

Living with the Nenets

by Sven Haakanson

Summary

The Nenets are nomadic reindeer herders who live in western Siberia, Russia. The author of this book spent six months living with the Nenets.

Features of the Text

- Fact files and charts
- Specialized vocabulary – *ethnographer, nomadic, clan, dialect, indigenous, tendon*
- Journal structure
- Maps

Purpose

Living with the Nenets can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- S** exploring the features of a journal;
- S** questioning the text;
- S** synthesizing information from text and visual sources;
- S** analyzing the meanings of complex words.

The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Exploring the features of a journal
- S** Questioning the text

Introducing the text

Invite the students to generate questions about the person on the cover. Record their questions on a board or chart. If necessary, prompt the students by asking them to consider ethnicity, climate, and way of life.

Ask the students to read the introduction. Discuss any answers to their questions.

Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to skim through the text and notice how it's organized.

- *What kind of text is this?* (journal, recount) *How can you tell?*
- *What are some features of a journal?* (dates, description of setting, details of events, temporal sequence)
- *What tense and voice is a journal usually written in?* (simple past tense, first person)

Ask the students to read pages 4 to 7 noting the kinds of details recorded in the journal.

- *Why did the author keep this journal?*
- *What other kinds of information do you wish the author had included? What are you curious about?*

Ask the students if they have other questions. Explain that asking questions of a text sometimes leads to further questioning.

Model some sample questions, such as:

- *The Nenets have adapted to a cold environment. I wonder if they have physical differences that make them less affected by the cold?*

As the students read the rest of the text, ask them to think of some new questions.

- *How can you use what you've learned to ask informed questions?*
- *How can you use the facts about the Nenets to help you ask questions about their culture?*

Ask the students to share some of their questions. Conclude the session by comparing the questions from the beginning of the session with their latest questions.

- *How are the new questions different?*
- *Which of our questions make you think in new or different ways? Why?*



Following Up

The students can:

- generate questions by using the blackline master on page 69 to compare their culture and lifestyle with the Nenets' culture and lifestyle
- conduct research on another nomadic people and compare their lifestyle with the Nenets' lifestyle
- generate questions that a Nenet might want to ask someone living in America.