family came back. The Netherlands is a very flat country—not a great place for his passion, downhill skiing. Sarajevo has three world-class ski resorts. They are a legacy of the 1984 Winter Olympics, which were hosted by Sarajevo. A decade ago, the mountain where Haris practices was covered with land mines. After the mines were removed, the ski areas were repaired. Once again, they attract skiers from all over the world.

Most days, Haris heads to the slopes or to physical training after school. His ski team has traveled to Austria and Spain for training and competitions. Of the hundreds of Bosnian skiers competing in his age group, Haris is ranked No. 5. His ultimate ambition: to win an Olympic gold medal—preferably with Sarajevo again hosting the Games.

“Right now, the Austrian, Swiss, Germans, and Italian dominate the skiing world,” Haris tells JS. “But soon, Bosnia is going to catch up. It’s our generation that’s going to make Bosnia and Herzegovina one of the top nations in skiing and soccer.”

Inset: Teen Diary: A Report From Sarajevo

“Everyone is Outside”

A relatively carefree life in Bosnia’s capital

Our school—which was built in the 1930s—is very good, but there are too many students. We attend in separate shifts, by grade—either from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., or from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. We change shifts every week. The teachers lecture in front of the blackboard, but when students make presentations, we usually use a laptop and an LCD projector.

We also have cell phones. We have the Internet at home—kids here can’t live without it! But during summer break everyone is outside.

We usually play hide-and-seek, cops-and-robbers, or soccer in our neighborhood [an urban residential area of apartment buildings]. It’s safe during the day. Sometimes in the evening drunkards and drug users gather behind some of the buildings. But they’re harmless, and we know all of them, so we play outside in the evenings as well. Here in Sarajevo, kids can breathe. —Hana Sulejmanpasic, 13



## Bosnia The Children of War

### Popular Culture

Mahir Povlakic (*MAH-heer POHV-lah-KITCH*) might add basketball to the list of future Bosnian strengths. The 12-year-old is a forward on his school's team.

"Basketball is very popular here," he says. "We watch the NBA. I like the Los Angeles Lakers because Kobe Bryant plays for them. I follow all the playoffs."

Yugoslavia was a basketball powerhouse that challenged or defeated the U.S. in international competition. The countries resulting from its breakup still produce top talent. More than a dozen current NBA stars are from the former Yugoslavia.

Cable TV brings weekly NBA games into Sarajevan homes. It also keeps teens up on popular music, as does the Internet.

"Hip-hop and rock are popular here, especially 50 Cent," says Mahir, "but I like Linkin Park."

### Internal Strife

Mahir, Haris, and Damir are typical middle-class Sarajevans. But they live in the relatively prosperous capital city. Not all Bosnian kids are as fortunate.

With a per capita GDP of only \$6,600, Bosnia is one of the poorest countries in Europe. (By contrast, the U.S. per capita GDP is \$46,000.) Full-time workers in Bosnia make only about \$500 a month, and the unemployment rate is 45 percent.

The war isn't the only reasons for Bosnia's poor economy. New borders drawn in the breakup of Yugoslavia cut off many old factories and businesses from their customers.

The people of Bosnia face internal divisions as well. The peace accord signed in 1995 divided the country into two regions—one for Bosnian Serbs, the other for Croats and Bosniaks.

A rotating trio of Presidents, one from each ethnic group, heads the federal government. This arrangement doesn't work very well because the groups tend to mistrust one another.

That's why the 1995 agreement established a supreme authority: a High Representative appointed by the international community. European Union (EU) peacekeepers support that authority.



## Bosnia The Children of War

### **Bridging the Divide**

Before the war, people of all ethnic groups lived peacefully side-by-side. They often intermarried and attended social events together. Now, in some parts of Bosnia, kids of different ethnicities are taught in separate classrooms.

But in Sarajevo, where schools have never been segregated, few teens are bound by the ethnic mistrust of their elders.

When Damir is asked if he knows the ethnicities of his classmates, the concept is alien to him. “Well, yes,” he says. “This year we had a girl from Algeria. We could tell she wasn’t from Bosnia right away.”





## Hard Time in Sarajevo: Cold Weather Comes Early to Bosnia's War Torn Capital, Bringing More Hardship, Death

**SARAJEVO, Bosnia** - This month snow fell in the cold mountains surrounding Sarajevo (sara-AY-voh). And so did hopes for peace.

