How do you know what’s RIGHT?

Can you think of a situation when you weren’t sure what to do? If so, you know that it’s not always easy to tell right from wrong. Sometimes you must rely on your internal compass to guide your behavior. In this story, a boy decides to disobey a rule in order to help someone in need.

**DISCUSS** What purpose do rules serve in families and society? When might rules have to be changed? Discuss these questions with a small group.
TEXT ANALYSIS: CULTURAL CONFLICT
When you read a story set in another country, knowing about the area’s history and culture can be important background. It can help you to understand the characters’ behavior and the cultural conflicts that unfold. A cultural conflict is a struggle that arises because of the differing values, customs, or circumstances between groups of people. For example, if a story is set in a place where one religious group has been fighting against another, parents might be angry if their child becomes friends with someone from outside their group.

“Out of Bounds” takes place in South Africa. As you read the selection, notice how the conflicts reflect the history and culture of South Africa. The background on this page will provide you with some of the information you need.

READING SKILL: MAKE INFERENCES
Fiction writers do not always make direct statements about characters or the cultures in which they live. Instead, writers provide certain details and expect readers to combine these details with their own knowledge to “read between the lines” of a story. This process of forming logical guesses is called making inferences. As you read, use a chart like the one shown to record your inferences about the main characters.

VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT
The boldfaced words help Beverley Naidoo describe a particular society. Using context clues, try to write a definition for each word.

1. The boys straggle behind their older brother.
2. The flood could maroon many people on rooftops.
3. Members of the newer sect didn’t agree with people from the orthodox church.
4. The Africans fought vigorously for equality.
5. The peace talks gave people a glimmer of hope.
6. The evening news was interesting enough to engross him.
7. We watched the energized boy bound up the hill.
8. Poor communication will hamper efforts to get along.

Complete the activities in your Reader/Writer Notebook.

Meet the Author
Beverley Naidoo
born 1943
Writing for Justice
Beverley Naidoo grew up in Johannesburg, South Africa, when the country was racially segregated. It wasn’t until she went to college that she recognized the injustice of the laws. After she moved to England, she decided to write children’s books that speak honestly about South African society. She published her first book, Journey to Jo’burg, in 1984. It was banned in her home country until 1991.

BACKGROUND TO THE STORY
Apartheid
South Africa is the southernmost country on the African continent. The nation is ethnically diverse, with whites forming the smallest group. However, up until 1994, whites ruled the country under a system called apartheid (apartness). Apartheid was based on segregation between the races. The white government classified non-whites into three groups. Africans made up the largest group but had the fewest rights. “Coloureds” (people of mixed race) and those of Indian descent were granted limited rights in 1984. The government decided where each group could live, conduct business, or own land. The effects of apartheid continue to influence South African society today. Africans, on average, remain poorer and have less access to education than other groups.

Storms and Floods
“Out of Bounds” is set in 2000. That year, severe storms devastated southern Africa. Floods swept away schools, roads, crops, and livestock. About 540,000 people were left homeless.

Go to thinkcentral.com. KEYWORD: HMLB-805
Out of bounds.

That’s what his parents said as soon as the squatters took over the land below their house. Rohan’s dad added another meter of thick concrete bricks to their garden wall and topped it with curling barbed wire. He certainly wasn’t going to wait for the first break-in and be sorry later. They lived on the ridge of a steep hill with the garden sloping down. Despite the high wall, from his bedroom upstairs, Rohan could see over the spiked-wire circles down to the place where he and his friends used to play. The wild fig trees under which they had made their hideouts were still there. They had spent hours dragging planks, pipes, sheets of metal and plastic—whatever might be useful—up the hill from rubbish tipped in a ditch below. The first squatters pulled their hideouts apart and used the same old scraps again for their own constructions. Rohan could still see the “ski slope”—the red earth down which he and his friends had bumped and flown on a couple of old garbage can lids. The squatters used it as their road up the hill. Now it looked like a crimson scar cut between the shacks littering the hillside.

