Words Aptly Spoken

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

An introduction to literary classics

Classical Conversations®
MULTIMEDIA

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an introduction to literary classics

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Jen Greenholt, *Words Aptly Spoken* Series
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Foreword

Learning to read is one of the most defining moments in life. It opens an unparalleled number of doors and possibilities, some of them life-changing. The books you read from that moment on have an enormous amount of power to shape your life. This is one of the characteristics that make quality children's literature so priceless.

Words Aptly Spoken: Children's Literature takes you into the world of award-winning children's and young adult authors. Many of the books in this collection have won the Newbery Medal, one of the most prestigious awards for American children's literature. But while these books were first and foremost written for the enjoyment and education of children, they are not only for children. The lessons they teach and the courage of the people whose stories they tell are ageless. Everyone can take something away from these books, whether it is a better understanding of responsibility and selflessness or a new appreciation for the ability to read.

As with previous collections in the *Words Aptly Spoken* series, *Children's Literature* contains a series of questions about each work being studied. Review Questions ensure that you understand the basic plot, characters, setting, and message of the book. Thought Questions take the themes and ideas raised by each author and help you apply them to other, more familiar situations.

Children's Literature also introduces strategies for summarizing, creating chronologies and character charts, taking notes, and analyzing symbolism. Each of these skills will make reading and writing about classic literature a more fulfilling experience.

All this being said, take a deep breath and get ready to plunge into some great works of children's literature.

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STUDY GUIDES

A Note for Parents: Tools for the Journey

If you have ever heard Shakespeare performed before a live audience and marveled at the ease with which the words flowed from the actors' lips; if you have ever envied people who can call on Milton, Dickens, Joyce, and Lewis to lend eloquence to their argument; if you have skimmed a list of the hundred greatest novels of all time and winced as you remembered struggling to finish *The Grapes of Wrath* in high school—you may think that the great conversations of literature are forever closed to you.

The good news is, they're not! Whether you are a student, an adult, a parent, a child, or all of the above, you have the capability to train yourself not only to read great literature, but also to share its beauty, truth, and joy with others.

Although most people learn to read as children, the art of deliberately engaging with the content and ideas of a novel or short story requires ongoing practice.

The *Words Aptly Spoken* series is based on the classical model of education,[1] which breaks learning into three natural stages: grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric. In the grammar stage, you learn the vocabulary of a subject. In the dialectic stage, you learn to develop logical arguments and analyze others' ideas. In the rhetoric stage, you explore the consequences of ideas as you form and express your own. This guide will help you as you begin to apply the classical model to the study of literature.

Why Children's Literature?

As a parent or adult, you might be asking, "But why children's literature? Isn't that book too easy for my/my child's reading level?" First, consider a different question: Why do adults read aloud to small children, and then teach children to read using the same books? After all, they already know the endings!

That is precisely the point. Because children have heard the story many times, they can learn to identify the words on the page. Through repetition, they are able to focus on mastering a new skill without the distraction of unfamiliar content. The same is true as you train yourself to read great literature. Beginning with simple, familiar stories allows you to focus on the writer's craft.

How to Use This Book

Despite popular belief, reading is not wholly instinctive. Because comprehension, analysis, and critical thinking require practice, each work of literature you will study is broken down by chapter into a series of questions designed to give structure and guidance to your reading.

Although the questions are arranged chapter-by-chapter, most readers will not pause to answer questions after finishing a chapter. If the book has captured your imagination the way classic literature ought to, you won't want to stop reading! For this reason, treat these questions as tools not only for reading, but also for writing, leading discussion, and sharing your ideas with others.

[1] See Dorothy Sayers' essay, "The Lost Tools of Learning."

Review Questions pull out the grammar for each chapter: Who is the book about? (Characters) What happens? (Plot) Where does it take place? (Setting) What is the message? (Theme) What is the scope or time frame? (Focus) For readers of all ages, repeatedly asking these questions will generate good reading habits; eventually, as you read, your brain will automatically take note of this information and store it for future use.