Bosnian Serb soldiers, who have surrounded Sarajevo for more than two years, succeeded last month in cutting off running water, gas, and electricity to the city's suffering people. In order to survive, people now line up with large plastic jugs to get water, then return to their dark, often cold homes. With food running short, and with no heat or electricity, the city's 380,000 people, who have already suffered enough for several lifetimes, face especially hard times.

### Country at War

Sarajevo is the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a country that has been torn apart by the bloodiest fighting in Europe since World War II (1939-45). The war in Bosnia began in 1992, when the country of Yugoslavia, which had been a Communist dictatorship since 1945, broke apart. In March 1992, soon after Bosnia, which had been part of Yugoslavia, declared its independence. Bosnia's three main ethnic groups then took up arms against one another.

Bosnia's main ethnic groups are Muslims, who make up 40 percent of the population; Serbs, who make up 31.4 percent; and Croats (KROH-ats), who make up 17 percent. Each of those groups has its own religion, culture, and way of life - plus a long history of hating the other groups.

The Serbs and Croats began the war because they feared that Bosnia's Muslim-controlled government would persecute them. The Serbs in Bosnia were helped and aided by fellow Serbs in neighboring Serbia. Similarly, the Croats received aid from supporters in Croatia, which borders Bosnia to the north.

### People Against People

Most of the fighting has been between Muslims and Serbs. It is a war of people against people, not just army against army. To many Bosnian Serbs, all Muslims are the enemy, including women and children. Many Muslims view the Serbs in much the same way.

"Ethnic cleansing," the process of driving all people of one ethnic group away from conquered territory, has become a feature of this ethnic war. The world has been shocked to see pictures of children being shot, old people abandoned to die, and people being chased from their homes - all because they belonged to the wrong ethnic group.



## Hard Time in Sarajevo: Cold Weather Comes Early to Bosnia's War Torn Capital, Bringing More Hardship, Death

Since the Bosnian civil war began, more than 200,000 Bosnians - men, women, and children - have been killed on all sides. Hundreds of thousands more have been wounded, blinded, or crippled. And more than 2 million people, out of a total population of only 4.4 million, have been chased from their homes.

The Bosnian Serbs have achieved the most success. They now control more than 70 percent of Bosnia's territory. Their army now surrounds Sarajevo and other major cities.

### Peace Plans

But the Muslim government, centered in Sarajevo, has not given up. It has been able to gain international support for peace settlements that would keep Muslims in power. A number of peace plans have been proposed by the United States and other countries to end the war in Bosnia. But so far, none has been accepted by all three ethnic groups. The latest peace plan, which would have given the Serbs 49 percent of Bosnia, was rejected by the Serbs in September. The previous peace plan was rejected by the Muslims.

Still, there have been some small gains for peace. No longer do large Serb guns rain down shells on Sarajevo from the surrounding hills. Earlier this year, under the threat of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) air strikes, the Serbs agreed to withdraw their big guns. NATO is a military alliance that includes major European nations and the United States.

The big guns may be gone. But Serb snipers, who still remain in the hills and look for any moving target in the city below, make walking Sarajevo's streets a life-threatening experience.

### U.N. Role

The United Nations also is trying to reduce the bloodshed in Bosnia's civil war. More than 9,000 U.N. troops are now in Bosnia to try to keep food, water, and medicine supplied to people suffering from the fighting.

But dealing with the Bosnian Serbs has been tough for U.N. soldiers - especially around Sarajevo. Many times in the past, the Serbs have agreed to let U.N. relief convoys enter Sarajevo, only to back off from such agreements at the last moment.



## Hard Time in Sarajevo: Cold Weather Comes Early to Bosnia's War Torn Capital, Bringing More Hardship, Death

In September, the Serbs agreed once again to open the roads around Sarajevo to U.N. trucks carrying medicine and food. On October 1, however, they stopped 29 of 34 truck convoys going into Sarajevo, reportedly in response to a NATO air strike on September 23.

Earlier this month the Serbs also agreed not to try to shoot down U.N. relief planes landing at Sarajevo's airport. So far, this agreement has held.

On October 5, the U.N. issued a warning that vital food supplies were dwindling in Bosnia, especially in Sarajevo, and called upon all nations to help. Powdered milk is expected to run out in Sarajevo by November and sugar and salt by December.

Many nations, including the United States, are responding. But everything depends on the Serb army. Will it keep its agreements to allow emergency food and medicine to enter Sarajevo and other cities?

U.S. Secretary of Defense William Perry, who visited Bosnia on October 1, has called for NATO to threaten massive air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs if they block relief shipments to Sarajevo.

In war-torn Bosnia, the threats go on - and so does the suffering.

