



CTYOnline Young Readers' Series

Theme: Quests and Challenges

Note: Parents should review the books in each theme before choosing in order to find the most interesting and appropriate theme for their child.

Note to viewers on the CTY website: Although the glossary words in blue are actual links to a web-based classroom, you cannot access that classroom because it is password protected.

Instructions for Lesson One

All work is due by the following Sunday at midnight. (That's the end of Sunday, not the beginning!) This means that your assigned reading should be completed by Thursday night--at the latest--to allow you enough time to finish the other assignments (Blog and Discussion Posts) by Sunday night.

1. Begin reading *The View from Saturday* by E. L. Konigsburg, preferably reading in the following reading chunks:

Chapter 1 & Noah Writes a B & B Letter (Pages 1-20)

Chapter 2 & Nadia Tells of Turtle Love (Pages 21-57)

Chapter 3 & Ethan Explains the B & B Inn (Pages 61-93)

2. Post ONE of the following two blog assignments (your choice) to the Discussion Blog:

a. Pretend you are Nadia and write a 100-250 word letter to your mother explaining your decision to go help the turtles instead of going to Disney World. Be sure to explain how you came to realize that you and your father are much like the turtles who need rescuing and how your feelings toward your grandfather's new wife Margaret are changing.

b. During the first half of the book, all the main characters: Noah, Nadia, Julian, and Ethan have made a journey of some sort and experienced kindness. Some have experienced cruelty as well. Pretend you are a guest at Sillington House overhearing the four children at their Saturday afternoon tea discussing their journeys and experiences during the past year. Write a 100-250 word [dialogue](#) of what you have overheard. [Be sure that the characters refer to specific events in the book.]

CLICK HERE TO BEGIN BLOGGING: [Blog](#)

3. Contribute three (or more) thoughtful posts to the Discussion Board in response to any of the following questions. (Remember! At least one of your three thoughtful posts should be in reply to a discussion post made by another student.)

a. **Appreciation for cultural diversity.** On page 22, Mrs. Olinski has a discussion with the District Superintendent about how she had chosen the four students of her academic bowl team. Do you think Mrs. Olinski was serious when she tells Mr. Rohmer that in the interest of diversity, she had chosen the four students because they included a brunette, a redhead, a blond, and a kid with black hair? Do you agree with Mr. Rohmer that “Jews, half-Jews, and WASPs [White Anglo Saxon Protestants]” have nothing to do with diversity? Which of the two—Mrs. Olinski or Mr. Rohmer--do you think has a better appreciation for different cultures and sensitivity to the needs and differences of others? Explain by referring to the text.

b. **Nadia's changes.** Nadia asks, “How could my Grandpa Izzy even begin to think that our digging out a nest would be like old times? In old times, which were not so long ago, I would have enjoyed—even been excited about—digging out a turtle nest. In old times Margaret would still be Mrs. Draper, and I would neither know nor care that she had a grandson Ethan” [33-34]. Discuss some of the changes in Nadia’s life over the last year. Are all the changes bad? If not, why does Nadia act as if all the changes are bad? Compare Nadia’s handling of her parents’ divorce to the way her father is dealing with the changes.

c. **Worst feeling in the world.** Nadia claims that “There is not a worse feeling in this world than the feeling that someone knows something about you that he has known for almost a whole summer and has kept to himself. Even sharing what he knows about you with others is not as bad as knowing something and not telling you he knows...I felt as if I had been spied on” [44]. Do you think Nadia is overreacting? Do you think her parent’s divorce has made her especially sensitive? Would you be as mad as Nadia under the circumstances?

d. **About silence.** Silence is mentioned throughout the book. Answer the questions about silence in any one (or more) of the following four bullets:

- On page 48 Nadia says, “Like Ethan, my father has a strong taste for silence.” What does this mean? Do you know anyone else who has a “strong taste for silence?”
- Nadia also uses silence as a tool—first to punish Ethan and then to punish her father. “I wanted silence to make him as miserable as it had made me.” How had Ethan and her father’s silence hurt her? Did Nadia’s refusal to speak to Ethan, her father, and her grandfather make her feel any better?
- Later in the book, Ethan says, “I never told Nadia how much I liked seeing the halo the sunlight made of her hair. Sometimes silence is a habit that hurts.” What does he mean? Can you think of a time in your own life when silence hurt you?
- Can you describe other times in the book that silence (or the decision not to speak) is used by different characters?

e. **Is Julian weird?** Ethan finds his introduction to Julian to be strange. “What is there about an English accent that makes people seem more intelligent than they maybe are? And was it catchy? ... Was he really unaware of being weird? How did he get to be so weird?” [67] If Julian began attending your school, would you think of him as “weird?” Do you think that you would eventually become friends? Why or why not?

f. **What is so special about Sillington House?** What is it about Sillington House—the **setting**, the atmosphere—that gives these four young people the courage and the confidence to be more themselves than ever before?

g. **What Ethan gained and lost.** Ethan leaves Sillington House, and he wants to walk home. He says: “I wanted to walk the road between Sillington House and mine. I wanted to mark the distance slowly. Something had happened at Sillington House... Had I gained something at Sillington House? Or had I lost something there? The answer was yes” [89]. What specifically had Ethan gained during the tea in Sillington House? What specifically had he lost? If something important has happened at Sillington House, why do you think the boys still act the same on the bus each morning?

h. **Your favorite literary devices.** After you have reviewed the definitions of the literary devices **alliteration**, **simile**, **personification**, **hyperbole**, **onomatopoeia**, and **metaphor** found in the Glossary, reread any chapter of the *View from Saturday* and notice the author’s use of these literary devices. Pick out a few examples of literary devices that you think most represents E. L. Konigsburg’s style or that you consider most memorable and share them. Would you enjoy this book as much if the author did not use literary devices?

