

Stages of Adjustment

<p>Stage One</p> <p>Often called the “honeymoon stage”</p> <p>Occurs during initial arrival when newcomers feel excited and hopeful about their new life, especially those of refugee background who have arrived safely.</p>	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are curious about their new culture and dedicated to learning the new language • Are enthusiastic about becoming familiar with school routines and making friends • somewhat anxious about the future • Are optimistic and idealistic about their new surroundings, new country and new opportunities • Demonstrate unmistakable foreignness • Make superficial attempts to adjust and fit in <p>Even though families experience the greatest stress following their initial move, they are also provided the greatest amount of resources and support at this time.</p> <p>School staff can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learn about students’ backgrounds and cultures • provide orientation information about schooling and services
<p>Stage Two</p> <p>Often called the “hostility stage”</p> <p>Occurs between 4 and 12 months after moving to a new country when culture shock becomes evident</p>	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have begun to manage and speak English • begin to notice significant differences between their own culture and Canadian culture and often experience homesickness • enter a period of confusion, loss and disorientation that often results in depression • often feel that they don’t understand their new country and their new country doesn’t understand them • feel frustrated, and possibly depressed, anxious, irritable or angry • demonstrate withdrawal, alienation and, in some cases, erratic or aggressive behaviour • may avoid contact with the mainstream culture or community. <p>In some instances, students become less competent academically and socially, compared with their initial arrival, and tend to withdraw. They may reject anything associated with their new culture (food, language, etc.)</p> <p>School staff can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show compassion and understanding • Help students understand this phase as normal • Help students and families set realistic goals and expectations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities to build students’ self esteem and highlight successes
<p>Stage Three</p> <p>Often called the “humor stage”</p> <p>Occurs over time as newcomers work towards resolution and reconstruction</p>	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have more constructive attitudes and feel less anxious • speak better English and understand more • try new behaviours and test limits • work toward resolution of their feelings and their sense of being torn between the new and the old. <p>Families become more stable as members find employment and learn more English. Parent-teen conflict may be at its worst.</p> <p>School staff can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help students see the value in their original culture as well as their new one • Present opportunities for students to communicate about their past • Offer opportunities for students to become mentors and role models
<p>Stage Four</p> <p>Often called the “home stage”</p> <p>May be years in coming and for some will never take place</p>	<p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have more proficiency in English • feel that their emotional equilibrium is restored • appreciate aspects of both original culture and Canadian culture • participate in school and community activities • have friendships with people from different backgrounds • are able to value both old and new cultures • feel that Canada is their home and accept they are here to stay. <p>Students may still respond in unexpected ways to situations or events.</p> <p>School staff can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support each student’s unique process of adjustment and identity-building • Promote opportunities to engage in full life of community

adapted from: The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: English as a Second Language and English Literacy Development: A Resource Guide (p. 8)

and Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A Guide for Teachers and Schools (p. 14-15)

