

Reading Comprehension & Classroom Activities

Home Away from Home



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BEFORE READING

Look Closely at the Front Cover

- What do you see in the illustration?
- Describe the lady and the girl.
- How do you think they are feeling? What clues help you know this?
- Where do you think the story takes place?
- What do you think the story might be about?



Encourage students to make predictions based on the illustration, colors, and expressions.

DURING READING

Read the book aloud or listen to an audio version together.

Invite students to notice how Nuha's feelings change as the story unfolds.

AFTER READING

Understanding the Story

- In your own words, what was the story about?
- When the story begins, Nuha does not want to visit Oman. Why do you think she feels this way?
- How does Nuha feel at the beginning of the story?
- When Nuha loses her doll, how does that make her feel?
 - Have you ever lost something special to you? How did it feel?
- Why do you think Nuha does not like Oman when she first arrives?
 - Have you ever traveled to a place you didn't like at first?



LOOKING AT THE ILLUSTRATIONS

- How does Nuha's home look different from Oman?
- What interesting or new things do you notice at the souk (market)?
- What details help show that this place is different from where Nuha lives?



WRITING ACTIVITIES

Cultural Traditions

A tradition is something a family passes down from one generation to another. It can be a special activity, food, or way of celebrating holidays or life events.

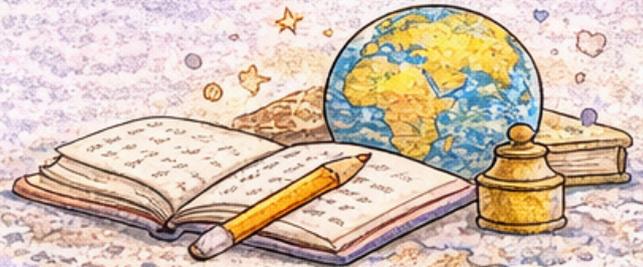
Omani culture is different from what Nuha is used to in the United States.

- Does your family have a tradition?
 - Examples: movie night, special meals, family gatherings
- Write about one family tradition or draw a picture of it.
- What does this tradition mean to you?



CREATIVE WRITING

- Write a story about a place you have visited:
 - A grandparent's home
 - A country your family comes from
 - A place you travel to often
- What is it like there?
 - How does it make you feel?
 - Do you enjoy visiting this place? Why or why not?



AUTHOR'S CRAFT

- Authors use special techniques to make stories fun to read aloud. Can you find examples of these in *Home Away from Home*?
- Look for:
 - 1 Rhymes
 - 2 Onomatopoeia (words that sound like noises)
 - 3 Alliteration (repeating beginning sounds)
 - 4 Metaphors (describing something by comparing it to something else)



EMOTIONS & FEELINGS

A character's actions, words, and choices help readers understand how they feel—even when the character doesn't say it out loud.

Reread & Observe

As you reread *Home Away from Home*, pay close attention to Nuha. Create a chart like the one below:

What Nuha Does	Why Do You Think She Does This?	How Is She Feeling?
Example: Hugs her doll tightly at home	Her doll comforts her. It makes her feel safe.	Sad, worried, comforted

Try It Yourself

- Find two more moments in the story where Nuha does something important.
- Describe:
 - What she does
 - What might be going on inside her heart or mind.
 - How her feelings change over time



Reflect & Connect

- Have you ever felt the way Nuha felt?
- What made you feel better?
- Who or what helped you feel safe?



Skill Focus: Emotional awareness, inference



Big Idea: Feelings change—and noticing them helps us understand ourselves and others.





LANGUAGE & CULTURE

The story includes Arabic words alongside English.



Notice & Wonder

- Which Arabic words did you hear or read?
- What do you think they mean?
- How did you figure it out—through pictures, context, or explanation?



Think Deeper

- Why do you think the author chose to include words from another language?
- How do these words help the story feel more real?



Try This

- Write or draw one new word you learned.
- Do you speak or hear another language at home?
- Share a word that is special to you or your family.



أهلاً وسهلاً



Big Idea: Language carries culture, meaning and identity.





DRAWING & ART

Art helps us tell stories in new ways.



Draw from the Story

Choose one:

- Draw your favorite scene from the book.
- Draw something new or surprising Nuha experiences in Oman.



Add Details

- What colors did you use? Why?
- What emotions are the characters feeling in your picture?
- What details help show where the scene takes place?



Extension (Ages 7-9): Add a speech bubble or thought bubble to your drawing.

