

Example text: Cultural folktales

Watermelon

Many years ago, during King Hung's reign, there lived a young orphan boy who was adopted by the King and named Mai An-Tiem.

Under the King's careful guidance, Mai An-Tiem became known for his strength and hard work. He had everything he could ever want: good farming land, plentiful crops, a beautiful house and a loving wife.

However, not everyone was pleased with Mai An-Tiem's success. Some were jealous of him. They spread rumours about how greedy and boastful he was. When the King heard these rumours, he decided to teach Mai An-Tiem a lesson in humility and test his resourcefulness at the same time.

The King decreed that Mai An-Tiem and his family be exiled to a remote island in the East Sea.

Once on the island, Mai An-Tiem noticed sea birds dropping some small, black seeds onto the beach. He decided to try and grow the seeds into plants, hoping that they might be edible.

In the following months, the seeds grew into a creeping, green plant. Mai An-Tiem and his family were amazed by their hard, jade-coloured skin and their sweet red inside. Each time they ate one of the fruits, Mai An-Tiem used a sharp stone to carve his name and location into the skin and then he set it afloat in the sea. They were found by sailors who came to the island to trade rice and other goods for the delicious fruits, which had become known as 'watermelon'.

Eventually King Hung heard the story of the fruit that floated on water and the family that grew them. He knew immediately that it must be Mai An-Tiem and it made him regret his actions.

He invited Mai An-Tiem and his family to return home and share their knowledge of how to grow watermelons – which they did.