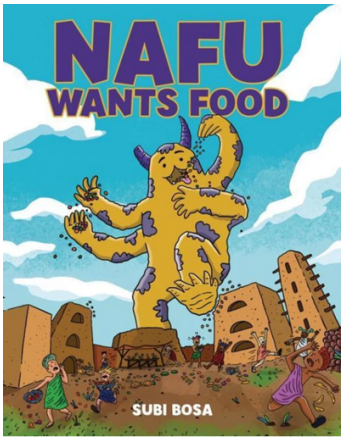


Nafu Wants Food

Author: Subi Bosa
Illustrator: Subi Bosa
Publisher: Lerner Publishing Group

The Otto Foundation Children's Book Award 2026
Chapter Book/Graphic Novel Shortlist

Nafu is Mongo Village's Guardian, so the villagers happily give Nafu all the food they want. But after greedily gobbling up the very last of the harvest, Nafu abandons the village and heads into the desert in search of new and existing things to eat. Instead, Nafu gets lost, their limbs fall off, and they start to shrink more and more each day. Can they find their way home, or will someone make a meal out of Nafu?

- Lerner Publishing Group

Teaching notes

These notes have been written by the Otto Foundation to provide teachers and caregivers with ideas to develop text comprehension and support literacy skills. They encourage deep reading of the text and illustrations, which may happen over a series of reading sessions, not just one sitting.

These notes have been written with Grade 4, 5, 6 and 7 readers in mind, but teachers and caregivers will need to adapt them to the age and experience of their readers.

Themes

- Kindness and generosity
- Community
- Overcoming prejudice
- Courage
- Responsible leadership

Before reading the story

- Open the discussion by allowing the children to share their initial responses to the front cover of the book. Encourage the children to discuss what they see and their responses to it.
  - *What do you notice about the cover illustration?*
  - *What does the cover illustration make you think about?*
  - *How does the cover illustration make you feel?*
  - *What do you like most about the cover illustration?*

- Explain that the title of the book is **Nafu Wants Food**. Ask the children to share their thoughts on the book cover.

- *What kind of book do you think this is going to be, based on the title?*
- *What do you notice about Nafu's size compared to the villagers'? Is Nafu human? What is Nafu if not human?*
- *Do you think the villagers are afraid of Nafu? What makes you think this?*
- *Where do you think the setting of the book is? Is it somewhere you recognise?*
- *What do you think might happen to the monster (Nafu) in this book?*

- Read the back cover blurb to the children. Explore how they might change their ideas about the story now that they have more information.
  - *How does reading the blurb change what you think might happen to Nafu in the story?*
  - *Do you think the cover picture shows Nafu at the beginning or the end of the story? Why do you think this?*

Reading aloud discussion points

Prologue

- *What kind of creature do you see in the first panel? How do you think the creature is feeling?*
- *Why does the dung beetle say "***You're in my sun"***? What can you see in the left-hand corner? Does the shadow look like a creature that you have seen before?*
- *In the next panel, we see a hand. How is it the same as a human hand? How is it different?*
- *Do you think the bigger creature can see or hear the dung beetle? Why do you think this?*
- *Who do you think the creature is, considering the cover and the name of the book?*
- *If there was a panel after the last panel on page 4, what do you think would happen in it? Do you think* **Nafu** *has stood on the dung beetle? Why or why not?*
- *On the next page, we get another angle of the tree. This time, there is a bird on a branch. What is the bird trying to do?*
- *What do you think the* **BOOM** *indicates? What do you think Nafu is doing here?*
- *We find out that the fruit are* **oranges***. Look at how they look in Nafu's hand. What does this tell you about Nafu's size?*
- *How do you think the bird is feeling in the middle panel? How do you think the bird is feeling in the last panel?*
- *Do you think that Nafu is paying attention to the smaller creatures or that they care about the smaller creatures? Why do you think this?*

Part One: Meet your Monster

Pages 8–21
- *Pages 8–9 show what life is like in a village. What is the village called?*
- *Give an example of people being* **kind and loving** *in Mongo Village.*
- *What kinds of tasks and errands are people doing? Which of these tasks and errands are familiar to you?*
- *Read the first speech bubble on page 9. What is the boy/man telling the girl/woman? What do you think he saw? What does this tell you about how much the people of*