### BACKGROUND

The tragedy in Bosnia has its roots in the birth - and death - of Yugoslavia. Modern Yugoslavia dates from the end of World War I, in 1918, when a new state rose from the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian empire and its bordering states.

In World War II, Yugoslavia was taken over by the Nazis and occupied by German troops. But the Yugoslavs fought a tough and determined guerrilla war against the occupying Germans. Aided by the country's mountainous terrain, Communist guerrilla leader Tito and his forces held down a number of German divisions, preventing them from joining other German forces fighting in Europe, thus helping the Allies win the war.

Still, Yugoslavia suffered dreadfully during the war - Losing an estimated 10 percent of its entire population.

Tito's iron dictatorship held Yugoslavia together after the war. But after Tito's death in 1980, the country began to fall apart - a process that was swiftly completed with the fall of communism in Europe between 1990 and 1992.



## Hard Time in Sarajevo: Cold Weather Comes Early to Bosnia's War Torn Capital, Bringing More Hardship, Death

Outwardly, it is hard for an American to understand the deep hatreds and divisions among the various ethnic groups of what was once Yugoslavia. To begin with, Muslims, Croats, Serbs, and Slovenes are all Slavs - the large division of the human race that includes the Russians, Poles, Ukrainians, and Bulgarians.

Language is another area where the differences don't seem that great. The Serb language and the Croat language are nearly identical. In fact, linguists often speak of one language called Serbo-Croatian. The major difference is that the Serbs, like the Russians, write their language using the Cyrillic alphabet, and the Croats, like the Poles, write their language in the Roman alphabet. Slovene is very similar to Serbo-Croatian, and Muslims speak mainly Serbo-Croatian.

The main division among these peoples appears to be religion. The Slovenes and Croats are mainly Roman Catholic. The Serbs are mainly Eastern Orthodox. And the Muslims, of course, are followers of Islam. The Muslims are a legacy of centuries of Turkish rule, in which followers of Islam were given preference in jobs and in status.

Over the last thousand years, each of these groups, while linked by basic similarities, developed its own tribal identity to the point that - today - each tends to look on the others as very different peoples. This attitude, aided by desire for land and wealth at the expense of other groups, has led to the current ethnic civil war in Bosnia.

### DOING MORE

As in any news that takes place far from our shores, students might not relate very well to news from Bosnia. To make this story more relevant, you might ask some students to do a report on the history of Yugoslavia - how it became a nation, and how it died as a nation.

Another way to make this story more relevant is to compare Bosnia to the United States. We, too, are a multi-ethnic society. What conditions would have to exist for the U.S. to break apart in ethnic fighting? Is such a fate for the United States even possible? Discuss the possibilities.



## Hard Time in Sarajevo: Cold Weather Comes Early to Bosnia's War Torn Capital, Bringing More Hardship, Death

### Consider This...

The United States, like Bosnia, is a nation composed of different ethnic groups. But, unlike Bosnians, Americans have not resorted to war and "ethnic cleansing." Why have different racial and ethnic groups been able to live peacefully in the United States, but haven't been able to do so in Bosnia? As an American, what advice would you give a Bosnian about tolerance?



## Peace Patrol; U.S. Troops Will Stay at Least Another Year in Tense Bosnia

### Full Text:

TUZLA, Bosnia--A cold wind from the hills blows through this war-ravaged city. Snow and ice are on their way, and for U.S. troops in this remote corner of Europe, so is another lonely winter far from home.

That wasn't supposed to be. When President Clinton sent U.S. troops to Bosnia last year, he said they would be home by this Christmas. But in a televised statement from the White House last month, the president said U.S. troops would be staying for at least one more year.

"Bosnia," said the president, "still reaps a bitter harvest of hatred" so the United States must stay to keep Bosnians from slaughtering one another once again.

### History of Hate

Bosnia is a small country (about half the size of Pennsylvania) that was torn apart between 1992 and 1995 by a brutal civil war among its three main ethnic groups--the Bosnian Serbs, the Croats (KROH-ats), and the Muslims. Each group has its own religion, culture, and way of life--plus a history of hating the other groups that goes back hundreds of years.

The main difference between Bosnia's ethnic groups is religious. Most Serbs belong to a division of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Muslims, of course, are followers of Islam. And Croats are mainly Roman Catholic.

In 1992, when Bosnia declared itself independent of Yugoslavia, Muslims controlled the government. Fearing Muslim domination, Bosnian Serbs revolted and attacked government forces. The Croats then entered the conflict--fighting both Serbs and Muslims in a three-way battle for control of the land.

