

CTYOnline

YOUNG READERS SERIES

“On Our Own” Syllabus

Please note: Parents should review the books in each series before deciding on a theme that will be most interesting and appropriate for their child. Students taking “On Our Own” will read *A Single Shard* by Linda Sue Park, *Crispin: The Cross of Lead* by Avi, and *The Thief Lord* by Cornelia Funke.

Instructions for Lesson One

1. Begin guided reading of *A Single Shard* by Linda Sue Park, preferably reading in the following reading chunks:

Pages 3-24 (Chapters 1-2)

Pages 25-48 (Chapters 3-4)

Pages 49-72 (Chapters 5-6)

2. Post ONE of the following Blog assignments to the Discussion Blog:

- a. Using the explanations of 1st Person [Point of View](#) found in the terms [Narrator](#) and [Point of View](#) in the [Glossary](#), pretend you are a character in *Shard* and write a 100-250 word diary account from “your” 1st person [point of view](#) describing some event that occurs in the book.
- b. Pretend you are Tree-ear and write a 100-250 word letter of gratitude to another character in the story expressing Tree-ear’s appreciation.

3. Contribute three (or more) thoughtful posts to the Discussion Board in response to any of the following questions:

1. **Setting:** The unnumbered page before page 3 lets us know that the [Setting](#) (see [Glossary](#)) of the book is a small village on the west coast of Korea, mid- to late 12th century. Does this [setting](#) make you more or less interested in the book you are about to read? Are you concerned whether you will be able to relate to people from that long ago and perhaps that far away?

2. **A Kind of Stealing:** In the first chapter, why did Tree-ear wait until the man reached the bend in the road before telling him that he was losing rice from his container? Do you think that he should have told the man earlier? Why? Was Tree-ear's waiting until the bend to tell the man a kind of stealing? Explain why or why not.
3. **Positive Outlook:** What do you think your outlook about life would be if you had to sell all of your possessions and live under a bridge, foraging for food each day? Do you admire Crane-man for his positive outlook or think he is crazy?
4. **Luck and Learning:** Many people think that some one who is particularly good at something is just "lucky" or "born that way." In contrast, Tree-ear's experience with learning how to cut and carry wood and clay is an excellent example of the "learning curve" that takes place when people learn new skills. According to this theory, as people perform a task more often, they become better at it: They become more physically fit and mentally confident, make fewer mistakes, create shortcuts, and figure out improvements. Have you ever experienced the "learning curve" effect in your own life or observed it in others? Explain.
5. **Inference:** In page 34, "a hot lump rose in Tree-ear's throat" Why? What [Inference](#) (see [Glossary](#)) does the author want the reader to make?
6. **Two and Four Legs:** What does Crane-man mean on page 36 when he comments "when I leave this world, I will have two good legs and no need [for a crutch]? What does Tree-ear mean when he adds "Some of us will have four good legs?"
7. **Winter:** What do you think of Crane-man and Tree-ear's practice of moving from the bridge to sleeping in a pit every winter (pg. 55)? Why do you think that they did not go to the monks and beg for a warm place to stay during the winter?
8. **Orphans:** Why do you think orphans are considered bad luck in many societies? Do you think that they are considered bad luck in your culture?
9. **Kang's Idea:** Do you agree that if Tree-ear would tell Min about what he had seen in Kang's workshop, that he would be stealing Kang's idea? Crane-man responded on page 64 that "once a man has revealed his idea to others, it is no longer his alone. It belongs to the world." Do you agree? Do you think it should be a matter of common decency or law enforcement that should stop Tree-ear from spreading the news of Kang's new idea?
10. **Similes/Metaphors:** Do you like the combination [Simile/Metaphor](#) on page 65 that "All went about their work with their faces tighter, as if the news of the emissary's impending visit had pulled the string of village life taut" Would you prefer the [simpler](#) statement, "Before the emissary's visit, the villagers became more tense"? Why or why not?

Note: You are provided with a list of "50 Mind-Expanding Vocabulary Words from *A Single Shard*" that you can use to help better understand *Shard* and increase your knowledge of vocabulary words in general. Crossword puzzles are also included to help reinforce your knowledge of these useful vocabulary words. **Working on the crossword puzzles is an optional—not required—activity!**

Instructions for Lesson Two:

1. Complete guided reading of *A Single Shard* by Linda Sue Park, preferably reading in the following reading chunks:

Pages 73-95 (Chapters 7-8)

Pages 96-119 (Chapters 9-10) and 149-152 (Author's Note);

Pages 120-148 (Chapters 11-13)

2. Post the following blog assignment to the Blog:

Read the “Interview with Newbery Award Winner Linda Sue Park” and the “About the Author” (both can be found at the very end of the book). Write a 100- 250 word letter to the author, telling her what you liked and didn't like about the book and any questions you have about the author, her writing in general, and this book in particular and this book's characters. You may want to include whether you would be interested in reading other books written by her.

