

A PROMISE IS A PROMISE

By Robert Munsch and Michael Kusugak

In spite of her mother's warning about sea monsters called the Qallupilluit, Allashua goes fishing alone on the sea ice. When the Qallupilluit capture Allashua, she escapes by promising to bring her brothers and sisters to the sea creatures. With the help of her mother, father, brothers and sisters, Allashua and her family are able to protect one another from the Qallupilluit.



WITS Connection: Talk it out, Seek help

Questions and Activities



PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

- Learn about the origins of the story and the inspiration for its characters on Robert Munsch's website at www.robertmunsch.com/books/a-promise-is-a-promise-2/.
- Teach students about Nunavut, Canada's newest territory. Point it out on a map of Canada and distribute the [Nunavut Map handout](#).
- Learn about the Inuktitut language. Distribute the [Inuktitut Language handout](#) to students and go through it with children to learn more about the language spoken by Inuit people.



PRE-READING QUESTIONS

1. Look at the cover. Based on the clothing you see the girl wearing, where do you think the story takes place?
2. What is the girl doing on the cover of the book?
3. What can you do on ice?
4. What is dangerous about ice?
5. What is a promise?
6. What does it mean to break a promise?
7. What do you think the girl will need to seek help about?



POST-READING QUESTIONS

1. What promise was broken in the story? *Allashua promised to go to the lake and not the ocean to fish.*
2. What happened after the promise was broken? *The Qallupilluit tried to drag her into the ocean. Allashua made a promise to return with her brothers and sisters.*
3. How do you think Allashua felt when she talked it out with her parents? *She felt less afraid and more relieved and hopeful.*
4. What three important details did Allashua admit to her parents? *She went to the ocean, she called the Qallupilluit nasty names and she promised the Qallupilluit she would return with her brothers and sisters.*

5. How did Allashua's parents help her keep her promise? *Her mother distracted the Qallupilluit with a dance.*
6. Do you think Allashua could have fixed this problem on her own? *She could not do this without getting hurt or possibly hurting her brothers and sisters.*
7. What does Allashua learn about promises? *Sometimes you need help to keep a promise.*
8. Why would parents tell their children that monsters live under the ice? *They said this to protect them from the cracks in the ice.*
9. Do monsters really live under the ice?



