

Ruurs, Margriet. My Librarian Is A Camel. Boyds Mill Press: Honesdale, Pennsylvania, 2005.

Reading Level 6.3

Interest Level 3-6

### **Genre**

Nonfiction

### **Annotation**

This book takes us around the world to show us how some children receive library services. Thirteen countries where books may be delivered by boat, camel or minibus are highlighted with additional brief snippets about each country as well as photos. In alphabetical order we visit countries from Australia to Zimbabwe. A two-page spread includes a brief description of the country and detailed photographs depict the unique service provided by librarians and volunteers. We see books delivered by semi-trucks, mail, wheelbarrow, boats, bicycles, camels, minibus, donkey carts and elephants. Stories of volunteers who carry books through the jungle to start a library should make us all appreciate both our school and public library and their dedicated librarians. Sharing this title will prompt action by readers to assist in literacy efforts around the globe and the author shares how to help on her website.

### **Booktalk**

How many of you have a library card? Where is your nearest library? How often do you visit your public library? Can you imagine your library in a semi-truck? Or maybe you get your books from a boat? If you live in Kenya a camel might deliver your books.

After reading a newspaper article about this very thing, Margriet Ruurs was curious about how children around the world receive books and she started collecting this information. Librarians around the world sent pictures and stories of how they put books into the hands of young readers. Thirteen countries are presented with their own special method of library service from Australia to Zimbabwe.

### **About the Author**

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

Margriet Ruurs was born and raised in the Netherlands but now lives in Oregon. She visits school and conferences about writing programs and focuses on getting children excited to read. Her books include Wild Babies, Emma's Egg, Big Little Dog, Logan's Lake, and Fireweed. Her work has earned her the Storytellers World Award, Silver Seal, and Mr. Christie Award of Excellence.

As the editor of a web magazine, **KIDSWWRITE**, Margriet Ruurs publishes writing by children. Explore this site by using the following link.

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KIDSWWRITE

<http://www.kalwriters.com/kidswwrite/>

The author says, "I like to putter in the garden or sit by the fireplace with a good book or my laptop. I've been writing all my life and can't think of anything more fun to do for a living!"

**Author Website**

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**Publisher Website**

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<http://www.boydsmillspress.com/>

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Just One More Book

Interview with Margriet Ruurs

<http://www.justonemorebook.com/?s=ruurs>

**Summary**

Travel to thirteen countries, from Australia to Zimbabwe and witness how dedicated librarians and volunteers put books into the hands of their patrons. A semi-truck with a toilet, a wheelbarrow on the beach, a book boat, bicycle libraries, camels, donkeys and elephants all deliver services that we perhaps take for granted. Photographs show how books are put into the hands of children all over the world.

**Point of View**

The introduction is in first person but each spread is a third person report.

**Theme**

Librarians

Traveling libraries

**Conflict**

Children around the world are challenged to receive books.

**Conflict Resolution**

Librarians and volunteers around the world are working diligently to provide resources to children around the globe by any means necessary. Philanthropic organizations also band together to bring books and children together.

**Characters**

**Not applicable**

**Setting**

Current photos from thirteen countries around the world depict unique library services.

**Discussion Questions**

Pre-reading

How often do you go to your school library? How often do you go to your public library?

Where is your closest public library? (This may be a good time to discuss the fact that there are areas in our state that do not have public libraries. Patrons do not have access to these services that we take for granted.)

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Show students a map of each of the country prior to reading the corresponding selection. Give students an atlas to use while reading this book. Ask students to locate the country in the atlas. What hemisphere is the country located? What continent is the country located and what is the longitude and latitude of the country? It may also help to construct a KWL chart for each of the countries.

List everything you know about this country. Save the charts for further research. The following links have sample charts and instructions.

Educator's World

[http://www.education-world.com/tools\\_templates/index.shtml#graphicOrganizers](http://www.education-world.com/tools_templates/index.shtml#graphicOrganizers)

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory

<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/learning/lr2kwl.htm>

Teacher Vision

[http://www.teachervision.fen.com/tv/printables/KWL\\_Chart.pdf](http://www.teachervision.fen.com/tv/printables/KWL_Chart.pdf)

NAME:

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>K</b> <b>What I Know</b>	<b>W</b> <b>What I Want to Know</b>	<b>L</b> <b>What I Learned</b>

## **Discussion Questions Continued**

Australia

Why does Travis tell stories?