Mongo Village *understand and know about the world? What does it tell you about how information is shared between people in the village?*

- *What are your impressions about* **Mongo Village***? Do you think the people are happy? Would you like to live there? Why or why not?*
- *Who is* **Doya***? Why do you think we have seen her and her name so often already? Do you think she will be an important person in the story? What kind of person does she seem like? How old do you think* **Doya** *is?*
- *Do you think the villagers are happy to see Nafu? How has the mood in the village changed with his arrival?*
- *A villager says* **"IT'S BACK!?"***. Why do you think the author has used an exclamation mark (!) and a question mark (?)? What does it tell you about how the person has said this?*
- *What does Nafu say to the villagers? How does it relate to the title of the book? Do you think that Nafu's hunger is going to be an important theme? Why do you think this?*
- *What did Nafu do to the villagers' lake?*
- *Look at* **Doya's** *face. Compare it to earlier in the story. Is she still happy? How do you think she is feeling?*
- *Nafu does not know the names of the fruits and vegetables. Look at what he is eating. What is a* **red ball***? What is an* **orange stick***? What are* **yellow beads***? What are* **yellow fingers***? What are* **small purples***? Can you think of more interesting names for other fruits and vegetables?*
- *How would you feel if you were from Mongo Village and Nafu came to take your food and eat it so quickly and greedily?*
- *Look at Nafu's eyes on page 15 and read what he says. Do you think that Nafu is even hungry? Explain why you think this.*
- *Nafu tells the villagers to grow more food while he looks for other villages. What does* **Doya** *shout at him? Do you agree that Nafu is a* **bully***? Explain why you think so? What should Nafu do instead?*
- *Why does* **Chief Mongo** *let Nafu eat all the food? What does Nafu do in return? Do you think this is a fair exchange? Do you agree with* **Chief Mongo** *or* **Doya***?*
- **Chief Mongo** *tells* **Doya** *to* **respect Nafu***. Do you think that* **Doya** *should respect Nafu? What makes it easy or difficult to respect someone?*
- **Doya** *is angry with* **Chief Mongo***. Do you think she is right be angry?*
- *Why is* **Chief Mongo** *scared to* **upset Mongo***? If you were the chief, what would you do?*
- *Nafu is looking for more villages, but he cannot find them. Why do you think he cannot find a village?*
- *What do you think will happen to Nafu if he does not find a village or more food?*

Pages 22–31

- *The purple box gives us some information that we need to understand the story. The author writes that Nafu* **wandered the desert** *for a long time. He then reveals that it has been* **six months***. Do you think that Nafu has eaten in those six months? How does that make you feel about Nafu eating all of the food at Mongo Village?*
- *What do you think is happening back at Mongo Village? Do you think they are relieved that Nafu has been gone for six months? Why or why not?*
- *Nafu thinks they see fruit. This is called a* **mirage***. Can you explain what a* **mirage** *is?* A mirage is something you think you can see, but it is not really there. The most famous example is in a hot desert where a person might think they can see water in the distance but they get there and it is not really there. *If you were hungry in the desert, what food or dish would you see as a* **mirage***?*

- *How do you think Nafu is feeling when they find the cave?*
- *Who does Nafu see in the cave? Do you think that* **Doya** *is really there? Why is Nafu seeing her and hearing her shout at them for stealing the villagers' food?*
- *Nafu realises that they are* **greedy**. *What does it mean to be* **greedy***?*
- *What begins to happen to Nafu? Why do you think this is happening? Do you think Nafu understands what is happening? Why do you think this?*
- *On page 30, the bird says* **"They're falling apart"**. *Can you explain the joke?*
- *Why do the animals laugh at Nafu? Do you think Nafu deserves to be laughed at? Why? Do you feel sorry for Nafu? Why or why not?*