Thought Questions are an exercise in dialectic, taking the basic elements from the Review Questions and encouraging you to analyze that information in light of other knowledge. As you become more familiar with the building blocks of a story, you should begin to ask questions of your own. What does this mean for me? How should I respond to this argument? You can use the Thought Questions as a jump-start for your own thinking process, as training tools for leading discussion, or as topics for essays.

If you cannot answer some of the questions by the time you have finished the book, consider going back and reading over sections that you may only have skimmed the first time. A word of caution: don't merely "look up" the answers to the questions and skim the rest of the book. Once established, this habit will make it harder for you to read and understand more difficult books. After all, self-respecting Olympic runners know that they would be at a severe disadvantage in the actual games if they secretly completed only half of their daily training regimen. In the same way, the results you achieve as a reader will reflect the quality and consistency of your training.

Because measuring progress is a part of learning, each section in this book begins or ends with suggested reading and writing exercises that allow you to gauge how well you have mastered the skills you've been practicing. Completing every type of exercise for every book you read can make it harder to retain what you've learned. Parents with younger children may want to focus on the suggested Reading Practice exercise, while older children may gain more from Going Deeper. Although a particular exercise is suggested for each book studied, if you would rather practice a different skill or work on several skills at once, feel free to do so.

It is best if you have your own copy of each book so you can highlight or make notes in the margins. If, however, you need to use a copy belonging to the library or to a friend, consider reading with a small notebook or a pad of sticky notes nearby so you can jot down ideas and connections while they are fresh in your head.

The Journey in Perspective

One of the most important things to remember as you start—or resume—this journey is that it doesn't happen overnight. The art of leading and sharing in conversations about classical literature takes a lifetime to refine. You must begin with the fundamentals: learning to read closely, taking notes, and developing the vocabulary to structure your ideas and explain them to others (grammar). You must practice: adding new techniques, revising old ones, and comparing the results (dialectic). And then you will be ready to start all over again as you share the joy of the journey with others around you (rhetoric). Let's get started!

Reading Practice

Reading a science fiction novel and reading a textbook or an instruction manual might seem worlds apart, just as reading a short story might seem fundamentally unrelated to taking a test, interacting with strangers, or working in an office; however, all of these tasks require some of the same basic reading and writing skills. This section will introduce some of the skills that will equip you for reading- and writing-based tasks in any context.

Note-taking

One of the broadest reading skills is taking notes. The first thing to remember is that note-taking is not about copying what the book (or speaker) says word for word. Instead, it is about picking the most important information and putting it into your own words. A good test is to take notes only after you have stopped reading and set the book aside. To practice taking notes, read a paragraph or two, set down the book, and write a few words to remind you of the main ideas.

Keep in mind that notes do not have to be in full sentences. Unlike chapter summaries, notes do not simply record the plot; they may also include examples of symbolism, important quotes, key descriptions, recurring themes, or even hints about events to come. You can use anything from note cards to a blank piece of paper or sticky notes to record your ideas.

If you learn to take good notes from the books you read, not only will you have an easier time taking notes as you listen to a teacher's lecture, but you will also have an easier time avoiding unintentional plagiarism. Plagiarism means taking someone else's words and using them as your own without giving credit to the author. (To avoid plagiarizing, place quotation marks around exact quotes, and be careful that your notes change more than a few words from the original.)

Note-taking is also a valuable skill outside of academics. A secretary recording the "minutes" of a meeting is taking notes. A lawyer listening to testimony and preparing for cross-examination and a doctor recording a patient's symptoms also need to be able to take good notes.

Chapter Summaries

A more specific type of note-taking is writing chapter summaries. After you finish reading each chapter, pause and set the book aside to think back over what happened. If necessary, re-read to refresh your memory. Then jot down the major events or points from the chapter. DO NOT write a chapter summary while looking at the book. If you need to look at the book in order to summarize what you have read, you should probably go back and read it again before you continue.

