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# Nasir, a Bangladesh Driver

Jane Watson

*Starmont Schools, Arlington, Iowa*

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Nasir, a Bangladesh Driver

Jane Watson – Starmont Schools, Arlington, Iowa

Grade Level (Req.): 4th-12th grade	Content Area (Req.): Geography	Unit (Opt.):
Connections to Other Disciplines (Opt.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>		
Time Frame (Req.): 1-2 class periods, longer if desired	Goal (Req.): Students will know the different types of work in Bangladesh.	
	Objective (Req.): Students will have an understanding of the work life of a Bangladesh worker. Students will have an understanding of the different types of transportation in Bangladesh. Students will have a beginning understanding of the economic differences between the USA and the developing country of Bangladesh.	
Materials Needed (Req.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Story of Nasir, a Bangladesh Driver</li> <li>• Discussion ideas worksheet for the teacher</li> <li>• Possible student worksheet if desired</li> <li>• Resource materials on Bangladesh</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	New Vocabulary (Opt.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	
Anticipatory Set/Introduction [Inquiry Question is required] (Req.): What is the life of a driver in Bangladesh like? How do wages compare between a worker in Bangladesh and in the USA? What kinds of transportation are found in Bangladesh?		
Instructional Sequence/Procedure (Req.): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teacher gives background explaining that Nasir is a real person in Bangladesh and is personally known by Iowa teacher Jane Watson, the author of the story.</li> <li>2. Hand out, "Nasir, a Bangladesh Driver." Have students read his story. Teacher may choose to read the story to practice listening skills.</li> <li>3. Discuss with students their response to this story.</li> <li>4. Teacher selects appropriate questions/projects from the provided list. Explain instructions.</li> <li>5.</li> <li>6.</li> <li>7.</li> <li>8.</li> <li>9.</li> <li>10.</li> <li>11.</li> <li>12.</li> <li>13.</li> <li>14.</li> <li>15.</li> </ol>		

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Formative Evaluation (Req.): Teacher observation and student participation

Assessment (Req.): Worksheet/project completion

Iowa Core Curriculum Standards Used (Req.):

- Geography, grade 9-12: Understand how human factors and the distribution of resources affect the development of society and the movement of populations.
- Geography, grade 9-12: Understand how cultural factors influence the design of human communities.
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Common Core Curriculum Standards Used (Opt.):

- Speaking and Listening, grade 6-12: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups and teacher-led) with diverse partners on specific grade level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
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NGS Standards Used (Req.):

- The patterns and networks of economic interdependence on Earth's surface
- The process, patterns, and functions of human settlement
- How forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface
- [Click here to enter text.](#)
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Five Themes of Geography Used (Req.):

- Primary: Movement
- Secondary: Location, Place, Human-Environmental Interaction, Region
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School District Standards and Benchmarks (Opt.):

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21<sup>st</sup> Century Universal Constructs (Opt.): Critical thinking, Flexibility and Adaptability

Other Disciplinary Standards (Opt.):

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Other Essential Information (Opt.): K-12 Talented and Gifted Instructor

Other Resources (Opt.):

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*Note from Jane Watson: In the summer of 2007, 14 teachers from Iowa spent a month in Bangladesh. Nasir was one of our drivers. Over time I learned his story and really grew to respect and love this young man. We continue to keep in contact through technology. He has read this lesson and is graciously allowing you to know his life so that you may have a better understanding of what life is like in a developing country. Listen and learn.*

## **Nasir, a Bangladesh Driver**



Nasir



Traffic



Rickshaw

Nasir is a driver in Bangladesh. He is 25 years old and has been a professional driver for ten years. He has a driver's license to drive a rickshaw, a mini bus, a taxi, a car, a van, a bus, and a heavy truck. He has also driven a train.

