

# Holes

by Louis Sachar

**1999 Newbery Medal Winner**

## A Teaching Guide

by Margret Whisnant



Stanley Yelnats,  
convicted of a crime he did not commit,  
becomes one of the bad boys  
at  
Camp Green Lake.

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*Blame it on his  
no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather.*

---

There is no lake.  
Hardly anything is green.

There are plenty of  
***Holes.***



***Holes***  
by Louis Sachar  
***A Novel Teaching Pack***  
by Margaret Whisnant

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## Goals

To . . .

- Offer a teaching guide with a full spectrum of learning experiences that flow from **basic knowledge** to **higher-level thinking skills**.
- Provide **classroom-ready** materials that **motivate** and **instruct**.
- Create **novel-specific activities** that require careful reading, help develop comprehension skills, and challenge the thinking process.
- Accommodate a wide variety of student **ability** and **interest**.
- **Support teachers** by providing a practical teaching resource that saves preparation time.
- Include **cross-curricula activities** as an integral part of the novel study.
- Correlate to various state **education standards and requirements** for language arts.

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## The Seven Components

### 1. Summaries

Written in present tense, the chapter-by-chapter summaries are more detailed than those found in most teachers' guides or other sources. Important points of the plot, character motivation and development, and story clues are all included. For quick reference, the summaries are presented in bulleted format. These synopses are a valuable resource for

*quickly becoming familiar with a title when time is limited*  
*managing a reading program that involves multiple titles/reading groups*  
*facilitating independent study*  
*refreshing memory when using a novel from year to year.*

### 2. Before You Read

In this component, the focus is on sparking student interest. Each teaching pack includes both an **independent activity** and a series of **whole-group/small-group discussion** or **research topics**, written as open-ended questions.

At least one **bulletin board idea** is included. In some cases, activities in the **Think, Write, Create** component also involve the creation of a bulletin board or classroom display.

### 3. Vocabulary

One of the many advantages of literature-based reading instruction is the opportunity to observe vocabulary in action! It is this circumstance that drives the vocabulary portion of the novel teaching packs.

#### **Word Choices. . .**

The words lifted from the novel for focused study are chosen based on one or more of the following criteria:

<i>their level of difficulty</i>	<i>their frequency of use in children's literature</i>
<i>their importance in comprehending the story</i>	<i>their value as useful composition vocabulary</i>
<i>the probability that they will be encountered across the curriculum</i>	<i>unique meanings, spellings, pronunciation, etc.</i>

#### **Word Lists and Definitions. . .**

For teacher convenience and reference, word lists with definitions are included. The selected words are arranged in story order, complete with page numbers so they can be spotted easily and studied in their "natural habitats." For clarity, the definitions are paraphrased to match the word's tense, number, part of speech, etc. rather than cross referenced as in a standard dictionary. The major resource of this information is [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com).

#### **Dictionary Activities. . .**

Long word lists are divided into chapter sets of workable numbers and presented as **Dictionary Digs**—sometimes given a slightly different name to correspond with the theme of the novel. In this introductory stage, students use a dictionary to answer a series of multiple choice questions about word meanings, usage, unique characteristics, etc.

### ***Using the Words. . .***

Other activities, which pull terms from the lists in random order, lead students through a variety of word studies which include

*sentence usage*  
*word forms*  
*synonyms and antonyms*  
*anagrams*  
*categories*  
*word groups/connections*

*word types (acronyms, onomatopoeia, etc.)*  
*scrambled sentences*  
*analogies*  
*whole-class/group games*  
*etymologies*

## **4. Assessment**

The two sections in this portion of the teaching pack offer a wealth of materials designed to build a strong **foundation** for student progression to higher level thinking skills. The operative phrase is **basic comprehension**.

### **Short Answer Questions**

Short answer questions for each chapter (or groups of chapters) are the first available assessment tools. The items encourage (and check) careful reading. Some require the reader to recognize a major event or idea while others involve finding a minor detail. The questions are in *sequence* with the pages they cover, but they are **not** designed to call attention to plot construction or other story elements.

The short answer questions can be used as

*student reading guides*  
*pop quizzes*

*discussion groups guides*  
*conferencing with individual students*

### **Objective Tests**

The objective tests have multiple functions. In addition to their obvious application, they also serve as tools that can *improve **comprehension skills** by providing practice in understanding plot structure and recognizing important story elements.*

### ***Rationale:***

#### ***Focus on the Plot. . .***

Whether they are aware of their ability or not, all good readers sense the **rhythm** of the **connected** events that compose the plot of a novel, and consequently **comprehend** the story. They are in tune with cause and effect, behavior and consequence, sequence—the heartbeat of the narrative.

This “plot rhythm” forms the framework for the objective tests. The chain of events that tell the story have been pulled from the novel and reformatted into a series of sequential questions, none of which require **interpretation**. They are intended to **draw student attention to the fact that something happened**, not to what the incident means. That comes later.

