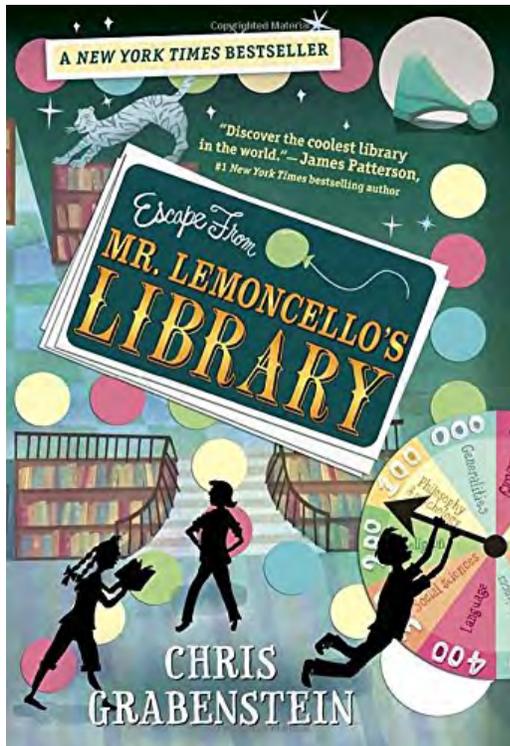


Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library

by Chris Grabenstein



As the youngest member of the Keeley household, twelve-year-old Kyle has gotten used to hand-me-downs and being outpaced by his big brothers in almost every way. He's pretty sure he'll never be an SAT-certified genius, like his brother Curtis, or an athletic powerhouse, like his brother Mike. No sweat. Books and sports aren't really his thing anyway. Kyle's real passion is games. Board games, word puzzles, scavenger hunts, video games—you name it; he'll play it! Amongst his family and friends, Kyle is considered an expert, especially when it comes to Squirrel Squad, Family Frenzy, and all the other games made by Luigi Lemoncello and his Imagination Factory team. Unfortunately, Kyle is about to miss out on the biggest, zaniest, most elaborate game in Lemoncello history!

Apparently, the eccentric game maker has secretly spent five-hundred million dollars transforming an abandoned bank building into a state-of-the-art public library. In honor of its grand opening, Mr. Lemoncello plans to select twelve local twelve-year-olds to spend the night locked inside, exploring the library's holdings, playing brand new Imagination Factory games, and winning prizes. If only Kyle had known that extra credit essay was for Mr. Lemoncello's contest, he certainly wouldn't have forgotten to do it!

Still, Kyle has logged enough hours playing games to know that—with enough focus, a sound strategy, some practice, and a dash of good luck—anyone can win. Can he find a way to make his own luck and enter Mr. Lemoncello's surprise contest anyway? Does Kyle really have what it takes to compete against Alexandriaville, Ohio's brightest twelve-year-olds (two of whom are his best friends!) in a brain-teasing, nonstop battle of wits?

About the Author

Anyone who has read one of his books will tell you that Chris Grabenstein is a born storyteller. He has a rare ability to roll mystery, humor, and lifelike characters into an unpredictable page-turner we want to read again and again! Luckily for us, when Grabenstein was a young elementary school student, his family and teachers recognized his gifts and encouraged him to write, perform, and, ultimately, build a career doing what he loves. He has been entertaining others with his original skits, plays, poems, and stories ever since. These days he lives in New York City where he comes up with great story ideas while running in Central Park with his rescue dog Fred (who is a former Broadway star, by the way!). When he's not writing or running, Grabenstein spends a lot of time leading workshops to teach aspiring young writers what he's learned over the years about creating characters, beating writer's block, choosing meaningful words, and more. To learn more about Grabenstein's upcoming books and workshops, visit [his website](#).

Getting Started

You can find *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library* at your local or school library, or at local or online bookstores. It's also available as an ebook for your iPad, Kindle, or Nook.