The fighting expanded in 1993 and in 1994. Large parts of Bosnia were turned into killing fields. The war, fueled by age-old hatreds, became more than just a war between armies. It became a war in which women, children, and the elderly were targets as well. All sides took part in "ethnic cleansing," the process of killing or driving all people of one ethnic group away from conquered territory.

During the fighting, the worst in Europe since World War II (1939-45), dozens of villages and towns were burned to the ground. More than 200,000 people were killed, many in mass executions. Thousands of others were crippled or wounded. Almost 2.8 million of Bosnia's 4.4 million people fled their homes.



## Peace Patrol; U.S. Troops Will Stay at Least Another Year in Tense Bosnia

### The Paris Peace Treaty

On Dec. 14, 1995, representatives of the three ethnic groups signed a peace treaty in Paris, France, as President Clinton and other world leaders looked on. To make sure that the treaty would be honored, NATO sent 60,000 peacekeeping troops--20,000 of them from the United States--to Bosnia

According to the terms of the treaty, each of the ethnic groups is assigned a part of Bosnia under a loose federal government. The U.S. peacekeeping force, now at 14,000 troops, is stationed in northeast Bosnia. (See map on page 1.)

U.S. troops in Bosnia are under orders to fight back with overwhelming force if they are attacked. The troops are equipped with about 150 tanks and 250 other armed vehicles. In addition, more than 70 Apache and Kiowa attack helicopters patrol the skies over the U.S. sector in Bosnia.

A U.S. fleet of naval ships, with attack planes, is also stationed off the coast in case extra firepower is needed.

So far, the peace treaty has held. But it is clear to President Clinton and other leaders that it has held only because troops are there to enforce it. Last month, U.S. troops moved in when Muslim refugees traded gunfire with Serb police. The U.S. soldiers simply overwhelmed both sides with helicopters and tanks to stop the fighting.

### How Long Will They Stay?

How long will U.S. troops have to stay in Bosnia?

The president says his goal is to withdraw U.S. troops no later than June of 1988, but critics who want U.S. troops withdrawn say the troops will have to stay much longer. Floyd D. Spence (R--S.C.) said that "the presence of a significant military force in Bosnia will be necessary for many years."

How does the president answer his critics? By pointing out the importance of keeping peace in Bosnia and preventing a resumption of a war that could spread throughout Europe. In his White House speech, the president said: "The United States cannot and should not try to solve every problem in the world. But where our interests are clear and our values are at stake, where we can make a difference, we must act and we must lead. Clearly, Bosnia is such an example."



## Peace Patrol; U.S. Troops Will Stay at Least Another Year in Tense Bosnia

RELATED ARTICLE: Consider This...

The United States, like Bosnia, is a nation composed of different ethnic groups. But, unlike Bosnians, Americans in modern times have not resorted to war or "ethnic cleansing." Why have different racial and ethnic groups been able to live in relative peace in the United States? Why haven't ethnic groups been able to do the same in Bosnia? As an American, what advice would you give to a Serb, Croat, or Muslim about how to live together in peace?

RELATED ARTICLE: Bosnia

### BACKGROUND

What has happened in Bosnia in the last several years has its roots in the birth--and death--of Yugoslavia. Modern Yugoslavia dates from the end of World War I, in 1918, when a new nation rose from the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian empire. It was called the nation of the South Slavs, or Yugoslavia, comprising Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, and other smaller nations.

During World War II, Yugoslavia was occupied by the Germans, who fought against Communist guerrillas led by Josef Broz, known as Tito. After the war, Tito ruled Yugoslavia with an iron hand. But after Tito's death in 1980, the country began to fall apart--a process that was swiftly completed with the fall of Communism in Europe between 1990 and 1992.





## Peace Patrol; U.S. Troops Will Stay at Least Another Year in Tense Bosnia

Here is a short chronology of what has happened since:

1991--On June 25, Croatia and Slovenia proclaim independence from Yugoslavia.

1992--On March 3, Bosnia's Muslims and Croats vote for Bosnia's independence. Vote is boycotted by Bosnia's Serbs. On April 6, most European nations recognize Bosnia's independence; war breaks out between rebel Serbs and Bosnia's government.

1994--In March, the United States succeeds in sponsoring an agreement to end the Bosnian war between Muslims and Croats.

1995--On January 1, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian government sign four-month truce, mediated by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter. On November 21, Serbs, Croats and Muslims reach a peace agreement in Dayton, Ohio. On December 14, a formal peace treaty ending the war is signed in Paris, France with major world leaders, including President Clinton, looking on.

