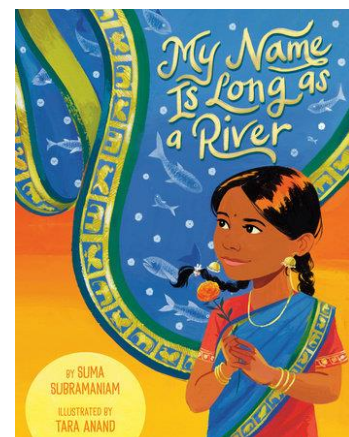


# educational TEACHING GUIDE

RESOURCES DESIGNED BY: the subway side

# My Name Is Long as a River

## teaching guide



### ABOUT THE BOOK

*What's so special about your name?*

Kaveri Thanjavur Jayalakshmi Ganesan doesn't think there is anything special about her very long name—in fact, she would prefer to be called “Kav.” But Paati reminds Kaveri that her name was inspired by her family's heritage, where she was born, and the powerful river they journey across for the Pushkaram Festival. Along the way, Kaveri's eyes and heart are opened to the beauty and magic her name holds.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

#### SUMA SUBRAMANIAM

Suma Subramaniam is the author of *Namaste Is a Greeting*, *She Sang for India*, *The Runaway Dosa*, *A Bindi Can Be...*, the *V. Malar* series, and other books for children and young adults. She has an MFA in Writing from Vermont College of Fine Arts. Suma lives in Seattle with her family and a dog who watches baking shows. Learn more at [sumasubramaniam.com](http://sumasubramaniam.com).

### PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Before reading *MY NAME IS LONG AS A RIVER* consider the following activities to engage your readers.

1. Take a picture walk of the story, flipping each page and pointing out the illustrations. Encourage students to predict what will happen in the story.
2. Host a class-wide discussion about the title. Why did the author choose that title? What might we be reading about?
3. Encourage students to create a mind-map, showing what they believe is important about their name.



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# EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

In *MY NAME IS LONG AS A RIVER*, an Indian girl discovers the power of her name as she travels along the river she was named after. The inquiry-driven activities in this guide apply to a variety of content areas and educational standards. They may be used for a range of learners and are aligned to the CCSS and NGSS.

## SOCIAL / EMOTIONAL

### *name poem*

Target Grade Range: 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

*MY NAME IS LONG AS A RIVER* reminds us how very special our names can be. Celebrate your students' names with this fun acrostic poem. This interactive social-emotional activity allows learners to appreciate the ways that their name makes them unique and special. It also provides an opportunity for students to learn more about each other.

## WRITING

### *name prompts*

Target Grade Range: 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

Our names are so much more than just a word. Suma Subramaniam drives home the importance of our names and how they have meanings that can reference our culture, family, and traditions. Encourage students to answer written prompts, either about the story or their own life. Cover a range of language and reading standards with this fun project!

## WRITING

### *river research*

Target Grade Range: 1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

We learn all about the Kaveri River and why it's important to the main character and Indian culture. Invite students to research an important river and write about their findings. This activity includes differentiated graphic organizers and writing paper for a range of students.





# EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

In *MY NAME IS LONG AS A RIVER*, an Indian girl discovers the power of her name as she travels along the river she was named after. The inquiry-driven activities in this guide apply to a variety of content areas and educational standards. They may be used for a range of learners and are aligned to the CCSS and NGSS.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

### *Kaveri River Flipbook*

Target Grade Range: 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

Learn more about the Kaveri River with this activity. Students will showcase their new learning of the Kaveri River by answering comprehension questions based on the book's back matter and piecing together an interactive flipbook.

## VOCABULARY

### *word match*

Target Grade Range: K – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

There are many Indian words included throughout the story. In fact, Suma Subramaniam provides readers with a glossary of Indian words, complete with definitions. Revisit the glossary in the backmatter section of the book. Review each word/phrase and definition. Then, students will use what they learned to match Indian words with their English definitions.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

### *how characters change*

Target Grade Range: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

We watch the main character change from start to finish in this story. Students will use this graphic organizer with this activity to capture how Kaveri Thanjavur Jayalakshmi Ganesan changed from start to finish. The graphic organizers have differentiated lined paper, allowing a range of students to complete this activity.