“There’s only one good thing about this business,” Ma said after the back wall was completed. “We won’t have to wash that disgusting red dust out of your clothes any more!”

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1. **squatters**: people who occupy public land in order to gain ownership of it.

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**CULTURAL CONFLICT**

In lines 1–19, what do you learn about the family’s feelings toward the squatters?
Rohan said nothing. How could he explain what he had lost? At first, some of the squatter women and children came up to the houses with buckets asking for water. For a couple of weeks his mother opened the gate after checking that no men were hanging around in the background. She allowed the women to fill their buckets at the outside tap. Most of her neighbors found themselves doing the same. Torrential rains and floods had ushered in the new millennium by sweeping away homes, animals and people in the north of the country. The television was awash with pictures of homeless families and efforts to help them. No one knew from where exactly the squatters had come. But as Ma said, how could you refuse a woman or child some water?

It wasn’t long before all that changed. The first complaint of clothes disappearing off the washing line came from their new neighbors. The first African family, in fact, to move in among the Indians on Mount View. No one had actually seen anyone but everyone was suspicious including the neighbor, Mrs. Zuma.

“You can’t really trust these people, you know,” Mrs. Zuma tutted when she came to ask if Ma had seen anyone hanging around. However, it was when thieves broke into old Mrs. Pillay’s house, grabbed the gold thali from around her neck, and left her with a heart attack that views hardened. Young men could be seen hanging around the shacks. Were some of them not part of the same gang? Mrs. Pillay’s son demanded the police search through the settlement immediately. But the police argued they would need more evidence and that the thieves could have come from anywhere.

A new nervousness now gripped the house owners on top of the hill. Every report of theft, break-in, or car hijacking, anywhere in the country, led to another conversation about the squatters on the other side of their garden walls.

At night Rohan peered through the bars of his window before going to sleep. Flickering lights from candles and lamps were the only sign that people were living out there in the thick darkness. In the daytime, when Ma heard the bell and saw that it was a woman or child with a bucket, she no longer answered the call.

All the neighbors were agreed. Why should private house owners be expected to provide water for these people? That was the Council’s job. If the squatters were refused water, then perhaps they would find somewhere else to put up their shacks. A more suitable place. Or even, go back to where they came from.

The squatters did not go away. No one knew from where they managed to get their water or how far they had to walk. On the way to school, Rohan and his dad drove past women walking with buckets on their heads.

2. tutted: made a “tut tut” sound with the tongue to express annoyance.
“These people are tough as ticks! You let them settle and it’s impossible to get them out,” complained Dad. “Next thing they’ll be wanting our electricity.”

But Rohan wasn’t really listening. He was scanning the line of African children who straggled behind the women and who wore the black and white uniform of Mount View Primary, his old school. He had been a pupil there until his parents had moved him to his private school in Durban with its smaller classes, cricket pitch, and its own rugby ground. Most of the African children at Mount View had mothers who cleaned, washed, and ironed for the families on top of the hill. But since the New Year they had been joined by the squatter children and each week the line grew longer.

The queue of traffic at the crossroads slowed them down, giving Rohan more time to find the “wire car” boy. He was looking for a boy who always steered a wire car in front of him with a long handle. He was about his own age—twelve or thirteen perhaps—and very thin and wiry himself. What interested Rohan was that the boy never had the same car for more than two or three days. Nor had he ever seen so many elaborate designs simply made out of wire, each suggesting a different make of car. They were much more complicated than the little wire toys in the African Crafts shop at the mall.

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4. *cricket pitch* and *rugby ground*: playing fields for ballgames that originated in England.
“Hey, cool!” Rohan whistled. “See that, Dad?” The boy must have heard because he glanced toward them. His gaze slid across the silver hood of their car toward the trunk but didn’t rise up to look at Rohan directly.

“It’s a Merc—like ours, Dad! What a beaut! Do you think—”

“Don’t think about it, son! You want us to stop and ask how much he wants, don’t you?”

