

LESSON PLAN

Salma the Syrian Chef

by Danny Ramadan • illustrated by Anna Bron

Lesson plan by Rabia Khokhar

Genre: picture book, children's fiction

Themes: inclusion, belonging, family, community, refugee experience, teamwork, problem solving, culture, feelings and emotions, diversity

Suitable for: Pre-K–2, Ages 4–7

Guided Reading Level: Fountas and Pinnell M

Lexile: 570L

Common Core standards: SL.2.1,1b,1c,2,3,4,6
RF.2.3,3c,3d,3f,4,4a
L.2.3,4,4a,4b,4c,4d,
W.2.1,2,3,7,8
RL.2.1,2,3,4,5,6,7,1

General curriculum connections: Kindergarten: Belonging and Contributing

Grade 1: Community

Grade 2: Family, Traditions

Summary:

Salma has recently arrived in Vancouver, Canada from Syria with her mother. They have arrived as refugees, and Salma's father will join them later. As they settle into their new home in the Welcome Center, Salma notices that her mother isn't smiling as much as she used to before they left Syria. Salma's mother is navigating many of the challenges newcomers experience, such as learning a new language and trying to find a job. To cheer her up, Salma decides to make her mother's favorite Syrian dish, foul shami. Salma gets the help from her teachers and friends at the Welcome Center. She encounters challenges and some problems as she figures out the names of the ingredients in English, buys them, and then prepares the meal for her mother. The community members come together to overcome obstacles that arise in helping Salma. Once the dish is complete, it brings a smile to Salma's mother and brings the community together.

Please remember that these are sample questions and activities. They should be tweaked and/or reformatted to best fit your students, context, and community to ensure equity and inclusion.

BEFORE READING THE BOOK

These activities build the context, introduce the topic of the book, and establish prior knowledge and interest.

- Ask students to look at the title and cover of the book. Ask them to answer the following questions: What do you predict the story will be about? What type of hat is the girl wearing? Who might the people around her be? Who do you think might be the Syrian chef?
- To situate the story and to build context, show students a world map and point out Syria and Canada. Explain that Vancouver is a city in the province of British Columbia in Canada and that this is where Salma's family has moved to. Salma is a refugee and refugees leave their home country for many different reasons. Ask students about the countries their families have come from before settling in Canada. Remind students that unless we are Indigenous, we have all come to Canada from another place. We are settlers.
- Ask students to think about some of the challenges that people may face when they leave their homes, move, and settle in a new place and country. Ask students to imagine learning a new language, finding a new home, and making new friends.
- Ask students what their favorite food or dish is, what the ingredients are, and how it's made. Remind students that in our communities, such as our classroom community, we have similarities and differences, like the food we eat and like. Reinforce that we are all different from one another and being different makes our communities richer and more interesting.

WHILE READING THE BOOK

These activities check on comprehension, stimulate interest, involve readers in reflection as they read, and encourage consideration of other readers' reactions.

- While reading the book, pause in key places to encourage students to predict what will happen next. Some examples of places to pause might be:
 - the page where Salma is thinking of how to make her mother smile. Prompt students to think of their ideas of how Salma will make her mother smile.
 - the page where Salma drops the olive oil and does not have any money to buy more. Ask students to predict what will happen next.
 - the page where the special dish is made. Prompt students to predict if Salma's mother will like the dish, if it will make her smile, and what feelings she may feel and show.
- While reading the story, point out the colors used on each of the pages and ask students to describe them. Tell students briefly about warm and cool colors and the impact they have on the reader. Some examples of warm colors are red, orange, and yellow, and some cool colors are blue, green, and purple. Prompt students to notice the connection between the colors the illustrator has used and what is happening in the story, such as how the character is feeling and the problems and solutions that are taking place.
Example: Near the end the pages are yellow to show happiness and love.
- Turn to the picture of the inside of the Welcome Center and ask students about the different community helpers supporting newcomers and refugees. What is the role of the Welcome Center in a community? Do you think it is important to have a Welcome Center in a community? What are some of the activities people are doing?
- While reading, stop at certain parts and ask students to think about the different feelings the characters are experiencing and the reasons why. Ask students if they are able to connect to a feeling that the characters experience and their reasons for feeling that way.
Example: Salma's mother feels sad at the start of the story because she misses her husband.
- Salma saw that her mother was sad and tried to make her happy by making her a special Syrian dish. Ask students if they have ever tried to make someone smile if they were sad or upset: What words and actions did you take to put a smile on someone's face? When you feel sad, what are some words and actions that make you smile and feel happy?

AFTER READING THE BOOK

These activities inspire continued reflection and response to the text, bring conclusion to the experience of reading this text, and stimulate further extensions.