What is unusual about the truck?

Azerbaijan

Why is Relief International in this country?

Canada

Who are the Inuit?

Describe the Borrower-by Mail process?

England

Why does the library take books to the beach? Do you think they lose a lot of books?

Why or why not?

Finland

What is a legend? What other legends do you know that is similar to this one?

Indonesia

Why do they use bicycles?

Kenya

Imagine you are this librarian and list the steps you need to take in order to deliver books by camel.

Mongolia

How can stories keep you warm?

Pakistan

Who is Scherazade? How did storytelling save her life?

Papua New Guinea

How much does a box of books weigh? Experiment to answer this question.

Peru

How might you receive books if you lived in Peru?

Thailand

Why was the elephant picked to deliver books?

Why did the Railway Police Division restore a train?

Zimbabwe

What do you think is the most unusual fact about this mobile library?

Post reading

Which mobile library do you think is the most unique?

Which country would you like to know more about?

Would you be interested in collecting books to send to one of the libraries we read about?

Which one and why?

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## Anticipation Statements

Agree	Disagree		Agree	Disagree
		<b>Libraries are everywhere.</b>		
		<b>Everyone has books.</b>		
		<b>A library has four walls.</b>		
		<b>A mobile library has wheels.</b>		

### Vocabulary Page

Passionate	5	Having a keen enthusiasm or desire for something
Aboriginal	7	a member of the native peoples of Australia
Refugee	8	somebody who is taking seeking safety especially from a war or persecution by going to another country
Territory	10	area of land controlled by a country
Tundra	11	the level nearly treeless plain between the ice cap and timber line Of North America and Europe that has permanently frozen subsoil
Remote	11	far away from other populated areas
Archipelago	14	a chain of islands
Meter	15	a unit of length equal to approximately 1.094 yards or 39.37 inches
Nomadic	15	Being like a person who moves from place to place, usually seasonally
Millennium	15	a period of 1,000 years
Acacia	19	a tropical tree with fluffy yellow flowers
Temperate	19	a climate with a range of moderate temperatures
Illiteracy	20	unable to read or write

### Read Alikes

#### Traveling Libraries

Stotts, Stuart. Books in a Box: Lutie Stearns and the Traveling Libraries of Wisconsin. Big Valley Press, 2005.

#### Libraries Around the World

Sawa, Maureen. The Library Book: the Story of Libraries From Camels to Computers. Tundra Books, Tundra Books of Northern New York, 2006.

Winter, Jeanette. The Librarian of Basra: a True Story from Iraq. New York:Harcourt, 2005.

#### Libraries- Fiction

Colfer, Eoin. Eoin Colfer's Legend of Spud Murphy. Miramax Books/Hyperion Books for Children, 2004.

Morpurgo, Michael. I Believe in Unicorns. Candlewick Press, 2006.

Ungar, Richard. Rachel's Library. Tundra Books, Tundra Books of Northern New York,2004.

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## **Read Aloud**

Page 5 Read the introduction to the class so that they will know the basic premise of the book.

Pages 18-19

Read the selection about Kenya because this is how the idea for this book grew.

## **Book Activity 1**

*Exploring Children's Books Around the World*

Students can work in teams or on individual computers. They should be able to share their finds with another classmate. This should take two class sessions to complete.

International Children's Digital Library

<http://www.childrenslibrary.org/>

This site allows students to read books from around the world. Some of the titles are in English but most are printed in their native language. I have included the direct link to several picture books. Ask students to read the book. Ask them to guess the story plot by looking at the pictures. Look at the picture and narrate the story. Share your telling with a classmate.

