



Reading Instruction for Middle School Students

**Lessons for Improving Comprehension
Through “Iqbal”
by Francesco D’Adamo**

Adapted from intervention materials developed by the Texas
Center for Learning Disabilities

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Introduction

Teacher Guide and Student Log

Introduction Teacher Guide

Day at a Glance

(60 Minutes)

Materials Needed Throughout Lesson

- Novel for each student
- Introduction Student Log for each student
- Display of Introduction Student Log (transparency, projected image, etc.)
- Timer

Activity	Time	Materials	Preparation
Introduce Vocabulary	10 minutes	Yes/No Response Cards	Prepare Yes/No Response Cards (one set per pair of students).
Read the Introduction	15 minutes		Choose a reading format.
Build Background Knowledge	20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction Vocabulary Images packet (and additional images of Pakistan as needed)• Images of Iqbal Masih and/or other child labor images	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Download and print Introduction Vocabulary Images packet in color.• Find and print other images of Iqbal Masih and child labor.
Preview Elements of the Novel	15 minutes	Three excerpt passages (found in Teacher Guide and Student Log)	Choose a reading format.

Introduce Vocabulary

(10 minutes)

1.	historical fiction	<i>n.</i>	Fiction that is set in the past. It may contain references to actual people and significant events in history. The writer may blend factual information about a time, a place, and historical people with imaginary characters, dialogue, details, and events.
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Display the Introduction Student Log so students can follow along as you read. Explicitly state the purpose of the lesson by telling students that they are about to begin reading a new historical fiction novel and that you are going to discuss what *historical fiction* means.

1. Tell students that the next novel, *Iqbal*, is historical fiction.
2. Read the definition of *historical fiction*.
3. Explain the value of historical fiction, and review the difference between fiction and nonfiction.

Historical fiction helps a reader experience what it was like to live during the time when the story takes place.

4. Highlight key aspects of historical fiction:
 - It is based on historical fact.
 - The setting is in the past.
 - The setting is a real time and place.
 - There are some fictional aspects such as characters, dialogue, details, or events.

5. Pass out Yes/No Response Cards to each pair of students. Present the following scenarios to students and ask them, based on the definition of *historical fiction*, to hold up the “Yes” card if you describe a novel that could be an example of historical fiction and the “No” card if you describe a nonexample. Discuss responses with your students.
- Say, *I am reading a novel about the Civil War. Could this novel be an example of historical fiction?* (Yes. Discuss: *The Civil War was a significant event in history. The setting is the past. The setting of the Civil War is a real time and place. Since it is a novel, there may also be fictional characters, dialogue, details, and events.*)
 - *I am reading a novel about the Iraq War. Could this novel be an example of historical fiction?* (Yes. Discuss: *The Iraq War is a significant real event that just recently ended in December 2011.*)
 - *I am reading a book about a family who lives on the planet Mars. Could this novel be an example of historical fiction?* (No. Discuss.)
 - *I am reading a novel about a mermaid and her life under the sea. Could this novel be an example of historical fiction?* (No. Discuss.)
 - *I am reading a novel about two imaginary characters and their experience during the Holocaust. Could this novel be an example of historical fiction?* (Yes. Discuss.)

Read the Introduction

(15 minutes)

Choose a format for reading, based on the amount of text, and circle the reading format you plan to use. (Do not choose Partner Reading for this particular lesson.)

Remember to choose a variety of reading formats throughout the novel. Please refer to the Reading Format Options section of the introductory materials for an explanation of each format.

Reading format options	
Cloze read	Choral read (repeated)
Partner read	Choral read (alternating)

1. Read through the focus questions on the Introduction Student Log. Explain that these are the questions to be discussed after reading the Introduction. Ask students to keep these questions in mind as they read the Introduction.
2. Read the *Iqbal* Introduction with your students according to the reading format you've chosen above.
3. After reading the Introduction, ask students to work with their partners (for 3–4 minutes) to answer the focus questions on their student logs.
4. Lead a class discussion of the focus questions. Allow students to use their notes.