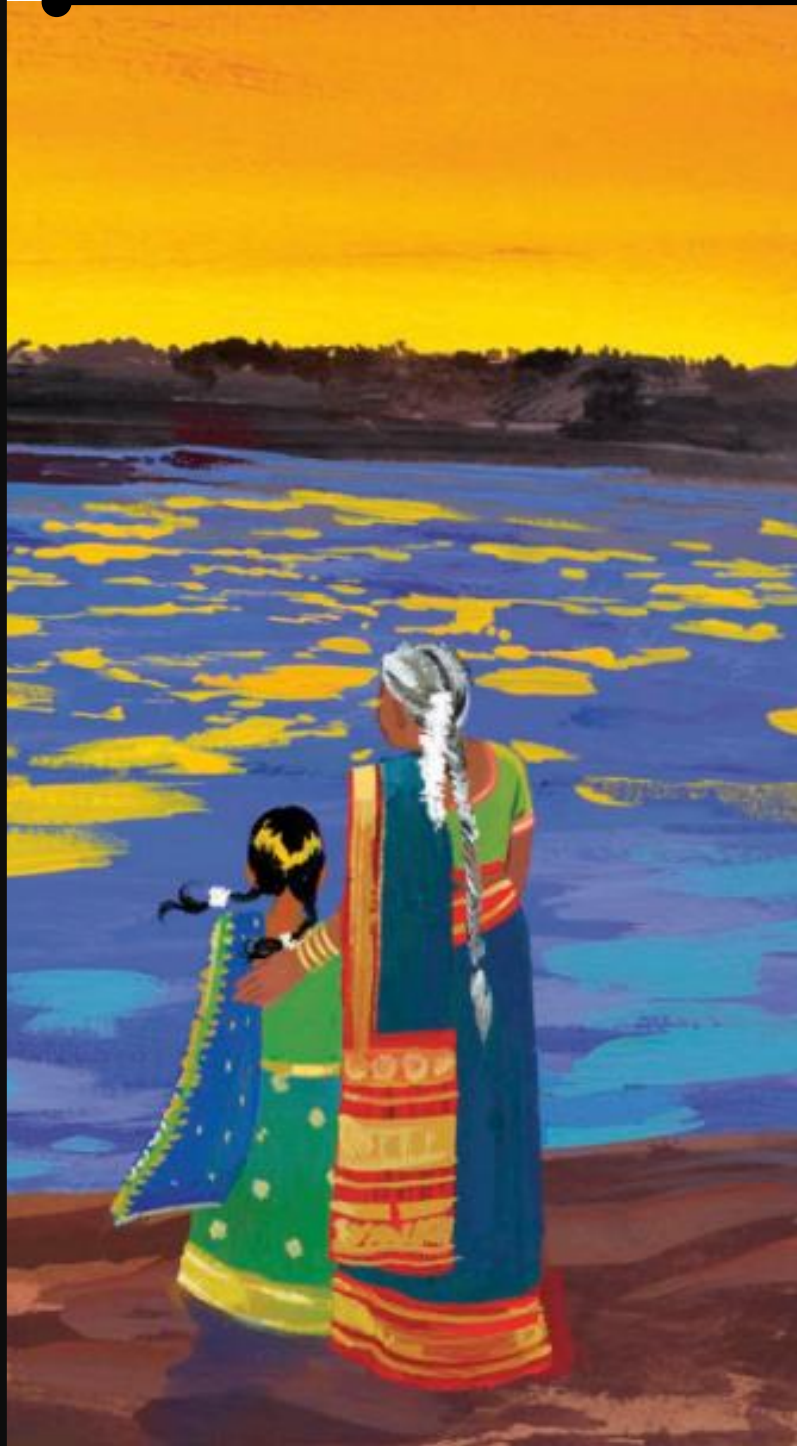


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# EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

In *MY NAME IS LONG AS A RIVER*, an Indian girl discovers the power of her name as she travels along the river she was named after. The inquiry-driven activities in this guide apply to a variety of content areas and educational standards. They may be used for a range of learners and are aligned to the CCSS and NGSS.



## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

### *heart of the story*

Target Grade Range: 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

An author's message differs from story to story. Students will explore the important message, or the heart of the story, with this English-Language Arts activity. Encourage children to use evidence from the text to support their thinking. Then, they can add a picture inside the heart.

The graphic organizers have differentiated lined paper, appropriate for students in a range of grade and ability levels.

## ART

### *book cover*

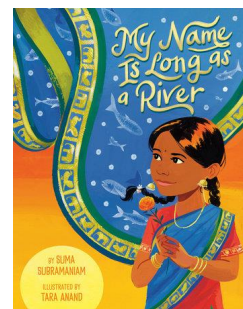
Target Grade Range: K – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

What better way to celebrate this fun story than with an art project? Have students design a new book cover, using their own name and a new simile. They can use their preferred art supply to decorate and color the book cover.

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# SOCIAL / EMOTIONAL ACTIVITY

## ALL ABOUT ME ACROSTIC



### Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.4

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.4

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.4

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.4

### You will need:

- White copy paper
- Pencils
- Art Supplies (crayons or colored pencils)
- Glue sticks
- Large colored construction paper



### Step-by-step to-do list:

1. Copy the **NAME POEM** template & portrait page on white copy paper.
2. Discuss with students what Kaveri Thanjavur Jayalakshmi Ganesan learned about what makes her name so special.
3. Encourage students to write an ACROSTIC poem about themselves using each letter in their name.
4. Then, they can draw a self-portrait to go along with the poem.
5. Remind students that an acrostic poem must use each letter in the word that's written vertically. The sentence or phrase should begin with each letter listed in their name.
6. After writing their acrostic poem and illustrating, they should glue both pages to a larger piece of construction paper (12x18).
7. Finally, have students share their poems with their classmates.
8. For younger students (1st grade and younger) you may want to complete this activity by having students draw pictures rather than write.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# NAME POEM

Think about the things that make your name. Use the letters of your name to create an acrostic poem about yourself. Use first letter of each line to write a word or phrase that shows something special about yourself. For example, C – Caring for others.

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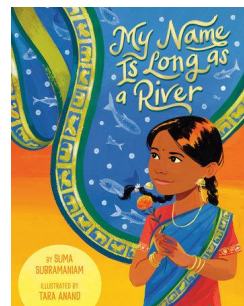
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

RESOURCES DESIGNED BY: *the sunny side*

# A PORTRAIT OF ME

# WRITING ACTIVITY

## NAME PROMPTS



### Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.8

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.8

### You will need:

- White copy paper
- Pencils



### Step-by-step to-do list:

1. Decide which **NAME PROMPT** writing paper works best for your students and copy on white paper.
2. Distribute the differentiated writing paper to students.
3. Read the written prompts aloud.
4. Students should use the lined paper to respond to each prompt.
5. Then, they can use their favorite art supply to color the picture.
6. You can also conduct a shared writing activity, where you model how to respond to the written prompt **WITH** students as they copy your notes and writing.
7. Finally, have students share their written prompts with a friend or the class.
8. For younger students (2nd grade and younger) you may want to complete this activity as a whole group or encourage students to draw rather than write.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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# KAVERI THANJAVUR JAYALAKSHMI GANESAN

What is the main character's name? What does she learn about her name? Why is it special so special? Use the lines to write then color the picture.

