

Educator's Guide



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CONTENTS

For the Teacher	3
Pre-Reading Activities	4
Prologue	4
CHAPTER 1: Warnings	5
CHAPTER 2: Eitan's Homecoming	6
CHAPTER 3: The Knock	7
CHAPTER 4: On the Run	8
CHAPTER 5: The Old British Fort	9
CHAPTER 6: Arriving in Ateret	10
CHAPTER 7: Good Morning, Ateret	11
CHAPTER 8: Of Guests and Hospitality	12
CHAPTER 9: Battling the Fire	13
CHAPTER 10: What Counts Most	14
CHAPTER 11: New Reports	15
CHAPTER 12: Reunion	16
CHAPTER 13: Aftermath	17
EPILOGUE: Efrat's Diary	17
Supplementary Activities	18

FOR THE TEACHER

This guide consists of lessons to assist you in using *Escape from the Neve Tzuf Fire: An Israeli Family's Story of Survival* in your classroom. The guide is written in a chapter-by-chapter format and includes a synopsis, pre-reading activities, and comprehension questions, as well as supplementary activities to be used at the end of the book.

The book and its accompanying guide can be used in a number of ways. Students reading at the same level might participate in a small-group guided reading of the book, returning to it over several weeks as they read and discuss it with the teacher. The entire class might read the book and discuss it in small groups using literature circles or reciprocal teaching. The teacher can then use the suggested questions to guide students in their discussions. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. Students should be encouraged to support their answers with evidence from the text. Students might keep a notebook of their responses throughout the year, which can then be used for progress monitoring and assessment purposes.

Using this guide can help you as a teacher create more active readers. Students who are encouraged to think about their reading, make inferences, compare and contrast events and characters, and notice author's language will read more closely and carefully. They will become more thoughtful readers, and their reading comprehension will improve. Working on this in the context of authentic literature helps to inspire a motivation and love for reading.

SYNOPSIS Efrat Cohen and her family escaped the forest fire of Neve Tzuf. They showed bravery and courage as they ran from the flames.

Pre-Reading Activities

Use one or more of the following activities to introduce the book.

1. **Predictions:** Have students preview the book by reading the title, the author, and looking at the picture on the cover. What do they think this book will be about? Have they read any other books in this series? What clues can they gather from the photograph on the cover?
2. **Building Background:** This book tells the story of a forest fire in Israel. Discuss what causes a forest fire and places in America where forest fires often develop. Why might these fires be particularly dangerous? Why would they occur in Israel?
3. **Genre Focus:** *Escape from the Neve Tzuf Fire: An Israeli Family's Story of Survival* is a true story. Students can read the disclaimer on the copyright page and discuss: Why are some conversations and minor episodes changed in the book?
4. **Geography:** Have students study the map on the inside front spread of the book to get acquainted with the Neve Tzuf area. Which cities do students recognize on this map?
5. **Current Events:** Discuss the current forest fires in the world, if any, to build background understanding for the book.



PROLOGUE



1. What are some questions you now have about the Cohen family story? Note these questions and leave space to record their answers as you read the rest of the book.
2. Efrat claimed she wasn't afraid. In that case, why did she ask her mother to drive faster?
3. What might Mr. Cohen have meant when he said, "This weather is just too much." How does weather relate to forest fires?

CHAPTER 1 — WARNINGS

SYNOPSIS As forest fires rage across the region, the Cohen family prepares for a possible evacuation of their home.

→ **Prompt:** This story begins with the Cohen family preparing for the possibility of leaving their home. Read to find out why they might need to run away.

Guided Questions

1. Describe the environmental factors that made it easy for the fires to spread.
2. Explain why the Cohens' *yishuv* was particularly in danger of catching on fire.
3. On page 16, it says, "Didi, Shalhevet, and twenty-year-old Yaeli all exchanged glances." What might they have been thinking as they looked at each other?
4. Why might Eitan have had to return from yeshivah?
-  5. **Document-based question:** Study the photograph on page 14. How would this blanket protect people in case of a fire?
-  6. **Document-based question:** Study the photograph on page 16. What details do you notice in the picture? How would you describe the *yishuv*?

