

Literature Circle Questions

Use the questions and activities that follow to get more out of the experience of reading *The Whipping Boy* by Sid Fleischman.

1. Prince Horace is known as Prince Brat by everyone in the kingdom. What are some of the things he does to earn this nickname?
2. Describe the whipping boy in this novel. Who is he? What is his job?
3. What happens as soon as Prince Brat and his whipping boy try to run away from the kingdom?
4. In *The Whipping Boy*, the author spins a fantastic tale of adventure using language that is funny and exaggerated. Select your favorite passage where the author has described characters or events in a funny or exaggerated way and read it out loud to the literature circle. Then, as a group, discuss what you liked most about the author's approach. Tell why.
5. How are Prince Brat and Jemmy different from one another at the beginning of the novel? Create a list of personality traits for each character and compare them. Then discuss how each character's background helped to shape their personalities.
6. What causes Hold-Your-Nose Billy and Cutwater to believe Jemmy is the real prince? What effect does this have on Prince Brat?
7. What is Jemmy's scheme to escape from Hold-Your-Nose-Billy and Cutwater and why does he think it will work? Why doesn't the prince go along with Jemmy's plan?
8. As they are trying to escape, Prince Brat and Jemmy get lost in the woods. Describe a time you got lost. What happened? How did you feel? How did you manage to find your way?
9. Imagine the prince has been asked to write a column for the local newspaper about what he has learned about life outside the castle walls. What would the prince write in his column?
10. Prince Brat and Jemmy learn a great deal about each other from their experiences in this novel. What do they learn? How does this knowledge affect their relationship? Give three specific examples.
11. Prince Brat changes a great deal from the beginning of the novel to the end. How does he change? Give three specific examples.
12. In the novel, Prince Brat is alone with his father when he explains why he ran away and how his friends helped him return safely. What might Prince Brat have said to his father so the king would forgive them? What could the king have told the prince to help him act more responsibly? Write a sample dialogue of what the two would say to each other.
13. Jemmy wants to stop royal households from keeping whipping boys. Compose a list of reasons Jemmy will use to convince royal families to stop using whipping boys.
14. Jemmy has the opportunity to leave the prince behind several times in the book but chooses not to, even though the prince has betrayed him. What would you have done if you were in Jemmy's shoes and were faced with this decision?

15. At the end of the book, the king says: “If you boys decide to run away again, take me with you.” Why do you think the king says this? What does this tell you about the king?

Note: These questions are keyed to Bloom’s taxonomy as follows: Knowledge: 1-3; Comprehension: 4-7; Application: 8-9; Analysis: 10-11; Synthesis: 12-13; Evaluation: 14-15.

Activities

1. Pick a passage from the book that creates a picture in your mind. Write it down, including page number and paragraph number. Then illustrate the passage on a separate sheet of paper. Have each person in your group tell what he or she sees in the illustration.
2. Find the classic tale, *The Prince and the Pauper*, and read it. How is this tale similar to *The Whipping Boy*? How is it different?