Rohan half frowned, half smiled. How easily his father knew him!

“No way! If we start buying from these people, we’ll be encouraging them! That’s not the message we want them to get now, is it?”

Rohan was quiet. He couldn’t argue with his dad’s logic. If the squatters moved away, he and his friends could get their territory back again.

Rohan returned home early from school. A precious half day. In the past he would have spent it in his hideout. Instead he flicked on the television.

News. As his finger hovered over the button to switch channels, the whirr of a helicopter invaded the living room.

“Hey, Ma! Look at this!”

Ma appeared from the kitchen, her hands cupped, white and dusty with flour. On the screen, a tight human knot swung at the end of a rope above a valley swirling with muddy water.

“A South African Air Force rescue team today saved a baby from certain death just an hour after she was born in a tree. Her mother was perched in the tree over floodwaters that have devastated Mozambique. The mother and her baby daughter were among the lucky few. Many thousands of Mozambicans are still waiting to be lifted to safety from branches and rooftops. They have now been marooned for days by the rising water that has swallowed whole towns and villages.”

“Those poor people! What a place to give birth!” Ma’s floury hands almost looked ready to cradle a baby.

Rohan was watching how the gale from the rotors7 forced the leaves and branches of the tree to open like a giant flower until the helicopter began to lift. Members of the mother’s family still clung desperately to the main trunk. Rohan saw both fear and determination in their eyes.

He and Ma listened to the weather report that followed. Although Cyclone Eline was over, Cyclone Gloria8 was now whipping up storms across the Indian Ocean and heading toward Mozambique. Where would it go next? Durban was only down the coast. Rohan had seen a program about a sect who believed the new millennium would mark the end of the world. They were convinced that the floods were a sign that The End was beginning.

“What if the cyclone comes here, Ma?”

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7. rotors (rō’tərz): helicopter blades.
“No, we'll be all right son. But that lot out there will get it. The government really should do something.” Ma nodded in the direction of the squatters.

“Now, let me finish these rotis for your sister!”

Ma returned to her bread making. When she had finished, she wanted Rohan to come with her to his married sister’s house. He pleaded to stay behind.

“I’ve got homework to do, Ma! I’ll be fine.”

“You won’t answer the door unless it’s someone we know, will you?”

“No, Ma!” he chanted. Ma said the same thing every time.

Alone in the house, Rohan daydreamed at his desk. He was close enough to the window to see down the hill. What if there was so much rain that a river formed along the road below! As the water rose, people would have to abandon their shacks to climb higher up. They would be trapped between the flood below and the torrents above. In assembly they had heard the story of Noah building the ark. Perhaps it wasn’t just a story after all. Perhaps the people had tried to cling on to the tops of trees as tightly as those they had seen on television.

_Tough as ticks._

The phrase popped into his mind. Wasn’t that what his dad had said about the squatters? Yet the one sure way to get rid of ticks was to cover them in liquid paraffin. Drown them. A terrible thought. He should push it right away.

Rohan was about to stretch out for his math book when a figure caught his eye on the old ski slope. It was the thin wiry boy, but he wasn’t pushing a car this time. He was carrying two large buckets, one on his head, the other by his side. He descended briskly down the slope and turned along the road in the opposite direction to that taken by the women who carried buckets on their heads. Rohan followed the figure until he went out of sight, then forced himself to open his book.

The bell rang just as he was getting interested in the first question. Nuisance! He hurried to the landing. If someone was standing right in front of the gate, it was possible to see who it was from the window above the stairs. He stood back, careful not to be seen himself. It was the same boy, an empty container on the ground each side of him! Didn’t he know not to come to the house up here? But he was only a child, and it looked as if he just wanted some water. It would be different if it were an adult or a complete stranger. Rohan’s daydream also made him feel a little guilty. He could see the boy look anxiously through the bars, his hand raised as if wondering whether to ring the bell again. Usually when the boy was pushing his wire car on the way to school, he appeared relaxed and calm.

