

Learning Objectives

For pages 712–715

In studying this text, you will focus on the following objectives:

Reading:

Using text features.

Analyzing informational text.

Summarizing.

Set a Purpose for Reading

As you read, ask yourself, how do the boys from Sudan help others overcome hardships?

Preview the Article

1. What does the title, also called a **head** or **headline**, suggest the article is about?
2. What details do the **photographs** and **captions** provide?

Reading Strategy:

Summarize

When you **summarize**, you put the main ideas and supporting details of a text into your own words. As you read, identify the most important ideas. Which details support these main ideas? Then write the information in a logical order.

Main Idea:

Detail 1

Detail 2

Detail 3

TIME

Message of HOPE

They became known as the Lost Boys of Sudan after fleeing the horrible civil war. Now three, who have done well in the United States, have returned to a refugee camp. Their goal is to help prepare others for fast food, phones, and life in America.

By ERICKA SÓUTER and DIETLIND LERNER

In a small, hot classroom in a crowded Kakuma, Kenya, refugee camp, a group of 20-year-olds sit at desks. They fire questions at three young men wearing shirts and ties. "What is the weather like in America?" asks one student. "Why are there murderers there?" asks another. "If obesity¹ is a problem, why are you skinny?" asks another. The men, who have photos of sports stars, roller coasters, and buses, answer with care. They also give some tips. "In America it is a very good thing to say thank you," says one. "When you get to America, everyone will ask if you are hungry," says another. "In our country it is insulting to ask that, so you say no. My advice to you is to say yes. We missed a lot of good food because of our culture!"

¹ **Obesity** is the condition of being very overweight.

Just 10 years ago, Duom Deng, David Ayiik, and James Biar were refugees too. During Sudan's civil war, the three boys had seen their parents killed and their villages destroyed. Then they and thousands of other orphaned children walked 1,000 miles east to Ethiopia. Once there, they spent five years wandering between refugee camps. Eventually they settled in Kakuma. Aid workers called the thousands of male orphans the Lost Boys. (Girls also fled to the camps. For cultural reasons, they were placed with refugee foster² families.) "We made ourselves brothers," says Deng, who is in his mid-20s. "We learned by ourselves to be good to ourselves and to others."

That good sense stuck with Ayiik, Deng, and Biar when they came to the United States with 3,600 other Kakuma refugees. In less than five years, they changed from wide-eyed immigrants who had never seen a kitchen freezer to young men working their way through college in San Diego, California. Now they have returned to Kakuma—thanks to the help of the San Diego Rotary³ Club. Their goal is to help the next group of U.S.-bound hopefuls prepare for their new home. "The desire to go back to the camp

² **Foster** means "sharing in family life even though not related by birth." The girls lived with refugee families, who looked after them.

³ The main goals of the **Rotary Club** are to help people in need and to build peace and understanding. It has "clubs" in many cities around the world, and members are called Rotarians.



Louise Gubb

"I think a lot about how people here have too little," says Duom Deng (left, with James Biar, center, David Ayiik, and a group of Kenyan women who are neighbors to Kakuma's Sudanese refugees). "I want one day for the hunger to stop."

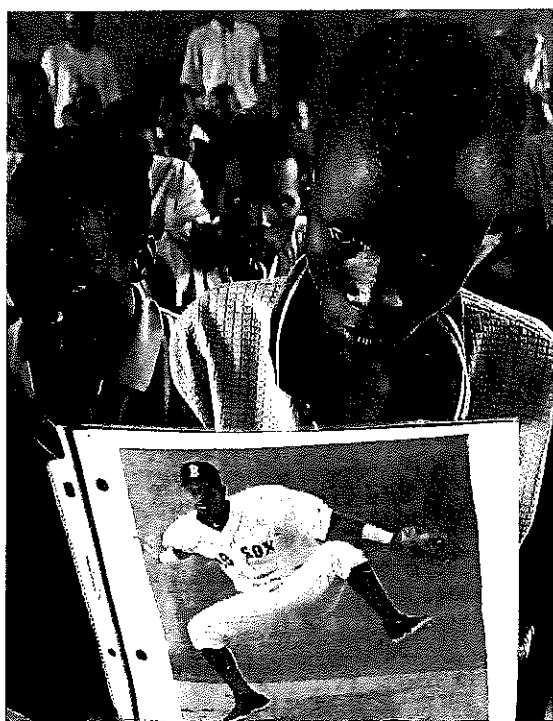
was straight from my heart," says Deng. "I wanted to see how the rest were doing. It was a big thought for me that I had left them."

