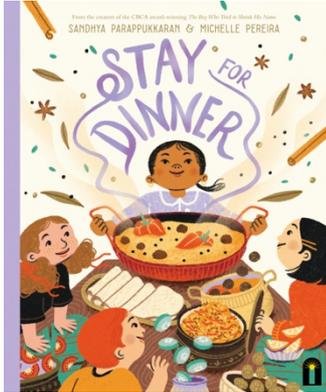


## Teacher's Notes



### Stay for Dinner

Written by Sandhya Parappukkaran

Illustrated by Michelle Pereira

Teacher's Notes by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

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### LEARNING OUTCOMES

#### RECOMMENDED FOR

Ages 3 + (Pre-school +)

#### KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- Learning areas: ACPPS019, ACPPS020, ACPPS024, ACELY1661, ACELY1656
- General capabilities:
  - Disability, Diversity and Inclusion
  - Communicating and interacting for health and well being
  - Contributing to healthy and active communities
  - Understanding and creating texts

### THEMES

- Difference and Diversity
- Food
- Families
- Homes
- Cultural Traditions
- Sports and Games

### SYNOPSIS

*Stay for Dinner* is a powerful story that celebrates culture and connection through food, from the creators of *The Boy Who Tried to Shrink His Name*, winner of the 2022 Children's Book Council of Australia's Award for New Illustrator.

Reshma loves dinnertime with her family. Her family eat with their hands – not just finger food type-eating, but hands-on squishy eating. When she's invited to stay for dinner at her friends' places, she finds out that they all eat in different ways. Some go *ting ting* with their cutlery, and others go *click clack* with their chopsticks. So what will her friends say when they see her family eat with their hands?



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR

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**Sandhya Parappukaran** left her job as a Food Technologist so she could put her feet up and read. Then she rediscovered her passion for children's books. She writes stories with themes of 'embracing your cultural identity' inspired by her South Indian heritage. Sandhya resides in Brisbane with her husband, three children and a backyard brimming with mango trees, curry leaves and green chillies.

**Michelle Pereira** is an illustrator who spent her childhood in Nairobi, Kenya, and now lives in Melbourne, Australia. She graduated from Monash University with a Bachelor of Communication Design and became a professional illustrator after a somewhat extended, but enjoyable, stint of hospitality work. She has worked with a range of clients such as Penguin UK, Netflix, the *New York Times* and *Marie Claire*. She uses bright colours and textural elements. In 2022 she was winner of the Children's Book Council of Australia's Award for New Illustrator for *The Boy Who Tried to Shrink His Name*, written by Sandhya Parappukaran.

## THEMES

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- **Difference and Diversity**

Reshma, the narrator, and her three friends, Charlotte, Phoebe and Leo, come from different cultural backgrounds and the food they eat, and how they share it with their families, reflects that, as do other aspects of their culture referred to in the written and visual text.

- **Food**

In the story, each of the four children share meals with their families which reflect their culture:

Reshma's family are Indian-Australian, and more specifically Malayali-Australian. Reshma's family culture originates from the present-day state of Kerala in south India. They eat curry, pappadums, pickles and rice. On special days, they have sadhya, which means 'banquet' in Malayalam and is comprised of multiple traditional vegetarian dishes served on a banana leaf. Sadhya originated in Kerala and is typically served on festival days such as Vishu (Malayali Hindu New Year) and Onam (harvest festival). In the sadhya Reshma shares with her friends, there is sambar, a lentil and mixed vegetable stew. [See

### **Bibliography]**

*Question:* What other food can you see on Reshma's family dinner table?

Charlotte's family are Anglo-Australian. They eat roast chicken, gravy, peas, and stuffed pumpkin.

*Question:* What other food can you see on Charlotte's family dinner table?

Phoebe's family are Asian-Australian. They eat noodles and dumplings.

*Question:* What other food can you see on Phoebe's family dinner table?

Leo's family are Italian-Australian. They eat spaghetti and meatballs.

*Question:* What other food can you see on Leo's family dinner table?

*Question:* What food do you eat in your home?



Table manners differ from country to country, and the way the four children eat is different:

Reshma uses her fingers to spoon rice and curry together. Sometimes she uses a banana leaf instead of a plate.

Charlotte eats with a fork and knife. She holds the fork in her left hand and the knife in her right; she picks up every pea with the fork, and uses the knife to cut her food into smaller pieces.

Phoebe uses chopsticks to gather rice and pick up dumplings and noodles. She tells Reshma, 'Keep the bottom one still and move the top one.'

Leo uses a fork to twirl spaghetti into a mouth-sized bundle and to pick up meatballs.

*Question:* How do you eat food in your home?

