

AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO

veera

hiranandani

The
Night
Diary



Pre-Reading Activities (cont.)

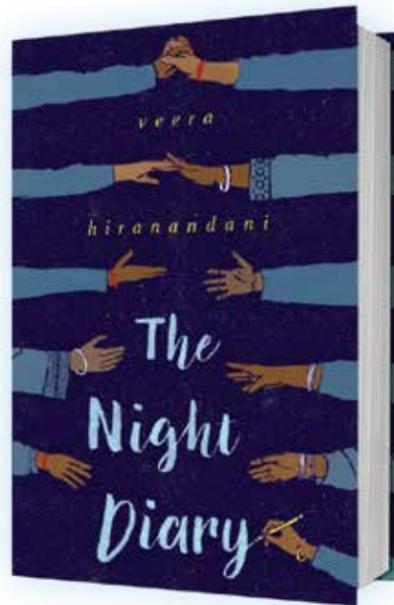
Dear Reader,

The Night Diary is historical fiction set in India in 1947. During this time, India is freed from British rule, but religious tensions among Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims cause India to partition into two countries: India and Pakistan. As twelve-year-old Nisha grapples with the idea that India is no longer whole—no longer a place where Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims live together in peace—she also grapples with her own identity; her mother, who died when she was a baby, was Muslim and her father is Hindu. As religion separates families and everyday life become dangerous, Nisha and her family leave what is now Pakistan and become refugees, struggling to cross the border and begin a new life.

Students experience the empowering messages of hope, overcoming fears, finding one's voice, and appreciating people for who they are. In addition, students explore the themes of identity, family, and belonging. This layered novel also encourages students to examine the concepts of **social justice** and social class.

The Night Diary is a **refugee story** that appeals to readers from 5th through 10th grade. These Core Curriculum Lesson Plans present discussion questions, activities, and writing prompts that align with the **Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and History and Social Studies for grades 5–7**. This guide is broken up into **three parts**. The lessons can be used as part of a comprehensive **English and/or History unit** that lasts for three to four weeks, or you might choose to use the lessons as enrichment activities to deepen student thinking as you conduct a whole class or small group novel study. This novel offers many options for further exploration and research about the causes and effects of the partition of India in 1947.

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Pre-Reading Activities

1. **View the interview with Veera Hiranandani, author of *The Night Diary* and her editor Namrata Tripathi at this link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Q5TzyjI8iU> in addition to any available movie trailers, consider *Ghandi* starring Ben Kingsty or *Earth* by Deepa Mehta.
 - **Ask:** What are you wondering? What parts of their conversation interested you?
 - Have additional primary source photographs ready for students to examine. Ask students to take a few moments to write about the details they see in the photos. Ask: What do you notice? What catches your attention?

The cover art represents Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh people on the cover, all conveyed by the various items on their wrists. For instance kalava/mauli (Hindu) and karas (Sikh), bare wrists (could be Muslim). Ask the students to notice and note details on the artwork on the book cover.

- Discuss: What is happening to the outstretched hands/arms the cover? What words or phrases come to mind as you view the hands/arms? What do you infer about all the sleeves being blue? How are the arms alike/different? What might the actions of the arms, hands, and fingers represent?

3. **In order to spark curiosity and to generate thinking about the big ideas, invite students to complete the following anticipatory guide.**

Directions: Read the statement and place a checkmark to show whether you agree, disagree, or are not sure.

Statement	I agree.	I disagree.	I'm not sure.
Being smart doesn't have to be about reading or math. It might be about artwork or being able to understand others.			
When people are separated into groups, they start to believe that one group is better than the other.			
Quiet voices sometimes get people's attention even better than loud voices.			
Everyone should dress the same, enjoy the same foods, and practice the same religion.			

