



EDUCATOR GUIDE



THE WORDS WE SHARE

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GENRE: Picture book, children's fiction

THEMES: emigration & immigration, Asian American, family, community, identity, language, multilingualism, culture, communication, emotions and feelings

SUITABLE FOR: Grades P–2, Ages 4–7

GUIDED READING LEVEL: Fountas and Pinnell L

LEXILE: AD720L

COMMON CORE STANDARDS: RL.2.2.1,2,3,4,5,6,7
W.2.1,3,5,6
SL.2.1,1a,1b,1c,2,3,4,5,6
L.2.2,3,4,4a,4b,4c,4d,4e,5,5a,5b,6

SUMMARY:

A young girl helps her dad navigate life in a new country where she understands the language more than he does, in an unforgettable story about communication and community.

Angie is used to helping her dad. Ever since they moved to Canada, he relies on her to translate for him from English to Chinese. Angie is happy to help: when they go to restaurants, at the grocery store, and, one day, when her dad needs help writing some signs for his work.

Building off her success with her dad's signs, Angie offers her translation skills to others in their community. She's thrilled when her new business takes off, until one of her clients says he's unhappy with her work. When her dad offers to help, she can't imagine how he could. Working together, they find a surprising solution, fixing the problem in a way Angie never would have predicted.

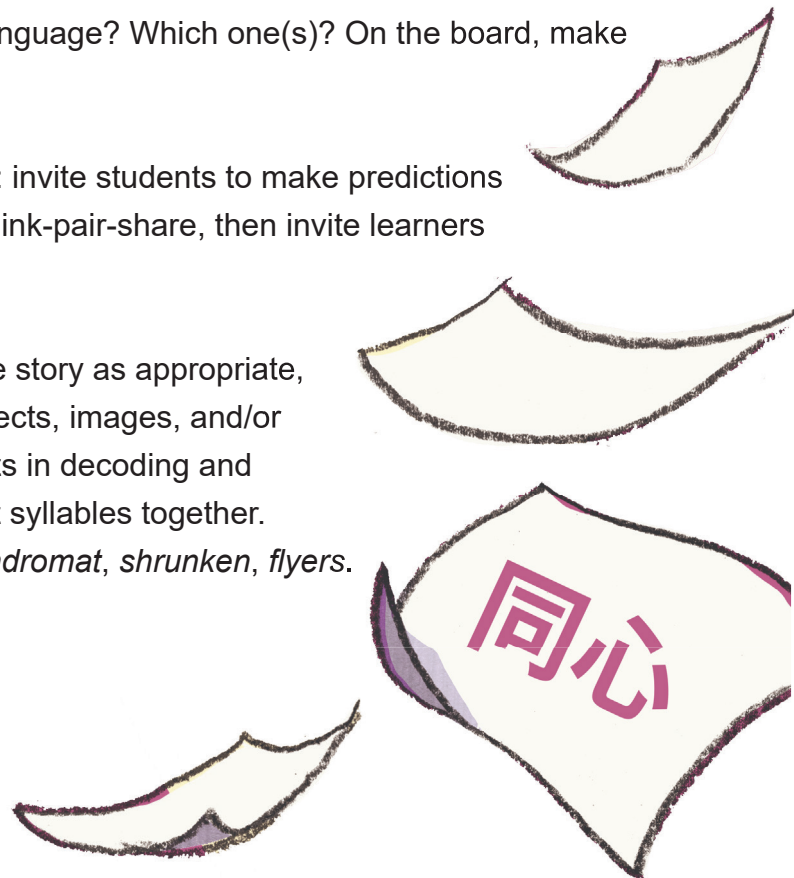
A gorgeously illustrated picture book that is at once a much-needed exploration of the unique pressures children of immigrants often face, a meditation on the dignity of all people regardless of their differences, and a reminder of the power of empathy.

Please remember that the suggested questions and activities within this educator guide are meant to serve as a starting point. Educators are encouraged to select items from each part of the guided inquiry process that work best for their style of teaching and will help them meet their goals when covering the topics in this book. Activities and prompts should be tweaked and/or reformatted to best fit your students, context, and community to ensure equity and inclusion.

BEFORE READING THE BOOK

These activities build the context, introduce the topic of the book, and establish prior knowledge and interest.

1. Introduce the title of the book. What does it mean to share? (e.g. to use something together, to divide something, to take turns, to have something in common, etc.) What are some things you share (or have in common with) with your family? With your friends? With your classmates? Prompt students to pay attention to what the characters share in this story.
2. Examine the book cover together. What do you notice? The title is in two languages—one in English, one in Chinese. Read the title in both English and Cantonese (the Chinese dialect spoken by the main characters of the story), using the author’s note on the last page for guidance and context.
3. Does anyone in your class speak an additional language? Which one(s)? On the board, make a list of languages spoken by students.
4. “Read the cover” or do a picture walk of the book: invite students to make predictions of what the story might be about. Allow time for think-pair-share, then invite learners to share their predictions with the class.
5. Explicitly pre-teach key vocabulary words from the story as appropriate, especially for younger learners. Use concrete objects, images, and/or actions to aid with comprehension. Guide students in decoding and pronouncing words as necessary. Clap and count syllables together. Suggestions of words include: *stern*, *bizarre*, *laundromat*, *shrunken*, *flyers*.



