

The Island of Dr. Libris

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English Language Arts Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1

Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2

Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3

Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1

Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.7

Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

Discussion Questions (During Reading)

Lab Note #315; Chapters 1 - 5

1. Look closely at the cover of the book. What do you think the book will be about?
2. Why does Dr. Libris consider Billy to be the perfect test subject?
3. How are Billy's parents different?
4. What does Billy look like?
5. How would you feel if there were security cameras all over the place in the cabin you were renting?
6. Who is Billy's mom renting the cabin from?
7. Why do Billy's parents argue?
8. Do you think you would like to stay in that cabin for the summer? Explain.
9. What is Billy's mom planning to do this summer?
10. Do you think Billy will have fun by himself? Why or why not?
11. Do you think Billy will visit the island? Would you?
12. Who is Alyssa?
13. How does Billy ruin his iPhone?
14. Do you think Billy should have helped Alyssa? Why or why not?
15. Describe Nick Farkas.
16. Based on what you have read so far, what are some words that you would use to describe Billy?
17. Why do you think Dr. Libris is watching Billy?
18. Do you think Billy will find the key? Where do you think it will be?
19. Describe the bookcase.

Chapters 6 – 10

1. How does Billy find the key?
2. Do you think you would have been able to find the key? Explain.

3. What happens when Billy begins reading about Hercules?
4. Does Billy's mom hear Hercules and Antaeus?
5. What happens when Billy closes the Hercules book?
6. Do you think Dr. Libris is a good guy or a bad guy? Why?
7. What is Billy's mom researching, according to chapter nine?
8. What happens when Billy starts reading *Robin Hood*?
9. Should Billy stop reading? Would you?
10. Do you think Billy should explore the island? Explain.
11. Do you think Billy will be able to row to the island? Explain.

Chapters 11 - 15

1. Do you think Billy handled Nick Farkas well? How would you have handled this situation Billy finds himself in at the beginning of chapter 11?
2. Who helps Billy row the boat? Were you surprised? Explain.
3. Do you think Billy should enter the dome? Explain.
4. Whom does Billy meet in chapter 12? What is his problem?
5. Were you surprised when Billy helps Hercules? Explain.
6. How does Billy help Hercules defeat Antaeus?
7. Whom does Billy meet at the end of chapter 14?
8. Who is Sir William of Goat?
9. Who is the enemy of Robin Hood and Maid Marian?

Chapters 16 – 20

1. Why do Robin Hood and Hercules fight?
2. Who joins the band of Merry People?
3. Who threatens Billy? What does Billy do?
4. According to Lab Note #320, what is Dr. Libris planning?
5. In Chapter 18, what message does Billy find?
6. Why does Billy want to find money?
7. Do you think Billy's parents would stop arguing if they had a lot of money? Why or why not?
8. Whom does Billy meet when he leaves the island? Should Billy trust him? Explain.
9. What is the Hodge Podge Lodge? If you had a Hodge Podge Lodge, what would you add to it? Explain.
10. What does Walter tell Billy about the bookcase?
11. What is the mesh on the dome for? What kind of top secret government project do you think the island is?
12. What happens when Walter and Billy take a short cut through the woods?

13. How does Billy escape the bullies? Do you think he should have given away the pie? Would you have? Explain.

Chapters 21- 25

1. What happens when Walter reads *The Three Musketeers*? Were you surprised? Explain.
2. How did the Musketeers come to life?
3. What do you think Theta Waves could be used for?
4. Were you surprised that Walter was able to bring the Junior Wizard to life? Explain.
5. Why do you think Dr. Libris gave Billy the ink blot test?
6. What is a black hole?
7. Which book do Walter and Billy choose to help them find the treasure? Why?

Chapters 26 – 30

1. What goes wrong with Walter's sleeping spell?
2. What does the poster in Chapter 26 say?
3. Who comes to life in Chapter 27?
4. Where is Pollyanna going to take Walter and Billy? Do you think it's a trap? Explain.
5. Should Billy go home where he is safe, or does he have a responsibility to help the characters he brought to life? Explain.
6. What new character appears in Chapter 28? Do you think Billy should trust him? Explain.
7. Why does Billy have to warn Robin Hood and Hercules?
8. How do Robin Hood and Hercules outwit and outplay the Sheriff of Nottingham?
9. What do you think will happen to Billy and Walter in Chapter 30?
10. How does Billy convince the Sheriff of Nottingham to not arrest them?
11. Do you think Walter should have pie? Explain.
12. Do you think Billy and Walter were having fun on their adventures on the island? Explain.
13. Do you think Billy and Walter are underestimating the danger they are in? Explain.

Chapters 31-35

1. Did anything change in the Robin Hood book after their adventure?
2. What book does Billy read next?
3. What did Walter A. do with the pie that is important to the story according to Lab Note 322? Why do you think this is important to the story?
4. Do you think Billy and Walter should go to the cave to look for treasures?
5. How does Alyssa persuade Billy and Walter to take her to the island?

