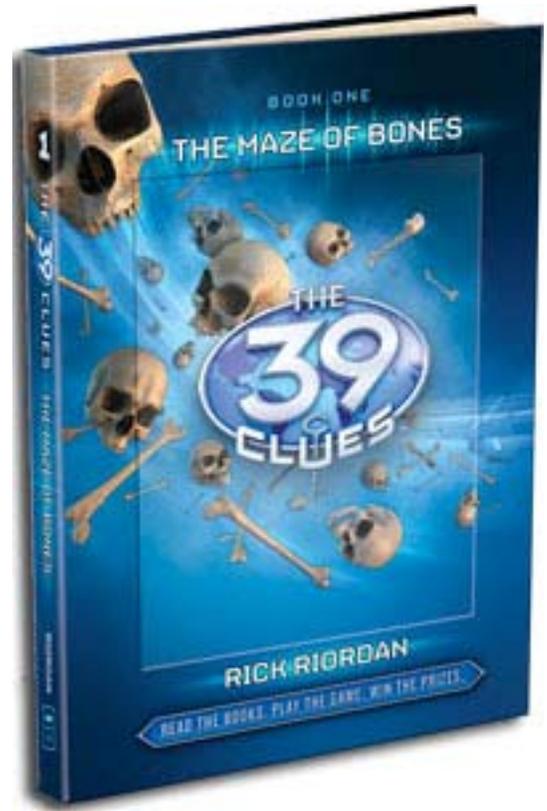


# The 39 Clues Book #1: *The Maze of Bones* Teacher's Guide

## **Theme:** Reading Comprehension



### **Guide to The 39 Clues Book #1: *The Maze of Bones* by Rick Riordan**

Theme of this section: Reading Comprehension

Students will learn:

- Writing
- Creative Expression
- Critical Thinking Skills
- Deductive Reasoning
- Number Sense
- Historical Thinking

#### **About the Author**

Rick Riordan is the author of [The Maze of Bones](#), and the architect of the plot for the entire ten-book series. Author of the #1 New York Times best-selling Percy Jackson and the Olympians series for children, he draws on his experience as a teacher of fifteen years to enchant children with his award-winning stories.

Mr. Riordan taught English and history at public and private middle schools in the San Francisco Bay Area and in Texas. In 2002, Saint Mary's Hall honored him with the school's first Master Teacher Award. His own experience with his son's learning differences inspired him to create the Percy Jackson series that features a twelve-year-old dyslexic boy who discovers he is the

modern-day son of a Greek god. Mr. Riordan does a masterful job of showing how learning disabilities can work to a person's advantage in life!

Rick Riordan now writes full time. He lives in San Antonio with his wife and two sons.

To learn more about Rick Riordan and his work visit:

<http://www.rickriordan.com/>

[http://teacher.scholastic.com/read/authors/rick\\_riordan.htm](http://teacher.scholastic.com/read/authors/rick_riordan.htm)

### **How the Story Begins**

Minutes before she died, Grace Cahill changed her will, leaving her descendants an impossible decision: "You have a choice — one million dollars or a clue."

Grace is the last matriarch of the Cahills, the world's most powerful family. Everyone from Napoleon to Houdini is related to the Cahills, yet the source of the family power is lost. 39 clues hidden around the world stand to reveal the family's secret, but no one has been able to assemble them. Now the clues race is on, and young Amy and Dan must decide what's important: hunting clues or uncovering what *really* happened to their parents.

### **Step 1: Begin the Hunt!**

Hook your students by launching your unit with this exciting video clip of Rick Riordan discussing The 39 Clues:

<http://scholastic.com/aboutscholastic/mediaroom/opk/39clues/39Cluesvideoaug.html>

Or download and print this booktalk about *The Maze of Bones*:

<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/collateral.jsp?id=35884>

Now that the students are excited about their reading adventure, listen as David Pittu reads chapters one and two of *The Maze of Bones* from Scholastic Audio:

<http://scholastic.com/aboutscholastic/mediaroom/opk/39clues/39Clues.html>

A mystery reader is also a great way to launch a book unit. Invite a parent, the principal, or another volunteer to read the first two chapters aloud to the class.

