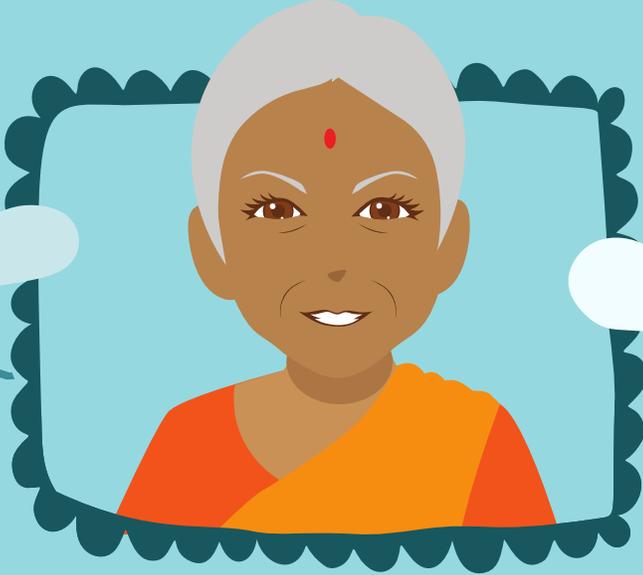
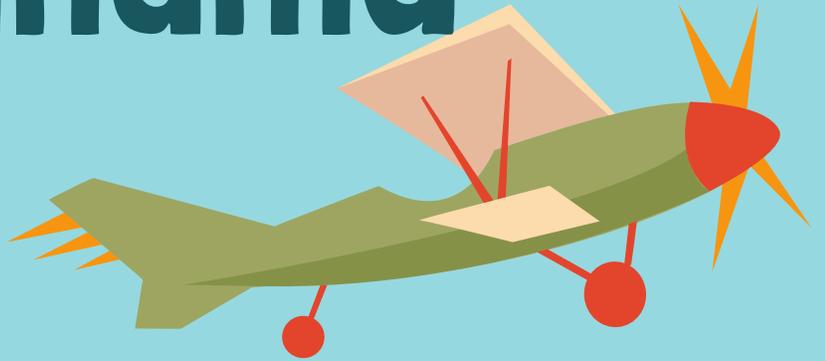


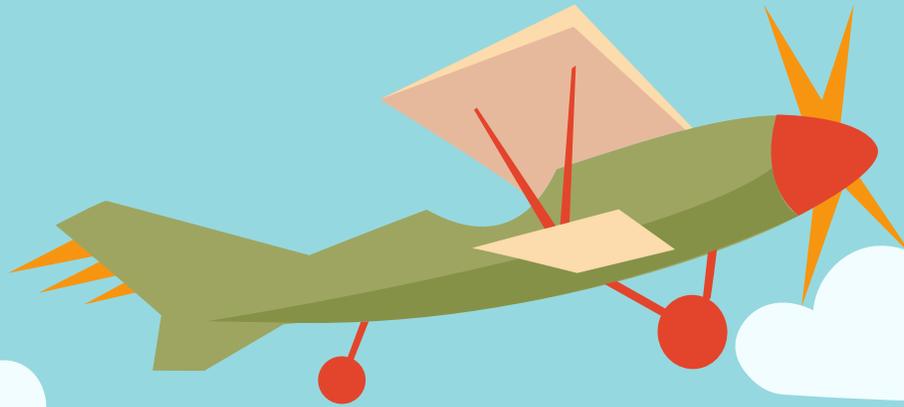
IHI Lesson Plan Resource



# When I Found Grandma



IMMIGRANT  
HISTORY  
INITIATIVE



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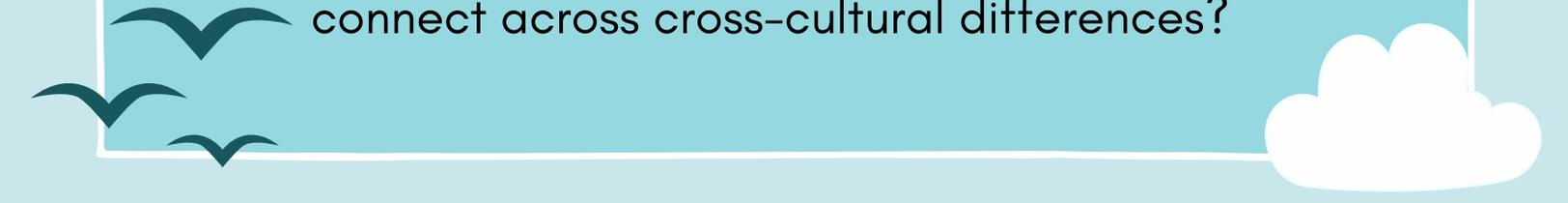
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# ABOUT THE BOOK