In addition to their testing function, teachers may use the pages to strengthen their students’ ability to **Summarize**: With only the questions as a guide, have students write a summary of the chapter. For a set of ten questions, limit the number of sentences they may write to seven or fewer. When they work with twenty or more questions, allow no more than twelve sentences.

**Report the News**: Ask your students to write a newspaper article based on the events identified in a set of questions and the *who, what, when, where, why* elements. Some information needed to complete this assignment may be located in previous chapters.

**Twist the Plot**: Choose one or two questions from each chapter and change its answer—true to false, no to yes, etc.—to demonstrate how changing a single (or several) events would (or would not) change the story. This process can be used to help students become proficient in distinguishing major plot movers from minor story details.

#### ***The Characters. . .***

Too often, when they are asked to describe a story character’s personality, the only answer many students can muster is “nice.” This portion of the Novel Teaching Pack, coupled with related activities from **Think, Write, Create**, is a well of opportunities for those teachers who wish to eradicate “nice” from their students’ vocabularies!

Questions that identify a character’s personality and/or motivation are purposely and carefully included with the plot movers. Again, the questions do not require **interpretation**. They simply establish that someone did or said something—knowledge that is invaluable when character analysis is required.

### ***Implied Meaning and Story Clues. . .***

The objective tests include items that establish the existence of story components carrying ***implied meaning***. ***Story clues*** that tantalize the reader with hints of future events also appear as question. At this point in the novel study, as before, **interpretation** is not the goal. **Awareness** of the **facts** is the target.

### ***Developing/Improving Listening Skills. . .***

Listening skills are rightfully included on every list of state competency requirements. Rather than always requiring students to answer test questions on a printed page, why not surprise them occasionally by doing the test orally and meeting competency goals at the same time?

### ***Discussion Guide Capability. . .***

The objective tests are helpful discussion guides. Use individual items on these pages to draw student attention to sequence, cause and effect, story clues (foreshadowing), character traits, recognizing and interpreting implied meanings, etc. These “thinking out loud” sessions are an **important building block** for the next learning phase.

## **5. Think, Write, Create**

In this section, students pack up what they already know about the novel and go exploring into its every nook and cranny. Some activities require the simplest interpretation or application, while others will challenge the most proficient thinkers. There is a high probability that young scholars, even reluctant ones, will label some of the selections as **fun**.

### ***Rationale:***

#### ***Guidelines. . .***

Most of the items in this section are based on the skills presented in the ***Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Bloom’s Taxonomy)***. There are two reasons for this choice. First, it mirrors the Novel Teaching Pack’s primary purpose of building a variety of sophisticated thinking skills on a foundation of basic knowledge. Second, in following the taxonomy guidelines, activities that correlate with many state educational standards emerge automatically.

#### ***Organization. . .***

**Chapter-specific** activities are grouped and presented according to their corresponding sets of **Short Answer Questions** and **Objective Test** page(s). Having led students through the basics for each chapter (or selected section), teachers may shop in this section for in-depth activities to optimize student understanding and interest. Armed with a firm grasp of each successive chapter, students are more likely to anticipate, embrace, and enjoy the next section. By repeating the process, students are also mastering concepts and intricacies connected to the **whole** novel

The **Whole Book Activities**, as their name indicates, require a grasp of the theme(s), characters, implications, etc. as they apply to the full novel. These pages are a teacher’s smorgasbord of culminating possibilities. In some cases, the choices are outgrowths of concepts that students have dealt with in a previous activity. In others, students are encouraged to look at the novel from a new angle.

#### ***Levels of Difficulty. . .***

A broad spectrum of **difficulty levels** to accommodate the needs of individual students, including the gifted, is an integral part of **Think, Write, Create**. However, **all** items from this section are intended to **challenge** and **sharpen** thinking abilities.

#### ***Activities. . .***

**Every** novel teaching pack includes activities that require students to choose and use precise, appropriate, and meaningful **vocabulary**. These exercises involve choosing a group of words to describe a character’s personality or behavior. The following example is from ***Charlotte’s Web***.

Eight-year-old Fern cried and begged her father not to destroy the runt pig. She sealed the little animal’s fate by asking her father if he would have killed her if she had been born very small.

- Which **two** of the following words do you think **best** describe the way Fern’s father behaved during this episode? Explain your choice. Include the definitions of the words you selected in your answer.

<i>practical</i>	<i>sensitive</i>	<i>loving</i>	<i>cruel</i>	<i>considerate</i>
<i>realistic</i>	<i>flexible</i>	<i>callous</i>	<i>compassionate</i>	<i>logical</i>

- Choose **two** words from the list below that you believe **best** describe Fern’s behavior. Explain why they are the appropriate words. Use the definitions of your choices as part of your explanation.