By the time the bell rang a second time, Rohan had decided. He hurried downstairs but slowed himself as he walked outside toward the gate.

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9. _rotis_ (rətˈəs): Indian flatbreads that are cooked on a griddle.
“What do you want?” Rohan tried not to show that he recognized the boy.
“I need water for my mother. Please.” The boy held his palms out in front
of him as if asking for a favor. “My mother—she’s having a baby—it’s bad—
there’s no more water. Please.”

This was an emergency. Not on television but right in front of him. Still
Rohan hesitated. His parents would be extremely cross that he had put himself
in this situation by coming to talk to the boy. Weren’t there stories of adults who
used children as decoys to get people to open their gates so they could storm in?
He should have stayed inside. Should he tell the boy to go next door where there
would at least be an adult? But the boy had chosen to come here. Perhaps he had
seen Rohan watching him from the car and knew this was his house.
“We stay there.” The boy pointed in the direction of the squatter camp. “I
go to school there.” He pointed in the direction of Mount View Primary. He
was trying to reassure Rohan that it would be OK to open the gate. He was
still in his school uniform but wore a pair of dirty-blue rubber sandals. His
legs were as thin as sticks.
“Isn’t there a doctor with your mother?” It was such a silly question that as
soon as it was out, Rohan wished he could take it back. If they could afford a
doctor, they wouldn’t be squatters on a bare hillside. The boy shook his head
vigorously. If he thought it was stupid, he didn’t let it show on his troubled face.
“Wait there!” Rohan returned to the house. The button for the electric gate
was inside the front door. The boy waited while the wrought-iron bars slowly
rolled back.
“OK. Bring your buckets over here.” Rohan pointed to the outside tap.
The buckets clanked against each other as the boy jogged toward him.
“Thank you,” he said quietly.

The unexpected softness in his voice had a strange effect on Rohan. It
sounded so different from his own bossy tone. Suddenly he felt a little
ashamed. This was the same boy whose wire cars he admired! If he were
still at Mount View Primary they would probably be in the same class.
They might even have been friends, and he would be learning how to make
wire cars himself. Why had he spoken so arrogantly? It was really only a
small favor that was being asked for. The water in the bucket gurgling and
churning reminded Rohan of the water swirling beneath the Mozambican
woman with her baby. Her rescuer had been taking a really big risk but
hadn’t looked big headed.11 He had just got on with the job.

When both buckets were full, the boy stooped to lift one on to his head. Rohan saw his face and neck muscles strain under the weight. How would he
manage to keep it balanced and carry the other bucket too? G

“Wait! I’ll give you a hand.” Rohan’s offer was out before he had time to
think it through properly. If the boy was surprised, he didn’t show it. All his
energy seemed to be focused on his task. Rohan dashed into the kitchen to
grab the spare set of keys. Ma would be away for another hour at least. He

11. big headed: conceited.
would be back soon, and she need never know. It was only after the gate clicked behind them that Rohan remembered the neighbors. If anyone saw him, they were bound to ask Ma what he was doing with a boy from the squatter camp. He crossed the fingers of one hand. At first Rohan said nothing. Sharing the weight of the bucket, he could feel the strain all the way up from his fingers to his left shoulder. When they reached the corner and set off down the hill, the bucket seemed to propel them forward. It was an effort to keep a steady pace. Rohan glanced at the container on the boy’s head, marveling at how he kept it balanced. He caught the boy’s eye.

“How do you do that? You haven’t spilled a drop!”

The boy gave a glimmer of a smile.

“You learn.”

Rohan liked the simple reply. He should ask the boy about the cars. This was his chance, before they turned into the noisy main road and reached the squatter camp.

“I’ve seen you with wire cars. Do you make them yourself?”

“Yes—and my brother.”

“You make them together? Do you keep them all?”

“My brother—he sells them at the beach.” The boy waved his free hand in the direction of the sea. “The tourists—they like them.”

“Your cars are better than any I’ve seen in the shops! Do you get lots of money for them?”

“Mmhh!” The boy made a sound something between a laugh and a snort.

