

# Life in a Refugee Camp

By Dejene

*My background is Ethiopian. I want to improve my English and mathematics. My tutor and I have been working together for over a year. I feel I have made a lot of progress. My next goal is to go to TAFE to do a diploma. I would like to say thanks to my tutor John, he helps me a lot.*



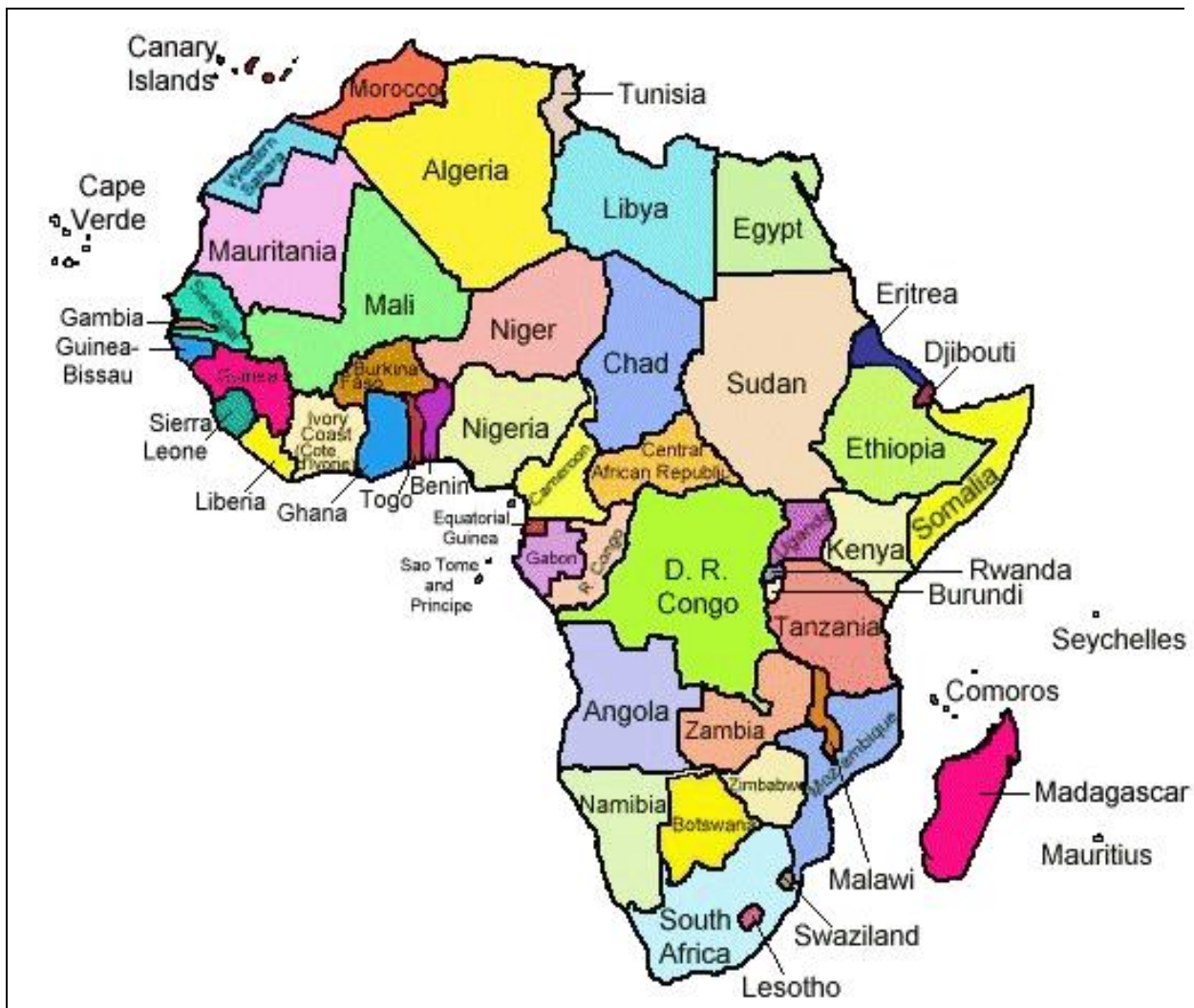
To live in a refugee camp is so difficult. I was in a refugee camp in Kenya for three and a half years after I fled my homeland of Ethiopia in 1991. Too many refugees live in a small and crowded camp. We do not know each other. It's hard to communicate because of different backgrounds and languages. Refugees from at least five or six different countries were living in a small camp surrounded by a high fence. You could not go out without written permission. No freedom at all!

The camp is very crowded with refugees. Besides that, there is not sufficient water, food and shelter and no recreation centre. Just stay all day and all night in the same spot. To get food you have to join a big queue. Once you miss your place in the queue you don't get any food. You have to wait for the next day. In the beginning we were given three small meals a day but as more refugees came, the food became more scarce and we only got one small meal a day.