LANGUAGE & CULTURE

At first, Nuha does not want to eat chicken shawarma.

Notice & Wonder

- Which Arabic words did you hear or read?
- What do you think they mean?

Make a Personal Connection

- Is there a food you didn't like at first but later loved?
- What helped you try it again?
 - A smell?
 - A friend or family member?
 - Seeing someone else enjoy it?



Writing Prompt

- A food I tried was _____.
- At first, I didn't want to try because _____.
- I decided to try it when _____.
- It smelled _____.
- I tried it because _____.
- Now I think it tastes _____.
- I felt proud when _____.



 **Big Idea:** Trying new things can be scary – but also rewarding.

CLOSING REFLECTION

- How did Nuha change from the beginning of the story to the end?
- What helped her feel more at home?
- What helps you feel at home when things feel new?

Deeper Reflection

- Nuha's feelings change when _____ happens,
- At the beginning of the story, Nuha feels _____, but later she feels _____.
- This shows that feelings can _____.
- I learned that it's okay to feel _____ when _____.

Talk About It

- Would you like to travel to Oman?
- Why or why not?
- What do you think Oman would be like?

After reading the story, I feel

- One thing I would want to see in Oman is _____.
- I would like to visit the _____.
- I think Oman would feel _____.
- I would be excited to _____.

BIG IDEA REFLECTION

- Traveling helps us learn about _____.
- Visiting new places can make us feel _____.
- Even places far away can feel like _____.

HENNA PATTERN MATH

Inspired by: Henna scene in the souk سوق

Instructions

Henna designs use patterns and symmetry—just like math!

Activity

- 1 Draw a line down the middle of the hand below.
- 2 Create a pattern on one side.



STEM Skill:
Pattern recognition &
symmetry



Big Idea: Math lives
in art and culture

MARKET MATH AT THE SOUK

Inspired by shopping, bartering, and sensory discoveries in the souk.

Nuha and Jadda are exploring the souk.
Each stall sells something special!



SOUK PRICE LIST

	Doll	\$3
	Shawarma	\$2
	Drum	\$4
	Henna	\$2
	Candy Sticks	\$1
	Perfume	\$5
	Figs	\$2

PART 1: MATCH & COUNT

Activity A: Count the Coins

Circle two items you like.

Count how many dollars you need.

I need \$ _____ to buy my items.

 Teacher tip: Use counters, play money, or dot drawing.



PART 2: CHOOSE & ADD

Nuha has \$5.

1. Which of these can she buy? (Circle all that work.)

- Perfume Doll + Candy sticks Shawarma + Figs
 Henna + Candy sticks

2. Show your math: \$ _____ + \$ _____ = \$ _____

PART 3: SOUK CHALLENGE

Multi-Step Problem

Nuha has \$10 to spend. ✓



3. Show your math: \$ _____ + \$ _____ = \$ _____

3. How much change will Nuha get back from \$10?

\$10 - \$ _____ = \$ _____



BONUS CHALLENGE (Critical Thinking)

Jadda says,

"We should save at least \$2 for figs later."

- Can Nuha still buy perfume? Why or why not?

Explain your thinking: _____

AT THE SOUK



Inspired by shopping, bartering, and sensory discoveries in the souk

Nuha and Jadda are back at the souk! Solve these math puzzles

PART 1: MULTIPLYING AT THE MARKET

1 Nuha made a shopping list but forgot the total cost!
Can you figure it out?



Nuha's Order:



4 Candy Sticks **2** Shawarmas **6** Figs

Total Cost: \$ + + =

PART 2: DIVIDING THE DEALS

Sharing the Figs

Jadda bought 18 figs. She will share them equally with her three grandkids.

How many figs does each get?



3 kids: figs each



PART 3: SOUK STAR CHALLENGE

Perfume is a popular item!

Hamza sells **3** bottles daily.

1. How many bottles does he sell in a week?

3 bottles \times 7 days = bottles

SKILLS: \times \div $+$ $-$

SKILLS: Multiplication, division, problem solving, bartering

Big Idea: Math helps us plan, trade, and make

3 bottles \times 7 days = bottles

3. Maya raised her price from **\$6** to **\$8**.

She sold the same 3 bottles in one day.

How much more did she earn?

