

The Lost Boys

Magazine Article by Sara Corbett

VIDEO TRAILER



KEYWORD: HML9-590

How far would you go to find **FREEDOM**?

COMMON CORE

RI 4 Analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on tone. **RI 6** Determine an author's purpose in a text and analyze how the author uses rhetoric to advance that purpose.

SL 2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats. **L 4b** Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech.

It's impossible for most of us to imagine what it would be like to be a refugee—someone who faces terrible danger in his or her home country and flees in search of freedom and protection. What would you do if you were imprisoned for your religious or political beliefs or harassed about the color of your skin? What would it take to make you leave your home and seek refuge in a strange, new place?

DISCUSS With a partner, discuss what it might be like to be forced to leave your home, your friends, your family, and everything familiar to you. Describe the one thing you would take with you if you had to leave quickly, and explain what you think you would miss most.



● TEXT ANALYSIS: AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

An **author's purpose** is what he or she hopes to achieve by writing a particular work. An author might write for any of several purposes:

- to persuade
- to inform or explain
- to entertain
- to express thoughts and feelings

In fact, an author may have more than one purpose for writing a given piece. For example, an author could be attempting to persuade you to register to vote while also expressing feelings about democracy. Understanding both the purpose of a text and how the author uses rhetoric to support that purpose is essential to getting the most out of what you read. As you read "The Lost Boys," use a chart to identify the purpose of key passages in the text.

Passage	Purpose
"According to U.S. State Department estimates, some 17,000 boys were separated from their families..." (lines 27–29)	inform

● READING SKILL: INTERPRET GRAPHIC AIDS

Magazine articles like "The Lost Boys" often include **graphic aids**—such as charts, maps, and photographs—that present key information and events.

- As you read, examine the **photographs** in this article. Consider the subjects' body language and facial expressions. What do they tell you about the subjects' feelings or experiences?
- As you study the **map** in this article, note details about Sudan. Where is this country? What features appear on the map? What else does the map communicate?

Review: [Connect](#)

▲ VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

The words listed here are crucial to understanding the Lost Boys' journey to freedom. Place each word in the column where it belongs. Define each word you know.

WORD LIST	boon	fractious	posse
	exodus	marauding	subsist

Know Well	Think I Know	Don't Know



Complete the activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

A Devastating Division

The young refugees profiled in this article are from Sudan, the largest country in Africa. Sudan has been torn apart by Africa's longest-running civil war. Their country has been devastated by war and ravaged by religious conflicts. Over 4 million Sudanese people have been driven from their homes, 2 million have died, and thousands more have been forced into slavery. Since 1955, Sudan's Islamic fundamentalist government has fought against groups of rebels from southern Sudan. The government is intent on imposing Islamic law on the people of Sudan, while the southern Sudanese groups demand religious freedom and economic power. Peace talks aimed at ending the war have produced glimmers of hope, and on May 26, 2004, a power-sharing agreement was signed by both sides. However, further crisis broke out in western Sudan shortly thereafter, plunging the country back into chaos and creating more orphans and refugees.



THE LOST BOYS

SARA CORBETT

THESE YOUNG AFRICAN REFUGEES SURVIVED LIONS, CROCODILES, AND STARVATION. NOW THEY’RE STARTING LIFE OVER IN AMERICA.

One evening in late January, Peter Dut, 21, leads his two teenage brothers through the brightly lit corridors of the Minneapolis airport, trying to mask his confusion. Two days earlier, the brothers, refugees from Africa, had encountered their first light switch and their first set of stairs. An aid worker in Nairobi¹ had demonstrated the flush toilet to them—also the seat belt, the shoelace, the fork. And now they find themselves alone in Minneapolis, three bone-thin African boys confronted by a swirling river of white faces and rolling suitcases.

Finally, a traveling businessman recognizes their uncertainty. “Where are you flying to?” he asks kindly, and the eldest brother tells him in halting, bookish English. A few days earlier, they left a small mud hut in a blistering-hot Kenyan refugee camp, where they had lived as orphans for nine years after walking for hundreds of miles across Sudan.² They are now headed to a new home in the U.S.A. “Where?” the man asks in disbelief when Peter Dut says the city’s name. “Fargo? North Dakota? You gotta be kidding me. It’s too cold there. You’ll never survive it!”