CHAPTER 2 — EITAN'S HOMECOMING

SYNOPSIS Eitan is home for Shabbos, and the Cohen family waits to see how the situation will develop.

➔ Prompt: Read to find out what happens once Eitan comes home for Shabbos.

Guided Questions

1. Why did Eitan leave his laundry and tefillin in yeshivah?
2. What made the discussion of the birthday party “a moment to be cherished”?
3. What are some reasons the fire was a major topic of conversation at the Rimmel Shabbos table?
4. What tone does the author use to describe the meal at the Rimmels’ house? Bring evidence from the text to support your answer.
5. Why was this wave of forest fires later referred to as the “fire intifada”?

CHAPTER 3 — THE KNOCK

SYNOPSIS The Cohen family is awakened in the middle of the night on Friday night and escapes their home from the fire.

→ Prompt: Read to find out what happens that Friday night.

Guided Questions


1. Why did the Cohen parents send their children out of the house ahead of them? Where were the parents going?
2. Why was the Rimmels' house a safer place for the Cohen family to wait out the fire?
3. When Abba wished Efrat, "Go in peace," the text says this was "like a wish that was also a command." Explain what this means.
4. Why was it important for Abba to shut the main electricity switch before leaving the house?
5. When the forest was first lit on fire, it caught slowly. Why?

CHAPTER 4 — ON THE RUN

SYNOPSIS The family runs from the Rimmels' house to the Old British Fort when it becomes clear the house will not be safe.

→ **Prompt:** Read to find out what happens after the Cohens arrive at the Rimmels' house.

Guided Questions

1. How and why did the original plans change once Ima came to the Rimmels' house?
2. If it was not a time of war, why was the air-raid siren turned on?
3. When they left the Rimmels' house, Yaeli told Efrat to look only left and not right. Why?
4. Why was the lowest neighborhood of Neve Tzuf particularly damaged by the fire?
5.  **Document-based question:** Carefully study the photograph on page 34. What details do you notice in the picture?

CHAPTER 5 — THE OLD BRITISH FORT

SYNOPSIS The Old British Fort is not a safe option, and Efrat, her mother, and Yaeli catch a ride to Ateret.

→ Prompt: Read to find out what happens when the Cohens reach the Old British Fort.

Guided Questions

1. Why did the Cohen family ride in a car on Shabbos to reach the Old British Fort?
2. Explain why the people of Neve Tzuf thought running to the fort would be a good idea and why they then changed their minds.
3. Summarize what you have read so far by listing the steps in the Cohen family's escape up to this point.
4. What were some of the steps taken by the firefighters and army personnel to fight against the fire?

CHAPTER 6 — ARRIVING IN ATERET

SYNOPSIS Ima, Yaeli, and Efrat settle into Ateret for the night.

➔ **Prompt:** Read to find out what happens when Efrat reaches Ateret.

Guided Questions

1. Describe some of Efrat's worries as she rode in the car to Ateret.
2. Describe Efrat and Yaeli's relationship. Bring evidence from the text to support your ideas.
3. How did the people of Ateret arrange to care for the refugees of Neve Tzuf?
4. Why did Ima choose to sleep in the dorm rather than at a family's house?
5. How might Efrat have felt when she bumped into her teacher, Mrs. Samuels?

CHAPTER 7 — GOOD MORNING, ATERET

SYNOPSIS Efrat, Yaeli, and her parents leave the yeshivah dorm for the Rosenfeld house.

→ Prompt: Read to find out what happens when Efrat wakes up on Shabbos morning in Ateret.

Guided Questions


1. Describe some of the ways the people of Ateret showed hospitality to the refugees of Neve Tzuf.
2. Why did the Cohen family feel particularly bad for the Reissmans?
3. Why was Efrat wishing for clouds as she walked through Ateret on Shabbos morning?
4. Add to the list of steps in the Cohens' escape route that you began earlier in the story.

CHAPTER 8 — OF GUESTS AND HOSPITALITY

SYNOPSIS Efrat spends Shabbos day at the Rosenfelds' house.

→ Prompt: Read to find out how Efrat spends the rest of her Shabbos.

Guided Questions



1. Describe Efrat's thoughts and feelings when Tzurit Rosenfeld asked her to describe the fire.
2. What kind of people were the Rosenfelds? Bring details from the text to support your answers.
-  3. **Document-based question:** Study the photographs on page 64. What details do you notice in these pictures?