A chapter summary should be written in full sentences, and should be no longer than one paragraph (4-5 sentences). Essentially, a chapter summary is a tool you can use to remember what you have read so far. In an academic setting, chapter summaries are very helpful when you are looking for quotations to write a paper or studying for a test. This skill will be particularly valuable when you read books with long or complex chapters, including textbooks and nonfiction.

What is more, the ability to record and outline a sequence of events will help you write

lab reports in the sciences, keep a journal when you go on an exciting trip, or even keep track of the strange noises your car is making so you can tell your mechanic.

Character Charts

Most books you read will have at least three or four characters in addition to the protagonist (main character). Some books have so many characters that it is difficult to keep them all straight! One tool that may help is a character chart. A character chart is simply a list of the people you encounter in the book, with a few brief notes or arrows indicating relationships between the characters. You can also write comments about the characters' personality traits, appearances, or choices. Include the page number with important points if possible.

When you read, keep your character chart nearby, so you can add notes and refer to it as you go. Then, if you have a question about how two characters are related, you won't have to search through the book to find the page where the characters were introduced. A character chart may also help you write essays, especially character sketches or book reports.

Creating character charts may seem like a task you would never use outside of school, but it teaches you a valuable skill. Substitute the word "person" for "character." Now imagine you are a diplomat. You are about to meet with three world leaders, and you need to know who they are and what makes them tick. How do you find out? You read their interviews. You read biographies and news stories about them. You take notes on their friendships, their enemies, and their likes and dislikes. You study their personality traits and choices. With all of this information, you are prepared when you enter the meeting.

On a smaller scale, think of a situation in which you might encounter strangers. Whether it's an interview with one person, a class with thirty, or a convention with a hundred, you want to be able to remember the names of people you meet and how they connect to each other and to you. Keeping track of the characters in a novel is a great way to practice.

Chronologies

Some books include flashbacks to earlier events or have two sequences of events going at the same time. A timeline allows you to see the events of the book as they occur in chronological order. Depending on the book's time span (a year, a month, a day), you may want to divide the timeline by larger or smaller increments of time (years, days, hours). If you are a visual learner, you can draw arrows from earlier events to the later events they influence.

As you prepare your timeline, think about whether some chapters have more action than others. Are there gaps in your timeline? What fills those gaps? Answering these questions will reveal places where the pace of the book slows down or speeds up. What important developments or themes appear in the slow parts? Are they important to the book's conclusion or larger message?

Although all of these considerations will help you write essays, in other situations, the skills you develop could also enable you analyze the development of a historical problem, unravel the events surrounding a crime, or create an itinerary for a group of people with busy schedules.

Maps

What chronologies do for time, maps do for space: they allow you to visualize the physical setting of a book. That is one reason many fantasy novels have a map on the inside cover or in the appendices. Because fantasy novels are set in a world that the author of the book has invented, authors and publishers realize that readers may need a map to bring the fantasy world to life.

Even though you may know the approximate geography of the United States or Europe or Africa, a map can still be a helpful tool to use as you read novels set in our world. For example, if you are reading a book about a military campaign, you may want to draw a map with the locations of major battles and colored lines to represent troop movements.

When you read a fantasy novel, use the author's descriptions to create your own map. If the book already has one, consider making a copy so you can add your own details. If the book is set in the real world, use an atlas to copy the basic shape of the country or state, and then add details mentioned in the book. Write down place names and major events that happen at each location. If you have space, jot down some of the important historical features of each location. If the main characters go on a journey, mark their route with colored pencils. (For a good example, look at the maps accompanying J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings*).

Not only will map-making improve your knowledge of geography; it will also make you more aware of the way that landscape can affect events. When Hitler's troops invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, they underestimated both the distance their supply lines would have to stretch and the fierceness of Soviet winters. The western prairies and the mountains of Colorado will present different challenges to the characters and real people who live in those places.