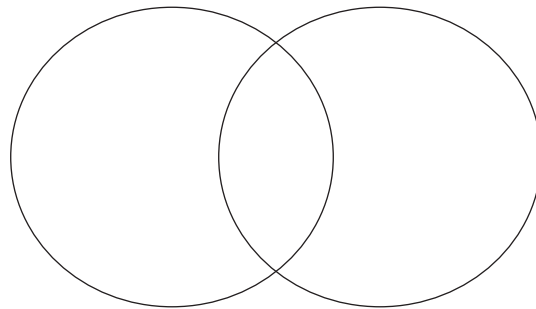
- People in a community are similar and different. In our classroom, we are a community with similarities and differences. For example, we may have the same favorite foods, but we may speak different languages. In the Welcome Center, we see a diverse group of people. The teacher can model with two characters some of the similarities and differences they share in a Venn diagram. For example, they may be newcomers to Canada but speak different languages. Reinforce that differences are important because they make our communities interesting and special. Oftentimes, we tend to focus on similarities in the elementary classroom, but it is important to focus on differences too.

The following extension activity can be done in small groups, with older students, or with a teacher. Teachers can decide what will work best for their students and class community. Students can be grouped in pairs and complete the Venn diagram below. Brainstorm some similarities and differences together as a class to give students ideas.

Examples to consider: name, height, skin color, languages spoken, number of family members, pets, hobbies, interests, etc.

Example diagram:

Students' names are put at the top of each circle with differences listed under the students' names and the similarities listed in the middle part.



- Find and post a world map in the classroom. Explain that there are many different types of maps. People who make maps (known as cartographers) do so from their own perspective and ideas. There are so many things that may impact how they draw the map. It is good to look at maps made by different cartographers so we can get a complete idea of the world. Maps give us information, tell us stories, and connect us. Have students put a sticker on the countries they and their families identify with and may have come to Canada from. Students can go home and ask their families for some ideas. The teacher can reach out to families to ensure accessibility and inclusion for this assignment.
- Ask students to imagine that Salma wanted to write a thank you letter to one of the people who helped her through the challenges she faced as she prepared a special dish for her mother. Who would she write the letter to? What could she say? Ask students to write their own letter to that person.
- Ask students to imagine that Salma is talking to her father on the phone or communicating in one of the many different ways people communicate with their family and loved ones around the world. Prompt students to orally retell the events of the story to her father using words like *first*, *then*, *next*, and *finally*.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

These activities are only a start. They are designed to support the goal of helping students explore the story and their own creativity.

EXPLORE SYRIAN ART

Encourage students to explore the Syrian-inspired art in the illustrations. Ask them to look carefully at the geometric shapes and colors palettes used, and to look carefully at the patterns and the warm and cool colors used. Bring some examples of Syrian art to display in the classroom and ask students to point out similarities and differences between the examples and the art in the book. Ask students to create their own Syrian-inspired art.

RECIPE SEQUENCE WRITING

Food often brings people together. Salma makes the dish fowl shami for her mother to cheer her up. It is a special Syrian dish. Ask students to write down the ingredients and the steps to make fowl shami. Then ask them to think of a dish that is special to them or to their family. Maybe it is a special dish from their culture. Ask students to write and draw how to make the dish step by step. Remind them to use words like *first*, *next*, *then*, and *finally* to write out the recipe to share with the class. Put all of the recipes together in a class recipe book to share with each other.

PROBLEM/SOLUTION

Salma encounters different problems and challenges in the story. As a class, brainstorm to identify two or three problems that happen in the story. Then think of the solutions and how the problems are solved. Think about and point out the people in the community who work together as a team to help solve those problems. Think about the strategies that are used to solve the problems in the story. Ask students if they could use some of these strategies in their own lives. Students can use a chart like the one below to write down their ideas.

Problem	Solution

FAMILY TREE

***Please be aware of your context and student's lived experiences. Please tweak to best fit your students so that they are included respectfully and authentically in this activity.**

Let students know that there are different types of families. Families are made up of people who love and take care of each other. Some family members live with us and some may live apart for different reasons, like Salma's father. Point out some of the different families shown in the story and illustrations (e.g., Amir and Malek, Granny Donya). Brainstorm some family vocabulary with the class and make it a point to write down the many different names/words students have for their loved ones in various languages as a way to honor their identities and lived experiences, e.g., Father/Papa/Baba.

Create a big family tree in the classroom with construction paper. Students can draw a family portrait on paper. They can include all the family members they want to and then complete a corresponding writing activity to tell the class about their family. Post these portraits on the tree. Students can be provided with some or all of the following sentence starters. The teacher can do some modeled writing as an example for students.

