



AHIAHIA

THE ORPHAN

BY LEVI ILLUITOK

ILLUSTRATED BY NATE WELLS



EDUCATOR'S
RESOURCE



AHIAHIA

THE ORPHAN

ABOUT THE BOOK

After his parents are brutally murdered, Ahiahia is raised by his grandmother in a camp surrounded by enemies. His grandmother knows that eventually the camp will turn on Ahiahia, just as it did his parents, so she chants a protection chant over the clothing that she lovingly sews for him, over the amulet and necklace she gives him, even over the dog that is his companion. When he is attacked, Ahiahia must use his agility, hunting skills, and the protection imparted by his grandmother to stay alive.

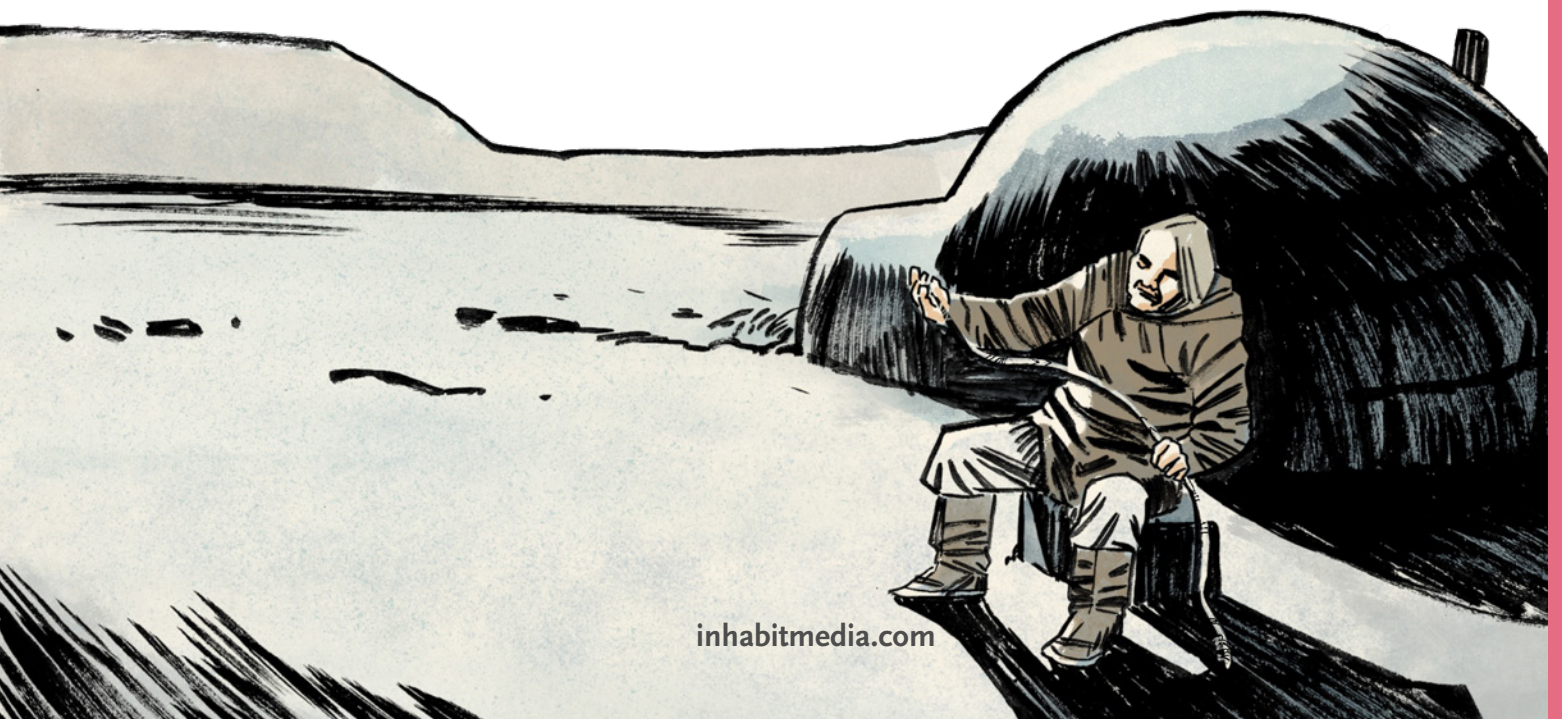
This traditional story is retold by Kugaaruk Elder Levi Illuitok, and illustrated in a comic book style by Nate Wells, giving life to an ancient story for new generations to enjoy.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Levi Illuitok was born in Qilijauqtaq, Kugaaruk, a community in Nunavut. While growing up, he and his family travelled by land and did not stay in one place for long. Levi enjoys going out on the land and hunting. He also teaches his traditional knowledge to students.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Nate Wells is an illustrator and designer living in Texas. While studying graphic design at Texas Tech University, Nate began his career in cartooning at the school's newspaper, *The Daily Toreador*, where he worked as an editorial cartoonist. Nate now works in the fields of comic books, film, and music, creating posters, sequential art, and concept art.



