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Teacher's Guide

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Chapter Questions

Chapter 1

In the fifth paragraph, the description of the camp personnel gives us our first clue about Camp Green Lake being something quite different from a camp. What is that clue?

Chapter 2

Why did Stanley Yelnats choose Camp Green Lake over jail?

Chapter 3

What three qualities are required of a successful inventor?

Chapter 4

Solve this problem: Including the first day, how many times in a 30-day period will Stanley get clean work clothes?

Chapter 5

What are the real names of the characters nicknamed Armpit, Zigzag, Mom, and Magnet, respectively?

Chapter 6

Why did Stanley run rather than walk home with Clyde Livingston's sneakers?

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What shape best describes the holes that the boys were required to dig?

A. cube; B. cylinder; C. rectangle

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Draw a color sketch of how you believe a yellow-spotted lizard would look.

Chapter 9

What do we learn about Stanley's relationship with his mother from his letter to her?

Chapter 10

What object does Stanley find?

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Who appears to be the leader of D tent and why is it surprising that he is the leader?

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Punishment is intended to cause pain, suffering, or loss. How is Zero able to prevent the staff from punishing him?

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What rewards does X-Ray earn from Stanley's discovery?

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Stanley forms a new opinion about the purpose of the holes. What is it?

Chapter 16

What important childhood experience did Zero miss?

Chapter 17

After reading about Zigzag's behavior, what is your opinion of him?

Chapter 18

What favor does Zero ask of Stanley and how does Stanley respond?

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After confessing to stealing Mr. Sir's sunflower seed, which were actually stolen by Magnet, Stanley surprises himself on the ride to see the Warden. How?

Chapter 20

What evidence is there that the Warden has a sadistic personality?

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What happens to Stanley's hole while he is at the Warden's?

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What does Stanley realize about the gold tube and what does he wonder about it?

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How does Miss Katherine Barlow offend Charles Walker?

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How does Mr. Sir retaliate against Stanley for the pain he suffered from the Warden?

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What does Sam, the onion man, do for which Miss Katherine pays him with six jars of spiced peaches?

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For what crime was Sam shot by Trout Walker and why wasn't Kate shot as well?

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Why did Kissin' Kate Barlow die laughing?

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The silhouette of a fist with a giant thumb protruding upward reminded Stanley of his great-grandfather. How?

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Why does Stanley feel guilty about Zero's disappearance?

Chapter 32

Why does Stanley decide to make a break from Camp Green Lake?

Chapter 33

As Stanley moves farther from the compound he makes some observations about the holes. How are they different from the holes he had been digging?

Chapter 34

Stanley discovers a boat on the lake and Zero, alive, under the boat. What is the name of the boat, and what connection does that name have with previous events, especially from Chapter 27?

Chapter 35

Stanley is rescued indirectly by Katherine Barlow. How is that possible?

Chapter Questions

Chapter 36

As Stanley and Zero trudge along the lakebed, Stanley has time to consider the possibility of his own death. What worries Stanley more than anything else about that possibility?

Chapter 37

As Zero and Stanley climb up the cliffs and along the mountain, they realize there are weeds and bugs there. Why does this comfort them?

Chapter 38

After carrying Zero up the mountain, Stanley discovers two resources to help sustain them. What are they?

Chapter 39

What confession does Zero make?

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What experience does Stanley have that is like the one Becca Tennyson had a century before?

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Despite the circumstances, Stanley finds himself at peace with himself for the first time that he can remember. Why do you think that is?

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Zero describes his last memory of his mother. Where was he, and what happened?

Chapter 44

Describe Zero and Stanley's very short-lived success.

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What painful discovery do Stanley and Zero make?

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How does Stanley maintain stillness as he sits with the venomous lizards on him?

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Chapter 47

What's in a name? In this chapter, we learn the Warden's name and the name on the suitcase. What are those names and how are they linked?

Chapter 48

How is the lawyer allowed to free Zero as well as Stanley?

Chapter 49

How did onions and Derrick Dunne help save Stanley?

Chapter 50

Some people believe in curses. If Madame Zeroni was wronged by Stanley's "no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather," how did Stanley finally compensate for that wrong?

Vocabulary

authentication: *validation; proof of authenticity or truth*

concoction: *mixture of various ingredients*

delirium: *a state of extreme mental confusion*

descendants: *offspring*

despicable: *deserving to be disliked or looked upon with contempt*

forlorn: *miserable; without hope*

jurisdiction: *physical territory of a power or authority*

mirage: *a false appearance; an optical illusion*

paranoid: *characterized by thoughts of suspicion or persecution*

perseverance: *persistence; patient, continued effort*

precipice: *steep rock face or overhang*

runt: *the smallest animal of an animal litter*

sheepishly: *shyly; timidly*

spigot: *faucet*

stone: *a weight of 14 pounds*

strenuous: *requiring great energy or effort*

suckle: *to nurse*

suppress: *crush; restrain*

vile: *wicked; sinful*

writhed: *twisted; contorted*

Vocabulary Building

DIRECTIONS: Use the vocabulary words and definitions from the previous page and the clues provided by the italicized words to fill in the missing words in this story.