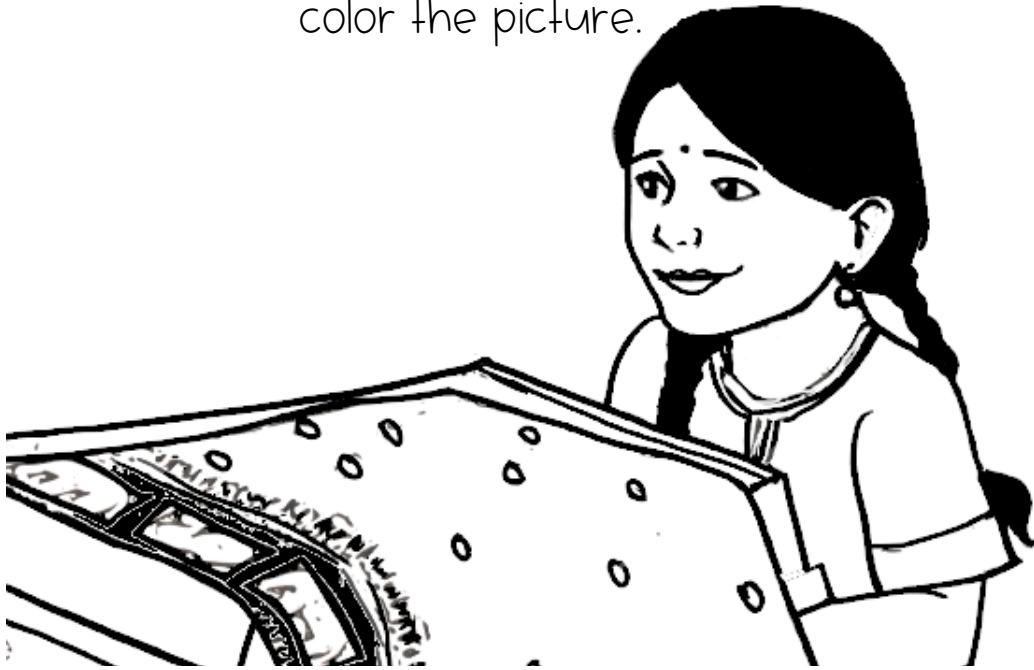


Name: \_\_\_\_\_

RESOURCES DESIGNED BY: *the sunny side*

# KAVERI THANJAVUR JAYALAKSHMI GANESAN

What is the main character's name? What does she learn about her name? Why is it special so special? Use the lines to write then color the picture.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

What is your name? What is the meaning of your name? Why is it special to you? Use the lines to write then color the picture.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

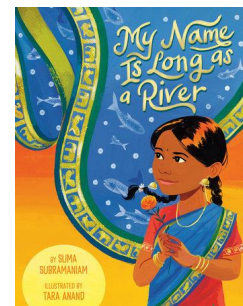
What is your name? What is the meaning of your name? Why is it special to you? Use the lines to write then color the picture.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed middle line. The lines are provided for writing the answer to the question.



# WRITING ACTIVITY

## RIVER RESEARCH



### Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.2  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.2  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2

### You will need:

- White copy paper
- Access to Chromebooks or iPads
- Pencils

### Step-by-step to-do list:

1. Decide which differentiated **RESEARCH PAPER** works best for your students and copy on white paper.
2. Distribute the fact graphic organizers and writing paper to students.
3. Flip to the backmatter section of **MY NAME IS LONG AS A RIVER** and read all about the Kaveri river.
4. Encourage students to research a different river (it may be helpful to provide a short list of well-known rivers).
5. Students should record the facts they learn about the animal they're researching (having access to technology like Chromebooks or I-pads works best).
6. Finally, have students write an informational paragraph on the writing paper by copying the facts and adding an introduction and conclusion sentence.
7. For younger students (1st grade and younger) you may want to complete this as a shared research project, where students copy your research.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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# RIVER RESEARCH

**RIVER:**

**FACT 1**

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**FACT 2**

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**FACT 3**

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**FACT 4**

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**SOURCE :**

\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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# RIVER RESEARCH

**RIVER:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**FACT 1**

\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**FACT 2**

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\_\_\_\_\_

**FACT 3**

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\_\_\_\_\_

**FACT 4**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**SOURCE :** \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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# RIVER RESEARCH

**RIVER:**

**FACT 1**

**FACT 2**

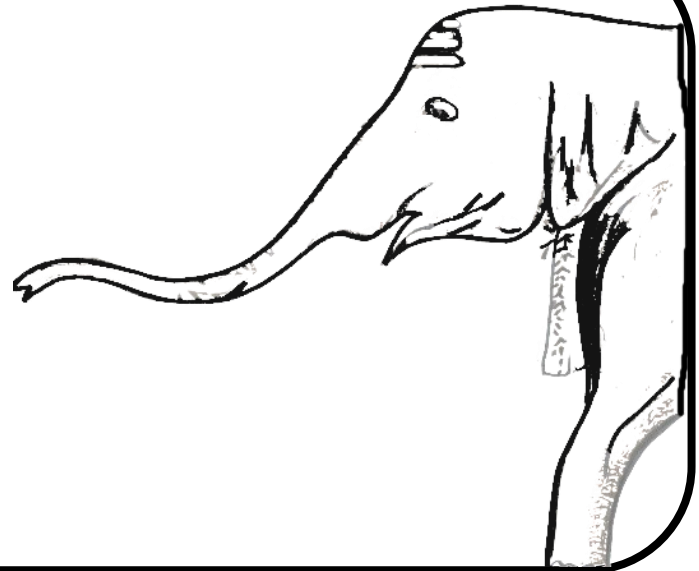
**FACT 3**

**FACT 4**

**SOURCE :**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# MY RIVER RESEARCH



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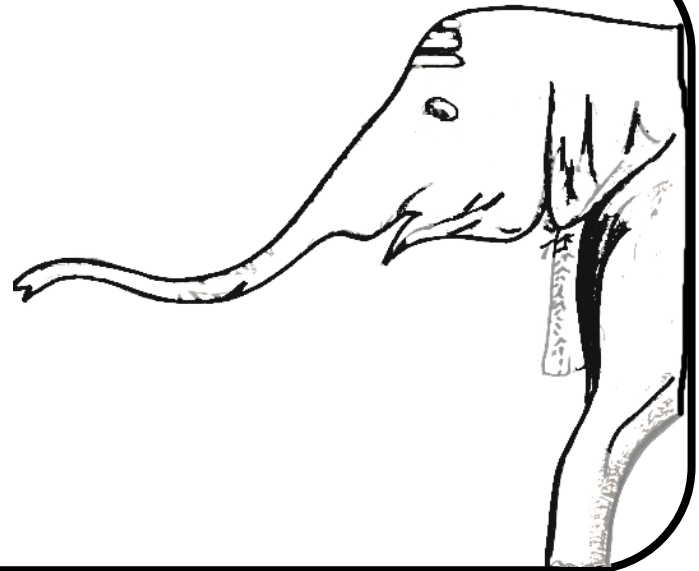
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