CLICK HERE TO BEGIN DISCUSSION: [Forums](#)

Note: You are provided with a list of “Mind-Expanding Vocabulary Words from *The View from Saturday*” 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 Two

All work due by the following Sunday at midnight. (That's the end of Sunday, not the beginning!) This means that your assigned reading should be completed by Thursday night--at the latest--to allow you enough time to finish the other assignments (Blog and Discussion Posts) by Sunday night.

1. Finish guided reading of *The View from Saturday*, preferably reading in the following reading chunks:

Chapter 4 & Julian Narrates When Ginger Played Annie's Sandy (Pages 94-118)

Chapters 5-7 (Pages 119-138)

Chapters 8-12 plus Fifteen Questions with Thirty-Six Answers (Pages 139-163)

2. Post ONE of the following two blog assignments (your choice) to the Discussion Blog:

a. Pretend you are one of the main characters from the book—Mrs. Olinski, Noah, Nadia, Julian, or Ethan—and write a 100-250 word first person **point of view** diary entry about one or two of the other main characters in the book. In your entry, discuss your relationship and your history with this other character(s). How did you come to know him or her? What do you admire and what do you have in common? Have you been able to help one another?

b. Pretend that the author had not written Chapter 12 and needs a new ending for her book. Use your imagination and write your own 100-250 word ending to the novel. It's your ending—you can write it from Noah, Nadia, Julian, Ethan, Mrs. Olinski or even Mr. Singh's first person **point of view**. (This would be a great opportunity for you to look over the literary terms in the Glossary and include an example or two of an **Alliteration**, **Simile**, **Personification** or **Hyperbole** !)

CLICK HERE TO BEGIN BLOGGING: [BLOG](#)

3. Contribute three (or more) thoughtful posts to the Discussion Board in response to any of the following questions. (Remember! At least one of your three thoughtful posts should be in reply to a discussion post made by another student.)

a. **Why Julian?** In Chapter 4, why do you think Julian is the one who decides to help Mrs. Olinski?

b. **Ethan the Silent vs. Ethan The Soul.** On page 105, Julian says Mrs. Reynolds didn't recognize Ethan Potter "...for the person yelling *Bravo!* was Ethan, The Soul—not Ethan the silent." Why did "Ethan the Silent" return after Mrs. Reynolds asked about his brother Lucas? Discuss the difference between the two Ethans, basing your answer on your reading.

c. **Dealing with troublemakers.** Julian has an early experience with Hamilton Knapp that puts him on guard. His senses are on alert whenever Ham and his friends are around. Why don't the others feel a similar need to be on guard with Ham around? Do you know any troublemakers like Ham Knapp? Have you found or observed any effective way to deal with the troublemakers so that they don't hurt you or your friends?

d. **"Blinded by jealousy."** Why do you think Mrs. Olinski is "on the verge of screaming with pain and rage" and "blinded by jealousy" as she regards the new Mrs. Diamondstein at the end of Chapter 5? Why is Mrs. Olinski so upset? Are you

surprised that a mature adult could feel so angry and jealous at the happiness of her close friend? How is she saved by a genie?

e. **Handling Hamilton Knapp.** What do you think of the way Mrs. Olinski handled Hamilton Knapp and Jared Lord in Chapter 6? Do you think that they will be more or less likely to misbehave in her classroom in the future? Why did Mrs. Olinski make the comment “I think you enjoy writing on the blackboard, Mr. Knapp?” Did The Souls try to trip Hamilton Knapp on his way back to his seat? Why else would The Souls stick out their arms and legs at the end of Chapter 6?

f. **About symbols.** Review the definition of [Symbol](#) found in Glossary. How is the small ivory monkey used as a [symbol](#)? At the end of Chapter 7, what is the [symbolism](#) intended when the students pin pieces of rope on their shirts? What is the [symbolism](#) of Michael Froelich’s action at the end of Chapter 7? Can you as the reader infer from his action whether Michael is still friends with Ham Knapp?

g. **Quests and challenges.** A “quest” is a journey or search undertaken with a goal in mind. Traditionally, people on a quest receive help by some to defeat those who are trying to stop them. Moreover, everyone undertaking a quest must overcome challenges and learn important truths about themselves in order to succeed. Choose one of The Souls and describe how he or she has engaged in a quest. Have his or her personal obstacles been resolved by the end of the book? What assistance did he or she receive, and what challenges were overcome? Did Mrs. Olinski undertake a quest as well?

h. **Were you confused by the book’s narrative structure?** *The View from Saturday* has an unusual structure in that some chapters are narrated by one of the children and other chapters are written in the 3rd person omniscient [point of view](#) although containing many of Mrs. Olinski’s thoughts. Several of the same events are covered in different chapters from different points of view. Did you find this approach confusing? What is the advantage of having chapters narrated by each of The Souls? Would you have preferred a more traditional structure?

CLICK HERE TO BEGIN DISCUSSION: [Forums](#)

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Instructions for Lesson Three

All work due by the following Sunday at midnight. (That’s the end of Sunday, not the beginning!) This means that your assigned reading should be completed by Thursday night--at the latest--to allow you enough time to finish the other assignments (Blog and Discussion Posts) by Sunday night.