Investigate

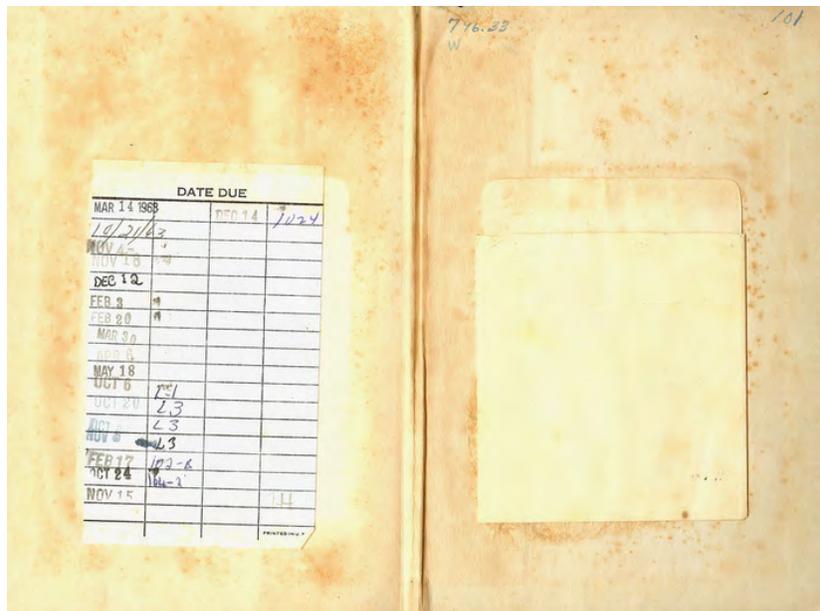
Every good story is full of captivating characters, timeless and timely themes, significant settings, pivotal plot points, and vivid vocabulary that combine to engage our brains and our hearts. In this section of the website, you will find activities that invite you to dig deeper into each of these literary elements for a better understanding and enjoyment of the book.

To aid your investigation, save our Writing While You Read guide (see pages 20 & 21), with helpful tips on keeping a reading journal and annotating a book while you read.

Respond to the following prompts in your Reading Journal as you read (or re-read!) Chapters 1-19 of *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library*.

- The key way a writer helps his or her readers connect with a story is through its characters. Which qualities, behaviors, and choices do you think make some characters more appealing than others? To help you answer this question with specific evidence from the book, use the Character Grid you'll find on pages 22 and 23 below (and you can make extra copies of page 23 if you need them). Tuck it inside your book, and, each time you meet a new character, take a minute to jot down the name and your initial observations about him or her on your Character Grid. Be sure to revisit your Grid every few chapters or so, too! There may be more ideas you want to add as you get to know each character better.
- The first few chapters of *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library* introduce us to Kyle Keeley and his family. How would you describe their family dynamic? How do they spend their time? How do they treat one another? What does their overall behavior tell us about what's important to this family? Be sure to mention specific examples from the book for support.

- In chapter 9, Kyle and his family go to the local toy store to redeem his gift card. What can you deduce about the interests and strengths of each family member based on the Lemoncello games they choose? Which game most appeals to you? If you shared a gift card with your own family, what sorts of games (real or imaginary) would best suit each member of your family?



- Would you say that the dialogue, or the way characters talk to one another, in this book rings true to life? Why or why not? In your journal, record some examples of phrases or sentence constructions that sound familiar (or unfamiliar) to you. Based on the evidence you've collected, how accurately does the author, Chris Grabenstein, capture the way kids and families these days really talk to one another? How does this style of dialogue help (or hurt) your ability to connect with the characters?

- Dr. Zinchenko, a world-famous librarian and Mr. Lemoncello's most trusted employee, "[is] a tall woman with blazing red hair. She [wears] an expensive, custom-tailored business suit, jazzy high-heeled shoes, a Bluetooth earpiece, and glasses with thick red frames" (7-8). She has single-handedly orchestrated and overseen every aspect of the library's top-secret construction (7-8). What's more, she has designed the intricate, multi-day library lock-in game that often leaves even Mr. Lemoncello himself stumped! In terms of her qualities, behavior, and importance to the overall storyline, how does Dr. Zinchenko compare to other female characters you've read about lately? How might she inspire young, gifted students, girls in particular?
- Just before they enter the library for the first time, Dr. Zinchenko reminds the children of her "number one rule: Be gentle. With each other, and, most especially, the library's books and exhibits" (49). Obviously, Dr. Zinchenko is concerned with preventing damage to the library's holdings and exhibits. She is a "world-famous librarian," after all (7)! She is equally careful, though, to encourage the children to be "gentle" with one another. What do you think she means by this? Which of the children seem to neglect her advice as the story unfolds? Why?
- Compared to his older brothers Mike and Curtis, "Kyle, who [is] twelve, [isn't] the star of anything" (2). Why do you think Kyle feels this way? Based on what you know about him so far, what are some of the special skills, character traits, and abilities he may be overlooking (or underestimating) in himself? What evidence from the book tells you so?