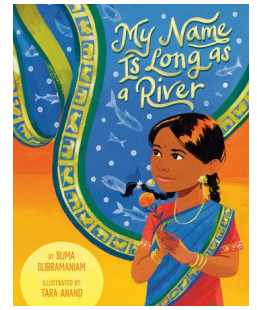
# MY RIVER RESEARCH



Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed middle line. There are five sets of these lines for writing practice.

# SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITY

## KAVERI RIVER FLIPBOOK



### Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.1  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.1  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.1  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.1

### You will need:

- White or colored copy paper
- Pencils
- Scissors
- Stapler
- Art Supplies (crayons or colored pencils)



### Step-by-step to-do list:

1. Decide which **KAVERI RIVER FLIPBOOK PAGES** work best for your students.
2. Copy the flipbook pieces on white or colored copy paper (copying the pages as a stapled packet works best).
3. Have students cut around the solid black lines of each flipbook page.
4. Discuss the Kaveri River – where it is, how large it is, and why it's important (see the answer key for specifics).
5. Students will write and respond to the above prompts on each flipbook page.
6. Have students stack the flipbook pages in order with the Kaveri River title page on top.
7. Staple (or if your students are old enough have them staple) the pages together at the top.
8. Students should cut apart and decorate the character header.
9. Then, glue the character template to the top of the flipbook.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# KAVERI RIVER FLIPBOOK

## Directions:

1. Gather the flipbook pieces.
2. Cut around the solid, black line.
3. Write about the Kaveri River – where it's located, how large it is, and why it's important.
4. Stack the flipbook pages in order with the Kaveri River title page on top.
5. Have your teacher staple the pages together at the top.
6. Cut apart and decorate the character header.
7. Then, glue the character to the top of your flipbook.

GLUE CHARACTERS HERE

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

# KAVERI RIVER

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# KAVERI RIVER FLIPBOOK

Where is the Kaveri River?

Where is the Kaveri River?

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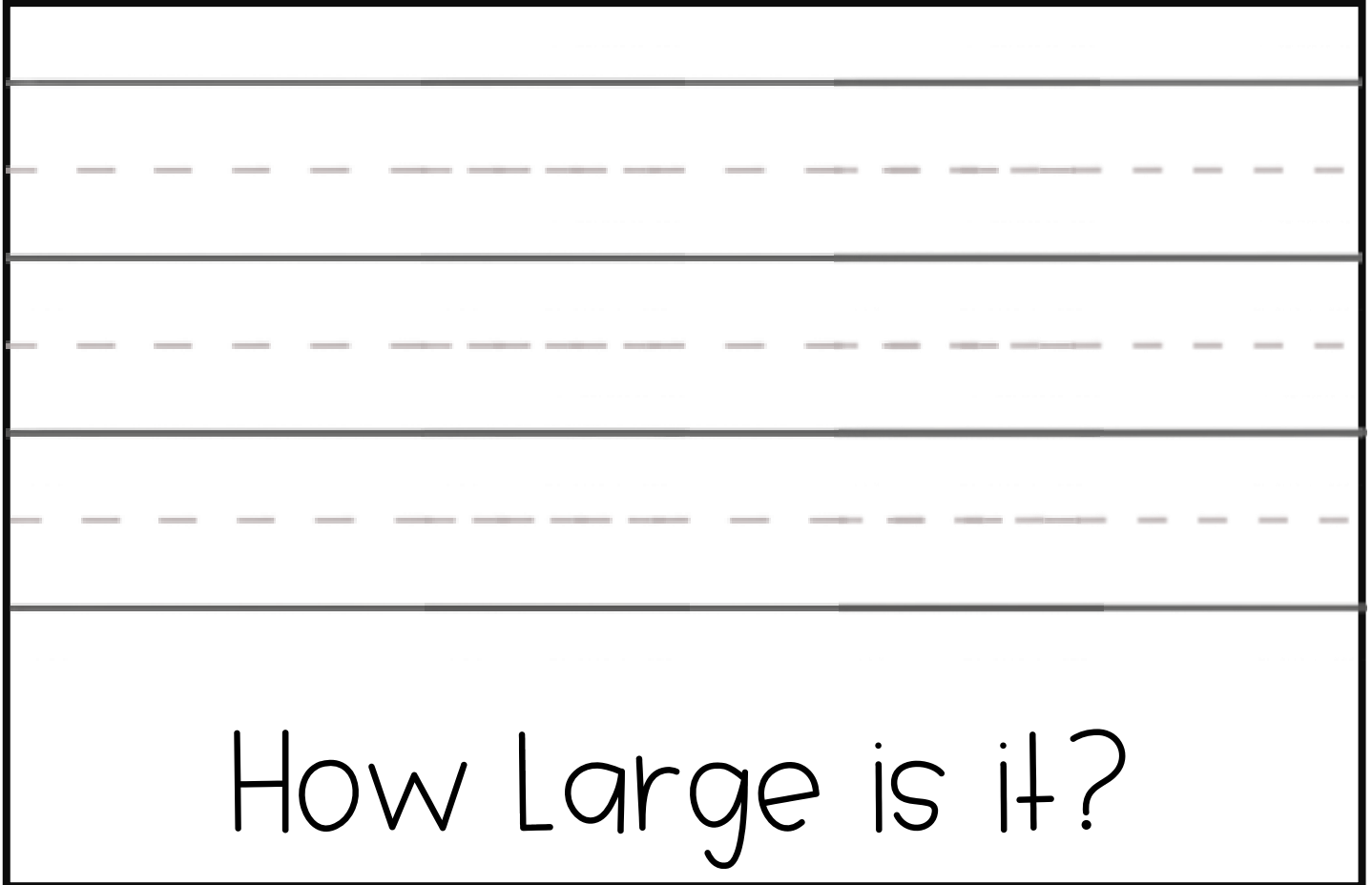
# KAVERI RIVER FLIPBOOK

Where is the Kaveri River?