<i>impulsive</i>	<i>compassionate</i>	<i>assertive</i>	<i>tender-hearted</i>	<i>hysterical</i>
<i>undisciplined</i>	<i>naive</i>	<i>juvenile</i>	<i>humane</i>	<i>empathetic</i>

In each case students work with a given collection of terms, all of which can be correctly applied to the character(s) in question. However, the individual words have strengths of meaning. It is the student's task to analyze both the character's behavior and the words, make choices, and then cite events from the story to support his/her selection.

Teachers may opt to narrow the choices to fewer words, choose words for individual students, divide the class into groups and offer a specific set of words to each group, or use the assignment as it is written. Whatever the technique, it is here that the word **nice** can be knocked off the shelf, shattered on the floor, and swept out the door. No longer necessary. Useless. Gone!

**Other items** in this section challenge students to . . .

*write for self expression, for communication, and  
for entertainment  
form opinions and theories  
cite "evidence" from the story to support their  
explanations and opinions  
connect personal experience to story situations  
analyze story characters and events  
make predictions based on given facts  
imagine*

*think about social issues  
create drawings, diagrams, photos, maps,,  
models, recordings, films, etc.  
categorize  
engage in research and data gathering  
become familiar with and identify literary elements  
recognize and perceive story theme(s)  
understand point of view*

### **Cross Curricula. . .**

**Think, Write, Create** takes full advantage of opportunities to connect both major themes and the smallest story detail to other realms of the curriculum. In **Charlotte's Web**, for example, students may apply their calculation skills to a page of "Spider Math." In the **Holes** teaching pack is a challenge to create a game that utilizes a "saved" group of Camp Green Lake's holes.

### **Options, options, and more options. . .**

**Think, Write, Create** is purposely bulging at the seams to give teachers **pick-and-choose options** for  
*individualizing assignments  
group work  
whole class activities*

*homework  
short-term and long-term projects  
differentiating assignments for two or more classes  
capitalizing on student interest*

## **6. Graphic Organizers**

Ideas for the graphic organizers are pulled from the chapter or whole book activities and expanded into a writing assignment. Priority is given to those topics that allow a student to relate personal experiences, make choices, empathize with a story character, and/or imagine.

### **Structure. . .**

The organizers do not repeat a set pattern of circles, squares, lines, etc., prescribed for a particular type of writing. Each one is tailored to a **specific idea** pulled from the novel. **Structured directions** for organizing the topic support the student at this stage of the process so that **writing** is the major focus.

### **Non-writing Organizers. . .**

Sometimes, students are enticed to stretch their imaginations by filling out "forms" or writing "diary entries." One graphic organizer from **Hatchet**, for example, allows students to assume the persona of the pilot who rescued Brian by writing three entries into his log—the day before the rescue, the day of the rescue, and the day after the rescue. In the **Holes** Novel Teaching Pack, students become detectives and conduct a "background check" on Mr. Sir, recording their findings on the provided "official form." In these cases, composition skills take a back seat to **imagination, empathy, and pure enjoyment**. Teachers may wish to capitalize on student enthusiasm by asking for a written "report" based on the information entered on the forms.

## **7. Answer Keys**

Keys for **all items that require a specific answer** are included in this section.

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### **A final note from the author. . .**

It is my personal wish that when the last page has been read, the last activity completed, and the last idea discussed, at least one of your students will ask, "What are we going to read next?"



Margaret Whisnant

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## Chapter Summaries

### Chapter 1

- Camp Green Lake is in Texas. There is no lake.
- The largest lake in Texas used to be located at the town of Green Lake. The town, like the lake, no longer exists.
- Daytime temperatures reach ninety-five degrees in the shade on the dry lake. Rattlesnakes, scorpions, and yellow-spotted lizards live there.
- The hammock stretched between the only two old oak trees on the edge of the dry lake belongs to the warden.
- Being bitten by a yellow-spotted lizard is a certain slow and painful death.

### Chapter 2

- Camp Green Lake is for bad boys, and they must dig a hole every day in the hot sun.
- Stanley Yelnats chooses Camp Green Lake over jail because he is from a poor family and has never been to camp.

### Chapter 3

- A handcuffed Stanley Yelnats, the only passenger on the bus to Camp Green Lake, doesn't have any friends, is overweight, and is taunted at his middle school.
- Stanley is innocent of the crime for which he has been convicted.
- The family joke is to blame everything on Stanley's no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather. Years before he stole a pig from a one-legged Gypsy and got a curse put on him and all his descendants.
- Stanley's father is an inventor, currently trying to find a use for old sneakers, but he never has any luck.
- Everyone in the family has always liked the fact that *Stanley Yelnats* is spelled the same frontward and backward. Our Stanley is Stanley Yelnats IV.
- In spite of their bad luck, every Stanley Yelnats has remained hopeful.
- The first Stanley Yelnats makes a fortune in the stock market. He loses it all moving from New York to California when his stagecoach is robbed by the outlaw Kissin' Kate Barlow, and he is left stranded in the middle of the desert.

