

Second Story Press

Beginner Level ESL

TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE

WRITTEN BY HELEN WOLFE



The Way to School

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Book Summary

The Way to School is a non-fiction picture book appropriate as a supplemental or introductory text for a Beginner's English as a Second Language, ESL A credit or non-credit classroom of adolescents or adults. It can also be easily integrated into an elementary school program for young children, even at the primary level. The book has colourful photographs that encourage students to express important ideas about obtaining an education in their native countries. These photographs feature children from around the world making their way to school every day, despite significant challenges. Reading the book helps students to identify their own learning challenges in their first countries and in Canada. The book has minimal but very descriptive text that is extremely helpful in fostering vocabulary growth. Reading and studying the book introduces multiculturalism and helps students appreciate challenges that many children face in getting an education.

PART A

Pre-Reading Activities



ACTIVITY 1

Do a brainstorm with the students by asking, “What is your first country?”

Make a list of the students’ first countries and display it prominently in the classroom. If you wish, you can also make a separate or companion list of the students’ nationalities that can be used in discussing the book.



ACTIVITY 2

If you are working with young children, they can draw pictures of themselves going to school. If your students have also been to school in their native countries, they can draw two pictures—one of going to school in their first countries and one showing how they get to school in Canada. Then, the students work in pairs or small groups describing their pictures to their classmates.



ACTIVITY 3

Have the students discuss and complete this simple survey, either in pairs or small groups.

The survey is purposefully simple, and can be used to begin the discussion of the challenges faced by children around the world getting to school. When you take up this activity with the class, add “WHY?” or “WHY NOT” to elicit the reasons that keep many children from attending school.

 ACTIVITY 3

Coming To School

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| a. In Canada is it easy for you to get to school? | YES | NO |
| b. Is it easy for everyone to get to school in your first country? | YES | NO |
| c. In Canada do students come to school by bus, car, or walking? | YES | NO |
| d. In your first country do students come to school the same way as we do in Canada? | YES | NO |
| e. In your first country, do some people try to stop students from coming to school? | YES | NO |
| f. In your first country, can both girls and boys come to school? | YES | NO |
| g. In your first country, does it take a long time to come to school every day? | YES | NO |
| h. In Canada, are students supposed to go to school until a certain age? | YES | NO |
| i. In your first country, do students have to stop going to school sometimes? | YES | NO |
| j. In Canada, do we come to school even when the weather is bad? | YES | NO |
| k. Can everyone come to school in your first country when the weather is bad? | YES | NO |
| l. In Canada, does everyone at school have the books, paper, and supplies that we need to do our work? | YES | NO |
| m. In your first country, does everyone have the books, paper and supplies that we need to do our work? | YES | NO |

PART B

Listening and Speaking Activities



ACTIVITY 4

Have the students work in small groups or as a class to begin discussing the book.

Ask them to look at the cover of the book and pose the following questions:

- a. Where are these children?
- b. How do we know that they are all probably on their way to school?
- c. How are the children getting to school?
- d. Do you think that it would be difficult or dangerous to go to school this way every day? Why?
- e. Look at the children's faces and body language or actions. How do they feel about getting to school?



ACTIVITY 5

The following activity can be done the same day as Activity 4 or on the next day.

Reintroduce the fact that all of the photographs in the book show children who are going to school. The students work in groups and choose any one of the pictures in the book.

Then, they answer the following questions, some of which are similar to those in the first activity:

- a. Where do you think these children live?
- b. Where are they in the picture?
- c. How are they getting to school?
- d. Is it difficult or dangerous to get to school this way? Why?
- e. How do you think the children feel about getting to school this way?
- f. How would you feel if you had to get to school this way every day?