### **Step 2: Create an Investigation Journal**

Your students will need a place to keep track of their ideas and clues. This will also be a place for them to write responses to discussion questions, ponder vocabulary words, and make connections to aid comprehension. The 39 Clues series is a natural catalyst for students to students' comprehension, enticing them to understand fully what they are reading so they can drink in every potential clue! This guide will help you model reading comprehension strategies for your readers.

To create an investigation journal, use a composition notebook, binder, or even staple together notebook paper. Have students personalize a cover by decorating it with pictures or drawings of famous people they admire and places they would like to visit in the world. Leave the back cover blank for a later activity. Have them divide the journal into three sections:

1. Discussion
2. Vocabulary
3. Activities

### **Step 3: Read Chapters 1 and 2**

*Skill: Activating prior knowledge to make connections to the text*

Discuss the following questions as a group, or have students write thoughts in their journal.

1. What does power mean to you? What could make you the most powerful person in the world?
2. If you could be related to one famous person, who would it be?
3. One million dollars or a clue — what would you decide?

#### **Vocabulary Activity**

Students will work in groups of two. One child will read the word aloud to the other. The second student will respond with what they think it means. Have them discuss what mental image the word generates in their minds. Finally, have them locate the word in the text to see if their definitions fit the context. Did their definitions fit the meaning?

### **Step 4: Read Chapters 3 & 4**

*Skill: Making inferences to build comprehension*

Good readers draw conclusions based upon their own background knowledge and clues in the text. Model for your students how to read between the lines by asking "I wonder" questions. Ask your students to ponder the following questions. Discuss answers as a group or have them write their conclusions in their investigation journal.

1. Mr. McIntyre told the heirs that the prize would make the winners the most powerful beings on earth. I wonder what it could be?
2. Why there are exactly 39 clues?
3. Amy and Dan were given a warning: Beware of the Madrigals. I wonder what the Madrigals are and why they must beware of them?

#### **Vocabulary**

Students can use Scholastic's Word Wizard Dictionary to look up the meaning of words and hear the pronunciation at: <http://wordwizard.scholastic.com/dictionary/>

### **Step 5: Read Chapters 5, 6, & 7**

*Skill: Synthesize - combine what you've read with your own existing ideas to form new ideas.*

Amy doesn't think she and Dan have a chance to find the clues. Mr. McIntyre assures her that they have talents to help them win. In your investigation journal compare and contrast Amy and Dan, the Kabras, the Starlings, Jonah Wizard, the Holts, Alistair Oh, and Irina Spasky. What advantage does each of them have over the other heirs? What is their weakness? What countries do they come from? What qualities do you think the winners will possess?

Here's a clue to get you started...

[http://cdn.static.the39clues.com/cards/0050535d50ba671c845505630cc97f0f/ca\\_rd.pdf](http://cdn.static.the39clues.com/cards/0050535d50ba671c845505630cc97f0f/ca_rd.pdf)

#### **Vocabulary Clue**

Divide the class into two teams. Ask one person from each team to come to the front of the room. The teacher will show the class the word. Contestants can ask their team only yes or no

questions about the word. The person who guesses their word in the fewest guesses wins a point for their team.

### **Geography**

Grace Cahill kept a map of the world with pushpins in her secret library. Help your students track their journey around the world by displaying a world map in your classroom. Track their locations with pushpins like Grace!

Another option is an online map like at [http://www.scholastic.com/scholastic\\_thanksgiving/voyage/journey.htm](http://www.scholastic.com/scholastic_thanksgiving/voyage/journey.htm) where students can see pictures of the actual historical locations on line.

### **Step 6: Read Chapters 8, 9, & 10**

*Skill: Ask questions - before, during, and after reading - to better understand the author and the meaning of the text.*

Encourage your students to ask questions like:

1. What do I think will happen to Dan and Amy? Will the Luciens eliminate them?
2. What have I learned about Ben Franklin? What did he invent? What else do I want to know about him?
3. What predictions can I make? Do I think they will find the answer to the clue in Philadelphia?

