

Storytelling: Para Refugee Athletes

An activity of "Thank you Tokyo!"

The Olympic Games gave us a magnificent treat. **"Thank you, Tokyo!"** (page 1, *What's Up* August 2021) salutes Japan for hosting it despite the challenges of the pandemic. Now, it is time for the Paralympic Games (24 August to 5 September).

Olympic and Paralympic teams usually represent their countries. There is one exception — the teams of refugee athletes. These are athletes who were forced to leave their home countries, often taking dangerous journeys before they can settle in their new host countries. Despite the great hardships they have faced, these athletes have not given up their dreams to be Olympians. They want to show other refugees that they too should never give up their dreams.

The official website of the Tokyo2020 Paralympics features the stories of six Para refugee athletes. Look to them for inspiration by sharing their stories in class.

1. Form six groups of about the same size. Each group is to tell the story of one athlete.

IN GROUPS

2. Go to the Tokyo2020 Paralympics website and read the article:
"Meet the six athletes who will compete for the Para refugee team at Tokyo 2020"
➤ <https://olympics.com/tokyo-2020/en/paralympics/news/six-athletes-to-compete-for-the-para-refugee-team-at-tokyo-2020>
3. As a group, select one of the athletes. No two groups should focus on the same athlete.

<input type="checkbox"/> Abbas Karimi (swimming)	<input type="checkbox"/> Ibrahim Al Hussein (swimming)
<input type="checkbox"/> Alia Issa (athletics)	<input type="checkbox"/> Parfait Hakizimana (taekwondo)
<input type="checkbox"/> Anas Al Khalifa (canoe sprint)	<input type="checkbox"/> Shahrads Nasajpour (athletics)

4. Prepare your story the BRAVE way:

Backstory: Life events that led to the person being a refugee.

Reality: About the person's impairment and how it can be a handicap.

Ambition: The person's hopes and dreams.

Victories: Achievements (big and small) so far.

Equal opportunity: How is the Paralympics giving this athlete a fair chance? Are the rules different from the Olympic rules? Are the facilities, equipment, and general conditions as good? Do they feel welcomed and respected? Any other comments.

AS A WHOLE CLASS

5. Take turns for each group to share the story of its focus athlete. After the storytelling session, reflect on how presenting someone else's story benefits the storyteller.