

Close Read (Annotate the Text) Steps!

- ✓ **Stop** after every paragraph and **ask yourself** “**what is the writer trying to tell me?**” Write your understanding on the right margin.
- ✓ **Write comments** that show **you understand** the article (main idea, summary statement, etc.)
- ✓ **Write Questions** that show **what you are wondering** about as you read.
- ✓ **Write notes** that shows **you understand** when the author is stating **facts or opinions**
- ✓ **Write any other observations, connections, comments, and thoughts** you may have.

Biggest challenge for refugee kids is enrolling in school

By USA Today, adapted by Newsela staff on 10.26.18

Word Count **757**

Level **840L**

ATHENS, Greece — Abdul Rashid is 16 years old. He escaped his homeland of Afghanistan for Greece almost three years ago. Yet this month he will make another new start in his adopted country. He will attend school for the first time.

Abdul understands the challenge of a new school, but he knows learning Greek is needed.

"It's very important to learn the language of the country you're living in," Abdul said in English. "So now I'm learning Greek. But it's very difficult. It's very different from our language."

Risked Their Lives

Most Greek children are returning to school now. However, thousands of new children came to the Mediterranean country during the refugee emergency that began in 2015. More than a million refugees escaped to Europe from war, terrorism and few job opportunities in their home countries. Many risked their lives to make it there.

Still, many of the refugee children have not signed up for school. The Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) studied this problem. The UNHCR's report said four of every 10 children between 5 and 17 were not signed up for school in Greece. Sixteen- and 17-year-olds had the worst percentage, with only four of every 10 in school. Only one out of 10 children living on the Greek islands was in school.

Abdul, who speaks Dari and English, and is learning Greek, hadn't gone to school since leaving Afghanistan. His family first hoped to meet Abdul's brother in Germany. However, Europe has all but frozen migration since 2016.

Not Enough Information

As another year passed, Abdul didn't know he could attend school in Greece. Nobody provided him with information about how to sign up.

His problem is common.

Half of the world's refugees are children, according to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). Of those who are of school-age, more than half aren't in the classroom. That means 4 million children around the world are out of school. Last year, the number of out-of-school refugee children increased by 500,000, according to UNICEF.

Germany, Italy and Greece have taken the most refugees arriving in Europe. In Greece, experts are hopeful more children will attend school this year. The Greek government's plan now is to bring refugee children to school to teach them.

Even so, the Greek Ministry of Education didn't have numbers on how many refugees were signed up for school this year.

"We're expecting an increase in the teenagers," said Savas Kalokairinos, a social worker for Elix, a Greek non-governmental organization.

Elix works with 2,500 refugees, offering them Greek, English, math and physics courses.

There are still plenty of hurdles to refugee children's education. Some teachers do not know how to teach Greek as a second language. Also, many migrants move from camps to apartments in different cities during the school year. Others find smugglers and continue their journey through Europe.

Parents often do not know how to help their children's education, either.

"Some 70 percent of the parents have never entered a school in their lives, so it's hard for them to teach their children how to behave in school," said Kalokairinos.

Fariba Khodadadi is 9 years old and lives in Eleonas, one of the refugee camps in Athens. She switches easily from English to Greek in one sentence. Fariba looks forward to starting school this month for a second year in Athens. Her favorite subjects are math and Greek.

Fariba came from Afghanistan. She walked to Europe with her family before she was of school age. "It was cold, and my legs hurt," Fariba said. "I was 5 years old."

She shows why her family left Afghanistan with gestures. She pretends to dig. Then she places something in the area she's dug. She shouts "Bam!" Fariba spreads her arms toward the sky imitating an explosion.

Not Afraid Of Challenges

With this type of danger back in Afghanistan, the challenge of a new language at school is not something students like Fariba and Abdul deeply fear.

"I'm going to make it," said Abdul. Someday, he wants to become a journalist. "Here it's good. There's peace. In Afghanistan, we'd know that there was a war going on by looking outside our home before leaving for school. If there was no one on the streets, we wouldn't go to school that day."

Text Dependent Questions

- 1 Why did the number of refugee children in Greece increase? How do you know?
- (A) They were sent alone without their parents; However, thousands of new children came to the Mediterranean country during the refugee emergency that began in 2015.
 - (B) They were leaving their home for a better and safer life; More than a million refugees escaped to Europe from war, terrorism and few job opportunities in their home countries.
 - (C) They knew that it would be easy to go to school in Greece; Abdul, who speaks Dari and English, and is learning Greek, hadn't gone to school since leaving Afghanistan.
 - (D) They were invited there by the Greek government; The Greek government's plan now is to bring refugee children to school to teach them.

- 2 Read the paragraph from the section "Not Enough Information."

Half of the world's refugees are children, according to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) . Of those who are of school-age, more than half aren't in the classroom. That means 4 million children around the world are out of school. Last year, the number of out-of-school refugee children increased by 500,000, according to UNICEF.

Which answer choice accurately explains what this paragraph means?

- (A) Adult refugees around the world are decreasing as the number of refugee children increases.
- (B) Countries around the world are trying hard to do more to get refugee children to go to school.
- (C) The number of refugee children who are out of school around the world has been steadily growing.
- (D) Most of the children who are refugees around the world have already finished going to school

