

# Avalanche!



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**Text Type:** Non-fiction: Description — Report

**Guided Reading Level:** P

**Summary:** *Avalanche!* introduces us to mountainous areas where avalanches sometimes occur. We learn about the different types of avalanches, how to ski safely in avalanche areas, and how to protect ourselves if an avalanche occurs.

## Text Features

- ▶ table of contents
- ▶ colour photography with boxed text
- ▶ glossary and index
- ▶ headings
- ▶ bulleted lists

## Visual Literacy

- ▶ labelled photographs

## Text Supports

- ▶ colour photographs
- ▶ boxed text
- ▶ glossary
- ▶ index

## Possible Text Challenges

- ▶ multi-syllabic words, e.g., *patrollers, dangerous*
- ▶ complex sentences
- ▶ new vocabulary, e.g., *sluffs*

## First Session (pages 4-9)

### Reading Strategies

#### Comprehension

- ▶ synthesizing
- ▶ analyzing
- ▶ evaluating

#### Working with Words

- ▶ use a variety of strategies, including using context and visual cues, and chunking to solve multi-syllabic words
- ▶ use the glossary to find the meaning of unfamiliar words

### Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ analyze information
- ▶ synthesize information
- ▶ use chunking and context and visual cues to solve multi-syllabic words
- ▶ use the glossary to solve unfamiliar words
- ▶ read complex sentences

### Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ discussing with a group
- ▶ orally synthesizing main ideas

**Teaching Tip:** When assessing students' learning, make sure you observe them throughout the Guided Reading session and not just at the end.



## BEFORE READING

### Making connections: text to world

#### **Activating and Building Prior Knowledge**

Introduce the book to students. Say, *You will be reading about avalanches and how they happen.* Use some of the new vocabulary throughout your discussion before reading. This will help students later as they read.

Ask, *Why do avalanches happen? Where do they happen?* Discuss the effect of avalanches. If possible, have a website available to support the discussion (CBC Archives has a good one). From this information, chart the course of an avalanche down a mountain, adding new vocabulary.

**ESL Note:** Avalanches and snow may be a new concept for some students new to Canada. Explain where an avalanche may occur by showing a map of North America and pointing to the mountain regions. On chart paper, draw a diagram to illustrate how an avalanche occurs.

### Inferring/text features

#### **Overcoming Text Challenges**

Hand out copies of the book. Show the front and back covers, then read the title, author's name, table of contents, glossary, index, and biography of the author to students. Say, *We've learned some important things about avalanches from looking at the book and reading the author's biography. What are some questions you have about avalanches that you would like answered?* As students provide ideas, record them on chart paper.

Read the back cover text. Ask, *What reaction do you think the author expects you to have after seeing these photographs?*

### Word solving and building

Say, *There may be some tricky words for you in this book.* Ask, *What can you do if you come to a word you don't know?* Elicit responses from students. Affirm suggestions students make. These could be recorded on chart paper for later reference.

Remind students of any strategies not mentioned, such as, using context cues (what word would make sense?), or sounding out words. Model with a word from the text, e.g., *pow-er-ful*.

**ESL Note:** Introduce challenging vocabulary (*avalanche, steep slopes, slab, explosion, etc.*). The meaning of the words should be discussed before the lesson to ensure understanding.

### Text features/visual literacy

On page 4, point out the heading and ask, *What information would you expect to find on this page? Look at the heading.* Point out the boldfaced words in the

last sentence on this page and explain how to use the glossary on page 19 to find the meaning of words in boldface.

### Analyzing

#### **Setting a Purpose**

Distribute sticky notes and tell students, *When you are reading and you find an answer to one of your questions, place a sticky note on the page. After the reading, we will talk about what we discovered.*



## DURING READING

Ask students to read pages 4–9 of the text independently, thinking about the purpose that has been set.

Tell students to mark any pages that answer their questions.

Encourage students who finish early to reread parts of the text and locate any challenging words they were unable to solve. Observe and listen to students as they read the text, noting their ability to solve challenging words, and to identify answers to their questions as they read.



## AFTER READING

### Synthesizing

Ask students to share the parts of the text that answered their questions.

### Analyzing

Ask, *What questions were you able to answer?* Refer to the chart with questions from the Before Reading section. Answers could be recorded, time permitting.

### Self-monitoring

Ask, *What do you still need to know?* Identify new questions and record them on the chart.

### Word solving and building

Ask students to identify any challenging words they encountered and discuss the strategies they used to solve words. Share with students effective strategies you saw being used. For example, say, *I noticed when Kema was trying to figure out the word dangerous, she really thought about what word would make sense. She tried dangerous and she was right. When Aamer was trying to figure out the word difficult, he sounded it out slowly and broke the word down into three parts, e.g., diff-i-cult.*

Acknowledge these and any other strategies observed as strategies that good readers use. You may choose to keep a running chart of effective reading strategies.

# Second Session (pages 10-20)

## Reading Strategies

### Comprehension

- ▶ synthesizing
- ▶ analyzing
- ▶ evaluating

### Working with Words

- ▶ solving challenging words using strategies that include using context and visual cues, and chunking

## Assessment Opportunities

Note each student's ability to:

- ▶ analyze information
- ▶ synthesize information
- ▶ solve multi-syllabic words using chunking, and context and visual cues
- ▶ read complex sentences

## Oral Language Opportunities

- ▶ discussing with a group
- ▶ sharing information



## BEFORE READING

### Analyzing

#### **Activating and Building Prior Knowledge**

Ask students to recall the facts they learned about avalanches from the first session by asking, *What are some of the things we learned about avalanches?* Continue with a brief discussion.