The roads in Bangladesh are filled with heavy traffic. Most roads are not smooth. The roads are filled with many different kinds of vehicles including bicycle driven rickshaws. Many of the drivers have had little training on how to drive. There are people walking and animals of all kinds alongside and on the roads. Drivers have little opportunity to use a cruise control on their vehicles as the roads are congested with vehicles, people, and animal traffic. In Bangladesh the roads are often flooded which creates more problems for the drivers. At night it is very difficult for Nasir to drive safely as many of the objects that are on the night road do not have lights or reflectors.

Many people in Bangladesh do not drive. In order to get a drivers license, one has to have completed the eighth grade. In Bangladesh, children have free education up through grade five. After that they test and pay to go to school. Many people can not afford to pay for school. There are children that never go to any school because their labor is needed to help feed their family.

Nasir's father is a rice farmer who owns half an acre of land. (The average size farm in Bangladesh is one acre.) His family's village has no electricity. Their farm is in an area that fights floodwaters from July to December. Nasir's mother died when he was five years old. He remembers very little about her. He has only one picture of his mother, and that picture is

damaged. His two younger sisters have no memory of their mother. His father remarried. When Nasir was eight years old, he got a job and started to live and work at a restaurant. In Bangladesh it is not unusual for young workers to live where they work. The work Nasir did helped provide for all of his expenses as well as help pay for his family's expenses.

Today Nasir is a professional driver. The company he works for has him on duty for 18 hours every day. He works seven days a week. Nasir's salary is paid by the month. His pay per month is 4500 Taka, about \$65.00 American dollars. He has many expenses of his own--food, rent on his sleeping room, clothes, and his cell phone (which he has to have for his job). He has no paid holidays, sick day pay, or medical insurance.

Nasir is a very kind and honorable young man. He cares very much for his family. His father's small rice farm makes enough "benefit" (Nasir would use this term) to pay for the needs of Nasir's grandmother, father, stepmother, and seven-year-old stepsister. Nasir's income helps with their expenses. Nasir absolutely loves his grandmother, who is aging and has medical needs, so he helps with hospital and medicine payments.

Nasir also has three nieces that he is very close to and loves dearly. Their father is a rickshaw driver--a very difficult job with little pay. One of his nieces is in seventh grade, so Nasir sends her money, also.

Let me share another interesting fact about Nasir. In the 1950's engineers from several countries, including the United States, were asked to help the country figure out ways to control their many floods. Flood dikes were developed. Nasir's grandfather was a very wealthy farmer. He owned 25 acres (remember that the average sized farm is one acre). In 1970, a huge cyclone (hurricane) struck. The flood dikes changed the direction of some of the flooding, causing all of Nasir's grandfather's 25 acres to wash away. The land was washed away and covered by a change in the river. So' the family went from being very wealthy to being very poor.

When I had complimented Nasir on his driving, he told me, "Madam, I don't want to be a driver. I want to be a farmer. I have land. I have cow. Not a very good cow--a Bangli cow." (Nasir owns 1/5 of an acre of farmland.) When I asked him, "If money were no problem what is your dream? Dream big." He gave me the largest, fun smile and said, "I dream of owning five acres of land and 250 cows." Then he laughed and laughed.

Even though Nasir has experienced many hardships, he has a golden heart. He does not spend his time being angry at the past but looks with joy and hope toward the future. He wants American students to know this:

- While the country of Bangladesh has many hardships, the people are the friendliest you will find
- Respect your teachers and study hard. You are very lucky to have a free education through grade twelve.

## Questions, Answers, and Resource Suggestions

1. At what age did Nasir become a professional driver?

15 years old. He is now 25 and has been a driver for 10 years.

2. What is a rickshaw?

A small two-wheeled cart that is operated by manpower. In Bangladesh the rickshaw driver peddles a standard bike. The rickshaw is for hire for passengers, products, or both. It is a very hard job, with little respect given to the drivers. Rickshaw art is beautiful and fun to see.

RESOURCE: National Geographic Photo Gallery: **Bangladesh--Van Ricksha**  
<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/photography/galleries/bangladesh/photo3.html>

The Ricksha Arts of Bangladesh <http://www.webpak.net/~ricksha>

3. List the different types of transportation that one might find in Bangladesh. Find pictures and/or information about each of these kinds of transportation.