The other problem was the lack of basic facilities such as water, toilets and shelter, leading to a chain reaction of malaria and not enough treatment. To get treatment you have to have some money. No money, no treatment at all. I remember that I had a nasty attack of malaria. I was very sick for two weeks. I was very lucky to have some friends who were willing to contribute some money for me to go to hospital for treatment. I may have died if I hadn't had treatment.

There were many other bad things about living the refugee camp, but now I am fortunate to have a life in Australia. I am a family man. I have a family of five children, three sons and two daughters. One daughter is still in Africa. I have a full-time job and I'm glad to be here. Australian people have been kind to us.

**Find Ethiopia and Kenya on this map of Africa.**



**Now see how many country names you can find in this Wordsearch.**  
*You might like to do this activity at home, for 'homework' or just for fun.*

M	A	U	R	I	T	A	N	I	A
A	N	N	W	K	A	L	I	S	C
U	G	A	A	E	N	G	G	U	O
R	O	M	N	N	Z	E	E	D	N
I	L	I	D	Y	A	R	R	A	G
T	A	B	A	A	N	I	I	N	O
I	X	I	T	S	I	A	A	P	M
U	M	A	L	I	A	R	T	I	Y
S	L	I	B	Y	A	C	H	A	D



## Activities

When you think about this story, what are some **words** that come to mind? They might be **descriptive words**, like ‘difficult’ or ‘crowded’. Or **factual words** like ‘hunger’ or ‘sickness’. Try to get **words from your own mind**, rather than from the text. See what you can remember.

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Look at the text and decide what the **main topics** are, in each paragraph. Some of the work is done for you, here.

For example, **Para 1** is an Introduction. It **sets the scene** of a refugee camp. It’s about **crowding, communication problems** and **lack of freedom**.

**Para 2** is mostly about **lack of**..... Note that the first sentence mentions crowding, but that’s *not* what the whole paragraph is about.

**Para 3** is about .....

.....

**Para 4** is a closing statement. Dejene (the writer) finishes off the topic of the refugee camp and **goes forward** to say how much better his life is, now that he is **in Australia**. It’s a happy ending.

So, transferring those main topics, from the bottom half of the previous page, here is a sequence of possible **keywords** from this text:

- Introduction
- Refugee camp setting
- crowding
- communication problems
- lack of freedom
- lack of ..... (Insert your choice, re para 2)
- ..... (Insert a major topic of para 3)
- ..... (Possibly another major topic of para 3 – It's *your* choice whether there is/are 1 or more major topics)
- Closing statement – finishes off the refugee camp topic
- Looking forward, now that life is better in Australia

***If you are studying, keywords are a good way to summarise your reading.***

Can you write a brief summary of the text, from these keywords and from your impressions about the overall story? Just 1 or 2 paragraphs which sum it up, and convey some of its feelings. Your aim is to convey the gist of the text, to someone who doesn't have time to read the whole thing.

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Find and correct any deliberate errors in this extract from the text. Put your corrections below each error. Do as much as you can *before* referring to the original copy.

The camp is very crouded with refuges. Besides that, their is not

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suficient water, food and shelter and no recreation centre. Just stay al day

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and all night in the same spot. To get food you have to join a big qeue.

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weight for the next day.In the begining we where given three small meals a

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day but as more refugees came, the food became more scarce and we onlie

.....  
got one small meal a day.

Now check the original copy of the text to find answers to these questions:

- How long was Dejene sick for? .....
- Who/what enabled Dejene to get treatment for malaria?  
.....
- Food was given out at the recreation centre. – True? or False?
- How many children does Dejene have? .....
- Is Dejene working? .....

Consider the use of joining words in this text. Words which join two distinct ideas are called **conjunctions**. Conjunctions *connect* or *link* or *combine* other words, phrases, or sentences.

'and' is the most commonly used conjunction – *but* other words convey more interesting meaning: words like '*but*'!

**Find the following examples in the original text.**

Para 1 uses 'after' to connect the first idea (that Dejene was in a refugee camp) to the second idea (that being in the refugee camp occurred *after* Dejene fled Ethiopia). Para 1 also uses 'because' to connect two ideas. **Tell your tutor the two ideas which are connected by 'because'.**

Para 2 uses 'and', and 'but'.

Para 3 uses 'leading to', as a way to introduce the next thought. This is really effective, because it establishes 'cause and effect'. The things listed in the first part of the sentence *lead to* the effects in the second part of the sentence. 'if' is also used as another 'cause and effect' conjunction.

Para 4 uses 'but' and 'and'.

**Complete each sentence** below with *your choice* of linking word.  
*There is more than one way to do each of these.*

I was very sick for two weeks ..... I had a nasty attack of malaria.
<input type="radio"/> when <input type="radio"/> because <input type="radio"/> and <input type="radio"/> or
I'm glad to be here ..... Australian people have been kind to us.
<input type="radio"/> while <input type="radio"/> but <input type="radio"/> because <input type="radio"/> after
Australian people have been kind to us ..... we arrived.
<input type="radio"/> until <input type="radio"/> so <input type="radio"/> because <input type="radio"/> since