And then he laughs. Peter Dut has no idea why. **B**

In the meantime, the temperature in Fargo has dropped to 15 below. The boys tell me that, until now, all they have ever known about cold is what they felt grasping a bottle of frozen water. An aid worker handed it to them one day during a “cultural orientation” session at the Kakuma³ Refugee Camp, a place where the temperature hovers around 100 degrees.

Peter Dut and his two brothers belong to an unusual group of refugees referred to by aid organizations as the Lost Boys of Sudan, a group of roughly 10,000 boys who arrived in Kenya in 1992 seeking refuge from their country’s

A GRAPHIC AIDS

This **photograph** was taken shortly after the Dut brothers arrived in North Dakota. What do their facial expressions and body language suggest about their comfort level in their new surroundings?

B AUTHOR’S PURPOSE

The writer begins this article with an **anecdote** instead of immediately presenting statistics about Sudan. How does this choice affect your perception of the subject matter?

1. **Nairobi** (nī-rō’bē): the capital city of Kenya, a country in Africa.

2. **Sudan**: a country in eastern Africa northwest of Kenya.

3. **Kakuma** (kə-kōō’mä).



fractious civil war. The fighting pits a northern Islamic government against rebels in the south who practice Christianity and tribal religions.

The Lost Boys were named after Peter Pan's **posse** of orphans. According to U.S. State Department estimates, some 17,000 boys were separated from their families and fled southern Sudan in an **exodus** of biblical proportions after fighting intensified in 1987. They arrived in throngs, homeless and parentless, having trekked about 1,000 miles from Sudan to Ethiopia, back to Sudan, and finally to Kenya. The majority of the boys belonged to the Dinka or Nuer tribes, and most were between the ages of 8 and 18. (Most of the boys don't know for sure how old they are; aid workers assigned them approximate ages after they arrived in 1992.)

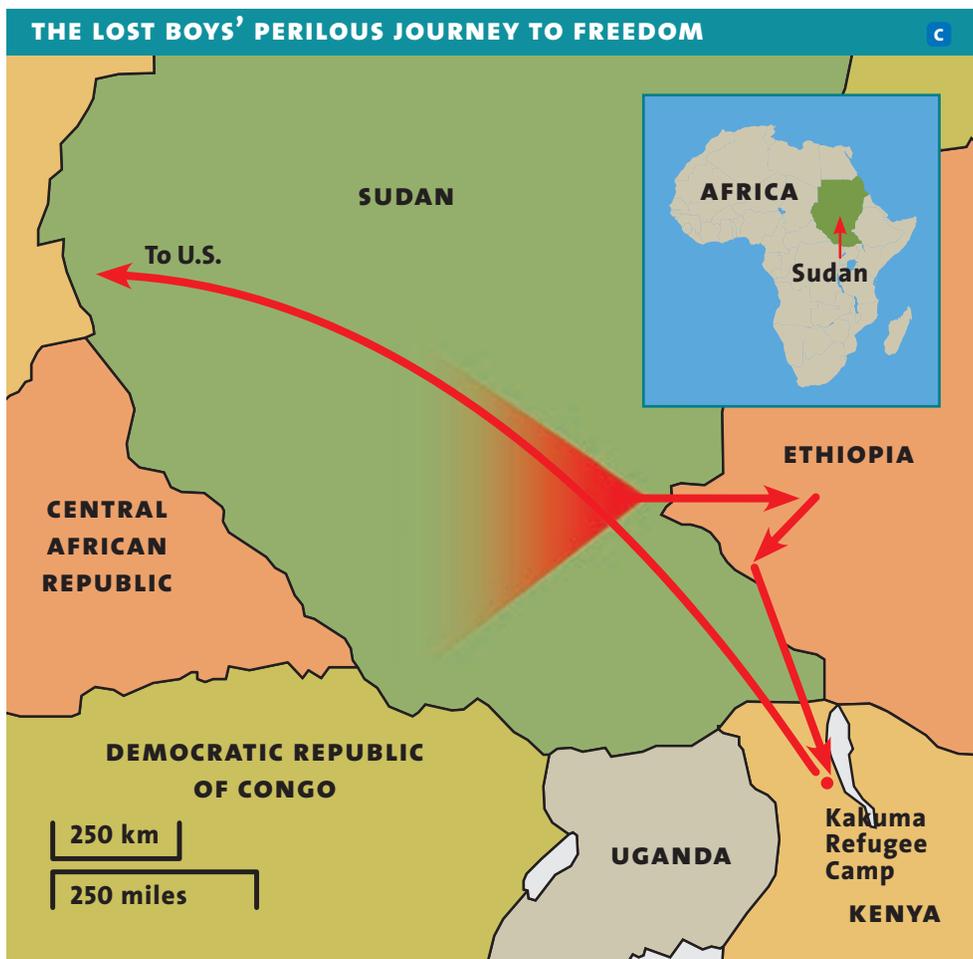
Along the way, the boys endured attacks from the northern army and **marauding** bandits, as well as lions who preyed on the slowest and weakest among them. Many died from starvation or thirst. Others drowned or were eaten by crocodiles as they tried to cross a swollen Ethiopian river. By the time the Lost Boys reached the Kakuma Refugee Camp, their numbers had been cut nearly in half.

