

# Coming to the U.S.A.

**When civil war broke out in Somalia, these sisters left their home and came to the United States.**

The Ibrahim sisters—Nimo, 16, and Fadumo, 18—came to the United States in 2000. They were born in Somalia, a country in Africa. While they were still very young, civil war and famine came to Somalia. More than a million Somalis were in danger of starving. They had to escape.

Fadumo was 5 years old when her family left Somalia. "I remember the house we used to live in, and how we used to cook, and how it was so different than here," says Fadumo.

When they fled their home country, the Ibrahim family had nowhere to go, nowhere to turn. They were **refugees**. For many years they didn't have a home. They lived in camps in Africa. But thanks to the International Rescue Committee, they were able to move to Boston, Massachusetts, five years ago. Nimo and her sister went to high school in Boston. Their father has a job, and their mother is taking care of two new babies. They have made a brand-new start.

It hasn't been easy. Nimo says that fitting in to her new home and learning a new language were difficult first. "There are a lot of nice people, and there are a lot of cruel people," she says. "It took me two years to get used to everything and everyone."

There are many good things, as well. Fadumo says she likes "the mix of different kinds of religion and culture" in Boston.

Both Nimo and Fadumo want to become doctors and go back to Somalia to try to help people.

"I miss my grandmother and my family in Somalia," says Nimo.

## Vocabulary

*refugees* (re-fyoo-JEES)  
people who leave their  
country to escape danger

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What goals do the Ibrahim sisters have for their future?

- A They want to become doctors and go back to Somalia.
- B They want to live in camps in Africa with their family.
- C They want to stay in Boston because they like the religion and culture there.
- D They want to work for the International Rescue Committee.

2. Which of the following does the author describe first in the passage?

- A The author describes how the Ibrahim family ended up in Boston.
- B The author describes the life of the Ibrahim family in refugee camps.
- C The author describes the reasons the Ibrahim family left Somalia.
- D The author describes the future goals of the Ibrahim sisters.

3. It can be inferred from the passage that

- A life in the refugee camps was a lot of fun for the Ibrahim family
- B it was hard for the Ibrahim family to adjust to life in the United States
- C the Ibrahim family had plenty of food in Somalia
- D the father of the Ibrahim family has a new job as a doctor in the United States

4. Read the following sentence and answer the question below: "There are a lot of nice people, and there are a lot of cruel people," she says."

In the sentence, the word **cruel** most nearly means

- A happy
- B interesting
- C mean
- D angry

5. What would be another good title for this passage?

- A The Civil War in Somalia
- B Escaping Famine and Finding Food
- C A New Life in the United States
- D A Family from Somalia

6. Why did the Ibrahim family need to leave Somalia?

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7. What word would the author most likely use to describe the Ibrahim family?

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8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

The Ibrahim sisters want to go back to Somalia someday \_\_\_\_\_ they want to try to help people there.

- A but
- B because
- C although
- D after

9. Answer the questions based on the sentence below.

The Ibrahim family left Somalia when their daughters were very young because of civil war and famine.

Who? the Ibrahim family

(did) What? \_\_\_\_\_

When? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

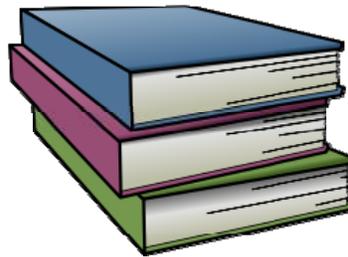
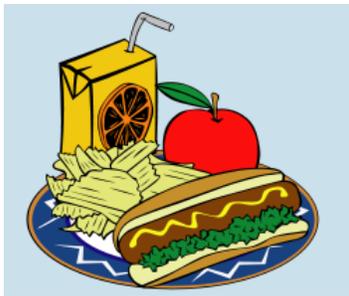
10. Read the vocabulary word and definition below and complete questions 10a, 10b, and 11.

**Vocabulary Word:** famine (fam · ine): not having enough food for a large number of people

10a. Read the five sentences below and underline the word **famine** in each sentence.

1. When there was a famine in Ethiopia, many people starved to death.
2. Because of the very dry climate crops could not be grown which caused a famine.
3. The pictures of the children affected by the famine were extremely sad.
4. When there was a famine in Ireland in the mid-1800s, a lot of Irish people chose to come to the United States in search of food and jobs.
5. The government officials gave food to the people who were living through the famine.

10b. Which image shows things people do NOT have during a famine?