3. Contribute three (or more) thoughtful posts to the Discussion Board in response to any of the following questions:

a. **Regrets:** Do you think that the fox that Crane-man saw on his way to the temple was more a good or bad influence in Crane-man's life? Do you think Crane-man would have been happier if he had received the monk's aid? Do you think that Crane-man himself had regrets?

b. **Crane-man and Min: Similar or Different:** Crane-man and Min both suffered from some bad breaks and disappointments in their lives. How did their approaches to their hardships and suffering differ? What could Tree-ear learn from both of them?

c. **Two Statements:** What is Crane-man's point on page 92 when he makes a distinction between the two statements “Min has some work that must be transported—for an audience at the royal court” and “I am going to the capital –to Songdo?”

d. **One Hill at a Time:** Crane-man advises Tree-ear on page 93 that “Your mind knows that you are going to Songdo. But you must not tell your body. It must think one hill, one valley, one day at a time. In that way, your spirit will not grow weary before you have even begun to walk. One day, one village, That is how you will go, my friend.” Have you ever had an experience in your own life (or observed in the life of another) that would confirm the wisdom or usefulness of Crane-man's advice? Explain.

e. **Not My Son:** Are you surprised at Min’s statement on page 95 to Tree-ear that “you are not my son”? Would you have changed your mind about going to Songdo for Min if you were Tree-ear? Why or why not?

f. **Rusty Voice:** On page 106, after he was given a monkey Tree-ear had made for him, Crane-man “started to speak, but the sound of his voice was rusty and he shook his head instead.” What [Inference](#) (see Glossary) does the author want the reader to make?

g. **Falling Flowers:** Why do you think that Crane-man so admired the “Falling Flowers” women in Puyo? Do you think that leaping into death is a good way to show true courage?

h. **Tree-Ear's Parents:** Once Tree-ear came to Songdo, he considered looking for the monk who might still remember something about his parents sending him to Ch’ulp’o as a toddler. Are you surprised when he decides not to try? Do you think he should have at least tried to find the monk in order to find out more about his parents?

i. **New Name:** At the end of the book, Tree-ear is happy when he is given a new name. Are you surprised? Would you be willing to change your name?

j. **Happy Ending:** Do you consider the book as having a happy ending? Why or why not?

Note: You are provided with a list of “50 Mind-Expanding Vocabulary Words from *A Single Shard*” that you can use to help better understand the book and increase your knowledge of vocabulary words in general. Crossword puzzles are also included to help reinforce your knowledge of these useful vocabulary words. **Working on the crossword puzzles is an optional—not required—activity!**

Instructions for Lesson Three:

1. Begin guided reading of *Crispin: The Cross of Lead* by Avi, preferably reading in the following reading chunks

Pages 298-302 (Historical Note) (Note: This interview is available in an attached .pdf file called Additional Reading Material for those whose edition of the book does not contain the Historical Note. For ease in reading, print out the 5 page file.)

Pages 1-27 (Chapters 1-6)

Pages 27-56 (Chapters 7-11)

Pages 56-82 (Chapters 12-18)

2. Post ONE of the following two blog assignments to the Discussion Blog:

- a. Write a literary “rap.” Choose a character from *Crispin* or *Shard* and write a 12-20 line rhyming description of the character or the character’s actions during a specific event. You may do this in the form of three or four *Limericks* (see **Glossary**) with an AABBA *Rhyme Scheme* (see **Glossary**) or a 12-20 line “rap” using any *Rhyme Scheme* of your choice (AABBCC... is particularly easy).
- b. Write a 100 - 250 word [Letter to the Editor](#) or [Editorial](#) (see Glossary) complaining or explaining about the Steward’s treatment of the serfs and common people in the village.

