

I Will Always Keep Trying...

*As told by Jaber
to author Dianne Wolfer*



If I had stayed in Afghanistan, I would have been a farmer like my father and his father. But the Taliban came. They took me away. My peaceful life ended.

I was forced to work for Taliban soldiers. They made me dig tunnels. It was difficult work. The Taliban shot prisoners. I saw many Hazara people die. One day I escaped. I fled to Pakistan and I worked there for six months.

Then I left Pakistan and travelled to Indonesia. After a terrible boat trip I arrived in Australia. I spent seven months in a detention camp. Then I was given a Temporary Protection Visa.

When I was sent to Albany Backpackers, I only had a few words of English. After a few weeks, a man at the hostel said, "Work?" I nodded, "Yes". The man was kind. He helped me find a job at an abattoir.

I was happy to have work, but this job was hard. Some men were injured. I saved money and tried to study English. I wanted to be able to speak to other people and to perhaps find a better job.

I tried to enrol in a language course at TAFE, but the person in the office said I was not allowed to learn. I didn't understand.

Continued overleaf

"What if I pay?" I asked.

"No, I'm sorry."

I couldn't give up. I had come so far and I wanted to learn. There must be a way...

"Isn't there anything I can do?"



The person at TAFE gave me a phone number for *Read Write Now*. This act of kindness meant so much to me. I felt that I wasn't alone. Someone cared.

Read Write Now found a volunteer tutor for me. My English improved. The *Read Write Now* volunteers were patient. They gave me hope.

I worked hard and saved. After five years, my English was better. At last I had enough money to enrol in a language course. I moved to Perth to study. It took two years to finish the language diploma. Another tutor from *Read Write Now* helped me. I am so grateful to her. I was still keen to improve my English and I hoped to become an interpreter.

I applied for a job with the Department of Immigration. They accepted my application. Like many West Australians, I am now a FIFO worker.

Every few weeks I fly in and fly out to detention camps at Darwin, Derby and Port Christmas Island. I help refugees and Australians understand each other. I like working as an interpreter. I think language is a key to understanding.

Today, I am proud that I can do meaningful work in this country which gave me sanctuary.

Jaber

Think about what you have read – the whole story. How would you describe this story to someone who hadn't read it? **Discuss with your tutor.**



Jaber went from Afghanistan to Pakistan, to Indonesia, to a detention camp, to Albany in Western Australia, and then to Perth. He now flies out to Derby, Darwin and Christmas Island.

He expected to become a farmer. In Australia he worked in an abattoir, became a TAFE student and then an interpreter. How do you think the men in the detention centres felt when they discovered that their Department of Immigration interpreter was previously “one of them”? **Discuss with your tutor.**

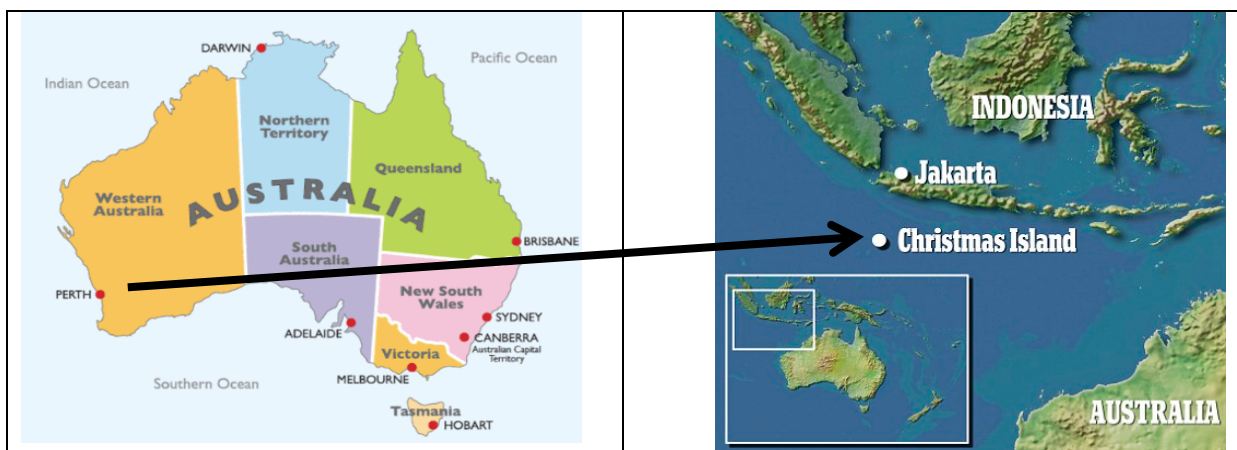
What kind of person do you think Jaber is? Write some words that describe him:

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.....



Without checking the text, do you remember what work Jaber had to do for the Taliban?

Do you recall how he got from Pakistan to Indonesia?

Have a look at the text, now, and check your answers to the 2 questions above.

Can you also see how long he spent in a detention camp:

What did he think about his first job in Australia?

How did he hear about 'Read Write Now'?

Over his time in Australia, Jaber learned English and completed a language Diploma. What does Jaber think about language? Find his words to complete this sentence:

Jaber thinks language is a

Hint: It's near the end of the story!

How do you think he feels about the interpreting work that he does?

.....



Find the word in the text which means each of these. Then fill in the boxes:

Movement of people into another country	I	m	m	i	g	r	a	t	i	o	n
People who are locked up			p								
Being prevented from leaving			d								
Accommodation for travellers	B				p						
Jaber's FIFO job	i					p					
Being physically hurt					i						
Register for a course or school							e				
People who work without pay		v									
An attempt to get a job		a									
People fleeing their birth country				r							
A safe place			s								

Complete this sentences. **Then add some more sentences**, explaining **why** you made each choice .

What I **like** about this story is

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What **surprised** me about this text was

.....

.....

.....



Can you think of some other, alternate words for each of these (words which mean *almost* the same thing)? These words are **synonyms**.

peaceful:

soldiers:

trip:

kind:

proud:

If you have a dictionary, look up the word 'resilient'.

Jaber was resilient – although he does not use this word, himself.
Discuss with your tutor what 'resilience' is.

Life is a Journey

More Word Activities

How many words can you make out of the letters in the name of Jaber's country Afghanistan? Use each letter only as many times as it appears in the word Afghanistan. This means you can use 3 'a's and 2 'n's. *Minimum 4 letters!*

4-letters	5-letters	6-letters	7 or more letters
		<p><i>Now it's getting hard!</i></p>	<p><i>You are doing very well if you come up with more than one of these! 😊</i></p>

Try starting some words with 'sh' or 'st'... or 'th'...

Contractions are: where two words are joined together, and one or more letters are **left out**, to shorten the result. Examples from this text are:

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| I'm (sorry.) | which is short for | I am (sorry.) |
| couldn't (give up.) | which is short for | could not (give up.) |
| Isn't | which is short for | Is not |

Write what these contractions are short for:

- | | | |
|---------|--------------|-------|
| wasn't | is short for | |
| weren't | is short for | |
| You're | is short for | |
| We're | is short for | |
| I'll | is short for | |