

## **In Their Shoes: Fleeing to the United States**

**Directions:** Read the following story from Akon and Laer, his seven year old brother. Their family fled their home in Honduras a few years ago for a safer life in the U.S, and were held in detention in Mexico while claiming **asylum**.

*Since October 2018, at least 900,000 migrants and people seeking asylum have arrived at the southwestern U.S. border. Most come from one of three Central American countries: Honduras, Guatemala, or El Salvador.*

*Some people come to escape poverty. In Honduras, more than half of the population lives in poverty. Akon’s mom supports her family by cleaning houses and selling homemade pan de coco (coconut bread). Akon, his mom, and his 7-year-old brother, Laer, left for the U.S. in April to reunite with the boys’ grandfather in New York City.*

*“Most of the time, we traveled by bus,” Akon says. “In Guatemala, we walked part of the way.”*

*Other people are fleeing violence. In parts of Honduras, gangs control entire neighborhoods. Gang members demand money from citizens. “If I don’t pay, there are consequences,” one woman said.*

*Often, it’s a combination of factors that pushes someone to leave home.*

**Directions:** When their parents decided that the family would move, Akon and Laer had to pack their things in a hurry. Below, draw a picture of what your suitcase or bag you’d bring with you if your parents told you that your family was moving with little notice would look like.