1996--On November 18, the United States and other nations sign an agreement keeping their peace-keeping troops in Bosnia for another 12 months.

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## Refugee Writing on The Journey

Feeling Afghanistan, Karim Kaidari arrives in the West.

The plane manoeuvred. I looked out of the window; little signs of activity were becoming visible on the ground below.

I said to Suson: 'I think we are getting there.' She turned her face away. Like a scholar reading verses. The plan descended. I was the authority, giving myself the right to come here. But soon the power shifted to the voice of the man behind the immigration desk: 'Passports please!'

Suson was not bothered. She did not speak English. I pretended not to either.

'Which airline did you travel with?'

The advice of the agent rang in my mind: if they know the airline they might send you back on the same place.

'No...English,' I hesitated. Oh, my first conversation started with a lie. How many lies should I say before I could prove the truth? Why do reasons fail against the system?

The officers started to search our bags. Groups of passengers were passing by, casting puzzled glances. I felt humiliated, as if I had committed a crime. In my luggage the officers found a tiny bag with the Emirates logo on it and a Swissair pen. There were other items with airline names on them. The tallest of the officers asked me something in German, I wished I could tell them about the woman I knew who used to work for Ariana Airline in Afghanistan. She had valued this collection so much. When she was no longer allowed to work [because of the Taliban] she was generous enough to give me the collection.

The officer added another harsh-sounding comment in German and gave me a serious look. I looked into his eyes. I was on the brink of saying in English: 'Listen to me, I'm screwed up by the system of my own country. I need shelter and food now. I'm capable of putting my own bread on the table. So please let me get in. I wouldn't have left my home if I didn't have to. I understand your concerns but my reasons are strong. Can't we sit and talk as human beings?' But I remained silent. Humanity is not the superpower in this real world.

My wristwatch was ticking towards late afternoon in Afghanistan. The officers asked us to sit on chairs in front of the desk and wait. I was expecting a thorough search so I checked through my things. I found a visiting card belonging to Angela, a woman who worked in the Geneva office of the organization I had quit 20 days previously in Kabul. I asked Suson if she knew how to get rid of this card. She took it from me, put it in her mouth and chewed it.



## Refugee Writing on The Journey

Every limb of my body was shaking. It wasn't just the fear of going back home and getting into trouble again. It felt as if a nightmare was about to repeat itself.

At times of extreme emotional disturbance sometimes writing helps me. I opened my blank diary and without thinking I wrote a few lines which turned into a letter to my mother:

*Sitting here is not easy. This is making me feel like once again I am accused of an offence, a treason. Dear mum, these guys have the same rough attitude as the people who were interrogating me at the beginning of my imprisonment. Do you think I will survive a new life with such a start?*

One of the officers came and took the diary from me and tried to read it. I had written it in a Dari script with Arabic alphabet. He never gave it back. They asked the same questions again. Perhaps our appearance confused them. I had a tourist T-shirt on, a money belt around my waist and a stylish haircut. Suson was dressed like a Western Asian returning from the motherland. The officer gave us each a form to fill out. "I wish they would take us somewhere private, even a prison cell," I thought, when another group of people passed by.

Suson and I were separated.

'For the last time, I'm asking you: which airline have you come in with?'

I shrugged. Another officer banged his bunch of keys on the desk: 'We need to put on this bloody form. If you want to be difficult, you will stay here even longer,' he shouted. The other gave him a disapproving look.

I was helpless and exhausted. After a long search of body and luggage, I was led to a waiting hall where I met Suson again. The air-conditioned room was cold. I found an intimacy with the other people from various cultures. They all had fear and fatigue, like ours, on their faces.

I looked at Suson, her eyes filled with tears, her shoulders hunched. We had known each other barely a day – only since becoming travelling companions. But I felt a wrench in my heart for her. I was 25 and had survived harrowing moments; I knew uncertainty. But she was only 16m has grown up in an era of total male domination. 'She's such an innocent,' I thought. 'How is she going to make it?' She noticed I was looking at her.



Refugee Writing on The Journey

‘What’s going to happen?’ she asked.

I sighed: ‘I don’t know.’

‘Are they going to prosecute us and send us to jail or will they send us back home?’

‘Which one would you prefer?’ I asked, as if we were given a choice. She became breathless for a moment, silent tears ran down her cheeks.

‘How stupid of me,’ I thought. ‘She can’t handle it’. I grabbed her arms. ‘You are a silly girl. This is a civilized country, we both have strong reasons to be here. You know a family who will look after you. Someone will marry you one day, and you’ll have kids, one after another.’ I was relieved when I saw her face brighten again. I told her that her name, with a slight change in pronunciation, was Western, that a character in a famous novel was called Susan.