Respond to the following prompts in your Reading Journal as you read (or re-read!) Chapters 20-37 of *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library*:

- Why do you think Haley Daley pretends not to be smart when she's around her classmates (109-110)? Have you ever felt like hiding your skills and abilities because you worried others might not accept you? In what way(s) does your personal experience as a gifted student help you better understand what Haley is going through?
- Mr. Lemoncello has named the library's holographic librarian after his beloved childhood librarian, Mrs. Tobin. Why do you think Mrs. Tobin had such a strong, lasting influence on him as a young boy? How might Mr. Lemoncello's adult life have turned out differently if he had not met her?
- When he talks, Mr. Lemoncello often makes allusions, or passing references, to well-known children's books and authors. This adds a good bit of word humor and unpredictability to his lines! More importantly, though, his allusions direct listeners' minds to make brief but meaningful connections to familiar characters, symbols, or ideas that have direct bearing on the topic at hand.

For example, when one of the first few contestants attempts to escape the library through the fire door, Mr. Lemoncello announces, "Sorry, Yasmeen. That's where your sidewalk ends. You broke the rules. You are out of the game" (90). This is an allusion to Shel Silverstein's classic poetry book *Where the Sidewalk Ends*. It's both a funny line and a reminder that Mr. Lemoncello is very well read. It also reinforces that he is kind-hearted. By making this slight reference to a familiar children's book, Mr. Lemoncello is attempting to keep the mood light, remind Yasmeen that the game is just for fun, and allay any sad feelings she has about being eliminated. That's a lot of meaning packed into a single, simple line, right?

In your reading journal, keep a list of the allusions you notice in the text. Jot down your ideas about how each one helps you better understand Mr. Lemoncello's character and the way he is attempting to shape the way his child contestants approach the lock-in games.

- The majority of the book's events take place inside Mr. Lemoncello's library, a setting that is anything but ordinary. There are floor-to-ceiling bookcases, hover ladders, 3D holograms, large-scale Lego models, 3D Audio Animatronics, virtual reality games, technology-integrated conferencing rooms, and high-definition video screens. There is even an origami trapdoor! While both the time and place in which this story takes place are very realistic, the library



itself lends an almost fantastical layer to the story's events. In what way(s) does this story become more like a fantasy or science-fiction adventure novel due to this grouping together of so many technological marvels all under one roof?

- How do you think Kyle's relationship with his family has shaped the way he makes decisions and behaves toward others, particularly in difficult situations? Which scenes from the book lead you to this conclusion?
- Although Kyle is clearly the protagonist, or central character, this book includes a number of other well-developed young characters whose behavior and choices directly impact Kyle's. For this reason, it's important to examine the author's use of round and flat characters. The more we learn about a character's background, feelings, and insecurities, the more realistic—or round—the character becomes. Conversely, those about whom we know little more than one or two traits are called flat characters. Flat characters are almost like necessary placeholders; they have to be around to help move the story along, but they don't impact the outcome all that much. As you've probably guessed, the more rounded characters a writer includes, the more complex the storyline becomes.

In your reading journal, make a list of the other eleven kids who are selected to enter the library along with Kyle. Then identify each one as either flat or round. Once you've narrowed in on the round characters, consider how and why some of them become Kyle's allies while others become his adversaries. What aspects of each round character's background, feelings, and insecurities impact his or her approach to Kyle and the game in general?

