

“Get on the Floor – We’ve Been Hit!”

by Bronwyn Wood

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Overview

This dramatic article begins with an account of Josiah’s experiences when he is stationed with his family in Lebanon and a bomb hits the building next to theirs. The recount is followed by background information about Josiah’s family and the situation in Lebanon and ends with a question directed at readers.

Teachers may need to consider whether this text is appropriate for students who have experienced being in a war zone or come from Middle Eastern countries.

Suggested teaching purposes

- To support the students in developing the comprehension strategies of **inferring**, asking questions, and visualising.
- To engage the students in reading a real-life account of a boy who is caught up in a bomb explosion.

Suggested learning goal

I am learning to ask questions and use information and clues in a text to visualise what it would be like to live in a war zone.

Success criteria

I will be successful when I have:

- made connections to what I know about war zones
- used information in the text to help me visualise what it would be like to be close to a bomb explosion
- asked questions and looked for answers in the text that help me fill in the gaps in my “picture”.

Features of the text

What features of this text support the teaching purpose?

- The dramatic events and sense of urgency that are conveyed through:
 - the title
 - the first-person narration from a child’s perspective
 - the dialogue and use of imperatives, for example, “Get on the floor!”, “Keep down”, “Don’t move!”, “Grab your things”
 - the use of dashes, rather than commas, to indicate additional information
 - the exclamation marks for emphasis
 - vivid verbs, for example, “stunned”, “shattered”, “crashed”, “flying”, “landed”, “dived”, “crawled”, “grabbed”, “exploding”, “burst”, “raced”, “fleeing”
- The authenticity of the text, written by the mother of the narrator
- The topic-specific vocabulary, including “bombing”, “UN”, “peacekeeper”, “Rest House”
- The question and answer format on page 24

- The layout features including:
 - the typewritten font for the name of the author
 - the footnote on page 22.

Readability

Noun frequency level: 8.5–9.5 years for guided reading

What prior knowledge or experience might help my students to read this text?

- Being familiar with what to do in a disaster or emergency situation, for example, having an emergency kit prepared
- Having visited or lived in another country
- Having a parent or family member who works in another country for long periods
- Having links with families in the New Zealand Defence Forces
- Having some current affairs knowledge of the political situation in the Middle East
- Experience of reading factual recounts, for example, in newspapers or the *School Journal*.

What text features might challenge my students and require a prompt or a brief explanation?

- Words and concepts including: “first-hand”, “evacuate”, “blown-out windows”, New Zealand Defence Force, “peacekeepers”, “Hezbollah”.

Preparation for reading

In preparation for the lesson below, have the students watch a news clip or look at photographs of similar events as depicted in this text. Ask them to make some notes about how they would feel and what life would be like for people living in those kinds of conditions. (Making connections)

A framework for the lesson

How will I help my students to achieve the learning goal?

Before reading

- Refer to the task above and ask the students to share their responses, referring to their notes. Tell them you have a real-life account of a boy who is caught up in a bomb explosion for them to read. Explain the location and help the students find Lebanon on a map of the Middle East. Keep the map handy to refer back to during the reading. (Making connections)
- Discuss how people write about and describe actual events in newspapers. You could have an example of a newspaper article to read together as a reference. “What would you expect to find out from the article we’re about to read?” Draw out the idea of finding out what, when, where, who, why, and how. Read the title and ask the students to share any questions they have about the text. (Making connections; asking questions)
- Share the learning goal and success criteria with the students.

Reading and discussing the text

Refer to Effective Literacy Practice in Years 5 to 8 for information about deliberate acts of teaching.

- Have the students record questions they may have as they read through this

text. These questions could be recorded either individually on notepads or as a whole group, on a whiteboard or in the group-reading book.