4. **Create a jackdaw by gathering items or pictures of items related to the story in order to generate anticipation. Be sure to consider primary sources such as photographs and newspaper stories related to the location, culture, time period and characters. Invite students to add to the assemblage as the story unfolds.**
 - You might include these items or find pictures of these items online: mortar and pestle on page 252; any of the ingredients or spices mentioned (for example: cumin seeds, coriander seeds, gingerroot, turmeric root, garlic, mango, lentils, rice, okra, etc.); pictures of meals from the text (sai bhaji on page 252 or any of the meals explained in the glossary of the book); bangles; a tapestry (p. 109, 175); a diary and other items that she brings with her on page 93 (three pencils, jewelry in a silk sack, gold coin, pinch of dirt); and a red ribbon (Hafa's gift to Nisha), dprimary source photographs and newspaper articles (p. 91) of the time period of the partition.
 - Have students choose an item from the assemblage and write about it in their journals. For example, they might infer the purpose of an object or the meaning of a picture. They might record a list of wonderings or questions.
5. **Invite students to investigate the glossary and discover important words that are commonly used in India and Pakistan:**
 - Have small groups choose three words/concepts and become "experts" on them before reading. Using online sources, have students explore the terms or concepts beyond the definition provided in the glossary. After discussing the meaning within their group, have groups demonstrate the meaning by creating a sketch or short skit, or by locating a photograph or short video online. For food items, student might choose to locate a short cooking video or a how-to.
 - Groups teach the class as the items appear throughout the story.
6. **In order for students to gain a sense of the setting (India in 1947), have them view online maps and interactive timelines.**
 - Ask students to compare and contrast maps from before and after the partition.

****Correlates to Common Core Standards:**
SL.5-7.2, SL.5-7.1, RI.5-7.4, W.5-7.4, W.5-7.9, RI.5-7.7, L.5-7.4

First Section (pgs. 1 - top of 99)

1. The theme of appreciating people for who they are starts to develop early in the book from the details of characterization.

- Invite students to record specific words and phrases from the text in a way that makes sense to them as they read (in a web around the character's name, on sticky notes as they read or in a chart, etc.)
- Have them record details for the inside (dreams, motivations, fears, hopes, strengths, challenges, interests) and for the outside (visible aspects) of the main characters: Nisha, Amil, Dadi, Papa, Kazi, Mama.
- In small groups, students use a medium such as bulletin paper to create an oversized visual to represent one of the main characters. (Note: Amil could be represented as the breakable branch and Nisha as a circular shape or those groups might choose their own symbols).
- As the characters develop over time, invite groups (or work as a class) to add words or phrases from the text to the visual representations. Ask: How would you change the symbol you picked as the character grows and changes?
- Invite students to create a representation of themselves to explore how they see themselves in the world and their own identities.

2. What motivates Nisha to write to her mama?

- Invite students to choose one of the following pages and dig into the reasons: 3, 8, 12, 13, 22, 40, 59, 63, 77, 97. Ask students to consider: How would Mama respond to Nisha? Have them begin a night diary from Mama.
- Invite them to choose one of Nisha's letters and respond to it in the role of Mama. What would Mama say to Nisha and the family? How would she answer her questions?
- (As students read into the next two sections, additional quotations about motivation are located on pages 132, 150, 160, 233, 253.)

3. In Veera Hiranandani's interview with her editor, she talks about food as way for her to connect with the Indian side of her family. Veera decided that food would be a way for Nisha to express herself without having to talk.

- Reread and discuss passages that allow students to explore the questions: How does the author use food to communicate character feelings? How is food a way for Nisha to express herself? How does the author use food to set the mood of the scenes?
- As students read on, ask them to be on the lookout for passages in which food allows Nisha to express herself.
- Kazi says, "Don't forget what I've taught you. Making food always brings people together" (p. 95). Have students consider: In what ways does food bring people together?

4. On page 13, Nisha says, "I wonder why Amil is the way he is. I wonder why I am the way I am."

- Ask students to locate places in the text that reveal Amil's strengths and challenges and places that reveal Nisha's strengths and challenges.
- Have students respond in their journals: How are they alike and different? What is the author trying to teach us through Amil and Nisha's differences? In what ways do they have a special bond?
- Begin to get students thinking about the big philosophical question of identity by exploring a resource for children on the topic such as the picture book *Why am I Me?* by Paige Britt and Illustrated by Sean Qualls and Selina Alko.