Pages 32–34
- *How long has it been since Nafu left Mongo Village? How long has it been since Nafu's body began to break apart?*
- *After five years, you would expect Mongo Village to be back to normal with enough food for everyone. What seems to be happening instead?*
- *What two things are happening to the crops at Mongo Village?*
- *Who is the* **Great Eye***? Why do the villagers worry that they've upset the* **Great Eye***?*
- *Who do you think the* **Tonana family** *are? What do you think they have done in Mongo Village?*
- *What has happened to the temple?*
- *Chief Mongo says* **"Being a chief is so hard"**. *Do you agree? What is hard about being a chief? Do you think that a chief should never make a mistake? How could a chief avoid making too many mistakes?*
- *What does Doya think about Chief Mongo? What do you think about Chief Mongo?*

Pages 35–37
- *Nafu is now only left with a head. How does Nafu move around? Do you think it is easy to get around without a body and limbs?*
- *How long has passed since Nafu left Mongo Village?*
- *The spider tells a joke that Nafu does not find funny.* **Eight feet** *is equal to about 2,5 m. If Nafu was* ***20 feet tall****, how tall was he in metres?* (2,5 / 8 = 0,3 m; 20 x 0,3 = 6,25 m). *How tall is the tallest person you know? How much taller is Nafu?*
- *Nafu does not believe that what they are seeing is real. Why does Nafu believe it is all a* **mirage***? What is it that makes Nafu finally believe that they have reached a village?*
- *What is the village called? What does the name of the village mean? Where has Nafu ended up?*

Part Two: Find the Village

Pages 38–47
- *Part Two is called* **Find the Village**. *What is this village called? (hint: you saw the name at the end of Part One)*
- *What do you notice about this village? What do you notice about the people in the village? The person with the purple hair is a visitor. How can you tell this?*
- *Talk about this village compared to the village (Mongo Village) at the beginning of the book.*
- *If you saw Nafu's head hopping along, what would you think it was?*
- *Why is it significant that the villagers think Nafu is a* **slug** *and a* **rat***?* Those are both examples of pests that eat crops.

- *Is Nafu glad that they finally found a village? Why do you think this? What kind of village was Nafu hoping to find?*
- *Why do you think the people are* **angry and mean***? How is your mood when you are feeling hungry?*
- *What do the* **Tonana family** *demand from the villagers? Do you think the* **Tonana family** *are kind? What word does one of the villagers use to describe them?*
- *When Nafu meets* **Gundi***, they are unable to say the name, Nafu. Why do you think Nafu is struggling to speak?*
- *What do* **Gundi** *and* **Nafu** *have in common?*
- *What does* **Gundi** *suggest he and Nafu do in order to win the race?*
- *Why do you think Nafu agrees to be Gundi's missing leg? What is Nafu hoping to get from doing this?*

Pages 47–56
- *A villager says* **"The Tonana family are greedy"**. *Who does the work on the* **Tonana family** *land?*
- *Do you think the villagers are happy to be at the races? Why do you think this? Why are they there?*
- *Why are the monsters so excited? What have the monsters been promised? How do you think the prize makes the villagers feel?*
- *What happens to Gundi and Nafu? Why are they* **in last place***?*
- *Look at the lady with the purple hair on page 52. What kind of expression does she have on her face? What do you think she is thinking or feeling?*
- *What is Gundi's plan to help him and Nafu win the race? Do you think this is a fair plan? Why or why not?*
- *Why does Gundi ask* **"We won?"** *How do you think he is feeling?*
- *What are you starting to realise about the dinner with the* **Tonana family***?*
- *Look at the* **Tonana family** *in their cart riding through the village. How do you think they are feeling? Why do the villagers act like they are happy? How are the villagers actually feeling?*
- *How did Nafu end up in the grass?*

Pages 57–64
- *Gundi tells Nafu that he is worried. Why do you think Gundi is worried? What do you think is going to happen to Gundi and Nafu?*
- *Do you think Elos wants to eat something strange? Why do you think this?*
- *Describe the Tonana family's house. Where is it? What does it look like? Why is it important to them to live far away from the village? Do you think this is the right thing for a family in charge to do?*
- *What do you notice about the shelves in the Tonana family's kitchen? How does this make you feel?*
- *Do you think Nafu understands what is happening yet? Why or why not?*
- *What is* **thyme***?* It is a type of herb, pronounced 'time'. *What does Nafu think the cook is saying?*
- *What are the Tonana family's children's names? What kind of children do you think they are? Would you be friends with* **Mai** *and* **Kai***? Why or why not?*
- **Aunt Elos** *tells the children the story of Nafu. How are the Tonana family and the old Nafu similar?*