11. If you forgot to bring your lunch to school and did not eat that day, is that a famine? Why or why not?

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**Passage Reading Level:** Lexile 740

**Passage Text Structure:** Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

**Passage Summary:** The passage describes a family who left Somalia as refugees and settled in the United States after years in refugee camps in Africa. The passage especially focuses on the experience of the two older daughters in the family who are now in high school in Boston.

1. What goals do the Ibrahim sisters have for their future?

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- A happy
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5. What would be another good title for this passage?

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- B Escaping Famine and Finding Food
- C **A New Life in the United States**
- D A Family from Somalia

6. Why did the Ibrahim family need to leave Somalia?

**Suggested answer:** There was a famine and a civil war in Somalia, and many Somalis were in danger of dying of starvation. [paragraph #1]

7. What word would the author most likely use to describe the Ibrahim family?

**Suggested answer:** The author might describe them as brave since they had the courage to flee their home country, live in refugee camps and finally come to the United States, where they adjusted to a very unfamiliar land and culture. [paragraphs #3, 4]

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

The Ibrahim sisters want to go back to Somalia someday \_\_\_\_\_ they want to try to help people there.

- A but
- B because**
- C although
- D after

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

The Ibrahim family left Somalia when their daughters were very young because of civil war and famine.

Who? The Ibrahim family

(did) What? **left Somalia**

When? **when their daughters were very young**

Why? **because of civil war and famine**

10. ReadWorks recommends that you teach this vocabulary word to the whole class out loud using the four steps listed below.

**Vocabulary Word:** famine

**Step 1:** Introduce the word

- a. Teacher writes the word on the board and divides it into syllables: (fam · ine)
- b. Teacher says: "This word is famine. What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "famine."]

**Step 2:** Provide a child-friendly definition

- a. Teacher says: "Famine means not having enough food for a large number of people."
- b. Teacher says: "In the text, the author states that there was a famine in Somalia. This means that there was not enough food for the people in Somalia."
- c. Teacher says: "What is the word?" [All students reply together out loud: "famine."]

**Step 3:** Practice the word

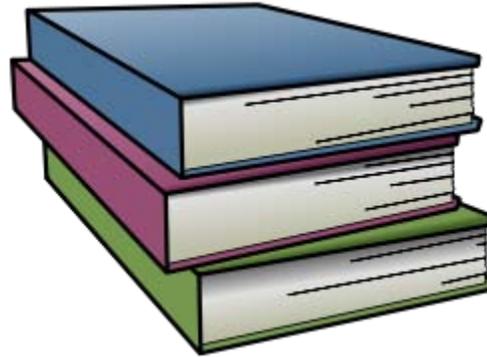
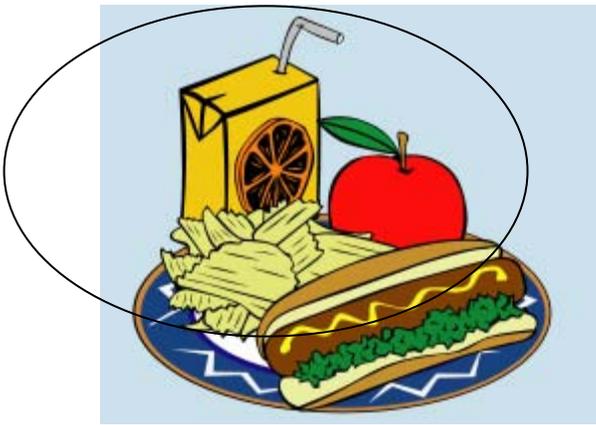
Teacher provides examples and additional opportunities to repeat the word. Read the 1<sup>st</sup> sentence out loud to your students. Begin reading it again and when you come to the vocabulary word prompt students to say the vocabulary word out loud. Then, finish reading the sentence out loud to our students.

- 10a.**
1. When there was a famine in Ethiopia, many people starved to death.
  2. Because of the very dry climate crops could not be grown which caused a famine.
  3. The pictures of the children affected by the famine were extremely sad.
  4. When there was a famine in Ireland in the mid-1800s, a lot of Irish people chose to come to the United States in search of food and jobs.
  5. The government officials gave food to the people who were living through the famine.

**Step 4:** Check for student understanding

This step can be completed as a whole class activity or as an independent practice.

- 10b.** Which image shows things people do NOT have during a famine?



- 11.** If you forgot to bring your lunch to school and did not eat that day, is that a famine? Why or why not?

**Suggested answer:** No because you would only miss one meal and would not have a shortage of food for an extended period (weeks, months etc.) of time.

*Suggested Additional Vocabulary:* starving, cruel