An assimilated child of the Indian diaspora finds herself culturally challenged when her grandmother visits her family in North America. Maya longs to see her grandmother, but when Grandma arrives from India, she is not quite what Maya expected. Grandma wears fancy clothes and she is really loud. Her prayer bells wake up Maya every morning, she puts nuts in rice, and her sweets aren't as tasty as cupcakes. Will Maya and Grandma find a way to connect across cross-cultural differences?

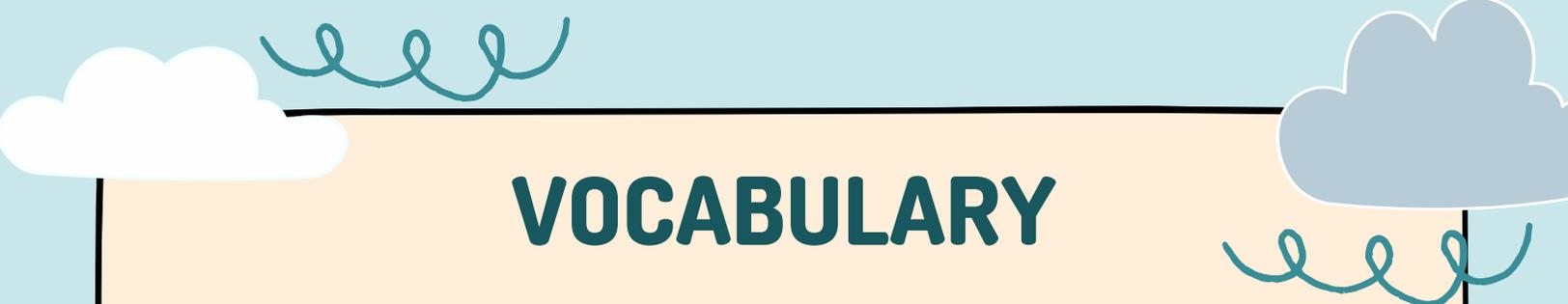


## ABOUT THE AUTHOR: SAUMIYA BALASUBRAMANIAM

Saumiya was born in Mumbai India, and later immigrated to Canada with her daughter. Her experience as an immigrant parent, and her daughter's experience as a child of immigrants, have inspired her writing. She believes that all children should see themselves reflected in literature and in stories shared in the classroom.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR: QIN LENG

Qin Leng is a designer and illustrator who has received many awards for her animated short films and artwork. She was born in Shanghai, lived in France as a child, and later moved to Canada. She currently lives in Toronto, with her husband and her son.



# VOCABULARY

- **Crimson:** (n) a dark red color
- **Bangles:** (n) a bracelet or anklet usually made out of metal
- **Cashews:** (n) a kidney or rainbow shaped nut
- **Holi:** (n) A Hindu festival of color to celebrate spring, new life, and love
- **Temple:** (n) A place to pray
- **Whirled:** (v) to spin around quickly
- **Clutched:** (v) to hold on tightly
- **Hoisted:** (v) to lift something up



# THEMES

- Discovering and embracing differences leads to stronger bonds between family members.
- Different families have different traditions and culture. Be proud of your own culture and traditions, and appreciate the differences of others.

# NJ State Standards

6.1.5.CivicsCM.3: Identify the types of behaviors that promote collaboration and problem solving with others who have different perspectives. 6.1.2.CivicsCM.3: Explain how diversity, tolerance, fairness, and respect for others can contribute to individuals feeling accepted.

6.1.2.CivicsCM.2: Use examples from a variety of sources to describe how certain characteristics can help individuals collaborate and solve problems (e.g., open-mindedness, compassion, civility, persistence).