Train, bus, heavy work truck (many trucks are beautifully painted), vans, cars, mini-bus, bicycle driven van to carry products, rickshaw, water buffalo, walking.

RESOURCE: <http://www.virtualbangladesh.com/transport.html>

4. What makes driving difficult for Nasir?

Very heavy traffic. Poor road conditions. Unskilled drivers. Many types of vehicles, animals, and people. Frequent flooding. Night driving is especially difficult as many have no lights or reflectors.

Nasir's job is physically hard. He drives many hours sometimes making his arms and legs numb. There is no relaxing with a driving job in Bangladesh.

The Iowa teachers were in agreement that this was a very difficult country to drive in and none of us would want to try driving in the cities.

5. How many years did Nasir go to school?

Somehow while he was working full-time at the restaurant, he continued to go through level five, which is the highest level of free education, and then continued to grade eight so that he could get his driver's license. From information given in the story, students can reason that he at least had an eighth grade education because one has to have that in order to get a driver's license.

6. In what year did Nasir's mother die?

This story is written in 2007 when Nasir was 25 years old. His mother died when he was five. His mother died in 1987 or 1988.

7. Why does Nasir's niece in seventh grade need money?

In Bangladesh children have free education through grade five. After that, they test and pay to continue their school. So, Nasir's income helps to pay his niece's tuition to go to school. Her father is a rickshaw driver and makes little money.

8. Nasir is trying to help pay for the needs of how many people? List them and what it is that the money will be spent on.

Nasir--he has to pay for all of his own expenses

Father---basic living needs, food, clothing, medical, farming expenses

Stepmother-- basic living needs, food, clothing, medical

7-year-old stepsister--basic living needs, food, clothing, medical, school expenses

Grandmother--medicine, food, clothing

Niece--school expenses

9. Think about this question and write your thoughts: What might happen if Nasir is sick or injured and could not work for a day? A week? A month? A year?

10. Research cyclones (hurricanes) in Bangladesh. What are cyclone shelters and how are they used?

Cyclone shelters are strong buildings that are two or more stories high and are often used for schools, community centers, and hospitals. When the cyclones come, the people go to the highest levels for safety.

RESOURCE: Red Cross Red Crescent - News <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/news/02/022501>

Research the Bangladesh Red Crescent (a sister organization to the American Red Cross). How is this organization helping the people prepare for disasters?

RESOURCE: Bangladesh Red Crescent Society <http://www.bdracs.org>

11. You just happened to be born in the United States of America. Compare and contrast how Nasir and his family's lives might be different if they just had been born in America.



Suggested areas:

- Education
- Medical services
- Work benefits
- Work week
- Child labor
- Home life
- Job opportunities
- Farming
- Roads
- Vehicles for transportation
- Going shopping

12. Nasir's grandfather was a wealthy farmer. How might their family life be different today if the 25 acres of land had not been washed away?

## MATH QUESTIONS:

1. How many hours per week does Nasir's job require him to be on the job?

18 hours per day x 7 days a week=126 hours per week

2. How many hours per month is he on duty to drive?

18 hours per day x 30 days a month=540 hours per month

3. How much money (in U.S. Dollars) does Nasir get paid per hour for his work?

Nasir's pay is \$65.00 per month

$\$65.00 = \underline{\quad} ? \underline{\quad}$  About 12 cents per hour

540 hours

4. What is Nasir's yearly salary?

$\$65.00 \times 12 = \$780.00$  per year

5. Nasir has the ability to drive many types of vehicles. Research what types of driving job opportunities he might consider if he lived in America and what his salary might be. The following website will help you with this:

Occupational Outlook Handbook <http://www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm>

Here are a few of the driving jobs listed and their average salaries:

Taxi and limousine service	\$10.68 per hour
Bus transportation	\$15.86 per hour
Charter bus industry	\$10.81 per hour
Freight trucking	\$14.79 per hour
Railroad engineers	\$40,000 per year