

We all Went on Safari

Laurie Krebs and Julia Cairns,
Barefoot Books (2003)

This book is set in the
Serengeti, Tanzania

Geographical enquiry and skills

- enquiry – asking and answering questions
- using and understanding geographical vocabulary
- visual literacy – using pictures to learn about the landscape of the Serengeti
- using globes and atlases

Geographical knowledge and understanding

- the location of significant places related to the book (UK, Africa, Indian Ocean, Tanzania, etc.)
- the landscape, climate and animals of the Serengeti
- the Maasai people

Reference

Leeds DEC (1996) *Feeling Good about Faraway Friends*.
Leeds: Leeds DEC.

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This beautifully-illustrated picture book follows a Maasai family as they travel through the Serengeti grasslands in East Africa. As the sun rises the family encounters one leopard, then two ostriches, three giraffes, etc. until, late in the afternoon, they encounter ten elephants. The book contains facts about Tanzania and a simple map of the country, as well as information about the Maasai people, their lifestyle, and the animals the family meets. The book also offers opportunities to learn a few words in Swahili.

Sharing the story

Start by looking at the illustration on the front cover and discussing the title. What can pupils see? What is a safari? Read the book. Pupils will soon join in with the simple rhyming text. Some of the animals mentioned will be familiar from picture books, television and films, while others, such as wildebeests and warthogs, may not. Use the pictures to encourage pupils to describe these animals. Pupils will probably enjoy hearing the story more than once, becoming more familiar with it on each re-reading.

Teaching activities

Imagining the Serengeti

Movement activities will help pupils engage more deeply with the story. Working in a room with sufficient space, pupils imagine that they are in the Serengeti and experiment with moving like the different animals in the story. Use appropriate language and voice tone to help them represent the ways the different animals move – the slow lumbering elephant, the swift-moving long-legged ostrich and the hippopotamus wallowing in the lake. Pupils could also act out the journey of the Maasai family as they traverse the Serengeti, miming their reactions to the different animals, e.g. caution near the leopard and lions, pleasure in the antics of the monkeys. Enhance the activities by playing Tanzanian music in the background.



Finding out about the Serengeti and Maasai

The evocative illustrations in *We All Went on Safari* convey a sense of the space and beauty of the Serengeti (meaning 'endless plain' in Swahili). On a second or third reading, use the pictures to draw pupils' attention to the landscape. What is the Serengeti like? What sort of clues can they see? They should name and describe the landscape features (e.g. the grasslands, the mountains beyond), and the variety of trees and plants. From the pictures, what do they think the weather is like in the Serengeti? Pupils may suggest that it is hot and dry but you can challenge this common misconception by asking how the grass and trees could grow if there is no rain. Remind them that plants need water to grow.

Show pupils the map at the back of the book, then find Tanzania on a globe or in an atlas. Look first for the pupils' own country, then Africa, the Indian Ocean, Lake Victoria, and finally the Serengeti National Park. This structured focusing process will help pupils relate the location of the story to their place in the world, and build their locational knowledge of the wider world.

Some pupils might like to find other features shown on the map, such as Mount Kilimanjaro, the Great Rift Valley, Arusha, Dar es Salaam and the neighbouring countries of Kenya, Zambia and Mozambique. Use a globe or world map to discuss how they could get to the Serengeti, thinking about both the route and modes of transport.

The resource pack, *Feeling Good about Faraway Friends* (Leeds DEC, 1996), provides excellent resources and activities for pupils to learn about the Maasai people and their lifestyles.

Modelling the Serengeti

Pupils could create models of the Serengeti landscape in cardboard boxes. Allocate small groups different animals which feature in the story, and ask them to research each animal's habitat using books, images and other information. The finished models can be exhibited like display cases in a natural history museum, complete with supporting information boards.

Alternatively, pupils may enjoy recreating the setting for the story using miniature animal and people figures in the sand tray or on the floor. The play will be enhanced if you are able to provide relevant landscape features (grass matting, trees, etc.) and some adult support to exploit the rich language development opportunities this sort of play offers.



A local counting book/frieze

Use *We All Went on Safari* as a stimulus to create a counting book or frieze set in your local area. When pupils go for a walk in the local area, what animals and birds do they see? Replicating the format of the book will encourage pupils to think about wildlife in their local area, and offers plenty of opportunities for cross-curricular work.