There was a Sikh immigration officer sitting near the door behind a small desk. He was doing nothing throughout the hours we were waiting there. He came to us and handed out parcels of food. He gestured towards the free drink machine. Susan was hungry and started to unpack her food.

‘Don’t you want some?’ she asked.

But I didn’t have the appetite for anything but getting out of here.

‘They give rations to refugees all over the world,’ I said.

She glanced at me, pausing while biting the plastic with her teeth.

But I was delighted with the discovery, I had found my new identity: I’M A REFUGEE.



## Refugee Writing on The Journey

Dear Mimmy

In a diary she calls ‘Mimmy’ schoolgirl Zlata Filipovic records her departure from besieged and war-torn Sarajevo and her arrival in Paris.

Paris. There’s electricity, there’s water, there’s gas. There’s, there’s ... life, Mimmy. Yes, life; bright lights, traffic, people, food ... Don’t think I’ve gone nuts, Mimmy. Hey, listen to me, Paris!?! Me, my mum and my dad. At last ... The darkness is behind us, now we’re bathed in light lit by good people. Remember that – good people. Bulb by bulb, not candles, but bulb by bulb, and me bathing in the lights of Paris. Yes, Paris. Incredible.

On 6 December, three days after my thirteenth birthday (my second in the war), the publishers told us that on Wednesday 8 December, we were to be ready, that thy would be coming for us – we were going to Paris for your promotion, Mimmy.

We had one to day to accept that we were leaving Sarajevo, to say our goodbyes to Grandma and Grandpa, the whole family, Mirna, to pack and be ready by 8.00 am when an UNPROFOR personnel carrier would be coming to pick us up.

It’s impossible to explain those mixed feelings of sorrow and joy. Joy at being able to leave the war and sorrow at having to leave EVERYTHING behind. ALL MY LOVED ONES.

Wednesday 8 December, 8.00 am. It was all done. We had cried our eyes out, said our goodbyes. Eight o’clock came and went. No personnel carrier. Why? Who knows? Something went wrong. Again that strange mixed feelings, again that feeling of sunken hopes.

At 10.00 am on 23 December, the personnel carrier actually came. Through our little window of the vehicle I watched the Post Office pass by, the Law Faculty, the Holiday Inn, Marin Dvor, Pofalici, Hrasno, Alipasino, polje, Nerdazarici, Sarajevo was passing by. We reached the airport safely.

Then the Hercules cargo plane, flying over Bosnia and Herzegovina, leaving it behind. We flew over the Adriatic Sea. Our landing point – Ancona. And ... we stepped out of the Hercules and together with our friend Jean-Christophe Rufin, we boarded a small plane – destination PARIS. In the plane we were given Coca-Cola, salmon, eggs, steak, chicken, tomatoes YUMMY. Everything I hadn’t seen for almost two years.



### Refugee Writing on The Journey

And then ... the lights of Paris appeared. There was electricity. Then I caught sight of the Eiffel Tower. Arc de Triomphe, cars, houses, roads, people... LIFE. At about 3.00 pm we landed at the military airport in Paris. A wonderful reception, warm words of welcome.

Then a SHOWER. WATER. BATH. HOT WATER. COLD WATER. SHAMPOO. SHOWER. Bliss!

That's how Paris welcomed me. That's how I came out of the darkness and saw the lights. Are these lights my lights as well? I wonder. When even a glimmer of this light illuminates the darkness of Sarajevo, then it will be my life as well. Until then ...???

Haidari, Karim. "Refugee Writing on the Journey." *New Internationalist* 350 Oct. 2002: 20–21. [www.newint.org](http://www.newint.org).



## I Escaped the Taliban

By: Rattini, Kristin Baird

### Section:

#### Kids Did It

When Nargis Alizadeh remembers her childhood in Afghanistan, she remembers fear. Life was dangerous for her family under the Taliban government. They banned TV, radio, and photographs. Women weren't allowed to attend school or even go outside without a man. Those who didn't obey were jailed--or killed. "They took away our happiness," Nargis says. "They put fear in people's hearts so they wouldn't disobey the rules."

After the Taliban found out that Nargis's father had been teaching women, the family knew he had to escape Afghanistan immediately. A year and a half later, Nargis, her younger sister and brother, and their mother also made the break for the border between Afghanistan and Iran--and for freedom. "I was really scared," Nargis says. "If we were caught, we would be killed."

