

ANTICIPATION GUIDE

Agree or disagree?

Instructions: Read each of the following statements. Then, indicate whether you agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or disagree with each statement by writing your answer on the line.

A = agree

SA = somewhat agree

SD = somewhat disagree

D = disagree

1. _____ When in danger, running away to safety is the best option.
2. _____ Happy moments and memories cannot exist in the same place and time as bombings and war.
3. _____ Making decisions is easy if you examine all of the facts.
4. _____ Being a new student at school is exciting.
5. _____ The most difficult part of learning a new language is understanding all of the rules of grammar.
6. _____ Fulfilling your own desires and goals in life is more important than pleasing your parents.
7. _____ A mother will always put the needs of her children first.
8. _____ Grief is easier to bear if it is shared.
9. _____ The history and heritage of one's country defines the person.
10. _____ People cannot have a fresh start until they have let go of their past.

ANTICIPATION GUIDE

First look at the book

1. Look at the cover of the book. What awards and honors has the book received?

2. What do you notice first about the artwork and design on the cover? _____

3. Based on the cover, what do you think the book will be about? _____

4. Read the plot preview and critical reviews of the book. Based on these, list one reason why you might find the book interesting. _____

Read the poem “Early Monsoon” at the start of the book.

5. What is a monsoon? _____

6. What is the noise described in the poem? _____

7. What is the date of the poem? _____

8. To whom is the book dedicated? _____

9. What is a refugee? _____

ANTICIPATION GUIDE

Quick background information:

The Vietnam War

- Vietnam is a small country in Southeast Asia. It is a bit larger than New Mexico.
- On September 2, 1945, Vietnam gained independence from France.
- An international conference in Geneva on November 1, 1955 split Vietnam into a communist North and a noncommunist South.
- The start of United States involvement in the Vietnam War is not definitive. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, United States support of South Vietnam increased.
- During the Vietnam War, the United States supported noncommunist South Vietnam against communist North Vietnam and their allies in the South, the Viet Cong.
- The United States withdrew combat forces from Vietnam in 1973.
- On April 30, 1975, North Vietnam gained control of Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam, ending the war and reunifying Vietnam under communist rule.
- Saigon is now called Ho Chi Minh City, and it is the most populous city in Vietnam.
- Over 3 million people, including 58,000 Americans, were killed in the Vietnam War.



"Battlefield: Vietnam." *PBS*. PBS. Web. 8 Mar. 2015. <<http://www.pbs.org/battlefieldvietnam/timeline/>>.

Carland, Dr. John. "Information Paper: When Did the Vietnam War Start for the United States?" *Vietnam War 50th*. Office of the Secretary of Defense, 17 June 2012. Web. 8 Mar. 2015. <http://www.vietnamwar50th.com/assets/1/7/Info_paper_Vietnam_War_and_US_Start_Date.pdf>.

"Vietnam." *Central Intelligence Agency*. Central Intelligence Agency, 3 Apr. 2013. Web. 5 Mar. 2015. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/cia-maps-publications/Vietnam.html>>.

"Vietnam War." *History.com*. A&E Television Networks, 1 Jan. 2015. Web. 8 Mar. 2015. <<http://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war>>.

"The World Factbook: Vietnam." *Central Intelligence Agency*. Central Intelligence Agency, 30 June 2014. Web. 8 Mar. 2015. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/vm.html>>.

READING COMPREHENSION AND ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

Part I: Saigon

1. What is the year for the **setting** of the story? _____
2. What is Tết and how is it celebrated? _____

3. How old is the **narrator**? _____
4. What is the Teller of Fate’s prediction for Hà’s family? What do you think this means for the family? _____

5. Fill in the following chart for the characters in Hà’s family:

Character	Descriptive details
	Ten years old; named for the Golden River; loves her papaya tree
Mother	
Quang	
	Eighteen years old; idolizes Bruce Lee
Khôi	

6. A **symbol** is something used to represent another thing, person, or idea. Explain what papayas and the papaya tree symbolize in this novel. _____

7. Who is TiTi? Where does she go? _____

8. What has happened to Hà's father? How does the family deal with his absence?

9. What does Hà do when her mother send her to the market to shop for the family?

10. A **simile** is a comparison between two things using the words "like" or "as." Find an example of a simile in "Two More Papayas." _____

11. Why are some words written in italics in this text? _____

12. In the poems "Current News" and "TV News" Hà hears that what group is coming closer to Saigon? As these people come closer, how is Hà's family and community impacted?

13. How did Hà's mother become separated from her father and family? _____

14. In "A Day Downtown" Hà and her mother go to a ceremony for military wives. What comment does the President make to the crowd? What is Mother's response to the speech? _____

15. Identify one **simile** in "Twisting Twisting." What does the simile show the reader about Mother? _____

16. What does Hà do to Tram? Why does she do it? _____

17. "Promises" is a poem about papayas on Hà's tree, which are **symbolic** of Hà. It says that the papayas "cling to the trunk" and they are "Still green / but promising." How can these lines be applied to Hà as well? _____

18. Who is Uncle Sơn and what does he find for Hà's family? _____

19. Mother asks for the sons' opinions about leaving Vietnam in "Should We?" Why is Vũ's answer different from his brothers'? _____

20. **Repetition** is the use of a word or phrase more than once, and it can be used for several purposes in poetry. How is repetition used in “Sssshhhhhh”? _____

21. When a reader takes clues from literature and uses them to come to a conclusion about meaning, the reader is making an **inference**. Using the title of “Quiet Decision,” the description of Hà’s cutting of the sweet potato, and the dialogue at the end of the poem, what inference can be made about Mother’s thinking? _____

22. A **metaphor** is a comparison between two things that does not use like or as. Identify one simile and one metaphor from “Crisscrossed Packs.” _____

23. In addition to necessities, each family member packs one “choice” item in their bag before leaving Vietnam. What does Hà choose to take? Why does she take it?

