



## Classroom Guide for **HOT, HOT ROTI FOR DADA-JI**

by **F. Zia**  
Illustrated by **Ken Min**

### Reading Level

\*Reading Level: Grades 2-3

Interest Level: Grades K-5

Guided Reading Level: P

\*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

### Themes

Family Traditions, Food/Cooking, Grandparents, Storytelling, Imagination, Animals, India, Asian/Asian American Interest

### Synopsis

*Hot, Hot Roti for Dada-ji* is a whimsical story of a young Indian American boy's adventures with his grandfather. When Aneel's grandparents come to stay with his family it means good times and great stories are ahead. After his grandfather, Dada-ji, tells a story about his childhood, Aneel is inspired to cook up some fun of his own. Learning that hot roti, an Indian bread, used to make his grandfather as strong as an ox, Aneel decides to see if the bread still has the same power. Under the watch of the whole family, Aneel makes up a batch of hot, hot roti, and it seems his grandfather couldn't be more excited. But, when there are no water buffaloes to wrestle or mango trees to shake, like Dada-ji does in his stories, the two set out to find other adventures.

### Background

*Hot, Hot Roti* introduces students to the culture and traditions of India. The author weaves together many aspects of life in India and contemporary life in the United States.

Indian Americans, usually referred to as Asian Indians to avoid confusion with Native Americans, who were traditionally called American Indians, are one of the fastest growing immigrant groups in

the United States. According to the 2010 Census, cities with sizeable Asian Indian communities include the New York City area, Jersey City, Atlanta, Baltimore/Washington, Boston, Chicago, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and San Francisco/San Jose/Oakland.

Second in population only to China, India is home to around 900 million people. The two major religions are Hinduism (about 82 percent of people) and Islam (approximately 12 percent of the people). The official languages of India are English and Hindi, although hundreds of dialects are also spoken. The capital is New Delhi in the northern part of the country. India has been an independent democratic country since 1947 and today is fast becoming a global economy.

Roti is a soft, round, flat unleavened (meaning it does not use yeast) bread made from whole wheat flour that is traditionally eaten in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. (It is also eaten in parts of the southern Caribbean, particularly Trinidad and Tobago.)

Before reading, introduce students to the glossary on the last page of the book. Hindi words and phrases used throughout the story are defined there, along with pronunciations.

**Teaching Tip**

Use *Hot, Hot Roti for Dada-ji* as an introduction to a unit on food or on Indian culture. The book may also be read during May, as part of a celebration of Asian American Heritage Month.

**BEFORE READING****Prereading Focus Questions**

Before introducing the book to students, you may wish to develop background, tap prior knowledge, and promote anticipation with questions such as the following:

1. Do you and your family have a food that you eat on certain occasions or that you like to make together? Tell us about the food. Why is this food special to your family?
2. Have any adults told you stories about when they were younger? What were the stories about?
3. Let's find India on a map. What do you know about India? Has anyone ever eaten Indian food? How was the food similar to or different from the food you usually eat?
4. When do you use your imagination? What are your favorite things to pretend to be or do?

**Exploring the Book**

Display the book and write the title on the chalkboard. Read the title aloud and ask students to speculate about what the title means. Encourage students to study the front cover illustration for context clues.

Have students look through the book and note the expressions of the faces in the illustrations. Explain that these expressions help tell the story.

If you have not already done so, introduce students to the glossary on the last page of the book and review the words and phrases so that students will be familiar with them during the reading.

**Setting a Purpose for Reading**

Have students read to learn about Aneel's relationship with his grandfather and what motivates Aneel throughout the story.

**VOCABULARY**

Have students work in small groups to create a list of twenty words—ten words that describe Aneel and ten that describe Dada-ji. Students may choose words from the story or come up with their own words to describe the characters.

Have students use a dictionary and a thesaurus to find a synonym and an antonym for each word on their lists. Then let students share their words for each character. If you wish, you could create a master list on the chalkboard and have students use their words in sentences.