Miggle and Morgan

Miggle was the *tiny*, handsome _____ of his litter. He *shyly* and _____ approached the pile of his siblings and, *using all of his energy*, made a _____ effort to *nurse* or _____ like his littermates. He made a *persistent effort*. Despite his _____ he could not find a *territory* that hadn't already been claimed. A littermate had _____ over every nipple, and would *crush* and _____ him as he *twisted* and _____ to reach any *faucet* or _____ on his mother's huge underbelly. Once he was able to wriggle atop the *steep formation* formed by the many warm, outstretched piglets, only to fall off the _____. Then he tried to find an entry beneath the pig pile, but he found himself trapped and nearly crushed beneath the *weight* of two _____. In a *state of mental confusion* or _____, he backed away, feeling *hopeless* and _____. Some of his littermates stopped nursing and looked at him *with contempt*. Feeling _____, he turned away, hopeful of finding some *edible mixture* or _____ elsewhere to satisfy his gnawing hunger. Far across the field, he *saw what appeared to be* a steamy puddle of milk. Obeying his hunger and following the _____, he walked until he was overcome with fatigue and fell asleep. When he awoke, he felt a shadow over him and saw a shape topped with dark hair. It had a small nose, with nostrils nearly obscured beneath. It was extending two long appendages toward him. What was this *wicked*, _____ thing? His thoughts were *suspicious* and _____. But the hands lifted him and held him in a warm, reassuring way. When the hands offered a warm bottle of milk, he accepted this *proof* of his own worth, this _____ of love from a young boy named Morgan who named the runt Miggle. Today, the *offspring* of Morgan are the proud _____ of Mercy Farm, where they continue to raise piglets to become beloved pets.

Teacher's Page

Chapter 1

In the fifth paragraph, the description of the camp personnel gives us our first clue about Camp Green Lake being something quite different from a camp.

What is that clue?

(This paragraph identifies a warden, whereas most camps have directors.)

Chapter 2

Why did Stanley Yelnats choose Camp Green Lake over jail?

(He thought it was a camp, something he had been too poor to experience.)

Chapter 3

What three qualities are required of a successful inventor?

(A great inventor, according to the text, needs intelligence, perseverance, and luck.)

Chapter 4

Solve this problem: Including the first day, how many times in a 30-day period will Stanley get clean work clothes?

(One day. After the first day, he will never have clean work clothes again, because his work clothes will be his “resting” clothes, recycled.)

Chapter 5

What are the real names of the characters nicknamed Armpit, Zigzag, Mom, and Magnet, respectively?

(Their names are Theodore, Ricky, Mr. Pendanski, and Jose, respectively.)

Chapter 6

Why did Stanley run rather than walk home with Clyde Livingston’s sneakers?

(He thought they were a “gift from God” and could be useful in assisting his father in his search for a method for recycling old sneakers.)

Chapter 7

What shape best describes the holes that the boys were required to dig?

A. cube; B. cylinder; C. rectangle.

(B. cylinder)

Chapter 8

Draw a color sketch of how you believe a yellow-spotted lizard would look.

(The drawing should include a yellow-green body color, eleven yellow spots, length of six to ten inches, yellow eyes circled with red, a white tongue, and black teeth.)

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Chapter 9

What do we learn about Stanley's relationship with his mother from his letter to her?
(We learn that Stanley is willing to disguise the truth because he doesn't want her to worry about him.)

Chapter 10

What object does Stanley find?
(He finds a fossilized fish.)

Chapter 11

Who appears to be the leader of D tent and why is it surprising that he is the leader?
(X-Ray seems to be the leader, which is surprising because he is the second smallest.)

Chapter 12

Punishment is intended to cause pain, suffering, or loss. How is Zero able to prevent the staff from punishing him?
(He claims to enjoy digging holes, which is supposed to be dreaded rather than enjoyed.)

Chapter 13

Who seems to be more logical, Stanley or X-Ray, and why?
(Stanley seems more logical. He has to explain to X-Ray that it would be a waste of his day off to turn in the gold tube when his hole is nearly finished.)

Chapter 14

What rewards does X-Ray earn from Stanley's discovery?
(He gets the rest of the day off, a double shower, and clean clothes.)

Chapter 15

Stanley forms a new opinion about the purpose of the holes. What is it?
(Stanley decides that there must be something valuable or important for which they are digging, and that something is not just character-building.)

Chapter 16

What important childhood experience did Zero miss?
(Zero missed learning nursery rhymes.)