3. Contribute three (or more) thoughtful posts to the Discussion Board in response to any of the following questions:

- a. **Kings:** In *Crispin’s* world of 14th Century England, people believed in the divine right of kings: the king was only the king because God had willed it so and therefore, to go against the king was to go against God. If the king was at the top, the clergy, the nobility, and the knights were the middle class, whose duties were to support the king who, after all, was seen as being God’s representative on earth. The serfs were the lowest class of medieval society, and they were not even allowed to leave the land on which they worked. Although serfs had no rights, they suffered from many obligations and heavy taxes. They were also harshly punished when they broke any rules. Missing a day of work or criticizing those in authority were serious offenses. Even deer hunting to prevent one’s family from starving was forbidden because all property was thought to belong to the king or the nobility. Punishment ranged from whipping to imprisonment, to a cut-off hand, or even death by hanging. Do you think any society in the 21st Century has such harsh and unbending rules? Any examples? Do you think that the laws would be fairer if they were written by an elected legislature, enforced by other elected officials, or if punishment was decided on by a jury of common people?
- b. **Crispin’s [Point of View](#):** Review the explanation of 3rd Person [Point of View](#) found in the terms [Narrator](#) and [Point of View](#) in the Glossary. *The Broken Shard* was written from the 3rd person perspective. In contrast, *Crispin: the Cross of Lead* is written in the first person, that is, from the perspective of Asta’s son himself. In which story (3rd person or 1st person) would you expect there to be more information about the main character’s thoughts and feelings? In which story would you expect the knowledge of events and the thoughts and feelings of other characters to be more limited? Why?
- c. **Beginning Tone:** In the very beginning of *Crispin*, “A steady, hissing rain had turned the ground to clinging mud. No birds sang. No bells tolled. The sun hid behind the dark and lowering clouds.” The author is using [Imagery](#) (see Glossary)

to set up a certain feeling or tone for this part of the book. Describe the feeling or tone.

- d. **Deserving Punishment:** In the end of Chapter 2, Asta's son again prayed to God seeking forgiveness for his sinful life. What did he consider his sins to be? Do you consider him as leading a particularly sinful life for which he deserved God's punishment? Why do you think the boy was so convinced that he deserved punishment?
- e. **Shunned:** Both Tree-ear and Asta's son were poor orphans who were shunned by other children. Is there any group of children that you know of or have read about who are shunned for circumstances out of their control?
- f. **Bravery:** Both Tree-ear and Asta's son had never left their small village until their early teens. Would you be different if you only knew the people of your neighborhood and school? Do you think that Tree-ear and Asta's son would be eager to see the rest of the world if they weren't forced to by outside circumstances? Do you consider yourself more adventurous than either Tree-ear or Asta's son? Is it easier to be brave and adventuresome when you have some knowledge of the outside world?
- g. **Wolf's Head:** Asta's son found out in Chapter 8 that the steward had declared him "a wolf's head." What does that mean? Do you think anyone today is ever treated as if they were "a wolf's head?" Can you think of any criminal in the modern world that would deserve to be treated as a "wolf's head?"
- h. **Asta's Secrets:** Why do you think that Asta never told her son that she had named him Crispin? Why do you think she would keep a secret the fact that she could read and write? What do you think that Crispin meant by his statement that "the things the priest had said made my heart feel like a city under siege (*Crispin*, 42)? This statement is an example of which literary term from the Glossary?
- i. **Crispin vs. Tree-ear:** In Chapter 13, Crispin comments that "I, who had never really had to make important choices about anything—now I had to decide everything for myself. The result was that I stayed where I was...I spent my time in an aimless, crushing sadness, consumed by an alternating dread and desire that I might be caught. If I were caught, at least my misery would have ended." (*Crispin*, 60-61). How would his misery have ended if he was caught? Do Crispin's feelings remind you of Tree-ear's feelings during one part of *The Single Shard*? What do the boys have in common? Do you think that real teenagers ever feel such feelings of despair? What did the boys do that ultimately made them feel better?
- j. **Great Mortality:** In Chapter 15, Crispin encounters a deserted village whose inhabitants had been killed by the "Great Mortality," a devastating 14th Century plague that killed up to two-thirds of the European population. According to Crispin, "the cause of this blight was well known: God had sent it as punishment

- for our sins” (*Crispin*, 68). Modern historians argue about the cause of the Black Death, but their explanations involve factors such as bacteria, virus, global climate change, rodents, and lack of sanitation. Why do you think Crispin and his contemporaries “knew” the cause of the Great Mortality was punishment for their sins? Do you think 14th Century Europeans were more sinful than people today?
- k. **Mottos:** In Chapter 16, Bear says that the king’s motto is “it is as it is,” but Bear’s own motto is “Let it be as it may be!” (*Crispin*, 75). What is the difference?
 - l. **Bear's Personality:** The end of Chapter 18 is an excellent place to stop and describe what you know of Bear’s personality so far. Make a prediction about Bear’s influence on Crispin in the future: Will Bear help or hurt Crispin’s struggle to become safe and free?
 - m. **Asking Questions:** Why does Bear act as if Crispin had offended him when the boy told him that asking questions doesn’t matter “because you’re already my master forever” (*Crispin*, 85).
 - n. **Two Fools:** What do you think Bear means when he tells Crispin that “the only difference between a dead fool and a live one is if the dead one has a deeper grave?” (*Crispin*, 90).
 - o. **Society's Rules:** In Chapter 18, Bear explains to Crispin that the dead man he had seen rotting on the gallows at the crossroad had been punished for holding back from his master a pound of wool to sell so that he could feed his sickly child. In Chapter 21, Bear explains that his own father had paid the fees necessary for Bear to become a monk because he caused too much trouble and ate too much when he was 12 years old. Who was the better man according to 14th Century society’s rules? What kind of society would create such rules?
 - p. **Is Bear Mad:** One of the interesting things about a 1st person account is that often the author will portray the [protagonist](#) as believing something while persuading the reader to believe something else altogether. At the end of Chapter 21, Crispin is “convinced more than ever that Bear was mad” (*Crispin*, 100). Are you (the reader) convinced that the Bear is mad? Explain your answer.