Introduction Focus Questions

1. *What is the main issue in this story?*
2. *Can you think of other times in history when this was an issue? If so, when and who was involved?*
3. *When and where does this story take place?*
4. *From whose perspective is the story told?*
5. *Why is this topic important to you?*

Build Background Knowledge

(20 minutes)

Iqbal takes place in Pakistan. Build your students' background knowledge about Pakistan by discussing Pakistan's geography, culture, climate, industry, and so on, and by sharing background information on *Iqbal* Masih and child labor. A few images of Pakistan are provided in the Introduction Vocabulary Images (see separate file for download), and you may wish to print these images in color.

1. **Learn about Pakistan:** Show students a map of Lahore, Pakistan. Point out where Lahore is located on the continent of Asia, and where the continent of Asia is located in relation to North America. Show a few images from Lahore and mention/discuss the following about Lahore, Pakistan:

- *The population of Pakistan is 138 million. Pakistan is about the size of Texas and Louisiana together. Comparison: The population of the entire United States is 300 million.*
- *Pakistan produces rice and cotton and is famous for its handmade carpet manufacturing.*
- *Climate: Pakistan can get as hot as 122 degrees during the summer and well below freezing in the winter.*
- *Pakistan is a male-dominated society. 70% of the children in primary school are male.*
- *Literacy in Pakistan is just under 40%.*
- *Lahore is a busy, active city. Restaurants and shopping markets stay open late into the night. There are several celebrations each year such as kite-flying competitions and the Festival of Lamps, as well as horse and cattle shows, and concerts and theater productions.*
- *The streets have many bazaars where merchants sell leather articles, handmade clothing, gold and silver jewelry, and silk.*
- *The traffic in Lahore is famous for being very dangerous. Most people cannot even cross the street. There are not enough roads for the number of cars; the streets are crowded, people drive fast, and there are many traffic accidents.*

(SOURCES: www.wikipedia.org and www.geography.about.com)

2. **Learn about Iqbal Masih and child labor issues:** Show images (photos, transparencies, or other projected images) and share reading material about Iqbal Masih and child labor. These materials can fuel a discussion about child labor issues and the experiences of Iqbal. Several online sites may be helpful to you. One such site is www.childrensworld.org. (To access information on this site about Iqbal, click on Laureates, then Laureates A–Z, and then Iqbal Masih.)

Discuss issues within the images such as:

- *What are the working conditions like?*
- *What type of work are the children involved in?*
- *What kind of tools are the children using?*
- *What is the mood of the images? Mood of the children?*

Preview Elements of the Novel (Style, Characters, and Setting)

(15 minutes)

1. Choose one of the three excerpt passages provided on the following pages.
2. Choose a method of reading that is appropriate for your class, and circle the chosen method below.

Reading format options	
Cloze read	Choral read (repeated)
Partner read	Choral read (alternating)

3. Read the passage with your students.
4. Engage in a discussion with your class. (Each passage has suggested discussion questions following the passage.)
5. Read a second or third passage with the class if you wish.

***Iqbal* Passage 1**

(From page 53)

¹By now our evening get-togethers had become routine. We didn't even wait for the lights to go out in the master's house. As soon as Hussain locked the door and we heard his footsteps cross the courtyard, we left our beds and sat down in a circle. Twig, who was strange and funny, joined our group, and sometimes so did one or two of the others.

²"We should all run away," said Twig. "Just think of Hussain's face! I can't stand him. He's almost worse than the master I had before. Let's become bandits and attack the trucks that come into the city."

³"Why the trucks?"

⁴"Because they carry a lot of food."

⁵"Forget it," said Mohammed. "We should escape to the mountains. There the master would never be able to find us."

⁶"Yeah, and how did he find you?" Twig asked.

⁷"Bad luck."

⁸We poured out our feelings. But we still feared that nothing would ever change for us. There was a precise rule among us. *Never* talk about the future. Not a single one of us dared to say "next summer," or "in a year," or "when I'm grown up." Oh yes, we talked about things we'd like to do, and we talked about the day our **debt** would be canceled. We talked that hope into the ground. But nobody really believed it. It was a sort of litany, a way to feel good. Otherwise what was left to us?

⁹Iqbal had been the first brave enough to say loud and clear that the debt is never canceled. And he was the only one to talk concretely about the future.

Passage 1 Discussion Questions

1. Through Fatima, the author describes the mental state of a child slave. How do those feelings compare to other accounts by slaves you have learned about?
2. What is debt?
3. What do you think Iqbal means when he says that the debt is never canceled?

