

Literature Circle Questions

Use these questions and activities that follow to get more out of the experience of reading *Alone in the Ice World* by MaryAnn Easley.

1. What does Allison share with Paniyapluk that brings them closer together?
2. Allison says Ikayauq's sled looks "old-fashioned." What surprises her about it?
3. When fire breaks out in the store, Allison notes there are no emergency vehicles to call. There isn't even running water. She helps bring water from the river. What surprises her about how everyone reacted to the blaze?
4. What different ideas do Allison and Johnny Skye have about what Allison should bring with her on the plane?
5. Allison writes three letters to her parents while she is away: one to her dad and two to her mom. Compare the way she sounds in each letter. What does the change show about how Allison herself is changing?
6. Explain the story behind why Paniyapluk thinks Allison is an ice worm.
7. Draw a picture of Sikik's village as you see it. Now draw or list any additions you would suggest to provide more opportunity within the village for people like Oolik or Aqsuk. What good things would come from what you have added? Based on what you have read, could any new issues arise from the introductions you have made?
8. Allison is horrified that Sikik gives away her newborn baby to Oolik's mother, but the community sees it as a time to celebrate. Discuss and make a list of acceptable practices in your culture that might seem strange -- even alarming -- to someone unfamiliar with your way of life.
9. What evidence can you find that Allison's ideas about Alaska and the Eskimo people change over time?
10. Matu thinks California is a scary place. Evaluate the accuracy of his information and opinion. How is his information similar to or different from how Allison's opinion of Alaska is first developed?
11. When Matu and Allison are stuck in the snowstorm for several days, Allison says she is "bored to tears." Matu seems completely satisfied with having to wait for the weather to improve. What could Allison have done to be less bored during that time? Ask your students, what would they do in her circumstances?

12. After Oolik learns to sign, the villagers come to accept her more. Why do you think the villagers originally thought Oolik was no good? Suggest other ways people could have learned to get along with Oolik better.

13. Allison feels sorry for Ikayauq because he is poor. Matu laughs and says, "Ikayauq rich." Choose which viewpoint you agree with and explain why.

14. Igri/John says "Education destroyed my roots and my language. Now I don't belong anywhere. Not in this culture. Not in any other." Would it be better for John if he had not gone to school? Explain the pros and cons of modern-day education within this culture.

15. Allison tells her mother she wants to stay with her in Alaska, *especially* after all Allison's been through. Explain why she feels this way. Why is she not more determined than ever to go back to California?

Note: These literature circle questions are keyed to Bloom's Taxonomy: Knowledge: 1-3; Comprehension: 4-6; Application: 7-8; Analysis: 9-10; Synthesis: 11-12; Evaluation: 13-15.

Activities

1. Before reading the book, ask students to imagine themselves stranded in a place they don't know with people who speak and act differently from anything they've ever experienced before. Which of their personal possessions would they most like to have with them and why? Record the answers on poster board and revisit the question after the book is completed. Has anyone changed what they would bring? Are the reasons for what they would bring the same or different as before?

2. Write down simple directions on scraps of paper such as "turn off the light" or "take off your shoe." Have students pair up and attempt to communicate their message to one another without using the actual object, writing or drawing, or any words. Ask them to describe how it felt. How might they feel to have to attempt to communicate in that manner all the time?

3. What is considered progress often has a negative impact too. Discuss different advancements with side effects, such as factories leading to pollution, computer usage leading to identity theft, or some countries getting richer from other countries' cheap labor. Ask your students to imagine countermeasures that might mitigate these negative impacts and have them create a plan for how they would implement it on a large scale.