Finland

Never Lonely Again (This story is available in English)

[http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookPreview?bookid=wilysta\\_00940120&route=eu&lang=English&msg=](http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookPreview?bookid=wilysta_00940120&route=eu&lang=English&msg=)

United Kingdom

The Story of the Three Little Pigs

[http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookPreview?bookid=stor\\_00150083&route=eu&lang=English&msg=](http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookPreview?bookid=stor_00150083&route=eu&lang=English&msg=)

Kenya

Haiba and the Seven Dwarves

[http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookPreview?bookid=dumhaib\\_00590005&route=africa&lang=English&msg=](http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookPreview?bookid=dumhaib_00590005&route=africa&lang=English&msg=)

Zimbabwe

How Chimpanzees Became Bald

[http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookPreview?bookid=mbrscmp\\_00170001&route=africa&lang=English&msg=](http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookPreview?bookid=mbrscmp_00170001&route=africa&lang=English&msg=)

Peru

The Vicuna and It's Magic (This title is in English and Spanish)

[http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookPreview?bookid=viavicu\\_00510057&route=southAmerica&lang=English&msg=](http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookPreview?bookid=viavicu_00510057&route=southAmerica&lang=English&msg=)

Mongolia

The Legend of Wive's Hair

[http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookPreview?bookid=baalege\\_00730011&route=asia&lang=English&msg=](http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookPreview?bookid=baalege_00730011&route=asia&lang=English&msg=)

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The following author is featured in our book. One of his books is listed below. Explore some of his other titles.

Six Silver Stars

[http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookPreview?bookid=dassixs\\_00900126&route=asia&lang=English&msg=](http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookPreview?bookid=dassixs_00900126&route=asia&lang=English&msg=)

Book Activity 2

*Country Dig*

Materials:

KWL Charts

Atlas

Encyclopedia

Almanac

Resources to Explore

About.com Geography

<http://geography.about.com/library/maps/blindex.htm>

Atlapeia Online

[http://www.atlapeia.com/online/country\\_index.htm](http://www.atlapeia.com/online/country_index.htm)

Peace Corps Worldwide Schools Volunteer Multimedia Clips

My Life In East Africa

[http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/multimedia/slideshows/ken\\_chenau.cfm](http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/multimedia/slideshows/ken_chenau.cfm)

Explore Back-Country Peru

[http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/multimedia/slideshows/pru\\_shank.cfm](http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/multimedia/slideshows/pru_shank.cfm)

Cultural Gaffes Beyond Your Borders

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/multimedia/videos/culturalgaffes/>

World Almanac for Kids

<http://www.worldalmanacforkids.com/>

Divide the class into teams. Assign each team a KWL chart. Using the countries discussed in the book, students will research and collect interesting facts about their countries. They can seek answers for the questions on their KWL charts. Using the information collected, students can create posters, multimedia presentations or oral reports to share their findings.

**Curriculum Connections**

Art                    Have students create bookmarks with original artwork                    bookmark, art supplies

Geography            Have students locate the countries on a map                    Globe, atlas, maps

Service Learning Project    Have students determine and select a project to complete that will provide books for needy children

Peace Corps Worldwide Schools (Use this resource for ideas)

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/educators/servicelearning/planning/index.cfm>

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## Resources to Explore

Peace Corps Worldwide Schools Volunteer Multimedia Clips

My Life In East Africa

[http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/multimedia/slideshows/ken\\_chenau.cfm](http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/multimedia/slideshows/ken_chenau.cfm)

Explore Back-Country Peru

[http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/multimedia/slideshows/pru\\_shank.cfm](http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/multimedia/slideshows/pru_shank.cfm)

Cultural Gaffes Beyond Your Borders

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/multimedia/videos/culturalgaffes/>

## Indiana Academic Standards

4.2.2 Use appropriate strategies when reading for different purposes.

4.2.4 Evaluate new information and hypotheses (statements of theories or assumptions) by testing them against known information and ideas.

4.5.6 Write for different purposes (information, persuasion, description) and to a specific audience or person.

4.5.3 Write or deliver a research report that has been developed using a systematic research process (defines the topic, gathers information, determines credibility, reports findings) and that:

- includes information from a variety of sources (books, technology, multimedia) and documents sources (titles and authors).
- demonstrates that information that has been gathered has been summarized.
- organizes information by categorizing it into multiple categories (such as solid, liquid, and gas or reduce, reuse, and recycle) or includes information gained through observation.

4.7.12 Make informational presentations that:

- focus on one main topic.
- include facts and details that help listeners focus.
- incorporate more than one source of information (including speakers, books, newspapers, television broadcasts, radio reports, or Web sites).

