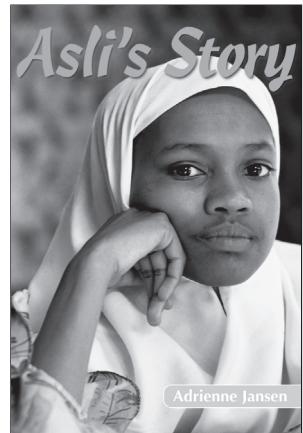


# Asli's Story

by Adrienne Jansen



## Book Summary

The civil war in Somalia forced Asli and her family to flee their home for a very different country. This book explains some of the many changes that Asli faces as she adjusts to life in New Zealand.

## Features of the Book

- Biography based on an interview
- The theme of overcoming difficulties
- Factual information combined with narrative
- Family photographs and memorabilia
- Maps and time line
- Specialised vocabulary – *mosque, Ramadan, hijab, sorghum, Koran*

## Purpose

Asli's Story can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- making and revising predictions;
- using graphic sources of information;
- discussing the author's intention;
- discussing issues raised in the text;
- rewriting text from a different point of view;
- using the text as a springboard to independent research;
- exploring a character's feelings.

## The Guided Reading Lesson

- Making and revising predictions
- Using graphic sources of information
- Discussing the author's intention
- Discussing issues raised in the text

## Introducing the text

Look at the title of the book and discuss the photograph on the front cover.

- Where do you think Asli might be from? Why is she dressed in this way?
- How do you think she's feeling in this photograph?
- What do you think Asli's Story could be about?

Read the blurb on the back cover together and compare this information with the ideas that the students have already shared. Explore and build their background knowledge by asking:

- Where is Somalia?
- Look at the fact file on page six. Can you share one fact about Somalia?
- What has been happening in Somalia? What would make people like Asli leave as refugees?

Look at the photographs on the first few pages of the book. Read the introduction together and check the students' understanding by asking:

- Why isn't Asli's home peaceful any more?
- Why can't they take anything with them?
- Why do they have to leave the home they love?

## Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read chapters 1 and 2 independently. As they read, they can think about the following questions:

- *What is the author's intention in sharing this information?* (to give some background information so the reader can understand Asli's situation)
- *How is the information presented?* (text, maps, charts, chapter headings, and sub-headings)
- *What issues are raised?* (civil war and its effects)

When the students have read these chapters, discuss their responses to the questions.

The students can now read the rest of the book independently. As they read, encourage them to think about the following questions:

- *Which parts of the book contain factual information? Think about the different ways the information has been presented.*
- *How do you think Asli and her family are feeling?*
- *What adjustments have Asli and her family had to make throughout their journey?*

When the students have finished reading, discuss their responses to the questions above and their personal reactions to the story as a whole. They may need prompting with questions or statements such as:

- *Why do countries have civil wars?*
- *What do you think you would like or dislike about living in a refugee camp?*
- *If you had to move from your home, where would you go and why?*
- *If Asli had a choice, where do you think she would have gone?*

## Revisiting the Text

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

### **S** Rewriting text from a different point of view

Ask the students to reread chapter 4, paying close attention to how Asli might be feeling about her different world. Gather the students' ideas about how this chapter could be rewritten from Asli's point of view as a first person narrative.

 Rewrite page 17 together as a first person narrative, for example, "We arrived in Wellington in the middle of winter. It was very cold, wet, and windy. We needed to put on warmer clothes and turn the heaters on in our new home. This was only the beginning of the differences – everything was different! People wore totally different clothes, and they spoke a language we could not understand ..."

When the students understand how they are to rewrite the chapter, give them time to reread, make notes, and to develop their recount from Asli's perspective.

### **S** Using the text as a springboard to independent research

Those students who display interest in the issues presented in the book could undertake independent research to find out about the current situation in Somalia. They could use the class library and the Internet as well as contacting refugee organisations. They could present their work in the form of a news report.

### **S** Exploring a character's feelings

Ask the students to think about how Asli would have felt during the different events in her life. For example, when she was living with her grandparents, she felt happy and safe; when she was travelling on the boat to Kenya, she felt scared and cramped.

 Ask the students to reread the book and to complete the blackline master on page 76 to show how Asli felt at different times.