- *Why is Nafu confused about the cooking process? What does this say about the way that Nafu used to eat?*
- *Do you think it is fair that the Tonana family own all the land and that they make the farmers give them all the food that is produced? Why or why not?*
- *What does Nafu realise about the way the Tonana family is running the village?*

Pages 65–73
- **Elos** *says that after Nafu left,* **"NEW monsters showed up"**. *But Mrs Tonana does not agree. She says that* **Nafu was the last monster**. *Do you think that Nafu was the* **last monster***? Why or why not?*
- *Gundi realises something about the* **Tonana Races**. *What is it? How does the Tonana family use the races to* **get rid of all creatures and monsters***?*
- *What does Nafu start to do in the pot of food? What happens to Nafu's body as they eat more and more of the vegetables in the pot? How do the Tonana family help Nafu without realising it?*
- *Gundi is a humorous character. Why do you think he is funny? Do you think he means to be funny, or is he accidentally funny? Do you have funny friends like Gundi? Why do they make you laugh?*

Part Three: Enjoy your Wings

Pages 76–85
- *Do you think the younger people in the village know who or what Nafu is? Why do you think this?*
- *Why do the villagers accuse Nafu of* **stealing and eating** *their food?*
- *What is different about Nafu now that their limbs have grown back? How is Nafu different from at the beginning of the story?*
- *The Tonana family shout* **"The food is OURS! We own the farms!!"**. *Do you think the Tonana family are correct in thinking they own the food because they own the farms? How do you think the Tonana family came to own the farms?*
- *Why do you think Nafu picks the villagers up? How would you feel if a giant monster picked you up?*
- *What has Nafu learnt that they did not know (or did not care to know) before they got lost?* The correct names for the vegetables. For example: carrot, potatoes, legumes etc.
- *Why is Gundi upset?*
- *How do the villagers react when the Tonana family call the food their* **private property***?*
- *Why do the villagers shout* **"You're the REAL monsters!"**. *Who are the villagers talking to? What do the villagers mean?*
- *What does Nafu decide to do with the food the Tonana family stole? How do you think this makes the villagers feel?*
- *What happens when the villagers start to eat again? How does their attitude towards one another change?*
- *Who do you think the person in the hooded cloak is? What do you think they will want to say to Nafu?*

Pages 86–90
- *Why does Nafu follow the person in the hooded cloak? What does the person ask Nafu to do? Why does the person ask this?*

- *What does Nafu uncover when they* **blow the dust off***? Where did the person bring them? How does Nafu finally recognise where they are?*
- *Who is the person under the hooded cloak?*
- *Do you think that Gundi fully understands what is happening? Do you think Gundi understands or knows who Nafu is and what happened to Mongo Village? Why do you think this? How would you explain to Gundi what is going on?*
- *Chief Mongo explains that Nafu's* **greed** *and her* **fear** *was the reason Mongo Village fell. Explain why Chief Mongo's fear also contributed to the village falling.*
- *What happened when Nafu ate all the food and Chief Mongo lost control of the village? Do you blame the villagers for thinking that they needed another, stronger leader? Explain why you think this.*
- *Chief Mongo says that the Tonana family* **were MUCH worse***. Much worse than who? How were they* **much worse***?*

Pages 91–95
- *Where are the Tonana family now? Do you think they deserve to be there? Why do you think so? Do you think the family feel sorry for what they have done?*
- *The villagers call the Tonana family* **monsters***. Do you think the Tonana family are* **monsters***? Explain why or why not.*
- *What does Chief Mongo tell Nafu to do? Do you think that Nafu feels sorry for what they did all those years ago? What has Nafu decided to do* **from now on***?*
- *How does Nafu return water to the village's lake?*
- *Why does everyone think that Nafu is* **flying***?*
- *Where would a person usually do a* **cannonball***?* A cannonball is when a person jumps into a swimming pool while holding their knees close to their chests. It creates a big splash. *Explain the joke.*
- *What does Chief Mongo instruct the villagers to do? Why are they doing this?*

