

Another Point Of View – Reading Comprehension

LESSON 1

Objectives

The students will:

- Apply reading comprehension strategies by working in groups to analyze a text.
- Create new written materials based on the original text.
- Investigate the Caucasus region of the world where Asia and Europe meet.

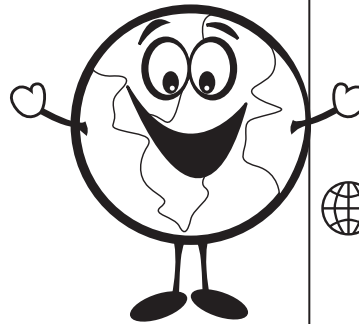


Materials

- Large world map
- “Once There Was and Was Not: A Modern Day Folktale from Armenia” book
- Pronunciation Guide and Glossary for “Once There Was and Was Not”

Procedure

- 1. Introduce the geographic setting of the story.** Using a large world map visible to the entire class, have one student come to the map and point out Europe. Have a second student come to the map and identify Asia. Point out the countries of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Explain that these three countries and parts of Southern Russia are in an area known as the Caucasus, named after the Caucasus Mountains.



The Caucasus is commonly referred to as the region of the world where Asia and Europe meet. This meeting of the continents is both physical and cultural. Geographers still spar over whether to classify the region as part of Asia or Europe. Culturally, multiple religions and ethnic groups have competed in the Caucasus for centuries, leading to a history of violent clashes and turmoil. The Caucasus is on the Western edge of the Silk Road, an overland trade route that linked China to the Mediterranean Sea. It was called the Silk Road because the main product that was traded along the route was silk from China being taken to Europe. Because of the Silk Road an amazing mix of goods, people and ideas from all over Asia and Europe were brought together in this region for thousands of years. Currently, the major religions in the area are orthodox Christianity (an ancient form of Christianity) and Islam. The Caucasus region is overshadowed by the larger neighbors of Russia, Turkey and Iran (formerly Persia), and often serves as a buffer zone between these giants.

National Standards Addressed



LANGUAGE ARTS

- Read a wide range of texts to build an understanding of cultures of the world.
- Apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate and appreciate texts.



GEOGRAPHY

- Investigate how the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of the Earth’s surface.



HeiferEducation.org

Prometheus and Other Famous Inhabitants

The Caucasus is often referred to as “the cradle of civilization” because the region played an important role in the ancient history of many cultures. In Greek mythology, Prometheus helped create humans and stole fire from the gods to give to them. Zeus punished him by chaining him to a rock in the Caucasus Mountains. Every day an eagle would come down to eat out his liver, but because he was immortal, the liver would grow back to be eaten again the next day. Prometheus eventually escaped this punishment.

There are many other stories involving the region. The Garden of Eden was fabled to be in an area of the Caucasus region (now within the borders of modern Iran). Mount Ararat, on the border of Turkey and Armenia, was the site where Noah was supposed to have landed his ark. Thaddeus and Bartholomew, two of Jesus’ disciples, traveled to Armenia and converted many people to Christianity. When Armenia’s king later converted to Christianity, Armenia became the first Christian country in the world.

Procedure (continued)

2. Read the book “Once There Was and Was Not: A Modern Day Folktale from Armenia” together as a class. Introduce the book by explaining that the students should think about how the main characters are feeling during different parts of the story, and how they themselves might feel if these or similar events had happened to them. Read the book aloud to the class, or choose students to read a page aloud one at a time. Make sure the students can see the illustrations on every page.

Please refer to the Pronunciation Guide and Glossary included in this lesson.

3. Discuss the different points of view of the various main characters. Use the questions below to elicit discussion from the students about how they think the main characters might have felt during different parts of the story. Encourage students to make comparisons from the text to their own experiences.

