

Lamont Books Standing Order

March 2014

Teacher Notes and Activities

The Afghanistan Pup

By Mark Wilson

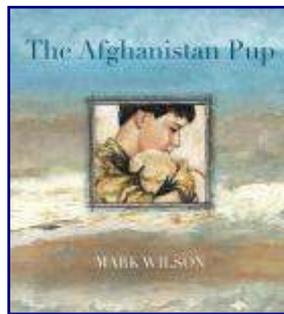
Publisher: Lothian Children's Books

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\$24.99

**Picture Book of
the Month**

The Afghanistan Pup is the story of an Afghani schoolgirl fighting for her education, an Australian soldier struggling to survive, and an abandoned Labrador pup who touches the lives of both of them. With powerful impressionistic illustrations and honest writing, Mark Wilson introduces young readers to the tragedy of war in an accessible yet realistic way, showing not just the dark side but how hope can be found even in the most difficult places.



Teacher notes have been taken from those supplied by the publisher and prepared by Robyn Sheahan-Bright.

Themes:

- The Afghanistan War
- Refugees
- Pets and trauma

Discussion Points and Activities:

- Western powers invaded Afghanistan as the 'Coalition Against Terror'. The Taliban are portrayed as the 'enemies' in this conflict with western powers. Investigate their beliefs and the origin of the conflict. Do the Taliban have any legitimate argument with western powers, or a claim to engage in combat? Conduct research into the background of the conflict.
- Research the role played by Australian troops in the war in Afghanistan.
- Tarin Kowt in the province of Uruzgan was the site of the Australian army base which closed in late 2013. Find out more about this area and the people who live there. How has it changed since the current conflict began in 2001?
- Research some of the weaponry used in modern warfare such as landmines, roadside bombs, grenades and chemical weapons.
- Mark Wilson, in his series about children at war, has suggested that generations in Australia have been affected by various wars. Discuss this topic. You may wish to examine your own family history in relation to this question. For example, you may have parents, grandparents or great aunts or uncles who fought in wars or even died in them.
- How has the war in Afghanistan impacted on the traffic of refugees to Australia and other countries? Research the stories of these refugees.
- In this story the love of a dog offers comfort to both an Afghani girl and an Australian soldier. In the note at the end, the author refers to the role which animals have played in the recovery of soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Have you ever experienced this sort of bond with an animal? Has your pet ever helped you get through a difficult time?
- The book says that Kinah had to be careful because many older people didn't believe that girls and women should be taught to read or write. Is this a prevalent belief in Afghanistan, or only amongst members of the Taliban?
- Bravery is an ambiguous concept. The young soldier is fighting and also rebuilding parts of Afghanistan. But the civilians like Kinah who survive this crisis need to be every bit as brave. How would you describe bravery? Is the soldier brave to be in Afghanistan?