6.1.2.HistoryCC.3: Make inferences about how past events, individuals, and innovations affect our current lives

6.1.2.HistoryUP.2: Use evidence to demonstrate how an individual's beliefs, values, and traditions may change and/or reflect more than one culture 6.1.2.HistoryUP.3: Use examples from the past and present to describe how stereotyping and prejudice can lead to conflict.

## Common Core

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.1: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.2: Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.3: Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.4: Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.7: Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.9: Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1.B: Build on others' talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.2: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.4: Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.

# A Brief History of South Asian Immigration to the U.S.

**When did people from South Asia, like Maya's family, first start immigrating to the U.S.?**

People from South Asia started immigrating to the U.S. as early as the 1700s, but most people started immigrating during the late 1800s. The region of South Asia includes modern-day countries like India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Bhutan, Maldives, and Afghanistan. Because of anti-Chinese exclusionary laws in both the U.S. and Canada, companies in North America started looking elsewhere for cheap and plentiful labor, such as from places like Mexico, the Philippines, and South Asia.

As a result, many South Asians started immigrating to the U.S. for work opportunities. Most South Asian immigrants were farmers and did similar work after arriving. Other South Asian immigrants were peddlers, silk traders, students, and more.

## **What treatment did they face in the U.S.?**

In the late 1800s, anti-Asian racism and violence was on the rise. When South Asian immigrants started arriving onto U.S. soil in greater numbers, newspaper headlines called it a "Hindu Invasion," which increased fear and distrust of more Asian immigrants. U.S. government agencies claimed that these immigrants would never be able to fully integrate into U.S. society. South Asian Americans faced serious discrimination and unfair treatment, and those who worked as agricultural laborers were paid less than any other racial group for their labor. Some South Asian Americans were even targeted with violent attacks and riots.

## **What laws regulated the immigration of people from South Asia?**

In the beginning, South Asian immigrants could come to the U.S. without many legal barriers. But by the early 1900s, immigration laws began changing. As anti-South Asian sentiment grew, a series of laws were passed that restricted immigration into the U.S. for South Asians. The Immigration Act of 1917 banned the immigration of people in the "Asiatic Barred Zone" region, which included South Asia. Simultaneously, the Alien Land Laws were altered so that South Asian Americans would now be unable to own and lease land in western states.

U.S. laws also began to impact South Asian Americans who had lived and grown up in the U.S. In 1923, the Supreme Court in United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind made South Asian immigrants ineligible for U.S. citizenship. This also stripped any existing naturalized South Asian Americans of their US citizenship. South Asian immigrants could not become naturalized citizens until the Luce-Celler Act in 1946.

Finally, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 drastically changed immigration to the U.S. and helped create our modern immigration system. This Act eliminated national origin quotas and led to a significant increase of immigration from Asian countries. Maya's family likely immigrated to the U.S. during this time period, alongside many other South Asian immigrants.

From 1966 to 1977, the U.S. heavily recruited highly skilled workers from Asia. Nearly 80% of South Asian immigrants during this period were scientists, engineers, or doctors. In 1990, a third wave of South Asian immigrants began to enter the U.S., including students, working class families, and H1-B visa holders.

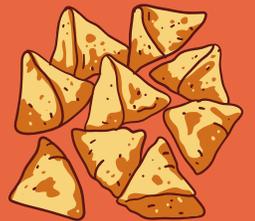
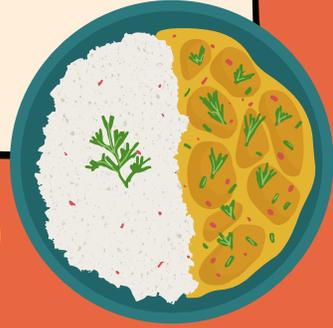


## What is life like today for South Asian families such as Maya's?

Now, South Asian Americans play an important role in the U.S. and their cultural practices, once disdained, have become part of mainstream American culture and media. South Asian Americans have made huge impacts on America's civil rights traditions, and also in industry and in technological innovation. Today, the Vice President of America is a South Asian American woman!