Where is the Kaveri River?

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# KAVERI RIVER FLIPBOOK



How Large is it?

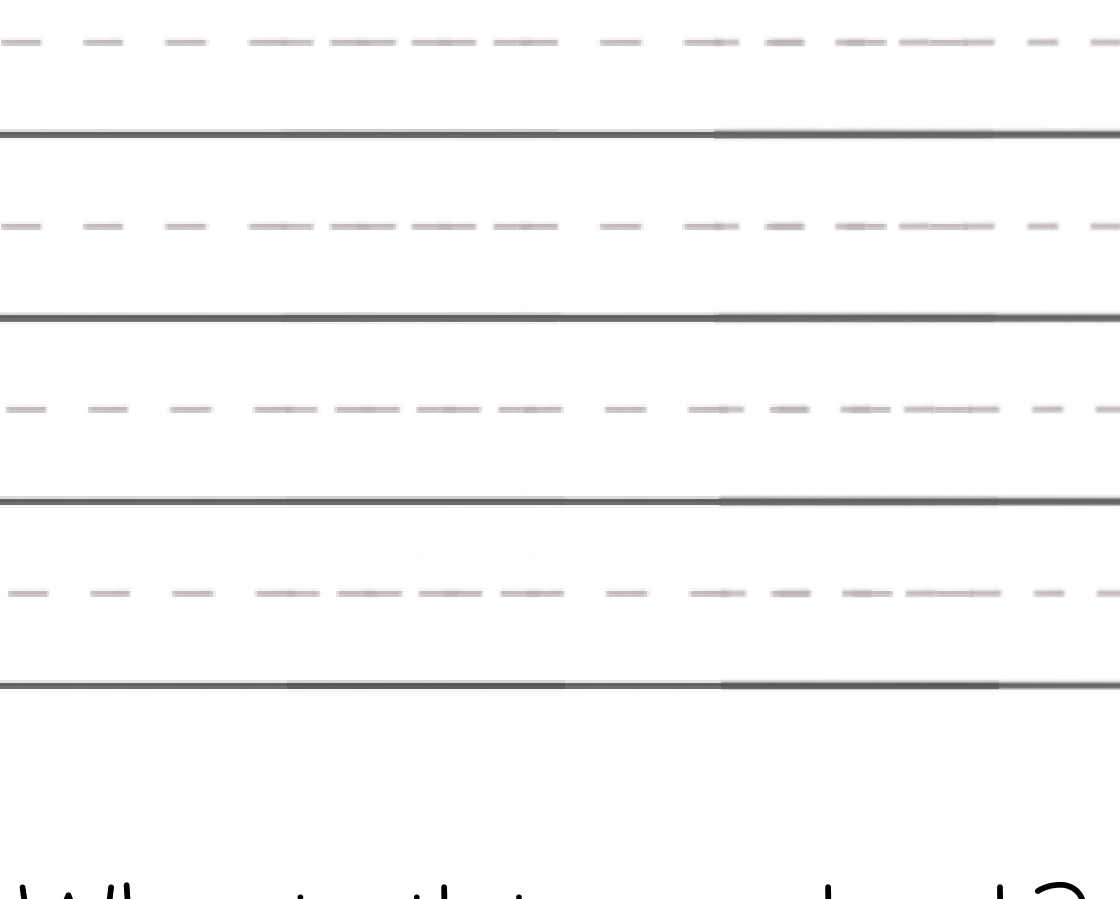
# How Large is it?

# KAVERI RIVER FLIPBOOK

How Large is it?

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# KAVERI RIVER FLIPBOOK



Why is it important?

# Why is it important?

# KAVERI RIVER FLIPBOOK

Why is it important?

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Copy character headers on white construction paper or copy paper. Students will cut apart and decorate the illustration of Kaveri. Then, glue it to the top of their flipbook.



# ANSWER KEY

## KAVERI RIVER FLIPBOOK

The Kaveri River extends for approximately 475 miles and is in South India.

Where is the Kaveri River?

The river brings cultivation to 250,000 acres of land, covering three states and a union territory.

How Large is it?

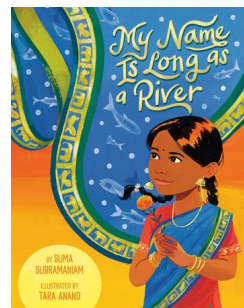
From the birth of a child to marriage and death, some people perform rituals that connect to the river. Some believe that taking a dip in the river will improve their physical and mental health.

Why is it important?

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# VOCAB ACTIVITY

## INDIAN WORD MATCH

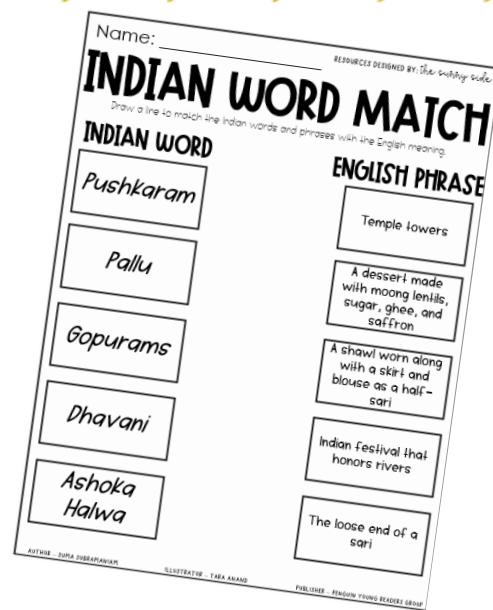


### Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.4  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.1.4  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.4  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.4  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.4  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5.4