- How would you describe Mr. Lemoncello's clothes, behavior, way of speaking, and preferred mode of transportation? Based on what you know about his family, childhood, and early years as a game maker, why do you think he chooses to present himself in this unusual way?
- On two occasions, Kyle and his teammates drop what they are doing and run to help other players who are in trouble. In chapter 21, they rescue Haley from the automated book sorter in the basement. Then, in chapter 25,

they rush to the Art & Artifacts room to protect Miguel from Andrew Peckleman. Interestingly, both Haley and Miguel end up joining Kyle's team. What's more, the team receives a bonus clue after each attempted rescue. Why do you think that is? Why would Dr. Zinchenko, the game's designer, reward this type of behavior from Kyle's team?

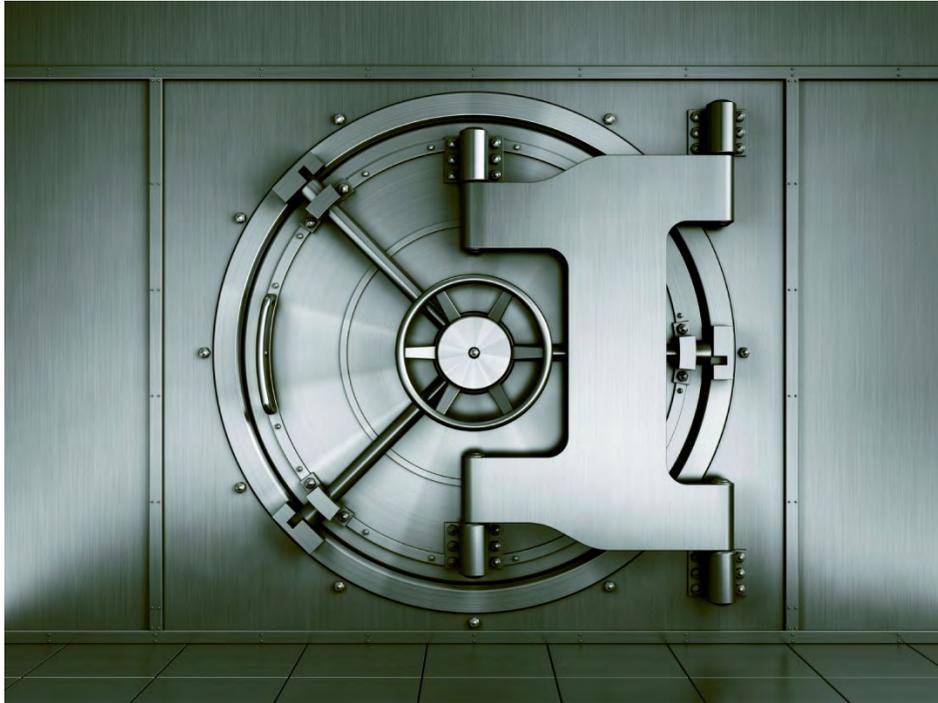
Respond to the following prompts in your reading journal as you read (or re-read!) Chapters 38-56 of *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library*:

- Who is a more effective team captain, Kyle or Charles Chilton? What qualities do the two boys have in common? What qualities make one boy a more appealing leader than the other? Look back through the book and find a couple of different quotations that characterize each boy's approach to his teammates and the game. Then create a Venn diagram (see page 25) in your reading journal to help you visualize the similarities and differences.
- When we first meet Kyle in chapter 1, we learn that he "[loves] playing games against his big brothers. As the youngest, it [is] just about the only chance he ever [gets] to beat them fair and square. Board games [level] the playing field. You [need] a good roll of the dice, a lucky draw of the cards, and some smarts, but if things [go] your way and you [give] it your all, anyone [can] win" (4). Over the course of this book, what has Kyle demonstrated about the true value of "some smarts" and giving "it your all," not only in a game but also in real life? In what way(s) do wise judgment, persistence, and perseverance trump luck?
- In what way(s) would this book—and our reaction to it—be different if Charles Chilton were the main character, rather than Kyle? Imagine and map out an alternate plot (schedule of major events in order) for a visual.
- One of the most common archetypes, or story models, in children's and young adult literature is that of the wise, old master training up his protégé, or apprentice. The master typically serves as a mysterious guide who passes on just enough knowledge to prepare the young protégé to meet whatever destiny awaits. Very often, the master dies (or is absent for some other reason) midway through the story, and the protégé must learn to triumph alone. The classic example of this story model, of course, is the relationship between Arthur and Merlin in the Arthurian Legends. In your own reading, though, you have probably already encountered many other variations on this story model, such as Bilbo and Gandalf (from *The Hobbit*); Harry Potter and Albus Dumbledore (*Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone*); and Charlie Bucket and Willy Wonka (*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*).

