



About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Biography Page Count: 20 Word Count: 1,359

Book Summary

Barack Obama is a biographical text about the forty-fourth president of the United States of America. Chronicling his life from birth until his historic election, the book educates readers on how Obama's life experiences shaped his decisions and career path. Background information about his family life, struggles, and career choices gives readers insight into Obama's personal side.

Book and lesson also available at Levels K and O.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Ask and answer questions


Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of asking and answering questions to understand informational text
- Understand and identify cause-and-effect relationships
- Recognize and understand irregular past-tense verbs
- Identify and use synonyms

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—**Barack Obama** (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Dictionaries
- Thesauruses
- **KWLS/ask and answer questions, cause and effect, irregular past-tense verbs, synonyms worksheets**
- **Discussion cards**

 Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

Vocabulary

*Bold vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA-Z.com.

- **Content words:**
 - Story critical: **civil rights** (n.), **degree** (n.), **ethnicity** (n.), **heritage** (n.), **injustices** (n.), **races** (n.)
 - Enrichment: **ashamed** (adj.), **continents** (n.), **honors** (n.), **inspired** (v.), **local** (adj.), **moved** (v.), **passion** (n.), **reputation** (n.), **slavery** (n.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Write the name **Barack Obama** on the board. Ask students to share what they know about him. Explain that **Barack Obama** was elected president of the United States on November 4, 2008. Ask students whether they know anything about Obama or his campaign for the presidency.

- Create a KWLS chart on the board and hand out the [KWLS/ask-and-answer-questions worksheet](#). Review or explain that the *K* stands for knowledge we know, the *W* stands for information we want to know, the *L* stands for the knowledge we learned, and the *S* stands for what we still want to know about the topic. As various topics are discussed, fill in the first column (*K*) on the board with information students know about the topic. Have students complete the same section of their KWLS worksheet.
- Ask students what they would like to know about Barack Obama. Have them fill in the second column (*W*) of their worksheet. Write their questions on the class chart.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what kind of book it is and what it might be about.
- Ask students if they think this book is fiction or nonfiction and to explain their reasoning.
- Show students the title page. Talk about the information on the page (title of book, author's name).
- Ask students to turn to the table of contents. Remind them that the table of contents provides an overview of what the book is about. Ask students what they expect to read about in the book based on what they see in the table of contents. (Accept all answers that students can justify.)

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Ask and answer questions**

- Discuss how having prior knowledge about the topic, and asking and answering questions while reading, can help readers understand and remember the information in a book.
- Direct students to the table of contents. Use it as a way to model asking questions.
Think-aloud: I can use the table of contents to think of questions I'd like to have answered about Barack Obama. For example, Section 2 is titled "Growing Up." I know that Obama grew up to be a very important politician, but I don't know where he was born or what his life was like as a young boy. I'll have to read the book to find out. I'll write that question in the W column of the KWLS chart.
- Have students look at the other section titles. Write any questions they have based on the covers and table of contents in the *W* column of the KWLS chart on the board.
- Have students preview the rest of the book, looking at maps, photos, and captions. Point out the "Do You Know?" boxes, which contain more information about Obama. Show students the glossary. Have them add any additional questions they might have about the book to their KWLS chart. Write shared questions on the class chart.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Cause and effect**

- Discuss cause-and-effect relationships. Explain that a *cause* is *an event that makes something happen*, and the *effect* is *what happens because of, or as a result of, the event*.
- Write the following sentence on the board: *I put on my hat.* Model identifying cause-and-effect relationships.
Think-aloud: I know that there are reasons, or causes, for events to happen. When I put on a hat, it might be because it is hot outside. The hat shades me from the sun and keeps me cool. So, a cause for putting on the hat could be because I wanted to stay cool. However, I also sunburn easily. Since a hat shades my face from the sun, another reason to put on a hat could be to prevent me from getting sunburned. There can be more than one cause for an effect.
- Invite students to explain other possible causes for putting on a hat (it is cold, it is windy, the hat is part of a costume, and so on).

- Retell the series of cause-and-effect relationships about the decision to wear a hat on a hot day. Ask students to identify the causes and effects. Write each cause and its effect on the chart on the board. When finished, point out how each cause-and-effect relationship leads to other cause-and-effect relationships.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- Write the following words from the content vocabulary on the board: *civil rights*, *ethnicity*, and *injustices*.
- Give groups of students three pieces of blank paper. For each word, have them write or draw what they know about the word. Create a definition for each word using students' prior knowledge.
- Review or explain that the glossary and a dictionary contain lists of vocabulary words and their definitions.
- Model how students can use a glossary to find a word's meaning. Point out that not all content words will be found in the glossary, and ask students to locate the word *inspired* in the dictionary. Explain that they will find the word *inspire*, and that the suffix *-ed* is dropped for entry words. Invite a volunteer to read the definition for *inspire* in the dictionary, and have a different volunteer read the definition for *inspire* in the glossary.
- Have students compare the two definitions with their prior knowledge of the word. Then have students follow along on page 8 as you read the sentence in which the word *inspired* is found to confirm the meaning of the word. Repeat the exercise with the remaining vocabulary words.