Rohan realized that he had asked another brainless question. Would they be staying in a shack if they got lots of money? Rohan had often seen his own father bargaining to get something cheaper from a street hawker.12 He tried to cover his mistake.

“There’s a shop in the mall where they sell wire cars. They charge a lot and yours are a hundred times better!”

“We can’t go there. The guards—they don’t let us in.”

Rohan knew the security guards at the entrance to the mall. Some of them even greeted his parents with a little salute. Rohan had seen poor children hanging around outside. They offered to push your trolley,13 to clean your car—anything for a few cents. Sometimes Ma gave an orange or an apple from her shopping bag to a child. Other times she would just say “No thank you” and wave a child away. Ma never gave money. . . . Rohan had never thought what it would be like to be chased away. How did the guards decide who could enter? How could the boy and his brother go and show the lady in the African Crafts shop his cars if they weren’t allowed in? 1

Rohan was quiet as they reached the main road and turned toward the squatter camp. The noise of vehicles roaring past was deafening. He never normally walked down here. Not by himself nor with anyone else. His family

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12. **hawker**: seller.
13. **trolley**: shopping cart.
went everywhere by car. With all the locks down, of course. The only people who walked were poor people. His eyes were drawn to a group of young men walking toward them. They were still some distance away, but already Rohan began to feel uneasy. They were coming from the crossroads that his dad always approached on full alert. Rohan knew how his father jumped the red lights when the road was clear, especially at night. Everyone had heard stories of gangs who hijacked cars waiting for the lights to change.

The handle had begun to feel like it was cutting into his fingers. The boy must have sensed something because he signaled to Rohan to lower the bucket. For a few seconds they each stretched their fingers.

“It’s too far? You want to go?” The boy was giving him a chance to change his mind. To leave and go back home. He had already helped carry the water more than half the way. He could make an excuse about the time. But the thought of running back to the house along the road on his own now worried him.

“No, it’s fine. Let’s go.” Rohan heard a strange brightness in his own voice. He curled his fingers around the handle again.

As they drew nearer the men, Rohan felt their gaze on him and suddenly his head was spinning with questions. Why on earth had he offered to help carry the water? What did he think he was doing coming down here? And he hadn’t even yet entered the squatter camp itself!

“We go here.” The boy’s voice steadied him a little.

Rohan turned and stared up at his old ski slope. He felt the force of the young men’s eyes on his back as he and the boy began to ascend the rough track. Someone behind called out something in Zulu14 and, without turning, the boy shouted back.

The words flew so quickly into one another that Rohan didn’t pick up any even though he was learning Zulu in school. They must be talking about him, but he was too embarrassed—and frightened—to ask. He could feel his heart pumping faster and told himself it was because of the stiff climb. He needed to concentrate where he put each foot. The track was full of holes and small stones. A quick glance over his shoulder revealed that the young men had also entered the squatter camp but seemed to be heading for a shack with a roof covered in old tires on the lower slope. A couple of them were still watching. He must just look ahead and control his fear. As long as he was with the boy, he was safe, surely?

A bunch of small children appeared from nowhere, giggling and staring. He couldn’t follow their chatter but heard the word “iNdiya!” The boy ignored them until a couple of children started darting back and forth in front of them, sweeping up the red dust with their feet.

“Hambani!” Rohan could hear the boy’s irritation as he waved them away. But the darting and dancing continued just out of reach.

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14. Zulu (zǔˈlə): the language of the Zulu, a Bantu people of South Africa.
“Hambani-bo!” This time the boy’s voice deepened to a threat, and the cluster of children pulled aside with one or two mischievous grins. Beads of sweat had begun trickling down the boy’s face. With his own skin prickling with sticky heat, Rohan wondered at the wiry strength of the boy whose back, head, and bucket were still perfectly upright as they mounted the hill.

