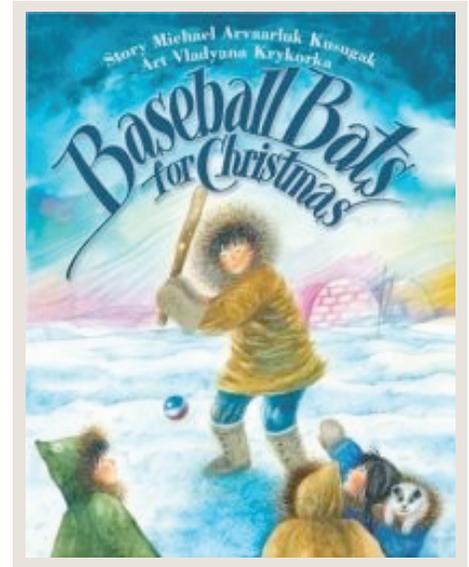




Title: Baseball Bats for Christmas
Author: Michael Arvaarluk Kusugak
Genre: Picture Book (anecdotal)
Cultural Connection: Ceremony



PLOT SUMMARY

Arvaarluk was a seven year old boy living in Repulse Bay at the north end of Hudson Bay, on the Arctic Circle. The land was rocky with not a single tree in sight. In 1955 less than one hundred people lived there. Their traditional winter homes were igloos and sod huts. One day, close to Christmas time, Rocky Parsons flew his Norseman aeroplane into Repulse Bay to refuel. He unloaded six green spindly trees and stuck them in a snow bank. The children had only seen “standing-ups” in the pictures in books at the church. That Christmas the manager of the Hudson’s Bay Company store gave Arvaarluk a blue and red rubber ball as a gift. Arvaarluk and his friends loved playing baseball but they hardly ever could find any good sticks to use as bats. Yvo looked at the trees and decided that Rocky had left the “standing ups” for the kids to use as baseball bats. He got an axe and chopped off the branches of one of them and smoothed it out. All of the kids came to play. *They played ball all that spring and all that summer, making more bats with the spindly trees when they broke. And, in the autumn we could hardly wait for Christmas when, again, the Union Jack would go up the flagpole and Rocky Parsons would, once again, bring us baseball bats for Christmas.*

LEARNING INTENTION

Focus Reading Connection: # Making Inferences

Readers infer when they take what they know about a story and then fill in the information that was not included. When talking to students about inferring it is important to emphasize that:

1. Inferring helps the reader to better understand the story.
2. Readers need to look for clues in the pictures and the text as well as relying on their own background knowledge to fill in what is not written on the page.
3. Some authors deliberately write very little but leave the reader lots of clues to think about.

This lesson uses structured partner talk as a learning strategy. To learn more about partner talk please refer to the Educator’s page on our website.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- 1 copy of Baseball Bats for Christmas
- 1 copy of inferring worksheet



BEFORE

- Explain to the class what inferring is (something that good readers do to understand what the author is saying even if it is not written in the text).
- Explain that inferring requires the reader to do a lot of thinking about the clues that the author has left behind in the text and in the pictures.
- Explain that readers can also use their own background knowledge to help fill in the missing information.
- Inferring Practise: Use body language and your facial expression to display an emotion. Have the class guess what the emotion is. Have them justify their answers: *"I think that....because..."*.
- Inferring Practise: Repeat the above activity using students to model an emotion.
- Inferring Practise: Discuss, as a class, what clues the models gave you that helped you make the inferences.

DURING

- Have the students identify the Canadian Arctic on a globe, wall map or in an Atlas.
- Have each student talk to a partner and share what they know about the Canadian Arctic.
- Have some students share what they know with the rest of the class.
- Explain that today the class will listen to a story that takes place in Repulse Bay, on the Arctic circle. Although trees do not grow that far north six of them suddenly arrived in the village. Instruct the students to listen for clues that would explain what the trees were for.
- Begin to read the story and stop at the end of page four. *"There was church to go to at midnight"*.
- Ask each student to turn to a partner and tell them something true about the trees.
- Have a few students share their information with the rest of the class.
- Have each student record at least one fact about the trees on the inferring worksheet.
- Ask each student to turn to the same partner and ask a question about the trees.
- Have a few students share their question with the rest of the class.
- Have each student record a question on the inferring worksheet.
- Have each student talk to the same partner and make an inference about the purpose of the trees.
- Have a few students share their inferences with the rest of the class.
- Have each student record their inference on the worksheet.
- Continue to read the book, stopping to look at the pictures and to discuss the details of the story.

AFTER

- Have each student talk to the same partner and share what was the same and what was different between their inference and what actually happened in the story.
- Have the students complete the last part of the worksheet.

Suggested Supplemental Resources:

Click on the Kids tab of our website to find similar stories such as:

- Frozen Land by Jan Reynolds
- Arctic A-Z by Wayne Lynch
- I is for Inuksuk by Mary Wallace



Date: _____

Name: _____

Making Inferences

1. One fact I know about the trees is:

2. A question I have about the trees is:

3. I am inferring that maybe:

4. What actually happened is:
