

## American Ethnic Literature Review Worksheet -- \*TEACHER VERSION

### Vietnamese American Curriculum

*\*These questions in italics are included for the teacher to guide discussion and student responses to this worksheet if needed.*

Author \_\_\_\_\_ Illustrator \_\_\_\_\_

Story Title \_\_\_\_\_ © Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### A. Understanding the essential elements of a short story:

Who are the main characters?	When and where does the story take place?
Describe the conflict and how it gets resolved:	

#### B. Critiquing the author and illustrator:

Do you feel that the author is qualified to write this story? Why or why not? <i>*For example, is the author from within the ethnic group that s/he is writing about? What experience or knowledge does the author have to make her/him qualified to write this story? What might have been happening during the author's formative years that would affect her/his social and racial attitudes about the ethnic group featured in the story?</i>
Do the characters look realistic? Why or why not? <i>*For example, do the illustrations show signs of exaggerated features such as slanted eyes or very yellow skin tones for Asian Americans? Do the people of color look realistic or do they look like European descent characters except for a different shade of skin color? Do the illustrations show diversity of faces and bodies within the ethnic group?</i>
Do the illustrations add details to enrich your understanding of the written text? Why or why not? (Answers will vary)

### C. Looking for stereotypes and power relationships

Did you find any examples of bias or stereotypes in this book?

If yes, please explain:

*\*For example, does the author make generalizations about the group or topic s/he is writing about that seem like stereotypes? Why do you feel they are stereotypes and why do you think the author included this information? Do you see any “loaded words” that contain offensive overtones, such as words that suggest an inferior or violent culture (“primitive,” “savage”), or dis-empower or objectify a person (“docile,” “exotic”), or have been used in past U.S. propaganda to imply enemy-like status (“crafty,” “treacherous”? Are there other phrases or words that readers might be sensitive to, such as “fireman” instead of “fire fighter” (which is gender neutral and more inclusive) or descriptions like “fair” and “slender” that limit the definition of beauty?*

Are different characters in the story shown with different amounts of power to make decisions or do they have an equal amount of decision making power over their lives? Give an example to support your answer:

*\*For example, are the ethnic characters portrayed with the agency and power to solve the problem/conflict within their own cultural or familial structure and community or must they go outside of their ethnic community for resolution? Who benefits from the resolution? Does anyone need to conform to the dominant culture or give up ethnic values as part of the story’s resolution? (A recurrent stereotypical role is a European American who “rescues” a person of color, or is the only one in the story who holds the power to solve the problem or conflict, without any explanation of the conditions that cause the inequity of power of the different ethnic and racial groups in the first place.)*

Did you have any stereotypes or negative attitudes before reading this book that were changed by this book? If yes, please explain: (Answers will vary)

### C. Audience appeal, clarity and relevance to the reader:

Did you enjoy this book? Why or why not?

*\*For example, how did the story relate to your own life and experiences?*

Do you feel that this book would be enjoyed and understood by readers of different ethnicities and cultures? Why or why not?

*\*For example, does the author make connections between different ethnic cultures and/or with mainstream American cultural norms that readers might already be familiar with? Does the author present new and interesting information, but also balance these differences with universal values and experiences that all humans share? Does the author develop positive and realistic characters that you can relate to and/or identify with?*

Were new concepts or words introduced by the book explained in a clear and respectful way?

If yes, give an example of a new concept or word that you learned from this book:

*\*For example, does the author show the validity of many cultures without creating implications of cultural superiority or inferiority? Is the author able to introduce new ideas that illustrate the diversity of cultures within the U.S. without making ethnic culture seem exotic or foreign?*

What questions, if any, do you have after reading the book? (Answers will vary)