

Literature Circle Questions

Use these questions and the activities that follow to get more out of the experience of reading *Frindle* by Andrew Clements.

1. What is Mrs. Granger's famous "battle cry" that all her former students remember?
2. What question does Nick ask Mrs. Granger on the first day of class to stall the lesson? How does she outsmart him?
3. List the three important events that lead to Nick's big idea: renaming a pen "a frindle."
4. What exactly does Mrs. Granger mean when she says that "dog" means dog because we all agree it does?
5. Why do those students want to stay after school and be punished by Mrs. Granger? Why do they consider it a "badge of honor"?
6. If "ain't" is not a proper word, how can it be in the dictionary, as Nick points out? What is Nick trying to prove when he brings this point up with Mrs. Chatham, the principal?
7. Imagine that you are the reporter from the *Wakefield Gazette*, trying to get the scoop on the new word "frindle." What questions would you ask Mrs. Granger? How would you convince the principal to give you the real story?
8. Bud Lawrence wants to own the copyright for the word "frindle." What does he plan to do with it? How can someone own the rights to a word? Explain how this is different from owning a bike or a pair of sneakers, or even a pet dog.
9. When the reporter from the TV station asks Nick "What's next for you and your new word?" Nick replies that "frindle belongs to everyone now." How can a word belong to everyone? What does someone "do" with a word that belongs to them?
10. How does the experience of inventing a new word and becoming a celebrity affect Nick? Why does he think twice about testing out his new idea: protesting the poor food in the cafeteria?
11. In her letter to Nick (which he opens years later, after he's in college), Mrs. Granger says: "A person can watch the sunset, but he cannot slow it down or stop it or make it go backward." What do you think this observation has to do with Nick's word?

12. Why does Mrs. Granger “expect to hear remarkable things” about Nick in the future? Can you predict — based on his creativity and his restless challenging of rules and conventions — what kind of remarkable things he might go on to do?
13. Can you recall the early parts of the story and Mrs. Granger’s “war” against Nick and his new word? Now that you know what her real intentions were — to intentionally make herself “the bad guy” — try to imagine what she was thinking when she posted her angry notice, or when day after day she kept all those students after school.
14. Do you think Nick really knew what he was getting into when he started spreading the word “frindle”? How did Mrs. Granger — who tried to make obstacles for Nick — realize the possibility of Nick’s new word?

Note: These literature circle questions are keyed to Bloom’s Taxonomy: Knowledge: 1-3; Comprehension: 4-6; Application: 7-8; Analysis: 9-10; Synthesis: 11-12 ; and Evaluation: 13-14.

Activities

1. Nick gets the idea for inventing a new word partly from a word he used as a baby, “gwagala” — his word for music. Are there words that you invented as a baby, before you could read and learn the actual words? If you can’t remember, ask your parents or brother or sisters.
2. Draw a picture that will serve as an advertisement for a frindle. What will it look like— an ordinary pen, or something more unique? Come up with a catchy phrase so people will start using it. What famous people or celebrities might you get to endorse it?
3. Do you have any teachers, like Mrs. Granger, who made life difficult for you as a student, but whom you came to appreciate later on? What important lessons did they teach you that you didn’t want to learn? How did their being strict pay off for you? Write a letter to an old teacher, like Nick does, telling them all the important things you got out of their class. You don’t have to send it, of course, but see if you surprise yourself with how much you actually learned from them.

Other Books by This Author:

The Jacket, Aladdin, 2003
The Janitor’s Boy, Aladdin, 2001
The Landry News, Aladdin, 2000
The School Story, Aladdin, 2002
Things Not Seen, Philomel, 2002
A Week in the Woods, Simon & Schuster, 2002
Pets to the Rescue Series, Simon & Schuster
Jake Drake Series, Aladdin

Book Web Site: <http://www.frindle.com/>