Note: You are provided with a list of “50 Mind-Expanding Vocabulary Words from *Crispin*” that you can use to help better understand the book and increase your knowledge of vocabulary words in general. Crossword puzzles are also included to help reinforce your knowledge of these useful vocabulary words. Working on the crossword puzzles is an optional—not required—activity!

Instructions for Lesson Four:

1. Continue guided reading of *Crispin: The Cross of Lead* by Avi, preferably reading in the following reading chunks:

Pages 109-138 (Chapters 24-29);

Pages 139-164 (Chapters 30-33);

Pages 165-193 (Chapters 34-38);

Pages 193-219 (Chapters 39-43);

2. Post the following blog assignment to the Discussion Blog:

Bear has led a varied life: He spent seven years learning to be a monk, ten years as a mummer, several years as a soldier, and finally, the past few years have been spent as a spy while he traveled through the country as an entertainer. Using the explanation of 3rd Person [Point of View](#) found in the terms [Narrator](#) and [Point of View](#) in the **Glossary**, use your knowledge about Bear's personality and write a 100-250 word short story about some imaginary event in Bear's life. (This would be a great opportunity for you to look over the literary terms in the **Glossary** and include an example or two of a [Hyperbole](#), [Alliteration](#), [Metaphor](#), or [Simile](#)!)

3. Contribute three (or more) thoughtful posts to the Discussion Board in response to any of the following questions:

- a. **Ignorance:** In Chapter 24, Bear observes that “the greater a man’s—or boy’s—ignorance of the world, the more certain he is that he sits in the center of that world” (*Crispin*, 110). Do you agree? Explain.
- b. **Sorrow:** Bear also advises Crispin that those who seem sad or bring remorse are shunned because “sorrow is the common fate of man. Who would want more?” (*Crispin*, 110). Bear adds that no one ever has enough wit and laughter, for “mirth is the coin that brings a welcome.” Bear advises Crispin to “lose your sorrows and you’ll find your freedom” (*Crispin*, 111). Could that be good advice in the 21st Century? Explain.
- c. **Questions:** Bear says a wise man told him that “living by answers is a form of death” because “it’s only questions that keep you living” (*Crispin*, 111). What does that mean? Do you agree?

- d. **Freedom:** In Chapter 24, Bear tries to give Crispin the freedom of choosing whether or not to stay with him, but the boy refuses to decide. Why? What could be holding him back?
- e. **Differences:** Bear asks Crispin whether he has “ever desired to be anything different?” (*Crispin*, 118). After changing Crispin’s looks by cutting his hair and washing his face, Bear challenges Crispin to “think what you might become if you were cleansed of thirteen years of dirt, neglect, and servitude (*Crispin*, 119). What does it mean to be cleansed of “neglect” and “servitude?” Do you think it is too late for Crispin to change and take charge of his life? Have you ever wondered what it would be like to alter yourself for the better in some significant way? What is stopping you?
- f. **Prayers:** At the end of Chapter 26, Crispin prays to Saint Giles that Bear will not betray him. Do you think Crispin’s prayer will be answered? Make a prediction.
- g. **Skills:** At the end of Chapter 27, Crispin realizes that if he is to stay alive, he must learn new skills, and the sooner the better. Explain how this is a different approach for Crispin.
- h. **Alertness:** Bear shared an old soldier’s saying with Crispin that “if you have to choose between alertness and worry, being alert will bring you more days of life” (*Crispin*, 151). Can this be useful advice in your own life?
- i. **Changes:** In Chapter 32, Crispin makes a decision that shows how much he has changed since his mother died. What is the decision and why is it important?
- j. **Disguising Fear:** In Chapter 34, Bear advises Crispin to “try show less worry” because “the worst disguise is fear (*Crispin*, 163). What does he mean? Do you think this is useful advice?
- k. **Heirs:** Widow Daventry talks about Lord Furnival as having no “legal” heirs although she had heard rumors that the nobleman had some “illegitimate” ones. Do you think that it is fair to treat the child whose parents are married differently than a child whose mother is not married to the father? What kind of claim do you think the “illegitimate” child could make that would overcome the money, power, and authority of a nobleman’s widow?
- l. **Heaven:** Bear claims that he is a “fool because I should like to be in Heaven before I die” (*Crispin*, 180). What does he mean?
- m. **Change in Perspective:** In Chapter 37, Crispin is excited by the prospect of new choices. How is this perspective a change from Crispin’s personality at the beginning of the book? Do you think this change is believable? What do you think has caused this change?
- n. **Suspense:** Chapter 38 ends with a man leaping in front of Crispin, crying “Halt!” and spreading his arms wide enough to prevent Crispin from passing. This is an

example of *Suspense* (see **Glossary**), one of Avi's favorite literary devices. What is your favorite example of *Suspense* in the book so far?