However, South Asian American communities continue to face discrimination and even violence in the U.S. After September 11, 2001, there was a significant increase of violent hate crimes against people of South Asian and Middle Eastern descent, particularly those who identified as Muslim or Sikh. Nowadays, many South Asian Americans are still viewed as outsiders or as different. These fears are echoed in When I Found Grandma, such as Maya's desire to be seen as fully American and her distress whenever her grandma refers to her by her full name, "Mayalakshimi."

# INDIA BACKGROUND INFORMATION



# MAP OF INDIA



# INDIAN SWEETS



**Gulab Jamun** is a milk-based, deep fried dumpling soaked in saffron or rose cardamom flavored syrup. It's a very popular Indian sweet with a soft texture that melts in your mouth.



**Milk Barfi** is a sweet Indian fudge recipe that uses just 5 ingredients: Brown butter, whole milk, milk powder, sugar, and cardamom powder. It can also be garnished with chopped almonds.



**Besan Ladoo** is round-shaped, chickpea based Indian sweet. It is flavored with cardamom pods and often garnished with pistachios and rose petals. They are traditionally eaten to sweeten your mouth when you share a piece of good news.



**Badam Pista Burfi (Almond Pistachios Fudge)** is a crunchy, nut-based fudge often served around Diwali. It is made with almonds and pistachios mixed with butter, sugar, milk powder, cardamom and saffron. It is sometimes dyed green with food coloring.



# INDIAN CULTURAL REFERENCES



## Sari/Saree

The word "sari" means "strip of cloth" in Sanskrit. A sari is a long piece of cloth draped around the body and over one shoulder. It is worn by Hindu women.



The word bangle comes from the traditional word Bangri or Bangali, which in Sanskrit means 'the ornament that adorns the arm'. Bangles are traditional bracelets that are usually made of metal, wood, glass or plastic.

Women in India wear bangles to enhance their beauty. It also symbolizes wealth, power, and status.



## Bangles

A small, Indian-made bell that is used by Hindus to announce a Puja ritual. The word "puja" means to worship and adore. The Puja ritual is a prayer ritual.

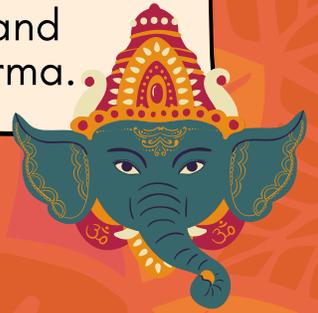


## Prayer Bells

# INDIAN CULTURAL REFERENCES



Hinduism is the principal religion in India. People who practice Hinduism worship many gods and believe in reincarnation and karma.



## Hinduism



A Hindu temple is a symbolic house. It is the seat and dwelling of Hindu gods, and it is designed to bring gods and humans together.



## Temple

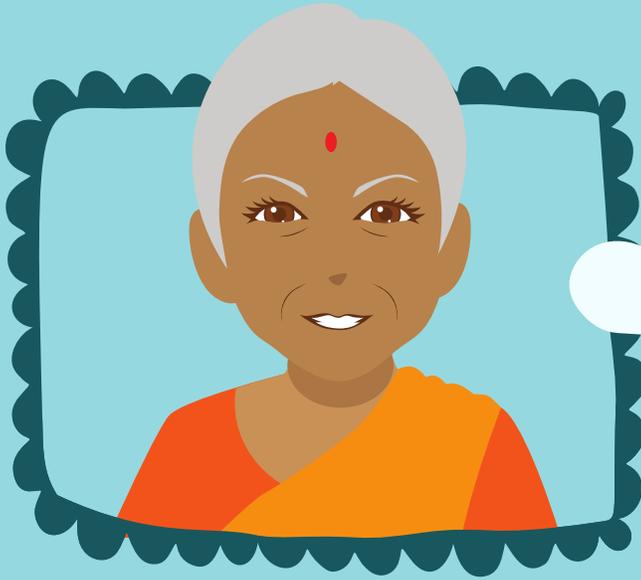


Holi is an ancient Indian Festival of Color. It celebrates the blossoming of spring and marks the end of winter, the joys of love and the victory of good over evil. It is a festival celebrated with color, water, and the exchange of sweets.