### You will need:

- White or colored copy paper
- Pencils



### Step-by-step to-do list:

1. Copy the **INDIAN WORD MATCH** graphic organizers on white copy paper.
2. Flip to the back matter section of the story **MY NAME IS LONG AS A RIVER**.
3. Discuss the meaning of each Indian word/phrase and record the definition on the white-board.
  - **Pushkaram** – Indian festival that honors rivers
  - **Pallu** – The loose end of a sari
  - **Gopurams** – Temple towers
  - **Dhavani** – A shawl worn along with a skirt and blouse as a half-sari
  - **Ashoka Halwa** – A dessert made with moong lentils, sugar, ghee, and saffron
4. Distribute the match and encourage students to match the Indian words/phrases with the English meanings.
5. For younger students (1<sup>st</sup> grade and younger) you may want to complete this activity as a whole group or encourage students to draw rather than write.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

RESOURCES DESIGNED BY: *the sunny side*

# INDIAN WORD MATCH

Draw a line to match the Indian words and phrases with the English meaning.

## INDIAN WORD

*Pushkaram*

*Pallu*

*Gopurams*

*Dhavani*

*Ashoka  
Halwa*

## ENGLISH PHRASE

Temple towers

A dessert made  
with moong lentils,  
sugar, ghee, and  
saffron

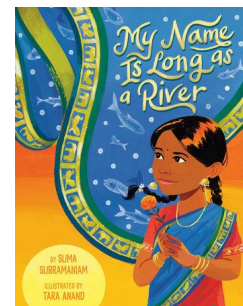
A shawl worn along  
with a skirt and  
blouse as a half-  
sari

Indian festival that  
honors rivers

The loose end of a  
sari

# ELA ACTIVITY

## CHARACTERS CHANGE



### Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3

### You will need:

- White copy paper
- Pencils

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

In the story Kaveri Thanjavur Jayalakshmi Ganesan's feelings changed. Write about how she changed from beginning to end and why?

### HOW CHARACTERS CHANGE

#### HOW DID SHE CHANGE?

How did Kaveri Thanjavur Jayalakshmi Ganesan feel in the beginning of the story? Why?	What caused Kaveri Thanjavur Jayalakshmi Ganesan to change?	How did Kaveri Thanjavur Jayalakshmi Ganesan feel at the end of the story? Why?

AUTHOR - SUMA SUBRAMANIAM ILLUSTRATOR - TARA ANAND PUBLISHER - PENGUIN YOUNG READERS GROUP

### Step-by-step to-do list:

1. Decide which **HOW CHARACTERS CHANGE** organizer works best for your students and copy on white copy paper.
2. Explain that in fiction stories like **MY NAME IS LONG AS A RIVER**, the main character's feelings typically change from start to finish.
3. Encourage students to explore how Kaveri Thanjavur Jayalakshmi Ganesan's feelings changed and why by writing or drawing in each box of the graphic organizer.
4. After students fill in each box, they can share and compare their thinking in partnerships or in small groups.
5. For younger students (1st grade and younger) you may want to complete this activity as a whole group together.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# HOW CHARACTERS CHANGE

In the story Kaveri Thanjavur Jayalakshmi Ganesan's feelings changed. Write about how she changed from beginning to end and why?

HOW DID SHE CHANGE?		
How did Kaveri Thanjavur Jayalakshmi Ganesan feel in the beginning of the story? Why?	What caused Kaveri Thanjavur Jayalakshmi Ganesan to change?	How did Kaveri Thanjavur Jayalakshmi Ganesan feel at the end of the story? Why?
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# HOW CHARACTERS CHANGE

In the story Kaveri Thanjavur Jayalakshmi Ganesan's feelings changed. Write about how she changed from beginning to end and why?

HOW DID CALVIN CHANGE?		
How did Kaveri Thanjavur Jayalakshmi Ganesan feel in the beginning of the story? Why?	What caused Kaveri Thanjavur Jayalakshmi Ganesan to change?	How did Kaveri Thanjavur Jayalakshmi Ganesan feel at the end of the story? Why?
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

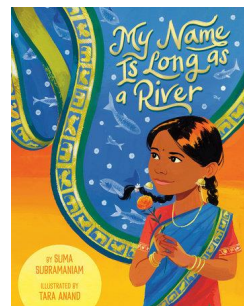
# HOW CHARACTERS CHANGE

In the story Kaveri Thanjavur Jayalakshmi Ganesan's feelings changed. Write about how she changed from beginning to end and why?

HOW DID CALVIN CHANGE?		
How did Kaveri Thanjavur Jayalakshmi Ganesan feel in the beginning of the story? Why?	What caused Kaveri Thanjavur Jayalakshmi Ganesan to change?	How did Kaveri Thanjavur Jayalakshmi Ganesan feel at the end of the story? Why?

# ELA ACTIVITY

## HEART OF THE STORY



### Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.2

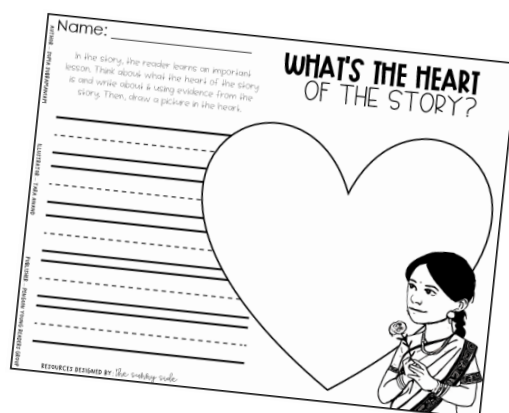
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2

### You will need:

- White copy paper
- Pencils
- Art Supplies (crayons or colored pencils)