### Chapter 4

- Stanley meets a man who introduces himself as Mr. Sir. He is eating sunflower seeds because he has quit smoking.
- Mr. Sir tells Stanley he isn't in the Girl Scouts anymore.
- Stanley receives two orange jumpsuits, two orange T-shirts, yellow socks, white sneakers, an orange cap, and a canteen.
- Stanley is to dig one hole each day, five feet deep and five feet across in every direction, measured by his shovel.
- Breakfast is served at 4:30 so the holes can be dug before the hottest part of the day.
- Mr. Sir says Stanley is to report anything interesting he digs up to him or another counselor.
- There are no fences or guards at Camp Green Lake because nobody runs away from the only water for a hundred miles.
- Mr. Sir says Stanley should get used to being thirsty, since that's how he is going to be for the next eighteen months.

### Chapter 5

- Stanley's counselor, Mr. Pendanski, tells him the one rule at Camp Green Lake is *Don't upset the Warden*.
- Mr. Pendanski declares his respect for Stanley and his intent to help him turn his life around.
- Stanley learns that he will be sleeping in a cot that belonged to a camper called Barf Bag, who is in the hospital and won't be returning.

# Word Lists with Definitions

(Arranged in Story Order)  
(Some words appear on multiple pages.)

## Set 1: Chapter 1-Chapter 31

- gruff** Hoarse; harsh; brusque in manner or appearance. (p. 8)
- descendants** All of the offspring of a given ancestor; people, animals, or plants whose ancestry can be traced to a particular individual or group. (p. 8)
- vast** Very great in area or extent; immense; great in size, amount, or quantity. (p. 8)
- perseverance** Steady persistence in adhering to a course of action, a belief, or a purpose; steadfastness. (p. 8)
- befell** To come to pass; to happen. (p. 9)
- dazed** In a state of mental numbness, especially as resulting from shock; stunned or confused; slow to react. (p. 11)
- desolate** Devoid of inhabitants; deserted; barren; lifeless. (p. 11)
- violation** A disrespectful act; an act that disregards an agreement or a right; a crime less serious than a felony. (p. 12)
- premises** A tract of land with its component parts, such as buildings; a building or part of a building with surrounding grounds; land or buildings together considered as a place of business. (p. 12)
- scarcity** Insufficiency in amount or supply; shortage; rarity of appearance or occurrence. (p. 21)
- prospect** Something expected; a possibility. (p. 22)
- retrieved** Gotten back; regained; rescued or saved. (p. 23)
- despicable** Deserving of contempt or scorn; vile (p. 25)
- souvenir** A token of remembrance; a memento. (p. 25)
- defective** Having a fault; faulty; imperfect or malformed. (p. 26)
- forlorn** Wretched or pitiful in appearance or condition; nearly hopeless; desperate (p. 30)
- eternity** Time without beginning or end; infinite time. (p. 31)
- deftly** Quickly and skillfully. (p. 32)
- excavated** Removed by digging or scooping out; made a hole in; hollowed out. (p. 34)
- preposterous** Contrary to nature, reason, or common sense; absurd. (p. 34)
- dawdle** To move aimlessly or lackadaisically; to take more time than is necessary. (p. 35)
- grimaced** Contorted the face in an expression of pain, contempt, or disgust. (p. 39)
- predatory** Living by preying on other organisms; of, related to, or characterized by plundering, pillaging, or marauding. (p. 42)
- scowled** Wrinkled or contracted the brow as an expression of anger or disapproval. (p. 46)
- intensity** Exceptionally great concentration, power, force, energy, or feeling. (p. 47)
- shrugged** Raised the shoulders in a gesture of indifference, doubt, or disdain. (p. 52)
- appropriate** Suitable for a particular person, condition, or occasion; fitting. (p. 57)
- metallic** Containing metal; having the characteristics of metal. (p. 60)
- paranoid** Characterized by extreme or irrational fear or distrust of others. (p. 71)
- evict** To put out, a tenant for example, by legal process; expel; force out. (p. 75)
- condemned** Pronounced or proven guilty; officially and strongly disapproved; officially pronounced unfit for use or consumption. (p. 88)
- toxic** Poisonous; capable of causing injury or death, especially by chemical means. (p. 90)
- refuge** Protection or shelter, as from danger or hardship. (p. 93)
- defiance** Bold resistance to an opposing force or authority; readiness to resist or contend. (p. 96)
- incurable** Being such that a cure is impossible; incapable of being altered, as in disposition or habit. (p. 102)
- vile** Filthy, foul, or nasty; thoroughly unpleasant; appalling. (p. 118)
- blotchy** A discoloration of the skin; blemished. (p. 121)
- depriving** Denying; taking something away from; keeping from possessing or enjoying. (p. 131)

## Short Answer Questions

### **Chapter 1**

1. What was the area called Camp Green Lake once like?
2. How hot did it get at Camp Green Lake in the summer?
3. Who owned the shade at Camp Green Lake?
4. What happened if you were bitten by a yellow-spotted lizard?

