



One Plastic Bag: Isatou Ceesay and The Recycling Women of the Gambia

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Grades 1- 4

SUMMARY:

In this true story, Isatou Ceesay notices that discarded plastic bags are piling up on the ground in her town of Njau, Gambia. Mosquitoes are swarming near pools of water the bags help collect. The smoke and smell involved in burning the bags are unpleasant. Goats are dying as a result of eating the bags. This young female did not just complain about the problem-she came up with a solution. This solution resulted in an empowered group of women working together, a healthier environment, and a source of income for their community.

Grade 3 Discussion Questions

RL.3.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g. their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

- How did Isatou's feelings change toward plastic bags throughout the story?
- Isatou was nervous about telling people about her plan. Discuss what concerns the author stated (as well as other possible unstated concerns) Isatou may have had about her plan and her concerns about the reactions others might have to her plan.
- Isatou shared her plans with her friends. What response did she get from her friends? Do you think it was beneficial for her to share her ideas with others? Why or why not?
- What are some examples of how Isatou's recycling project changed her community? Consider how it changed the environment and the lives of the animals and the people living there.

RL.3.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.

In Gambia they speak Wolof. There are 3 Wolof words in this story that you can figure out by listening to the whole sentence and looking at the illustrations. The words are *mbuba*, *wanjo*, and *dalasi*. Find, read and show the individual pages where these three words are used. Read each sentence to the children one at a time. Have them turn-and-talk to their partner to discuss what meanings they come up with before sharing their ideas with the class. Model confirming the literal meanings of the words in the glossary located in the back of the book.

Grade 3 Activities

W.3.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

*To experience some of the feelings Isatou may have experienced, students will create items made out of plastic bags and imagine selling these items in Gambia. Students will cut plastic bags up into strips. They will learn how to tie and braid the strips to create a jump rope, bracelet, keychain, or weave the strips into mats.

*After this experience, they will then write a 5-sentence paragraph stating their opinion of Isatou's recycling project. Their opinion may be on the effectiveness of the project or the effort involved in the project. Their paragraph will include a topic sentence stating their opinion, 3 sentences stating 3 reasons that support their opinion, and a concluding sentence.