In what way(s) does the relationship between Kyle and Mr. Lemoncello fit the master-protégé archetype? In what way(s) does it take this classic story model in a new direction?

- Look back over the notes you've made about Mr. Lemoncello and his library guests on your character grid (see page 22 and 23). Decide which characters are ultimately static and which characters are dynamic. Being willing to change, especially under pressure to win a game, could have either a positive or negative outcome. Which characters stay true to themselves no matter what? Which characters change for the better? Which characters change for the worse? Why?
- Even though his library lock-in game has turned out to be outrageously fun and an amazing gift in itself, there must be something more Mr. Lemoncello hopes to accomplish. Why do you think he has transformed the abandoned bank building into this incredible, new library for the children of Alexandriaville, Ohio? Consider the

quotation found on the pedestal of his statue just inside the vault door entrance: "KNOWLEDGE NOT SHARED REMAINS UNKNOWN—LUIGI L. LEMONCELLO" (54). Why do you think Mr. Lemoncello believes this is an essential lesson for young people to learn? Which of the twelve lock-in contestants have learned this lesson by the end of the book? How do you know?



Getting to the Root



English is a living language. It changes and grows all the time. One of the best ways to understand the history of the English language and to unlock the meanings of unfamiliar words is to learn Latin and Greek word parts. As you study biology, you will learn more and more of these word parts, and once you know them, you will begin to recognize them in all kinds of words—and you'll find that your knowledge of those word parts will help you decipher the meanings of unfamiliar words.

Roots are the "base" of plants, and Latin and Greek roots form the base of many English words. For example, the Latin root *audi* means "to hear." How many modern English words can you think of that include the root *audi*?

Next, take a look at each word part below. Beside each part is a word from *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library* containing that word part. You can find the word in context on the page number in parentheses.

- **rot—rotunda** (8)
- **ben—benefactor** (25)
- **dub—indubitably** (49)
- **aus—auspicious** (73)
- **circ—circumference** (115)
- **man—manipulate** (133)

1. Can you determine the meaning of the root from your knowledge of the word beside it?
2. If not, think of other words that you know that also contain that root. What do those words have in common? Based on that common element, can you figure out the meaning of the root?
3. If you're still stumped, check out this [list of Latin and Greek roots](#).
4. Now that you know the meaning of the root, how many words can you generate that use the root?
5. Once you understand the meaning of the root, you'll find that even your understanding and appreciation of familiar words will deepen and grow when you think about how that root works in those words.

Words, Words, Words

Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library is full of great words. Below is a list of some of the words from the book that may be unfamiliar to you, along with the page number on which each word appears in the story. Be sure to follow the steps below for other words in the book that are new to you.

- renovations (7)
- eccentric (8)
- quaint (8)

- holographic (9)
- gloat (16)
- flounced (26)
- demolition (34)
- mesmerized (38)
- memorandum (50)
- reverberating (54)
- niches (56)
- simulator (69)
- luxuriating (70)
- decipher (74)
- traipsed (77)
- pathetic (99)
- paraphernalia (112)
- accoutrements (112)
- prototypes (112)
- rumpus (136)
- flagrant (149)
- deductive (166)
- atrium (168)
- scoured (171)
- magnanimous (173)
- cryptic (224)
- preposterous (236)



Before you look these words up in a dictionary—or ask someone what they mean—try working through the following steps:

1. Generate a list of other words that share one or more of the same word parts. What do the words on the list have in common? Are there any clues from those commonalities that you can use to help figure out the meaning of the unknown word? Hint: Some word parts—as they appear in English words—have multiple meanings as we look back at the Latin and Greek, in part because of changes that have occurred in the words over the years. For example, does the "ped-" in "pedestrian" mean the same thing as the "ped" in "pediatrician"? Where there is possible confusion, context clues (see step 2) are extremely important.
2. Go back and reread the word in its context. This context includes the sentence in which you find the word, but you should also read one or two sentences both before and after the appearance of the word. What context clues do you find that might unlock the meaning of the word for you?
3. Make your best guess at the meaning of the word.
4. Look up the definition in [a dictionary](#). Be sure to also look for information about the word's origin. This information will often contain the Latin or Greek word from which the word is derived.
5. How close was your guess?