5. On page 28, we learn that India will become free from Britain but that "there's talk of India being separated into two countries, where Muslims have to go one place and the Hindus, the Sikhs, and everybody else have to go another place."

- Have students prepare a newspaper story in which they explain what is happening in the role of a news reporter. Have them consider the following for additional details: When Papa explains the situation on page 44; pages 57, 70-71, 88-89, the author's Afterword, and the headlines presented on page 91. Consult primary source newspaper articles for inspiration.
- Invite students to practice speaking their news stories by recording and recording it using digital tools.

8. On page 32, we learn about the tensions between Hindu students and Muslims students at Amil's school. Nisha says, "Everything is different now, even though it's exactly the same. I can see it all around us, but I don't know what to call it. It's like a new sound I can hear in the air."

- **Ask students to discuss:** What are some key moments in the characters' everyday lives when tensions between Muslims and Hindus grow and become dangerous? What is the role of secrets in the text and do Nisha and her family members keep parts of their identity a secret? Why?

9. Exploring Craft Strategies: How does the author communicate meaning? Have students discuss the power of the following examples and invite them to try the strategies out in their own notebooks:

Comparisons using Similes and Metaphors	Personification
<p>"They explode in my mouth like firecrackers" (p. 26).</p> <p>"I needed all the feelings to stop boiling like a pot of dal and be cool enough for me to taste them" (p. 36).</p> <p>"He says letters to him are like bugs and grass waving in the wind" (p.47).</p> <p>"I felt my courage to speak go out like a flame" (p. 82).</p> <p>"I felt the truth sink down into my stomach like a pile of coal" (p. 84).</p> <p>"My childhood would always have a line drawn through it, the before and the after" (p. 86).</p> <p>"Would they have drawn a line right through us?" (p. 90).</p>	<p>"His eyes turn everything into art" (p.8).</p> <p>"I took in Kazi's words, let them dance and twirl in my head, replayed them over and over like a beautiful piece of music" (p. 26).</p> <p>"I like to make mine last as long as possible, the rosewater syrup tickling my tongue" (p. 52).</p> <p>"The music rippled out in waves over the growing crowd" (p. 67).</p> <p>"I felt the truth sink down into my stomach like a pile of coal" (p. 84).</p> <p>"My childhood would always have a line drawn through it, the before and the after" (p. 86).</p> <p>"Would they have drawn a line right through us?" (p. 90).</p>
Use of Senses	Use of Movements to Show Character Emotions
<p>pg. 7: Hindu temple</p> <p>pg. 33: Mama and Papa</p> <p>pg.: 37: the hospital</p> <p>pg.: 65: the house when Mama was alive</p> <p>pg. 67: the market</p>	<p>p. 14: Dadi's "eyes darted back and forth before she answered the door."</p> <p>p. 37: "I shook my head hard and bit my lip to stop the tears."</p> <p>p. 56-57: "Kazi made a face and sucked in his breath."</p> <p>p. 60: "I placed my dough on the counter and punched and pounded and punched until I couldn't hear my thoughts" (p. 60).</p> <p>p. 85: "My heart pounded."</p>

10. Ask students: What significant moments occur at the goodbye party? (78)

- Invite groups to choose a scene from the party and enact it with peers. Ask audience members to note: What do we learn in this scene about the characters and their circumstances? What do we learn about the theme of family?

11. Invite students to consider the value of education in this story. Give small groups one of the following pages. Ask groups to locate and discuss a powerful passage or quotation about education on the page and then share it and discuss it with the class:

- Page 18: Nisha compares her school to Amil's school and we learn that "not all girls go to school" and that "Papa says it's important to be educated" (p. 18).
- Page 43: Nisha and Amil learn that it is not safe to go to school anymore and that Dadi and Papa will teach them at home.
- Page 46: Nisha's reaction to not going to school
- Page 92: Nisha must leave all of her books behind when she leaves
- Page 102 (looking ahead): Papa has Amil take the Mahabharata book

12. Nisha asks Mama, "Is it the brain that makes people love and hate? Or is it the heart?" (p. 88).

- Invite students to tackle this philosophical question by sharing resources with students about kindness, love, and diversity.
- Have students locate moments in the text when there is a contradiction between what Nisha is learning about the world around her versus what she feels is right.

