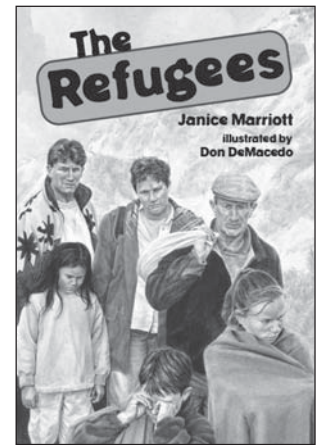


# The Refugees

by Janice Marriott

illustrations by Don DeMacedo



## Book Summary

A boy and his older sister are forced to leave their home after soldiers burn their house. The children are separated from the rest of their family and have to make the long journey to a refugee camp by themselves.

## Features of the Book

- The relevant, contemporary theme
- First person point of view
- The realistic illustrations
- The strong emotions of the characters
- The use of simile – *forlorn as a foghorn; like a dog's howl*
- The use of metaphor – *furnace of anger*
- Alternatives to the word “said” – *announced, replied, muttered, whispered*

## Purpose

*The Refugees* can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- S** identifying with a character in the story;
- S** making inferences and drawing conclusions and supporting them with evidence from the text;
- S** identifying problems and resolutions within a text;
- S** interpreting and analyzing characters' emotions and actions;
- S** innovating on text.

## The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Identifying with a character in the story
- S** Making inferences and drawing conclusions and supporting them with evidence from the text
- S** Identifying problems and resolutions within a text

## Introducing the text

Introduce the book and read the back cover blurb aloud to the students. Ask them to make a list of ten things they would take with them if they had to leave their home in the middle of the night. This could be done individually or in pairs.

Now create the scene.

- *You will be walking.*
- *You will have a younger brother or sister with you.*
- *You can take only what you can carry.*
- *Divide your list into needs and wants. If you had to cut your list in half, what would you leave behind?*



## Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read the first chapter of the story.

- *While you're reading, imagine you are the boy. Make a mental note of what you think his feelings might be as he moves about in the dark.*

When they have finished reading, discuss the students' thoughts about the boy's feelings. Ask them to support their views with specific references (words or sentences) from the text. This is also a good time to predict what the boy might have buried in the garden. Make a list of possible items so the students can refer to it when they have finished the book. They could revise their predictions at the end of chapter 5.

Now let the students read the rest of the story independently.

- *As you read, continue to imagine yourself as either the boy or his older sister.*

As the students read, note any difficulties they may be having and give assistance where it is needed. Also observe if they are fully engaged with the task.

When the students have finished reading, they could discuss some of the following questions.

- *What role do you think the older sister took on? Why?*
- *Is there anything you would have done differently if you were one of the characters in the book?*
- *Were you surprised about what the boy buried in the garden?*
- *Have a look at the list of items you would take with you if you were a refugee. Would you change any of them now that you have read the story? What changes would you make?*


Discuss the realism in the illustrations.

- *Does this style of drawing make it easier to read the text?*
- *What do you notice about the characters' faces in the illustrations?*
- *How has the illustrator helped you to understand how the characters are feeling?*

## Revisiting the Text

The suggested activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson if appropriate or could be used as a mini-lesson at a later time.

### **S** Interpreting and analyzing characters' emotions and actions

 The students could reread the story and note at least four different feelings the boy experiences, for example, sad, angry, excited, or scared. The blackline master on page 80 can be used to make a note of these emotions and to add the action that is associated with each of them.

In pairs, the students could compare their work and discuss how they would have reacted and felt in these situations.

- *Do you think the children might have reacted differently if their parents had been with them?*
- *What do you think you would have done?*
- *Can you think of different words that can be used to describe the same feelings, for example, "angry" and "furious."*

### **S** Innovating on text

Ask the students to choose a critical event in the story, for example:

- when the boy buried the box
- when the boy thought he heard someone at night
- when the children chose to leave home
- when the boy thought he saw his father at the refugee camp.

Discuss the kind of language the author has used to capture the reader's interest and raise tension. Make a list of the adjectives used.

Discuss these and suggest others.

Now ask the students to retell the story from the "critical event" they have chosen onward, changing the outcome in a way that fits with the author's style. The students could discuss and evaluate each other's changes.

Alternatively, you could ask the students to write chapter 10 of the story describing how the boy and his sister are reunited with their parents.