

# Lowji Discovers America

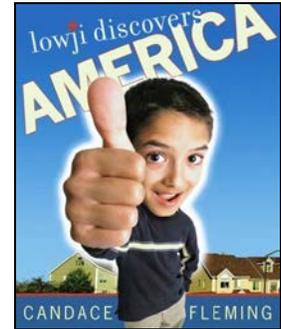
by Candace Fleming

## Classroom Guide

This guide can be used for whole or small group instruction and can be modified for independent work as well.

## Over-arching Themes

Friendship  
Positive attitude: looking for silver linings  
Resourcefulness  
Immigration



## Companion Books

*Bridge to America* by Linda Glaser (Houghton Mifflin, 2005)  
*Bringing Asha Home* by Uma Krishnaswami and Jamel Akib (Lee & Low, 2006)  
*Home of the Brave* by Katherine Applegate (Feiwel & Friends, 2007)  
*I Was Dreaming to Come to America* by Veronica Lawlor (Viking, 1995, NF)  
*Immigrant Kids* by Russell Freedman (Dutton, 1980, NF)  
*The White Elephant* by Sid Fleischman (Greenwillow, 2006)

## Characters

Lowji Sanjana	main character; Lowji is a boy from Bombay, India who moves to a small town in Illinois during the summer of his ninth year.
Farokh Sanjana or “Bape”	Lowji’s father
Sooni Sanjana or “Ma”	Lowji’s mother
Jamshed	Lowji’s best friend in India.
Landlady Crisp	the woman who owns and manages Lowji’s apartment building in Illinois.
Mrs. Pendergast	the elderly neighbor lady that lives on the first floor of Lowji’s building in Illinois.
The Doves	the newlywed couple that lives on the second floor of Lowji’s building
Ironman and Blossom	the muscleman and his pet pig
Tamika	the girl on the blue bicycle

## Before Reading

### Activating Prior Knowledge

- ◆ What do you know about India? (India Activity)
- ◆ Have you ever had to move to a new home or a new school? What was it like? Can you share some of your thoughts and feelings? (Moving Activity)

- ◆ Do you know anyone that has moved to America from another country? Where were they from? What challenges did they have when they first came to America? (Friends from Other Lands Activity)

### Setting the Purpose/Thinking about Themes

- ◆ **Hopes, Dreams and Positive Attitudes:** Based on some the thoughts and feelings you talked about in **Moving Activity** the challenges in the **Friends from Other Lands Activity**, brainstorm some goals and wishes that Lowji might make and write them on origami birds. Fly the birds outside or hang them in the classroom. (Use books such as *Origami Birds* by Michael LaFosse or Internet Sites for directions.)
- ◆ **Forming Friendships:** Lowji meets many new people in his adventures and develops many new relationships. Through his journey, he develops a circle of friends. As you read the story, keep a record of the friends Lowji makes in his adventures.
- ◆ **Predictions:** Write a letter to Lowji to encourage him about coming to America. Share with him some of the positive aspects of living in a small Midwestern town.

### During Reading

- ◆ Students will keep a “Silver Lining” journal and record passages from the story each time Lowji discovers a new “silver lining” in his life.
- ◆ Create a poster sized, silver covered cloud. As the students read through the story and discover different “silver linings” in Lowji’s life and record them in their journals, it will also be recorded on the cloud.

### Mystery in the Woods

- ◆ After moving to his new home, Lowji encounters a mystery in the woods. As you read, record the clues. After each clue, make a prediction about the mystery. Can you solve it before the author shares the answer?

### After Reading

- ◆ Select one or more activities from the Activity Menu.

## India Scavenger Hunt Activity

This activity can be done in the school Media Center or Computer Lab. It should take about 20 minutes to complete. Students can be put into pairs or teams of three. Each team will have one question to answer and bring back to the group. The goal is to complete all the answers within 10 minutes. Students can use the Internet or the Reference section of the library to find the answers to the questions. After the teams have returned with the answers, spend some time discussing their answers.