Second Section (pgs. 99 - 185)

1. Have students continue the exploration of how the author uses food as a way for Nisha to express herself and as a way to create mood in the scenes.

- Food references in this section include: mango slices (p. 11), roti and dal as they flee (p. 116), mango (p. 121), dry rice for fleeing (122), candy on the trail (p. 164), and spices (p. 179), dal (p. 180).
- Reread the passage on p. 180 in which Nisha stirs the “warm, yellow dal” and discuss the author’s purpose with food.

2. On page 103, Amil burns his drawings.

- **Have students share their thoughts:** What is the significance of this act? What might this symbolize?

3. After Amil spills the water, Papa said, “Don’t spill it again. There’s life in here. Treat it like that” (p. 119)

- Share poems, chants, videos, and picture books that focus on water as life sustaining.

4. As Nisha struggles on page 129, she writes about a girl who walks past her: “I caught a girl’s eyes, a few years younger than me, hair and clothing rumped and dirty. She looked like a small, frightened animal, weighed down by her belongings. I probably looked like that to her.”

- What is the significance of the girls looking the same as they struggle? How does struggle reveal commonality? What does it say about humanity?
- Open a conversation to explore the idea that people in the text are sometimes identified based on their clothing. For example, Nisha wrote about the men who made space for them in the shelter, saving Amil’s life: “I guessed they were Muslim families from their clothing and from the topis the men were wearing” (p. 148).
- Discuss the relationship of clothing (or physical appearance) and identity in the text. In what way is clothing part of one’s identity? How does clothing celebrate cultural diversity?

5. At one moment during the grueling walk, Nisha said that Papa treated Amil “like an annoying fly” (p. 130). Nisha reflects, “I wish Papa would be nicer to him. Amil is only being all he knows how to be. But I guess Papa is, too. I guess we all are. It’s just that some people are better at being than others” (p. 130).

- Invite students to write a short opinion response in their journals: In what ways do you agree or disagree with Nisha’s thoughts?

6. Ask students to consider how the author uses craft to communicate meaning in this section:

- **Invite students to mine the section for the following:** flashback (p. 140); comparisons using simile or metaphor (for ex. pgs. 100, 116-117, 128, 129, 141, 144); small movements to show character emotion (p. 109), in addition to any words or phrases that grab their attention.
- Ask them to choose a craft strategy and try it out in their notebooks.

7. On page 144, Nisha drinks in her first sip of water in two days. She uses the metaphor, “liquid diamonds.”

- Have students share their opinions on the effectiveness of this metaphor. What is being compared and why? What is the impact on readers?
- Ask students to notice the author’s use of sentence fluency—how she creates a two-word sentence: “Liquid diamonds.” Discuss how this slows the pace, emphasizing the significance of the words.
- Invite groups to enact the scene on pages 143-145.
- Have students locate examples in the text when the author uses the moments around the water to reveal character traits (for example, Dadi and her selflessness).

8. A Muslim family saves Amil’s life by accepting the family into the shelter and providing them with space. Papa said, “We need shelter. My son will die if he doesn’t get warm” (p. 149). Ask small groups to discuss:

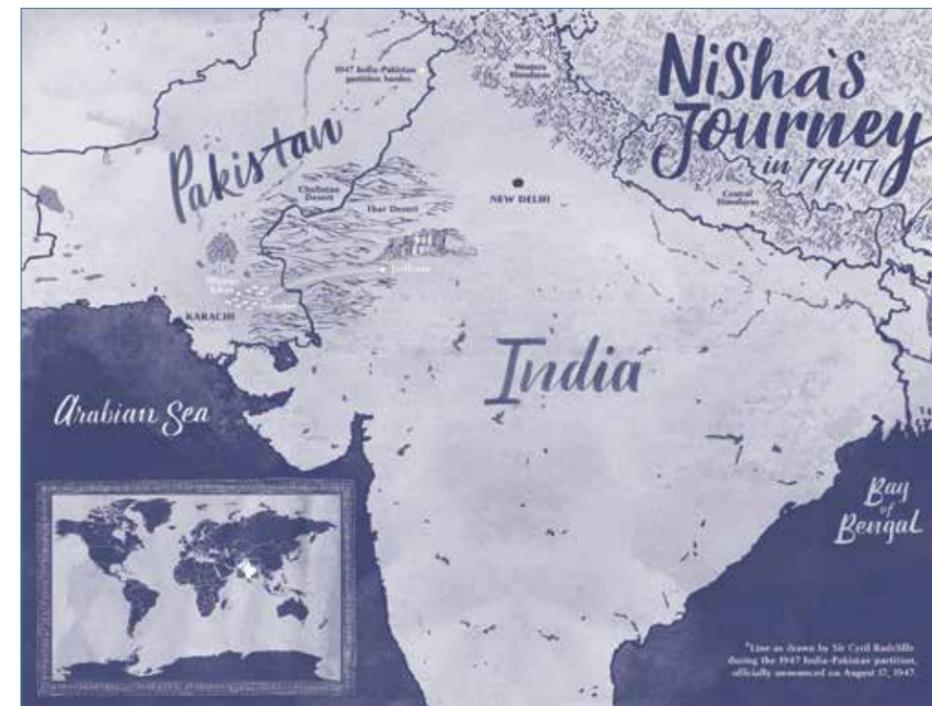
- How does this scene celebrate humanity in a time of conflict?
- How is this moment a turning point for Nisha and her family?

9. When a man grabbed Nisha and held a knife to her throat, Papa lets the man go and says Ghandhiji’s words, “An eye for an eye make the whole world blind” (p. 171). Have students discuss:

- Do you agree with the way that Papa responded?
- What other ways does Papa work to build bridges and show humanity in his life?
- **Nisha later reflects:** “There was something about it having it happen that made me less scared than more scared” (p. 177). How did the knife incident affect Nisha? What did she come to understand about the man?

10. Papa introduces Rashid Uncle and says, “He can’t speak, only write” (p. 174). A few pages later, Nisha writes, “What would I do without Amil? He is my voice. He asks the questions I can’t.” (p. 178). Throughout the text, Nisha considers the ways in which she is alike and different from other members of her family. She also considers how family members are alike and different from one another.

- Invite students to choose two characters and compare and contrast them by creating a poem for two voices.
- Start by showing students examples of poems for two voices from print or online sources and discuss the points of view and how the format works—the lines in the middle show ways in which the characters are similar (these lines are spoken together when read aloud). The lines on either side show character differences and are read one at a time by the two different voices.
- Have students mine the text and their notes on characterization in order to include details. Encourage them to include big ideas.
- Invite students to practice reading their poems using technology and share them with partners, in small groups or with the class.



**Correlates to Common Core Standards: SL.5-7.1, SL.5-7.3, SL.5-7.4, SL.5-7.6, L.5-7.5, RL.5-7.1, RL.5-7.2, RL.5-7.3, RI.5-7.4, RI.5-7.9, RI.5-7.10, W.5-7.1, W.5-7.4, W.5-7.5, W.5-7.7, W.5-7.9



Third Section (pgs. 186 - 254)

1. On page 179, Nisha calls herself a “coward.” She writes, “What did I do when the man attacked me? I froze” (p. 179).

- Ask students to share their opinions: Do you think Nisha was a coward? Why or why not?
- Encourage students to think about the concept of bravery. Invite students to read, view and hear additional texts about bravery including poems, books, quotations, videos, and contemporary songs.
- As students continue to read, ask them to flag places in the text when a character shows bravery and overcomes fears. (For example, you might consider pgs: 210, 243, and 254)
- Students work in groups to communicate the energy and significance of these brave moments through one of the following:
 - Create group movement, considering moving in high and low stances and fast and slow paces
 - Create a group tableaux, placing their bodies as frozen statues to symbolize bravery (rather than showing the exact action of the scene)
 - Create music with found objects or locate music to communicate the power of the bravery
 - Create an abstract painting, choosing colors, shapes, and lines to represent bravery
- Groups might consider having one or more students read the passage while they perform the movement, tableaux, or music to communicate the message.

