

## ***A Different Pond***

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This text is about an immigrant family from Vietnam, with storytelling and traditions highlighted as a way to help the youth stay connected to their family's past.

PTSD trigger warning: The dad in this story is a veteran who served with his brother in the war. If you are a war veteran, like me, a small portion of this story may trigger thoughts and feelings related to your own experiences while fighting for your country. Please give yourself space to process them before you share the story with your students.

### **Possible Strategies for Instruction**

#### **Comprehension**

- Set purpose for reading
  - April: Celebrate Diversity Month
    - This was started in 2004 to recognize and honor the diversity surrounding us all. By celebrating differences and similarities during this month, organizers hope that people will gain a deeper understanding of each other.
  - May: Asian Pacific American Heritage Month
    - The month of May was chosen for this observance in honor of the first Japanese to immigrate to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. Chinese immigrants made up the majority of the workers who laid the tracks on the project.
  - June: Immigrant Heritage Month
    - Established in June 2014, Immigrant Heritage Month gives people across the United States an opportunity to explore their own heritage and celebrate the shared diversity that forms the unique story of America. It celebrates immigrants across the country and their contributions to their local communities and economy.
  - October: Global Diversity Awareness Month
    - This is a month to celebrate and increase awareness of the diversity of cultures and ethnicities and the positive impact diversity can have on society.

#### **Accuracy**

- Use picture clues: Readers use illustrations, photos, graphs, maps, and charts to help derive meaning from the text and confirm that the words being read make sense.
  - Before reading: What is the author or illustrator trying to communicate with the title and cover illustration?
    - What is a pond?
    - What are they doing at the pond?
    - Have you ever gone fishing?

- What do you notice about the style or flow of the illustrations?
- During reading: What do you notice? What do you wonder?
  - Pages 1–2: They’re sharing a bed; Mom is still sleeping; they have to be really quiet; it must be really early in the morning; they are packing food, so it might be a long day; Dad has a tackle box, so you could infer that they do this often.
  - Pages 3–4: The dad turns on the heater, so it must be cold. The boy is looking out the window as he listens to his dad tell stories. The boy is thinking about how others hear his dad’s English usage compared with how he hears it. I wonder how it makes him feel to hear his dad’s English usage described as “a thick, dirty river.”
  - Pages 5–6: I notice the sign is written in two languages. I wonder if the owners speak a language other than English or if they are making the store accessible to the people who live in this neighborhood.
    - I also notice the minnows moving in the plastic bag. I wonder how they feel in his hands.
  - Pages 7–8: I notice the “No Trespassing, Keep Out” sign. I wonder if it is dangerous to be near the pond.
  - Pages 9–10: I notice other people at the pond smiling while they engage with the little boy. His dad is smiling in those memories too. I wonder if those were trips of leisure and this one is more mission focused.
  - Pages 11–12: I notice the boy is good at building a fire, and that he waits for Dad’s nod, showing approval, before he lights the match. I wonder if the dad did the same with his parents when he was younger. Is this a family tradition?
  - Pages 13–14: I notice the boy is uncomfortable with touching the minnow. I also notice his dad is now smiling.
  - Pages 15–16: I notice they are taking a break. I wonder how long fishing takes and if Dad is going to make it to work on time. I also notice the sadness on Dad’s face when he thinks about his brother. I wonder what type of support was offered to him to help with his grief.
  - Pages 17–18: I notice he’s eager to help, but he looks instantly regretful after feeling the fish in his hands. I wonder how I would respond if I was holding the fish.
  - Pages 19–20: I notice Dad is smiling again. Fishing must have made him happy. After this morning’s adventure, I wonder if Dad will have enough energy to work his regular job.
    - I also notice the boy looking back, thinking about the other pond. I wonder if he will visit Vietnam.
  - Pages 20–21: I notice Mom greeting them to collect the fish. I wonder how long she’s been awake and what her morning routine looked like before they returned with the fish.
  - Pages 22–23: I notice the stuffed animal next to the boy’s knee. I wonder about his age and the age of his siblings.

- Pages 24–25: I notice how the illustrator puts the main characters in color. I wonder about the other siblings. What are their stories? Did they learn to fish like this too?
- Use prior knowledge and context: Context clues are the words, phrases, and sentences surrounding an unfamiliar word that give clues or hints about its meaning. The reader uses these clues and the information they bring to the text to determine the meaning of the words.
  - Before reading: Activate schema or build background knowledge.
    - What is a pond?
    - The title mentions a “different” pond. Why do you think they might think of a different pond?
    - What are they doing at the pond?
    - Have you ever gone fishing?
      - What are some reasons for going fishing?

### **Expand Vocabulary**

- Tune in to interesting words: Readers build word awareness and understanding by focusing on words in the text that are interesting and unique.
  - A few words from the text to consider, depending on English language proficiency and varying developmental levels: *bare bulb, tackle box, streetlights, minnows, Hmong man, lure, freckles, Vietnam.*