## Holi

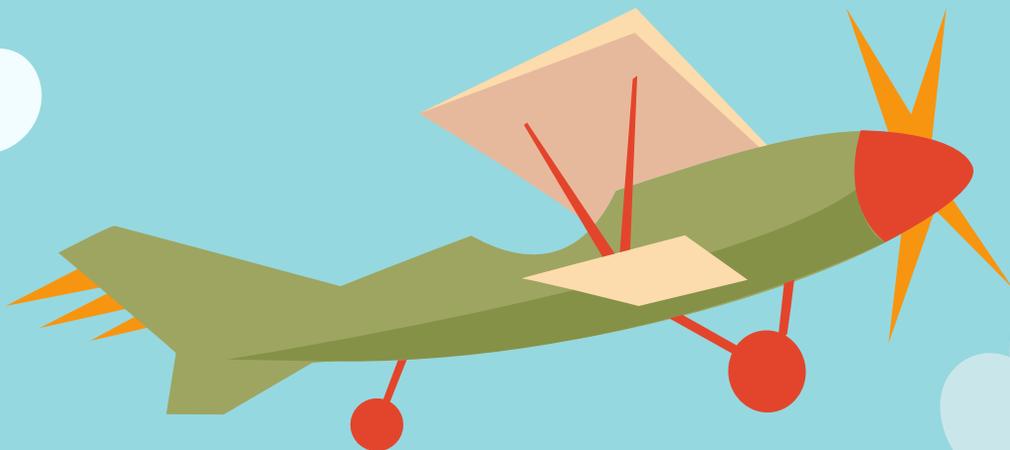


# When I Found Grandma



## Reading Questions

*before, during, and after reading*



# CONNECT TO THE TEXT

*\*Before reading, reference the "Indian Cultural References" to give background info on some of the references in the story*

- Do you have relatives that live another country? Have you visited them? Have they visited you? Share a memory about the visit.
- Have you ever felt embarrassed by a grown up in your family (grandparent, parent, aunts, uncles, etc.)? What happened? Did you let them know how you felt?
- Does your family have special traditions? Any special/cultural foods you eat? Holidays you celebrate?

## BEFORE BEGINNING

Tell students this book is fiction. Fiction is a story with imaginary events and people, but you can still connect with how the characters feel and with the plot. See if the events have ever happened to you with someone in your family, or with a friend.

This story is about Maya, a young girl who is excited for her Grandma to visit all the way from India (reference the map to show where India is). However, when Grandma arrives, Maya doesn't understand why Grandma dresses, acts, and even cooks so differently... Let's see if Grandma and Maya will be able to connect. What do you predict?

## EXPLORE THE COVER

- What do you notice on the cover?
- There are two people on the cover:
  - How are they different?
  - How are they similar?





# READING QUESTIONS

## PAGE 7-8



- **ILLUSTRATION ANALYSIS:** (before reading the page) What is going on on these pages? Point out the order of the illustrations, top left, to bottom, to the right page.
  - Guide the observations: Grandma is cooking. What is Maya doing? How does Maya feel on the right side?
- Have you tried a new or different food before? Did you like it?
- **PAUSE & DISCUSS/CHART:** What are some differences about Grandma that Maya is having difficulty accepting so far?

## PAGE 9-10



- Maya hasn't been too nice to Grandma. Is Grandma upset? How does she feel about Maya? How do you know?
- **MOVEMENT:** Squeeze your eyes shut. Look like you are pretending to sleep.
  - Have you ever pretended to be asleep? Why were you pretending?

## PAGE 11-12



- Pause after page 11. Why did Maya hide the bells?
- **ILLUSTRATION ANALYSIS:** (before reading page 12) What do you notice about what the grown ups are wearing?
- Holi is the Hindu festival of color that celebrates spring, love, and new life. *Reference page 14.*
- Temple: a place to pray (*reference page 14*). Does your family go to a special place to pray?
  - Are there special holidays your family celebrates?
- Why is Maya crying?

# READING QUESTIONS



## PAGE 13-14

- After page 13: Has Grandma done anything mean to Maya? Why does Maya wish she never came?
- What do you think Maya wishes Grandma was like?
- Grandma makes a **compromise** with Maya. How do they both get what they want to do?
- How does this compromise show how Grandma feels about Maya?