2. Continue the exploration of food and how the author uses food as a way for Nisha to express herself and to create mood in the scene. Consider the following:

- When Nisha is frying dough in hot oil she writes, “I watched each circle puff up and felt a lightness I hadn’t felt in so long” (p. 209).
- Nisha describes how cooking makes her feel on pages 243-244 and she writes, “When Gandhiji spins, maybe he finds some peace like I do when I cook” (p. 244).
- The significance of sai bhaji being the first meal she cooked on her own for the party and how it reminds her of home (p. 252).
- Challenge the students to choose one of the powerful scenes with cooking in the text and create a found poem by picking out key words and phrases from the passage and arranging them into a poem. Invite them to repeat a line or two to highlight meaning and create rhythm and beat.

3. Nisha writes, “I still don’t understand. We were all part of the same country last month, all these different people and religions living together. Now we are supposed to separate and hate one another. Does Papa secretly hate Rashid Uncle? Does Rashid Uncle secretly hate us? Where do Amil and I fit in to all of this hate? Can you hate half of a person?” (p. 187).

- Have students discuss in groups: How is it confusing for Nisha to hear about the fighting between groups when those close to her, both Hindu and Muslim, embody kindness and love?
- Have groups locate examples of the kindness she experiences from those she knows and loves.
- Invite students to consider: Do individuals have the freedom to choose their behavior, even when they are part of a larger group?

4. Nisha encounters experiences that require her to grapple with the concepts of fairness and social justice. Have students grapple with these issues by considering the following two quotations:

- When Nisha thought about the risks of talking with Hafa, she “felt a growing rage” in her chest and said, “It was okay for a strange man to put a knife at my throat, but it wasn’t okay for us to speak to a little girl playing in the back of her house?” (p. 200).
- Papa comes to the aid of a man at the water pump who “might have bled to death” (p. 136) without Papa’s help. When Papa asks the man for a sip of his water, the man said, Not enough” (p. 136) and he and his family left.
- Have students take a position debate: Should Nisha talk to Hafa? Should the man give water to Papa? Why or why not?

5. Discuss in groups: What is the symbolism of having to leave the “half-carved doll” that Rashid Uncle was making her (p. 224)?

6. On page 237, Nisha recounts the bloody scene at the train in which Sikh men, Muslim men, and Hindu men fight. She writes that a Muslim man and a Hindu man had fallen next to each other and that “they lay close together, hands touching” (p. 237). Nisha said, “I watched them die like that” (p. 237).

- Have groups use the power of tableaux (silent, still statues) to show this scene.
- Audience members list words and phrases that come to mind as they view the statues.
- **Discuss:** What is the significance of this moment?

7. On page 250, Kazi has joined the family again and Nisha writes, “As I went to sleep that night, I felt peaceful in a way I never had been. We were put back together. To Nehru, Jinnah, India, and Pakistan, to the men who fight and kill- you can’t split us. You can’t split love.

- Have small groups choose one of the many references of parts and a whole/ divided, united from the text. Invite them to visually represent how the parts make a whole. (They might create puzzle pieces, divide drawings in halves, etc).
- Have students discuss the important question: What brings the parts together?

Some examples to consider:

- The idea of twins as parts of a whole: “If I die, I’m glad I’m here with my brother, the other half of me” (p. 237).
- Muslim mother and Hindi father giving Nisha and Amil two parts to their whole identity
- India as a whole breaking into parts (old India and new India) and Gandhi wanting a “united India” (p. 90)
- Being separated from Kazi in the partition then finally reuniting with them
- Joining Rashid Uncle, part of Mama’s family
- “When you divide people, they take sides” (p. 45).
- Remembering her mama’s name is Faria, Nisha says, “It reminds me of the whole person you were, beyond my mama (p. 226).