“It’s that one—we stay there.” The boy, at last, pointed to a structure of corrugated iron, wood, and black plastic a little further up. It was not far from the old fig trees. For a moment Rohan thought he would say something about his hideout which the first squatters had pulled down. But he stopped himself. Maybe the boy had even been one of them!

As they drew nearer, they heard a woman moaning and a couple of other women’s voices that sounded as if they were comforting her. The boy lowered the bucket swiftly from his head and pushed aside a plywood sheet, the door to his home.

15. **corrugated** (kôr’ə-gā’tid) iron: sheet iron with parallel ridges.
Rohan wasn't sure what to do. He knew he couldn't follow. The sounds from within scared him. The moans were rapid and painful.

Rohan folded his arms tightly, trying not to show how awkward he felt. The little children were still watching but keeping their distance. They could probably also hear the cries. It would be hard to keep anything private here. The only other people nearby were two gray-haired men sitting on boxes a little lower down the hill. One of them was bent over an old-fashioned sewing machine placed on a metal drum, a makeshift table. Normally Rohan would have been very curious to see what he was stitching, but now he was just grateful that both men were engaged in talking and didn't seem interested in him.

He turned to look up the hill—toward his house and the others at the top protected by their walls with wires, spikes, and broken bottles. When he had hidden in his hideout down here, he had always loved the feeling of being safe yet almost in his own separate little country. But that had been a game and he could just hop over the wall to return to the other side. Surrounded now by homes made out of scraps and other people's leftovers, this place seemed a complete world away from the houses on the hill. In fact, how was he going to get home? If he didn't leave soon, Ma would be back before him. Would the boy at least take him part of the way through the squatter camp? He needed him to come outside so that he could ask him.

“What do you want here?”

Rohan spun around. A man with half-closed eyes and his head tilted to one side stood with his hands on his hips, surveying Rohan from head to foot. His gaze lingered for a moment on Rohan's watch.

“I . . . I brought water with . . . with . . .” Rohan stammered. He hadn't asked the boy his name! Panic-stricken, he pointed to the door of the shack. The man stepped forward, and Rohan stumbled back against the wall of corrugated iron. The clattering brought the boy to the door. The man immediately switched into loud, fast Zulu. The boy spoke quietly at first, but when the man’s voice didn’t calm down, the boy’s began to rise too. Even when he pointed to the bucket and Rohan, the man’s face remained scornful. Rohan was fully expecting to be grabbed when a sharp baby’s cry interrupted the argument. The boy’s face lit up, and the man suddenly fell silent. Rohan’s heart thumped wildly as the man’s eyes mocked him before he turned and walked away.

Rohan folded his arms tightly, trying not to shake. Before he could say anything, a lady appeared behind the boy, placing a hand on his shoulder.

“You have a little sister!” She smiled at the boy and then at Rohan. She looked friendly but tired. Her cheeks shone as if she too had been perspiring. It was obviously hard work helping to deliver a baby.

“Tell your mother thank you for the water. You really helped us today.” Rohan managed to smile back.

“It’s OK.” His voice came out strangely small.

“Solani will take you back now—before it gets dark.” Rohan felt a weight lifting. He did not need to ask.

Language Coach

Word Definitions: The word surveying in line 321 means “to look at carefully.” Why do you think the man was surveying Rohan?

Cultural Conflict

Why do you think the man is scornful and mocks Rohan with his eyes?
The sun was getting lower and made long rodlike shadows leap beside them as they scrambled down the slope. Knowing the boy’s name made Rohan feel a little easier, and he wondered why he hadn’t asked him earlier. He told Solani his own, and the next thing he was telling him about riding on garbage can lids down the ski slope. Solani grinned.

“It’s good! But this place—it’s a road now. We can’t do it. The people will be angry if we knock someone down.”

Rohan understood that. But what he didn’t understand was why the man with scornful eyes had been so angry with him. And why had those other young men looked at him so suspiciously? He decided to ask Solani.

“They don’t know you. Sometimes people come and attack us. So if a stranger comes, they must always check first.”

