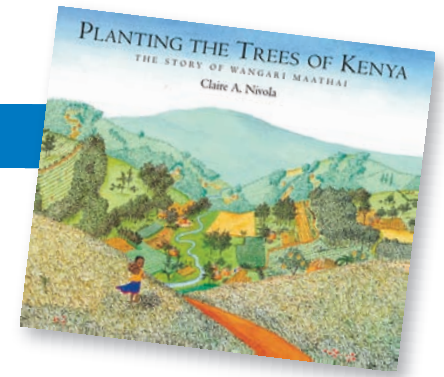


Planting the Trees of Kenya

The Story of Wangari Maathai



A RIF GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

Themes: Heroic Women, Perseverance, Environment, Education

Grade Level: 3rd to 5th grade

Book Brief: A Kenyan woman fights to save her country, one tree at a time.

Author and Illustrator:

Claire A. Nivola

Content

Connections: Math, Science, Social Studies

TIME TO READ!

BEFORE WE READ, LET'S LOOK AT...

The Cover: Have students predict what the text is about based on the title and front cover illustrations. Have them make predictions about the text's genre and the author's purpose. Who is Wangari Maathai?

The Pictures: Flip through the pages in the text. Ask your students what they notice about the illustrations. How does the land change throughout the book? What effect might that have on the people of Kenya?

Prior Knowledge: Find out what your students know about Kenya. Show them Kenya on a map and point out

its proximity to the equator. Explain that the climate tends to be wet and hot—ideal for growing many plants. Compare your area's climate with that of Kenya.

Vocabulary: sacred, homestead, plantation, export, silt

Purpose for Reading: Choose the purpose that best fits your class: "Let's read today to find out how the choices people make can affect their environment." "As we read, think about how the people of Kenya found themselves growing poorer even though they were working the same land they always had." "As we learn about Wangari Maathai, think about the difference just one person can make."

WHILE WE READ

MONITORING COMPREHENSION

- ◆ What caused the changes in Kenya while Wangari was away at college?
- ◆ What effect would the changes in the land have on the animals? How would this affect the people?

- ◆ How do you think Wangari felt when she returned to Kenya?
- ◆ What does Wangari mean when she says that good soldiers should have guns in their right hands and trees in their left?
- ◆ What would have happened if Wangari hadn't come back to Kenya?

LET'S THINK ABOUT

Our Purpose: Revisit the purpose: "How can choices people make affect the environment?" "Why did the Kenyan people become poorer while still farming?" "How was just one woman able to have such an effect on an entire country?" Have students look for evidence in the text to support their answers.

Extending Our Thinking: "What makes the fig tree sacred?" Point out that many cultures have traditionally considered certain plants or animals sacred because of all the things they provide for us. Is there any plant, animal or aspect of nature most people in the US today still hold sacred? Have we lost respect for nature? This would make a good think-pair-share activity.

NOTE TO EDUCATORS

- ◆ Extension Activities for Educators also available.
- ◆ Vocabulary Scaffolding Sheet also available.



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