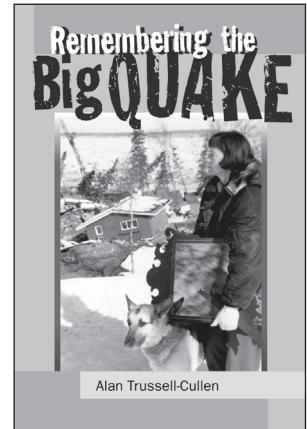


Remembering the Big Quake

by Alan Trussell-Cullen



Book Summary

The 1964 Alaskan earthquake killed 115 people and caused enormous damage to the coasts of the United States and Canada. Anne Donaghy, a survivor of the quake, shares her memories of that day with the author who presents her account as an oral history.

Features of the Book

- Interview format
- Expository and procedural text
- Historic and family photographs
- Maps
- Fact files
- Specialised vocabulary – *aftershocks, debris, tsunami*
- Labelled diagrams and photographs
- The use of emotive and descriptive language

Purpose

Remembering the Big Quake can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- S** relating events in a story to students' own experiences;
- S** making predictions from text and photographs;
- S** investigating the language of an interview;
- S** discussing open and closed questions;
- S** planning and conducting an oral history interview;
- S** retrieving and reformatting information;
- S** researching a topic using different sources.

The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Relating events in a story to students' own experiences
- S** Making predictions from text and photographs
- S** Investigating the language of an interview
- S** Discussing open and closed questions

Introducing the text

Ask the students if they have ever been in an earthquake.

- Where did the earthquake take place?
- Do you know how strong it was?
- How did you feel during and after the earthquake?

If the students have never experienced an earthquake, ask them to imagine what it might be like.

Look at the cover of the book.

- How serious do you think this quake was? How can you tell?
- What time of year did the disaster happen?
- What do you think the woman on the cover is doing?
- If you had to evacuate your home in five minutes, what three things would you take with you? Why?

Read the blurb on the back cover together.

- Does this confirm your prediction about the strength of this earthquake?
- What does the photograph on the title page tell you?

Look at the map on page 3 together and work out where Anchorage is in relation to the sea and the other states of America.

- Why would being near the sea be very dangerous after an earthquake?

Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read the introduction on pages 3 to 5.

- *How do you think the author will present the information in this book?*
- *How do you think he recorded the answers to his questions?*

Discuss the information in the fact box on page 5.

- *Can you explain what an “oral history” is?*

Study the headlines on page 5.

- *What information do you get from these headlines?*
- *Can you explain what a tsunami is?*

Ask the students to read chapter 1 independently.

- *As you read, think about the way the text in the fact boxes is different from the answers to the author’s questions. (The text in the boxes is factual information written in a formal way.)*

Discuss the way that the author’s carefully chosen questions encourage Anne to share her thoughts, feelings, and memories.

The students can read the rest of the book independently.

- *As you read, look at how the photographs have been laid out to give the effect of the ground moving at different angles.*

When the students have finished reading, review the interviewer’s questions.

- *Which questions were open? Which were the result of one of Anne’s answers?*
- *“That must have been frightening!” is not a question. Why did the interviewer say that? Was it effective?*

Ask the students to write some interview questions for an imaginary situation. They could try out their questions on a partner.

- *Did your questions encourage your partner to share their experiences, feelings, and opinions?*
- *How would you change your questions to get better answers?*

A variety of photographs have been used to illustrate the text.

- *Where would these photographs have come from?*

Discuss the way that libraries and archives often have photograph collections and resources.

- *What has been used when a photograph was not available? (page 7)*

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 Planning and conducting an oral history interview

Ask the students to read the fact box on page 8 and to review the information in it with a partner. Each student can then choose a topic they want to know more about and decide on the best person to interview to get information on that topic.

 The students can use the blackline master on page 71 to prepare the questions for their interview. When they have done the interview, they can transcribe the information from the audio tape and present it as a report to the class. They could also critique their own work, based on the quality of the responses to their questions.

- *Which questions would you rewrite to get more informative or interesting answers?*

S Retrieving and reformatting information

Ask the students to skim-read the text to construct a time line of the events before, during, and after the Alaskan earthquake. They will need to focus on the events in the story and distinguish these from the thoughts and feelings of the subject.

S Researching a topic using different sources

The students could choose another earthquake and research it using at least three different sources of information. They could compare the two earthquakes using the headings from the fact file on page 26. You could suggest that they use the SkyRider chapter book *Our Changing Earth* as one of their sources.