

FOR STUDENT READERS

This novel was inspired by untold generations of Native American heritage. *Red Thunder* illustrates the importance of passing on family and cultural traditions as well as the life lessons learned through experience and relationships. The following topics and questions are intended to create the opportunity for a shared reading experience and group discussion—within the classroom, study group, or the family environment.

- 1.** Sun Boy explains the many traditions of his people and their different purposes. In what ways could these traditions help us in today's world?
- 2.** Sun Boy yearns to become a respected warrior. Why is the warrior such an honored position in Schi'tsu'umsh society? What characteristics define the warrior role in this novel?
- 3.** Animals are a significant part of Native American culture. What are some of the animals mentioned in *Red Thunder*? In what ways do they factor into the telling of this story?
- 4.** "They were our elders. They sacrificed so very much for us." Throughout the novel, Sun Boy and Rainbow Girl show great respect for their elders. What lessons did you learn from their relationship with their elders?
- 5.** Matheson says, "The backdrop to this story is part of our genuine oral history." His writing style mirrors the classic form of oral storytelling. Why do you think Matheson may have chosen to use this timeless way to tell his story?