



The **YELLOW SUITCASE**

story by Meera Sriram
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TEACHER'S GUIDE
COMPILED BY MEERA SRIRAM

LESSON PLAN ON LOSS & GRIEF and IMMIGRANT LIFE

SYNOPSIS

In this story, a little girl named Asha travels with her family from America to India to attend her grandmother's funeral. In India, Asha's grief is intensified by unfamiliar customs, people, and places. And her suitcase that she carried every summer with gifts from and to Grandma lies empty. Asha is heartbroken and confused, but when she discovers a special gift left behind just for her, she realizes that the memory of her grandmother will live on forever inside her.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

- ❖ Recall a time you've missed someone (or a pet) dear to you?
- ❖ Have you experienced grief? What are some emotions that you might feel while grieving?
- ❖ Have you ever attended a funeral?
- ❖ How do you feel when you can't, don't, see someone you really love?
- ❖ Who is an immigrant?
- ❖ What is home?
- ❖ Have you traveled to visit family or friends in a faraway place, and how do you feel when you say good bye to them?
- ❖ How do you stay in touch with relatives who don't live close to you?

STORY ANALYSIS

Identify the following in the story:

- **SETTING:** where is the story set?
- **CONFLICT:** what is the problem the main character is dealing with?
- **CHARACTERS:** who is the main character, are there other characters?
- **STORY ARC:** identify & graph the beginning, climax, resolution, end
- **RESOLUTION:** how is the problem solved?

WRITING PROMPTS

- **SAD MOMENTS:** Write about an experience that made you very sad

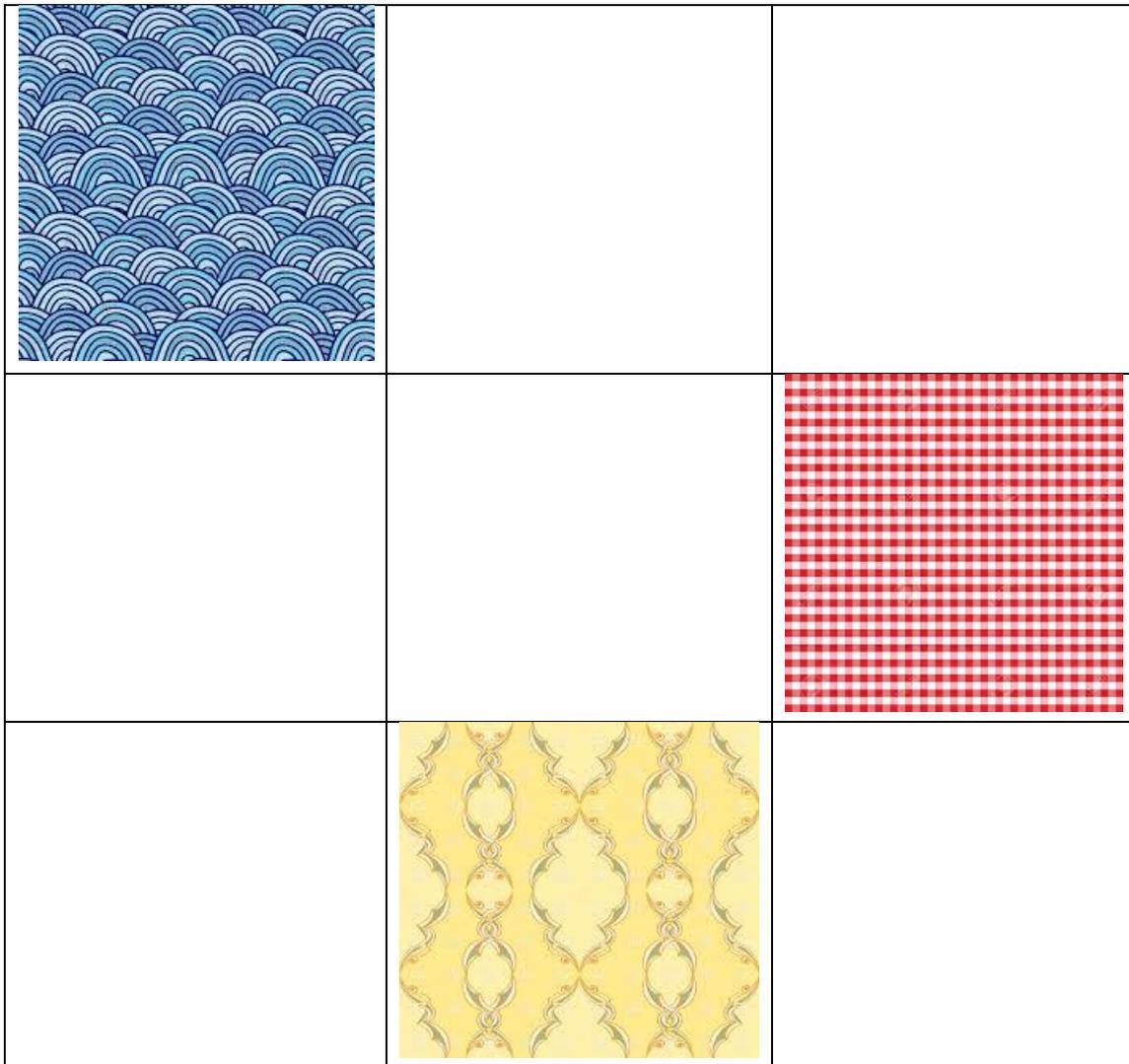
- **DEAR _____** : Write a letter to someone you miss a lot
- **WHAT IS HOME?** Write about what makes you call a place home and where do you most feel like being home (think neighborhood, town, country, a house, garden, book, or any other place)?
- **TWO FLAVORS:** Write about a time when you experienced two cultures combining (think food, music, friendship, gift, travel, everyday incidents, events)
- **MEMORY SUITCASE:** List experiences, things, places, or events that could help you fondly remember a loved one

BOOKS AS “MIRRORS & WINDOWS,” AN ANALYSIS

- Share the title and story of a book that talked about an experience similar to something you have experienced in your life
- What books have you read in which the characters (or the main character) looked like you?
- Share a book that had a story about something you have never experienced before
- What books have you read in which the story is set in a place or culture outside of your own?
- Was “The Yellow Suitcase” more a mirror or a window for you?
- What did you see through the cultural window (of India) in “The Yellow Suitcase?”
- Have you ever felt like you were experiencing two cultures at once?
- What are some of the similarities and differences between your cultural background and Asha’s cultural roots?

ACTIVITY

1. Make your own MEMORY QUILT with words or pictures



2. QUIZ: HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW INDIA?

1. In which continent is India in?
2. How long does the flight from US to India take?
3. What is a peninsula?
4. Name the capital of India?
5. What is a sari?
6. What is tea called in Hindi (the popular Indian language)?
7. Name some Indian foods you're familiar with?
8. When did India get her independence from the British?
9. What is ghee?
10. What are some religious holidays celebrated in India?

CROSSWORD, WORDSEARCH, & MAPS COMING SOON!

Please email meeraTsriram@gmail.com for questions or visit www.meerasriram.com for more information on THE YELLOW SUITCASE