Set the Purpose


- Have students think about what they already know about Barack Obama as they read the book to find answers to their questions, and write what they learned in the *L* section of their KWLS worksheet.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read to the end of page 8. Remind them to look for information about Barack Obama and the events of his life that will answer questions on their KWLS chart. Encourage students who finish early to go back and reread.
- When they have finished reading, have students discuss the information in each section and share what they learned about Obama's accomplishments, influence, and/or personality. Have students circle any questions on their KWLS chart that were answered and add any new questions that were generated.
- Model answering a question on the KWLS chart and filling in additional information.
Think-aloud: *I wanted to know where Obama was born, and what his life was like as a young boy. I found out that he was born in Hawaii in 1961, and that he was called Barry when he was young. I also found out that his father was from Kenya and his mother was from Kansas, and that his dad left when Barry was four. His mom later married a man from Indonesia, and they moved there when Barry was six. He was eventually sent back to Hawaii to live with his grandparents so he could get a better education. I'll write what I learned in the L column of my KWLS chart. This information made me want to know how living in different places affected Obama's outlook on life. I'll write this question in the W column of my KWLS chart.*
- Create a cause-and-effect chain on the board. Write *his father moved back to Kenya* under the *Cause* heading. Ask students to use the text and think-aloud discussion to identify the effect of this cause (*his mother eventually remarried because her first marriage ended and she fell in love with someone new and they moved to Indonesia*). Write this information on the chart under the *Effect* heading.

- Introduce and explain the **cause-and-effect worksheet**. Ask students to write the information from the board on their worksheet. Have them identify and write on their worksheet a cause-and-effect relationship that happened as a result of Obama's mother remarrying and moving to Indonesia. (*Cause*: Obama learned what it was like to live in a very poor country; *Effect*: His mother thought he could get a better education in Hawaii.) Point out how the chain connects the first cause-and-effect relationship with the second (the effect, *his mother remarried and moved to Indonesia*, is connected to the next cause, *Obama learned what it was like to live in a very poor country*).
- Have students identify and write on their worksheet a cause-and-effect relationship that happened as a result of Barry moving back to Hawaii. (*Cause*: In Hawaii, he felt like an outsider because of the color of his skin and his unusual name; *Effect*: He learned about important African Americans who felt like outsiders but who had successfully found their way in the world.) Point out how the chain connects the second cause-and-effect relationship with the third (the effect, *His mother thought he could get a better education in Hawaii*, is connected to the next cause, *In Hawaii, he felt like an outsider because of the color of his skin and his unusual name*).
- **Check for understanding**: Have students read pages 9 and 10. Have them write answers they found while reading in the *L* column of their KWLS worksheet and additional questions they raised in the *W* column. Invite them to share the information they learned and the questions they generated as they read the book. Record shared responses on the class KWLS chart.
- Have students identify and write on their worksheet a cause-and-effect relationship that happened as a result of Barry finishing high school. (*Cause*: Barry went to college in Los Angeles; *Effect*: He learned that he wanted to help people in communities.)
- Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to look for and write answers to their KWLS worksheet questions. Encourage them to add new questions they might have to their worksheet as they read and to circle the important events.

 Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Ask students to share questions they added to their KWLS worksheet while reading, and ask them what questions were answered (or not answered) in the text.
- **Think-aloud**: *I wanted to know how living in so many different places affected Obama's outlook on life. I found out that he often felt like an outsider because he had a father who was black and a mother who was white. However, I learned that when he went to college, he learned that he didn't have to choose between his two backgrounds. Over time, he became inspired to make changes in some of the unfair things he had seen so far in his life. I learned that he went to law school and later became involved in politics because he was so passionate about helping people and improving the world.*
- Reinforce that asking questions before and during reading, and looking for the answers while reading, keeps readers interested in the topic. It also encourages them to keep reading to find answers to their questions and helps them understand and remember what they have read.
- Point out to students that all of their questions may not have been answered in this text. Brainstorm other sources they might use to locate additional information to answer their questions. Invite students to fill in the final column (S) with information they would still like to know about Barack Obama.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Discuss with students the information on their cause-and-effect worksheet. Point out the last effect in the chain. (*He learned that he wanted to help people in communities.*) Have students reread page 11 to identify the cause-and-effect relationship that happened as a result of Barack wanting people to be treated fairly. (*Cause:* Barack wanted to learn how to change laws; *Effect:* He entered law school in 1988.)
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete their cause-and-effect worksheet. If time allows, discuss their responses.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you learned about Obama's life experiences and how they all helped to shape his great accomplishments. Now that you know this information, how do you feel about his motivation to succeed and the changes he has undergone so far in his life? How have his experiences shaped him as a person? How does Obama's life story affect how you think about your personal experiences helping to shape your own life?