### **Chapter 2**

1. Why were the bad boys at Camp Green Lake made to dig a hole every day in the hot sun?
2. What choices did Stanley have when he agreed to go to Camp Green Lake?

### **Chapter 3**

1. How did Stanley get to Camp Green Lake?
2. Why was Stanley teased by the kids and sometimes the teachers at his middle school?
3. Who was responsible for Stanley's being in the wrong place at the wrong time and getting sent to Camp Green Lake for a crime he didn't commit?
4. Stanley's father was smart and had perseverance. What didn't he have?
5. Why was Stanley Yelnats the fourth Stanley Yelnats?
6. How had the first Stanley Yelnats lost his fortune?
7. What was Stanley's father trying to invent?

### **Chapter 4**

1. In addition to Camp Green Lake's few run-down buildings and some tents, what did Stanley see farther away?
2. Why did Mr. Sir have a burlap sack filled with sunflower seeds on the floor next to his desk?
3. What color were the clothes that Mr. Sir gave Stanley?
4. What was the required size of the daily hole and how was it to be measured?
5. What did Mr. Sir say about Camp Green Lake?
6. Why didn't Camp Green Lake need a fence or a guard?


### **Chapter 5**

1. What did Mr. Pendanski look like?
2. Why didn't Stanley try to tell his counselor that he was innocent?
3. Where was Barf Bag?
4. What special power did X-Ray claim to have?
5. Who said there was nothing inside Zero's head?

**PART ONE: YOU ARE ENTERING CAMP GREEN LAKE**

**1 Pages 3-4    2 Page 5    3 Pages 6-10**

Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.

- 
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Camp Green Lake was in (A) Arizona, (B) Texas, (C) Alabama.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Camp Green Lake had no (A) buildings, (B) roads, (C) lake.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Green Lake was also once the name of (A) a town, (B) a railroad, (C) a hotel.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 4. During the summer, Camp Green Lake was (A) a cool, shady retreat, (B) ninety-five degrees in the shade, (C) overflowing with campers.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The hammock, strung between the only two trees in Camp Green Lake, belonged to (A) the Warden, (B) the younger campers, (C) the mayor of the town of Green Lake.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The building that stood on Camp Green Lake was (A) a large two-story structure, (B) an old motel with twenty-two rooms, (C) a log cabin.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Which of the following was **not** something found in the lake bed? (A) rattlesnakes and scorpions, (B) holes dug by the campers, (C) a small pool of mud.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Sometimes, campers tried to be bitten by a rattlesnake or scorpion to avoid (A) digging a hole out in the lake, (B) hiking in the heat, (C) working on the Warden's new cabin.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Being bitten by a yellow-spotted lizard meant (A) a day in the hospital, (B) a slow, painful death, (C) certain dismissal from the camp.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The bad boys who were sent to Camp Green Lake were forced to (A) sleep outdoors, (B) dig a hole every day in the hot sun, (C) write about their feelings in a diary.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 11. The judge gave Stanley Yelnats a choice between going to Camp Green Lake or (A) a reform school, (B) jail, (C) a special school.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 12. At Stanley's middle school, the kids, and sometimes the teachers, made cruel comments about his (A) dirty clothes, (B) strange way of speaking, (C) large size.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Stanley was not a bad kid, and he was (A) innocent of the crime for which he had been convicted, (B) extremely proud of his family, (C) a straight A student.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Stanley's no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather was blamed when things went wrong in the family because (A) he had spent most of his life in jail, (B) a gypsy put a curse on him and his descendants for stealing a pig, (C) he was unlucky.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Stanley's family seemed to always be (A) luckier than most, (B) moving from town to town, (C) in the wrong place at the wrong time.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Stanley's father was an inventor with intelligence and perseverance, but he never had any (A) money, (B) time to work on his projects, (C) luck.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Stanley's family kept naming their sons "Stanley Yelnats" because they liked the fact that the name was (A) spelled the same frontward and backward, (B) not difficult to remember, (C) had a pleasant sound to it.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Which of the following was **not** true of all the Stanley Yelnats? They (A) had made fortunes in the stock market, (B) were only children, (C) always remained hopeful.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Though Stanley's great-grandfather lost his fortune when he was robbed by Kissin' Kate Barlow, the family considered him lucky because (A) he made it all the way to California, (B) he was the first Stanley Yelnats, (C) she didn't kill him.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Which of the following led to Stanley's arrest? (A) His father's latest project of trying to invent a way to recycle old sneakers. (B) He was the only person riding on a bus that was later robbed. (C) He fought with a classmate who made fun of his name.