5.3.1 Demonstrate that lines of latitude and longitude are measured in degrees of a circle, that places can be precisely located where these lines intersect, and that location can be stated in terms of degrees north or south of the equator and east or west of the prime meridian.

5.2.3 Recognize main ideas presented in texts, identifying and assessing evidence that supports those ideas.

5.4.4 Use organizational features of printed text, such as citations, endnotes, and bibliographic references, to locate relevant information.

5.4.5 Use note-taking skills when completing research for writing.

5.4.6 Create simple documents using a computer and employing organizational features, such as passwords, entry and pull-down menus, word searches, the thesaurus, and spell checks.

5.5.3 Write or deliver a research report that has been developed using a systematic research process (defines

the topic, gathers information, determines credibility, reports findings) and that:

- uses information from a variety of sources (books, technology, multimedia) and documents sources (titles and authors).
- demonstrates that information that has been gathered has been summarized.
- organizes information by categorizing and sequencing.

5.7.8 Analyze media as sources for information, entertainment, persuasion, interpretation of events, and transmission of culture.

5.7.10 Deliver informative presentations about an important idea, issue, or event by the following means:

- frame questions to direct the investigation.
- establish a controlling idea or topic.
- develop the topic with simple facts, details, examples, and explanations.

6.1.23 Form research questions and use a variety of information resources\* to obtain, evaluate and present data on people, cultures and developments in Europe and the Americas. (Individuals, Society and Culture)

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- 6.3.1 Identify and locate on maps the countries and capitals of Europe and the Americas such as Great Britain, Russia, Mexico, Canada and Brazil.
- 6.3.2 Use latitude and longitude to locate the capital cities of Europe and the Americas and describe the uses of locational technology, such as Global Positioning Systems (GPS)\* to distinguish absolute and relative location and to describe Earth's surfaces.
- 6.1.4 Understand unknown words in informational texts by using word, sentence, and paragraph clues to determine meaning.
- 6.2.1 Identify the structural features of popular media (newspapers, magazines, online information) and use the features to obtain information.
- 6.2.3 Connect and clarify main ideas by identifying their relationships to multiple sources and related topics.
- 6.2.4 Clarify an understanding of texts by creating outlines, notes, diagrams, summaries, or reports.
- 6.4.3 Write informational pieces of several paragraphs that:
- engage the interest of the reader.
  - state a clear purpose.
  - develop the topic with supporting details and precise language.
  - conclude with a detailed summary linked to the purpose of the composition.
- 6.4.5 Use note-taking skills when completing research for writing.
- 6.4.6 Use organizational features of electronic text (on computers), such as bulletin boards, databases, keyword searches, and e-mail addresses, to locate information.
- 6.4.7 Use a computer to compose documents with appropriate formatting by using word-processing skills and principles of design, including margins, tabs, spacing, columns, and page orientation.
- 6.5.3 Write or deliver a research report that has been developed using a systematic research process (defines the topic, gathers information, determines credibility, reports findings) and that:
- uses information from a variety of sources (books, technology, multimedia) and documents sources independently by using a consistent format for citations.
  - demonstrates that information that has been gathered has been summarized.
  - demonstrates that sources have been evaluated for accuracy, bias, and credibility.
  - organizes information by categorizing and sequencing, and demonstrates the distinction between one's own ideas from the ideas of others, and includes a bibliography (Works Cited).

## **Bibliography**

About.com Geography

<http://geography.about.com/library/maps/blindex.htm>

Education World

[http://www.education-world.com/tools\\_templates/index.shtml#graphicOrganizers](http://www.education-world.com/tools_templates/index.shtml#graphicOrganizers)

Follett Library Resources

<http://www.flr.follett.com/>

Indiana Academic Standards

<http://www.doe.state.in.us/standards/welcome.html>

International Children's Digital Library

[http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookPreview?bookid=dassixs\\_00900126&tab=createor2735&route=text&lang=English&msg=](http://www.childrenslibrary.org/icdl/BookPreview?bookid=dassixs_00900126&tab=createor2735&route=text&lang=English&msg=)

Peace Corps Worldwide Schools

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/>

Byerly, Greg and Brodie, Carolyn (2004, June). Web Wide World: Country Information on the Internet. *School Library Media Activities Monthly*, Volume XX, Number 10, 27-28.

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