Pages 96–111
- *Whose voice does Nafu recognise? Why does* **Doya** *say that she is the* **monster that** *Nafu* **made***? Do you think that some people do evil things when they go through hard times? Why or why not?*
- *What does it mean to* **have a big head***? What does Elos think of the family when she says that they have* **big heads***?*
- *Who do you think was the better leader? Chief Mongo or Doya? Say why you think so, remembering to say what was good and bad about both.*
- *How do you know that there is a still a good person underneath Doya's evil? How do you think her children feel about what has happened?*
- *Doya says that her family will* **leave the village** *and Chief Mongo says* **"Nonsense!"***. What kind of person do you think Chief Mongo is? Do you think that Doya and her family deserve a second chance? Why is it important to give people a second chance?*
- *What did it take for Nafu to learn his lesson? What did it take for Doya to learn her lesson? What does this tell you about the hardest lessons in life?*
- *Have the villagers totally forgiven Doya? How do you know?*
- *Chief Mongo explains why the temple is important to the village. She says that it is* **the heart of our village***. What does this mean?* It means that it is the place that where everything important happens and where people gather and come together as a community. *Do you know a place in your community that is the* **heart***? Why is it the* **heart** *of your community? What kinds of things happen there?*

- *What happens when the villagers and Nafu finish the temple? Why is this exciting and important?*
- *What is the* **special gift** *that the* **Great Eye** *gives Nafu? What condition does the* **Great Eye** *give Nafu? What must Nafu use this special gift to do?*
- *Why does Chief Mongo* **reject** *the Great Eye's gift? Would you have rejected the gift? Why or why not?*
- *Who decides to go with Nafu on their travels? Do you think Nafu is happy about this? Why or why not?*
- *What is funny and clever about the last line of the book?* **I don't know. But I do know one thing. Nafu wants food!**

Topics for discussion after reading the story

- Explore with your children:
  - *Who is your favourite monster character in this book? Explain why this is your favourite monster character.*
  - *Where do you think Nafu and Gundi are going next? What adventures do you think they will have?*
  - *Is there anything you particularly liked or disliked about this story?*
  - *Has anything that happened in this book ever happened to you?*
  - *What is something you have learnt from this story? What lesson does the story try to teach?*
  - *If the author asked you what could be improved in the book, what would you say?*
  - *What would you tell your friends about this book?*

Activity ideas for after reading the story

- In Part Two of the story, a group of monsters take part in the Tonana Races. Ask the children to create their own monsters to take part in the race. They can either write a description of their monsters, or they can draw pictures of their monsters. Encourage them to be creative and give as many details as possible.

  For example:
  - *What does your monster smell like?*
  - *What does your monster look like?*
  - *What language goes your monster speak?*
  - *What sounds does your monster make?*
  - *What does your monster eat and drink?*
  - *What is your monster's name?*

- On a whiteboard/chalkboard/large piece of paper, draw a line down the middle. On one side, write: **Positive qualities** and on the other side, write: **Negative qualities**. Have a class discussion about positive and negative qualities of leaders. Encourage children to think of examples of good qualities.

  For example:
  A good leader is ***kind*** *- they will try to make sure that everyone has something to eat and drink.*

- Find traditional stories to share with the class about monsters/creatures/animals in folklore. Ask the class to share their own monster stores from their families and communities. Explain that people use these stories to teach lessons and share wisdom.

  For example:
  - Anansi the Spider
  - The Tokoloshe
  - Kaggen (the Mantis)

Please see the following pages for Grade specific CAPS aligned skills covered in these teaching notes.