4 Pages 11-15 5 Pages 16-20

Write either **True** or **False** in the blank before each statement.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Stanley was handcuffed during the eight hour bus ride to Camp Green Lake.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Camp Green Lake was covered with trees and a dozen or more buildings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Camp Green Lake was a juvenile correctional facility.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Mr. Sir wore sunglasses, even though he was indoors, a cowboy hat; and he had a tattoo of a rattlesnake on his arm.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Mr. Sir ate sunflower seeds because he had quit smoking.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Stanley had to remove his clothes in front of Mr. Sir, who made sure he wasn't hiding guns, explosives, weapons, drugs, or alcohol—none of which were allowed at Camp Green Lake.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Stanley's two sets of clothes were orange, even his socks and sneakers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. At Camp Green Lake, Stanley was to dig a hole each day, Monday through Saturday, with Sundays off for church.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Stanley was to dig holes five feet deep and five feet across in every direction.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Breakfast at Camp Green Lake was served at 4:30 in the morning because Mr. Sir did not believe in sleeping late.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Stanley had to dig from five o'clock in the morning to five in the afternoon even if he had finished his hole before five.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. If he dug up anything interesting, Stanley was to report it to Mr. Sir or any other counselor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. The purpose of Mr. Sir's gun was to shoot campers who tried to run away.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Camp Green Lake had the only water in a hundred miles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Mr. Sir offered Stanley a can of soda from the small refrigerator in his office.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Stanley had been sentenced to Camp Green Lake for eighteen months.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Mr. Pendanski, Stanley's counselor, had a thick curly black beard, but his head was shaved almost bald.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. The one rule at Camp Green Lake was *Don't Upset the Warden*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Stanley told Mr. Pendanski that, not only was he not a bad kid, but he was also innocent of the crime with which he had been charged.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Mr. Pendanski was every bit as unfriendly and grumpy as Mr. Sir.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. Stanley wasn't crazy about taking the cot and crate that had once belonged to someone named Barf Bag.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. All of the boys Stanley met in tent D had nicknames.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. Mr. Pendanski said Zero got his nickname because there was nothing inside his head.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. X-Ray claimed to be able to see inside people, and he called Mr. Pendanski "Mom."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. Armpit threw Stanley to the ground for calling him "Theodore."



6 Pages 21-25    7 Pages 26-40

water	old sneakers	the shovels	blisters
Stanley's cot	jail	to build character	Madame Zeroni
a lawyer	Clyde Livingston's sneakers	X-Ray	Elya Yelnats
miss the bus	the dry lake bed	the Warden	a fat pig
a red pickup	the Girl Scouts	his piles of dirt	Myra Menke
Sarah Miller	the first hole	Zero	spit into his hole

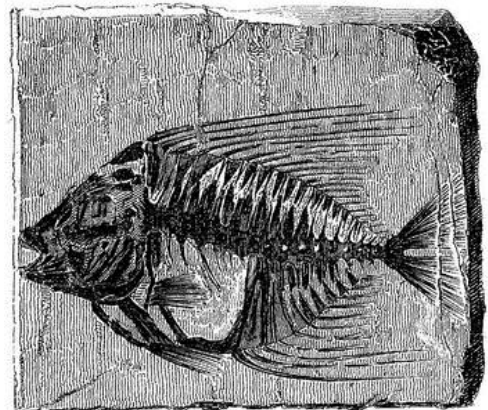
From the list above, find the name, word, or phrase that matches each clue below and write it in the blank. **All** answers will be **used at least once**. **Some** answers will be **used more than once**.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. This was where the campers dug their holes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Her son lived in America, and Stanley's great-great grandfather tried to find him.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Stanley's parents couldn't afford one, and his mother said he didn't need one if he told the truth.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Stanley realized they were too close to his hole and would have to be moved.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. They smelled really bad, but Stanley thought they were special and could hold the key to his father's invention.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Stanley's great-great grandfather's rival offered this in exchange for Myra Menke.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. It smelled like sour milk.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. They were five feet long and used to measure the holes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. They were expected to sell at an auction for over five thousand dollars, which would go to help the homeless, and a policeman caught Stanley running home with them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. It was used to haul water and food to the boys.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. When his no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather's curse kept anyone from believing the truth, Stanley had a choice between Camp Green Lake or this.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. She gave Stanley's great-great grandfather a pig and made him promise to carry her up the mountain to drink from the stream and also sing the pig's song to her.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Her head was so empty, she couldn't choose the man she wanted to marry.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. She was Stanley's great-great grandmother and the person who rewrote the words to the pig lullaby to sing to her son, the first Stanley Yelnats.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Because it was so scarce, campers were allowed only a cold, four minute shower.