- o. **Symbolism:** In *Crispin*, a snare is used as a *Symbol* (see **Glossary**). What is a snare? Can you think of an incident that occurred already in the book when it felt like Crispin was being "snared?" Does it seem likely that he and Bear will get "snared" again?

Note: You are provided with a list of "50 Mind-Expanding Vocabulary Words from *Crispin*" that you can use to help better understand the book and increase your knowledge of vocabulary words in general. Crossword puzzles are also included to help reinforce your knowledge of these useful vocabulary words. **Working on the crossword puzzles is an optional—not required—activity!**

Instructions for Lesson Five:

1. Complete guided reading of *Crispin: The Cross of Lead* by Avi, preferably reading in the following reading chunks:

Pages 219-249 (Chapters 44-49);

Pages 249-278 (Chapters 50- 56);

Pages 279-309 (Chapters 57-An Interview with Avi);

2. Post ONE of the following two blog assignments to the Discussion Blog:

a. Pretend you are a reporter and write a 100 - 250 word article for the Medieval Gazette describing some event that took place in *Crispin*. Be sure to answer the reporter's questions: who, what, where, when, and how.

b. Pretend you are a medieval talk show host and interview Crispin and/or Bear. Remember that you need to write both your questions and their answers (total word count should be between 100-250 words).

3. Contribute three (or more) thoughtful posts to the Discussion Board in response to any of the following questions:

- a. **Literary Devices:** Great writers such as Avi often use literary devices. Review the definitions of the literary devices [Hyperbole](#), [Onomatopoeia](#), [Metaphors](#), [Similes](#), or [Alliteration](#) found in the **Glossary**. Next reread any chapter of *Crispin* and notice the author's use of these literary devices. Finally, give examples of literary devices that you think most represent Avi's style or you consider most memorable.

- b. **Denial:** When Bear tells the Widow Daventry, in Chapter 44 (*Crispin*, 221) “Less said, less to deny,” what does he mean?
- c. **Wisdom:** In the end of Chapter 44, Crispin decides to ignore Bear’s instructions and run after Bear to warn him about the two men that are following him. Is this a wise decision?
- d. **Disobeying:** After Bear went into the building to meet with John Ball and some other men, Crispin decides not to go to him and tell about the men following him because he was nervous that Bear would be annoyed with him for disobeying his orders a second time. Do you think that this was a wise decision? What would you have done?
- e. **Escape:** After the soldiers broke up the meeting and everyone but Bear is able to escape, Bear cries out to Crispin to go and get out of the city because “it’s you that they want, not me.” Do you think Bear is right? Why?
- f. **Steward:** Crispin is convinced that the Steward, John Aycliffe, had taken Bear to get at Crispin. Do you agree? How would the Steward know that Bear and Crispin were together?
- g. **Silence:** In Chapter 47, the statement is made that “Silence was the only voice that could speak to me” (*Crispin*, 238). What literary device (see the **Glossary**) is being used?
- h. **Identity:** In Chapter 49, Crispin finally is told his true identity. Were you surprised? If not, when did you figure it out? Why is Crispin’s “blood” a warrant for his death?
- i. **Symbolism:** The author uses two different places of worship as *Symbols* (see **Glossary**) of the difference between the nobility and the common serfs. Compare the description of Lord Furnival’s chapel in Chapter 55 to the description of the village church found in Chapter 8. Is this an effective use of *symbolism*?
- j. **Statements:** In Chapter 56, John Aycliffe tells Crispin that “There is an order to things which God Himself has put in place” that “can never be changed” (*Crispin*, 275). Has anyone else in the book made a similar statement? Who? When? Do you agree?
- k. **Oaths:** In the end of Chapter 56, both John Aycliffe and Crispin make sacred oaths. Do you believe they will both keep them? Do you believe both of them *should* keep their oaths?
- l. **Imagery:** Did any image come to mind when the author described how the soldiers were trying to trap Bear and Crispin?

- m. **Removal:** Do you think that Crispin is wise in removing the cross of lead and giving it away? Would you have done the same? Why or why not?
- n. **Sequel:** Would you be interested in reading the sequel to this book? Why or why not?