6. Who is picnicking with Alyssa? Do you think this is a good idea?
7. Why did Billy bring to life a prehistoric monster?
8. Who is standing outside of the cave in Chapter 32?
9. How does Billy bring the "Sharkodile" to life? Who helps him out of the cave?
10. What does the Sheriff do when he sees the sharkodile? Do you think he will return?
11. How do Hercules and Robin tame the sharkodile?
12. How do the Musketeers react when Hercules and Robin save them from the sharkodile?
13. What kind of book does Billy need to read to bring the treasure to life?
14. Do you think Nick Farkas will find the treasure before Billy?

Chapters 36-40

1. What news does Billy's mom share in Chapter 36? What do you think the "giant" problem is?
2. According to Lab Note #323, where is Dr. Libris moving? Do you think this is good or bad?
3. Do you think Billy, Walter, Alyssa, or Nick will find Dr. Libris?
4. What does Nick tell Billy in Chapter 37?
5. Who is wanted now by the Sheriff of Nottingham?
6. How big is Jack's giant?
7. Describe the giant. Is he scary?
8. What does the giant accuse Jack of doing?
9. What do you think the cinderblock building is?
10. How does Billy trick Jack?
11. Describe the Space Lizard.
12. Who else arrives on the island?
13. Should Billy leave the island? Why or why not?
14. What present does Billy's dad bring? Do you think Billy will care more about the present than the island?
15. What do you think Billy's dad is going to tell him?

Chapters 41-45

1. How does Billy respond to his dad's news?
2. Do you think Walter is trying to steal the treasure?
3. What does Billy's dad tell him in Chapter 42?
4. What happened to Walter in Chapter 43?
5. How is Walter rescued in Chapter 45?
6. How does Billy buy Walter more time?

Chapters 46-50

1. How does Walter escape?
2. Whom does Billy ask for help? Why?
3. How do Billy and Walter trick Nick Farkas? Should they have warned Nick about the danger?
4. What does Billy bring to life in Chapter 49?
5. How does the P.B.C. cheat code word?
6. Why do you think Billy and Walter erased Nick Farkas's memory?
7. What is Billy going to use the time machine for? Do you think this plan will work? Explain.
8. What is the love potion for?
9. What is the reminder alarm on the iPhone for?
10. Do you think it is wrong for Billy and Walter to lie about a sprained ankle? Explain.

Chapters 51-55

1. Who appears at the end of Chapter 51? Do you think he will ruin Billy's plan to save his parents' marriage? Why or why not?
2. What does Dr. Libris explain about how Theta Waves work?
3. Do you think Dr. Libris should ask Billy's mind to make things? Explain.
4. Why is Billy's mind such a treasure?
5. What happens when Dr. Libris turns off the dome?
6. Where do Billy and Walter go at the end of Chapter 53?
7. Do you think Billy will be able to save his parents? Explain.
8. Do you think Billy regrets sending his parents back in time? Explain.
9. Do you agree with Billy's decision to let his parents make their own choices? Explain.
10. How does Billy get his parents to return?

Chapter 56 and Epilogue

1. Who returns in Chapter 56? How does Billy get rid of him?
2. Why does Billy decide that he doesn't need to find the buried treasure anymore?

Understanding Figurative Language

1. *"The convertible rocketed up the winding country road like it was The Space Lizard's Galaxy Blaster from Billy's favorite comic book."* (page 3)

This means that the convertible car was:

- a. Speeding
 - b. Imaginary
 - c. On fire
 - d. Out of control
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2. *"The three guys -- who were all about Billy's age-- straddled their rides and laughed the way hyenas do when they find a wounded wildebeest."* (page 13)

This means that the three guys were

- a. Laughing in a playful way
 - b. Laughing because they were making fun of Billy
 - c. Laughing really loudly
 - d. Laughing nervously
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3. *"She wore a bell-shaped yellow gingham dress that made her look like an upside-down daffodil."* (page 87)

The author describes Pollyanna this way to show that

- a. Pollyanna looks ridiculous.
 - b. Pollyanna is wearing a very bright yellow dress.
 - c. Pollyanna cannot be taken seriously.
 - d. Pollyanna should be embarrassed about being out of fashion.
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4. *"The chamber was pitch black and colder than frozen pizza crust."* (page 104)

This means that

- A. The chamber was a cold and dark place.
- B. The chamber was like a dark pizza place full of crusts.

- C. The chamber was going to be heated up soon.
 - D. The chamber was not as bad as Billy thought it would be.
5. *"Its [the creature's breath] smelled like moldy hamburgers somebody should've put in the refrigerator weeks ago."* (page 109)

This means

- a. The creature had just finished eating hamburgers.
- b. The creature's breath was hot.
- c. The creature's breath had a delicious smell.
- d. The creature's breath smelled rotten.

