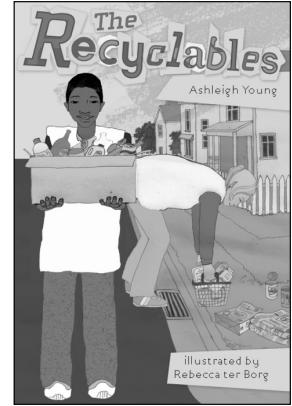


The Recyclables

by Ashleigh Young
illustrated by Rebecca ter Borg



Book Summary

Jamal decides to save the world when he sees a hermit living a simple lifestyle on TV. He starts a recycling programme in his neighbourhood, but soon finds out that things aren't as simple as he thought. This story looks at the value of being organised if you want to make a change.

Features of the Book

- Realistic fiction
- Environmental theme
- First person narrative

Purpose

The Recyclables can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills and understandings:

- S** making connections;
- S** exploring figurative language;
- S** examining how our consumer society needs to solve problems to do with the disposal of waste;
- S** exploring how people can make a positive difference in their society.

The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Making connections
- S** Examining how our consumer society needs to solve problems to do with the disposal of waste
- S** Exploring how people can make a positive difference in their society

Introducing the text

Ask the students if they've ever had any "bright ideas" that involved persuading others to help, for example, setting up a roster, organising a club or an event, or trying to have something changed at school.

- *How did you try to persuade people?*
- *Did things work out the way you expected?*
- *Did you have to settle for less than you'd wanted?*
How did you feel about that?

Explain that in this story one person tried to "save the world" by setting up a recycling programme. Tell the students that you will ask them to identify any connections they have with the story and to explain how these connections helped them to understand it.

If your school or community has a recycling programme, discuss this with the students. Ask them to think about recycling in terms of what, why, how, who, and when.

Investigation Tools

- Digging Deeper – Our Rubbish, page 29
- Step by Step – Recycling Paper, pages 30–31
- Making Connections – How Can You Help?, page 32

Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read the first chapter silently. Tell them to make a mental note of any connections with their personal experience.

- *What connection did the narrator make at the start of the story? What impact did it have on him?*
- *Have you ever seen something on TV that made you want to change things?*
- *What kind of person is Jamal? Does he remind you of anyone?*
- *If you have made connections, how have they helped you to understand the story, such as the family dynamics or Jamal's motivation?*

Ask the students to read Chapter 2 silently, then discuss it, along with any connections the students have made. Point out the effect of Jamal's enthusiasm on his family.

As the students read Chapter 3, ask them to think about the idea of one person saving the world. Discuss this when they have finished reading.

The students can read the rest of the story independently, then share their thoughts about it.

- *How true to life was this story?*
- *Could you imagine doing something like this? How would your family and friends react?*
- *How realistic is it for one person to "save the world"?*
- *Can individuals make a difference? Why/why not?*

Revisiting the Text

The activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson, during later reading sessions as mini-lessons, or as independent activities.

S Examining how our consumer society needs to solve problems to do with the disposal of waste

The students could formulate a plan of action for one of their ideas.

S Exploring how people can make a positive difference in their society

Have the students brainstorm a list of actions that could make a difference in their classroom, school, home, or neighbourhood. Help them to research how practicable and effective each action might be. The students could compare one of the actions they listed with the plan in the story.

S Exploring figurative language

Write on the board examples of figurative language from the text. Examples include "as if someone had sprayed it with a giant can of paint" (simile, page 6), "jam is full of chemicals" (hyperbole, page 12), "no one ever takes anything to the recycling centre" (hyperbole, page 16).

Discuss the kinds of figurative language used and their effectiveness. For example, hyperbole (exaggeration) is used a lot by the narrator, and this helps the reader to picture him as a person who over-dramatises.

☞ The students can use the blackline master to record examples of figurative language and their use.