Note: You are provided with a list of “50 Mind-Expanding Vocabulary Words from *Crispin*” that you can use to help better understand the book and increase your knowledge of vocabulary words in general. Crossword puzzles are also included to help reinforce your knowledge of these useful vocabulary words. **Working on the crossword puzzles is an optional—not required—activity!**

Instructions for Lesson Six:

1. Begin guided reading of *The Thief Lord* by Cornelia Funke, preferably reading in the following reading chunks:

Pages 7-30 (Chapters 1-2)

Pages 31-53(Chapters 3-6)

Pages 54-73 (Chapters 7-11)

Pages 74-90 (Chapters 12-13)

2. Post ONE of the following two blog assignments to the Discussion Blog:

a. Scipio acknowledged in Chapter 4 that “You can get through life perfectly well without knowing what sugar tongs are” (*Thief*, 35). Think about your own list of “Five or More Things that You Have Been Taught by Your Parents or Teachers that You Believe You Can Get through Life Perfectly Well **Without** Knowing.” Then, make another list of “Five or More Useful Things that You Learned on Your Own that You Wish Had Been Taught by Your Parents or Teachers.” Explain any items that are not self-explanatory and your combined lists and explanations should total 100-250 words.

b. What does the reader know about Scipio and Prosper so far? Write a 100-250 word comparison of the two boys, noting how they are alike and how they are different.

3. Contribute three (or more) thoughtful posts to the Discussion Board in response to any of the following questions:

- a. **Interview:** In Chapter 1, the woman began the interview with the detective by stating, “*This* is what we’ve lost” while pushing a picture of her two nephews

- across the desk (*Thief*, 9). What [Inference](#) can the reader (and the detective) make about the woman based on her statement?
- b. **Parents:** After the woman and her husband left, the detective thought to himself, “Parents like that are still better than no parents at all” (*Thief*, 13). What do you think?
 - c. **Photography:** Twelve-year-old Prosper lectured his five-year-old brother Bo, “How often do I have to tell you not to let yourself get photographed?” (*Thief*, 18). Why does it matter?
 - d. **Barbarossa:** At the end of Chapter 5, why do you think that Prosper is so determined that Scipio should not be told about Barbarossa’s offer? Do you think that there is more to it than Prosper’s feeling of not trusting Barbarossa?
 - e. **Prosper:** Compare Prosper’s values and concerns with those of Riccio. Which boy would you rather have as a companion if you were trying to live without adults? Why?
 - f. **Caterpillars and Butterflies:** At the end of Chapter 6, Prosper asks Riccio if he sometimes wished he was grownup. Riccio replied that it is “great being young,” adding Scipio’s quote that “Children are caterpillars and adults are butterflies. No butterfly ever remembers what it felt like a caterpillar” (*Thief*, 53). Do you agree? Do you know of any adults who seem to remember what it feels like to be young?
 - g. **Minor Characters:** How well does the author create her minor characters? Choose one of the minor characters (Hornet, Riccio, Bo, Mosca, Victor, or Esther) and describe their personality and motivations.
 - h. **Scipio:** In Chapter 11, why do you think that Scipio wore his black mask when he led his gang across St. Marco’s Square?
 - i. **Mask:** A short time later, in Chapter 12, Scipio took off the mask while he waited for Prosper and put the mask back on again before going into the confessional to meet the Conte. What do you think the mask means to Scipio?
 - j. **Inference:** In Chapter 13, Victor realized “there was another reason why he didn’t want to take Bo...It was ridiculous, but he just couldn’t do that to Prosper—to have him find his brother missing when he came out of the Basilica” (*Thief*, 84). What [Inference](#) (see **Glossary**) should a reader make about Victor based on his realization?
 - k. **Finding:** At the end of Chapter 13, Victor decided to find the children and tried not to think about what he would do once he found their hiding place, “later...I’ll worry about that later” (*Thief*, 90). Do you want him to find the children? As a reader, do you trust Victor to act in the child’s best interest--or that of his client, Esther Hartlieb?

Note: You are provided with a list of “50 Mind-Expanding Vocabulary Words from *The Thief-Lord*” that you can use to help better understand the book and increase your knowledge of vocabulary words in general. Crossword puzzles are also included to help reinforce your knowledge of these useful vocabulary words. **Working on the crossword puzzles is an optional—not required—activity!**

Instructions for Week Seven

1. Continue guided reading of *The Thief Lord* by Cornelia Funke, preferably reading in the following reading chunks:

Pages 91-108 (Chapters 14-16)

Pages 109-127 (Chapters 17-19)

Pages 128-147 (Chapters 20-22)

Pages 148-163 (Chapters 23-25)

Pages 164-182 (Chapters 26-27)

2. Post the following blog assignment to the Discussion Blog:

Pretend you are Scipio and write a polite but honest 100-250 word 1st Person [Point of View](#) (see terms [Narrator](#) and [Point of View](#) in Glossary) Letter to his Father expressing how Scipio really feels about how he is treated by his parents. Include “your” suggestions about how “you” want to be treated.