<p>How many miles is Bombay, India from your school?</p> <p>(Hint: You can use an airport website to get miles from one major airport to another. From Minneapolis to Bombay: 6,886 miles.)</p>	<p>Find a map of the World. Find the country of India. Find Bombay. Find America. Find Illinois. As you look at the distance that Lowji must travel, what are some questions that come into your mind?</p>
<p>How many different languages are spoken in India?</p>	<p>What kinds of clothing might children living in India wear? How is this the same or different from children living in America?</p>
<p>What movies are popular in India?</p>	<p>If you lived in India, what type of pet might you have?</p>
<p>What kinds are food do people in India like to eat?</p>	<p>Lowji's and his family are believers in an ancient religion called Parsis. Share a few important facts about this religion.</p>

**Moving Activity**  
**(This can be done as a large group brainstorming.)**

Imagine that your parents informed you that you were going to move to another country in June! You would be in another country, where they spoke another language, and away from all of your friends. Make a list of pros and cons about the move. Pros are the positive aspects of moving. Cons are the negative aspects of moving.

PRO	CON

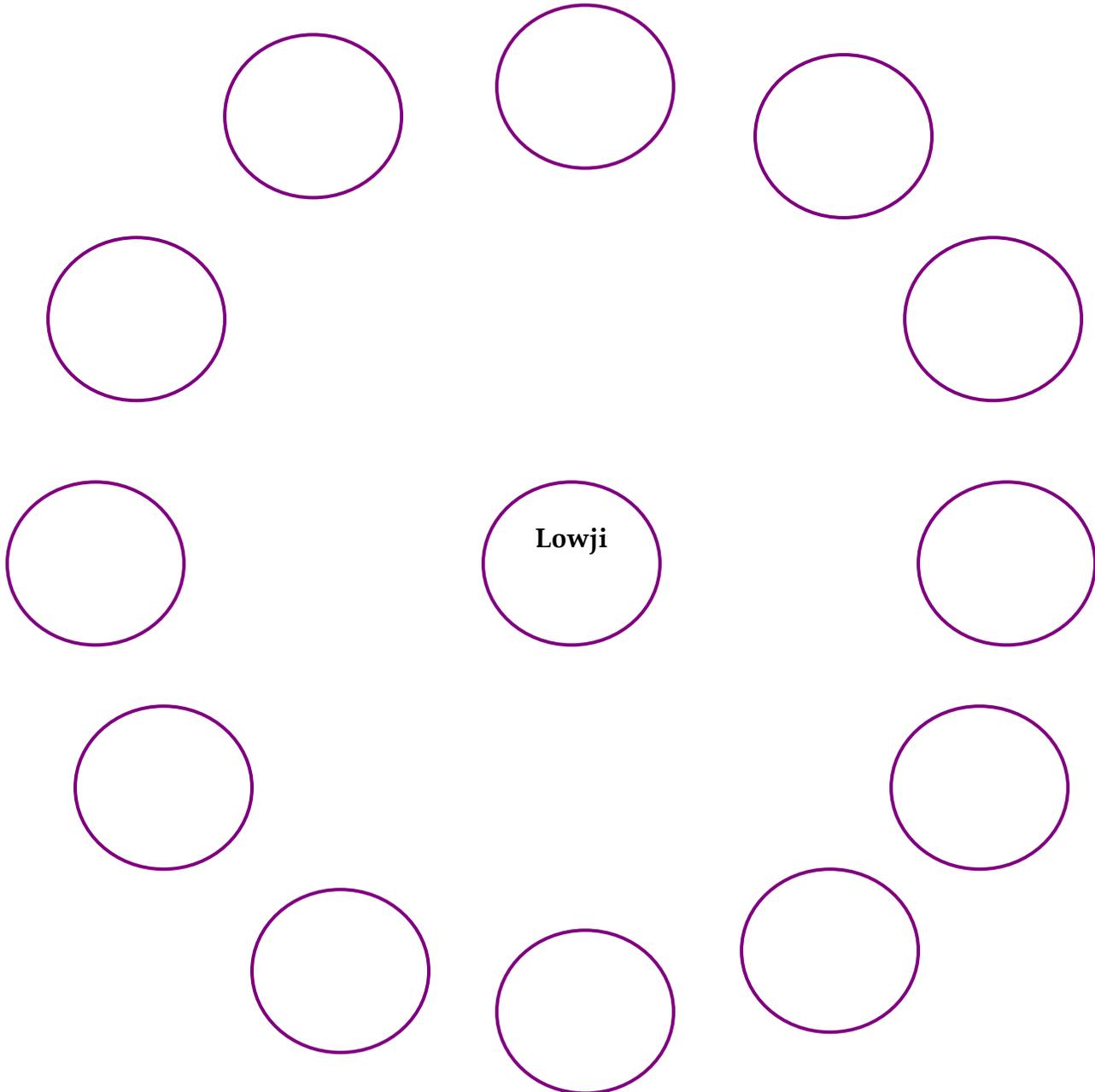
## Friends from Other Lands

Ask each student to think of one person they know who has moved here from another country. It can be a friend their age or an adult friend of the family. This can be a homework assignment. They can ask their friend or ask their parents for help at home and report back. Fill in the chart as a short brainstorming activity or as something developed over time.

First Name of Friend	Their Country of Origin	Challenges

## A Circle of Friends

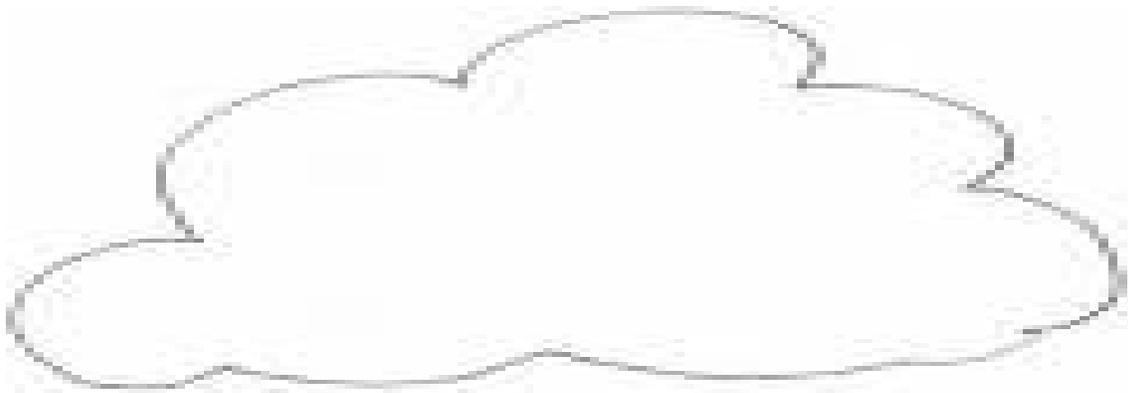
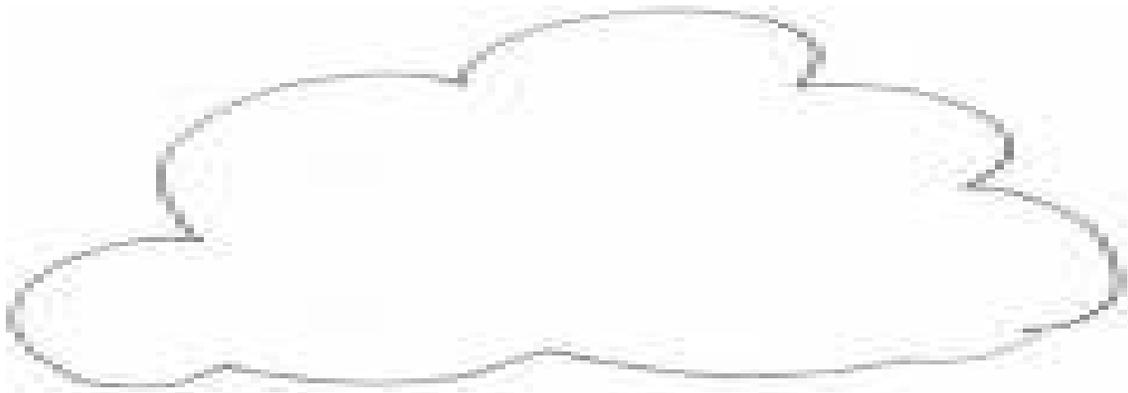
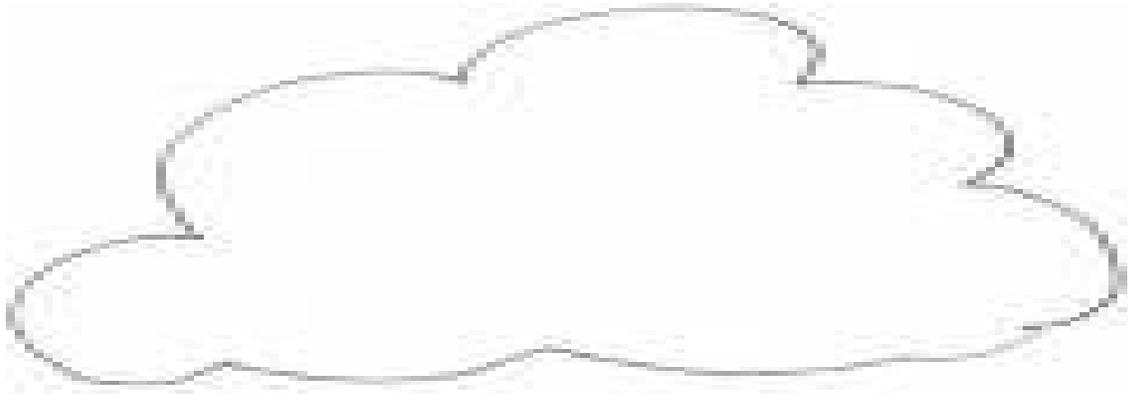
As we go through our lives, we develop friendships. Some friendships are long and lasting. Other friendships are short-term. Lowji meets many new people in his adventures and develops many new relationships. Through his journey, he develops a circle of friends. As Lowji makes a new friend, add that character to the friendship circle.