$\$8 \times 3 =$ $\$6 \times 3 =$ more



ENGINEERING DESIGN CHALLENGE



BIG QUESTION

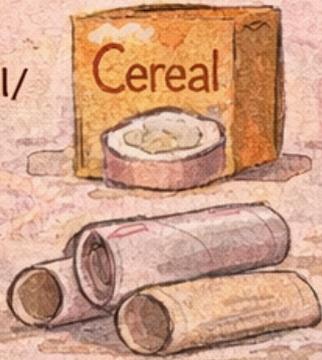
How can we design a souk stall that is strong, useful, and welcoming?

MATERIALS

(Choose what you have – low prep & flexible)

Building pieces

- Cardboard (cereal/ shoe boxes)
- Paper towel or toilet paper rolls
- Craft sticks/ popsicle sticks
- Index cards or construction paper
- Paper cups



Connectors

- Masking or painter's tape
- Glue sticks



3 BUILD (15-20 min)

Use your materials to build your stall.

Engineering tips:

- Roll paper into tubes for strength
- Fold cardboard into triangles
- Use more than one support

THINK LIKE AN ENGINEER

- What part was hardest to build?
- What made your stall stronger?
- How does good design help shopkeepers?

STEM CONNECTION



Skill: Engineering design process
(Imagine – Plan – Build – Test – Improve)

YOUR DESIGN MUST:

- Stand on its own
- Hold at least 3 items
- Have a roof or arch

1 IMAGINE (5 min)

Think about the stalls Nuha and Jadda see in the souk.

- What do stalls need to do?
 - How will people shop here?
- Draw a quick sketch of your stall.

2 BUILD (15-20 min)

Before building, decide:

- What will hold it up?
 - Where will the roof go?
- (Older kids: label roof, walls, supports.)



4 TEST (5 min)

Place 3 items inside your stall.

- Did it stand?
 - Did anything bend or fall?
- If it falls, that's okay — engineers redesign!



Big Idea: Designs solve real world problems – and can always

Souk Sensory Science Walk

Inspired by: Smells, sounds, and sights of the souk



Big Idea

Scientists use their **five senses** to learn about the world—just like Nuha exploring the souk.

PART 1: SENSORY WALK

Take children on a **slow walk** around an **outdoor space** (schoolyard, garden, park, playground courtyard)



SEE • What do you notice?



HEAR – What do you hear?



SMELL – What do you smell?



FEEL – What do you feel?
(Touch)

Sense	What I Noticed
See	
Hear	
Smell	
Feel	

PART 2: RECORD YOUR OBSERVATIONS

Take children on a table, clipboard, or sitting area and complete



SEE – What do you notice? _____



HEAR – What do you hear? _____



SMELL – What do you smell? _____



FEEL – What do you feel? (Touch) _____

PART 3: REFLECT

Which sense helped you understand _____



TEACHER TIP: Help kids find safe spots to touch.

Model language: “I notice...”, instead of “I like...”

Two Dolls, One Me

Instructions

Nuha has two dolls that are different – but both belong to her.

Activity

Draw **two** things that represent you:

- One from home
- One from somewhere new

Finish the Sentence:

One from home

One from somewhere new



Finish the Sentence:

I am made of ~~a lot of things~~
and together they make me.