NOTE TO EDUCATORS

This guide is geared toward students in Grades 8 to 10, and contains pre-reading activities, discussion questions, and extension activities focused on the comic book *Ahiahia the Orphan* by Levi Illuitok. The activities and discussion questions may be modified to suit the learning needs of your students. Students will participate in reading, writing, comprehension, and reflection activities to analyze and respond to the story. Students will respond to discussion questions, either orally or in writing, that encourage text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections. This guide is intended for use with a class set of *Ahiahia the Orphan*.

Please note that *Ahiahia the Orphan* contains graphic content with descriptions of violence. Consider whether this text is appropriate for your students before beginning the activities in this guide.

Ahiahia the Orphan contains words and phrases in Inuktitut. If you are not familiar with Inuktitut, there is a glossary of all Inuktitut terms located at the end of the book. Ensure that students are aware of the glossary so they may refer to it while reading.

Comic books use a combination of words and pictures in a sequence across the page to tell a story. Comic books are powerful tools for educators to increase student engagement and confidence in reading. The strong visual element is appealing to both the reluctant and advanced readers in your classroom, and can be used to address the instructional needs of most readers.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

MAKING PREDICTIONS

Ask your students to look at the cover of *Ahiahia the Orphan*. Read the title out loud and ensure that all your students can see the illustration. Ask students to predict what they think the comic book is about, based on the title and the illustration. Prompt students as needed using the following questions:

- After reading the title, what do you think will be the focus of the story? Why?
- After looking at the illustration, what do you think the person is feeling? Why?
- Do the colours used on the cover suggest anything about the mood, or general feeling, of the story?
Explain your thinking.

Record students' predictions and revisit them after they have finished reading.



UNDERSTANDING COMIC BOOKS

Tell your students that *Ahiahia the Orphan* is a comic book. Ask your students if they enjoy reading comic books, and if so, what they enjoy about them. Explain to students that a comic book uses text and illustrations to tell a story. Tell students that, unlike a novel that only contains text, a comic book uses panels (a box containing images and/or text), illustrations, sound effects, speech bubbles, and/or thought bubbles.

Have students look at page 5 of *Ahiahia the Orphan*. At this point, do not read the page.

Ask students the following questions:

- What elements unique to comic books do you see on this page?
- How would you read this page of the comic book? Would you look at the page panel by panel, or would you read the text and then look at the illustrations after?
- If you removed the text from this page and were just left with the illustrations, would you still understand what was happening? Why or why not?
- If you removed the illustrations from this page and were just left with the text, would you still understand what was happening? Why or why not?
- Would you rather read a novel or a comic book? Why?

DURING AND POST-READING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The following questions and discussion points can be used during and after reading *Ahiahia the Orphan*. Provide students with the chance to voice their own opinions, share their experiences, ask questions, or point out anything else they may notice about the book.