- How did the club decide which members received a calf?
- Do you think the decision-making process was fair?
- What other ways could they have decided which members received a calf?
- How would you feel if you were Artun and you didn’t get picked to receive a calf?
- Why do you think Artun and Lazar continued to be part of the Agriculture Club?
- How did Artun feel while waiting to hear how Lazar and Maral placed in the competition?
- Why did the judges decide to give Lazar and Artun each their own calves?
- Do you think a tale like this could happen in real life? Why or why not?

4. Write a letter expressing a character’s point of view. Divide the class into small groups. Tell each group to imagine the events of the story from Sarkis’ point of view. Explain that their assignment is to write a letter from Sarkis to Artun and Lazar, written after he gets out of the hospital.

Emphasize that there is no right or wrong answer about what Sarkis might say. The author has left that information out of the text, and the reader is free to use the information that the text provides to imagine what Sarkis might think or feel.

Advise the groups to start by creating a list of things that Sarkis might be feeling, and what he might want to say to Artun and Lazar. Have the groups use their lists to compose their letters. After each group has completed a letter, have a representative from each group read their letter aloud to the class. The students may find it interesting to compare how similar or different their letters are.

Links To Heifer International

Making Opportunities Available For All

One of Heifer International's Cornerstones is "Full Participation." This means that participation in Heifer's project work is open to all members of a community, not just a select group. The Agriculture Club was open to all students, not just those who were lucky enough to receive a calf. "Once There Was and Was Not" is based on a true story. As in Heifer International projects around the world, not every member of a group receives a livestock animal at the same time. The boys who did not initially receive calves were active and valuable members of the club, providing input to the group and learning skills from group activities.

The two boys in the story also displayed another Heifer Cornerstone – that of "Sharing and Caring." When their friend received a calf, he allowed the two boys to share in the experience of raising his calf and the two boys happily assisted him. When the friend was unable to do the work himself, the two boys stepped in to help him and were able to prove to the judges and to themselves how much they had really learned about raising calves. This example shows how groups reach their development goals by sharing and caring for each other. For more information about Heifer International's cornerstones, please visit www.heifer.org.



“Once There Was and Was Not”

Pronunciations:

- **Artun** – “ar-TOON”
- **Armenia** – “ar-ME-knee-ah”
- **Nalbandyan** – “nahI-BAHND-yan”
- **Sarkis** – “sahr-KEYS”
- **Lazar** – “la-ZAHR”
- **Maral** – “mah-RAHL”

Definitions:

agriculture	Activities related to farming (including raising livestock animals).
bystanders	People who watch an event, but are not directly involved in the action. People in an audience are usually bystanders.
categories	Groupings or divisions used to classify things.
club motto	A phrase or saying that emphasizes what is most important to the club (or a general statement about what the club strives to accomplish).
committed	Promised to do something.
criteria	Separate factors in how something is judged (things that judges consider in evaluating a competitor).
decorations	Something that is used to beautify.
donor	A person or group that gives money or specific objects to another person or group.
ecology	The interaction between living things and their environments (i.e., humans and where they live).
erupted	Broke out in a wild, often loud manner.
log book	A book where data or other information is collected about a single subject or activity done on a regular basis (i.e., taking care of a pet every day, or what is eaten for lunch every day).
meager	A very small amount.
mucked the stall	Cleaned out the stall where livestock animals live. This included shoveling out any manure and replacing dirty straw with clean straw.
notation	A short, written note, usually containing data.
pledged	Promised.
prodded	Poked gently in order to get a response.
soothing	A calming effect.
tallied	A tally is a counting of items. In a competition, a tally is usually a counting of votes.
trough	A large basin or bowl, often made of wood, that you can use to hold water or food for livestock animals
wobbly	Slightly unstable, unsteady.

“Once there was and was not...”

Folktales are stories that are told over and over again among groups of people. They often begin with a few words to get listeners (or readers) ready for the story. Most students will have heard stories that begin, “Once upon a time...”. Armenian storytellers often begin with “Once there was and was not...”.