## PAGE 15-16

- How is Grandma dressing now? How is it different than how she used to dress? Why is she dressing this way?
- **DRAWING:** Draw what an "all-American hat" looks like to you.



## PAGE 17-18

- What's happening here? What is Maya's new problem?
- Maya is lost. What are some ideas of what you can do if you are lost?
- **FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE:** Simile - "The Ferris wheel looked like a monster with many mouths."
  - Similes compare two different objects using like or as. Think of another simile for Ferris wheel. Use the sentence frame: "The Ferris wheel looked like \_\_\_\_\_."

# READING QUESTIONS



## PAGE 19-20

- Who is calling Maya? What clue tells you who it is?
- Ask students to point to the cap.
  - Can they see it in the crowd?



## PAGE 21-22

- How does Maya feel about Grandma now?
- Who else do you notice in the illustration?
  - Give students time to observe the other groups and people in the illustration.



## PAGE 23-24

- **QUOTE ANALYSIS:** "'You found each other,' said Father."
- What does Father mean by this?
  - Answer: They both found each other when Maya was lost. It could also mean that they both understand each other a little bit more. Grandma's loud voice and calling her by her special name helped Maya find her, and Grandma tries to dress and do some of the things Maya likes.

# READING QUESTIONS



## PAGE 25-26

- **COMPARE AND CONTRAST:** How does Maya respond differently to the cashew rice this time compared to her first try? Differences? Similarities?
- Have you ever not liked a food on the first try, but then liked it when you tried it again later? What was that food?



## PAGE 27-28

- **CHARACTER GROWTH:** How do Maya's feelings towards Grandma change throughout the story?
  - Create a chart or mini timeline:
    - **Beginning:** Maya misses her Grandma and wants her to visit
    - **Conflict:** Grandma visits but it's not like how Maya imagined. Maya is upset and embarrassed by Grandma's cultural differences
    - **Resolution:** Maya appreciates Grandma more
- Grandma found the bells Maya tried to hide. Did Grandma get mad? What did she do instead?
- **MOVEMENT:** Have students pretend to ring bells and mimic the jingle sound of the bangles from earlier



## PAGE 29

- How does Isabella feel about her grandma visiting? Who or what part of the story does this remind you of?
  - Answer: The start of the book, when Grandma came to visit Maya and embarrassed her
- Why does Maya say, "That's okay," to Isabella?
- What are Maya's thoughts about people who may be different from her?
- How do you think this will make Isabella feel?