PAGES 5–9

- What do you notice about the illustrator’s use of colour in the first five pages of the story? Why do you think the author chose to use these colours? (Answers will vary. For example, the illustrator mainly uses orange and black, which may represent fear, anger, or death.)



PAGES 10–13

- What do we know about Ahiahia as a young man? (He is a hunter.)
- Ahiahia’s grandmother makes amulets that he can wear as protection from harm. What harm do you think Ahiahia might need protection from? (Answers will vary.)



PAGES 14–15

- Why do you think Ahiahia has many enemies in his camp? (Answers will vary. For example, they may be jealous that Ahiahia is independent and strong, or they may view Ahiahia as a threat.)

PAGES 16–17

- How would you describe Ahiahia's grandmother? Use specific examples from the story to support your answer. (Answers will vary. For example, she knows many traditional skills; she loves and cares for Ahiahia; she has connections to the spiritual world.)



PAGES 18–19

- Two different types of speech bubbles are used for dialogue on these pages and throughout the story. What do you think is the purpose of each type of speech bubble? (The round bubbles are for normal speech, and the bubbles with jagged edges are used for shouting.)
- How do you think Ahiahia felt when the man who was taunting and chasing him fell through the rock crevice? (Answers will vary. For example, relieved, happy, or like the man deserved it.)

PAGES 20–24

- What is similar about the illustrations at this moment in the story to the beginning of the story? (The illustrator uses similar colours, orange and black, to the pages when Ahiahia's parents were murdered.)

PAGES 24–25

- Ahiahia dodges the arrows that are being shot at him with ease. Why do you think Ahiahia is able to do this? (He is protected by the protection chant that his grandmother performed over the amulets, necklace, bows, and dog.)

PAGES 26–28

- Why did the men who tried to kill Ahiahia flee the camp? (They knew they couldn't kill Ahiahia. They were worried Ahiahia would take revenge.)

PAGES 29–32

- Why do you think Ahiahia would not let his wives leave the *iglu*? (Answers will vary. For example, he may want to protect them from harm, or he may want to control them.)
- The illustrator uses orange and black to depict Ahiahia's wives inside the iglu with his grandmother. What might this suggest about the mood inside the iglu? (Answers will vary. For example, it may represent fear, anger, or sadness.)

POST-READING

- What words would you use to describe Ahiahia? Use specific examples from the story to support your answer. (Answers will vary.)
- Is Ahiahia a hero or a villain in this story? Use specific examples from the story to support your answer. Do you need any more information to answer this question? If so, what information do you need? (Answers will vary.)
- What lessons can you take away from this story? (Answers will vary.)
- Does the story of Ahiahia remind you of any other books you've read or TV shows or movies you've watched? If so, which ones? (Answers will vary.)

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

MAKING PREDICTIONS: FOLLOW-UP

Remind students of the predictions they made before reading *Ahiahia the Orphan*. Post student predictions in a visible area of the classroom. Ask students to review their predictions and decide whether they were accurate now that they have read the story.

STORYBOARD

Ask students to think about the events leading up to the murder of Ahiahia's parents. Explain that since the author does not explain why Ahiahia's parents were murdered, the motive and events leading up to the murder are left open to the reader's imagination. Remind students that a motive is a reason for doing something and is often a secret. Provide students with up to five minutes to "think-pair-share" the following question:

What do you think was the motive for Ahiahia's parents' murder?

Think-Pair-Share is a collaborative learning strategy that allows students to problem-solve or answer a question. During Think-Pair-Share, students move through three steps:

1. **Think** individually about a topic or question.
2. **Pair** up and discuss the topic or question with another student.
3. **Share** what was discussed with the whole class.

This strategy helps focus students' attention on the topic of discussion and fosters active participation, problem-solving, and oral communication skills.

After students have had an opportunity to think-pair-share, ask a few volunteers to share some of the ideas they discussed with their partner. Record students' ideas on the whiteboard or a piece of chart paper.