3. Contribute three (or more) thoughtful posts to the Discussion Board in response to any of the following questions:

a. **Nice:** Do you agree with Prosper that “you never know whether someone is really nice...And you can’t tell from the way someone looks” (*Thief*, 96)?

b. **Veterinarian:** In the beginning of Chapter 17, Victor takes his sick tortoise to the veterinarian, but the author never mentions to the reader what happened during the visit to the veterinarian’s office or what was the veterinarian’s diagnosis. Do you think that was a mistake? Would the author have some other reason for mentioning that Victor had taken his tortoise to the vet so that he still had the sick tortoise in a box when he was captured by the children?

c. **Cats:** In Chapter 17, when his son expresses worry that his cat is sick, Dottor Massimo response is “She’s probably unwell because she’s just had kittens...It is not worth calling a vet” because “if she dies you’ll get a new one” (*Thief*, 114). What can we learn about Dottor Massimo and his son from this brief conversation?

d. **Truth:** In Chapter 23, the reader learns both what the gang knows about Scipio’s family background and also how the Thief Lord first met Riccio, Mosca, and Hornet. Victor asserts that the children have “fallen for the biggest toad who ever lived” and invites them to take a trip “to learn the truth about the Thief Lord” (*Thief*, 153). Do you think the children will be upset when they find out the truth about Scipio? Why? Should the fact that he is not a poor orphan living on his own be more important than the fact that he has gone out of his way to take care of the children? If you were them, would you be angry with him?

e. **Honor:** In Chapter 25, Victor leaves a note giving his word of honor. If you were the children, would you trust him to keep his word?

f. **Leaving:** In the beginning of Chapter 26, Prosper decides that he and Bo should leave, but Hornet objects to them leaving the gang because they “all belong together now...we’re sort of a family now” (*Thief*, 165). Do you think it would be better for Prosper and Bo if they go away by themselves? Do you think it would be better for the gang if they left? Explain.

g. **Anger:** By the end of Chapter 27, it is clear that some of the gang are more angry at Scipio than others. Which ones are the angriest? Why?

h. **Tortoises:** Do you think the author is using the tortoises as a [symbol](#)? When Victor first discovered his tortoises, they quickly retreated into their shells when Victor picked them up (*Thief*, 14). Later, however, the tortoises grew so comfortable with Victor that they even stuck their necks out of their shells and allowed him to tickle their heads (*Thief*, 110). Read over the description of [Symbol](#) in the Glossary. Do you think the author is using the tortoises as a [Symbol](#) for something else? If so, explain what the tortoises might [symbolize](#).

Note: You are provided with a list of “50 Mind-Expanding Vocabulary Words from *The Thief Lord*” that you can use to help better understand the book and increase your knowledge of vocabulary words in general. Crossword puzzles are also included to help reinforce your knowledge of these useful vocabulary words. **Working on the crossword puzzles is an optional—not required—activity!**

Instructions for Week Eight

1. Continue guided reading of *The Thief Lord* by Cornelia Funke, preferably reading in the following reading chunks:

Pages 183-199 (Chapters 29-30)

Pages 200-217 (Chapters 31-33)

Pages 218-239 (Chapters 34-37)

Pages 240-258 (Chapters 38-40)

2. Post the following blog assignment to the Blog:

Although the famous story of Peter Pan tells the story of a boy who never wants to grow up, one of the inspirations for the *Thief Lord* is the author's memory that when she was a child, she couldn't wait to grow up to be an adult. Which would you prefer: To never grow up, or to wake up tomorrow as a grown up? (Your answer should be between 100-250 words long.)

3. Contribute three (or more) thoughtful posts to the Discussion Board in response to any of the following questions

a. **Irony:** At the end of Chapter 30, Max Hartlieb's explanation for why he does not like children is an example of Irony (see Glossary). Explain.

b. **Similes:** Although *The Thief Lord* was translated from German into English, the translator kept many of the author's Similes (see Glossary). Chapters 31 and 32 contained a number of similes. Which did you like the best?

c. **Sadness:** Near the end of Chapter 33, Scipio "just stared with a bleak expression at the foaming path left behind by the boar" (*Thief*, 212). Why is he so sad?

d. **Disappointment:** In Chapter 34, Scipio thought that his father "was probably asking himself yet again what he had done to deserve this strange creature he called his son" because Scipio wasn't as "big as him, as interesting, as disciplined, controlled, dependable, or reasonable...He wasn't like him at all" (*Thief*, 220). Do you think many kids are afraid that their parents are disappointed in them or is Scipio just an extreme case?