Glossaries of Terms

Reading is one of the most important ways to expand your vocabulary. Some of the process is unconscious. You learn what a word means by its context. The next time you see the word you modify or confirm your original assumption based on the new context. However, deliberate practice will give you greater speed and accuracy as you learn new words, especially those for which context may not provide the meaning right away.

Some books use technical terms (science fiction), local slang (*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is a good example), or made-up words (fantasy novels). Some authors also use big or old-fashioned words that you may not recognize. Shakespeare is notoriously difficult for new readers, in part because everyday English in 1600 was very different from the English you hear today. In addition, writers from England, South Africa, New Zealand, or even New York, may use words that are specific to their culture and not widely known in other places.

If you come across an unfamiliar word, take a minute to write it down, along with a brief definition. That way if you see the word again, you can refer back to your glossary. The repetition of reading a word, then writing it, then looking at it will implant the word more firmly in your mind and increase the likelihood that you will remember it the next time you need it.

Going Deeper

One of the most exciting things about classic literature is the layers of meaning and ideas. On the surface, a book may be enjoyable to read because it has good action and interesting characters. If you read it again, you might begin to see parallels in the way two characters deal with their problems. A third reading might lead you to ponder a similar struggle in your own life, and a fourth might challenge you to respond to your problem in a different way.

Authors use a variety of tools to create these layers. This section will explore some common methods and give you the tools to reach a deeper understanding of your favorite books and a deeper appreciation for any book you encounter.

Genre

A *genre* is a category of literature based on the books' shared style, theme, or form. (*Genre* is a French word meaning a kind or type of thing, and it comes from the Latin word *genus*.) Although all of the books in this study guide can be loosely classified as children's literature, each one is slightly different.

Some of these books are historical fiction: stories set in real places and times in the past, but about fictional characters (*The Door in the Wall*). Some are realistic fiction: stories set in or near the author's own time period (*Where the Red Fern Grows*). Some are biographies: stories based on the lives of real people, either in their own words (*The Hiding Place*) or as told by others (*Amos Fortune, Free Man*). Others are fantasy: books set in worlds that are completely imaginary (*The Phantom Tollbooth*) or a combination of imaginary and real (*The Magician's Nephew*). Some books are difficult to classify because they include elements of several different genres.

When you read books from different genres, you will need to bring with you a different set of expectations. Just as your expectations vary when reading a user manual or a newspaper, literary genres may influence the way you understand a particular book. You might approach a fantasy novel knowing that some of the characters or situations could not occur in the real world. A work of historical fiction might have been limited by the author's access to research materials. Whereas in a work of fiction, an author might use the weather to suggest the mood of a scene, in a biography, a thunderstorm could simply be a factual detail from actual records.

Certain genres are better suited to giving a moral lesson, while others stir your imagination or teach you about history. As you read, think about the genre of each book from an author's perspective. Ask yourself what challenges and opportunities that genre presents to a writer. Always take genre into account when you analyze a book's purpose or claim to truth.

Themes

In the classic British novel *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, the main plot is about a scientist, Victor Frankenstein, who is so determined to pursue the possibilities of science that he neglects the ethical consequences of his actions. Most of the action is recorded, however, in a series of letters written by a minor character, explorer Robert Walton, who is bent on reaching the North Pole. His blind determination, without regard to the consequences, leads him into grave danger, where he meets Frankenstein. Do you sense a pattern?

Authors sometimes use minor events, characters, or problems (sub-plots), to reflect or emphasize the main plot. For example, if the central conflict of the book is caused by a character's selfishness, then the story might open with an argument between that character and his sibling over his unwillingness to share. Alternately, as in *Frankenstein*, one character—Frankenstein—might serve as a mirror in which another character—Walton—sees his flaws magnified. Parallels can also appear across generations (a son develops the same faults as his father) or cultural and economic situations. *The Prince and the Pauper*, by Mark Twain, is a famous example of the latter.