Tell students they will create a storyboard that depicts the events leading up to Ahiahia's parents' murder. Explain that a storyboard is a graphic organizer that contains illustrations and notes explaining what is happening in a story. Show students examples of completed storyboards. Many excellent examples are available online.

Tell students that while they create their storyboard, they may consider what happened right before the murder, or they may think about events that occurred further in the past when Ahiahia was a small child. Explain that the students will complete a storyboard that depicts six important moments before Ahiahia's parents' murder, including illustrations and accompanying notes explaining what is happening.

Provide students with a blank six-panel storyboard. One is available in the **Reproducible Resources** section on page 11 of this guide, or you may create your own storyboard template using a word processor. Provide students with time to complete their storyboards, circulating and offering support and encouragement as needed.

“WHAT IF” QUESTIONS

Tell students that they will consider how the story of *Ahiahia the Orphan* could have been different by creating "what if" questions. Provide students with an example of a "what if" question:

What if Ahiahia's parents escaped the iglu during the murder attempt?

With students, brainstorm answers to the "what if" question above. Encourage students to generate as many ideas as possible and record them on the whiteboard. Possible responses include:

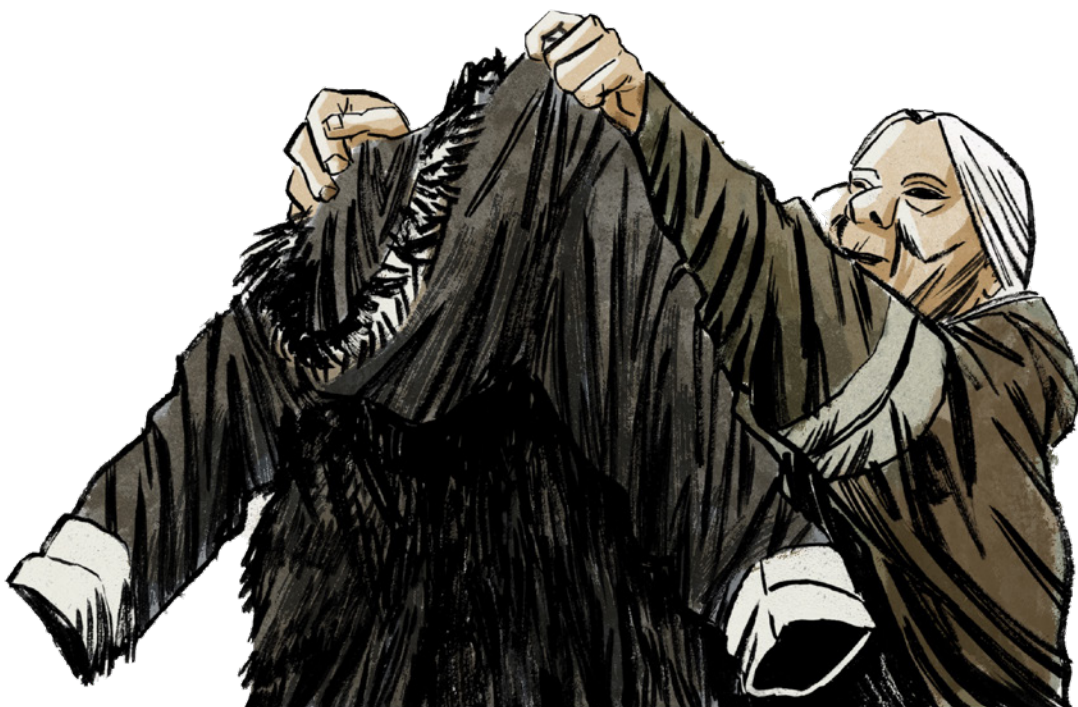
- Ahiahia and his parents may have left their village and found a new place to live.
- Ahiahia and his parents may have lived in fear of another murder attempt taking place.
- Ahiahia's parents may have left Ahiahia behind to fend for himself.