CHAPTER 9 — BATTLING THE FIRE

SYNOPSIS Back in Neve Tzuf, Eitan works with other firefighters to put out the blaze.

→ Prompt: Read to find out how Eitan fights the fire back at Neve Tzuf.

Guided Questions

1. Describe the process the firefighters of Neve Tzuf used to fight the forest fire.
2. What was the role of the Supertanker in fighting the fire?
3. Describe Eitan's feelings as he heard what had happened to his family and to his home.
4. What survived the fire in the Cohens' home? What message did Eitan take from that?
-  5. **Document-based question:** Examine the photograph on page 67. Which details in the picture are reflected in the text?
-  6. **Document-based question:** Look closely at the photographs on pages 29 and 71. What common features can you find in them?

CHAPTER 10 — WHAT COUNTS MOST

SYNOPSIS A bar mitzvah is quickly arranged for Nevo Reissman, and the Ateret community continues to show exceptional hospitality to Efrat and the other refugees.

→ Prompt: Read to find out more about Efrat's Shabbos experiences and how these make her feel.

Guided Questions


1. Explain why the sweet candies suddenly seemed unappetizing to Efrat.
2. The text says, "And coming back to the Rosenfelds' home later, she realized that she'd gained something as well." Explain what Efrat had gained.
3. Describe Efrat's mixed feelings over the Shabbos she spent in Ateret.
4. Why do you think Efrat would "forever cherish her Shabbos in Ateret"?

CHAPTER 11 — NEW REPORTS

SYNOPSIS After Shabbos is over, the Cohen family makes plans to go to their grandparents, and they hear about the state of their community and house.

→ Prompt: Read to find out what happens when Shabbos is over.

Guided Questions

1. Why did Efrat tremble during Havdalah on *motza'ei Shabbos*?
2. Describe the extent of the damage to Neve Tzuf based on information the Cohens received after Shabbos was over.
3. What is meant when it says that Neve Tzuf was “a settlement with question marks hanging over it”?
4.  **Creative writing:** Write a thank-you note from Efrat to the Rosenfeld family, including specific instances of their hospitality and describing her feelings after Shabbos concluded.

CHAPTER 12 — REUNION

SYNOPSIS The Cohen family reunites, visits Neve Tzuf, and then settles into their grandparents' home in Modi'in.

→ Prompt: Read to find out how the Cohen family reunites with Eitan.

Guided Questions

1. Why was Efrat glad that it was completely dark when she visited her destroyed home?
2. Explain what the hardest part of his job was, according to Eitan.
3. Describe Efrat's new understanding of what a home really is.
4. What were some of the miracles experienced in Neve Tzuf the night of the fire?
5. Describe the sense of security Efrat felt after she showered and settled in to her grandparents' home.

CHAPTER 13 — AFTERMATH

SYNOPSIS The Cohen family, with support from family, friends, and people around the world, slowly rebuilds.


→ Prompt: Read to find out how the Cohen family moves on after the fire.

Guided Questions

1. What were some of the ways that family and friends showed support for the Cohens after the fire?
2. Why do you think the routine of school was so important to Efrat?
3. Why did the worker in the “store” let Efrat take something even before it was open for business?
4. Describe some of the differences between the Cohens’ temporary home and the one they lost in the fire.
5. What were some of the lessons Efrat gained from the fire?

EPILOGUE — EFRAT’S DIARY

→ Prompt: Read to find out more about the events in the book, as told in Efrat's own words.

1. What else have you learned about Efrat’s personality after reading her diary?
2. Consider Efrat’s poem about the fire. What message was she conveying? What tone did she use?
-  3. **Document-based question:** Look at the photos on pages 104 and 105. Describe Efrat’s feelings at the time these photos were taken.

Supplementary Activities

Use one or more of the following activities to conclude the book.

Life Lessons

Read the author's note at the back of the book. What lessons can we gain from reading the Cohen family story?

Creative Writing

Write a speech that Mr. Cohen may have delivered at the *chanukas habayis* celebration when he moved back into his home. Reflect on the lessons he learned from his life story and the message he'd want his children to take from it.