24. What happens to Hà’s papaya tree before the family leaves Vietnam?

25. What are conditions like on the ship? _____

26. When the helicopter pilot comes aboard the ship, what news does he bring? _____

READING COMPREHENSION AND ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

Part II: AT SEA

1. Describe some of the challenges Hà and her family face on the ship as they flee Vietnam.

2. When Hà eats her ration of rice, what does she imagine? Why might she connect these two things “although one has nothing / to do with the other”?

3. After one week on the ship, what does Mother have Hà’s older brother do for the children onboard?

4. What is Khôi’s secret?

5. What does Hà give up in order to make Khôi feel better?

6. What do the doll and the chick **symbolize** for Hà and Khôi? Why is it important, then, that they throw these items overboard?

7. **Personification** means that human characteristics are given to objects. In “A Kiss”, two objects are personified and their kiss begins a party. What objects are personified as kissing and why is their kiss cause for celebration? _____

8. What does Hà notice about the soldier who helps her board the small boat to go to shore? Why does it stand out to her? _____

9. Where does Hà’s family land to wait in a camp? _____

10. What is nước mắm and how does it help the people in the camp? _____

11. What does the amethyst ring **symbolize**? _____

12. What three countries are options for Hà’s family’s relocation? _____

13. What do people need in order to leave the camp in Florida? What does Mother do to improve the family’s chances of leaving? _____

14. Where does Hà’s family go when they get a sponsor? _____

15. Describe the physical appearance of Hà’s family’s sponsor. _____

READING COMPREHENSION AND ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

Part III: ALABAMA

1. Why does Hà's family repack their bags after arriving in Alabama? _____

2. What does Mother say is the most important priority for the children now that the family is in America? _____

3. What does "the cowboy" bring to Hà's family to eat? What do they think of the meal?

4. Describe Hà's family's new house and furniture. _____

5. What are the rules Hà discusses in "First Rule," "Second Rule," and "Third Rule"? Why does she find them frustrating? _____

6. Explain the title of "Neigh Not Hee." _____

7. Why does Miss Scott laugh sadly at Hà on her first day at school? _____

8. In "Rainbow," what two physical traits does Hà notice about the other students? What does she notice about herself in comparison to them? _____

9. Based on Hà's description of her first school lunch, what food did she receive in the cafeteria? _____

10. What part of the school day does "Loud Outside" describe? What happens to Hà during this time? _____

11. How is Vĩ treated by others at school? How is his response different from Hà's?

12. How will brother Khôi help Hà? _____

13. What happens in class to make Hà feel dumb? _____

14. What does Vĩ ask to be called now? Why do you think he takes this name? _____

15. Identify two **similes** at the beginning of “Neighbors.” What do these similes reveal has happened to Hà’s home? _____

16. Who is the only neighbor who is welcoming to the family? What does she offer to do for them? _____

17. Why does Hà feel regret when she starts to learn English? _____

18. In “HA LE LU DA” what do Hà and each of her family members do at church? What does Hà realize at the end of the poem? _____

19. **Imagery** is descriptive language that uses one or more of the five senses: sight, sound, smell, touch, taste. Find examples of imagery from each of the five senses in “Can’t Help.”

SENSE	EXAMPLEs
Sight	
Sound	“day of shouts and HA LE LU DAs”
Smell	
Touch	
Taste	

20. Why is October 14 Hà’s “Most Relieved Day”? _____

21. What does Hà do that makes her feel “Smart Again”? _____

22. What does Miss Scott teach Hà’s class about Vietnam? What does she miss in her lesson? _____

23. What name does Pink Boy call Hà? Why is it offensive? _____

24. What experience has she had and what does Mrs. Washington know about Vietnam, both the good and the bad?

25. Why do the children chant “Boo-Da” at Hà? _____

26. What “Confessions” does Hà make to her mother? What does Hà believe her behavior has caused? _____

27. How does Hà finally escape the bullying of Pink Boy? Why do people start to treat her better at school? _____

28. What are the “three packages of something orange and dried” that Mrs. Washington gives Hà for Christmas? _____

29. What does Hà do with the present? What does Mother do with the gift? What lesson does Hà learn from the gift? How can this lesson apply to her new life in Alabama?

READING COMPREHENSION AND ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

Part IV: NOW ON

1. What gift does “Pem” (Pam) give Hà? _____

2. Why is Hà embarrassed by what she wears to school on the first day back from Christmas break? _____

3. What type of ceremony does Hà’s family hold? What sign leads Mother to decide to have the ceremony? _____

4. What career does each of Hà’s brothers want to have? _____

5. What is Mother’s prediction for the family for the year 1976? _____

