Vocabulary

Read and review these vocabulary words to prepare you for reading this book. One of the words appears in the Read Aloud on page 87. Which one?

camp—a temporary settlement where people are kept and watched
exhausted—tired and drained of all strength
route—the path taken
sacrifice—something given up for the good of another
shelter—something that covers and protects from weather and danger
tribe—a group of people with shared family history and customs
weep—to cry

Fluency Warm-Up

Reading with Expression

When you read with expression, you use your voice to bring out the meaning and feeling of the words.

How will you know what to express? First, watch for punctuation. For example, an exclamation mark can tell you when to read with anger or excitement. Second, try to imagine what the writer or a character may be thinking or feeling.

Fluency Practice

1. Read this with an angry voice. I lost my ugly shoes.
2. Read this with a happy voice. I lost my ugly shoes.
3. How would you read this? THAT’S MY SHOE!
4. How would you read this? That’s my shoe?
Comprehension Warm-Up
Making Inferences

An inference is an educated guess that you make about your reading. To make an inference, use clues in the reading and your own experience.

One way to practice making inferences is to ask yourself questions as you read. Then you can use what you know to figure out the best answers.

COMPREHENSION TIP

As you read, ask questions like these.
- What kind of person is this character?
- Why did the author write this?
- What will happen next?
Readers' Theater

Presents

The Trail of Tears

by

Laura Layton Strom

Cast

(in order of appearance)

Narrator

Sa-li (SAW lee)

Father

Mother

Iskagua (is KAW gwa)

brother of Sa-li
NARRATOR: Our play begins in October 1838. This story is about a fictional Cherokee family from Chattanooga, Tennessee. After the U.S. government passed the Indian Removal Act, the Cherokee were forced to leave their homes. This was one of the darkest times in American history.

SA-LI: Dear Diary,
It has been six months since we left our land, our home. The federal guards forced us to leave. I could not take my sewing or my books. My grandmother had to leave her medicines behind. My mother left her beloved treasures. There are about 900 Cherokee at this camp.
I’m lucky, though. There are children here without their parents. Their parents were taken to a different camp.

FATHER: Sa-li, dear, what are you doing?

SA-LI: I’m just writing in my diary, Father.

FATHER: Come here by the fire, Sa-li. I need to talk to you and Iskagua. We need to have a family meeting.
**Narrator:** Sa-li and her family gathered by the fire. Father brought terrible news.

**Father:** We will never go home again. We must leave this camp with the other Cherokee tomorrow. I hear 15,000 of our people had to leave their homes. We will journey westward with our tribe to a place far away. We will start a new life there.

**Mother:** But why? Why is the white man doing this to us? We did not bother anyone.

**Father:** The white man wants the land. I heard that a few Cherokee leaders agreed to move. But the leaders of our tribe said those chiefs did not speak for all of us. Yet, we all need to go.

**Iskagua:** Can't we fight this?

**Father:** No, son. The leaders of our tribe say we must move. Our survival as a people depends on doing what we are told.

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**Fluency Tip**

Think about how Iskagua is feeling. Change your voice to express his feelings.
ISKAGUA: And we have to walk?

FATHER: Yes, my son. The women will ride in the wagon.

MOTHER: How far will we travel?

FATHER: It is very far. It will take us all autumn and winter. We will have to be strong. We will ask the Great Spirit to watch over us.

SA-LI: Father, we will be strong. We will do this as a family. Family is most important.

MOTHER: How will we start? Is there a trail to follow?

FATHER: The trail starts with every Cherokee’s first footstep. We’ve been given a route. We’ll set off at sunrise. So go and rest.

NARRATOR: It is now November 1838. One month has passed since Sa-li and her family left the camp for land in what is now Oklahoma.
Sa-li: Dear Diary,
    The weather seems to get colder and wetter with every passing day. I've never seen so much mud! Grandmother has been coughing a lot. I think the weather is very hard on her.

Iskagua: (returning from a hunt) Hello, Sa-li.

Sa-li: Hello, Brother. I can hear my stomach growl with hunger. Did you find something good for us to eat?

Iskagua: I'm afraid not, Sa-li. Father and I searched and searched. There is so much rain and mud that I think the animals are hiding. I'm afraid we will have to eat the wheat the government gave us.

Narrator: Thousands of Cherokee continue the journey west. The harsh winter has killed many of them. Many others are sick. All are exhausted. At night you can hear the people weep. The children cry. The women cry. The men cry. The Cherokee people keep their heads down and keep moving west.
SA-LI: Dear Diary, Grandmother died today. She has been sick since we left home without her special medicines. I think the creek water we drank last week did not help. We all got very ill. But Grandmother did not get better. I hope she is feasting on meat with the Great Spirit.

FATHER: I am so proud of you all, dear family. This will be our new home.

MOTHER: Our trip is done. This land looks so different from our last home. But we will make it into a new home.

ISKAGUA: Father, what should we do first?

FATHER: First, we will build a shelter. Then we will go in search of meat.

MOTHER: Yes, it would be good to have some fresh meat to cook. Sa-li, let's go get some wood for a fire.

SA-LI: (later that evening) Dear Diary, We started our new life today. We still miss our old home. And we don't understand why we had to leave. But we are a strong people. We will not let this weaken our family or our tribe. Our family and tribe mean everything to us.
NARRATOR: By March 1839, all survivors had arrived in the west. Thousands had died along the way, especially the youngest and oldest people. There is now a Trail of Tears State Park and Historic Trail to honor the Cherokee people. The park helps us remember the sadness and sacrifice of a proud people.
Comprehension

Write your answer to each question on the lines below.

1. Why does Sa-li think she is luckier than some Cherokee children?

2. Why are the Cherokee people being forced to move?

3. What is Iskagua thinking and feeling in this play? How do you know?

4. How would you feel if you were in Iskagua’s situation?

5. Why do you think Father says that the Cherokee’s survival depends on obeying the government?

6. From what you read, how would you describe Sa-li?

7. Why do you think Father is proud of his family?
Vocabulary

Write each vocabulary word on the line where it belongs.

route  weep  exhausted  tribe  sacrifice  camp  shelter

1. After the climb up the mountain, we were all ________________.

2. A tepee is a traditional Native American ________________.

3. I started to ________________ when I read the sad part of the story.

4. The boys were in a hurry, so they took a direct ________________ home.

5. At the museum, we learned about the Hopi ________________.

Extension

1. In a small group, imagine you have to leave your home tomorrow and you will never return. What would you pack in a backpack to take with you?

2. Research other Native American people and where they lived and what happened to them. Choose from the following or find others:
   - Apache
   - Comanche
   - Hopi
   - Caddo
   - Cree
   - Iroquois
   - Navajo
   - Seminole