

A Bank of Comprehension Activities

Prediction – ask pupils to pool their knowledge about the religion of Hinduism. What do they already know? Based on this shared knowledge, what do pupils predict will happen in a story about a young Hindu girl? Show the title: *Looking for Lord Ganesh*. Does this confirm or alter the pupils' initial views?

Guided Reading – for questions that test a range of skills, see the separate Guided Reading worksheet, also available for download online. Questions test straightforward comprehension, inference, understanding of language, skills of prediction and summary and empathy.

Vocabulary – at the bottom of the Guided Reading resource are a list of 'challenge words' that pupils may find more difficult to understand. Pupils could arrange these in alphabetical order, look them up in the dictionary, record their findings and then search for synonyms and antonyms in a thesaurus.

Inference – focusing on the universal themes of friendship and fitting in, *Looking for Lord Ganesh* is ripe with opportunities for the development of inference skills. In particular, pupils could consider the events in the book from the perspective of various different characters and could fill in thought bubbles to show how these characters – Anika, Hadiya, Victor and Kayla – are feeling at a given point in the story. Pupils could also chart the development of Anika's feelings as the story progresses, using a simple flow chart to record their ideas.

Investigating language – the wisdom that Anika receives from Lord Ganesh is based on her own interpretation of Hindu mantras such as "the whole world is at your feet for your asking." Ask pupils to provide their own interpretation of this advice. Pupils could also look at some of the emotive similes in the story and think of their own alternatives: "Anika missed Mumbai so much it was like having a constant toothache" (pages 1-2) and "guilt nibbled at Anika's insides like a hungry mouse" (pages 13-14).

Discussion – *Looking for Lord Ganesh* could be the inspiration for multiple circle time activities based on pupils experiences of trying to fitting in, trying to be a good friend and working as a team. The ending of the book could also provide an interesting topic for discussion: has Anika been in contact with Lord Ganesh or did she know the answers to her problems all along? This could also lead on to a consideration of how we find the answers to our problems in the technological world of the twenty-first century – can Google tell us the answer for everything?