In their investigation journal, have your students make predictions about the book's ending and ask questions about the text. At the end of the unit, see who guessed correctly!

### **Vocabulary Activity**

Student will be naturally interested in the espionage aspects of the book. This easy lesson integrates science with vocabulary from the book by having the students write the vocabulary words with invisible ink. Students will learn how types of juice, when heated with a light bulb, will reveal a secret message!

Have each student write the definition of a word on a piece of plain paper. Using invisible ink from the activity below, students will hide the word somewhere on the page. When the ink has dried, have a partner try to decode the secret word!

### **Make Invisible Ink!**

What to do

1. Using juice squeezed from a lemon or from a bottle, apply "ink" on paper with a cotton swab or paint brush.
2. Allow the paper to dry.
3. Ready to read the secret message? Hold the paper up to a light bulb. The heat will cause the "ink" to darken to a very pale brown. Be careful not to get the paper too close to the heat source and ignite the paper!

How it works

Lemon juice is acidic and weakens paper. When paper is heated, the remaining acid turns the writing brown before discoloring the paper.

### **Step 7: Read Chapters 11, 12, 13, & 14**

*Skill: Visualize - create pictures in you mind while you read.*

Ask your students what they see, smell, feel, and taste while reading.

What did Amy look like after the flight to Paris?

What did it sound like to be mobbed by paparazzi?

What do you think Jonah Wizard's fashion line looks like?

Dan dreams about crème glatee? What do you think it is and what does it taste like?

In the investigation journals, have students draw their most vivid scene/character/setting from these chapters and then compare their ideas with a partner to see the differences and similarities.

### **Step 8: Read Chapters 15, 16, 17**

*Skill: Finding the main idea*

Looking for the big idea in a book helps readers determine importance while they are reading. In textbooks, the main ideas are often announced in boldface words and titles, but in literature, students may need to hunt for clues to find the theme of the book.

One theme of this book is talent. The historical relatives of the Cahills are talented. The team members are talented. Dan and Amy don't think they are talented, yet everyone is out to get them. What are their talents and how are their talents linked to the other theme of the book — power?

### **Step 9: Read Chapters 18, 19, 20**

*Skill: Putting the clues together-reading comprehension*

Your class is now armed with some powerful information to solve The 39 Clues. They've learned what good readers do to comprehend a story. Review with your class their investigation journals now that they've finished the story. What predictions were accurate? What questions can they now answer? What new thoughts do they have?

### **Vocabulary**

Rick Riordan uses some powerful and vivid words in his writing. In their investigation journals, have your students write down words from *The Maze of Bones* that they would like to use in their own writing. What less effective synonym could the author use? How did the more picturesque word change the passage?

Here are some of the words:

#### **Chapter One**

Perilous

Lamented

Talisman

Brusque

Obscured

#### **Chapter Two**

Lunatic

Careened

Exploits

Hearse  
Sentimental  
Exasperation  
Podium  
Beneficiaries  
Quest  
Instituted  
Destiny  
Surname  
Renounce

### **Chapter Three**

Guardian  
Archeology  
Mutant  
Contorted  
Wards  
Embarking  
Coaxed

### **Chapter Four**

Resolution  
Cartographer  
Alliance  
Collaborate

### **Chapter Five**

Vellum  
Pseudonym  
Almanac  
Combusting  
Inferno

### **Chapter Six**

Monogram

### **Chapter Seven**

Antidote  
Incapacitate  
Anti-surveillance  
Kiosk

### **Chapter Eight**

Cylinder  
Rendezvous  
Careened  
Submerged

### **Chapter Nine**

Predicament  
Asunder

### **Chapter Ten**

Ambushed

Sarcasm  
Gendarme

**Chapter Eleven**  
Shurikens

**Chapter Twelve**  
Conspiracy

**Chapter Thirteen**  
Stronghold

**Chapter Fourteen**  
Quay  
Mausoleum

**Chapter Fifteen**  
Catacombs  
Symbolic  
Coordinates

**Chapter Sixteen**  
Forged  
Quavering  
Imploring  
Arrondissement

**Chapter Seventeen**  
Anagram

**Chapter Eighteen**  
Inert  
Catalyze  
Belfry  
Skittered

**Chapter Nineteen**  
Parchment  
Adagio

### **Explore History with Ben Franklin**

Introduce students to Ben Franklin and his many accomplishments by having them explore:

[http://teacher.scholastic.com/scholasticnews/games\\_quizzes/interview/index.asp](http://teacher.scholastic.com/scholasticnews/games_quizzes/interview/index.asp)

<http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/aa/leaders/franklinb>

### **Learning about Ben Franklin**

Benjamin Franklin was naturally curious and liked to learn how things work. Introduce students to these fun facts about Franklin:

- He got tired of switching between two pairs of glasses — one for reading and one for distance. So he cut each pair in half to create the bifocal lens.
- He wanted to swim faster so he created swim fins.
- He wanted to reach a high shelf so he invented a long reach device.

Ask students what they wish was easier in their lives. Then have them create an idea for their own invention and sketch their design.

### **Electricity experiment**

Benjamin Franklin may be most famous for his experiments with electricity. Did you know that static electricity is similar to that of a lightning strike? Walking on carpet can generate about 3,000 volts of electricity and taking off a sweater can create about 30,000 volts. Lightning strikes discharge 100 million volts! Using a balloon and a fluorescent light bulb, students will explore how static electricity works.

Unlike standard incandescent bulbs, fluorescent tubes are filled with a gas that gets excited when even a small amount of electricity is applied to it. In fact, you can power up a fluorescent bulb with a spark of static electricity. In this activity, you'll test this principle for yourself.

#### Materials

- Balloon
- Dark room
- Fluorescent light bulb

#### What to Do

1. Decide who will hold the bulb first and who will be on "balloon duty." Designate another person as note taker. Make the room as dark as possible.
2. While the bulb holder firmly grasps the bulb with the metal contact portion facing outward, have the person on balloon duty rub the balloon against his or her head and then immediately touch the "charged" balloon to the metal contact.
3. Observe what happens.
4. Change roles, and repeat step two.
5. Change roles once more and repeat step two but this time introduce a variable, such as rubbing the balloon for a longer period of time or waiting for five seconds before touching the balloon to the bulb. Be sure to record your observations in your investigation journal.

### **Understand Symbols and Crests — then Design your own Crest**

The four branches of the Cahill family use symbols to represent themselves. Look at the Cahill crest on page 45. What do the symbols of the four branches mean?

Have students find out which branch of the Cahill family they are in when they log onto [www.the39clues.com](http://www.the39clues.com) (see "Join the Cahill Family" below).

Share familiar symbols with the students such as the McDonald's arch, the Nike swoosh, the Olympic rings etc. Why do people and corporations use symbols? Discuss other symbols such as your state's seal. Discuss symbols from nature such as the eagle, or flowers such as the rose.

Have the students design their own crest using symbols that they feel represent them, or use one of the Cahill family crests. Place the crest on the back cover of their investigative journal.

### **Join the Cahill Family**

Children can become part of the Cahill Family and join the hunt for clues and prizes!

With the help of their parents, have students log on to The 39 Clues Web site, [www.the39clues.com](http://www.the39clues.com), to create an account and find out to which branch of the Cahill family they belong! Students will need to have their parent's email address to gain permission to activate the account.

**Multi-Author Stories — A Fun Writing Activity**

Each book in The 39 Clues series is written by a different author. Have students explore this process through cooperative writing.

First, have a class discussion to outline an idea for a story. Then have each student write their opening paragraph, then pass their paper to the next person to write the second paragraph. Continue until the work is complete. For a more unpredictable experience, after each paragraph, papers can be shuffled and passed randomly to the next author. Finally, share/compare/discuss the stories. Are they similar or very different? Why?

*Guide written by Laura Stockwell, Fifth Grade Teacher, Orlando, Florida*