

Watercress
Discussion Guide
Grades Pre-K-3

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

- Discuss the importance of understanding the history of your family & ancestors.
- Before reading, have a class discussion to activate prior knowledge about how family history affects past memories and making future memories. Make a list of student generated responses on an anchor chart or whiteboard.
- Frontload vocabulary: watercress, family, ashamed, famine, China, abrupt, destination, mud, snails, ditch, sodden

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

- What are you learning about how the young girl feels about her family stopping to pick watercress?
- Let the illustrations be helpful in understanding the vocabulary and the emotions of the characters in the story.
- Think about what is different today for the young girl & her brother living in Ohio than life was for their mother growing up in China.

After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.

Make two columns listing what the young girl in the story was ashamed of in stopping to pick the watercress and then what she learned about why her parents wanted to stop to pick the watercress. Then finish with what you believe changed her mind to better understand her parents and their family history.

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.