Organize students into partners. Ask pairs to brainstorm "what if" questions for the story of Ahiahia and write them down on a piece of lined paper. Encourage students to generate as many ideas as possible. After each pair has had a chance to write down their "what if" questions, instruct pairs to trade pieces of paper with another pair of students. Now, each pair will answer the "what if" questions created by other students.

Provide time for students to respond to the "what if" questions. After they have finished, each pair should trade pieces of paper with the pair they originally switched with. Each pair should now have the list of "what if" questions they initially created with answers to those questions.

Provide time for students to review the answers to their "what if" questions and facilitate a discussion with the whole group. You may wish to discuss the following:

- How the "what if" questions change the outcome of the story of Ahiahia.
- Similarities and differences between the questions created by each pair.
- Similarities and differences between the answers generated by each pair.
- Challenges of this activity.



DIARY ENTRY

Tell students that they are going to write a diary entry from the perspective of Ahiahia. Explain that perspective is how a character understands what is happening in a story.

Facilitate a discussion about diary entries with students using the following discussion prompts:

- What is a diary? (Answers may vary. For example, a place where people write their thoughts, feelings, and experiences.)
- Who is the intended audience of a diary? (The person who wrote the diary. Most people like to keep their diaries private.)
- What do people write about in their diaries? (Their thoughts, feelings, or experiences.)
- Imagine that you had a diary. How would you feel if someone read your diary? (Answers may vary.)
- How is diary writing different from other types of writing? (Answers may vary. For example, a diary may be less formal and is usually written in the first person.)
- What could you learn about a person through reading their diary? (Their thoughts, feelings, or experiences.)

Remind students that they will write a diary entry from the perspective of Ahiahia. The diary entry should focus on the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of Ahiahia, and can be based on any moment from the story. Tell students that when writing the diary entry, they will pretend that they are Ahiahia and write in the first person, using phrases such as “I am” or “I feel.”

Distribute a sheet of lined paper to each student and provide time for independent writing. Circulate through students and provide one-on-one support as needed.

BOOK REVIEW

Tell students that they will write a book review for *Ahiahia the Orphan*. Remind students that a book review provides a summary of the story and shares the reviewer's opinion of the book. Tell students that book reviews help people decide which books to read, just like movie reviews help people decide which movies to watch. Tell students that they will include the following information in their book review:

- The title, author, and illustrator of the story.
- The year of publication.
- The genre of the story.
- A summary of the book that explains what the story is about. The summary should be written carefully so as not to contain any spoilers.
- Their rating of the story from one to five stars. Five out of five stars means that they thought the book was excellent.
- Their favourite part of the story and why they liked that part of the story.
- Anything that they felt was missing from the story.
- Whether they recommend or do not recommend the book and why. This section should also justify the rating they've chosen.

Ask students to write a draft of their book review on lined paper. Provide time for independent writing, collect students' drafts, and provide formative feedback. Allow time for students to revise and edit their writing before creating a final draft for submission.

Note: This activity may take multiple class periods to complete.