**AFTER READING****Discussion Questions**

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop understanding of the content. Encourage students to refer back to the text and illustrations in the book to support their responses.

1. What are the things Aneel likes about having his grandparents live with his family?
2. Do you think Aneel and Dada-ji are close? How can you tell?
3. Who is the lad in Dada-ji's story? How do you know?
4. How does the lad astonish the villagers in the morning? In the afternoon? At night?
5. How does the lad in the story get the power of a tiger? What gives him the power?
6. What motivates Aneel to make roti?

7. What problem does Aneel face when he wants to make roti? How does he decide to solve this problem?
8. Why won't the various members of Aneel's family help him? What excuses do they give?
9. How does Aneel's family react once he starts making roti on his own? How do their reactions change over time?
10. What are the steps for making roti?
11. What does Dada-ji think of Aneel's roti? How can you tell?
12. What do Aneel and his grandfather do after they eat the roti?
13. What makes this book so funny? Find some examples of funny parts in both the text and the illustrations.
14. Why do you think Dada-ji calls Aneel "my tiger" at the end of the story?
15. What does Dada-ji do to support and encourage Aneel throughout the story?

### Literature Circles

If you use literature circles during reading time, students might find the following suggestions helpful in focusing on the different roles of the group members.

- The **Questioner** might use questions similar to the ones in the Discussion Question section of this guide.
- The **Passage Locator** might look for passages in Dada-ji's story that are similar to what Aneel and Dada-ji do together after eating roti.
- The **Illustrator** might create an illustrated chart showing the ingredients and steps for making roti.
- The **Connector** might find other books that feature Asian Indians in the United States or that are set in India.
- The **Summarizer** might provide a brief summary of the group's reading and discussion points for each meeting.
- The **Investigator** might find more information about Indian foods or the tradition of storytelling in India.

\*There are many resource books available with more information about organizing and implementing literature circles. Three such books you may wish to refer to are: *Getting Started with Literature Circles* by Katherine L. Schlick Noe and Nancy J. Johnson (Christopher-Gordon, 1999), *Literature Circles: Voice And Choice in Book Clubs and Reading Groups* by Harvey Daniels (Stenhouse, 2002), and *Literature Circles Resource Guide* by Bonnie Campbell Hill, Katherine L. Schlick Noe, and Nancy J. Johnson (Christopher-Gordon, 2000).

**Reader's Response**

Use the following questions or similar ones to help students practice active reading and personalize what they have read. Suggest that students respond in reader's journals, essays, or oral discussion.

1. *Hot, Hot Roti* presents Dada-ji's story told within the story of Aneel and his family. Have you read other books that have a story within a story? Do you like this kind of setup? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think Aneel loves hearing his grandparents' stories? How do you feel when someone tells you a fun or an exciting story? Why do you feel that way?
3. How does the setting in India affect the story that Dada-ji tells? If the story took place in the United States, how might it be different?
4. If you were the lad in the story, how else might you astonish the villagers morning, noon, and night?

**Other Writing Activities**

You may wish to have students participate in one or more of the following writing activities. Set aside time for students to share and discuss their work.

1. Have students write up a recipe for roti based on what happens in the story. Have them list the ingredients first and then write out the steps as a numbered list.
2. Ask students to pretend they are reporters. They should write a short news article reporting on what the lad in Dada-ji's story did.
3. Have students go through the book and on a separate sheet of paper, write captions for some of the illustrations.
4. There is a lot of exaggeration in both the text and the illustrations of the book. Have students write out some additional exaggerated situations for the lad in the story, or for Dada-ji and Aneel. Students may also wish to add pictures to illustrate the situations.

**ELL Teaching Strategies**

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English language learners or who are learning to speak English as a second language.

1. Assign each English language learner to a partner who is a strong English speaker and reader. Have the partners read the story together.

2. After the first reading, go back through the illustrations and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
3. Invite ELL students to write or dictate questions about the story. Set aside time to help students explore and answer these queries.
4. Have ELL students create flashcards for ten English words they did not know from the story. Have them quiz one another throughout the week with their flashcards.

### **INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES**

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas.

#### **Social Studies**

1. Have students research India and its culture. One place to start online is the CIA [World Factbook](#). Let individual or small groups of students choose specific topics and present what they learn in an appropriate format, such as a short essay, chart, graph, map, and so on.
2. Provide each student with an outline map of the world on which countries are indicated (many reproducible maps can be found online). Have students chart a course from the United States to India with four or five stops along the way. See where they imagine themselves going! Let volunteers tell why they stopped at each place.
3. Have each student bring in a recipe that has special cultural, religious, or holiday significance to her or his family. On the back of the recipe have the student write the "story" behind the recipe. Ask students to give a presentation about their recipes and then create a class recipe book that can be duplicated and sent home with each student.

#### **Language Arts**

Have students write fictional stories about the special powers their favorite foods can give them. This activity may be done by individuals, small groups, or as a full class writing experience.

#### **Math**

Download the [roti recipe](#) from the *Hot, Hot Roti* website, and duplicate enough copies to distribute to the class. Have students practice working the equivalent measurements by halving and doubling the ingredients. Then ask students to guess how many roti they think they can make from the amounts of ingredients listed in the original recipe. Make a note of student's guesses if you plan to make roti in the classroom. (see Science/Cooking activity)

### Science/Cooking

If possible, have students cook up a batch of roti in the classroom. Use the roti recipe downloaded for the Math activity. Have students note the changes that occur in the ingredients when they are mixed together, and the changes in the dough as the roti cook. After all the roti are cooked, count up how many there are and compare that number to students' estimates. Then enjoy a delicious snack!

### Music

Introduce students to Indian music through some of the recordings made by Ravi Shankar, composer and sitar player. His recordings are readily available and he has worked in a variety of traditional Eastern and Western styles. Have students compare the music on Shankar's recordings to other music with which they are familiar.

Indian pop music is also becoming more popular. Students may enjoy listening to a recording of the song "Jai ho," which was composed by A.R. Rahman for the 2008 movie *Slumdog Millionaire*. Recordings of this song are also easy to find online.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**F. Zia** is a writer and an elementary school teacher who grew up in Hyderabad, India. Her stories blend humor and tradition, memories and contemporary moments. Zia, who believes writing—like roti making—requires persistence and practice, wrote this story as a gift to her grandchildren. Zia lives in eastern Massachusetts with her husband. This is her first picture book.

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Ken Min** is an illustrator and animation storyboard artist. As a boy in Los Angeles, Min dreamed of becoming a dinosaur doctor. After realizing that dinosaurs were extinct, he decided to pursue his love of art. Min still lives in California and enjoys drawing the animals at the San Diego Zoo. This is the first picture book he has illustrated.

### Book Information

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### RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Learn more about *Hot, Hot Roti for Dada-ji* at

[http://www.leeandlow.com/books/419/hc/hot\\_hot\\_roti\\_for\\_dada\\_ji](http://www.leeandlow.com/books/419/hc/hot_hot_roti_for_dada_ji)

**BookTalk with F. Zia and Ken Min:**

[http://www.leeandlow.com/p/hot\\_hot\\_roti.mhtml](http://www.leeandlow.com/p/hot_hot_roti.mhtml)

**Roti Recipe:**

[http://www.leeandlow.com/images/pdfs/ROTI\\_recipe.pdf](http://www.leeandlow.com/images/pdfs/ROTI_recipe.pdf)

**Order Information**

**On the Web:**

<http://www.leeandlow.com/p/ordering.mhtml> (general order information)

[http://www.leeandlow.com/books/419/hc/hot\\_hot\\_roti\\_for\\_dada\\_ji](http://www.leeandlow.com/books/419/hc/hot_hot_roti_for_dada_ji) (secure on-line ordering)

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