

Bag for Life

Can you guess what's inside?

About the Story

Lexile: 580L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective: to write a prequel for a work of flash fiction

Key Skills: inference, narrative writing

Essential Questions:

- What is the power of hope?
- How do we cope in times of crisis?
- What does it take to survive?

Standards:

The article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.6, W.3, L.4, L.5, L.6

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



Your Teaching Support Package

Find your full suite of support materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Audio:

- Author read-aloud
- Text-to-speech
- Vocabulary

Connected readings from the Scope archives:

- Narrative Nonfiction: "Stranded at Sea"
- Narrative Nonfiction: "Trapped in a Cave"
- Narrative Nonfiction: "The Children's Blizzard"

Skill Building Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Core Skills Workout: Inference
 - Narrative Planner
 - Choice Board
 - Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice
 - Contest Entry Form
- *Available on two levels

Step-by-Step Lesson

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

1. Preparing to Read

5 minutes

Preview Vocabulary (5 minutes)

- Project **Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice**. Review the definitions as a class. Highlighted words: *garish*, *peer*, *salivating*, *vague*. Optionally, share the interactive link directly to your LMS and have students preview the words and complete the activity independently beforehand. Audio pronunciations of the words and a read-aloud of the definitions are embedded on the slides.

2. Reading and Discussing

30 minutes

- Point out the Spotlight On box and directions on page 29 or at the top of the digital story page. Read them aloud to your students.
- Read aloud the three callout circles, which introduce students to British terms that appear in the story.
- Optionally, for students' first read, have them follow along as they listen to author Joseph Elliott read his story aloud. The **audio read-aloud** is located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View.
- Divide students into pairs or groups to read the story again and discuss the following inference questions. Have students record their answers in their own document or on the **Making Inferences** activity graphic organizer.

Inference Questions

(20 minutes)

The close-reading questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.

1. **What does Amila think Dad means when he says, “I’m saving it for when we really need it”?** *Amila thinks Dad is saving the bag’s contents for when they need them to survive or when their situation is more desperate than it is now.*
2. **What can you infer about why Dad and Amila are walking through the forest? Explain.** *Dad and Amila left their home in such a hurry that they were not able to take any of their belongings with them. They are traveling through the forest without any food or supplies and without a clear destination. From these details you can infer that they are on this trek because of an unexpected crisis—a difficult and dangerous situation that required them to take the immediate action of leaving their home to find a safer place.*
3. **What does Amila focus on as they walk? How is she feeling physically and emotionally?** *Amila is completely focused on the bag for life—watching it, asking about it incessantly, fantasizing about what might be inside it. She is both physically and emotionally exhausted.*
4. **Why has Dad been carrying a bag full of stones? Does his plan work? Dad has been carrying the bag of stones to give Amila hope—and his plan works. The bag made Amila believe that if they really became desperate for food, they had some; it stopped her from thinking they would starve. The bag also gave her something to keep her mind on besides their perilous situation and her pain and exhaustion, as shown by the fact that Amila didn’t even notice when they’d finally left the forest and happened upon other people and safety.**
- Share responses as a whole group. Then write the following sentence stem on the board: *At the end of the story, Amila understands _____.* Give each pair or group of students a sticky note on which to complete the sentence. Then invite students to post their stickies on the board. Read them all aloud before discussing the following critical-thinking questions as a whole group.

Critical-Thinking Questions

(5 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.

1. **As you were reading, what did you think was in the bag? How did you feel when you learned that it was stones?** *Answers will vary.*

2. **What idea about hope is expressed in this story?** *Answers will vary, but students may say the story expresses an idea to the effect that hope keeps us going through difficult times.*
3. **What do you like/dislike about this story?** *Answers will vary.*

3. Skill Building and Writing

30 minutes

- Have students choose a culminating task from the **Choice Board**, a menu of differentiated activities. Note: One of the Choice Board options is the writing prompt that appears on page 29 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story page: *Write a prequel to "Bag for Life."* If students choose this option, provide the **Narrative Planner** to help them plan their prequel.

Suggested survival stories from the Scope archives:

- Narrative Nonfiction: ["Stranded at Sea"](#) (February 2022)
- Narrative Nonfiction: ["Trapped in a Cave"](#) (November 2021)
- Narrative Nonfiction: ["The Children's Blizzard"](#) (February 2019)