**ESL Note:** Prepare a KWL Chart on chart paper with the headings “What I know about avalanches,” “What I want to know about avalanches,” and “What I learned about avalanches.”

### Word solving and building

#### **Overcoming Text Challenges**

Say, *There are some long sentences in this book. When you read these sentences, it is important to look at the punctuation.* Review orally on a board or chart paper the purpose of periods, question marks, exclamation marks, and commas. Model the reading of a complex sentence from the text that contains one or more commas. For example, read the following sentence from page 6: “When it is cold and there is no wind, snow is light and fluffy.” Reiterate that you read the sentence carefully, pausing at the comma. Say, *When you are reading today, try to remember to pause as you read the commas in the long sentences.*

### Visual literacy/infering

Direct students' attention to the photograph of the snowshed on page 11. Say, *What information does this picture give you about snowsheds? What do you think would happen if the snowsheds weren't there?*

### Synthesizing

#### **Setting a Purpose**

Say, *Today you will learn something that skiers and motorists have to know about avalanches.* Encourage students who finish reading early to go back and look for more safety tips.



## DURING READING

Ask students to read pages 10–20 independently, thinking about the purpose that has been set.

Observe and listen to students as they read the text, noting their ability to read complex sentences effectively, and to locate key information about skier and motorist safety. Encourage students to reread sentences if they have difficulty with comprehension.

Assist students with word-solving strategies, vocabulary, and comprehension queries. Offer prompts to help students problem-solve as they read, e.g., ask, *Can you take apart the word to help you solve that word? Does the word sound right in the sentence?*

Encourage students who finish early to reread pages 10–20 independently or with a partner.



## AFTER READING

### Synthesizing

Ask students to share the parts of text they found that describe how skiers and motorists can stay safe in avalanche areas. Ask students to summarize what needs to be done to make mountain roads safe for drivers.

### Word solving and building

Ask volunteers to read aloud a complex sentence they came across, e.g., “Away from ski areas, in the mountain wilderness, it is more difficult to prevent danger from avalanches.” Praise students’ efforts at effectively pausing at the commas while reading. Remind them that pausing at the commas helps them make sense of what they are reading.

### Analyzing

Ask, *Where is the best place to ski if you want to avoid being caught in an avalanche? If you do get caught in an avalanche, what three things should you do?*

**ESL Note:** On chart paper, draw safety signs important for students to know and discuss the colours associated with safety symbols (i.e., yellow—caution; red—stop). Invite students to draw examples of safety signs they may see on a mountain, on the road, and at school. Discuss the importance of recognizing safety symbols both outside and inside.

## Rereadings

Provide opportunities for each student to reread the text independently or with a partner.

## Focused Follow-up

The following activities are optional. Choose those that best meet the needs of your students.

<b>Evaluating</b>	<p><b>Discussion</b></p> <p>Ask students to respond to the question, <i>If you knew there had been an avalanche on the mountain on which you wanted to ski, would you still go skiing?</i> Use the yes/no columns on the “Tally Chart” BLM to record responses. Ask students to support their response with a reason. Encourage students to refer to the text (where appropriate) for information to support their responses.</p>
<b>Synthesizing</b>	<p><b>Key Facts</b></p> <p>In an oral discussion, ask students to recall some key facts they have learned about avalanches. Refer to any questions that may not have been answered, and guide students through the process of researching sources to find answers to these questions.</p>
<b>Word solving and building/ language predictability</b>	<p><b>Finding Glossary Words</b></p> <p>On the “Finding Glossary Words” BLM, glossary words and their meanings have been scrambled. Instruct students to draw a line from each key word to its correct meaning have been scrambled. Students are encouraged to go back into the text to confirm their responses, if necessary.</p>
<b>Word solving and building</b>	<p><b>Practising Word Skills</b></p> <p>Have students create sentences with one or two commas in them, based on the material in this story. Have students read them aloud.</p>
<b>Synthesizing</b>	<p><b>About Avalanches</b></p> <p>Have students write a paragraph about avalanches. They should start with the sentence “Avalanches are beautiful but dangerous,” and then add supporting sentences for this statement.</p>

# Tally Chart

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

If you knew there had been an avalanche on the mountain on which you wanted to ski, would you still go skiing?

**YES**

**NO**

**Reasons**

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# Finding Glossary Words

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>avalanche country</b>	<b>metal stick used to find people buried in avalanches</b>
<b>avalanche path</b>	<b>a long tunnel built over a road or railway line to protect it from avalanches</b>
<b>beacon</b>	<b>avalanche in which an entire snow layer (a slab of snow) slides down the mountain at once</b>
<b>probe</b>	<b>snowy mountain areas where avalanches can happen</b>
<b>slab avalanche</b>	<b>device that uses radio signals to find people in the snow</b>
<b>sluffs</b>	<b>avalanche of many bits of snow moving down a slope</b>
<b>snowshed</b>	<b>the part of a mountain slope where avalanches often happen</b>