fractious (frăk'shəs) *adj.*
hard to manage or hold together; unruly

posse (pös'ē) *n.* a band

exodus (ëk'sə-dəs) *n.* a mass departure

marauding (mə-rō'dīng) *adj.* roaming about in search of plunder
maraud *v.*



C GRAPHIC AIDS

List two details included on the **map** that are not provided in the article. What do you think is the most important piece of information communicated by this map?



In 1992, roughly 10,000 boys from Sudan poured into a refugee camp in Kenya.

Now, after nine years of **subsisting** on rationed corn mush and lentils and living largely ungoverned by adults, the Lost Boys of Sudan are coming to America. In 1999, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which handles refugee cases around the world, and the U.S. government agreed to send 3,600 of the boys to the U.S.—since going back to Sudan was out of the question. About 500 of the Lost Boys still under the age of 18 will be living in apartments or foster homes across the U.S. by the end of this year. The boys will start school at a grade level normal for their age, thanks to a
50 tough English-language program at their refugee camp. The remaining 3,100 Lost Boys will be resettled as adults. After five years, each boy will be eligible for citizenship, provided he has turned 21. **D**

NIGHTTIME IN AMERICA?

On the night that I stand waiting for Peter Dut and his brothers to land in Fargo, tendrils of snow are snaking across the tarmac. The three boys file through the gate without money or coats or luggage beyond their small backpacks. The younger brothers, Maduk, 17, and Riak, 15, appear petrified. As a social worker passes out coats, Peter Dut studies the black night through the airport window. “Excuse me,” he says worriedly. “Can you tell me, please, is it now night or day?”
60 This is a stove burner. This is a can opener. This is a brush for your teeth. The new things come in a tumble. The brothers’ home is a sparsely furnished, two-bedroom apartment in a complex on Fargo’s south side. Rent is \$445 a month. It has been stocked with donations from area churches and businesses: toothpaste, bread, beans, bananas.

subsist (səb-sĭst') v. to support oneself at a minimal level

COMMON CORE RI.4

D TONE

Tone is the attitude a writer or speaker takes toward a subject. In a written work, tone is conveyed by the writer’s choice of words and details. The tone of magazine articles can vary widely based on the author’s purpose as well as his or her **audience**—the people intended to read the article. Most articles, however, can be described as either formal or informal in tone. Compared to other magazine articles you’ve read, is this one formal or informal? Explain.

A caseworker empties a garbage bag full of donated clothing, which looks to have come straight from the closet of an elderly man. I know how lucky the boys are: The State Department estimates that war, famine, and disease in southern Sudan have killed more than 2 million people and displaced another 4 million. Still I cringe to think of the boys showing up for school in these clothes.

