



Watercress

READ ALOUD

Themes: Cultural Heritage, Family, Immigration, Shame

Book Brief: While driving through Ohio, a young girl's Chinese immigrant parents spot watercress growing in a roadside ditch. They stop the car, grab scissors and a paper bag, and the family climbs out of the mud to gather it together.

Author(s):

Andrea Wang

Illustrator(s):

Jason Chin

BEFORE READING

The Cover: Have students make predictions about the book based on the title and the cover illustration. What is the little girl doing?

Vocabulary: Frontload Tier 2 words using the accompanying [vocabulary guide](#).

The Pictures: Flip briefly through the pictures. What do students notice about the little girl?

Purpose for Reading: "As we read, pay attention to the little girl as they are picking watercress and how she feels about her family."

Prior Knowledge: Ask students, "How does family history affect memories and make future memories?" Discuss the different types of families and family history with the class.

DURING READING

Check for understanding & make connections:

- What are you learning about how the young girl feels about her family stopping to pick watercress?
- Let the illustrations be helpful in understanding the vocabulary and the emotions of the characters in the story.
- Think about what is different today for the young girl & her brother living in Ohio than life was for their mother growing up in China.



Think Aloud: "The girl ducked when a car came by, she was afraid someone might recognize their family picking watercress."

AFTER READING

Our Purpose: The little girl was ashamed of her family. What did the author and illustrator do to show this?

Extending Our Thinking: Have students use [RIF's Writing Template](#), to complete the following task. Make two columns listing what the young girl in the story was ashamed of in stopping to pick the watercress, and then what she learned about why her parents wanted to stop to pick the watercress. Finish with what you believe changed her mind to better understand her parents and their family history.

If your students enjoyed this book...

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Let them explore more titles by Andrea Wang.
 - [Magic Ramen: The Story of Momofuku Ando](#) (2019)
 - [Luli and the Language of Tea](#) (2022)