1. Begin guided reading of *First Test (Protector of the Small)* by Tamora Pierce, preferably reading in the following reading chunks:

Chapter One: Decisions (Pages 1-25)

Chapter Two: Not So Welcome (Pages 26-49)

Chapter Three: The Practice Courts (Pages 50-72)

Chapter Four: Classrooms and Chapter Five: Kel Backs Away (Pages 73-107)

2. Post ONE of the following two blog assignments (your choice) to the Discussion Blog:

a. Lord Wyldon, the Training Master, is firmly against allowing girls in the page program. However, Kel is not a typical girl. Pretend that you are Lord Wyldon and write a 100-250 word first person [point of view](#) diary entry explaining why you initially thought it unwise to allow Kel into the page program. Discuss any change of heart you may (or may not) be feeling now that you've had a chance to watch her in action. You may want to include your thoughts about Alanna the Lioness in this entry too.

b. Merric is not appreciative when Kel defends him from being picked on by Joren, Vinson, and Zahir. Pretend you are Merric and write a 100-250 word first person [point of view](#) diary entry about the harassment and your feelings about Kel's interference.

c. Joren has wanted Kel to leave from the very first day. Pretend you are Joren and write a 100-250 word first person diary entry describing Kel from your [point of view](#) and explaining why you think she should leave becoming a page to the boys.

CLICK HERE TO BEGIN BLOGGING: [Blog](#)

3. Contribute three (or more) thoughtful posts to the Discussion Board in response to any of the following questions. (Remember! At least one of your three thoughtful posts should be in reply to a discussion post made by another student.)

a. **Why Kel wants to be a warrior.** As we see on page 14, Kel obviously has some strong warrior skills even at this point in her young life. She also knows how difficult it will be to train to become a page. Why does Kel want to put herself through that? What are her alternatives?

b. **Why does Kel decide to accept the unfair probationary period?** What do you think Kel learns from her desperate attempt to kill a spidren with only two stones in order to rescue the kittens? Are you surprised that the incident causes her to change her mind and accept the year-long probationary period not expected of the male pages? What would you do in her situation?

c. **"Red, blue, and puffy."** As Lady Ilane walks by her daughter, she touches Kel's black eye. "It was red, blue, and puffy—not the worst black eye Kel had ever gotten." What is the reader meant to infer from this statement?

d. **Controlling emotions.** When Kel walks into her room, she sees it has been vandalized. The words, "*No Girls! Go Home! You Won't Last!*" are written on the walls. "Kel took deep breaths until the storm of hurt and anger that filled her was under control." With the Yamanis, Kel learned to deal with her emotions and control herself so as not to show her feelings. Do you think this ability helps Kel? Why or why not? If you were in her shoes, how do you think you would have pulled your emotions under control?

e. **Name-calling.** When Kel was a very young child in the Yamani Islands, she was teased as a "clumsy foreign barbarian." At her home in Mindelan, some refer to her as "the cow." Several youths in the castle call her "the lump." Do you think these experiences help her to deal with her training as a page? What has she learned about human nature and acceptance through her experiences, both past and present?

f. **Neal's motivations.** Neal engages Lord Wyldon in a battle of words more than once. He corrects Master Oakbridge on the use of the proper pronoun when addressing Kel alone. What do you think of Neal's boldness? Do you think he confronts Master Oakbridge to defend Kel or because he feels it's the right thing to do? Why do you think so?

g. **Peachblossom's message.** Daine is a wildmage who is able to communicate with the animals. As she talks to Peachblossom, the horse tells her that Kel needs looking after. Why do you think the horse says this about his rider? Do you think Peachblossom is right?

h. **Is Kel worried?** At the end of chapter 5, Cleon tells Kel that Lord Wyldon will never let her stay. When Kel responds, "He might surprise you," Cleon retorts, "He never surprises anyone." Do you think Kel is worried? Use examples from the book to support your points.

i. **A lake as a metaphor.** At the end of chapter 2, Kel goes to sleep imagining herself "a lake, its surface as smooth as glass. This is my heart, she thought. This is what I will strive to be." Why does she choose the [metaphor](#) of a lake for herself? Do you think it's an appropriate [metaphor](#) for a person choosing a life as a warrior? What would you choose as a [metaphor](#) for yourself? Explain your choice.

CLICK HERE TO BEGIN DISCUSSION: [Forums](#)

Note: You are provided with a list of “Mind-Expanding Vocabulary Words from *First Test*” that you can use to help better understand the book and increase your knowledge of vocabulary words in general.

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Instructions for Lesson Four

All work due by the following Sunday at midnight. (That's the end of Sunday, not the beginning!) This means that your assigned reading should be completed by Thursday night--at the latest--to allow you enough time to finish the other assignments (Blog and Discussion Posts) by Sunday night.

1. Finish reading *First Test*, preferably reading in the following reading chunks:

Chapter Six: The Lance and Chapter Seven: Kel Takes a Stand (Pages 108-142)

Chapter Eight: Winter and Chapter Nine: Tests (Pages 143-185)

Chapter Ten: The Royal Forest and Chapter Eleven: Spidren Hunt (Pages 186-228)

2. Post **ONE** of the following three blog assignment (your choice) to the Discussion Blog:

a. Kel's best friends seem to be animals, such as the birds that she feeds and shelters in her room and the unlikely horse she selects as her mount. Using your imagination, write a 100-250 word story about a time (not mentioned in the book!) that some animal or animals save Kel from danger.

b. Pretend you are Kel and you have just learned that the Alanna the Lioness was ordered by the King to keep her distance from you so as not to show favoritism. Now that you know Alanna is interested in your welfare, write a 100-250 word letter to the Lioness telling her about your experiences—the things that are fair, and those that are not; the things you enjoyed, and those you did not. You can also tell her anything else that you (as Kel) might find important or just want to share with the first female knight.

c. Write a 100-250 word newspaper article detailing the battle between the spidren and the warriors. Be sure to include a headline and answer the journalist's questions of who, what, where, when, and how.