WHILE READING THE BOOK

These activities check on comprehension, stimulate interest, involve readers in reflection as they read, and encourage consideration of other readers' reactions.

1. Throughout the story, the teacher should model making connections out loud. Invite students to make their own connections while listening. Consider developing a “connection” symbol (e.g. making a circle with the thumb and index finger with each hand and interlocking the circles) for students to quietly demonstrate their own connections while listening. Teachers can acknowledge student engagement and invite students to share their connections with a peer or with the class at appropriate times of the story, or at the end of the reading.
2. Pause on the page where Angie helps her dad in the restaurant and in the store. Ask students: why do you think that Angie’s dad needs her help in speaking to the server at the restaurant, or double-checking the labels at the grocery store?
3. Ask students: do you think Angie enjoys helping her dad? Do you think she feels differently about this at different times? Why?
4. Ask students: how do you think Dad feels about his difficulties in his new environment? How does he feel about asking Angie for help? Consider both positive and negative feelings (e.g. proud of Angie, frustrated by his language skills, etc.)
5. Angie says that Dad is “the reason I’m writing things in English for people in the first place.” What do students think she means? Is she right? If not, why might she feel this way?
6. Angie thinks Mr. Chu sounds “pretty mad” when she receives his phone call. Ask students: have you ever tried to help someone, but then felt that they got mad at you in return? How did that make you feel?
7. Pause at key points in the story to discuss what emotions Angie may be feeling. Ask students if they have ever felt this way. When? Suggestions of key points include the lines:
 - a. “I can feel my face hot against the phone. I want to hide.”
 - b. “All of a sudden I turn from hot to cold.”
 - c. “My tummy is doing flip-flops by the time we get to the laundromat.”
 - d. “I make sure Dad knows all about the daily specials.”

AFTER READING THE BOOK

These activities inspire continued reflection and response to the text, bring conclusion to the experience of reading this particular text, and stimulate further extensions.

1. In what ways does Angie help her dad and her community in the story? What kinds of things do you do to help your family and your community?
2. What challenges do you think Angie and her dad might experience while settling into their new home in Canada? How can you help a friend or a classmate who is a newcomer to your school or your community?
3. Have you ever tried to help someone to understand something that they found difficult? How did you do it? How can we support someone who is learning a new language?
4. Discuss multilingualism and which characters in the book are multilingual. How many languages were in the story? How many languages do we know in our class? What are some benefits of learning new languages?
5. In two instances in the book, when Angie recalls her first experiences in Canada, and when she hears her dad speaking in Hakka for the first time, she describes the experience as hearing “strange music.” Why do you think she describes new languages as music? In what ways are languages similar to music?
6. Angie learns something about Dad that she didn’t know before—that another language he could speak was “in him this whole time.” Have you ever found out something that someone could do, long after you first knew them? How could we use those examples to shape the way we look at others in our community? Is there something special you can do which others may not know about? If so, would you like to share?
7. Revisit the title of the story in both English and Chinese. The Chinese title translates to “The Same Heart in Different Languages.” What do you think the author is trying to communicate with this title?



EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

These activities are only a start. They are designed to support the goal of helping students explore the story and their own creativity.

1. Engage in dual language projects. Ideas include:
 - a. Make and display welcome signage in various languages in the classroom and around the school
 - b. Create dual language posters, bulletin board displays, or sandwich boards
 - c. Design multilingual brochures and flyers
2. Note the pages in the book which have two languages. Have students create their own dual language books in English and another language. This could take on many forms: a fictional story, using photographs of special family memories, or even an instructional how-to book. Consider involving students' families to contribute to the creation of these projects. Younger learners can narrate and record an oral story, or the teacher may scribe the story which the student illustrates.
3. Have a language of the week/month: Learn key familiar phrases in another language (e.g. good morning, please, thank you, etc.) and have the whole class practice using these phrases during that week/month. Invite students who speak an additional language to be the "class expert" and teach the class these key phrases.
4. Graph the number of languages spoken in your class. For younger students, have them conduct a survey and create simple bar graphs. For older students, this can be extended to include concepts such as fractions and percentages, or even a study of censuses and statistics.
5. Display other dual language books in the classroom library to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and celebrate multilingual learning environments. If students have created their own dual language books, consider displaying and sharing these for all learners to read and enjoy.

