

Our Stories – Situation Script

The following script is designed to be used in the [Our Stories - Challenges for Refugees Settling in Australia - Years 8-9 lesson](#):

“Welcome to Australia. You’re all from different countries, cultures, ethnicities, backgrounds. You all have a different story but you all also have something in common. You’re all refugees who have just arrived in Australia.



You are in Australia, away from the danger that you faced in your home country. You

are no longer in imminent fear for your safety. You have managed to escape the war or persecution that caused you to leave behind your home.

You arrive and you’re lucky because there’s a community here of people from your country. For the first few days, someone from your community agrees to let you stay in their house. But you need somewhere more permanent to live. You don’t have a rental history and you’re worried that you won’t quickly find somewhere to live.

Take two steps forward if you decide to apply to rent a house in an inner-city suburb because you think this will be close to potential work.

Take one step forward if you decide to apply to rent an apartment or small house close to others who come from a similar community and background to you because you think this will make you feel safe and give you a sense of belonging.

Those who took 2 steps forward, take 2 steps back. You have only just arrived, so it will be very difficult to afford the rent. Even if you could afford it, it is very hard to prove to anyone that you would be a trustworthy tenant. You don’t know anyone in Australia, so you don’t have anyone who can give you a positive reference.

For those who took one step forward, stay where you are. It took a month, but you’ve found a modest rental home in a quiet suburb. You don’t know many people who live there, but you feel more safe here having people around who understand you, your life experiences and the challenges you presently face.

Now, it’s your first week in Australia and there are many basic things you need to do to start building your new life here. You need to go to the bank, get linked up with an employment agency and enrol in an English course. While some refugees arrive in Australia speaking English, for you this is all very daunting as you struggle with English. You could ask your neighbor in your street for help. Back home, your neighbours were often a source of support, but back home you knew your neighbours well. Here, it makes you nervous because you don’t know how they’ll feel about you, how they’ll react or whether there is a culture here of helping strangers. Your next meeting with your social worker is a week away and it will be hard for you to wait a full week to take these basic steps.



Take 2 steps forward if you decide to ask your neighbour to take you around and help you with these tasks. Take one step forward if you will wait a week for your next meeting with a social worker, who may be able to help you then. Stay where you are if you decide to try and do it yourself, hoping you'll be understood despite the language barrier.

Everyone who took 2 steps forward, now take 2 steps back. Your neighbour wasn't willing to help. They were polite but were quick to shut the door. This has made you feel isolated and alone. This has had a negative effect on your confidence.

For those who took one step forward, take a step back. You waited for your social worker, who was able to help you, but it was inconvenient and very frustrating to have had to put your life on hold for a week. These are tasks that you could have done yourself without any trouble back home. This experience made you feel helpless and disempowered.

For those who stayed where you are to try and do it yourself, take a step backward. You tried your best, but you weren't able to get anything done, because you weren't able to be properly understood. This left you feeling frustrated and disempowered.

You have a passion for helping people and a dream to work as a pharmacist. In fact, you already have qualifications from back home. You need a job, to start earning money as soon as possible. The only job immediately available is an entry-level role that does not use your training, is hard work and is not very well paid.

Take 2 steps forward if you accept the job. Stay where you are if you wait for something better and try to find a job you are more passionate about.

All those who took 2 steps forward, take one step back. At first, you were happy with your decision because you had a steady source of money. However, 12 months pass, and you're still in that same job. It is making you feel like you aren't achieving your full potential. This is making you feel unhappy and dissatisfied.

All those who stayed where they are, take one step back. No better jobs become available this next month, and you regret not taking the job when it was available.

For this scenario you are all school-age refugees and are placed in your local high school. You get allocated to a class where there are other students who speak English as a second language. You're struggling to make friends amongst the rest of your year level, and you don't know whether the other students will accept you.

Take 1 step forward if you make the decision to put yourself out there and introduce yourself to a group of students at lunchtime who are sitting together. Stay where you are if you decided to wait and see if someone will come and introduce themselves to you.

All those who took the risk to try to make new friends, take one step back. It's really scary and tough to make new friends with these students because you're unsure how they'll react to you. You have a different accent, and a different culture and background. This makes you nervous.

All those who stayed where you are, only a couple of students have introduced themselves. It's been a month and you still don't feel like you're making deep friendships.

