

Building Language Skills with The Seattle Times

Date: **Thursday, March 30, 2017**

Article: **Drought and warfare create perfect storm for 4 massive famines**

Print Replica: **Tuesday, March 28, 2017**

Section: **Main, A1**

Standard:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.10

By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, at the high end of the grades 4-5 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Key Ideas and Details:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.3

Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

Objective:

Students will practice their reading skills to explore how the author uses reasoning and evidence to support specific points in the text by using deeper level questions and connecting the content to their personal lives.

Pre-Reading: Get into pairs and look at these pictures together. Answer the questions below.



An ***inference***, is making a conclusion or opinion that is formed because of known facts or evidence Examine the following pictures and make an *inference* about what the story will be about:

- What do you see?
- Who is in the pictures?
- What emotions do you see?
- What do you see that would help you with what the article will be about?
- What questions do you have about the photos?
- Where do you think the pictures were taken?

Vocabulary:

Look up the definitions for the following word. Write definitions in the space provided, using your own words. Get into pairs and take turns telling your partner the definition of these words without looking at what you wrote.

“Different strategies are being emphasized this time around to ***parry*** the famine. One is simply giving out cash.”

Parry:

Building Language Skills:

Visualizing text is a proven way that improves reading comprehension. Have students close their eyes and listen carefully. Have them think deeply about the words described in the statement.

The teacher will read the following sentence to the class, taken from the article.

“First the trees dried up and cracked apart. Then the goats keeled over. Then the water in the village well began to disappear, turning cloudy, then red, then slime-green, but the villagers kept drinking it. That was all they had.”

Have students share their thoughts. What images did they see? What emotions did the paragraph stir inside of you?

Comprehension:

1. For the first time since anyone can remember, there is a very real possibility of four famines breaking out at once, endangering more than 20 million lives. What countries are at the center of this crisis?
2. International aid officials say they are facing one of the biggest humanitarian disasters since _____.

3. One powerful lesson from the last famine in Somalia, just six years ago, was that famines were not simply about food. They are about something even more elemental. What are they talking about?
4. What two main things are setting off an outbreak of killer diseases in displaced-persons camps?
5. What are the low-tech supplies that could save many lives?
6. Aid officials say all the needed food and water exist on this planet in abundance — even within these hard hit countries. What is happening?
7. What has happened recently to the cost of water in Somalia?
8. What is happening in Yemen?
9. What is happening in Nigera?
10. What is happening in Sudan?
11. The crowded camps have become hotbeds of communicable diseases like cholera. What is cholera and how is it spread?

Post-Reading Class Discussion or Journal Writing Assignment:

- What is your prior knowledge about famines?
- Do you ever think about how important water and food is?
- How did this article make you feel?

If rivers and other relatively clean water sources start drying up, as they are right now in Somalia, this sets off an interlocking cycle of death. People start to get sick at their stomachs from the slimy or cloudy water they are forced to drink. They start fleeing their villages, hoping to get help in the towns.

Camps form. But the camps do not have enough water either, and it is hard to find a latrine or enough water for people to wash their hands. Shockingly fast, the camps become disease factories.

- Do you see how quickly diseases can spread in these camps?
- What are the simple and inexpensive ways (that was in the article) to help the people in the camps survive?

Water, of course, is less negotiable than food. A human can survive weeks with nothing to eat. Five days without water means death.

- Did you know these statistics prior to reading the article?
- Did you know a human can survive weeks without food but 5 days without water and a human will die?
- How does that make you feel about water as a precious resource?

What needs to be done for these countries and their government in order to reduce armed conflict and rivalries, inflation and trade blockades and corruption? Is there a way out for these people?

Divide into small groups and brainstorm the best ways to help these countries tackle these huge problems. Be prepared to share your ideas with the rest of your class.