- Have the students read the author information and the profile of Josiah on page 21 and discuss the meaning of “first-hand”. (Making connections)
- Read the first paragraph on page 21. “How do Mum’s instructions make you feel? How does the author convey the feeling of panic?” Discuss the imperative language, the use of dashes, and the shouting, which create a feeling of urgency and danger. (Analysing and synthesising; inferring)
- Have the students read the rest of page 21 to get a feel for the overall scene. “What are some words that describe how you might feel if you were in this type of situation?” (Visualising)
- Return to the second paragraph. “What does it mean when it says that he was stunned? How does this help us to understand how Josiah was feeling?” Draw out the idea that this is probably his first experience of a situation like this and he is in shock. (Inferring; visualising)
- Have the students work in pairs to reread the rest of the page to identify the possible dangers (for example, the building may be unstable, another bomb, broken glass) and to provide evidence for their ideas. (Summarising; inferring)
- “What sentence in the last paragraph gives us an idea about the type of place they are living?” If necessary, draw attention to the bag always being packed in the event of evacuation. “How do you think they are all feeling at this stage?” (Inferring; visualising)
- Have the students read page 22. “What is the Rest House, and why are they being taken there?” (Inferring)
- Discuss where the dust came from and why they are sitting on the floor of the van. “What would it have felt like as they were driven through the streets? What sounds might they have heard?” (Inferring; evaluating ideas and information)
- Have the students read page 23. “Why do you think it is necessary to have somewhere for the United Nations families to go?” Draw out the idea that it is easier to have them together in one place and then for the UN to get them to safety. (Inferring)
- “What would it have been like sharing a space with that many people? We aren’t told what it was like, but what inferences can we make from the small amount of information here? What would the mood have been like while they waited to be able to leave?” (Inferring; visualising)
- “What has this page suggested to us about the situation in Tyre? What do you think Dad’s job might be?” Ask the students to reflect on what they have read so far and to think, pair, and share about what is helping them to make inferences as they read. Ask them to share any questions they may have. (Inferring; asking questions)
- Review the learning goal and success criteria. “How are your questions (and answers) helping you to build a picture of what this would have been like for Josiah? What questions do you have about the rest of the article?” (Asking questions; visualising)
- Have the students read the information on page 24. You may need to give

them an example of what 50 metres' distance looks like. Revisit the students' questions and whether the information on these pages answers them.

(Asking questions)

- Have the students read the list on page 25 and share their responses to the author's question and to the list of items that Josiah and Oliver took. (Inferring; making connections)
- "This text gives us a lot of factual information but not much information about the feelings of the characters. What did you do to fill in the gaps to build a picture of what it might have been like for Josiah?" Discuss the importance of using prior knowledge and asking questions. (Making connections; asking questions; inferring; visualising)

After reading

- Have the students think, pair, and share about an aspect of Josiah's life and what he might need to have done differently in a war zone. For example, would he have played outside and what might he need to think about? (Inferring; visualising)
- Discuss what it would have been like for Josiah while he was waiting for his father to come home. Prompt the students to think about what Josiah's everyday life would have been like back in New Zealand compared with living in Lebanon and what he might have been worried about. (Making connections; visualising)
- Discuss the relationship of the author to the narrator. "Why do you think they chose this way of telling Josiah's experience?" (Analysing and synthesising)
- Briefly discuss any words or phrases that the students found difficult and the strategies they used (or could have used) to work them out.
- Reflect with the students on how well they have met the learning goal and how the success criteria helped them. For example, "Did making a list of questions help you with your reading?" Ask the students if they want to add to or change the success criteria. Note any teaching points for future sessions.

Links to further learning

What follow-up tasks will help my students to consolidate and/or extend their new learning?

- Read other texts that support the strategy of visualising through making connections and inferring, for example, the poems "Sparkle Fish" (SJ 2.1.08) or "The Second-Hand Tent" (SJ 2.2.08). (Making connections; inferring; visualising)
- The students could research any unanswered questions. (Asking questions)
- Have the students create their own family evacuation plan or make a list of what they would take in an emergency backpack. (Making connections)