As you read, be on the lookout for characters who share a common fear, flaw, or personality trait. Ask yourself what the situation confronting the main character has in common with the minor characters' circumstances. Try to identify the main theme of the book, and then look for ways that each character or situation relates to that theme. If there is a character or sub-plot that seems totally out of place, think about ways it might illustrate the theme by showing its opposite.

Character Development

At the beginning of Esther Forbes's award-winning American novel *Johnny Tremain*, Johnny is a self-serving, arrogant young man who views other people as stepping stones to his own ends. By the end of the novel, he has become not only humble, but self-sacrificing for the sake of a greater cause. His transformation is what drives the plot and makes the story compelling.

If the main characters in a novel never changed, the novel itself would be much less interesting to read. Because humans are complicated and unpredictable, it is easier to identify with a character who shares those traits. For this reason, one way "classic" literature has been defined is that it contains characters who are complex and who grow or change over the course of the book. Change is not instantaneous, and authors use encounters, mishaps, and other characters to demonstrate the main character's growth.

After you finish reading, go back and look at the main character's first words at the beginning of the book. Look at the words the author uses to describe him or her. Now look at the character's last words, and the last description. What differences do you see? Think about the events and relationships that produced a noticeable change or caused the character to reevaluate his life, and use this information to identify the major turning points in the character's development.

Imagery

One of the most difficult jobs for a filmmaker is to turn a well-known book into a movie. Why? Because so many people have mental images of the settings and characters in the book, and everyone has a different idea of how their favorite scene should look.

In a film or play, the director can use physical props, sets, and costumes to show you her vision for a scene. In a book, the author must use words instead. Some descriptions are fairly straightforward: she wore a long, blue dress; three oak trees lined the driveway; it was July in New York City. Other descriptions are more subjective: the house was gloomy and vaguely threatening; the street was like a Baroque painting.

When you read a particularly vivid passage in a book, take a minute to sketch the scene. Compare your drawing with another person who has read the same book. Try to figure out why the drawings are different. If possible, look at an illustrated copy of the book, and see how close your vision of the scene comes to that of the illustrator. Think about the ability of certain words to produce a particular emotion. How did the author use these words to create a picture in your mind? When you write, think about ways you can use word choice to convey a certain mood.

Symbolism

When is a tree not a tree? Trick question, right? Not necessarily. In literature, sometimes a simple object or action represents something much larger. For example, in E.G. Speare's *The Bronze Bow*, the sandals Daniel must wear when he returns to the village and the cleansing rituals he must follow are symbolic of the constraint he feels when he is in the village.

Sometimes the symbol is not a specific object, but rather a pattern of events or ideas repeated on small and large scales. In *The Hiding Place*, Corrie ten Boom identifies symbolism in her own life. When Father does not let Corrie carry his briefcase because it is too heavy for her, she reflects that this is similar to the way in which God sometimes denies humans full knowledge because He knows they are not strong enough to bear it.

As you read, be on the lookout for symbolism. Authors rarely include details or describe a scene in a certain way without a purpose. Try to think how small events and interactions reflect the larger lessons of the book. And even though the "dark and stormy night" with which the cartoon character Snoopy began his novels is a bit overdramatic, keep in mind that something as simple as a rainstorm or planting a tree may reflect a transition in the book or in the life of a character.

Worldview

Have you ever stopped to consider why wearing a hat in church is frowned upon? Why "boys don't cry"? Why it is impolite to ask someone how much money they make? These and many other assumptions are part of our culture, part of the invisible rulebook that influences how we choose to behave. We act according to similar assumptions every day, often without recognizing that we are following "rules" at all.

In the same way, books present you with worlds in which certain things are taken for granted. If you read a book written or set during the Civil War, most likely the female characters will wear dresses and perhaps corsets. Owning slaves may be acceptable. The characters will not question these things, and you may not be expected to question them either.

