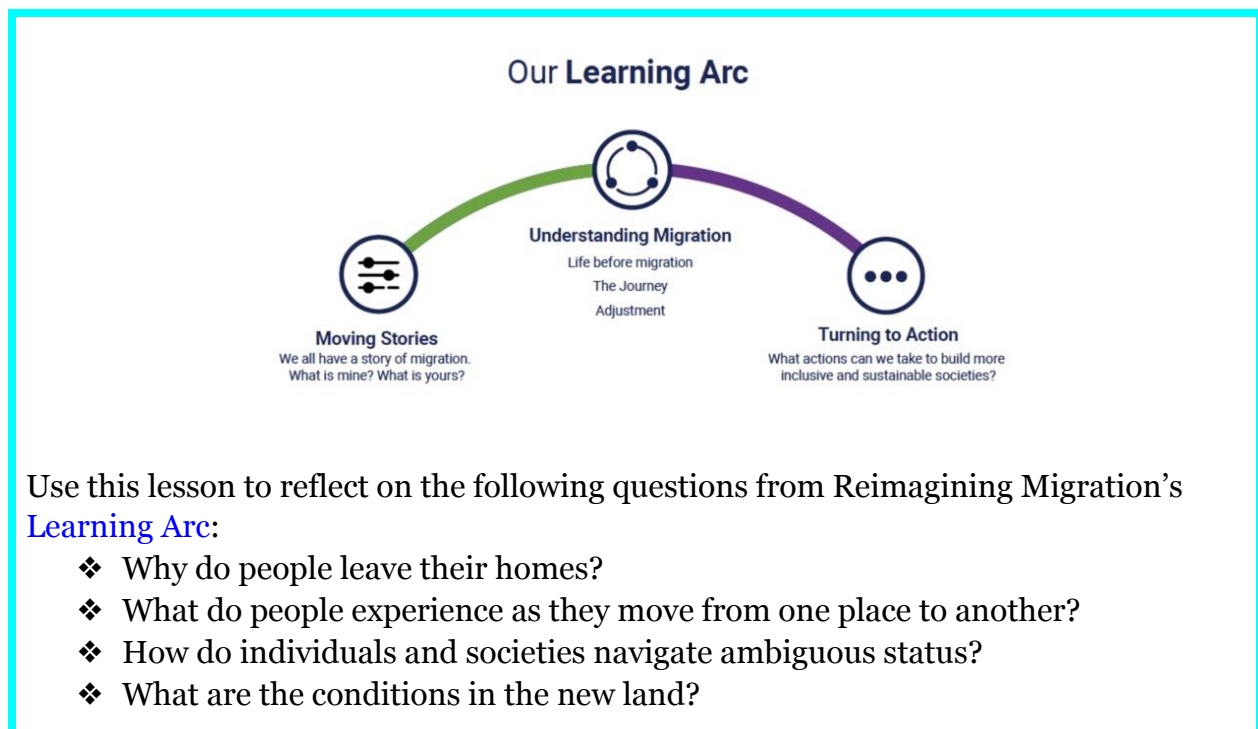




## Refugee by JJ Bola

JJ Bola is a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) where he fled, with his parents, at the age of six, to London. Today, Bola is a writer, poet, educator and a human rights activist. He published his debut novel in the U.K. called [No Place to Call Home](#) in 2017.



The video features Bola reading his poem *Refuge*, from a collection of poems called *Word*.



### Reflections and Teaching Ideas:

- Have students discuss what the term “home” means to them.
- What or who are the “monsters” Bola refers to in the poem?
- Describe JJ Bola’s experience when he arrived in the new land. What do you believe were some thoughts/feelings/questions racing through his head?
- Bola refers to assimilating to be “just like them”. What is lost when people assimilate? What is the difference between assimilation and acculturation? Do people need to assimilate to be considered fully integrated into the new society?
- What is a refugee? Research the [1951 refugee convention](#) to better understand the definition of refugees and the obligations of nations that signed on to the convention.
- Spend some time asking students to dig deeper into the poet's mind to develop a better understanding of his lived experience using the [step in-step out-step back routine](#).

## **Turning to Action**

*\*How can we take action toward more inclusive and sustainable societies?\**

### Extension:

Ask students to discuss what they would do if a new student from another country attended their school or moved into their neighborhood.

*What responsibility do we have as a community to help newcomers acculturate and transition?*