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Chapter 17

After reading about Zigzag's behavior, what is your opinion of him?
(Zigzag seems to be a bully who doesn't have any concern for his tent-mates.)

Chapter 18

What favor does Zero ask of Stanley and how does Stanley respond?
(Zero asks Stanley to teach him to read, but Stanley refuses.)

Chapter 19

After confessing to stealing Mr. Sir's sunflower seed, which were actually stolen by Magnet, Stanley surprises himself on the ride to see the Warden. How?
(He is surprised that he can still enjoy little pleasures, including a "comfortable seat" and "the air blowing through the open window onto his hot and sweaty face.")

Chapter 20

What evidence is there that the Warden has a sadistic personality?
(She deliberately inflicts wounds on Mr. Sir and introduces rattlesnake venom into those wounds.)

Chapter 21

What happens to Stanley's hole while he is at the Warden's?
(Zero continues to dig Stanley's hole and nearly finishes it.)

Chapter 22

What does Stanley realize about the gold tube and what does he wonder about it?
(Stanley realizes that the tube is a lipstick tube, and he wonders if the tube could have belonged to Kissin' Kate Barlow.)

Chapter 23

How does Miss Katherine Barlow offend Charles Walker?
(She refuses his offer of a ride in his boat on Green Lake.)

Chapter 24

How does Mr. Sir retaliate against Stanley for the pain he suffered from the Warden?
(Mr. Sir refuses to refill Stanley's canteen.)

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Chapter 25

What does Sam, the onion man, do for which Miss Katherine pays him with six jars of spiced peaches?

(Sam repairs the leaky schoolhouse roof.)

Chapter 26

For what crime was Sam shot by Trout Walker and why wasn't Kate shot as well?

(Sam had kissed Kate, a white woman, which was illegal because Sam was black. It was not illegal for Kate to kiss Sam, because she was white.)

Chapter 27

What are Zero's real names, first and last, and what character from Chapter 7 shared the same last name?

(Zero's real name is Hector Zeroni. In Chapter 7, we met Madame Zeroni, who was Stanley's great-great-grandfather's friend in Latvia.)

Chapter 28

Why did Kissin' Kate Barlow die laughing?

(She died laughing because Trout and Linda Walker would not be able to find out from her where her treasure was hidden or torment her anymore.)

Chapter 29

The silhouette of a fist with a giant thumb protruding upward reminded Stanley of his great-grandfather. How?

(After being robbed by Kissin' Kate Barlow, Stanley's great-grandfather claimed to have survived the three weeks before his rescue "on God's thumb.")

Chapter 30

Zigzag initiates a fight which results in two new rules from the Warden. What were they?

(The Warden tells them to dig their own holes, and forbids any more reading lessons.)

Chapter 31

Why does Stanley feel guilty about Zero's disappearance?

(Stanley blames himself for not being willing to instruct Zero in reading without requiring Zero to dig part of his hole in return.)

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Chapter 32

Why does Stanley decide to make a break from Camp Green Lake?

(Stanley can't get the image of Zero crawling through the sand out of his mind.)

Chapter 33

As Stanley moves farther from the compound he makes some observations about the holes. How are they different from the holes he had been digging?

(The holes on this part of the lake are helter-skelter, not planned.)

Chapter 34

Stanley discovers a boat on the lake and Zero, alive, under the boat. What is the name of the boat, and what connection does that name have with previous events, especially from Chapter 27?

(The name of the boat is the Mary Lou and Mary Lou was also the name of Sam the onion man's mule.)

Chapter 35

Stanley is rescued indirectly by Katherine Barlow. How is that possible?

(Sam had been paid for his work for Katherine Barlow with jars of her spiced peaches, which were in his boat when they tried to escape. This was the "sploosh" that had sustained Zero and which he and Zero drank under the boat.)

Chapter 36

As Stanley and Zero trudge along the lakebed, Stanley has time to consider the possibility of his own death. What worries Stanley more than anything else about that possibility?

(Stanley is particularly worried that his parents will spend the rest of their lives wondering if he is dead or alive, not knowing what happened to him.)

Chapter 37

As Zero and Stanley climb up the cliffs and along the mountain, they realize there are weeds and bugs there. Why does this comfort them?

(They realize that there must be water if there are these life forms that depend upon water.)

Chapter 38

After carrying Zero up the mountain, Stanley discovers two resources to help sustain them. What are they?

(Stanley discovers water and an onion.)

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Chapter 39

What confession does Zero make?

(Zero confesses that he was the one who took Clyde Livingston's sneakers.)

Chapter 40

What experience does Stanley have that is like the one Becca Tennyson had a century before?

(Stanley and Becca are both saved by onions.)

Chapter 41

Zero retells the story of stealing and abandoning Clyde Livingston's sneakers. Why and where did he abandon them?