They left in darkness, carrying only two blankets and a few clothes. Anything else might attract thieves. The next night, they struggled through the rain on a three-hour journey across muddy trails. "Those three hours felt as long as three days," she says. "Our feet were numb because it was so cold." They walked in silence--and fear. At any moment the family could face wolves, wild dogs, or worse: soldiers who would arrest them. After crossing a swift, swollen river and paying guards \$5,000 to let them into Iran, Nargis and her family finally made it across the border.

Reunited with her father, Nargis and her family now live in San Diego, California. And she's grateful for the journey she made eight years ago. "I appreciate everything I have in the United States," says Nargis. "I have the freedom to go to school, practice my religion, and make my dreams come true."

**WORLD REFUGEE DAY** draws attention to the more than 17 million refugees worldwide who, like Nargis, have been forced to leave their homes to escape war and oppression. This year's celebration on June 20 focuses on basic human rights, such as food, water, shelter, and safety. For more information, go online. [unrefugees.org](http://unrefugees.org)



## Town Mouse and Country Mouse

### A Conversation with Nazrullah and Ehsanullah

#### **Nazrullah, age 12**

My village, called Amla, is situated in the mountain valley of Darrai Noor. Everyone in Amla lives in buildings called qala, which are high-walled fortresses with large, open courtyards and huge wooden doors that we lock at night. I also know what city life is like because my family were refugees in Pakistan and we lived in a big city there. Two years ago, we returned to our land and home in Afghanistan. Unlike the city houses of brick or concrete, here in Amla our houses are made of shela, sun-baked mud brick. Inside these walls, we have two small buildings with a couple rooms in each.

My mother is the first one up each morning, before dawn. She builds a fire and sets water to boil for cha'i, the green tea everyone in Afghanistan drinks. My favorite breakfast is bread dipped in patinik, the cream off the top of the milk. Six days a week, I walk a kilometer (about 2/3 of a mile) to school. Because I could not go to school for a few years during the war, I am only in 3rd grade. School lasts from 8 to 11:30 A.M. The best part of school is passing through the bazaar on the way home. I always make sure to have some money to spend on a treat such as cookies, marbles, or a water gun. I'm not all that into school and would rather skip days to hunt little birds with my chapar, my slingshot. My sisters roast them over the fire and we all enjoy the tasty treat.

When I get home from school, I greet my parents and elders and help out wherever I'm needed. This could mean running errands for my mother to the store (women in Afghanistan mostly stay inside the compound) or serving tea to the guests. As we don't have phones here, sometimes I'm asked to bring a message to a neighbor. My father, who lost a leg in the war, needs my help carrying alaf, feed for the cows.

My favorite lunch is lubiya, beans, and for dinner we often have greens, fruit, or juguri, yogurt. We eat dinner after dark, lit by kerosene lanterns. My father says we will get a generator soon to have a light bulb for the evening. The children in our house often go to sleep listening to adults talking, telling stories, and gossiping late into the night.

I think I will grow up to be a farmer like my father. I like working on the land.





## Town Mouse and Country Mouse

### **Ehsanullah, age 11**

My family lives in Kabul, where my father works. We also have land and a house in the countryside that we share with Nazrullah's family. Our fathers are brothers. Like our fathers, Nazrullah and I were born in the same house and grew up playing together. We all went as refugees to Pakistan but when we returned to Afghanistan my family came to Kabul and his went back to the land.

We live in a two-floor rented house. Downstairs is my father's office and upstairs is our living space. My grandparents live in one room, my uncle and aunt and two cousins live in another room. I have four sisters and I am the oldest of three brothers; we live in the third room with our parents. Like most homes in Afghanistan, our house has walls around it and a door we keep locked. We get our water from a pump behind the house and have a generator for electricity. We only run the electricity at night to have lights and watch TV. I like seeing sports on TV, especially American sports.

I get up early each morning and go to school with my brother. Although he is two years younger than me, we are both in 2nd grade. We didn't go to school when we lived in Pakistan, so we are working hard to catch up. I like school and am trying to be the best in my class. Math is my favorite subject. School lasts from 7 to 9:30 every morning but Friday. After school, we help our parents and elders with errands. I like to be sent out to the corner store to buy things for my mother, because there is often a little change left I can spend on a treat. My grandfather is crazy about birds, all kinds of birds.

If I continue in school, I could be a doctor someday. Although I enjoy the lifestyle on our land out in the countryside, the open fields, and running freely with my cousins, I want to make something more of my life.