STEM Skill : Systems thinking



Big Idea: Identity can hold many worlds





GEOGRAPHY



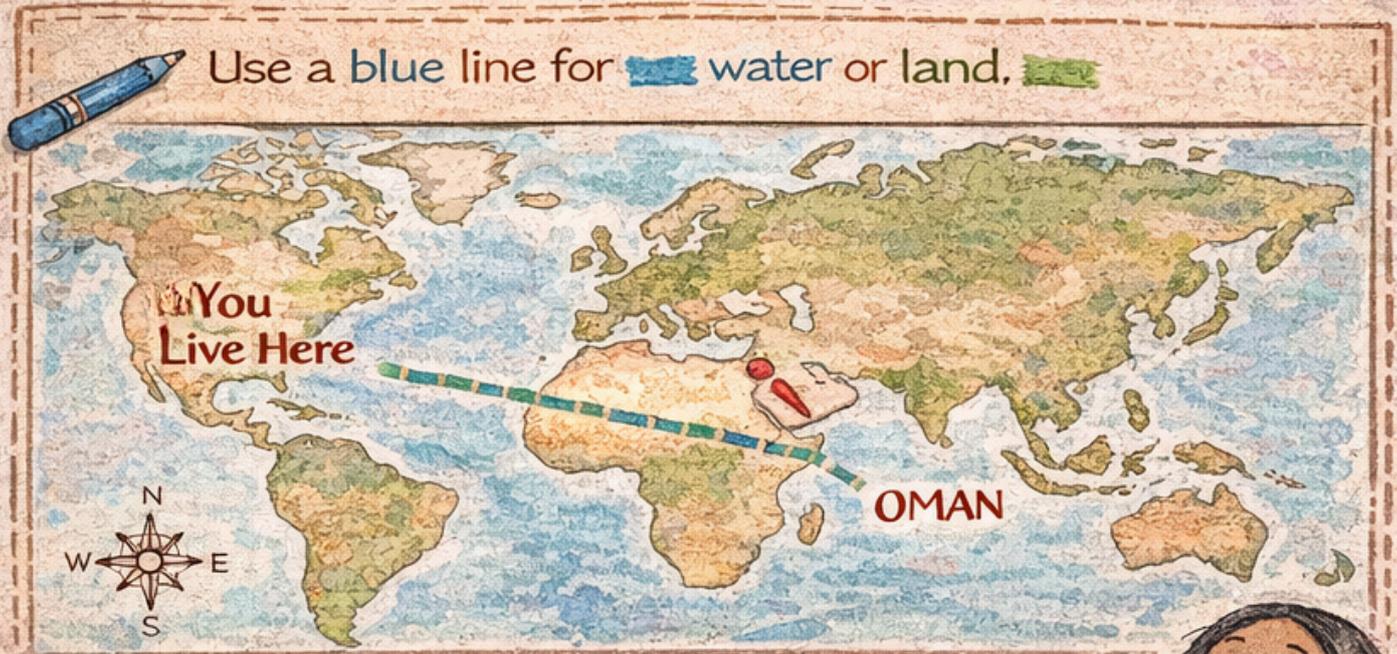
From Here to Oman

Inspired by: Nuha's journey and the map/back matter



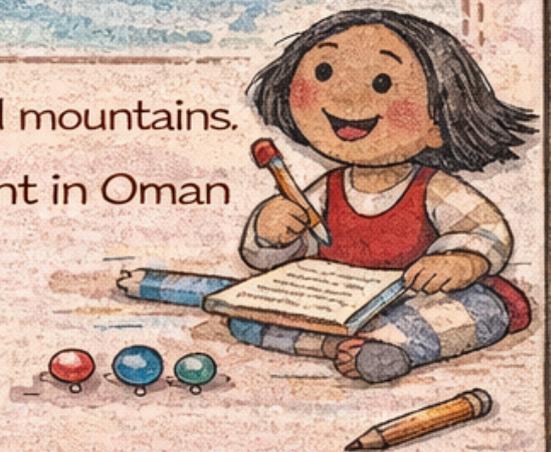
PART 1: FIND & TRACE (All Ages)

- Activity.**
1. Find where you live on a map,
 2. Find Oman,
 3. Draw a line showing how Nuha traveled.



Oman is by the sea and has deserts and mountains. Draw or list one thing that might be different in Oman because of:

- Weather: _____
- Land: _____



Count how many countries the line passes over.



SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITY -

CLOTHING & PLACE



CLOTHING AROUND THE WORLD

Inspired by: Jadda's abaya and the glossary



BIG IDEA

- **Activity:** Look closely at the clothes people wear in the story.
- **Answer:** What clothes do people wear in **Oman**?
What clothes do people wear where **your live**?



Teacher tip: Use language like "I notice..." instead of "I think..."



PART 2: DRAW & COMPARE

Draw two outfits:

Outfit from Oman

Outfit from My Community



Colors • Length ✂ length • Patterns



PART 3: CLOTHING & ENVIRONMENT

Clothes help people stay comfortable.

Match the clothing to the reason:

Clothing Feature	Why It Helps
 Long sleeves	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sun <input type="checkbox"/> Cold <input type="checkbox"/> Wind
 Light fabric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heat <input type="checkbox"/> Rain <input type="checkbox"/> Snow
 Loose clothing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air flow <input type="checkbox"/> Decoration



Question: How does weather affect what people wear?



SKILLS & SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTIONS



Skills: Cultural awareness, comparison, observation



Concepts: Culture, environment, daily life, identity



Big Idea: Different traditions, meet the same human needs.

SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITY -

CLOTHING & IDENTITY

PART 4: CLOTHING & DAILY LIFE

- People wear different clothes for different activities.
- Circle what people might wear:



- At home
- At school
- At a celebration
- At a market

Question: Why might clothes change for each activity?

