

*The Year of the Dog*  
**Discussion Guide**  
Grades 3-5

**Before Reading: to activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.**

- Discuss the importance of friends in everyday life. What makes someone a good friend? How do we make new friends? Make a list of student generated responses on an anchor chart or whiteboard.
- Before reading, have a class discussion to activate prior knowledge about immigration. What does it mean to be first generation? What are some examples of cultural fusion?
- Frontload vocabulary: brilliant, talent, flaky, nutritious, grumble, convince, cackle, stern, unique, scowl, jabber, devour

**During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.**

- What are people supposed to do/focus on during the Year of the Dog? (Ch. 1)
- How did Grandpa become rich? (Ch. 2)
- What is Pacy and her sister supposed to do on Chinese New Year to help their parents? (Ch. 3)
- How is school different in Taiwan? (Ch. 4)
- Why did the lunch lady think Pacy had already gotten lunch? (Ch. 5)
- How does Pacy know that she and Melody will be good friends? (Ch. 6)
- Why does Pacy go by Grace at school? (Ch. 7)
- How and why is dinner at Melody's different from what Pacy is used to? (Ch. 8)
- Why did Pacy not have a Red Egg Party? (Ch. 9)
- What does Pacy do at Albert's Red Egg Party? (Ch. 10)
- How does Grandma fix Pacy's neck? (Ch. 11)
- How do Pacy and Melody try to figure out who Teddy likes? Are they successful? (Ch. 12)
- What advice does Mom give Pacy about the book contest? Would you take this advice? Why or why not? (Ch. 13)
- What experiment do Pacy and Melody develop? (Ch. 14)
- What happens at the science fair? Does it prove Pacy and Melody's theory that it's their lucky year? (Ch. 15)
- Pacy notices that Chinese people and Chinese Americans are not often in movies or in books. What does she decide to do about it? (Ch. 16 and Ch. 17)
- Why do you think Mom's story about her first day of school made Pacy feel better? (Ch. 18)
- Did Pacy need to be nervous about being a Chinese, gift-giving munchkin? Why or why not? (Ch. 19)
- How did Pacy come up with an idea for her story? (Ch. 20)

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**During Reading (continued)**

- What was the process for Pacy to write and illustrate her book? (Ch. 21)
- Why does Pacy's mom think it was a good idea for their family to go to the Taiwanese American Convention? (Ch. 22)
- How did Aunt Alice honor her ancestors? (Ch. 22)
- Why does Pacy's mom want her to have friends from her own culture? (Ch. 23)
- What is Pacy's family able to do in Chinatown? (Ch. 24)
- Why does Pacy think she is not lucky? (Ch. 25)
- What helped Pacy figure out what her talent is? (Ch. 26)
- How do the Lins celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas? (Ch. 27)
- How do the Lins prepare for Chinese New Year? (Ch. 28)
- Why does Pacy think she had a good Year of the Dog? (Ch. 29)

**After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.**

Pacy was able to find her talent by the end of the Year of the Dog. What are some of your talents? How can you use them to help others? If you're not sure what talents you have, what are some ways to find out what they are? Write them down on chart paper or a whiteboard.

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.