On one hand, this is the mark of a well-written book set outside the reader's place and time. The author needs you to accept the characters' world (with all its peculiarities) as a place as normal as your own world. It can be easy to get swept up in the author's view of the universe, to blindly accept the philosophies, worldview, and actions of the characters without questioning. Being carried away by the author's imagination is one of the great joys of reading. But at the same time, it is wise to be aware of the book's subtler messages.

Every author has been influenced by his or her time. As a result, he may take for granted some things that you would never accept or believe. Paying attention to the author's

deliberate or unconscious assumptions not only will make you a better reader, it will also challenge you to recognize and analyze your own culture's version of "normal."

When you read, ask yourself these questions: what do the characters assume about the way the world works? What are the book's assumptions about religion? Human nature? Gender? Families? The natural world? Do the consequences of the characters' actions (or lack thereof) encourage you to follow their example?

Some details are simply different and provide a window into a historical period or fantasy world. However, some books may imply that it is okay to disregard morals "under [fill-in-the-blank] circumstances" or that "obviously [fill-in-the-blank] is true around the world." Both can provide excellent topics for discussion—if you're paying attention. So when you read, enjoy the details that make living on Mars or in the nineteenth century seem equally possible, but don't get so caught up in the music that you miss the lyrics.

Remember, there is a difference between blindly absorbing a book's messages and wisely considering them in light of truth. It is important to acknowledge that while the great classical conversations of world literature will inspire you, they will also challenge you. If you can approach them with a spirit of thoughtful critique rather than fear, you will be able to celebrate the discovery of truth and beauty in literature with that much more joy.

The Magician's Nephew

C. S. Lewis

Introduction

Clive Staples Lewis (1898-1963) is one of the most prominent authors in twentieth-century Christian literature. After a personal investigation of Christianity, Lewis went on to write books on topics ranging from pain and loss to the meaning of biblical love. Lewis also wrote a number of Christian-themed children's and science fiction novels. *The Magician's Nephew* was published in 1955. It is the prequel to Lewis' famed *Chronicles of Narnia* series, although it was written later than most of the other books. *The Magician's Nephew* introduces readers to the world of Narnia and sets the stage for the next book, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

Reading Practice: Maps

Look at several different types of maps: road maps, topographic maps, political maps, physical maps, climate maps, and resource or economic maps. Which types might be relevant or helpful for this book? Draw maps of the Wood Between the Worlds, Charn, and Narnia. Try to include as many details from the text as you can.

Going Deeper: Worldview

In this book, you will be introduced to several philosophies of "proper" human behavior. Try to identify the basic principles by which characters live. Compare and contrast the worldviews of Uncle Andrew, Jadis, and Aslan. Identify their highest values, the rules they refuse to break, and their priorities. Then ask yourself if the differences help to explain the conflict between them.

Another part of worldview in *The Chronicles of Narnia* that might spark conversation is the presence of magic. *The Magician's Nephew* contains references to three very different types of magic: Uncle Andrew's, Jadis's, and Aslan's. As you read, think about the way Lewis portrays magic. Does it have a clear source? Is it good, evil, or neutral? For parents, this is a great opportunity to respond not with fear but with wisdom as you discuss these questions with your children. For students, it's a chance to think critically about the possibilities and challenges of using fiction—especially fantasy—to communicate truth.

Chapter 1

Review Questions

1. How did Polly and Digory meet?
2. Why was Digory unhappy?
3. Which house did Polly and Digory enter from the tunnel?
4. What was the humming noise that Polly heard?
5. What did Uncle Andrew want to give Polly? What happened when Polly took the gift?

Thought Questions

1. How did Polly and Digory become friends? Were they very similar? How were they different? How do you make friends? Which is more important, similarity or being in a situation in which you need the other person?
2. Why did Polly accept Uncle Andrew's gift? How did he persuade her? Do you think you would have been fooled by his persuasion?

Chapter 2

Review Questions

1. Who was Mrs. Lefay? What was unusual about her?
2. Where had Mrs. Lefay gotten her box?
3. What was the difference between the yellow and green rings?
4. Why didn't Uncle Andrew want to go to the Other Place?
5. How did Uncle Andrew convince Digory to take the ring?