CLICK HERE TO BEGIN BLOGGING: [Blog](#)

3. Contribute three (or more) thoughtful posts to the Discussion Board in response to any of the following questions. (Remember! At least one of your three thoughtful posts should be in reply to a discussion post made by another student.)

a. **The weighted lance.** How does Kel feel when she finds out her lance had been weighted? Why does Kel decide not to say anything about the weighted lance, not even to Neal or the Prince? How does she decide to use the weighted lance to her advantage?

b. **Mysterious gifts.** Kel receives a second mysterious package for Midwinter Festival, "Bruise Balm" for the many injuries she will receive throughout her training. She dabs a bit of the balm on a knuckle she bruised the day before, and its healing properties seem almost magical. Even Neal says, "'There's *serious* healing spelled into this.'" What do you think of the mysterious gifts Kel is receiving? Who do you think is sending them? Do you expect the sender to turn out to be a friend or relative? Are there any clues in the text?

c. **Kel and her birds.** Kel finds companionship in the birds she feeds in her room. Why does Kel protect the birds and feed them as she does?

d. **Studying with friends.** Kel, Neal, and the prince decide to study together in Neal's room the day after Kel's second fight with Joren. Seaver shows up claiming to need help with mathematics. Faleron says he needs Neal's help with a paper. Do you believe them? What is really going on here?

e. **A hero's quest.** Neal accuses Kel of being on a hero's quest to get rid of the bullies. Do you think that's true? What do you think of Neal's question: "Why haven't you asked anyone to join you?" Why hasn't Kel asked anyone to help her get rid of the bullies? Can you think of any other way she could have stopped the bullying? Would you get in trouble if you tried Kel's approach toward the bullies in your school?

f. **Cleon vs. Joren.** Compare and contrast Cleon and Joren in their treatment of Kel. At what point does Cleon seem to change in his attitude toward Kel?

g. **Kel's fear of heights.** Kel's fear of heights makes the task of running from one end of the curtain wall to the other impossible to carry out. This is the only time she's shown true weakness in her experience at the palace. Do you think she should be ashamed? Why or why not? Do you think it is realistic for someone with such a strong fear of heights to dream of becoming an effective warrior or knight?

h. **The courage of Kel's mother.** At the end of Chapter One, we learn that Kel's dream of her mother's courage is an accurate memory of the events that took place when pirates attacked the Yamani Islands. On page 190 in Chapter Ten, we learn a little more of the story from Hakuin, the Shang warrior. Why is this event important for Kel, for her family, and for the people of Tortall?

i. **Torture or training?** While they are at camp, Kel is ordered to climb the tree every day. Lord Wyldon tells her, "'You have to disarm your fear or it will make a cripple of you.'" Neal says of Wyldon, "This is sheer torture. He's trying to make you quit.'" Do you agree with Neal's assessment? Do you think it's a good idea for Kel to climb the tree every day? Give your reasons based on your reading.

j. **Kel's second battle with spidrens.** Kel has seen the wrath of a spidren early in the book, and she knows what she will face. Why is it significant that she faces these creatures again at the end of the book? How has her training during the past year made a difference in the outcome of her battle with the spidren?

CLICK HERE TO BEGIN DISCUSSION:[Forums](#)

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[Instructions for Lesson Five](#)

All work due by the following Sunday at midnight. (That's the end of Sunday, not the beginning!) This means that your assigned reading should be completed by Thursday night--at the latest--to allow you enough time to finish the other assignments (Blog and Discussion Posts) by Sunday night.

1. Begin guided reading of *The Mysterious Benedict Society* by Trenton Lee Stewart, preferably reading in the following reading chunks:

Pencil, Erasers, and Disqualifications (Pages 1-27)

Spectacles and Buckets (Pages 29-42)

Squares and Arrows (Pages 43-65)

The Trouble with Children, or Why They Are Necessary (Pages 67-82)

2. Post ONE of the following two blog assignments (your choice) to the Discussion Blog:

a. As readers, we know what Reynie experiences as he makes his way through the testing process. However, Reynie meets up with Kate, Sticky, and Constance once their testing process is nearly complete. We don't really learn about their adventures with the test other than how they help Rhonda get a pencil. Pretend you are Kate, Sticky, or Constance and write a 100-250 word first person [point of view](#) diary entry about the testing process and their first impressions of Mr. Benedict, his assistants, and Reynie.

b. Pretend you are Reynie and write a 100-250 word letter to Miss Perumal just before you leave for the Institute, thanking her for all she has done for you and telling her about the test, Mr. Benedict and his assistants, and what you know of your mission.