PART 5: CLOTHING & CULTURE

- Some clothes:
 - Show respect
 - Show tradition
 - Show family or community values

Discussion Prompts:

- Why might Jadda wear an abaya?
- Are there clothes in your family worn for special days?
- How do clothes help people feel they belong?



PART 6: SAME NEEDS, DIFFERENT WAYS

Finish the sentences:

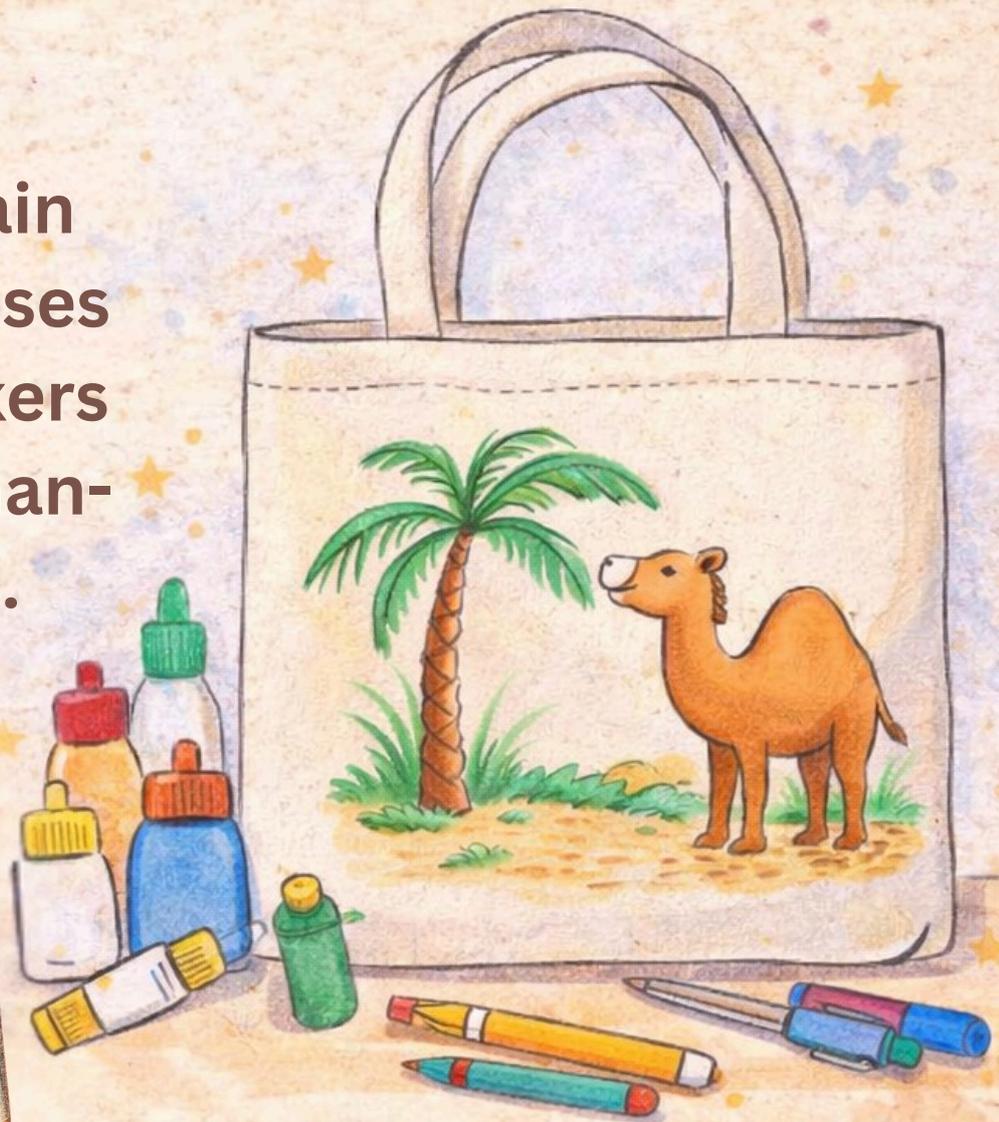
- Clothes help people stay. _____.
- Clothes can show. _____.
- Even if clothes look different, people everywhere need _____.
- My favorite outfit to wear at home is. _____.



Create Your Own Shopping Bag

Students can design their own market bag and bring home a special keepsake!

Each child receives a plain tote bag and uses paints or markers to draw an Oman-inspired art.



This activity encourages creativity and self-expression while requiring minimal assistance.