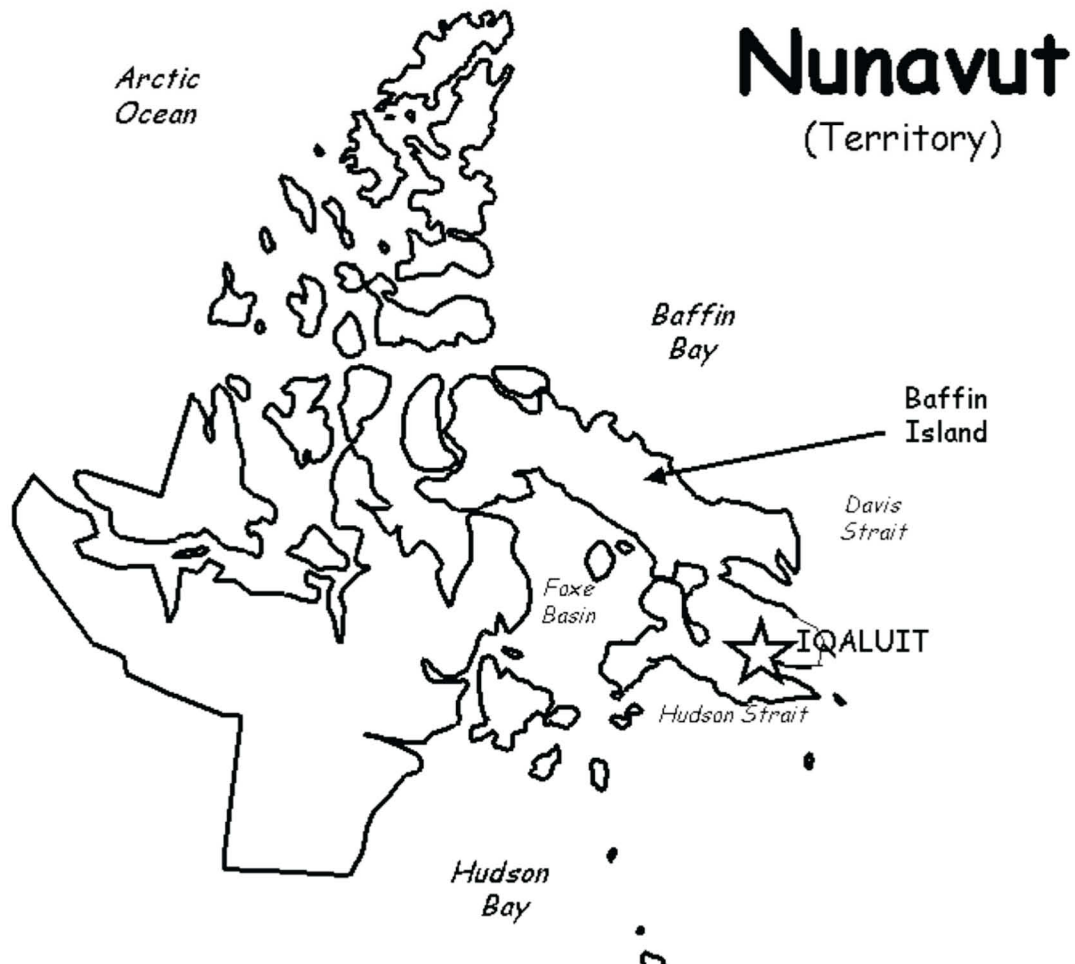
POST-READING ACTIVITIES

- Illustrate the behaviour of cracked ice using two pieces of tissue paper approximately 50 x 68 cm (20 x 27 in). Use scissors to make a single cut in the middle of one paper. Ask two volunteers to hold the piece without the tear and then place something small and relatively heavy (such as a stapler) in the middle of the paper. Next ask two volunteers to gently hold the tissue paper with the tear so that the tear is barely visible. Place the same object on the paper and watch the object fall.
- Have students draw pictures of the creatures that live below and above the ice.
- Compare the Qallupilluit with other mythical creatures such as unicorns, gryphons, Pegasus, the sphinx and faeries. Ask students to create their own mythical creatures through drawings or sculpture and explain the creature's supernatural powers and what it likes to eat.
- Have students make finger puppets to retell the story.
- Sometimes when we are in danger we have to make quick decisions. Allashua escaped from the Qallupilluit by promising them her brothers and sisters which caused an even bigger problem. Ask students to describe a problem they have faced and how they solved it. In small groups, have students role play the problem and three alternative ways to solve the problem. The rest of the class can vote on the best solution.

Notes:

A Promise is a Promise: Nunavut Map Handout

Name _____



Write some things you have learned about the Territory of Nunavut.

A Promise is a Promise: Inuktitut Language Handout

The Inuktitut Language

The language spoken by the Inuit is called Inuktitut. It is a very ancient language.

Qallupilluit is pronounced “ka-loo-pee-loo-eet”. Inuit is pronounced “ee-noo-eet” and Allashua is pronounced “a-la-soo-ak. In English, not all words necessarily sound the way they are spelled. Can you think of some English words like this?

Vowel Sounds

Inuktitut has only three vowel sounds: “aa”, “ee”, “oo”.

What are the vowel sounds in English?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

And sometimes...

6. _____

Part 2: Vocabulary

Some words we use in English are taken directly from Inuktitut, like parka, moccasin, mukluk and anorak. Can you think of any others? Make a list of such words and their meanings. In Inuktitut, there are about fifty different words for snow because the Inuit can identify around fifty different kinds of snow. They have one word for powdery snow, one for wet-packing snow and another for grainy snow in the Spring.

Some words do not exist in other languages at all. There is no Inuktitut word for “promise”, which means the Inuit would have difficulty expressing this idea or concept in their language. What would the story called if the word promise didn't exist in English?

Try to think of some things in English that would have no Inuktitut words such as pineapple or elephant. Today the Inuit people know of these things they may not have known about these things a long time ago.