When they reached the road, neither spoke. The hometime traffic would have drowned their voices anyway. Rohan thought about what Solani had said about him being a stranger. Surely they knew that he was from one of the houses on top of the hill. The houses that also did not welcome strangers. Like the squatters.

They parted at the top of the hill. Rohan was anxious to reach the house before his mother returned, and Solani was eager to see his baby sister. Opening the electronic gates, Rohan was relieved that his mother’s car was neither in the yard nor the garage. He dashed upstairs to his room and peered out of the window over to the squatter camp. The evening was falling very rapidly. His mother would be home any minute—and his dad. Neither liked to drive in the dark if they could help it.

**Analyze Visuals**

Note the boy’s expression and body language. What can you infer about his mood?

**Language Coach**

**Word Root** A root is a word part that contains the core meaning of the word. The root for the word *angry* is *angr*, which means “painfully constricted” or “sorrow.” Reread lines 348–349. How will the people feel if the boys knock someone down?

**Cultural Conflict**

What do Rohan’s neighborhood and the squatters’ camp have in common?
Rohan fixed his eyes on the deep crimson scar, hoping to see Solani climbing the slope. How strange to think that he had been there himself less than half an hour ago. In that other world. Yes! There was Solani! A tiny, wiry figure bounding up the hill. Not hampered this time with a container of water on his head. Rohan watched Solani weave through other figures traveling more slowly until three quarters of the way up the hill, he darted off and disappeared into the darkening shadow that was his home.

Rohan surprised his parents by joining them for the eight o’clock news. The story about the rescue of mother and baby from the floods in Mozambique was repeated.

“Sophia Pedro and her baby daughter Rositha were among the lucky few. Many thousands of Mozambicans are still waiting to be lifted to safety. . . .”

This time the reporter added their names. Rohan observed the mother more closely. Had she also cried and moaned like Solani’s mother? With the roaring waters underneath, how many people had heard her?

“It’s nice to see these South African soldiers doing some good,” said Ma when the news was finished.

Rohan wished he could say what he too had done that afternoon. But he feared the storm that it would let loose and went upstairs to his bedroom. Before slipping between his sheets, he peered out once again through the bars at the hill swallowed up by the night. He thought he saw a light still flickering in Solani’s home and wondered how many people were tucked inside the sheets of iron, plastic, and wood. He prayed that Cyclone Gloria would keep well away.

Next morning, the glint of metal beside the gate caught his eye from the front door. His dad was reversing the car out of the garage. Rohan ran across the drive. There, just inside the gate, was a wire car. A small, perfect Merc! Who could it be from, except Solani? He must have slipped it through the bars of the gate in the early morning. Quickly Rohan pushed it behind a cluster of scarlet gladioli. If his parents saw it, they would want to know from where it had come. They would discover he had gone out of bounds. . . . Well, so had Solani! Each of them had taken a risk. He needed time to think. In the meantime, the car would have to be his secret. Their secret. 

His and Solani’s.
Comprehension

1. **Recall** Why doesn’t Rohan go to his hideout anymore?

2. **Recall** Where has Rohan seen Solani before Solani comes to his house?

3. **Represent** Make a sketch showing Rohan’s house and the squatters’ camp. Think about what these places look like and where they are in relation to one another. Use descriptions in the story to guide you.

Text Analysis

4. **Make Inferences About Characters** Review your chart of inferences about the characters and their culture. Despite their differences, what qualities do Rohan and Solani share? Name three reasons why these two boys might be drawn together.

5. **Analyze Cultural Conflict** What causes the residents of Mount View to discriminate against the squatters? Consider what you know about the history and culture of South Africa as well as events in the story’s plot. Record your response in a diagram like the one shown.

6. **Evaluate Attitudes** Describe the attitudes of Rohan’s mother and father toward the squatters. Do you think they are prejudiced against Africans? Then consider Rohan’s experience in the squatters’ camp. Do you think the Africans are prejudiced against him? Explain your responses, citing evidence from the story.

7. **Make Judgments** Who do you think took the greater risk by going out of bounds—Rohan or Solani? Explain your answer.