8. Highlight the significance of Nisha’s voice by allowing students to hear the powerful quotations:

Examples of Nisha’s voice on pages: 129, 162, 110, 152, 160, 178, 188, 192, 205-206, 242, 248, 217, 230

- In small groups, students use available technology (ex. imovie, Audacity, or any recording tool).
- Groups choose quotations about Nisha’s voice. Then, groups read and record the quotations one after other. Group members decide how they will read and record each quotation-- chorally, in partnerships, or by taking turns one by one.
- **Extension:** Invite students to add music or pictures to help communicate the tone, mood, and meaning of the quotations.
- **Ask:** In what ways does hearing the words and music or viewing the visuals impact our understanding?

9. Invite students to explore issues of Social Class by returning to the following passages:

- When Nisha compares her home in Mirpur Khas to her new home in Jodhpur and said, “I didn’t know we were so rich until we became poor” (p. 253).
- Students might also think back to page 81 and pages 179-180 when Nisha wonders if Rashid Uncle had a cook who might have been Hindu and had to leave.
- **Ask:** Why would the author include these passages? What does she want you to know?

10. Ask students to consider how the author uses craft to communicate meaning in this section.

- Invite students to mine the section for the following: comparisons using simile or metaphor (ex. pgs. 197, 198, 250); small movements to show character emotion (ex. p. 202), in addition to any other figurative language or words that grab their attention.
- Have students choose a strategy and to try it out in their own writing.



After Reading Activities

Content of these Core Curriculum Lesson Plans was created by Dr. Jennifer M. Bogard, a former elementary school teacher who currently teaches educators at Lesley University in the Language and Literacy Division in addition to the Integrated Teaching Through the Arts Program. She is an author who writes books about integrating the arts and about the writing process for educators of K-12 classrooms.

Essay Ideas

1. How did Nisha express herself throughout the story? What moments and people empower Nisha to make her voice heard? When does she feel frozen or unable to speak? In what ways did she grow?
2. How did Nisha come to understand her identity? Is she still searching for answers? What experiences allowed her to think about who she is and why she is the way she is? How did knowing and understanding other people help her?
3. In what ways does Amil grow and change throughout the story? What experiences and people impact his growth?
4. Choose two characters and explore their relationship over time.
 - What are some of the moments when they appreciate one another for who they are?
 - What are some of the moments when they want the other to be different?
 - In what ways does their relationship grow and change over time? What moments in the text cause this growth?
5. *The Night Diary*, while historical fiction, can be thought of as a refugee story. Further explore the present-day refugee crisis. Compare and contrast how Nisha's story is similar to that of present-day children refugees?
6. What are some moments in the text when fear plays a role in the characters' decisions? In what ways do the characters overcome their fears? How do bravery and hope prevail? (In order to get ideas flowing, see pgs. 95, 145, 179, 185, 208, 210).
7. In what ways is Nisha's story one of hope and how does it celebrate diversity and humanity?
8. Explore the significance of silence and quiet throughout key moments in the text. You might consider these ideas and pages as part of your work: At the train: p. 227; Preparing to leave: p. 100; Whispers: pgs. 27, 50; Talking without words: p. 100
9. Further explore the concept of drawing lines/ boundaries/ parts and whole in this text and in the world today. How are things divided and united in the text? How are things divided and united in today's world? What messages do we learn from this?
10. Choose a character in the text that makes you want to know more about her/him because her story is not fully told. Imagine and write the untold story of this character. Consider these ideas: Papa, Dadi, Rashid Uncle, Hafa, the mother and son separated from their family at the train, a Muslim family in the new India who has to flee to Pakistan, etc.)
11. Find a passage or quotation that you find significant. Write about its power and meaning.

Invitations for research and further explorations:

1. Consider examples of voice and expression in today's world:
 - Have students conduct a research project to examine the role of children in present-day Women's Marches. Begin with the images from the author's interview and list the empowering words and phrases from the posters.
 - Locate additional images and posters from the Women's Marches and add the messages to the list. Use sidewalk chalk to share the empowering messages on the playground.
 - **Discuss:** How do voices affect change in today's world?
2. Invite groups to conduct a short research project on Gandhi
 - Use online resources including leveled text sets at <https://newsela.com/text-sets/262706>
 - Locate and discuss passages about Gandhi in the text (for example, those on pages 45 and 71 and later in the text on pages 162, 193, 244).
 - Ask groups to create a short presentation using digital tools to highlight Gandhi's actions, messages and most notable quotations.
 - As students continue to read the text, ask them to be on the lookout for instances when characters act in ways that embody the messages of Gandhi.
 - Have students respond in their journals to answer the questions: In what ways might Gandhi's messages inspire people in today's world? How might they inspire me?
3. Research present-day children refugees:
 - Have students begin at The Classroom Bookshelf to locate resources: <http://www.theclassroombookshelf.com/?s=refugees>
4. Invite students to conduct an author exploration by visiting Veera Hiranandani's website: <http://www.veerahiranandani.com/>
 - Encourage students to read her blog and respond with questions or comments.
 - Have students write two questions for the author and consider having her join your classroom for a free 20-minute Skype session or more.
5. Learn about the religions in the story including Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism.
 - Use online resources such as the leveled texts at: <https://newsela.com/text-sets/262706>
6. Consider girls and education in the world today.
 - Research the bravery of Malala. Share online interviews and picture books about Malala including: *Malala: A Brave Girl from Pakistan*/Iqbal: *A Brave Boy from Pakistan* by Jeanette Winter.
7. Research Spoken Word Poetry and spoken-word poets, such as Sarah Kay, and Project V.O.I.C.E. (<http://www.projectvoice.co/>)
 - Choose a powerful excerpt from the text in which Nisha communicates passion, strength, or takes a position. Let the passage inspire you to create poetry. Practice speaking your poem and share it with others.

**Correlates to Common Core Standards: RL.5-7.1, RL.5-7.2, RL.5-7.3, RL.5-7.6, SL.5-7.1, SL.5-7.2, SL.5-7.4, W.5-7.1, W.5-7.3, W.5-7.4, W.5-7.5, W.5-7.6, W.5-7.7, W.5-7.8, W.5-7.9

Praise for *The Night Diary*

“Nisha’s sweet, sheltered world disappears overnight when her country splits in two—now Hindus must live in India, Muslims in Pakistan. But Nisha’s both. Where can her family be safe? Hiranandani’s story is set in an historical time little known to American children, but she tells it in a way that makes it accessible, timely, interesting and real.”

—Kimberly Brubaker Bradley,
author of Newbery Honor-winning *The War That Saved My Life*

“Veera Hiranandani’s storytelling is exquisite and compelling. For Nisha, like so many of us, home is a complicated place and this heartbreaking and hopeful novel reminds us that even in places where there is great loss and strife, there is deep joy, renewed faith. *The Night Diary* is a treasure for young readers who are searching for their place in the world, who are determined to bring home with them wherever they go.”

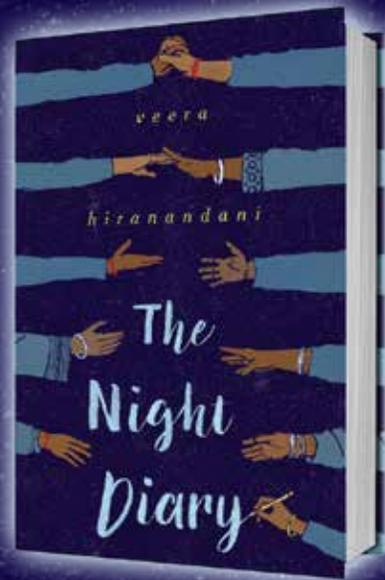
—Renée Watson, *Piecing Me Together*

★ “Believable and heartbreaking... A gripping, nuanced story of the human cost of conflict appropriate for both children and adults.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

★ “This rich, compelling story, which speaks to the turbulence surrounding India’s independence and to the plight of refugees, should be in all libraries.”

—*School Library Journal*, starred review



Meet Veera Hiranandani

Veera Hiranandani earned her MFA in creative writing at Sarah Lawrence College. She is the author of *The Whole Story of Half a Girl*, which was named a Sydney Taylor Notable Book and a South Asian Book Award Finalist. A former book editor at Simon & Schuster, she now teaches creative writing at Sarah Lawrence College’s Writing Institute and Writopia Lab.