Build Skills

Grammar and Mechanics: Irregular past-tense verbs

- Have students turn to page 7. Write the following sentence on the board: *His mother taught him about African American leaders.* Ask them to identify the verb in the sentence (*taught*). Explain that this is a *past-tense verb* that describes *something that happened in the past*. Write the term *Past Tense* on the board.
- Write the term *Present Tense* on the board. Explain that *present-tense verbs* describe *something that is happening in the present, or right now*. Ask students to name the present-tense form of *taught* (*teach*). Write the examples under the appropriate headings on the board.
- Have students turn to page 6. Read the following sentence aloud: *Barry's mother married a man from Indonesia when Barry was six.* Ask students to identify the verbs in the sentence (*married, was*). Point out that the verb *married* is changed to a past-tense verb by adding the suffix *-ed* to the root word *marry* after changing the *-y* to *-i*. Discuss how this is an example of a *regular past-tense verb*. Point out that *was* is an *irregular past-tense verb* because its past tense form is made without adding *-d* or *-ed*. Ask students to name the present-tense form of *was* (*is*). Write these examples on the board under the *Present Tense* and *Past Tense* headings.
- Ask students to turn to page 8. Have volunteers name the irregular past-tense verbs (*thought, could, sent, felt, was, made, found, came*). Have another volunteer name the present tense of these verbs (*think, can, send, feel, is, make, find, come*). Write the new examples on the board under the *Present Tense* and *Past Tense* headings.




Check for understanding: Have students turn to page 12 and circle the irregular past-tense verbs (*fed, saw*). Have them write the present tense of these verbs in the right-hand column of the book (*feed, see*). Discuss the answer aloud and write the example on the board under the *present-* and *past-tense* categories.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **irregular-past-tense-verbs worksheet**. Discuss their answers aloud after students finish.

Word Work: Synonyms

- Write the word *wanted* on the board. Have students locate and read the word in the first sentence on page 10. Ask students to suggest other words that mean almost the same thing (*desired, longed, wished*). Review or explain that a *word that means the same or almost the same thing as another word* is called a *synonym*. One reason writers replace words with synonyms is to make a piece of writing more interesting.
- Explain that writers may also use synonyms to explain new vocabulary in text. Have students read the second paragraph on page 8 and locate the word *inspired*. Ask them to identify context clues within the paragraph that could help them understand the word *inspired* (*leaders, found their way, believed*).

- Show students a thesaurus. Explain that a thesaurus is a book that contains synonyms of words. Point out the word *factories* on page 11. Look up *factories* and model how to use a thesaurus. Point out that *factories* is not listed as an entry word because dictionaries and thesauruses typically list root words. Review that the *y* in *factory* has been changed to *i* and the suffix *-es* has been added to make the plural form of the word.
- Give students a thesaurus. Ask them to find the word *factory* and confirm the synonyms suggested.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students turn to page 12 and read the page. Point out the word *improve*. Ask students to suggest other words that mean almost the same thing (*make better, enhance*). Have them use the thesaurus to confirm their synonym for the word.

 Have students read the second sentence on page 11. Ask them to circle the words *helped* and *dangerous*. Have students use the thesaurus to replace these words with synonyms to make the sentence more interesting. Remind them to choose words that do not change the meaning of the sentence. Have them write the sentence using the new words at the bottom of the page. Encourage students to share their sentences.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [synonyms worksheet](#). When they have finished, review their answers aloud.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently or with a partner. Encourage repeated timed readings of a specific section of the book.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have students share their KWLS worksheet with someone at home, explaining how it works and what they learned.

Extend the Reading

Informational Writing and Art Connection

Provide print and Internet sources for students to find out more about the election for the 44th president of the United States. Have them look for information to answer such questions as which states voted for McCain and which states voted for Obama, why new voter turnout was so important, and what issues each candidate focused on. Require that they have at least three sections, including an introduction and conclusion. Encourage them to add illustrations or photographs to their report. Require an error-free final copy with a front and back cover. Either bind each report separately or bind all of the reports together to make a class book with its own front and back cover.

Visit WritingA-Z.com for a lesson and leveled materials on expository writing.

Social Studies Connection

Lead a class discussion about the importance of political debates. Ask students to think about why it is important to debate both sides of an important political issue. Facilitate a debate within the classroom, focusing on an issue that is important to the group. Encourage students to state their opinions and back up their thoughts with information that helps sway others to think the same way. Point out that this is what happens when politicians debate important issues as well.

Skill Review

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment**Monitor students to determine if they can:**

- consistently ask relevant questions about the topic prior to and during reading; locate answers to their questions in text during discussion and on a worksheet
- understand and identify cause-and-effect relationships in the text during discussion and on a worksheet
- identify and understand the formation of irregular past-tense verbs during discussion and on a worksheet
- understand the uses of synonyms and correctly use them during discussion and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

- Book Quiz
- Retelling Rubric