CLICK HERE TO BEGIN BLOGGING: [Blog](#)

3. Contribute three (or more) thoughtful posts to the Discussion Board in response to any of the following questions. (Remember! At least one of your three thoughtful posts should be in reply to a discussion post made by another student.)

a. **The Emergency.** According to the first chapter, the newspaper is filled with news of what was called the "Emergency." The gist of the Emergency is that "things had gotten desperately out of control...the school systems, the budget, the pollution, the crime, the weather...why, everything, in fact, was a complete mess, and citizens everywhere were clamoring for a major--no, a *dramatic*--improvement in government... "Things must change NOW" was the slogan plastered on billboards all over the city" [2-3]. Does this description of the Emergency sound like the news that bombards you at school, on television, in newspapers, and over the internet? How so? Does listening to such news inspire you to act to make things better or do you tend to ignore it after a while like Reynie and Miss Perumal?

b. **Invitation to the Test.** The story begins with a cryptic invitation to take a test, just as we saw a similar invitation in *The View from Saturday*. What do you think of Reynie's desire to take this test and to continue on to the next phases despite the strange rules governing the testing process? Would you be interested in taking the test if you had the opportunity? Explain.

c. **Why mismatched clothes?** In Chapter One, what is the reason that Reynie showed up for breakfast with Miss Perumal wearing mismatched clothes and socks of different colors?

d. **Different kinds of intelligence.** Reynie perseveres through the seemingly impossible written test until he figures out that the test is a puzzle. Later he figures out the maze by analyzing the situation until he comes up with workable solution. Kate, Sticky, and Constance pass Mr. Benedict's tests by using completely different methods of problem solving. Each child is (according to Mr. Benedict's words on pages 80-81) "gifted," "resourceful," and "ingenious" but in different ways. How would you describe the different kinds of intelligence associated with each child? In other words, describe what traits make each child successful in overcoming the challenges he or she encounters.

e. **Compare the children.** Pick out one of the children [Reynie, Sticky, Kate, Constance] and compare that character with a child from *The View from Saturday* [Noah, Ethan, Nadia, Julian]. Which of the children [Noah, Ethan, Nadia, Julian, Reynie, Sticky, Kate, and Constance] reminds you the most of yourself? Which of the children would you most like to have as your close friends? Explain.

f. **Favorite literary devices.** The author Trenton Lee Stewart uses [similes](#), [metaphors](#), and other literary devices in his descriptions of the various characters and [settings](#) in the book. Reread any chapter, pick out some of your favorites literary devices, and share them with your classmates.

g. **Why shy?** On page 72, the statement is made, "For good reasons or not, we all have things we're shy about." Do you agree with this statement? Use an example from your reading in the course thus far, and an example from your life.

[CLICK HERE TO BEGIN DISCUSSION:Forums](#)

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Instructions for Lesson Six

All work due by the following Sunday at midnight. (That's the end of Sunday, not the beginning!) This means that your assigned reading should be completed by Thursday night--at the latest--to allow you enough time to finish the other assignments (Blog and Discussion Posts) by Sunday night.

1. Continue guided reading of *The Mysterious Benedict Society*, preferably reading in the following reading chunks:

The Sender and the Messages and The Men in the Maze (Pages 83-116)

Codes and Histories, The Things to Come, and The Naming of the Crew (Pages 117-145)

Nomansan Island , Traps and Nonsense, Beware of the Gemini (Pages 147-186)

2. Post **ONE** of the following three blog assignments (your choice) to the Discussion Blog:

a. Suppose you also passed Mr. Benedict's tests and were asked to join the team on this dangerous mission. Do you think that your parents would let you participate if they realized that your help was necessary to save the entire world from being dominated by a madman? Write a 100-250 word [dialogue](#) between you, your family, Mr. Benedict, and the other children in which you ask for permission to join the Mysterious Benedict Society. Be sure to explain fully the reasons you want to participate (if you do). Also be sure to include the reasons your family gives for their decision about whether you can participate.

b. Mr. Benedict is obviously in [conflict](#) about sending the children on this secret mission to the Institute. He knows they will be in danger, but as he's said, they are his only hope. What should he do? What options does he have? Pretend you are Mr. Benedict and write a 100-250 word journal entry from Mr. Benedict's [point of view](#) discussing his thoughts about sending the children on such a dangerous mission.

[CLICK HERE TO BEGIN BLOGGING:Blog](#)

3. Contribute three (or more) thoughtful posts to the Discussion Board in response to any of the following questions. (Remember! At least one of your three thoughtful posts should be in reply to a discussion post made by another student.)

- a. **More about literary devices.** Review the definitions of [Simile](#), [Metaphor](#), [Hyperbole](#), [Onomatopoeia](#) and [Personification](#) in the Glossary, and decide which term(s) apply to this passage found on page 91: “The blackened sky outside seemed to creep gloomily into the house, dimming the lamps and lengthening their shadows; and along with the howling chimneys was heard the growling of thunder, low and menacing and close at hand, as if a tiger prowled in the dark rooms beyond their walls.” Reread any chapter, pick out some of your favorites literary devices, and share them with your classmates. Do these literary devices add to your appreciation of a book? Would you like to start using them in your own writing?
- b. **For every exit there is also an entrance.** In the morning, the children learn more about the dangers of the project they are to undertake. They learn that the maze wasn’t just a test, but is actually a defense system. They also learn that Milligan will be their bodyguard and they are not allowed to leave the house without him. But just when they are about to be taken by kidnappers sent by the Institute, Milligan escapes from the room. Under these circumstances, what is the importance of Milligan’s statement on page 112, “Remember, children. For every exit there is also an entrance”? Can you think of a time in your own life when this saying might apply as good advice or a source of comfort?
- c. **What about subliminal messages?** The mysterious messages described in pages 95-105 are similar to subliminal messages that have been used in the past in movie and television advertisements to increase sales of certain brands of food and beverages. A subliminal message is a fleeting word or picture whose duration is too brief to be noticed by the conscious mind but is recognized by the subconscious or unconscious mind and thereby influences a person’s thoughts or behaviors. The practice is now banned in several countries and many question its effectiveness. But if subliminal messages were proved to be effective and were regulated by the government, do you think that it should be legal to use subliminal messages to promote positive behaviors such as anti-smoking and pro-recycling campaigns? Do you think its value would be greater than the possible dangers? Explain your opinion.
- d. **No one understands.** “What Mr. Benedict is too embarrassed to say, children, is that even if he did explain it, no one would believe him because no one would *understand* him. That’s the downside to being a genius—just because *you* understand something doesn’t mean everyone *else* will” (105). Do you have any experiences of learning things easily that other students find difficult to understand? Do you have any sympathy with or advice for the characters in the book who have trouble finding friends with similar interests and abilities?
- e. **Working as a team.** Mr. Benedict sends the children to the dangerous Institute with the job of learning both what they teach at the Institute, and what they *don’t* teach. “Every odd detail, every suspicious aspect of the Institute—any unusual elements at all, you must report to me.” Mr. Benedict emphasizes that “you are a team now. Whether you always agree is inconsequential, but you must take care of one another, must rely upon one another in all things... Every one of you is essential to the success of the team, and indeed, to the fate of us all” [118-119]. Why is it important that the children work as a team throughout this mission? And why does Kate whisper to Reynie, “I think we may have more trouble than Mr. Benedict expects”? [120]
- f. **Duty.** When Reynie asks Milligan what keeps him going since he has so little hope that he will ever remember his past, Milligan says he is acting from duty, “I know the Sender is out to do harm, I feel obliged to stop him. Or at the very least, to try” [130]. But does Milligan believe that the Sender can be stopped? If he does not believe that the Sender can be stopped, why does he bother to involve himself? Would you?
- g. **What are the rules?** As the children receive their tour of the Institute, Jillson states that there are virtually no rules at the school. She then rattles off a list of many exceptions to the “no rules” policy. Are there rules at the Institute? What are they? How is the Institute different from your school?