## Lowji's Silver Linings

### A Journal

As you read, you will discover that Lowji finds silver linings, or positive things that happen in his life to make him happy. When you encounter this in the story, place a sticky note in the book. When you complete the page or chapter, go back, find the section or passage where Lowji shares his discovery, and write it in your journal.



# Mystery in the Woods

After moving to his new home, Lowji encounters a mystery in the woods. As you read, watch for clues and references to the mystery in the woods. When you come to anything about the mystery, mark the spot with a sticky note. When you finish the section or chapter, go back and record the clues on this record sheet. After each clue, make a prediction about the mystery. Can you solve it before the author shares the answer?



Clue: \_\_\_\_\_

Page Number: \_\_\_\_ Prediction: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Clue: \_\_\_\_\_

Page Number: \_\_\_\_ Prediction: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Clue: \_\_\_\_\_

Page Number: \_\_\_\_ Prediction: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Clue: \_\_\_\_\_

Page Number: \_\_\_\_ Prediction: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Mystery in the Woods (cont'd)



Clue: \_\_\_\_\_

Page Number: \_\_\_\_ Prediction: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Clue: \_\_\_\_\_

Page Number: \_\_\_\_ Prediction: \_\_\_\_\_

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Clue: \_\_\_\_\_

Page Number: \_\_\_\_ Prediction: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Activity Menu

<p><b>Dictionary</b></p> <p>Lowji learns a number of new words and phrases like “or else” and “bummer” while in America. These words are expressions with special meanings and are called slang or colloquialisms. Create a dictionary of current slang terms used in your school and peer group, including definitions. Include at least ten words.</p>	<p><b>Solving Problems</b></p> <p>Lowji encounters many problems in the story. Select one of the problems and use the Steps to Problem Solving Chart to analyze the problem and Lowji’s solution.</p>	<p><b>Letter</b></p> <p>Read the letter that you wrote to Lowji prior to reading the book. Think about all of the events that happened in the story. Write another letter to Lowji. Share your favorite parts of his adventures.</p>
<p><b>Character Traits</b></p> <p>Lowji has a number of amazing and interesting personality traits. Use the Character Trait Sheet to identify these wonderful qualities.</p>	<p><b>Free Space</b></p>	<p><b>Map It</b></p> <p>How much will it cost to buy a round trip air ticket for Lowji to journey home to Bombay to visit friends during spring break? Use an online trip planner, like Expedia.com or Travelocity. Figure out how long it will take to get there in days and hours. Print off the information. Compare prices with two or more companies.</p>
<p><b>Comparing Fairy Tales</b></p> <p>Fairy Tales from India Go to the library and read two fairy tales or folk tales from India. Select one of the stories and do a Venn diagram to compare how the story is similar and different from a fairy tale you grew up hearing. A. K. Ramanujan and Joseph Jacobs have translated many fairy tales from India.</p>	<p><b>Rules!</b></p> <p>Lowji was very unhappy with the “No Pets!” rule at his apartment building in Bombay. He was even more disappointed to find it was a rule in Hamlet, Illinois. Make a list of the top ten rules that are in your life that you would most like to change if you had the chance. Put them in the order of most annoying rule to least annoying rule!</p>	<p><b>Music from India</b></p> <p>Go to a website such as <a href="http://www.musicindiaonline.com">http://www.musicindiaonline.com</a> and listen to several selections of popular music. Write a short review. Did you like the music? Why or why not? How is it the same as the music you listen to and how is it different?</p>