Discussion Questions (After Reading)

1. Is it better to be a kid now, or was it better to be a kid twenty-five or fifty years ago? Explain.
2. In *The Island of Dr. Libris*, Billy spends a lot of time alone until he meets Walter. Do you like spending time by yourself, or do you get lonely or bored when you are alone? Explain.
3. Robin Hood is known for stealing from the rich to give to the poor. Is it ever okay to do a bad thing in order to do a good thing? For example, it is okay to tell a lie or cheat if it will help someone? Explain.
4. Do you think time travel is possible? Why or why not?
5. If you could travel to any time, past or present, to what place and time would you go? Why?
6. What book would you bring to life if you could? Why?
7. In *The Island of Dr. Libris*, a shark-o-dile is a combination of a shark and a crocodile. What animal would you create by combining two animals? What would your animal be called?
8. Can anyone be a hero? Why or why not? Do you think that you could be a hero? Explain.
9. At the end of *The Island of Dr. Libris*, Billy decides that he didn't need to find buried treasure. He just needed to remember what he already had. What are the things that you are grateful for?
10. Pollyanna always looks on the bright side. Do you? Why or why not?
11. Do you think we get to make our own happy endings in life? Explain.

Activities

1. In the story, Dr. Libris is an interesting villain. If you could create your own villain, what would his (or her) name be? What would he or she look like? Why is he or she evil? What would make your villain unique? Draw a picture of your villain and write a character sketch describing him or her.
2. Pretend that Hercules, Robin Hood, Maid Marian, the three Musketeers, Tom Sawyer, and Pollyanna are coming to visit your town for the weekend. What would you do for fun? What food would you serve them? Where would they sleep? How would you introduce them to your friends? Write an itinerary for their visit and/or write a skit explaining what happens when they come to your town.
3. Dr. Libris considers the dome a “maze” for Billy to solve. Using a ruler and/or graph paper, create your own maze and give it to a friend to solve.
4. In *The Island of Dr. Libris*, the Sheriff of Nottingham posts several “Wanted” signs. Create your own “Wanted” sign! Ask someone to take your picture against a plain backdrop and print it out, or use your school picture or another picture that you have. (If you would like a challenge, draw a picture of yourself.) On a poster, paste your picture and write an explanation for why you are “Wanted.” For example, the following could be on a “Wanted” sign for author Chris Grabenstein, the author of *The Island of Dr. Libris*: “Wanted: Chris Grabenstein. He has kidnapped characters from famous stories to entertain children. Beware! Chris is armed with an out-of-control imagination, a Mac computer, and a dramatic dog named Fred. His sidekicks include characters like Riley Mack, Zack Jennings, and Kyle Keeley. He also pals around with James Patterson. Chris has already escaped from Mr. Lemoncello’s Library, so consider him dangerous. Chris is known to dress in yellow and travels around the country visiting schools. If you find him, please return him to J.J. in New York City. She promises to keep an eye on him.”
5. At the end of *The Island of Dr. Libris*, Billy realizes that he has a lot to be thankful for. Write a letter to someone who has made a difference in your life.
6. Find the list of books mentioned in the author’s note. Bring the list to your librarian and ask him or her to recommend one of those books to you. Check out the book and read it!

Writing and Research Assignments (Aligned to the Common Core)

1. In Chapter 2, Billy finds a plaque with the following quote from Carl Sagan: "A book is proof that humans are capable of working magic." What does this quote mean? How does this quote apply to *The Island of Dr. Libris*? Write a short essay explaining the quote and relating the quote to *The Island of Dr. Libris*.
2. In the beginning of the story, Billy destroys his iPhone. Think of an object that is important to you. Imagine how you would feel if you lost or broke this object. Write a story with a beginning, middle, and end explaining what happened to your object. How did you replace the object? What obstacles did you face? Who helped you? Be sure to include details to explain what happened and how you solved your problem.
3. In *The Island of Dr. Libris*, Billy reads a lot of books. What is the best book that you have ever read? Write a book review recommending this book to others. You should provide a brief introduction to the plot, but do not give the ending away. Include the title, author, and genre of the book in your review. Be sure to make the book sound appealing by using persuasive language and appropriate details.
4. One of the problems that Billy faces is dealing with Nick Farkas, who is a bully. Write an anonymous letter to Nick to convince him to stop being a bully.
5. Research M.C. Escher, Mythology, Mark Twain, the legend of Robin Hood, black holes, or any other topic that you discovered in *The Island of Dr. Libris*. Write a short report explaining what you learned. Be sure to make a list of the books, websites, or databases that you used. Remember to put the information into your own words.
6. Bullying is a common problem in schools. Do some research on the different types of bullying. Find out how to handle a bully. Share what you have learned with your class by creating a presentation, poster, or pamphlet.
7. Both Dr. Libris and the Sheriff of Nottingham are villains. Write an essay comparing and contrasting them.
8. Who is your favorite character in *The Island of Dr. Libris*? Describe the character in detail, and explain what you like about him or her.
9. On page 139, Maid Marian says, "Each of us can choose who or what we shall be. We write our own stories, Sir William. We write them each and every day." In an essay, explain how this is the theme of the book. Use specific details from the text to support your answer.
10. Many parents and teachers are concerned that children today do not spend enough time reading. As a result, schools across the country require students to read over the summer. Do you think children should have to read over the summer? Write a letter to your principal explain your opinion. Your letter should be five paragraphs. Include an opening, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Use examples from your own life and detailed explanations to make your point. Consider the other side's point of view as you

make your case. Remember to use varied sentence structure and transitional words and phrases.