### **Meet Gulafruz**

Gulafruz is about nine years old. She doesn't know for sure, as birthdates are not recorded in Afghanistan. "Gupsik" (her nickname) lives in the capital city of Kabul and goes off with her brothers to a school near her home. They get up early in the morning and put on their uniforms. For her brothers, that means pants and a clean shirt. For Gulafruz, it is a black tunic and pants and a white headscarf, or chador.



## Town Mouse and Country Mouse

Although they go to school together, their classes are separate, girls in one part of the building, boys in another. Six days a week, they leave for school at 7 and return at 9:30 A.M., finished with school and famished. That's when they get breakfast. Her older sisters are busy all morning preparing bread dough, cleaning the house, and getting breakfast ready for the return of "Gupsik" and her brothers. They change out of their uniforms and into everyday clothing as soon as they get home and then eat their breakfast of green tea and scrambled eggs scooped up with bits of bread, nan.

Gulafruz has been in 1st grade for a couple of years. Her family has moved several times around the city, and she has had to stop and start school each time. She is learning to speak, read, and write Dari, one of the two national languages of Afghanistan. At home, her family speaks their own tribal language, so learning Dari is difficult. Her favorite school subjects are math and calligraphy. Dari is written in a beautiful flowing script, and even 1st-grade students learn to use reed pens and black ink to form precise and fluid letters. Team sports aren't available for all girls in Afghanistan, but "Gupsik" really likes calisthenics, the physical exercises that the teacher leads in the classroom.

Homework gets done when there is light available, either during the day or at night when there is electricity, which is not all the time.

Gulafruz says, "I hope I will be allowed to keep going to school and even graduate from high school. Then I might be able to become a doctor."

R.L.

Some 2 to 4 million people live in the ancient city of Kabul.

### Meet Qazibim

Qazibim, 13, lives in the valley of Darrai Noor in eastern Afghanistan. With two brothers and five sisters, her family is about average size. As in most Afghan families, her father is a farmer who works his land growing corn, wheat, rice, and vegetables in season. Qazi's mother takes care of the family, and tends the cows and chickens. This year, Qazi is not allowed to go to school anymore. She was able to attend school until the second grade last year, but now she is prevented by her father, who says she is too old.



## Town Mouse and Country Mouse

Lack of security due to years of civil war and the rule of the Taliban kept many children out of school in Afghanistan. Qazi, like many of her peers, finally did get a chance to go to school despite being several years beyond her grade level.

When Qazi went to school, her favorite subject was the Pashto language — the official language of eastern Afghanistan. Although Qazi's community speaks a different language, called Pasha'i, she likes learning other languages. For three years, her family lived as refugees in Pakistan, where she learned to speak Urdu.

"One of the best parts of going to school was walking home," Qazi recalls. "My father would give me a few coins everyday to buy something on the way home. School was about a half-mile walk up the road. We passed through the bazaar on the way back. I used to buy little dolls, rings, earrings, or a snack on the walk home. Now that I'm too old, I cannot go out to the bazaar and don't get to run errands anymore for my parents. My younger sister and brothers go to school and they bring me things from outside sometimes." In Afghanistan, many young women are restricted by custom and tradition from going outside, and, at 13, Qazi is considered a woman. In fact, her father would not allow Qazi's photograph to be taken for this article.

For Qazi, a typical day starts by sweeping the open area of the courtyard and then outside around the walls. It is dusty because there is no concrete, just the packed dirt ground. Next, she washes the dishes from the night before. "We pump the water from a well outside our walls and, balancing the containers on our heads, carry it into the house. We do this over and over throughout the day."

Qazi helps her older sister with the cooking by cutting up tomatoes, rumi, and onions, pyaz. The older sister does most of the cooking now, but when she gets married it will become Qazi's job. Darrai Noor has none of the modern conveniences such as gas or electricity, so cooking is done over a wood fire. Qazi serves tea to elders, helps her mother milk the cows, and helps her father bring water for the animals.

Qazi is philosophical about her future. Accepting her fate, she says matter-of-factly, "I will be married (hopefully not too soon) to someone my parents choose. I wish I could have been a doctor if I had continued at school, but I won't be anything like that now." Qazibim realizes she will live like her mother and grandmother before her, tending children and animals in the countryside of Afghanistan. R.L.



## Town Mouse and Country Mouse

By Rachel Lehr

Rachel Lehr, who lives and works part-time in Afghanistan, interviewed male cousins: Nazrullah, who lives in the country, and Ehsanullah, who lives in the city. She asked them to describe where they live, daily life, and their future plans.