Iqbal Passage 2

(From page 62)

¹I worked and tried not to pay attention to my hunger. The pungent aroma of spicy mutton wafted over from the master’s house. I had eaten it two or three times. Back in my village the women prepared it for special occasions, like Choti Eid. It had to burn your tongue and throat, otherwise the men didn’t appreciate it. The meat was fatty and tasty.

²“Work.”

³And perhaps they even had sweets, fritters with fresh, soft cheese, rolled in sugar. And cinnamon.

⁴“Work.”

⁵I was hungry. I was tired. I was desperate.

⁶The master entered, picking at his teeth with a toothpick. We stopped our work and stood beside our looms. Hussain Kahn rubbed his back, took out his tape measure and a piece of paper where he had written the length of our work before he left, and very calmly began his calculations. Then he took the slate and made his decisions: three marks gone, four marks gone, or no mark because the work hadn’t been done well.

⁷Nobody dared complain.

⁸The master continued his counting, while Karim followed at his heels like a dog hoping for a bone. After the decision, we all bowed our heads in submission.

⁹Salman, only one mark erased; Ali—“It’s a mess!”—not even one; and little Ali could hardly hold back his tears. Mohammed, three marks, and he whistled with relief. Hussain was at the back of the room. Now Maria...

¹⁰Hussain Khan stopped short in front of little Maria’s loom, and his eyes bulged. Karim didn’t understand the terrifying look he received, but he whined in terror.

Passage 2 Discussion Questions

1. Since this book is set in Pakistan, were there any words you were unfamiliar with? What were they?
2. What do you think the calculation of “marks” means?
3. How does the author compare/contrast the lives of the children with their master’s life?

***Iqbal* Passage 3**

(From page 68)

¹“There were lots of things to see. I saw a juggler, and a snake charmer.”

²“There’s no such thing.”

³“Yes there is!”

⁴“And did the serpent sway to music?”

⁵“Not really. But it came out of the basket. It was a big snake with a broad head and an evil eye, and the man held it in his hands.”

⁶“Bare hands?”

⁷“That’s right. And there was food being sold everywhere. There were big pots of basmati rice and of chicken tandoori. It smelled so good. And I was hungry.”

⁸“And so? What did you do?”

⁹“I worked. They’re there, too.”

¹⁰“Who? Who’s there?”

¹¹“Children. Working. They’re the ones who unload the trucks and carry the crates, some so heavy they feel like they’ll break your arms. You go to a merchant and say, ‘Got any work for me?’ And he says, ‘Move that load and I’ll give you a **rupee**.’* That’s what I did. But there were other children who didn’t want me to do anything. They said, ‘Who are you? Where do you come from? This is our turf. Any work here is ours. Get out of here.’ I was afraid they would attract attention to me. After all, Hussain was out there looking for me. So I told them to leave me alone and I tried another area. Finally I found a butcher who let me unload a truck full of mutton hinds. He gave me a burlap sack to put over my head and shoulders to keep the blood off, which was lucky, because Hussain would never recognize me covered with burlap, and I knew he was after me.”

*1 U.S. dollar = 60.980 Pakistani rupees

(Source: <http://finance.yahoo.com/currency/converter>)

Passage 3 Discussion Questions

1. Since this book is set in Pakistan, were there any words you were unfamiliar with? What were they?
2. What is the difference between *labor* and *bonded labor*?
3. Why do you think Hussain is looking for the child talking in this passage?

Introduction Student Log

Vocabulary

1.	historical fiction	<i>n.</i>	Fiction that is set in the past. It may contain references to actual people and significant events in history. The writer may blend factual information about a time, a place, and historical people with imaginary characters, dialogue, details, and events.
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Key aspects of historical fiction:

- It is based on historical fact.
- The setting is in the past.
- The setting is a real time and place.
- There are some fictional aspects such as characters, dialogue, details, or events.

Read the Introduction

Preview the focus questions and then read the Introduction of *Iqbal*. After reading, answer the following focus questions with a partner, and be ready to discuss your answers with the class.

1. What is the main issue in this story?

2. Can you think of other times in history when this was an issue? If so, when and who was involved?

3. When and where does this story take place?

4. From whose perspective is the story told?

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