Extension and Challenge

8. **Text Criticism** As a child, Beverley Naidoo didn’t notice that she lived in an unfair society. “It was like being brought up to be a horse with blinkers,” she has said. “Luckily when I left school, I met people who challenged me . . . and I was able to take off the blinkers.” How do Rohan’s experiences in “Out of Bounds” reflect the author’s background?

9. **SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION** Research Nelson Mandela’s role in ending the system of apartheid in South Africa. Why is he considered an inspirational leader?

**How do you know what is RIGHT?**

Reread lines 162–180. Why did Rohan decide to disregard his mother’s instructions and open the gate to Solani?
Vocabulary in Context

▲ VOCABULARY PRACTICE

For each item, choose the word that differs most in meaning from the other words. Refer to a dictionary if you need help.

1. (a) bound, (b) leap, (c) spring, (d) stroll
2. (a) engross, (b) distract, (c) involve, (d) interest
3. (a) glimmer, (b) trace, (c) fraction, (d) excess
4. (a) hamper, (b) free, (c) prevent, (d) hinder
5. (a) maroon, (b) rescue, (c) save, (d) retrieve
6. (a) sect, (b) denomination, (c) group, (d) everyone
7. (a) straggle, (b) lead, (c) scatter, (d) dawdle
8. (a) vigorously, (b) energetically, (c) enthusiastically, (d) weakly

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN WRITING

Contribute • Culture • Interpret • Perceive • Similar

Rohan feels a connection between himself and the South African soldiers helping the Mozambicans. In a paragraph, explain whether you think his actions are similar to the soldiers’. Use at least one Academic Vocabulary word in your response.

VOCABULARY STRATEGY: USING REFERENCE AIDS

When you encounter a new word, you’ll want to learn what it means as well as how to pronounce it. To pronounce long words, it helps to break them into syllables and concentrate on pronouncing one syllable at a time. But if you don’t know a word, how can you know what syllables it contains? One way is to look up the word in the dictionary. Not only will you find the definition of the word, but the syllables of each entry will be separated by dots, as shown in the example below:

re•con•nais•sanse (rē-kōn’sə-sanz) n. An inspection or exploration of an area, especially one made to gather military information.

PRACTICE Look up each word below in a dictionary. Divide the word into syllables and write a simple definition for it.

1. cuneiform
2. hierarchy
3. idiosyncrasy
4. lamentable
5. masticate
6. perpetuate
Language

◆ **GRAMMAR IN CONTEXT: Use Colons Correctly**

A *colon* should be placed after a formal greeting in a business letter (*To Whom It May Concern:*) and before a list of items (*I had the following foods for breakfast: eggs, toast, and cereal*). When using a colon to introduce a list, avoid placing it directly after a verb or a preposition. Instead, insert the colon after a noun or after the words *the following*.

*Original:* The squatters suffer from: poverty, homelessness, and a lack of water.

*Revised:* The squatters suffer from *the following*: poverty, homelessness, and a lack of water. (*Inserting the following after the preposition from makes use of the colon correct.*)

**PRACTICE** Rewrite the following letter, correcting the colon errors.

Dear Mount View residents
To improve our relationship with the squatters, we are recommending that residents provide squatters with: food, water, and blankets. Also, we request that these professionals offer aid to the squatters, doctors, nurses, and teachers. From the walls, please remove: wire, spikes, and broken glass.

*For more help with using colons correctly, see page R50 in the Grammar Handbook.*

**READING-WRITING CONNECTION**

Demonstrate your understanding of “Out of Bounds” by responding to this prompt. Then use the *revising tip* to improve your writing.

**WRITING PROMPT**

Extended Constructed Response: A Plan
How could the residents of Mount View improve their relationship with the squatters? Write a *two- or three-paragraph plan* to help the two communities better understand one another.

**REVISIONING TIP**

Review your plan. Did you introduce any lists of problems or suggestions? If so, make sure you used colons correctly.