# INTERVIEW ACTIVITY

**Instructions: Interview a family member or someone who immigrated to the United States.**

**What are some similarities and differences between your home country and the U.S.?**

**SIMILARITIES**

**DIFFERENCES**

**What are some of the challenges of immigrating to the U.S.?  
What have been some of the highlights?**

**CHALLENGES**

**HIGHLIGHTS**

# INTERVIEW ACTIVITY

**How did people treat you when you first arrived in the US?**

**What do you miss about your home country?**

**Draw a picture together of traditions that the interviewee still practices from their home country!**

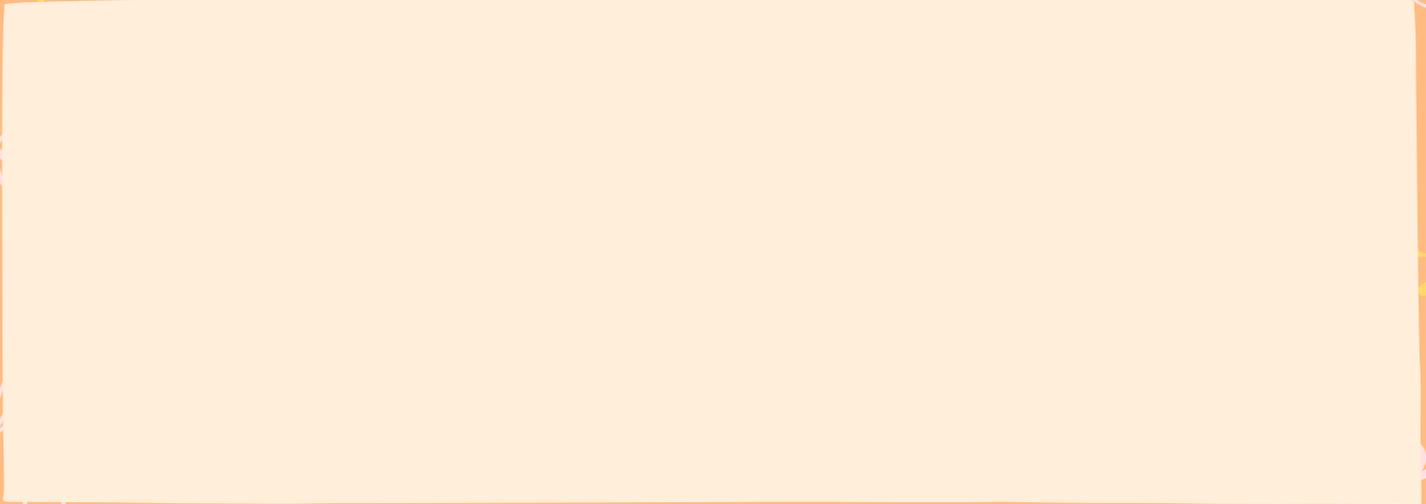
# INTERVIEW REFLECTION

**Even though Maya is excited to see her grandmother, Maya also gets frustrated with her cultural differences. Why do you think she feels this way?**

**Have you ever felt this way about a family member or a friend? If so, what behaviors made you feel similar to Maya?**

# INTERVIEW REFLECTION

**What have you learned from this interview?**



**What do you wish more people knew about immigrants?**



# EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

**Traditional recipe:** Maya's grandma made homemade Indian sweets and cashew rice. Does your family have a special or traditional food?

- Research or record the recipe from home.
- If allowed, bring the foods to try, or find a recipe that doesn't require an oven or stove and cook in class.



**Research:** Find a famous person who moved to the United States from a different country. Do they share what their experience was like being new to the US?



**Family culture research:** Research any of these traditions or traditional items your family may have. Present to the class.

Some example topics for discussion:

- Where your ancestors came from
- Traditional clothing
- Traditional foods
- Holidays your family celebrates



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## Asian American Intergenerational Children's Books

(linked to read-aloud videos)

- **Grandpa Grumps by Katrina Moore:** Daisy's Yeh-Yeh is visiting for the first time from China, and Daisy is so excited to meet him! But when Yeh-Yeh arrives, Daisy finds him less jolly than she imagined. Will she be able to make him smile before he goes home?
- **Drawn Together by Minh Le:** When a young boy visits his grandfather, their lack of a common language leads to confusion, frustration, and silence. But as they sit down to draw together, something magical happens—with a shared love of art and storytelling, the two form a bond that goes beyond words.
- **My Day with Gong Gong by Sennah Yee:** May isn't having fun on her trip through Chinatown with her grandfather. Gong Gong doesn't speak much English, and May can't understand Chinese. But just when May can't take any more, Gong Gong surprises her with a gift that reveals he's been paying more attention to her than she thought.
- **I Dream of Popo by Livia Blackburne:** When a young girl and her family emigrate from Taiwan to America, she leaves behind her beloved popo, her grandmother. She misses her popo every day, but even if their visits are fleeting, their love is ever true and strong.
- **The Most Beautiful Thing by Kao Kalia Yang:** When Kalia becomes unhappy about having to do without and decides she wants braces to improve her smile, it is her grandmother—a woman who has just one tooth in her mouth—who helps her see that true beauty is found with those we love most. Weaving together Kalia's story with that of her beloved grandmother, the book moves from the jungles of Laos to the family's early years in the United States.



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## Holi

- **Books about Holi: (read-aloud video links)**

- [Festival of Colors](#)
- [Let's Celebrate Holi](#)



- **Videos:**

- [What is Holi? Hindu Festival of Color](#): A group of kids describe Holi and share why it's important to them
- [Happy Holi: Jalebi Street](#): A cartoon episode about Holi
- [8 Holi Special Dishes in India](#): Holi Food Video

- **Activities:**

- [Blog: Holi Background Info and 15 Holi Crafts](#)
- [How to make Colored Holi Powders](#)
- [Holi Food Recipes](#)

For more lesson plan resources on immigrant history, visit [immigranthistory.org](http://immigranthistory.org)!