



Razia's Ray of Hope Curriculum (Grades 1-3)

***Razia's Ray of Hope: One Girl's Dream of an Education*, written by Elizabeth Suneby and illustrated by Suana Verelst, is the compelling story of a young Afghan girl who dreams of becoming educated.** In Razia's small village, girls haven't been allowed to attend school for many years. When a new girls' school opens in the village, a determined Razia must convince her father and oldest brother that allowing her to attend school would be good for Razia, their family, and their community. The book is based on true stories of students at the Zabuli Education Center outside of Kabul, founded by a generous and resourceful woman named Razia Jan, a CNN Hero, who also appears in the story. *Razia's Ray of Hope* is the latest book in Kids Can Press CitizenKid collection, which explores complex global issues and makes them accessible to younger readers.

Theme

Children's rights

Essential Questions

- What if you weren't allowed to go to school?
- Should all children have the right to an education?
- What elements make up a story?

Outcomes

- Students will be able to answer key details about the text.
- Students will be able to describe story elements, including setting, main characters, story problem and solution.
- Student will be able to discuss the connection between the story and the lesson theme.
- For the Service Learning component, students will build awareness and take action based on their learning.

Common Core State Standards

Key Ideas and Details:

- Ask and answer questions about key details in a text ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1](#)).
- Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.2](#)).
- Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.3](#)).
- Ask and answer such questions such as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.1](#)).
- Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.3](#)).
- Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.2](#)).

Comprehension and Collaboration:

- Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud, information presented orally, or through other media ([CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.2](#)).



Social Studies Connection

The context of *Razia's Ray of Hope* provides educators and their students with an opportunity to explore multiple themes among the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, including: culture; people, places, and environments; individual development and identity; power, authority, and governance; global connections; and civic ideals and practices (www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands).

Service Learning Connection

Students can choose to create their own service project utilizing ideas from the Razia's Ray of Hope Foundation (www.raziasrayofhope.org/fundraising-ideas.html) that align with the following Service-Learning Standards: meaningful service, youth voice, link to curriculum, reflection, progress monitoring, and diversity. (For more information on Service-Learning Standards, see www.nylc.org/k-12-service-learning-standards-quality-practice.) Students are also encouraged to develop their own ideas and share them with the Razia's Ray of Hope Foundation.

Materials

- *Razia's Ray of Hope: One Girl's Dream of an Education*, written by Elizabeth Suneby, illustrated by Suana Verelst
- Video: A student-led tour of the Zabuli Education Center, the school featured in *Razia's Ray of Hope* (5-minute runtime): www.sos4tkhf.com/videos_RROH_greeting.php
- "Family Tree" in Dari and English (see p. 3)
- Story Elements graphic organizer (on board, chart paper, or overhead projector; see p. 4)
- Background information on Afghanistan (PDFs):
 - www.raziasrayofhope.org/documents/Razias_Ray_of_Hope_About_Afghanistan_10.2009b.pdf
 - www.sos4tkhf.com/downloads/SOS_Journal_No_1.pdf

Preparation

- Gather materials and print or download internet sources ahead of time, if internet access is limited
- Review the lesson plans

Vocabulary

Rights, story elements, setting, character, problem, solution (and Dari vocabulary listed in the *Razia's Ray of Hope* glossary)

This curriculum was made possible through the generous support of the Khaled Hosseini Foundation and Kids Can Press. Razia's Ray of Hope is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of Afghan girls through community-based education at the Zabuli Education Center in Deh'Subz, Afghanistan.



Lesson Activities

Inquire

(30 minutes)

Anticipatory Set

Give students a blank piece of paper. Ask them to draw one of their most favorite school activities. Allow students to share their work after completing the drawings. Next, ask students to imagine a world where they were not allowed (or did not have the **right**) to go to school. Share with students the fact that in Afghanistan, under Taliban rule, girls were banned from attending school, riding bicycles, wearing brightly colored clothes, and laughing loudly (source: www.raziasrayofhope.org/women-and-girls-in-afghanistan.html). Ask students to revisit their drawings. What would they have to cross out from the picture if they weren't allowed to attend school? Discuss students' drawings, thoughts, and feelings.

Tell students you are going to read the picture book *Razia's Ray of Hope*, which is a story inspired by real-life events of a girls' school that opened in Afghanistan in 2008.

Building Schema

(Time varies)

Assessment Expectations

Create a shared understanding of expectations for participation and for academic outcomes.

Social Studies Connection: Exploring Afghanistan

Before reading *Razia's Ray of Hope*, students may need background information about Afghanistan, which can be tied to social studies objectives. For example, as part of the individual development and identity strand, students can compare how they are alike and different from characters in the book. Utilize *Razia's Ray of Hope*, the Zabuli Education Center tour video, and the background information PDFs (see Materials section for links) to paint a picture for students.

Vocabulary Preview: Dari Family Tree

Draw (or print from a picture book) two copies of a multi-generational family. Label one picture in English: Mother, Father, Daughter, Son, Grandmother, Grandfather. Label the second picture using the Dari words listed in the glossary section at the back of *Razia's Ray of Light* (e.g., Baba gi for the grandfather, Agha jan for the older brother, Bibi for the mother, etc.). As you read the story aloud, refer to the drawings to clarify students' understanding of the Dari words.

For Visual Learners

Suana Verelst, the illustrator of *Razia's Ray of Hope*, employed mixed media to illustrate the story. Ask students to analyze an illustration from the book. What do they see (digital images, photos, found objects, watercolor, sketches, etc.)? Ask students to create an illustration of a school activity employing similar methods.



Further Resources

Razia's Ray of Hope Foundation and the Khaled Hosseini Foundation offer a wealth of video and photo imagery that can be used to build schema for students:

www.raziasrayofhope.org/photos.html and www.sos4tkhf.com/videos.php.

Investigate & Analyze

(1-2 class periods)

Guided Instruction

Share an overhead chart of story elements with the students. Review the meaning of each story element. Ask students to be "Story Element Sleuths," looking and listening for these elements as you read the story. Depending on student level, read the story once or twice, pausing to check for understanding, and to allow students to provide responses for the Story Elements Chart below. Younger students could draw pictures instead of words in the chart.

Story Elements Chart

Setting(s)	
Characters	
Problem	
Solution	
Plot (Summary)	

Collaborative Learning

Once you have completed the chart, cover the responses and ask student groups or pairs to recount the elements of the story in their own words.

Synthesize & Act

(Time varies)

Discuss with students the connection between the story and the theme of **children's rights**. How do the characters' words, thoughts, or actions relate to the theme? (Razia wants to go to school but needs permission from her elders; Razia Jan opens a school for girls because there wasn't one, etc.)

Share with students that around the world today, 69 million school-age children do not go to school (source: www.globaleducationfirst.org/218.htm). Encourage students to discuss their thoughts and feelings on the matter, and to brainstorm what they might do to help. If they are interested in doing so, students can take action by raising money to help send a girl to school through the Razia's Ray of Hope Foundation, or by doing something of their own design. Information on fundraising and school projects can be found at the Razia's Ray of Hope Foundation's website (www.raziasrayofhope.org/fundraising-ideas.html).