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Instructions for Lesson Seven

All work due by the following Sunday at midnight. (That's the end of Sunday, not the beginning!) This means that your assigned reading should be completed by Thursday night--at the latest--to allow you enough time to finish the other assignments (Blog and Discussion Posts) by Sunday night.

1. Continue guided reading of *The Mysterious Benedict Society* by Trenton Lee Stewart, preferably reading in the following reading chunks:

Lessons Learned, People and Places to be Avoided, Logical Conclusions and Miscalculations (Pages 187-220)

A Surprising Suggestion, Tests and Invitations, Everything as It Should Be (Pages 221-252)

Of Families Lost and Found, Tactical Cactupi, Caught in the Act (Pages 253-285)

2. Post ONE of the following two blog assignments (your choice) to the Discussion Blog:

- a. Write a 100-250 word description comparing and contrasting Mr. Benedict and Mr. Curtain. Be sure to discuss what they have in common and how they are different.
- b. The children are at the Institute for quite a while and undoubtedly had many adventures not included in the book. Using your imagination, write a 100-250 word story about another time when one or more of the team outwitted Mr. Curtain or his henchmen.

CLICK HERE TO BEGIN BLOGGING: [Blog](#)

3. Contribute three (or more) thoughtful posts to the Discussion Board in response to any of the following questions. (Remember! At least one of your three thoughtful posts should be in reply to a discussion post made by another student.)

- a. **The Learning Institute.** Read over the first three pages of the chapter "Lessons Learned." What about the Learning Institute for the Very Enlightened ("LIVE") would you like? What about LIVE would you dislike?
- b. **Sticky's anxiety.** As we see through his behavior, Sticky is anxious all the time. Learning about the "Waiting Room" (and Corliss Danton's response in the chapter "People and Places to be Avoided") doesn't help matters. How do you think Sticky's anxiety will affect him? Do you think it affects his ability to perform to the best of his ability? Do you think he will ever overcome his anxiety? Is there anything his friends can do to help?
- c. **Boosting the power.** The children notice that they are becoming extremely cranky. When they realize that Mr. Curtain has boosted the power on his messages, they remember "Mr. Benedict had said, only minds with an unusually powerful love of truth noticed anything was happening." What does the author want us to infer from this statement and the behavior of the children--both the members of the Mysterious Benedict Society and the other students in the school? Why is Constance the only one who is able to *hear* the Messenger's voice? How does this explain Constance's behavior?
- d. **Canary in a coalmine.** Why does Reynie say Sticky's comparison of Constance to a canary in a coalmine is an "unfortunate comparison" (217-218)? Why doesn't Sticky realize that the comparison would be **upsetting** to Constance--until it is too late?

e. **Compare the violets.** Compare the violets in the offices of Mr. Benedict and Mr. Curtain. What can you infer about the men by their violets?

f. **The importance of family.** In the letter that he composes in his mind to Miss Perumal on page 255, Reynie thinks about the importance of family. "Looking around at Sticky, Kate, and Constance, I wondered how I'd feel if one of them disappeared.... Well, is this what family is like? The feeling that everyone's connected, that with one piece missing the whole thing's broken?" Is this what family means to you? What do you think of Mr. Benedict's definition of family as remembered by Reynie on page 257? Reynie wonders on page 255 whether it was worse for Sticky than for the rest of them since he actually remembers his family life. "Was it worse to have felt loved and then rejected or was it worse to have always felt alone?" What do you think?

g. **Is Fear the essential component of human personality?** Mr. Curtain writes in his journal that " No one seems to realize how much we are driven by FEAR, the essential component of human personality. Everything else - from ambition to love to despair - derives in some way from this single powerful emotion" (267). Do you agree with Mr. Curtain that FEAR is the essential component of human personality? Why or why not?

h. **What Reynie figures out.** When Reynie finally figures out that the Helpers have had their memories stolen, many things begin to fall into place. Why is it that the Helpers and Milligan are so sad, but the new recruits and Charlie seem more content with their situation?

i. **Heart-pounding suspense.** When Reynie is discovered peering in the gym window, he and Kate flee to the outer regions of the island through the crags, dunes, and ridges. At this point, the reader is on the edge of his or her seat, heart pounding, turning pages as fast as he or she can read. How does the author create this effect of **suspense**, encouraging the reader to keep turning the pages?