Students can also be asked (if possible) to bring in a family portrait that can be put on the family tree. Family members can also email the teacher the pictures if possible, which they can then print out. This will help ensure accessibility and inclusion for all families.

Sentence starters:

- Who is in your family? How many people are in your family?
- In your family are you the only child, the oldest, middle, or youngest?
- What holidays or traditions does your family celebrate?
- What does your family like to eat together?
- What fun activities do you do with your family?
- What is something special about your family?

UNPLUGGED/PLUGGED CODING ACTIVITY: COLLECT ALL THE INGREDIENTS

UNPLUGGED

Print out or draw the different ingredients needed to make foul shami, put them each on a butterfly clip, and spread them as game pieces around the coding grid. Create a game piece for Salma, the Welcome Center, and the store and place them on the coding grid. The store will be the starting point of the game and the Welcome Center will be at the end point. The goal will be for Salma to collect all the ingredients that are scattered around the coding grid. Students will need to be taught some direction and positionality words such as *right*, *left*, *up*, and *down*, which will be used to put arrows around their grid as they collect the ingredients and describe their moves on the grid.

Students can be given this prompt:

~Help Salma get all the ingredients to make foul shami for her mother.

~Code your way around the grid and collect all the ingredients to make the delicious dish.

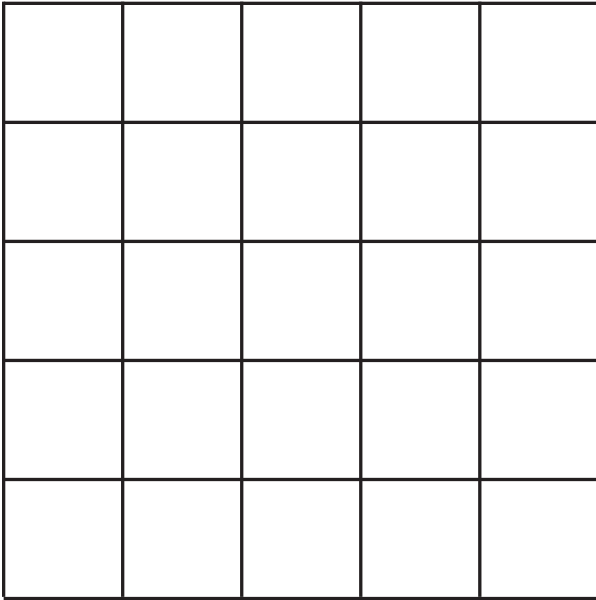
PLUGGED

Same as above, except that students will program the robot to move through the grid to collect the ingredients and not Salma the game piece.

Materials:

- coding grid
- game pieces (Salma, ingredients, Welcome Center, store)
- foul shami recipe card
- butterfly clips
- coding arrows
- plugged coding: robot e.g., Beebot, Dash

Example grid that can be made on big or small Bristol board:



Print out ingredient items and other game pieces and put them on these clips on various parts of the coding grid.



BELONGING IN A COMMUNITY

Belonging and community are two important themes highlighted in this book. It is important to feel a sense of belonging and welcome in a community. Our classroom and school are each a community. Ask students to think of some words or phrases that will help people feel like they are seen and welcome and like they belong in our communities. As a class, write down some words, phrases, and actions on Bristol board or oversized paper that will foster these feelings in the classroom and the wider school community. Decorate these words and phrases and put them around the class and school.

Examples:

- All are welcome here.
- You matter.
- You belong.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

The Welcome Center is one of the services in Salma's community that helps newcomers and refugees feel welcome and supported as they settle into their new country. Research some refugee and newcomers services in your community and invite a guest speaker to the classroom to talk about some of the ways that newcomers and refugees are supported and about the role of community helpers like Jad (the Jordanian translator) and Nancy.

Salma's Foul Shami

Learn to cook like Salma and make a historical Middle Eastern recipe from ancient times—foul shami made with fava beans, olive oil, onion, garlic, and sumac.

INGREDIENTS:

2 cups/16 oz cooked or canned fava beans

Extra virgin olive oil

1/2 onion minced

2 cloves garlic, raw and minced.

1 tsp sumac

Salt and black pepper to taste

Juice from 2 fresh lemons or more to taste

Diced ripe red tomato

Fresh minced parsley

INSTRUCTIONS:

Pour the fava beans, with their liquid, into a pot, add a glass of water, and heat on the stove for 20-30 minutes on medium heat until hot and soft. Pour them into a colander to drain.

While the beans are heating, mix the diced tomato, the minced parsley, the minced onion and the minced garlic in a bowl on the side.

When the fava beans are drained, add them to the mixing bowl.

Pour the juice of the lemons and the olive oil into the bowl. Add the sumac, and salt and pepper to taste.

Mix well and serve warm.

You can eat the foul shami with a spoon or pita bread.