



### American as Paneer Pie Discussion Questions

Please note, you can find a pronunciation guide for American as Paneer Pie at <https://supriyakelkar.com/pronunciation-guide/>

1. The first line of the book is “It’s funny how something as small as a dot could matter so much. But it did.” What do you think Lekha means by this? Can you find more examples of this phrase being true throughout the book?
2. Merriam-Webster defines a **microaggression** as “a comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group (such as a racial minority).” There are several examples of microaggressions in American as Paneer Pie. What are the consequences of microaggressions?
3. To “**other**” someone is to treat or think of a person or a group of people as alien to oneself or one’s group. What are some examples of Lekha’s peers othering her? Who does Lekha other?
4. The author describes the Indian food Lekha loves in great detail. Why do you think that is?
  - a. How does Lekha feel when she sees Avantika bring food that Lekha loves to lunch?
5. There isn’t a glossary in the book but with context clues, we can figure out what the Hindi and Marathi words mean. Why do you think the author made these decisions?
6. What are the **intracommunity** issues, within the South Asian/South Asian-American community, that are addressed in this book?
7. How does Lekha’s friendship with her family friends, Maya and Tanvi, challenge her? How does it change her over the course of the story?

8. Why do you think the author chose to include Maya's ajoba's story of what happened when he first came to America in 1967?
9. How does Lekha feel when she swims? Is her confidence different? Why do you think that is?
10. What are Avantika and Lekha's strengths and weaknesses? What do they learn from each other?
11. Lekha's dad has a quote he likes to say to her: "Himmat karke badha kadam, tere saath chalega har aadam." Loosely translated, it means to bravely take that first step forward, and everyone will be right by your side, because we're all in this together. How does that quote apply to Lekha's life? How does it apply to yours?
12. What does it mean to be an **ally**? Who is an ally in Lekha's life? What mistake does that ally make? What would have been a better way for Noah to be an ally after the hateful words are written on Lekha's garage? What are ways you have been an ally? What are ways you can be an ally?
13. Oakridge is not a very **inclusive** place. What are ways you can make your town more inclusive? How about your school?
  - a. Many school calendars are set up so that school is off for certain holidays. What holidays are you going to school on?
  - b. What holidays are celebrated by students in your school?
14. Lekha **finds her voice** through her writing. What are forms your voice can take?
15. Look at the cover (illustration by Abigail Dela Cruz, designed by Laura Lyn DiSiena). What symbolism do you see there?

