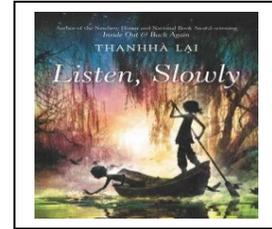


## **Listen, Slowly**

**By**

**Thanhha Lai**



*Grade Levels:* Grade 6-9

### *Synopsis*

Twelve year old Mai/ Mia is from a first generation family of Vietnamese immigrants now living in California. She has planned her exciting summer activities including the beach and an interesting romance possibility when her parents inform her that she will be going to Vietnam with her 79-year-old grandmother instead. Her grandmother hopes that she can find out what really happened to her husband during the Vietnam War. Mai's parents think this trip will be a great opportunity for Mia to learn about her culture and to meet her family. She has a difficult and miserable introduction to the geography, climate, customs, unusual food and language of this remote area but after resigning herself and becoming more curious about her family and the country she involves herself in this new life with humor and insight. Her devotion to her grandmother is heartwarming and Mia eventually matures enough to accept the cultural differences and the importance of family and tradition.

*Author Website:* <http://www.thanhhalai.com>

### *Lesson Ideas:*

- Vietnam Past and Present- Drawing from the book, have students brainstorm topics about Vietnam to research, such as geography, major cities, transportation, food, clothing, and different aspects of the war. Working in pairs, have them glean information from the novel and expand on what they find, using at least one print and one Internet source.
- Telling Stories -As a class, generate a list of questions for students' families. Have each student choose a family member and interview him/her about what life was like during the Vietnam War or another conflict that had an impact on his/her life. Ask students to share stories with their classmates and discuss the similarities and differences of what they learned from their family members.

### *Common Core Standards:*

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy RL 5.2 Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.3 Compare and Contrast two or more characters, settings or events in a story, drawing on specific details in the text.

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy RL 5.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 6 topic or subject area.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy RL 5.8 Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s).

*Suggested Companion Titles:*

- *Chasing Secrets* by Gennifer Choldenko
- *Full Cicada Moon* by Marilyn Hilton
- *Blackbird Fly* by Erin Entrada Kelly
- *Dumpling Days* by Grace Lin
- *Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park

*Professional Reviews:*

- *Booklist*, (November 1, 2014)
- *Kirkus Reviews*, (November 1, 2014)
- *New York Times* (May 8, 2015)
- *Publishers Weekly*, (December 1, 2014)
- *School Library Journal* (January 1, 2015)