



# RAIN SCHOOL

AUTHOR: JAMES RUMFORD

ILLUSTRATOR: JAMES RUMFORD

See a video of the book read aloud here: [Rain School](#)

**\*\* REMEMBER: HAVE FUN AND THE KIDS WILL TOO! \*\***

## OVERVIEW

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Children in Chad (Africa) build a schoolhouse that washes away during the rainy season after the end of each school year. James Rumford, who lived in Chad as a Peace Corps volunteer, fills these pages with the vibrant colors of Africa and the spare words of a poet to show how important learning is in a country where only a few children are able to go to school. (scholastic.com) "I wanted to give readers today pause for thought, a moment of appreciation for the school down the street and the men and woman who make education so easily available in our country." (jamesrumford.com)

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

James Rumford grew up in Southern California. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in Chad and Afghanistan. He was a Fulbright lecturer in Rwanda. He has lived in Honolulu for over thirty years. Rumford began writing and illustrating children's books in 1996, with the publication of *The Cloudmakers* (Houghton Mifflin). He is also interested in fine bookmaking and has his own letter press called Manoa Press, founded in 1986. He has published many limited-edition handmade books. (mcmillan.com)

## THE READ ALOUD

### BEFORE READING

Use these before reading the story to help students activate background knowledge and make predictions:

- James Rumford is the author and illustrator of this book. What does that mean?
- I wonder in looking at the picture on the cover what the book is about. What do you think?
- Do you think this book is fiction (thumbs up), non-fiction (thumbs down), or are you not sure (sideways)? Why do you think that?
- Look at the title page. What do you think the setting of this book is? What makes you think that?

### DURING THE STORY

Use these while reading the story to help students interpret the action and content:

- (p. 5) Why do you think there is no school?

## RAIN SCHOOL

### TOPICS & THEMES:

- Community
- Resources
- Schools

### *Tips for every book!*

### POWER PHRASES:

*I WONDER...*

*I NOTICE...*

*TELL ME MORE...*

### DIGGING DEEPER:

*"Tell me more, why do you think that?"*

*"How do you know that?"*

*"Why do you think they feel like that?"*

*"Interesting, did you notice anything else?"*

- What does the teacher mean when she says “This is our first lesson!”?
- (p. 10) What do you think “gather” means?
- Why do you think they are building the school from mud and grass and saplings? What is a sapling?
- (p. 17) How is this lesson like your school? How is it different?
- (p. 21) What does “the students minds are fat with learning” mean?
- (p. 24) The school is washed away! Why doesn't it matter?

## AFTER READING

*Use these after reading the story to help students understand what they just read:*

- Think about your prediction about whether this book is fiction or nonfiction. What do you think now? Why?
- I find this story particularly interesting because the author actually lived in Chad and taught there. He saw schools washed away by rain and rebuilt by the students, giving him the idea for this book.

## BRINGING THE BOOK TO LIFE!

- (p. 10) Let's pantomime what gathering grasses would look like!

## COOPERATIVE LEARNING

- (end of the book) Turn to your neighbor and talk about whether or not you think children will be excited to go back to school and rebuild their school. Share your ideas with the group.

## SMALL-GROUP IDEAS

### 1. DISCUSSION ACTIVITY

- If this story continued, what do you think would happen the next year?
- Let's look at the map on the last page of the book to locate Chad. What is unique about where it is located?
- Do people in Chad think education is important? Why do you think that?
- Look at p. 12-13. What do you notice about this schoolroom? Compare it to your schoolroom.
- If you got to meet the students of Chad, what questions would you ask them about their school? How can we find the answers to our questions? (e.g., write a letter to Mr. Rumford)

### Suggested Optional Activity:

- (Reader: download pictures of schools from 5-6 countries on a tablet or print out) Can you find similarities and differences between these schools? Which would you like to attend? Which would you not want to attend? Why or why not?

### 2. WRITING ACTIVITY

- Make three columns on your paper. Head one RAIN SCHOOL, one BOTH SCHOOLS, and one MY SCHOOL. List things you can find in the Rain School and in your school. The things that are on both lists, can then be added to the Both Schools list.

### 3. EXTENSION ACTIVITY

- Draw a picture of your dream school! Where would it be? What would you include? How would it look?

## COMMON CORE LINKS

CCSS, ELA, literacy, RL, 1.1,1.2,1.3,1.7