### Step-by-step to-do list:

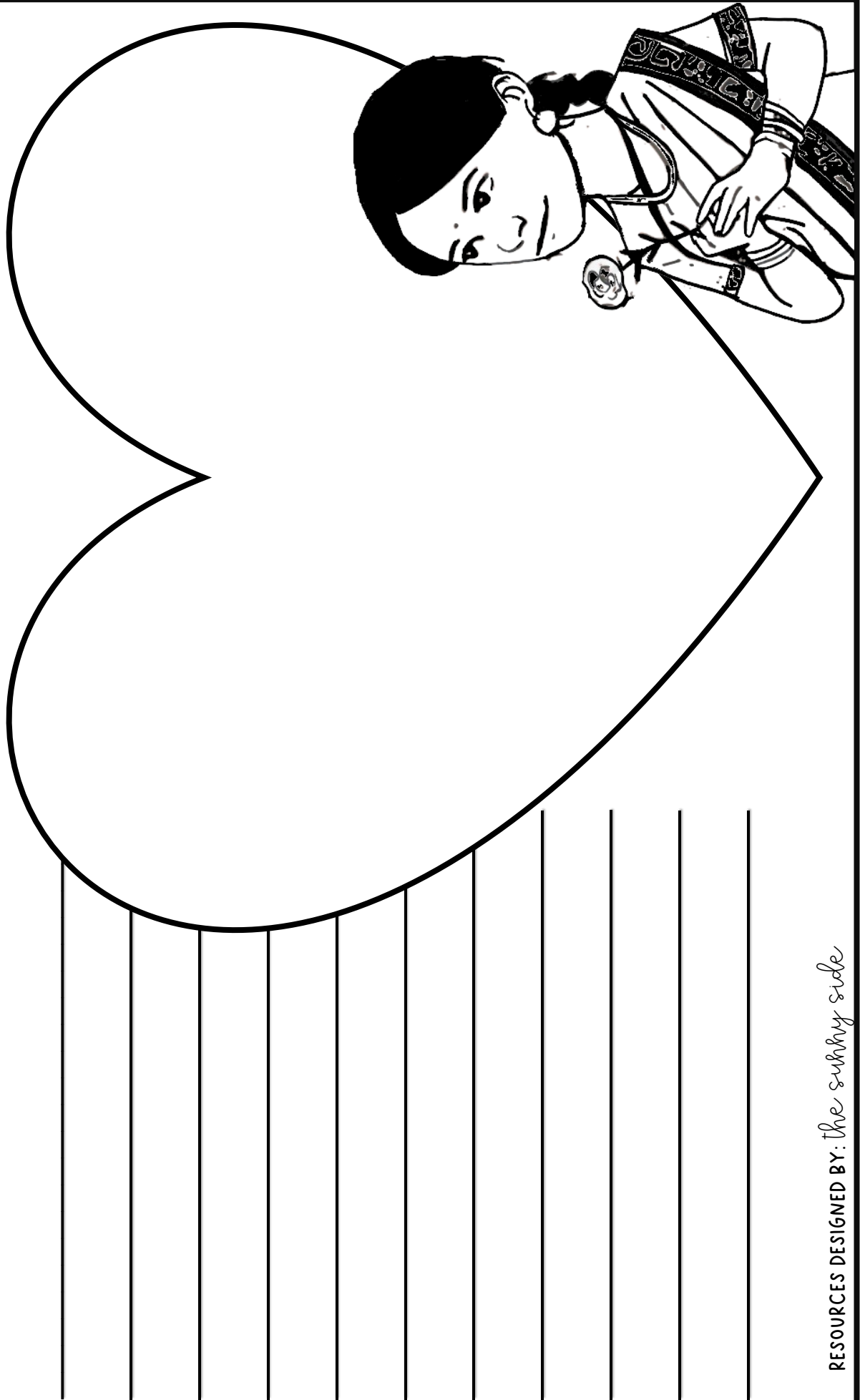
1. Decide which HEART OF THE STORY organizer works best for your students and copy on white paper.
2. Distribute the graphic organizers to students.
3. As a class discuss how finding the heart of a story is determining what the author hopes to teach you after having read. We can also think of the lesson.
4. Brainstorm the heart of the story using evidence from the text to support their thinking (e.g., if the heart of the story is all about being courageous, then the evidence from the story should show how the author hopes to teach you a lesson in being brave).
5. Write the author's lesson on the lines and draw a picture to show the lesson in the heart.
6. Allow students an opportunity to share with other students in class.
7. For younger students (1<sup>st</sup> grade and younger) you may want to complete this activity as a whole group or encourage students to draw rather than write.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

In the story, the reader learns an important lesson. Think about what the heart of the story is and write about it using evidence from the story. Then, draw a picture in the heart.

# WHAT'S THE HEART OF THE STORY?



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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# WHAT'S THE HEART OF THE STORY?

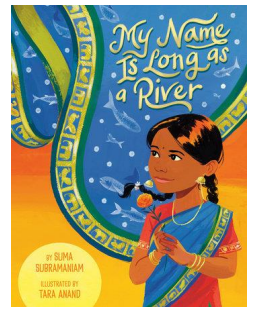
In the story, the reader learns an important lesson. Think about what the heart of the story is and write about it using evidence from the story. Then, draw a picture in the heart.

Handwriting practice lines (solid top and bottom lines with a dashed middle line) and a large heart shape for drawing.