- **Families**

Each child in this book lives with various members of their family:

Reshma lives with her Mama, Papa, and Ammama.

Charlotte lives with her mother.

Phoebe lives with her father.

Leo lives with his Nonna.

*Discussion Point:* Discuss families and how each family is unique and often different to another one.

*Discussion Point:* Reshma calls her grandmother Ammama and Leo calls his Nonna. What do you call your grandmother or grandfather?

- **Homes**

Each of the children's homes are different as well:

Reshma's house is multi-levelled, and has a veranda and large picture windows, and a vegetable garden.

Charlotte's house is a simple timber two-storey A frame.

Phoebe's house is a larger three-storey A frame.

Leo's house is a three-storey brick home, or possibly a townhouse.

*Question:* What details did you notice about the interior and exterior of each home?



- **Cultural Traditions**

Many cultures and religions observe special days when special foods are eaten, for example:

Muslim: Ramadan

Jewish: Shabbat

Hindu: Diwali (The Festival of Lights)

Buddhist: Vesak or Visakah Puja ('Buddha Day')

*Question:* What other special days are celebrated in other cultures and what foods are eaten on those days?

Many cultures have a signature dish which is eaten regularly, as the families in this book have, for example:

Spain – Paella

Greece – Souvlaki or Moussaka

Scotland – Haggis

Algeria and Morocco – Tajine

Hungary – Goulash

Japan – Sushi or Miso Soup

Brazil – Feijoada

*Question:* What other national dishes can you list?

*Question:* How many of them have you eaten?

*Question:* What might be considered an Australian national food or meal?

- **Sports and Games**

The children enjoy outdoor sports together. They play:

Soccer at Charlotte's house.

Badminton at Phoebe's house.

Basketball at Leo's house.

*Question:* What sports do you enjoy playing with your friends?



## WRITING STYLE

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This story is a cumulative take in which a repeated sequence of events (Reshma's meals at four different homes) culminates in a resolution.

The writing utilises literary devices, for example:

Personification: 'Side curries, pickles and pappadums jostle for space on our plates.'

Alliteration: 'I blush like a banana blossom.'

*Question:* What other literary devices did you observe in this text?

## WRITING EXERCISE

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Write a new scene for this book, about Reshma visiting another friend (from another culture) for dinner at their home, and what food Reshma might eat there.

Read poems about food [See **Bibliography**] and then write your own poems about favourite foods, in any style you choose (acrostic, haiku, free verse, etc.).

## ILLUSTRATION STYLE

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The book contains bright, vibrant artwork using patterns and shapes and textural elements.

## ILLUSTRATION EXERCISE

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Create a different cover for this book.

Design endpapers for this book; for example, you might create a grid and use repeated images of food which appear in this book, in a regular pattern.

Illustrate the poem you wrote above.

## COMPREHENSION

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*Question:* What does Reshma's father collect from their garden towards the end of this book? (*Answer:* Banana leaves.)

*Question:* What vegetable does Charlotte's mother grow in her garden? (*Answer:* Pumpkin.)

*Question:* What ornament appears in Phoebe's garden under a tree? (*Answer:* A stone pagoda or miniature temple.)

*Question:* Who joins the four children playing basketball in Leo's garden? (*Answer:* A puppy.)



## CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

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Create a classroom display of the students' responses to the tasks set above.

Invite students to create an image of their family meal table and what might be served in a typical meal. Then create a gallery of the images. Encourage students to be creative in the medium used in their responses.

## RELATED READING

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### Picture Books

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- Charles, Tami *Freedom Soup* Ill. by Jacqueline Alcantara. Candlewick Press, 2019.
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- Corr, Christopher and Grace, Claire *A Year Full of Celebrations and Festivals* Frances Lincoln Publishers, 2021.
- Food Like Mine (Children Just Like Me)* Dorling Kindersley, 2016.
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Marie, Lynne *Mealtime Around the World* Ill. by Parwinder Singh. 1517 Media, 2020.

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Qiu, Yobe *Delicious Asian Foods from A – Z! (Asian Adventures)* Ill. by Cynthia Li. Yobe Qiu, 2022.

Stewart, Whitney *What's On Your Plate? Exploring the World of Food* Ill. by Christiane Engel. Union Square Kids, 2018.

Turner, Tracey *We Are All Different: A celebration of Diversity* Ill. by Asa Gilland. Pan Macmillan UK, 2021.

## Poetry

Larios, Julie *Delicious! Poems Celebrating Street Food Around the World* Ill. by Julie Paschkis. Beach Lane Books, 2021. [See also **Websites** below.]

## Websites

'Festival' *Wikipedia*

<<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Festival>>

'Food: Poems for Kids' *poets.org*

<<https://poets.org/anthology/food-poems-kids>>

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