

## GRADES K-2 LESSON PLAN

**THE LIBRARIAN OF BASRA: A TRUE STORY FROM IRAQ**

**Title:** *The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq*

**Author:** Jeanette Winter

**Grade Level:** K-2

**Standards\*:**

- **Common Core:** *CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.1 & K.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1, 1.2, & 1.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.1, 2.2, & 2.3*
- **Virginia Standards of Learning:** K.10; 1.10; 2.9

**Overarching Theme(s):** Desegregation, Fairness, Point of View, Empathy, Inferencing

**Timeframe:** (30-45 minutes)

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*The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq*

**Summary:** This non-fiction account retells the story of Alia Muhammad Baker, a librarian in Basra, Iraq. When war began in her country, she was concerned with saving the library, a meeting place for the community. When the governor refused to store the books in another location for safe keeping, Alia, with the help of others, secretly moved the library's collection over time during the war crisis. The librarian bravely ensured the books were preserved for future generations of book lovers.

**Lesson Goals:**

1. Identify feelings and motivations of characters
2. Identify feelings and motivations of secondary/bystanders
3. Determine possible actions bystanders can take

**Key Terms:**

- **Culture:** a way of living that is passed down through generations (including language, religion, food, family and gender roles, beliefs, customs, traditions, etc.)
- **Identity:** the qualities, characteristics or beliefs that make a person who they are; people's identities are similar in some ways and different in others; everyone has multiple identities (race, ethnicity, language, gender, sexuality, religion, etc.)

**Procedure:**

*\*Important! Before the start of the lesson, students **must** engage in transactive discussion practice for the discussion to be meaningful. This does not have to take place before every lesson but students need to be familiar with this type of discussion for the lesson to be effective.\**

Before reading, the teacher should explain the history of school integration, including explanations of the above key words (sample language below):

*"The war in Iraq brought many changes to the country. As citizens feared the consequences of war on their daily live, librarian Alia Muhammad thought of future generations as well.*

*The library was a safe meeting space that welcomed everyone. As the war intensified, Alia wanted to ensure the sacred books were safe from damage or destruction. This story shows how war affects more than current society, it could affect the knowledge of future generations."*

Teacher should read the story aloud to the whole group. During the read aloud process, teacher should stop and ask teacher-generated comprehension questions to assess/support student understanding, address misconceptions, and answer questions.

- Students should discuss and answer book-specific discussion questions (see below) in pairs. (Teacher-generated comprehension questions can be discussed as a whole group.)
- Teacher can then have students share out the answers they generated in pairs.
- During whole group discussions, teacher should provide guiding questions rather than providing answers.
- Immediately following reading and discussion, teacher should have students *independently* respond to writing prompts or assign for homework.

### *Discussion Questions*

(pg. 6-10):

1. How do you think Alia feels when the governor refuses to move the library books to a safe space? Whose responsibility should it be to keep the books safe?
  - a. Why?
2. Do you think Alia was wrong for taking the library books since she was breaking the rules?
  - a. Why or why not?

(pg. 11-27):

3. How does Alia save the library books during the war?
  - a. If you saw what was happening, would you have helped Alia save the library books from being destroyed?
4. How do you think Alia felt when she was trying to save the books in the library during the war?
5. How does Alia save the library books during the war?
6. What do you think you would have done if you were in Alia's shoes?

How do you think Alia was feeling when the war gets closer to the library? Why?

Alia was feeling

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Writing Prompt

Do you think Alia was right or wrong for taking the library books since she was breaking the rules? Why? *Defend your answer using evidence from the book and/or class discussions.*

I think Alia was (circle one) right/wrong \_\_\_\_\_ for taking the library Page | 4

books since she was breaking the rules because

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Writing Prompt

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books since she was breaking the rules because

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## Standards\*

**Common Core Standards**[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.1](#)*With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.*[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.3](#)*With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.*[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1](#)*Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.*[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.2](#)*Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.*[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.3](#)*Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.*[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.1](#)*Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.*[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.2](#)*Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.*[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.3](#)*Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.***Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL)**

- **K.10** The student will demonstrate comprehension of nonfiction texts. a) Use pictures to identify topic and make predictions. b) Identify text features specific to the topic, such as titles, headings, and pictures.
- **1.10** The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of a variety of nonfiction texts. a) Preview the selection. b) Use prior and background knowledge as context for new learning. c) Set a purpose for reading. d) Identify text features such as pictures, headings, charts, and captions. e) Make and confirm predictions. f) Ask and answer who, what, where, when, why, and how questions about what is read. g) Identify the main idea. h) Read and reread familiar passages with fluency, accuracy, and meaningful expression.
- **2.9** The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of nonfiction texts. a) Preview the selection using text features. b) Make and confirm predictions about the main idea. c) Use prior and background knowledge as context for new learning. d) Set purpose for reading. e) Ask and answer questions about what is read. f) Locate information to answer questions. g) Identify the main idea. h) Read and reread familiar passages with fluency, accuracy, and meaningful expression.