



Synopsis

The Salt Caravan explores, in journal form, the experiences of a West African boy as he crosses the Sahara. The book also features information on West Africa and its people.



At a Glance

- ◆ **Genre:** nonfiction—photo essay
- ◆ **Theme:** teamwork—successfully completing a task
- ◆ **Developing Comprehension:** sequencing main text events
- ◆ **Developing Vocabulary and Language:** exploring spelling rules for words ending in *y*.
Highlighted words: *caravan, cauterize, environment, irrigate, landlocked, millet, nomad, teamwork*
- ◆ **Developing Fluency:** repeated reading for expression
- ◆ **Developing Writing:** planning a trip

Learning Outcomes

Students will

1. read text and interpret illustrations to make assumptions and answer questions (**LO 1**)
2. be able to search text in order to place statements in sequential order (**LO 2**)
3. compose a plan for a proposed trip (**LO 3**)
4. display an understanding of the importance of teamwork in successfully completing a task (**LO 4**)

Visual Elements

- ◆ captioned photographs
- ◆ map with icons
- ◆ questions in circles

Focus on Fluency

Repeated Reading for Expression

Write the text from page 4 on chart paper or on the board. Read it to students as they follow along with their eyes. Ask them to listen to how you phrase groups of words, observe the punctuation, and emphasize passages that show emotion.

Have students take particular note of pausing at commas. Help them understand that commas are used on this page to separate ideas and words in a list.

Then, as a group, have students engage in repeated readings of the passage until the reading begins to sound fluent and expressive. Monitor individual students during the reading. Plan to work together with any students who need further support.

Before Reading



Read the title with students. Explain what a salt caravan is (a train of many camels carrying loads of salt across the desert), and explain why people would pay to have salt transported such long distances (salt is essential for human health). Ask, *What do you think life would be like on a salt caravan?* Discuss the concept of teamwork. Ask, *Can you think of a time when you had to work as part of a team to get something done?*

Read page 2 to students. Ask, *Apart from running out of water, what else could make this journey dangerous?*

[bandits, becoming lost, sudden illness, etc.] Read the entries on the contents page. Have students turn to the index. Ask, *What two topics are featured most in this book?* [salt caravans, camels] *How can you tell?*

Other Books in the West Africa Set



Fiction



Biography

During Reading



This lesson guide provides suggestions for teaching the various sections of the book. It suggests using a variety of teaching approaches based on text complexity, vocabulary, and students' background knowledge. Teachers should feel free to alter the approach based on the needs and competencies of their students.

Section	Read & Discuss	Focus on Visual & Text Features	Observe & Assess
pp. 4–5	Read these pages with students. Then have students discuss the extensive preparations required for such a journey.	Discuss the highlighted word <i>caravan</i> . Ask students if they know a different use of the word (for example, <i>a caravan park</i>).	Did students display an understanding of the importance of careful preparation?
pp. 6–9	Explain the journal format to students. Then say, <i>Read to the end of page 9 and find out what happens on the first few days of the journey</i> . Have students discuss the journey.	Have students discuss the information conveyed in the photographs on these pages. Talk about the highlighted word <i>millet</i> . Ask, <i>What other cereals do you know about?</i>	Were students able to display an understanding of the main events of the first two days of Rabbedu's journey? (LO 1)
pp. 10–13	Ask, <i>What do you think will happen on the rest of the trip?</i> Have students discuss possible scenarios before reading this section. When students have finished, talk about how Rabbedu coped with challenges along the way.	Discuss the meaning of the highlighted word <i>cauterize</i> . Invite students to think of other words with the <i>-ize</i> ending. [<i>realize, memorize, energize, etc.</i>] Discuss why the author included the panel about camels.	Did students understand that although Rabbedu and the others had to cope with many hardships, these were not unexpected, and the caravan crew had prepared in advance for most of these circumstances? (LO 1)
pp. 14–15	Read these pages with students. Help students understand that West Africa is a region, not a country. Discuss some of the similarities and differences in the countries that make up West Africa.	Talk about the meaning of <i>landlocked</i> . Discuss related words (<i>landscape, landlord, etc.</i>). Help students read the map on page 15. Invite them to suggest what each of the icons represents.	Were students able to discuss some of the main similarities and differences in the countries that are included in the West African region? (LO 1)
pp. 16–17	Have students read this section and then discuss why the Niger River is so important to the people of West Africa.	Discuss the word <i>irrigation</i> and the use of the <i>-tion</i> ending to form a noun. Ask, <i>What would the verb be?</i> [<i>irrigate</i>]	Did students understand that the Niger River is extremely important in nearly every aspect of life? (LO 1)
pp. 18–21	Say, <i>Read to the end of page 21 and find out how and where many West African people live</i> . Challenge students to form a generalization about West African homes.	Discuss the highlighted words <i>nomad</i> and <i>environment</i> . Ask, <i>How do the photographs help you understand the variety of life in West Africa?</i>	Did students display an understanding of the relationship between the way people build their houses and their lifestyles and environment? (LO 1)
pp. 22–23	Have students read page 22 and compare schooling in West Africa with their own schooling.	Have students read and respond to the questions posed on page 23.	Were students able to compare schooling in West Africa with their own schooling? (LO 1)
p. 24	See Extending the Learning Experience		



Developing Comprehension

Sequencing Text Events (LO 2)

Talk about the chronological sequencing of events in the text. Choose a number of events from Rabbedu's journey across the Sahara. Write these on the board or on chart paper in random order, for example:

- Ylla finds dry grass to start a fire.
- The men cauterize the camels' blisters.
- They are given some water.
- Rabbedu pounds millet.
- They run out of water.
- The boys help the men load salt on the camels.