Thought Questions

1. Uncle Andrew says that promises and rules only apply to little boys, servants, and women. What does this tell you about his views on children? Women? Servants?
2. Do you think someone should be free from moral rules if they are particularly smart or powerful?
3. Do superheroes obey the law? Are the results of their actions generally good or bad?
4. Do you think Uncle Andrew was a coward? Explain.
5. Before he leaves, Digory says he "could not decently have done anything else." Do you agree? Why or why not?

Chapter 3

Review Questions

1. Where did Digory go when he put on the yellow ring?
2. How did Digory describe the wood?
3. Whom did Digory meet beside the pool?
4. What prevented Polly and Digory from going straight home?
5. What did Digory almost forget to do (just before they set out to explore)?
6. Why didn't the yellow rings take Polly and Digory into another world?

Thought Questions

1. How would you decide what kind of scientific tests are ethical (for example, using human volunteers, testing on yourself, or using animals)?
2. How had Uncle Andrew misunderstood the function of the rings? Why do you think he made that mistake? Is it wise to use something you don't understand completely?

Chapter 4

Review Questions

1. Describe the new world Digory and Polly entered.
2. How did Polly and Digory know this new world was very old?
3. What did the children see in the great hall?
4. How did the faces change as the children went farther into the room?
5. Did Polly want to strike the bell? Why or why not? Did Digory? Why?
6. What happened when the bell was struck?

Thought Questions

1. Digory describes the last woman in the hall as both very beautiful and very cruel. Is this possible? Does physical beauty have anything to do with goodness?
2. What do you think the poem on the pillar means?
3. Would you have struck the bell? Why or why not?
4. Is curiosity a bad thing? When does it become dangerous or harmful?

Chapter 5

Review Questions

1. How did the Queen, Polly, and Digory get through the doors?
2. Who destroyed Charn? How was it destroyed? Why was it destroyed?
3. How did Polly and Digory escape Charn? What went wrong with their escape?

Thought Questions

1. What was Digory's view of the Queen? Polly's? Why do you think the two children saw the Queen differently? In your opinion, who was right? Why?
2. How are the Queen and Uncle Andrew similar? How are they different? Which one is more dangerous? Is that a distinction you can make?

Chapter 6

Review Questions

1. What did the trip back to the Wood teach the children about the rings?
2. What did Polly want to do to Jadis in the Wood between the Worlds?
3. How did Jadis get to London?
4. What did the narrator describe as "Uncle Andrew's silliness"?

Thought Questions

1. Do you agree with Polly that she and Digory would have been justified in leaving the Queen in the Wood?
2. What do you think is the mark of a magician?
3. If you did wicked things over and over again, would it change your appearance? Why or why not? If so, how?
4. Look back at Chapter 4 (Thought Questions): what common theme do you see?

Chapter 7

Review Questions

1. Why couldn't Polly go back to help Digory?
2. How did Digory plan to get rid of the Witch?
3. Why did Digory suddenly want to go back to the wood? What prevented him?

Thought Questions

1. Would it have been wrong for Digory to leave Jadis in London? Was she his responsibility? What is the difference between a problem that is your fault and one that is your responsibility?

Chapter 8

Review Questions

1. How many people did Digory bring with him to the wood? Who were they?
2. Which world did the group enter by mistake?
3. What happened when the voice began to sing?
4. Who was the singer?

Thought Questions

1. If the music and singing were so beautiful, why do you think the Witch hated them?
2. Why do you think Lewis uses music instead of just words to create Narnia?
3. What is the most beautiful sound you have ever heard? What do you imagine the Lion's singing sounded like? What adjectives does Lewis use to describe it? What impression do the words convey?

Chapter 9

Review Questions

1. What happened when the Witch threw the iron bar at the Lion?
2. What did Uncle Andrew want to do with the new world?
3. Why did Polly compare Uncle Andrew to the Witch?
4. What did the Lion do to the animals he selected?