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Instructions for Lesson Eight

All work due by the following Sunday at midnight. (That's the end of Sunday, not the beginning!) This means that your assigned reading should be completed by Thursday night--at the latest--to allow you enough time to finish the other assignments (Blog and Discussion Posts) by Sunday night.

1. Continue guided reading of *The Mysterious Benedict Society*, preferably reading in the following reading chunks:

The Waiting Room, Punishments and Promotions, Half a Riddle (Pages 287-311)

The Whisperer, Open Sesame, Practice Makes Perfect (Pages 313-350)

Know Thine Enemy, A Chess Lesson, The Mouse in the Culvert (Pages 351-384)

2. Post ONE of the following blog assignments (your choice) to the Discussion Blog:

a. Pretend you are S.Q., Martina, or Jackson, and write a 100-250 word diary entry describing your impressions of Reynie, Sticky, Kate, Constance, Mr. Curtain, and his plans for you. Even better yet, choose an event from the book and tell it from "your" 1st person [point of view](#).

b. The children are on a quest to stop Mr. Curtain, and the more they begin to uncover the pieces of the puzzle, the more they realize that public support is necessary. Pretend you are a journalist contacted by Mr. Benedict and the children. They agree to leak some information to you, including documents, based on your promise that you will not reveal them as your sources. Write a 100-250 word article for your newspaper using the information that they provide you. Start with a headline and make sure that your article answers the journalist's questions of who, what, where, when, and why--but do not give away the identity of your sources!

c. Write a literary "rap." Choose characters or events from *First Test* or *The Mysterious Benedict Society* and write a 15-20 line rhyming description of the character(s) or the event(s). You may do this in the form of three [Limerick](#)s with an AABBA [Rhyme Scheme](#) or a 16-20 line "rap" using any [rhyme scheme](#) of your choice (AABB is particularly easy).

CLICK HERE TO BEGIN BLOGGING: [Blog](#)

3. Contribute three (or more) thoughtful posts to the Discussion Board in response to any of the following questions. (Remember! At least one of your three thoughtful posts should be in reply to a discussion post made by another student.)

a. **To tell the truth.** In the chapter Punishments and Promotions, Sticky is faced with the dilemma of whether to admit to Mr. Curtain that he has cheated. Reynie tells him to admit to cheating, and S.Q. advises him to deny cheating. If Reynie is willing to encourage Sticky to cheat (in order to defeat Mr. Curtain's plan to take over the world), why do you think that Reynie advises Sticky to tell the truth now about cheating rather than denying it? Sticky has about a minute to decide what to do. Why do you think he chooses to admit he's cheated? Also, when Sticky ultimately faces Mr. Curtain, are you surprised by his courage? Were his friends surprised by his courage? Do you think he surprises himself? Whose idea do you think it was to name Martina Crowe as the person who planned to benefit from the cheating?

b. **The Whisperer.** Since the Whisperer can perceive thoughts. Reynie approaches with caution, but he doesn't really have a choice; he is a Messenger now. He sits in the seat. The helmet lowers and adjusts to his head; the cuffs appear and tighten around his wrists. What does he then struggle with and why? How does he feel when he realizes that when you do what it wants, the Whisperer rewards you by soothing your secret fears? Would you like to have a Whisperer available in your home? Why or why not?

c. **Mr. Curtain's giggle.** On page 345, Mr. Curtain is watching the television in the printing room. "A news anchor was saying something about the Emergency. Mr. Curtain giggled—actually giggled—as if he were watching a comedy show." What [inference](#) does the author want the reader to make from this description?

d. **Why is Mr. Curtain so obsessed with control?** The Whispering Gallery is perfectly controlled as is much of the Institute, including all of the people who work there. Why is Mr. Curtain so concerned about control? Who or what is he trying to control? Can you think of any reason that control is more important to Mr. Curtain than it is for most people?

e. **What happens to people who resist?** At the end of the chapter Practice Makes Perfect, Reynie realizes that "the Helpers, the Recruiters, the Messengers--the entire Institute--it's all been one big experiment to make sure his plan can work... The Institute will become the Amnesia Sanctuary -- he needs a place to put all the people who resist him!" [349-350]. Kate replies, "People like us." Sticky responds, "People including us." Is there a difference in meaning between Kate's and Sticky's two statements? Explain.

f. **Reynie's worries.** What exactly is Reynie so worried about on page 354, when according to the book, "He was worried, deeply worried, that the Whisperer had revealed to him who he truly was"? If Reynie realizes that the "Whisperer's version of happiness is an illusion, it doesn't take away your fears, it only lies to you about them, makes you temporarily believe that you don't have them" [366], then why does he find the Whisperer so irresistible? Have you ever found yourself wanting something desperately-- even if you know it isn't good for you? How did Mr. Benedict's advice to Reynie about the chess lesson help?

g. **Confronting fears.** On page 378, Mr. Curtain admits that the Whisperer can not eliminate a person's fears, because "the only way fears truly disappear is if you confront them." Then he adds, "but who in the world wishes to confront his or her worst fears?" [378]. Describe some of the characters that you have read about in this course who have confronted their fears. Can you describe a time when you have confronted one of your own fears?

h. **Why does S.Q. stay at the Institute?** Although S.Q. is occasionally capable of sensitive and sensible thought, (shown in his conversation with Mr. Curtain and Martina Crowe on page 380), his thinking most often is so limited that he remains proud of his position helping Mr. Curtain carry out his plans. Since he does not appear to be the brightest crayon in the box, why do you think Mr. Curtain keeps him on?