PART C

Reading and Writing Activities

 **ACTIVITY 6****Directions:**

Draw a line to connect these important NOUNS or THINGS with their meanings.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1. Disasters | a. many Canadian children get to school this way |
| 2. Earthquakes | b. a way to travel over rivers and streams |
| 3. Tsunamis | c. a slow, heavy animal that pulls a wagon |
| 4. Typhoons | d. a word that means a long trip |
| 5. Bus | e. living creatures that have four legs |
| 6. River | f. a part of a mountain where you could fall off |
| 7. Mountain | g. a group of three or four dogs that pull a sled |
| 8. Tunnel | h. a heavy animal we don't often see in Canada |
| 9. Cliff | i. very bad weather that can happen anywhere |
| 10. Animals | j. water that can be very deep and dangerous |
| 11. Donkey | k. a way to travel under the ground |
| 12. Ox | l. An underground event that makes the world shake |
| 13. Buffalo | m. very bad winds cause by bad weather |
| 14. dog team | n. huge waves of water that drown people |
| 15. bridge | o. a high place that people climb |
| 16. journey | p. heavy animal similar to a cow that pulls a wagon |

 ACTIVITY 7**Directions:**

Complete the following sentences with your own ideas:

1. I enjoy going to school in Canada because _____

2. Some disasters in the world destroy _____

3. In many countries students walk to school because _____

4. In some countries students paddle or wade _____

5. Sometimes students need to walk around _____
and walk through a _____ because _____

6. In winter, some children get to school using a _____

7. Some students must carry their own _____
to school because _____

 **ACTIVITY 8****Directions:**

Choose one of the pictures in the book. Then write a story by doing the following:

1. Cover all of the words on the page by putting a piece of paper on the words
2. Write your own short story describing the picture. If you can't remember some words to use, uncover the words to help you in your writing. You can use these questions to help you to write your story:
 - a. Who is in the picture?
 - b. Where are the people in the picture going?
 - c. What do they need to do to get where they are going?
 - d. What are the problems, difficulties, or challenges that they face?
 - e. What do their facial expressions and bodies tell you about how they feel?
 - f. How would you feel if you were one of these children?

PART D

Social, Cultural, and
Media Literacy Activities



ACTIVITY 9

Arrange for a guest to come to speak to your students about the difficulties of obtaining an education in developing countries. Speakers from these organizations or situations can be arranged:

- a. World Vision
- b. Plan International
- c. Canadian or International Red Cross
- d. Another student who remembers going to school in her first country and can speak about her experiences
- e. A teacher in your school from a developing country who can speak about her childhood experiences going to school
- f. A representative of a church, synagogue, mosque, temple, or other religious organization that sponsors children from developing countries so that they can receive an education



ACTIVITY 10

After Activity 9, students can draw a picture of the speaker and then journal their thoughts and feelings about what they learned from the speaker.



ACTIVITY 11

Through Plan Canada or another non-governmental organization, your class can sponsor a child in a developing country to ensure that the child has access to an education and other fundamental rights.

Please note: Before you do thus, please ensure that your school is prepared to continue sponsorship after the current school year.



ACTIVITY 12

Your students could organize an assembly or presentation to the whole school so that sponsorship to educate children in developing countries becomes a school-wide initiative. Your students could take turns reading parts of the book to their schoolmates and create a PowerPoint presentation using the photographs in the book.



ACTIVITY 13

Your students or school might undertake a fundraising event with the proceeds going to any organization that helps students in developing countries to pursue an education.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS GUIDE

Helen Wolfe has been an educator for almost 40 years. She has a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Education and has earned professional certification in Senior English, ESL, Law, Special Education, and a Guidance Specialist.

Helen is experienced in all grade levels from Kindergarten to Grade 12. She has taught in a wide variety of public and private school settings. Since 1988, her focus has been as an adult educator in secondary school credit programs. During that time, she has written, revised, and implemented many courses of study in English, Social Science, and English as a Second Language.

In 2011, she wrote *Terrific Women Teachers*, a non-fiction chapter book for young readers that is part of the Women's Hall of Fame Series from Second Story Press. Her belief is that every student, even those with language and other learning challenges, has the right to read and appreciate well-written children's literature. That philosophy of inclusion motivates her to write teacher's guides to help make quality literature accessible to all learners.

Helen lives in Toronto and continues to work in adult education and ESL.

QUESTIONS?

If you have questions about this guide or would like to get in touch with Helen Wolfe, please send an e-mail to info@secondstorypress.ca.

FEEDBACK

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