Thought Questions

1. Polly says everything in Narnia comes "out of the Lion's head." What does she mean? Do you agree?
2. What parallels can you find between this creation story and the one found in Genesis 1-2? What are some significant differences?
3. What is wrong with Uncle Andrew's plan for the new world?
4. Is it a good thing to use the resources around you? When does it become a bad thing?

Chapter 10

Review Questions

1. What was the first joke in Narnia?
2. Why couldn't Uncle Andrew hear Aslan talking?
3. Did Strawberry remember the Cabman?

Thought Questions

1. Have you ever tried to convince yourself that something unpleasant was untrue? If so, why? Did you begin to believe it?
2. Is it hard for you to admit when you're wrong? Why do you think people are afraid to be incorrect?
3. How do your preconceived ideas about other people impact the way you see and interact with them?

Chapter 11

Review Questions

1. What did the animals think of Uncle Andrew? What did they do to him?
2. What did Aslan say when Digory asked him for help?
3. How did the Cabby's wife get to Narnia?
4. What did Aslan say were the qualities a king should have?
5. Who were the first king and queen of Narnia?

Thought Questions

1. Compare the way the animals in Narnia view humans to the way you think about animals. Do you think this book claims that animals and humans are equal? If not, why not?
2. What is the risk in stereotyping (making assumptions about) people based on the way they look?
3. Do you think it was fair for Aslan to blame Digory for the Witch's coming to Narnia?
4. In your mind, what sets kings and queens apart from other people? What additional responsibilities should they have? What additional privileges?

Chapter 12

Review Questions

1. What did Aslan ask Digory to do?
2. What was Strawberry's new name? How did he get it?
3. Why did Digory and Polly bury the ninth toffee?
4. What did the children hear just as they were about to go to sleep?

Thought Questions

1. Why do you think Aslan had tears in his eyes when he talked about Digory's mother? How is this story similar to the one in John 11?
2. Why did Aslan say that only he and Digory know how powerful grief can be? Do you think he's right?
3. Fledge says although Aslan knows what the children need, he likes to be asked. Do you think the same thing is true of God? Why or why not?

Chapter 13

Review Questions

1. Why didn't Polly and Fledge go into the garden with Digory?
2. Why didn't Digory take one of the apples for himself?
3. Whom did Digory meet in the garden?
4. How did the Witch change after she ate the apple?
5. What strategy did the Witch use to persuade Digory to steal one of the apples?
6. What was the Witch's mistake?

Thought Questions

1. Digory asks, "Who would want to climb a wall if he could get in by a gate?" He thought the answer was obvious. Do you? What is the difference between climbing a wall and entering through a gate? Why might someone choose to climb the wall instead?
2. Did Digory owe Aslan anything, as the Witch asks? Why or why not?

Chapter 14

Review Questions

1. What did Aslan do with the apple Digory brought?
2. What was inside the animals' cage?
3. What happened to the apple? What was its purpose? Its power?
4. What did Aslan say would happen to the Witch because she had eaten an apple?
5. What gift did Aslan give Digory?

Thought Questions

1. Aslan says, "Oh, Adam's sons, how cleverly you defend yourselves against all that might do you good!" Explain. Can you think of an example of this in your own life?
2. Why could Aslan give Digory an apple if Digory was forbidden to take one?

Chapter 15

Review Questions

1. What was Aslan's warning? His command?
2. How long were the children and Uncle Andrew gone?
3. What effect, if any, did the apple have on Digory's mother?
4. What did Polly and Digory do with the rings and the apple core?
5. How was Digory's apple tree connected to the tree in Narnia?

Thought Questions

1. Why didn't the children need to use the rings when they were with Aslan?
2. Why did the apples have a different effect on the Witch and on Digory's mother?
3. What do you think ultimately caused Uncle Andrew to learn his lesson?
4. If you have already read *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, how does Lewis set the stage for that book in the ending of *The Magician's Nephew*?