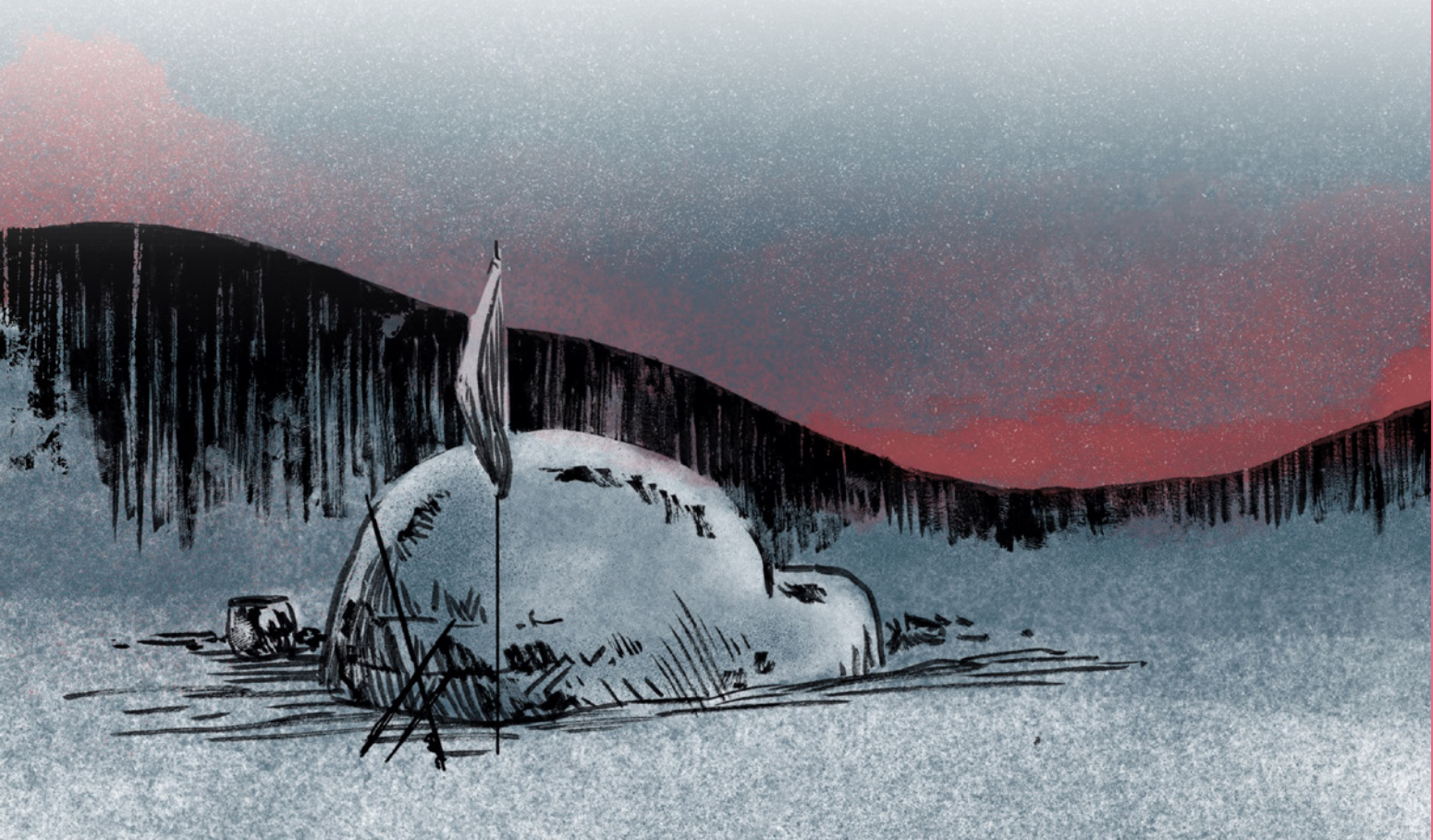
LETTER TO THE AUTHOR

Tell students that they will write a letter to Levi Illuitok, the author of *Ahiahia the Orphan*. Explain that the story of Ahiahia the orphan is a traditional Inuit story, and the version that the class has been reading is the version of the story that is familiar to Levi Illuitok.

With students, brainstorm a list of topics or questions they could ask the author in their letter. Record students' ideas on the whiteboard. Possible topics include:

- The author's life and experiences.
- Additional information about *Ahiahia the Orphan*.
- Other versions of the story of Ahiahia the orphan.
- Types of Inuit traditional stories.
- What they enjoyed about *Ahiahia the Orphan*.

Provide students time to write independently. Circulate through students and offer one-on-one support as needed. If time allows at the end of the lesson, you may ask volunteers to share some of the questions they asked in their letter to the author.



REPRODUCIBLE RESOURCES

STORYBOARD TEMPLATE

Name _____

Date _____

Title _____