8 Pages 41-42 9 Pages 43-47 10 Pages 48-51

Write either **True** or **False** in the blank before each statement.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Yellow-spotted lizards had eleven large yellow spots that could easily be seen from a distance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Yellow-spotted lizards liked to live in holes and eat, among other things, the shells of sunflower seeds.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. For the second day in a row, Stanley didn't use soap during his cold, four-minute shower.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. In the rec room, Stanley found nice furniture, a brightly lit pinball machine, and a large television.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. X-Ray and Armpit kept the Lump from starting a fight when Stanley stumbled over him.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The Lump was almost as big as Stanley and a lot tougher.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. X-Ray warned Stanley that his second hole would be harder because he would be hurting before he got started with the digging.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Stanley had to admit that he had always wanted to dig a big hole.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. In the letter, Stanley told his mom how awful things were at Camp Green Lake.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Zero watched Stanley write the letter and then asked if the shoes had red X's on the back.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. The other boys gave Stanley the nickname "Caveman," which, he thought, was better than "Barf Bag."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. The second morning, Stanley's body hurt worse than it had the day before.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. The only thing that got Stanley out of bed was the knowledge that every wasted moment put him closer to the rising of the sun.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Before the sun came up, Stanley used his cap to protect his blistered hands.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Stanley found digging the second hole easier than the first.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Digging in the second hole, Stanley found a rock with the fossil of a fish imprinted on it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Stanley's fossil was proof that there had once been a lake at Camp Green Lake.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Stanley hoped his find would be the miracle he needed to get the rest of the day off.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. The cloud of dust signaling the arrival of the water truck sent the boys scrambling to be first in line.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. To Stanley's disappointment, the Warden wasn't interested in fossils.



## Whole Book Test

Write the **letter** of the correct answer in the blank before each question.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Camp Green Lake was in (A) Texas, (B) Arizona, (C) New Mexico.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Stanley was sent to Camp Green Lake because he was found guilty of (A) trying to take money from an old lady's purse, (B) stealing a pair of tennis shoes that had belonged to a famous baseball player, (C) breaking into the homeless shelter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Stanley's family blamed all of their bad luck on his (A) crazy aunt who had stolen a chicken from a gypsy, (B) no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great grandfather who caused a curse to be put on them, (C) low-down-sneaking-lying grandfather who lost the family fortune.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The unusual thing about Stanley Yelnats' name was (A) there had never been another person with the same name, (B) his mother had broken a family tradition by naming him "Stanley," (C) it was spelled the same forward and backward.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Which of the following was **not** true about Camp Green Lake? (A) It wasn't green and there was no lake. (B) There were no fences around it. (C) There were still a few people living in the nearby town, also called Green Lake.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The most-feared animal at Camp Green Lake was the (A) scorpion, (B) rattlesnake, (C) yellow-spotted lizard.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. All the campers at Camp Green Lake had (A) nicknames, (B) their names printed on the back of their uniforms, (C) to wear bright green uniforms.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Stanley's father was trying to find a way to recycle old (A) motor oil, (B) bricks, (C) sneakers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Before he went to Camp Green Lake, Stanley was (A) overweight and made fun at school by other students and sometimes teachers, (B) known as the bully at his middle school, (C) ashamed of his parents and all the bad luck they had.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Stanley's great grandfather lost his fortune when he (A) bet everything in a poker game, (B) was robbed by Kissin' Kate Barlow, (C) invested it in the stock market.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Which of the following was **not** true of Clyde Livingston's tennis shoes? (A) They smelled bad. (B) Stanley found them lying beside a railroad track. (C) They were to be sold and the money was to be used to help homeless people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. At Camp Green Lake, all the boys had to (A) dig a hole every day, (B) dig a hole six days a week, (C) dig at least one hole every other day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. The holes the campers dug were located in the dry lake bed and (A) had to be five feet wide and five feet deep, (B) were exactly three feet apart, (C) were filled with dirt at the end of the day.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. According to the Warden, the purpose of the holes was to (A) find water, (B) build character, (C) use up all the boys' energy so they wouldn't have any left for escaping.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Mr. Pendanski was (A) the Warden's brother, (B) the assistant warden, (C) Stanley's counselor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Which part of the bargain with Madame Zeroni did Stanley's great-great grandfather fail to keep? He (A) didn't take the pig up the mountain every day, (B) refused to marry Myra Menke, (C) didn't carry Madame Zeroni up the mountain or sing the lullaby to her.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. The Warden was (A) a tall thin man, (B) a red-headed woman, (C) never seen by any of the campers.



# Think, Write, Create

## Chapter Activities

### Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Chapter 3

One definition of the word **contradiction** is *not in agreement*.

- Explain how the name **Camp Green Lake** was a *contradiction in terms*. How is it not a **camp**? Why is the word **green** a total falsehood? What is wrong with including **lake** as part of the name?
- When he chose Camp Green Lake over jail, what do you suppose Stanley expected to find when he arrived?

Stanley's father was an inventor with intelligence, perseverance, and no luck. His latest project was trying to invent a way to recycle old sneakers.