70 The next day, when I return to the apartment at noon, the boys have been up since 5 and are terribly hungry. “What about your food?” I ask, gesturing to the bread and bananas and the box of cereal sitting on the counter.

Peter grins sheepishly. I suddenly realize that the boys, in a lifetime of cooking maize and beans over a fire pit, have never opened a box. I am placed in the role of teacher. And so begins an opening spree. We open potato chips. We open a can of beans. We untwist the tie on the bagged loaf of bread. Soon, the boys are seated and eating a hot meal. **E**

LIVING ON LEAVES AND BERRIES

The three brothers have come a long way since they fled their village in Sudan with their parents and three sisters—all of whom were later killed by Sudanese
80 army soldiers. The Lost Boys first survived a 6- to 10-week walk to Ethiopia, often subsisting on leaves and berries and the occasional **boon** of a warthog carcass. Some boys staved off dehydration by drinking their own urine. Many fell behind; some were devoured by lions or trampled by buffalo.

The Lost Boys lived for three years in Ethiopia, in UN-supported camps, before they were forced back into Sudan by a new Ethiopian government no longer sympathetic to their plight. Somehow, more than 10,000 of the boys miraculously trailed into Kenya’s UN camps in the summer of 1992—as Sudanese government planes bombed the rear of their procession.

For the Lost Boys, then, a new life in America might easily seem to be the
90 answer to every dream. But the real world has been more complicated than that. Within weeks of arriving, Riak is placed in a local junior high; Maduk starts high school classes; and Peter begins adult-education classes.

REFUGEE BLUES

Five weeks later, Riak listens quietly through a lesson on Elizabethan history at school, all but ignored by white students around him.

Nearby at Fargo South High School, Maduk is frequently alone as well, copying passages from his geography textbook, trying not to look at the short skirts worn by many of the girls.

Peter Dut worries about money. The three brothers say they receive just \$107 in food stamps each month and spend most of their \$510 monthly cash
100 assistance on rent and utilities.

Resettlement workers say the brothers are just undergoing the normal transition. Scott Burtsfield, who coordinates resettlement efforts in Fargo through Lutheran Social Services, says: “The first three months are always the toughest. It really does get better.”

E AUTHOR’S PURPOSE

What is Corbett’s purpose in lines 70–77? Explain, citing specific details from the passage.

boon (bōōn) *n.* a benefit; blessing

COMMON CORE L.4b

Language Coach

Roots and Affixes

A suffix is an affix at the end of a root or base. Reread lines 93–94. In *Elizabethan*, the suffix *-an*, which comes from French and can be traced back to Latin, means “belonging to.” The base word, *Elizabeth*, refers to England’s queen from 1558–1603. What is *Elizabethan history*?



Riak Dut, shown here in his school lunch line, eats alone most days.

The Lost Boys can only hope so; they have few other options. A return to southern Sudan could be fatal. “There is nothing left for the Lost Boys to go home to—it’s a war zone,” says Mary Anne Fitzgerald, a Nairobi-based relief consultant.

Some Sudanese elders have criticized sending boys to the U.S. They worry
110 their children will lose their African identity. One afternoon, an 18-year-old Lost Boy translated a part of a tape an elder had sent along with many boys: “He is saying: ‘Don’t drink. Don’t smoke. Don’t kill. Go to school every day, and remember, America is not your home.’” **G**

But if adjustment is hard, the boys also experience consoling moments.

One of these comes on a quiet Friday night last winter. As the boys make a dinner of rice and lentils, Peter changes into an African outfit, a finely woven green tunic, with a skullcap to match, bought with precious food rations at Kakuma.

Just then, the doorbell rings unexpectedly. And out of the cold tumble four
120 Sudanese boys—all of whom have resettled as refugees over the last several years. I watch one, an 18-year-old named Sunday, wrap his arms encouragingly around Peter Dut. “It’s a hard life here,” Sunday whispers to the older boy, “but it’s a free life, too.” 

F GRAPHIC AIDS

What can you **infer** about Riak’s experiences at his junior high in North Dakota based on this photograph? Explain your answer.