(He left them on top of a parked car because they smelled so bad.)

Chapter 42

Despite the circumstances, Stanley finds himself at peace with himself for the first time that he can remember. Why do you think that is?

(Stanley had fallen into a pattern in which he felt sorry for himself and regarded himself as a victim of his destiny. Now he accepts it and sees that he has taken charge of his life by attempting to do what he thinks is right, like going after Zero.)

Chapter 43

Zero describes his last memory of his mother. Where was he, and what happened?

(She told him to wait in Laney Park, and he waited there for a month, but she never returned.)

Chapter 44

Describe Zero and Stanley's very short-lived success.

(They find and dig out the treasure from the hole where Stanley had found the lipstick case, but the Warden is there, ready to take it — and freedom — from them.)

Chapter 45

What painful discovery do Stanley and Zero make?

(They are in a lizard pit, surrounded and covered by lizards.)

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Chapter 46

How does Stanley maintain stillness as he sits with the venomous lizards on him?

(Stanley remembers a day when he and his mom had fallen into the snow, and how they had turned it into a pleasant day.)

Chapter 47

What's in a name? In this chapter, we learn the Warden's name and the name on the suitcase. What are those names and how are they linked?

(The Warden's name is Ms. Walker and the name on the suitcase is Stanley Yelnats. Stanley Yelnats was robbed by Kissin' Kate Barlow, and Walker is Trout Walker's family name.)

Chapter 48

How is the lawyer allowed to free Zero as well as Stanley?

(The Warden had destroyed all records about Zero when he ran away to avoid an investigation into his disappearance.)

Chapter 49

How did onions and Derrick Dunne help save Stanley?

(The lizards don't care for onion blood, so they didn't harm Stanley or Zero, whose diets had consisted primarily of onions for over a week. Derrick Dunne reported the time he had seen Stanley emerge from the restroom at school as five minutes after the theft of the sneakers, so the lawyer knew he was innocent and followed up to try to free him.)

Chapter 50

Some people believe in curses. If Madame Zeroni was wronged by Stanley's "no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather," how did Stanley finally compensate for that wrong?

(Stanley carried a Zeroni — Hector — up a mountain to drink from the water there, as his great-great-grandfather was supposed to have done with Madame Zeroni.)

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Writing Prompts

1. Stanley Yelnats III needed “intelligence, perseverance, and just a bit of luck” to succeed as an inventor. Write a profile about someone who has succeeded in a profession that interests you and include the attributes they have demonstrated to succeed in that profession.
2. In Chapter 19, Stanley is surprised that he can still enjoy life’s little pleasures, such as the cool wind on his hot, sunburned face and the comfort of the truck seat. Write a descriptive paragraph about an experience in which you enjoyed some of life’s little pleasures. Engage as many senses as you can and create clear, precise images.
3. Many of the characters in *Holes* have nicknames. Consider Kissin’ Kate Barlow, Trout Walker, Zero, X-Ray, and Caveman. Nicknames are created in many ways and serve many purposes. Create a new nickname for yourself or team with a classmate to create nicknames for each other, explaining your choices.
4. After Stanley witnessed the brutality of the Warden as she tortured Mr. Sir, he chose silence, hoping to be able to forget about the incident. Discuss Stanley’s reaction and compare it to other reactions you have had or learned about to deal with experiences of cruelty or violence.

Answers to Vocabulary-Building Exercise:

- | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. runt | 6. jurisdiciton | 11. stones | 16. mirage |
| 2. sheepishly | 7. suppress | 12. delirium | 17. vile |
| 3. strenuous | 8. writhed | 13. forlorn | 18. paranoid |
| 4. suckle | 9. spigot | 14. despicable | 19. authentication |
| 5. perseverance | 10. precipice | 15. concoction | 20. descendants |

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Jigsaw

Cut a **large sheet of paper** into jigsaw pieces, one for each of the following characters:

Elya Yelnats

Madame Zeroni

Stanley Yelnats I

Hector Zeroni

Katherine Kissin' Kate Barlow

Sarah Miller

Ms. Walker, the Warden

Mary Lou

Stanley "Caveman" Yelnats IV

Linda Walker

Clyde Livingston

Sarah Miller

Sam, the "Onion Man"

Trout Walker

Stanley Yelnats III

Divide the character list in a way that makes sense for your classroom. Assign the keeper of each piece to put the character's name on the piece and record important information in note form as the story proceeds. You may wish to make this part of your classroom discussion every fifth chapter along the way. At the completion of the book, students should report on the notes about their assigned character(s), add illustrations, and put it together in jigsaw fashion by gluing the pieces onto a large piece of cardboard. This may be used as an extension activity to help students see the interconnections and complexities of the plot Louis Sachar has woven.