e. **Mother:** What do you imagine Scipio's mother is like?

f. **Beards:** At the end of Chapter 36, Victor tells Ida that his false beards were missing but luckily he had recovered them today. What *Inference* (see Glossary) should the reader make?

g. **Children and Pets:** Scipio and Prosper complained about adults who treated children like pets. The kittens and the tortoises, however, were pets that were often treated like beloved children. This is an example of which literary term in the **Glossary**?

h. **Hornet:** Do you think that Victor and Ida were right to rescue Hornet from the orphanage without trying to find her parents?

i. **Missing:** In Chapter 39, Prosper is described as missing Bo “like a lost arm or leg” (*Thief*, 246) Can you imagine missing anyone that much?

j. **Childhood:** At the end of Chapter 39, Prosper decides to go with Scipio to the Isola Segreta because he wishes that “there really was something that could turn the small and weak into the big and strong” (*Thief*, 250). If you were Prosper, would you have gone with Scipio? Would you have wanted to give up your childhood and become an adult instead?

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Instructions for Lesson Nine

1. Complete guided reading of *The Thief Lord* by Cornelia Funke, preferably reading in the following reading chunks:

Pages 259-285 (Chapters 41-44)

Pages 286-306 (Chapters 45-47)

Pages 307-332 (Chapters 48-51)

Pages 333-345 (Chapters 52-53) plus interview with author Cornelia Funke (Note: This interview is available in an attached .pdf file titled Additional Reading Material for those whose edition of the book does not contain the "After Words.")

2. Post the following blog assignment to the Discussion Blog:

Write your own 100 - 250 word ending to the story assuming that the merry-go-round did not break in Chapter 44.

3. Contribute three (or more) thoughtful posts to the Discussion Board in response to any of the following questions:

a. **They're Gone:** When Victor finds Bo alone in the Star Palace, the five-year old sobbed that “They’re gone,” explaining that he was talking about missing his kittens and Hornet (*Thief*, 261). Are you surprised that he would be crying about missing his kittens and Hornet rather than missing his brother? Can you think of any reason that he would not want to mention his brother?

b. **What Mood:** In Chapter 41, the author writes, “The night crouched above the houses, dark and cold, like an animal that eats little boys” (*Thief*, 260). This sentence illustrates several different literary terms (see Glossary). Which literary terms apply? What *Mood* is the author creating?

c. **Renzo's Dissatisfaction:** In Chapter 43, Renzo complains that getting back his lost childhood is not as satisfying as he had hoped it would be. Are you surprised? Can you suggest an age he could have returned to that he might find more interesting? Why?

d. **Merry-go-round:** At the end of Chapter 43, Scipio cries out that those who want to turn themselves into children are stupid. Instead, he wants to ride the merry-go-round in the other direction. Which direction, if any, would you want to ride the merry-go-round? Why? Would your answer differ if you knew you could change back?

e. **Grown-up:** Are you surprised at how upset Scipio is to find out he is a “grown-up forever now?” (*Thief*, 288)

f. **Which Literary Term:** In Chapter 46, the author writes “The rain pelted from the roofs as if the sky had promised the sea to drown the city” (*Thief*, 298). Which literary terms in the Glossary could apply to this one sentence?

g. **Just Punishment:** Do you agree with Victor that Scipio cannot just leave his father “in the dark...with the constant worry that his son might have fallen into a canal or been kidnapped” (*Thief*, 308), or do you think that not knowing what happened to his son would be a just punishment for the father? Explain.

h. **Happy Ending:** Are you surprised that Riccio and Mosca prefer to staying on their own rather than living with Ida? Is this a happy ending to the book?

i. **Adult Life:** When Scipio asks Victor what adults do all day, Victor replies “work...eat, shop, pay bills, use the phone, read newspapers, drink coffee, sleep” (*Thief*, 339). Does

this seem like a realistic or a pessimistic view of an adult's life? What more do you expect of your life as a grown up?

j. Reconciliation: Do you think that there is any chance that Scipio would be able to reconcile with his parents if he contacted them perhaps ten years in the future? Can people change—even grown-ups?

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Instructions for Lesson Ten:

- 1. Select and reread relevant portions of *A Single Shard*, *Crispin: Cross of Lead*, and *The Thief Lord* in order to answer your choice of a summary blog assignment (that is, a blog in which all three books are discussed).**
- 2. Post ONE (your choice) of the two summary blog assignments, which ask you to think about, discuss, and compare all three books read.**
- 3. Contribute three (or more) thoughtful posts to the Discussion Board in response to any of the listed summary topics, which ask you to think about and discuss all three books read.**

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