Thousands of Kakuma's 86,000 refugees are Lost Boys. Most of them have applied for U.S. visas.⁴ But until the visas are approved, the refugees live in mud huts, sleep on wooden slabs, and eat only grain and water. Most have never owned a book, which made the 1,000 donated dictionaries Deng, Ayiik, and Biar brought a hot item. Deng's digital camera was also a hit. Some of the kids had never seen their own image and collapsed in squeals of delight. Tulasi Sharma works at the camp. "It is so important for the students to see the Lost Boys," says Sharma. "To know that it is possible [to succeed] and to know that they have not been forgotten."

⁴ A **visa** is an official document giving visitors permission to enter or leave a country.

The trip had an effect on the three from San Diego too. "I was really uncomfortable to see them that way," Deng says of his friends who live in poverty. "The food that they have is still not enough. They are not getting any vegetables or oils. The water gets cut off after just an hour. It is so sad to me."

The three have come a long way. In 1987 Deng's family, members of Sudan's Dinka tribe, had just settled down to dinner. Suddenly, Sudanese soldiers surrounded their tiny village. "We heard a cry from a neighbor," he recalls. "There were horses, guns, men everywhere." In the confusion, he was separated from his mother and father. But, like many parents, they had warned him that if the men with guns came, he should run east.



Louise Gubb

With the sounds of the village burning and people being shot, 6-year-old Deng ran with the other children. He was wearing a T-shirt and shorts—the only clothes he would have for the next two years. Deng and the other kids joined up with a larger group heading across the desert. "I remember eating leaves, I was so hungry and thirsty," he recalls. Hundreds died of hunger or were killed by lions and crocodiles, according to Ayiik. "I was very scared. I think I made it because I saw other kids like me and I tried to be strong like them," he says. "I couldn't give up."

Years later, the three arrived in the United States. They had only enough money to last for three months. Judy Bernstein is a volunteer who helped the young men get used to life in their new country. "They would put eggs and milk in the cupboard, not the refrigerator," she says. Lost Boys younger than 18 were placed in foster homes. The rest had to fend for⁵ themselves. To get ready for job interviews, "they learned how to look someone in the eye, which is not part of the Dinka culture," explains Bernstein. Sharing, however, is part of their culture. When one Lost Boy got a job interview, he would bring three or four of his "brothers" so they might find work too.

⁵ The phrase *to fend for themselves* means "to take care of themselves without help from others."



Louise Gubb

"I was hoping all our friends would have the same chance," says Ayiik (left, with Biar, center, and Deng). "If they came to the U.S., they too could do better."

Many of them spent a lot of their early time in America exploring. They went to zoos and grocery stores. They tried fast food. And they learned to cook. "In Sudan only women cook," says Ayiik, who has grown very fond of burgers. "It was a hard thing to learn." Their first apartments were often in rough parts of town. Usually five guys shared two bedrooms. For the San Diego Lost Boys, the local Rotary Club became a place to go. Bernstein took Deng and Ayiik to the club to speak about their experiences. The young men formed their own group within the club. The Rotarians

helped with English lessons and job training. Club member Stephen Brown helped them raise money to return to Kakuma. "Not only are they selfless and polite, but they present themselves with a dignity that's amazing, considering what they've gone through," he says. "They have big smiles and good senses of humor."

All three young men attend local colleges. Deng studies communication and general education. He also works at a graphic design company. Ayiik studies business accounting and works as a file clerk. Biar, the shyest of the three, studies education. "We passed a big disaster, and now we're having a good life and good experiences," says Deng. Eventually the men, who are all single, plan to return to Sudan. They want to help rebuild—and perhaps find wives. These days they seem neither boyish nor lost. As Simon Laur, a 24-year-old refugee in the Kakuma class, suggests, "Maybe we should call you the Found Boys."

Respond and Think Critically

1. Write a brief summary of the main events in this article before you answer the following questions. For help on writing a summary, see page 219. **[Summarize]**
2. **Text-to-Self** How might the story of the Lost Boys of Sudan help you face difficult challenges in your life? Explain. **[Connect]**
3. Why do you think the aid workers in the refugee camps call the boys from Sudan the "Lost Boys"? Explain. **[Infer]**
4. What does refugee Simon Laur mean when he says, "Maybe we should call you the Found Boys"? Explain. **[Interpret]**
5. **Reading Strategy Summarize** Does the deck, or subtitle, summarize the article well? Why or why not? ~~Use the graphic organizer to help you explain your answer.~~
6. **BQ BIG Question** Without the help of the Rotary Club, could the boys have become who they wanted to be? Explain.