Have students locate each of these events and rewrite them in the correct sequence. Discuss any events (for example, points 4 and 6) that could be placed in more than one position.

Developing Vocabulary

Words Ending in *y*

Review students' understanding of the conventions for adding suffixes to words that end in *y*. Choose a word from the text such as *worry* (page 2), and demonstrate adding a range of suffixes (*worried*, *worries*, *worrier*, *worrying*). Point out that the "dropping the *y*" rule doesn't apply when adding *-ing*.

On the board, write the words *journey* and *supply* from the text. Challenge students to add appropriate suffixes to each. Help students understand that when the final *y* is preceded by a vowel, it is not dropped. For additional hands-on practice, have students use the Reading Rods® Phonics Word-Building Kit to build words that end in *y* and add different suffixes.

Developing Writing

Compose a Plan for a Trip (LO 3)

Reread pages 4 and 5 with students. Ask, *How have Rabbedu and the others prepared for the trip?* Have students discuss this question and then, together, brainstorm a list of appropriate headings that could be used when planning a cross-country family road trip or vacation, for example: *food and drink*, *transportation*, *clothing*, *entertainment*, *equipment*, and *accommodations*.

Discuss some of the items that could be included under each heading; for example, *sleeping bags* could be included under *equipment*. Then hand out copies of **The Great Family Road Trip** activity. Read through the instructions; then have students complete the task. Have some fun sharing these.

Extending the Learning Experience

Teamwork (LO 4)

Discuss the first question in the "What Do You Think?" section on page 24. Invite students to list the three things they would most miss. Then have students talk generally about the types of skills needed by Rabbedu and Ylla and how teamwork was an important ingredient of their successful journey.

Have students talk about examples of teamwork from their personal experiences. Then hand out copies of the **Working Together** activity sheet. Read the instructions; then have students complete the task.



Vocabulary Assessment — The Salt Caravan

Name _____

Date _____

Word	Assessment Task	Response
environment	Ask, <i>Can you use the word environment in a sentence?</i>	Did the student's response indicate an understanding of <i>environment</i> ? (meaning)
	<i>How many syllables are there in the word environment?</i>	Did the student say there are four syllables? (syllabification)
	<i>What part of speech is the word environment?</i>	Did the student say <i>noun</i> or <i>naming word</i> ? (parts of speech)
irrigation	Ask, <i>What does it mean to use an irrigation system?</i>	Did the student indicate an understanding of the word <i>irrigation</i> ? (meaning)
	<i>What is the base word for irrigation?</i>	Did the student say <i>irrigate</i> ? (base words)
landlocked	Ask, <i>If a country is said to be landlocked, what does this mean?</i>	Did the student indicate an understanding of <i>landlocked</i> ? (meaning)
	<i>Can you think of a word that means the opposite of landlocked?</i>	Did the student say <i>coastal</i> or a similar word? (antonyms)
	<i>How are the words landlocked and teamwork similar?</i>	Did the student recognize these as compound words? (word associations)
caravan	<i>How would you describe a caravan?</i>	Did the student display an understanding of <i>caravan</i> ? (meaning)
	<i>Can you think of another meaning for the word caravan?</i>	Was the student able to offer another meaning? (alternative meanings)
teamwork	<i>What is the meaning of the word teamwork?</i>	Did the student display an understanding of <i>teamwork</i> ? (meaning)
	<i>Can you think of a word that has a similar meaning to teamwork?</i>	Did the student say <i>cooperation</i> , <i>joint effort</i> , or a similar word? (synonyms)

Name _____

Date _____

The word *teamwork*, as described in *The Salt Caravan*, means “working together.” Think about this definition as you respond to the following.

1. Would you rather have a sports team full of stars or a team that worked well together? Why?

2. When we think of our favorite movie, we often remember the star. Do you think this person deserves all the credit? Why/why not?

3. If you could choose a team of three others to help you build a go-cart, who would you choose? Why?

4. Can you think of a situation where “going it alone” might be more important than teamwork? Explain.

(Continue writing on the back of the sheet if you need more space.)

The Great Family Road Trip

Name _____

Date _____

Imagine that you and your family are going on a road trip across the country. Use the headings below to help you prepare.

food and drink

transportation

clothing

accommodations

Making Preparations

entertainment

equipment