CAPS skills covered in teaching notes

Listening and speaking

Grade 4

- Predict what a text could be about
- Identify characters
- Name characters correctly
- Listen for main message and specific details
- Describe events
- Identify specific details
- Discuss main ideas and specific details
- Express feelings in relation to events
- Express thoughts and feelings about a story/characters/setting or theme of a text
- Relate to own life experiences
- Answer oral questions based on the text
- Participate in group discussions
- Take turns to speak
- Share ideas, opinions and participate in the discussion
- Ask relevant questions
- Keep to the topic
- Maintain discussions
- Respond to others' ideas with empathy and respect

Reading and viewing

Grade 4

- Pre reading: Make predictions for the title and cover of the text
- Predict from title and discuss related themes/content
- Make predictions
- Identify and explain central events
- Identify and comment on the plot, setting and characters
- Discuss characters
- Give reasons for the actions of characters
- Give and explain own feelings about the text
- Express emotional response to text read
- Identify and discuss values in the text
- Use reading strategies: Make predictions and use contextual cues
- Use contextual cues to make meaning
- Discuss message/moral of the story
- Reflect on text read
- Infer meaning of unfamiliar words and images
- Use reading comprehension strategies: Visualisation and making connections
- Determine the impact of visual techniques
- Discuss new vocabulary from the text
- Understand vocabulary

Listening and speaking

Grade 5

- Make predictions
- Describe events
- Identify and explain cause and effect
- Comment on social, moral and cultural values
- Ask critical questions
- Express and justify own opinion with reasons
- Use information from the text in response to questions
- Identify main ideas and specific details
- Identify central idea, plot, setting and characters
- Relate text content to own life
- Discuss and give own opinion
- Express thoughts and feelings about the storyline
- Participate in group discussions
- Ask relevant questions
- Justify own opinion
- Maintain discussion
- Take turns to speak
- Respond to others' ideas with empathy and respect

Reading and viewing

Grade 5

- Pre reading: Predict from title and pictures and discuss related themes/content
- Comment on choice of pictures in text
- Share ideas and offers opinion using speculation
- Use reading strategies: Contextual clues and prior knowledge
- Discuss characters
- Give reason for actions of characters
- Discuss the central idea, plot, characters and setting
- Discuss cause and effect in the story
- Identify and discuss feelings expressed in text
- Express own feelings and opinion
- Identify and explain how central events and characters relate to own life
- Infer the meaning of unfamiliar words and images
- Discuss new vocabulary from text

Listening and speaking

Reading and viewing

Grade 6

- Predict what will happen in a story
- Discuss main ideas and specific details
- Identify themes
- Discuss characters
- Discuss plot, conflict and setting
- Discuss messages in text
- Discuss responses to text
- Discuss social, moral and cultural values in text
- Relate ideas to own life experiences
- Ask relevant questions and respond appropriately
- Stay on topic
- Explain logically
- Interact positively during group discussions
- Respond to others' ideas with empathy and respect

Grade 6

- Pre reading: Make predictions based on title and/or graphics and related themes/content
- Make predictions about the text
- Ask questions about the text
- Make inferences about the text
- Visualise parts of the text
- Identify and explain the central idea
- Interpret and discuss the text
- Discuss plot, theme, setting and characters
- Discuss suspense and twist
- Critically discusses cultural and social values in the text
- Relate events and characters to own life
- Show understanding of the text and relationship to own life
- Identify and discuss feelings expressed in text
- Express emotional response to texts read
- Identify different perspectives
- Give own perspective based on evidence in the text
- Infer meaning of unfamiliar words and images
- Invent or describe preferred results or endings

Listening and speaking

Grade 7

- Make predictions from cover page and blurb
- Confirm predictions
- Identify main and supporting ideas
- Make inferences
- Share ideas and experiences to show understanding of concepts
- Share ideas and opinions
- Identify characters
- Identify main and supporting ideas
- Use appropriate language
- Answer questions

Reading and viewing

Grade 7

- Make predictions
- Make connections
- Identify key features of a text such as characters, plot, setting, conflict, theme and message
- Discuss main ideas and themes
- Discuss fact or opinion in text
- Infer meaning of unfamiliar words
- Infer meaning and conclusions
- Visualise parts of the text
- Identify formal/informal language in the text
- Answer questions based on text