# Problem Solving Chart

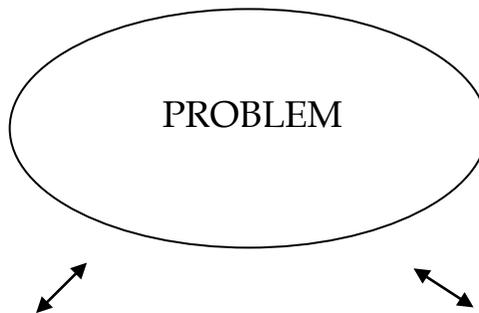
Think. Evaluate. Do not react. Take a step back and answer some questions:

What can you *see* that causes you to think there is a problem?

Where is it happening?

Why is it happening?

How is it happening?



With whom is it happening?

When is it happening?

## Problem Solving Chart (continued)

Write a sentence that states the problem clearly.

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How does Lowji solve the problem?

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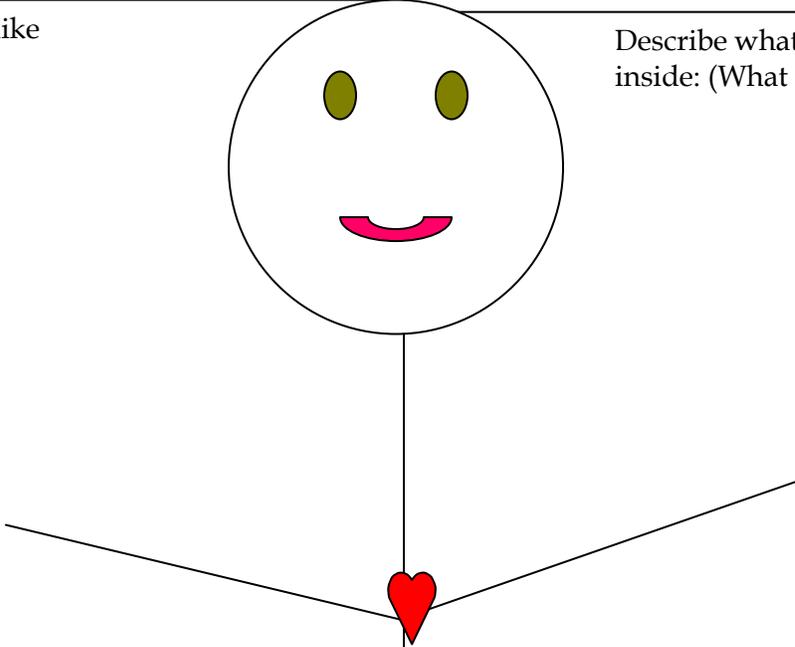
Was that the best way to solve the problem? Why or why not?

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What other ways might the problem have been solved?

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## Lowji's Character Traits

<p>Describe what Lowji is like On the outside: (What do you see?)</p>		<p>Describe what Lowji is like on the inside: (What does he feel or think?)</p>
<p>Describe who Lowji is for others: (What does he do for those in his life?)</p>	<p>Describe Lowji's hopes and dreams: (Who does he wish to be?)</p>	