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Instructions for Lesson Nine

All work due by the following Sunday at midnight. (That's the end of Sunday, not the beginning!) This means that your assigned reading should be completed by Thursday night--at the latest--to allow you enough time to finish the other assignments (Blog and Discussion Posts) by Sunday night.

1. Finish reading *The Mysterious Benedict Society*, preferably reading in the following reading chunks:

Sacrifices, Narrow Escapes, and Something Like a Plan, Bad news and Bad News (Pages 385-409)

Sticky's Discovery, The Great Kate Weather Machine, Stands and Falls (Pages 411-447)

The Best Medicine, Escapes and Returns, For Every Exit, an Entrance (Pages 449-486)

2. Post ONE of the following blog assignments (your choice) to the Discussion Blog:

a. The children could clearly use some extra help in defeating Mr. Curtain and his evil plan. Write a 100-250 word passage to revise or add to the chapter Escapes and Returns in which some of the children from *The View from Saturday* and/or *First Test* join the Mysterious Benedict Society to help distract the staff of the island, capture Mr. Curtain before he escapes, and completely thwart his attempt to take over the world.

b. Throughout the book, the reader experiences the action and events from the **point of view** of the **protagonists** (Reynie and the rest of the Mysterious Benedict Society). But what about the other side of the story? The Executives have the job of protecting Mr. Curtain and his secrets, and from their perspective, Mr. Curtain and the Executives are the "good guys" and the children are the "bad guys." Take any scene from the book and in 100-250 words, re-write the scene as it would be understood from the perspective of one or more of the Executives struggling to keep Mr. Curtain and the Institute safe. Your scene should show the Executives from a sympathetic perspective and should also be written from the third person **point of view**, in the same manner as the rest of the book is written.

c. After Mr. Curtain has fled, Mr. Benedict is put in charge of the Institute. He is eager to make changes but wants advice from children before making any decisions. He has hired you as a consultant to propose the changes that must be made so that the school really does educate gifted children. Write a 100-250 word description or proposal about how the school should be reorganized and what rules should be established. Don't forget to propose a new name!

CLICK HERE TO BEGIN BLOGGING: [Blog](#)

3. Contribute three (or more) thoughtful posts to the Discussion Board in response to any of the following questions. (Remember! At least one of your three thoughtful posts should be in reply to a discussion post made by another student.)

a. **Candy for breakfast.** Mr. Benedict doesn't allow the children to have candy for breakfast. In contrast, at the Institute, children are allowed to stuff themselves with "greasy foods, savories, and sweet treats" while "guzzling chocolate milk and soft drinks" [406]. What does the difference reveal about the two men? Whom would you expect would be more popular with most children?

b. **Sticky comes through.** One of the questions on the initial tests that the children took was "Are you brave?" Remembering that Sticky passed the test, how do you think he had answered the question on the test? When Reynie originally asked him, Sticky said that he did not want to sit in the Whisperer before his friend, but when the time finally came, Sticky stepped forward and asked Mr. Curtain to be first. Why is this important in the story? Why does he no longer feel "mixed-up"? Can you describe other times in the story that Sticky has acted brave? Why is this time particularly significant?

c. **Sticky or George Washington.** Just before Sticky's heroic moment, there is a passage pointing out that there were "times he had run away from his problems; and times when he'd felt himself paralyzed when action was most needed. He'd never understood this tendency of his—he knew only that he rarely lived up to expectation, and for this reason had clung so fiercely to his nickname. Any boy with a name like George Washington must surely have great things expected of him" [420-421]. After the events of the book have taken place and he returns to his family, do you think that he will be more willing to use the name "George" or "George Washington," or do you think that he will still want to be called "Sticky?" Explain your answer.

d. **Leaving Constance behind.** While the boys are off in the Whisperer doing their Messenger duties, Kate has been left with Constance. "It occurred to Kate to leave her behind. An inviting thought—so inviting she almost did just that. She went to the door. Hesitated. Looked back. The plan had called for all four of them. That was when Mr. Benedict had said mattered most, and it was what they'd agreed upon only yesterday. All four of them" [425]. Why does Kate decide *not* to go on her mission without Constance? How would Kate's mission to help Reynie and Sticky have been different if Constance had not been there?

e. **Constance comes through.** Constance stands up to Mr. Curtain when they are in the flag tower. On page 452, she gives him all the reasons why the children are smarter than he is. When Mr. Curtain falls down in an attack of narcolepsy, her response is: "That was fun." Do you think she actually enjoyed the confrontation? Do you think that any of the other children would have done a better job of angering Mr. Curtain than Constance?

f. **Constance's age.** As the story comes to its conclusion, readers learn more about each of the characters. Were you surprised to find out Constance's true age? Can you go back through the book and pick out some of the many times that the author gave hints about Constance's age?

g. **Entrances and exits.** Discuss some of the more important entrances and exits mentioned throughout the book.

h. **What is Mr. Benedict's first name?** If you were looking for Mr. Benedict's first name, where would you find it (and what is it)?

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Instructions for Lesson Ten

1. Post ONE of the summary blog assignments, which ask you to think about, discuss, and compare all three books read.
2. 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. (Remember! At least one of these three thoughtful posts should be in reply to a discussion post made by another student.)

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