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# ART ACTIVITY

## BOOK COVER ART



### Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.5  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.5  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.5  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.5  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.5  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.5

### You will need:

- Glue sticks
- Scissors
- White cardstock or copy paper

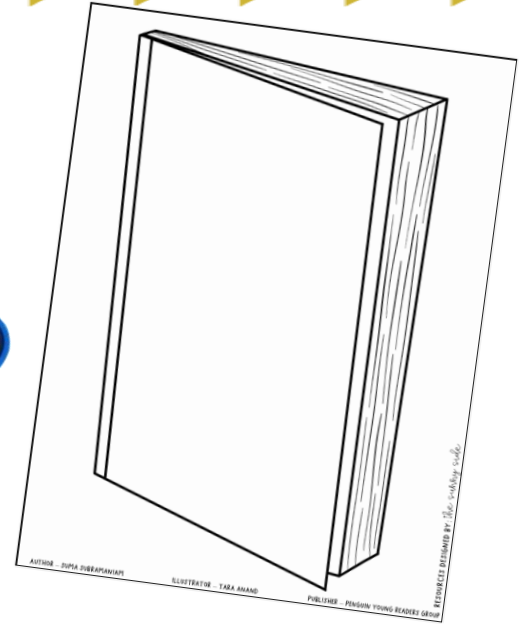
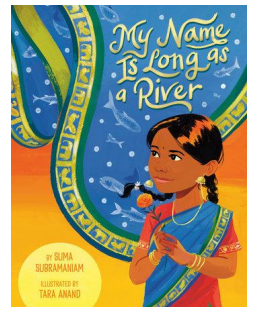


### Step-by-step to-do list:

1. Copy the **BOOK COVER ART** templates on white copy paper or cardstock for durability.
2. Show students the picture sample and explain that they will recreate the book cover using a new simile to describe their own name.
3. Once they decide on a title, students will decorate and cut their book covers out.
4. Then, they can share their book cover with a classmate, small group, or whole class.

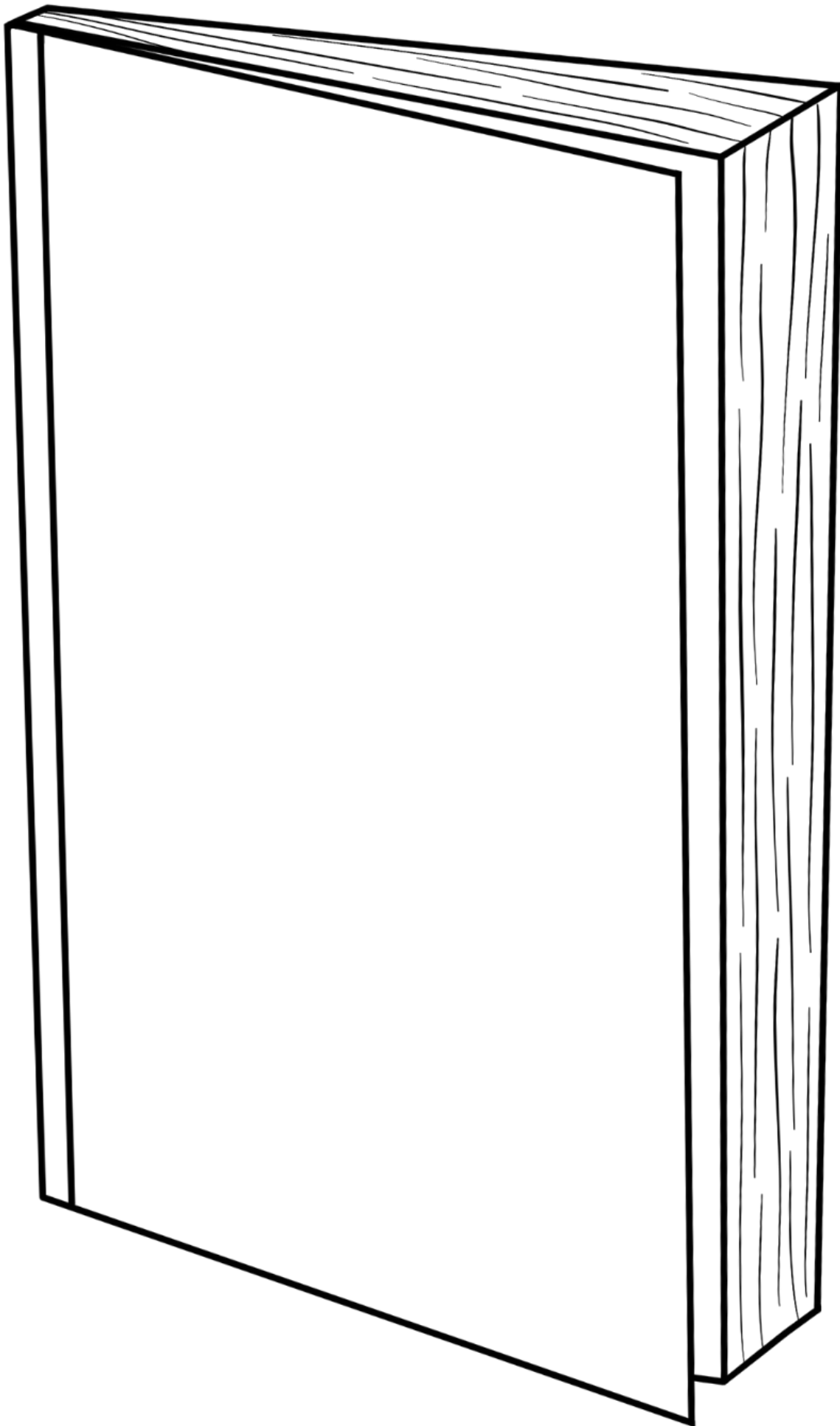
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# BOOK COVER ART



Copy book cover template on white copy paper or cardstock for durability. Students will use scissors to cut apart the template and design a new book cover using their own name.

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# CREDITS PAGE

## The author – Suma Subramaniam

Suma Subramaniam's interests in writing for children are centered around STEM/STEAM related topics as well as India and Indian heritage. When she's not recruiting by day or writing by night, she's volunteering for We Need Diverse Books and SCBWI or blogging about children's books. She lives in Seattle with her family and a dog who watches baking shows. Learn more at <https://sumasubramaniam.com>.



## CONNECT WITH SUMA



## The illustrator – Tara Anand





Tara Anand is an illustrator and visual artist from Bombay, India, based in New York City. She graduated from School of Visual Arts in 2022 and has since worked on editorial and children's book projects. She works primarily in gouache and loves to read in her spare time. Learn more at [taraanandart.com](http://taraanandart.com).






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