

The Cricket War — Activities for Before, During and After Reading

Content Warning: Please be aware that students who are refugees may find the book triggering.

Before Reading — Discussion Starters:

1. Look at the cover and predict what this novel might be about.
2. What if you had to leave everything and everyone you knew and escape from your home and country? Imagine what that might be like.
3. Look up the word refugee in a dictionary, and have students explain the meaning in their own words.
4. Find Vietnam and the Philippines on a world map, and discuss what students know about these countries. Examine how far the countries are from each other and from Canada and the United States.
5. Explain some key concepts of communism:
 - a) It is a political ideology considered the opposite of democracy and capitalism.
 - b) It supports a “classless” society where everyone is of the same social standing.
 - c) Modern communist governments are characterized by one-party rule, with state control over many aspects of citizens’ lives.
 - d) Communist countries today are China, Vietnam, Cuba, Laos and North Korea.
6. View an age-appropriate short video of crickets fighting on YouTube (the crickets do not die!):
 - “Creating a Champion Fighting Cricket” (runs a little over seven minutes):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzrYtnacCKk>
 - “Welcome to Cricket Fight Club” (a one-minute video from Science News):
<https://youtube.com/watch?v=yGoRKiuXCkw>



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During Reading — Activity Suggestions:

1. Write a letter from Thọ to his parents or draw a picture at each stage of his journey, describing what he has seen, what he is doing and how he feels.
2. Complete a K-W-L chart as you read (K: What I **K**now, W: What I **W**ant to Know, and L: What I **L**earned).
3. Create a three-way Venn diagram comparing and contrasting Thọ, Việt and Mai (think about their situations, ages and other characteristics).
4. Use the pronunciation guide and practice saying the terms and characters’ names aloud as you encounter each one in the story.
5. Make predictions at the end of each chapter about what will happen next. Before starting a new chapter, check the predictions to see which ones were accurate.

After Reading — Have your students ...

1. Refer to their K-W-L chart and discuss anything unanswered from “What I **W**ant to Know.”
2. Discuss what the book’s title means and why the authors chose it.
3. Brainstorm what happened to Thọ after his first night at Bryan’s house, then use those ideas to write a new final chapter.
4. Research and present the work being done today to help refugees by Cap Anamur and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.
5. Do an online search for “Vietnamese refugee camps Palawan” or “Palawan Refugee Camp” to learn more about the refugee camp where Thọ lived.
6. Celebrate Tết Trung Thu (Lunar New Year) in the classroom. Play games like tạt lon and Bite the Carp’s Tail. Eat moon cakes, listen to traditional Vietnamese stories and make paper lanterns.