

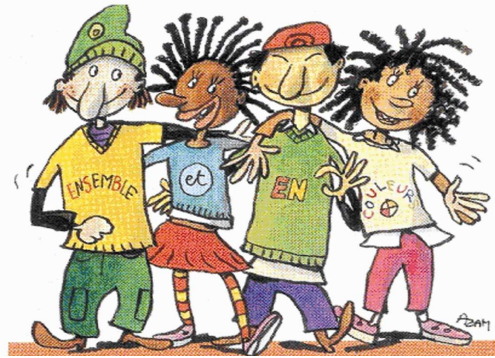
# STUDENT'S HANDOUT

## **KHADIJA: A FRIEND UNLIKE ANY OTHER**



### **Background Information**

Immigrants form an important and increasing proportion of Canada's population. In 2001, they represented 18.4% of the population or about 5.4 million, which means nearly 1 in 5 citizens. The meeting of two cultures is an enriching experience when each is ready to show openness and understanding. People of other cultures, although different, deserve most of all our respect.



### **Instructions**

Read the following story and then respond to the questions.

### **Khadija: A Friend Unlike Any Other!**

During French class today, the principal came to introduce a new student to us. Her name is Khadija Ben Daoud and she comes from Morocco. She has black hair, even darker than Melanie, who dyes hers. Everyone was looking at her hair, and I personally found it beautiful, but just a bit too curly since I prefer flat hair. Sylvie, our teacher, asked Khadiji to take a seat and to start the reading with us. Khadiji did not speak to us a lot, and during lunch she ate with her brother Karim. Certain students would not approach her.

A few weeks later Sylvie asked us to complete a project in groups of two, on any subject. I wanted to do it with my best friend Melanie, but the teacher asked me to do it with Khadiji. I told the teacher that this did not bother me, but just that I did not know her! Well, Mary, then this is the chance, Sylvie told me.

Khadija suggested that we go immediately to her house because she had something planned at 5 pm. She even lives close to my house! When I went into the house I quickly noticed the wonderful smell, and she explained that it was hrira that her mom was preparing. What? Hrira. It's a tomato soup with numerous spices that they eat during Ramadan. What? I didn't know what Ramadan was.

Khadija led me to her room and began to explain. Wow! I had never heard of it. Khadija is Muslim, and she fasts during Ramadan. It lasts one month, and during this time they can neither eat nor drink between the hours of sunrise and sunset. The month of Ramadan follows a moon calendar, while our calendar use the sun. At sunset, around 5 pm, the family gathers around the table to sample very good dishes, each one as tasty as the others. I know because Khadija and I talked so long that it was already time for Ramadan dinner. They called it "their turn" between themselves.

Khadija's parents invited me to stay for dinner, and I'm sure that it was the best meal of my life. What I loved most of all was the dessert! Khadija's uncle came after the meal, along with his wife, to have mint tea, and we each had a piece of cake made with a light pastry, almonds, honey, and orange extract. I had never tried anything similar. In the end, I had a wonderful evening, and just before leaving I asked Khadija:

- Why do you fast?
- There are numerous reasons, but the most important is to feel what hunger is and to try to understand how the poor live, and to be more generous and empathetic. In the evening we gather to eat, but you know, there are many people in the world who have nothing to eat even after a day of fasting.

On my way home my head was full of questions. I was above all lucky to have met Khadiji, and to have shared this evening with her family. I wondered why I hadn't talked to her before. I maybe thought that she was strange and that we were too different to be friends. But in fact, what I like the most about her is that she's different, and well, I learned so much about her religion and her country. I told her that she could count on me for whatever she needs. I will invite her to have dinner at my place sometime soon and I'll introduce her to my parents.

The next day I decided to fast as well and so I didn't have breakfast. At lunch time, I couldn't last any longer since my stomach was making noise and I was so hungry! I devoured my lunch but not before understanding what the poor feel. In the end, Khadija and I received a great mark for our project, whose theme was poverty and hunger in the world.



### Did You Know That?

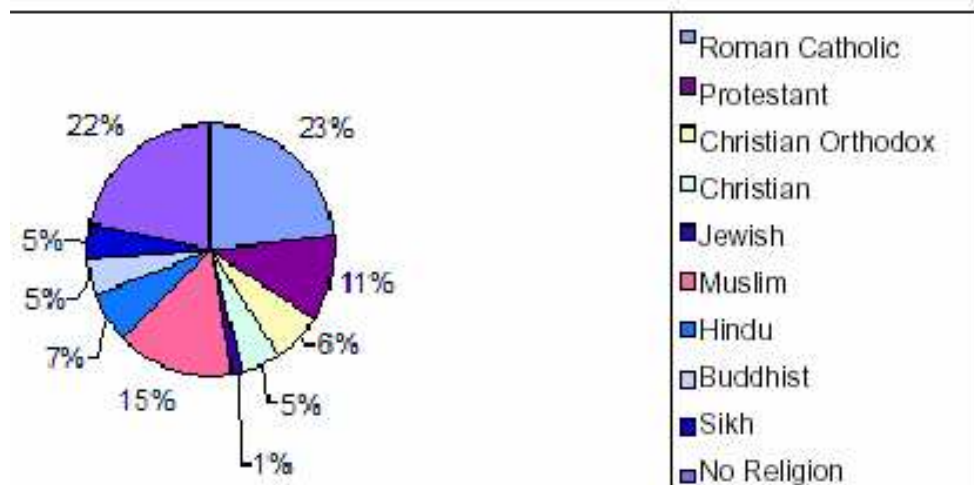
Morocco is one of Canada's oldest partners. The many political, cultural, and commercial links that unite the two countries are due to Morocco's membership with other French-speaking countries, to the numerous cultural and administrative agreements signed between the two countries, to the significant Moroccan population living in Canada, and to Morocco's political openness and dialog at the international level.

Basic education reform in Morocco, for example, is largely inspired by Canada's system. Additionally, the Canadian Government, through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is helping Morocco with the introduction of its basic education system.

### Sources:

[www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cidaweb/webcountry.nsf/vLUIImages/Marocque/\\$file/Strategie%20Maroc-f.pdf](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cidaweb/webcountry.nsf/vLUIImages/Marocque/$file/Strategie%20Maroc-f.pdf)

### The distribution of immigrants in Canada (1991-2001) according to religion (Source: Statistics Canada)



Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reading Comprehension Evaluation**  
**Khadija: A Friend Like No Other**

1. Briefly describe four discoveries or realisations that Mary had thanks to the link that she created with Khadiji and her family.

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2. According to the clues in the text, what is the minimum or likely number of people that attended the meal? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Mary was invited to Khadija's place to work on the project because Khadija had something planned at 5 pm. What did she have planned, and why?

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4. What does the fast imply for Khadija?

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5. Find and list two cultural differences that are mentioned in the text between the two new friends.

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6. A large part of the story takes place in Khadija's home. What paragraphs do not take place in her home? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Express what you think of the situation presented in the story. Use at least 5 lines to explain your thoughts.

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