G CONNECT

Think about what it’s like to receive instructions from a parent or other adult. Do you think these taped messages will influence the boys? Explain.

Comprehension

- Recall** Why did the Lost Boys leave Sudan?
- Summarize** What hardships did the boys endure as they fled from their homes in Sudan to the refugee camp in Kenya?
- Clarify** How did Peter Dut's friend comfort him at the end of the article?



RI 6 Determine an author's purpose in a text and analyze how the author uses rhetoric to advance that purpose. **SL 2** Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats.

Text Analysis

- Connect** Think back to the discussion you had about what it might be like to be forced from your home. Did reading about these young refugees change your feelings at all? Explain why or why not, citing details from the selection.
- Analyze Characterization** How would you describe the Dut brothers? What details caused you to form this impression? Use a spider map like the one shown to record the details before responding in a few sentences.



- Interpret Graphic Aids** Examine the **map** on page 594 and the **photographs** on pages 593, 595, and 597. Which was most effective at helping you understand the Lost Boys' experiences? Was the article more effective with the graphics than it would have been without? Explain your answer.
- Evaluate Author's Purpose** Review the chart you filled in as you read. What do you think is Corbett's primary purpose? Which purpose does she achieve most effectively? Explain your answers, citing evidence from the text.

READING-WRITING CONNECTION

WRITING PROMPT

Short Constructed Response: Analysis

Of all the struggles these refugees faced in America, which do you think must have been the most difficult? Consider the alienation caused by culture shock, financial hardship, loneliness, and the new climate. Write **one or two paragraphs** explaining your view, citing evidence.

REVISING TIP

Review your response. Did you incorporate relevant and convincing examples from the text to support your opinion? Add more support if necessary.

How far would you go to find FREEDOM?

When is freedom worth other sacrifices?

Vocabulary in Context

▲ VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Choose the word that is not related in meaning to the other words.

1. migration, exodus, consolation, flight
2. boon, building, structure, edifice
3. conspiring, ravaging, plundering, marauding
4. amusement, posse, recreation, entertainment
5. subsist, survive, manage, reconsider
6. irritable, divisive, fractious, connected

WORD LIST

boon
exodus
fractious
marauding
posse
subsist

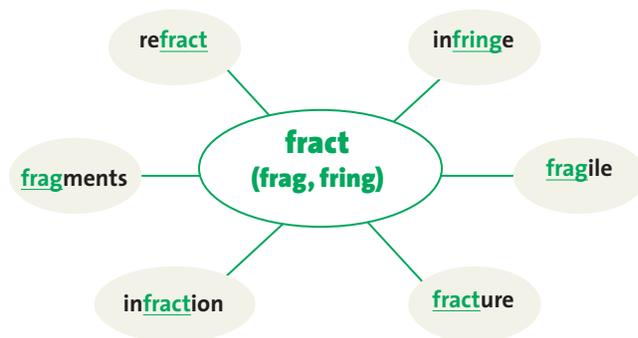
ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN SPEAKING

• conclude • construct • implicit • primary • specific

The author's admiration for the lost boys is **implicit** in this article. With a partner, discuss and identify **specific** characteristics and achievements she admires. Use at least one Academic Vocabulary word in your discussion.

VOCABULARY STRATEGY: THE LATIN ROOT *fract*

The vocabulary word *fractious* contains the Latin root *fract*, which means "to break." This root may also appear as *frag* and *fring*. To understand the meaning of words with these root forms, use context clues and your knowledge of the root.



PRACTICE Choose the word from the word web that best completes each sentence. Use context clues to help you or, if necessary, check a dictionary.

1. Don't put ____ objects where children can reach them.
2. ____ of the shattered glass still lay on the floor.
3. The protesters feared that the police would ____ on their rights.
4. Because water will ____ light, a pencil in a glass of water will look broken.
5. Any serious ____ of the rules will be punished by a two-day suspension.
6. He suffered a hairline ____ of his collarbone.

COMMON CORE

L4b, c Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings; consult reference materials to determine or clarify a word's meaning or etymology.

Interactive Vocabulary **THINK** central

Go to thinkcentral.com.
KEYWORD: HML9-599