

*Social Studies Tie-Ins, Discussion Questions and Research Prompts*

*by Padma Venkatraman*

Where is India? How large is it in areal extent? How diverse is it culturally? How large is its population?

Where is Tamil spoken? How old is this language? Where in India is the state of Tamil Nadu? How many cities does this state have? Find Chennai / Madras, the city that inspired THE BRIDGE HOME, on a map.

Viji and Rukku move from a rural area into an Indian city. How is the population of India split between urban and rural centers? How is your nation's population divided in this way? Do you live in a village or a town or a city? What is the difference between a village a town and a city?

When was the modern nation of India created? What are some challenges facing this country? What are some of India's strengths and assets?

At the teashop, Viji and Rukku meet Kitchen Aunty who complains about the lack of water in the city. Do you know what the water cycle is? Have you any idea how the world's water is distributed? How many people have access to freshwater? In what ways, globally, do we waste water? Which cities and countries in the world often face drought and why? Are such challenges growing, and if so, why?

How does India's political system compare with your nation's political system? What are some similarities and differences?

How much do you know about the history of child welfare laws? Conduct Research on Children's Rights in your nation and around the world. What child labor laws exist? What protections don't exist that you think are important?

Why do you think some nations are not as "wealthy" as others? Do you think the history of the world has impacted the economics of certain nations, and if so, how?

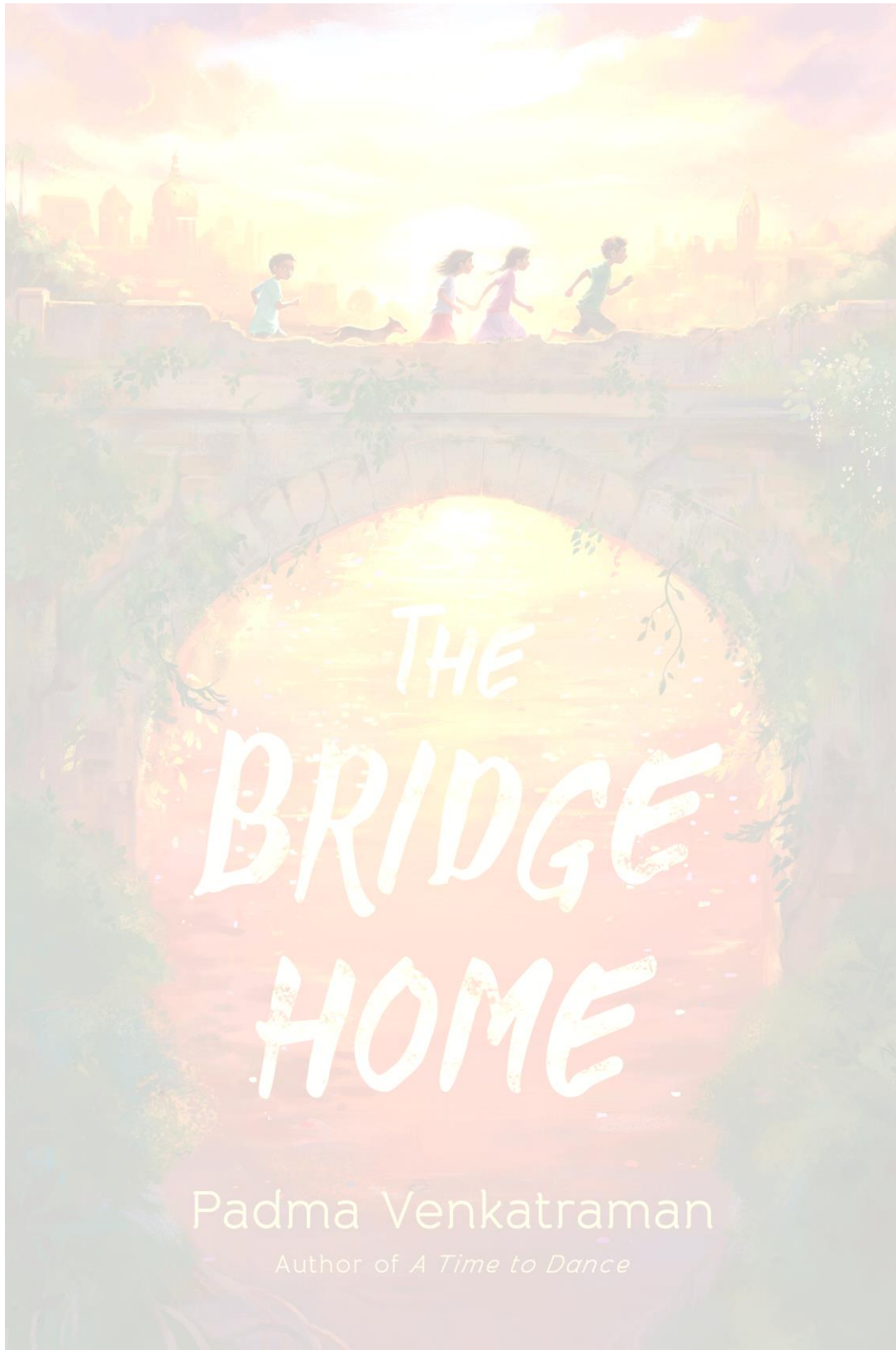
How can nations help care for all their citizens? What hurdles may they face in trying to ensure that every human being has access to health care and education? How does your nation handle health care? Is education mandated and/or accessible for all children?

In THE BRIDGE HOME, the children salvage recyclable material from garbage heaps. What do you know about how much waste is produced in the place where you live? Does your country export or receive trash? What can you do, personally, to reduce the level of waste you create? Do you separate your rubbish? What happens to things you put in the recycling bin?

What are renewable resources? How can you encourage the use of sustainable and renewable resources?

How many people can you name who encouraged peace and nonviolence around the world? Read books to find out more about them. Conduct Research on national and international organizations such as the United Nations, Doctors Without Borders, Engineers Without Borders and so on that try to create a more peaceful world.

As you debate some of the above topics, remember to respect others' opinions and if you disagree, please practice doing so with respect. Tolerance and acceptance begin with us and how we relate to one another even as we express our views.



THE  
BRIDGE  
HOME

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