- Stanley's father was probably aware of the old adage *Build a better mousetrap, and the world will beat a path to your door*—that is, if you invent what people want, they will buy it. Is it possible that Stanley's father might have had better luck if he chose better things to invent? Explain your answer.
- Using the three topics below as a guide, think of an invention for each one that you believe would appeal to the public and be profitable. Explain how each one would be beneficial to the people who bought it. (See **Graphic Organizer #1**)

*School and Education*  
*Transportation*  
*Sports and Entertainment*

- Write a report to distribute to inventors such as Stanley's father. Include drawings and diagrams.

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### Chapter 4, Chapter 5

- Why do you think the boys of Camp Green Lake preferred their nicknames to their real names? What was the advantage of a fictitious name?
- How were their nicknames different from those of people on "the outside"?
- Once he was released, do you suppose a boy continued using his Camp Green Lake name? Why or why not?
- Do you think nicknames are a good idea, a bad idea, or a non-issue? Explain your thinking.

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### Chapter 6, Chapter 7

Consider the following facts:

**Derrick Dunne** tormented Stanley by playing keep-away with his notebook. Stanley missed his bus and had to walk home because he was fishing his notebook out of the boys' restroom toilet, where Derrick had dropped it.

**Stanley** believed that the pair of smelly sneakers that fell from the sky and hit him on the head as he was walking home was a gift from God. In excitement, he ran and attracted the attention of a patrol car.

*(continued on next page)*

# Think, Write, Create

## Whole Book Activities

Before his experience at Camp Green Lake, Stanley Yelnats believed that things often went wrong in his life. As a matter of fact, every Stanley Yelnats had awful luck, though all of them always remained hopeful.

- Do you agree with Stanley that he always seemed to be in the wrong place at the wrong time? Give several examples from Stanley's story to support your answer.
  - Does it seem that the Yelnats family actually encountered bad luck more than the average family? Explain your answer.
- 

Both Stanley's and Zero's family passed along the same melody from generation to generation. However, the words were entirely different. Stanley's version can be found on page 8 and Zero's on page 233.

- Which words seem to say "*It's not my fault if I don't succeed*"? What line(s) can you offer as proof? Would you characterize the dominant mood as *optimistic* or *pessimistic*? Explain.
  - One family's version of the melody said, "*Pursue your dreams. Don't let anything stop you.*" Which lines carry such a message? Which family passed them from one generation to another?
  - According to the point of view in the song lyrics, which family should have met with great success and happiness? Which family, if its members had lived by the words they sang, would have created generation after generation of dismal failures? Did the families progress according to the song they sang to their children? Explain how you arrived at your answer.
- 

Stanley's family jokingly blamed his no-good-dirty-rotten-pig-stealing-great-great-grandfather for their bad luck. But things aren't always what they seem.

- Explain how Stanley's arrest, his sentence to Camp Green Lake, meeting Zero, and running away into the desert appeared to be bad luck but were actually events of good luck.
  - How did Stanley bring about a change of luck for everyone at camp Green Lake, especially the Warden, Mr. Sir, and Mr. Pendanski?
  - Do you believe in the forces of good luck and bad luck? Explain why you do or do not.
- 

Madame Zeroni told Elya Yelnats that the pig would get a little bigger each day he carried it up the mountain to drink from the stream, and he would get a little stronger as well.

- In what ways were Elya's task with the pig and Stanley's job of digging holes alike? How did the obstacles that Stanley faced get bigger—just like Elya's pig? How did Stanley grow stronger?
  - How did both Elya and Stanley benefit from their difficult experiences?
  - Write a short narrative about a difficult experience from life that you believe made you a stronger person. How did it compare to Stanley's situation?
- 

On the fateful day that he found the lipstick tube, Stanley decided to turn it over to X-Ray rather than keeping it for himself.

- How was Stanley's decision good for him, good for X-Ray, but not for the Warden?
- What do you think would have happened if Stanley had claimed the tube as his find?
- Prove that Stanley was in the right place at the right time and made the right decision.

## Building a Better Mousetrap

Stanley's father was an inventor with intelligence, perseverance, and no luck. No doubt, Stanley Yelnats III had heard the old adage *Build a better mousetrap, and the world will beat a path to your door*—that is, invent what people want and they will buy it. His latest project was trying to devise a way to recycle old sneakers. It seems that the true meaning of the *better mousetrap* saying eluded him.

Perhaps you can assist Stanley's father and others like him by formulating some ideas.

Use the three topics listed on the left as a guide. In the first box, jot down your idea for an invention in that field. In the second box, make notes about how it would improve the lives of people who bought it. Write a report to distribute to inventors. Include drawings and diagrams.

	<i><b>Invention</b></i>	<i><b>Advantages</b></i>
<i>School and Education</i>		
<i>Transportation</i>		
<i>Sports and Entertainment</i>		

