



Leopard Trail by Elizabeth Laird

Before reading

- 1a** Ask students to raise their hand if they have ever moved to a different place. If so, ask them about it – where did they move to? Was it easy or hard? Did they have any problems? Explain that they are going to read about a boy who moves to a new country. Students decide whether each thing is positive, negative or could be both. Discuss their answers as a class.

Answers

1 N 2 P 3 P 4 N 5 B 6 B

- 1b** Students now read *About the story* and check if anything from exercise 1a is mentioned. Establish that the boy in the story misses his friends, goes to a new school and doesn't make any friends at first, although does make friends in the end. You may want to make sure they understand *leopard* and *neighbourhood*.
- 2** Refer students to the chapter title and elicit what things might be different in Africa from their home country. Listen to their ideas but don't confirm anything yet.

CULTURAL INFORMATION

Many of Elizabeth Laird's books are set in the countries where she has lived and worked. However, the main focus of her books is the emotional and psychological issues that many children face as they grow up. *Leopard Trail* focuses on the issues resulting from Tom's move to Africa – the old life that he misses and the new things he must get used to, as well as other issues that are common to children around the world (difficulty making friends, for example).

While reading

- 1** Students now read the extract, referring to the *Vocabulary focus* box for help with unknown words. Ask them to answer the questions in their own words. In less confident classes, students can do this in pairs.

Answers

- 1** He hears a noise on the roof. It's probably an animal.
 - 2** Because at first he thinks he's in his old bedroom.
 - 3** Nairobi
 - 4** He notices how bright the sun is.
 - 5** Because he wants to dislike his new home. It tells us that he probably didn't want to move to Africa.
 - 6** It's much bigger and probably nicer. There's no broken gate, swing or garden shed.
- 2** Students now read the extract again and make notes in the table about the things that are different in Africa. Students can check answers in pairs before checking as a class.

Answers

Bedroom:	the wall is on the other side of the bed
Sounds/Noises:	there's a scrabbling noise coming from the roof; there's no sound of traffic; there are strange bird calls
Light:	the sun is stronger and the light is brighter
Surroundings/garden:	different kinds of landscape and trees (purple blue hills and palm trees); more green space and a larger garden; more trees, bushes and shrubs; the grass on the lawn is patchy; no shed, swing or broken garden gate in the garden

- 3** Now focus on the descriptive language the author uses to describe Tom's first impressions of Africa. Students find the words and phrases she uses to describe each of the things.

Answers

- 1** *a confused jumble of trees and streets and wayside houses*
- 2** *The light nearly dazzled him; ... lit up a distant range of ...; sparkled on the glossy leaves*
- 3** *range of purple blue hills; green sweep of land; big glossy leaves of the tall tree; spikes of a palm*
- 4** *huge; stretch of grass; shrubs and trees dotted about on it; bushes running along the fence*

After reading

- 1** In pairs, students discuss the questions. Point out they can choose anywhere that they like.
- 2** Working individually, students make notes on the place they chose and how it is different to where they live now. They can make notes under each category listed, but point out they can add other categories if they wish. In less confident classes, help students by eliciting and writing useful words on the board.
- 3** Students now complete the sentence beginnings to describe what they notice, hear, see and smell when they wake up on their first morning. Monitor and help with descriptive language as needed. Point out they can use some of the adjectives and other descriptive words from While reading, exercise 3.
- 4** When all the students have finished, put them in small groups to take turns reading their descriptions. Invite more confident students to read their descriptions aloud to the class. If suitable, the rest of the class could guess which place is being described.

EXTRA ACTIVITY

Students find out more information about Nairobi (e.g. population, languages spoken, food, climate, etc.) and compare it to the place where they live.