Uncover

Our world is full of connections—between people, places, and events. In this section of the website, you will find activities that uncover some important connections—in history, engineering, and math—between *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library* and our world!

History

Get to Know Your Library

As a book lover, can you imagine what it must have been like for the children of Alexandriaville, Ohio, to be deprived of a public library for twelve years? Even though you've probably spent countless hours in libraries and bookstores, after reading *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library*, you are likely looking at your experience with books in a whole new way. It's easy to take for granted our ready access to the information, imagination, and adventure books provide. Where would we be without these “windows into worlds we never even dreamed possible” (53)? Let's check out the vital role of libraries throughout human history.

Activities

- [Trace the practice of collecting and storing written knowledge](#) from the beginnings of human civilization through the modern era. Did you make the connection between Alexandriaville, Ohio, and Alexandria, Egypt, where one of the most important libraries of the ancient world was located?
- [Meet Johannes Gutenberg](#), the German inventor whose introduction of the printing press in the 1450s sparked the mass production and spread of reading materials to everyday people world-wide.
- Learn about how American librarian [Melvil Dewey](#) developed the Dewey Decimal System in the 1850s [to help librarians organize books](#), so patrons can find them easily. Then test your book shelving and sorting knowledge with this [Dewey Decimal System game](#).
- [Consider how the development of computer technology and the Internet revolutionized traditional library practices](#) and, thereby, people's access to information beginning in the mid-1900s.
- Read an e-book from [Project Gutenberg](#), which honors Johannes Gutenberg's mission to bring the written word to the masses. This nonprofit, volunteer-run organization was founded in 1971 by Michael Hart, the inventor of



e-books, and makes e-books readily available to the general public at no cost. Since that time, the Project Gutenberg online collection has grown to over 45,000 free e-books. There are many titles available, including Kyle Keeley's new favorite short story collection [The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes](#), by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

- Imagine the future of libraries around the world. [Will they go paperless?](#) [Will technology finally connect "information-poor" communities worldwide with library access?](#)
- If Dr. Zinchenko and Mr. Lemoncello have inspired you to spend your life immersed in books and educational technology, investigate the possibility of earning a college degree in [library science](#) and [becoming a librarian](#) yourself.

Now that you know all about the history of libraries, the next time you visit yours, step back and marvel at just how far our collection and sharing of knowledge has come . . . and may yet go!

The American Immigrant's Experience

After doing a bit of research on their mysterious benefactor's connection to their hometown, Kyle and his friends learn that Mr. Luigi Lemoncello was born in Alexandriaville, Ohio, to Italian immigrant parents who could barely speak English (25, 37). As a child, he lived with his parents and nine brothers and sisters, "crammed into a tiny apartment with only one bathroom over in Little Italy" (25). His refuge, of course, was the public library. Can you imagine, though, the challenges young Luigi must have faced outside the library's comforting walls? How might his experiences, not only within his immigrant family but also as an outsider in the community, have shaped his sense of self and life goals? Let's find out!

Activities

- [Investigate why people from other countries choose to immigrate to the United States.](#)
- [Compare a typical immigrant's understanding of what it means to be "American" with yours.](#)
- Consider the [family](#), [cultural](#), and [educational](#) challenges immigrant children face.
- [Take a closer look at the experience of Italian immigrants during the 1900s.](#) Though they faced many initial hardships, they eventually began to blend into the American school system, workforce, and culture. How does this historical information help you to better understand the Lemoncello family's background?
- [Review the requirements for becoming a naturalized American citizen](#) as well as [the one hundred questions immigrants must be prepared to answer on the U.S. citizenship test](#). How many of these American government, civics, and history questions are you able to answer?
- [Read the Naturalization Oath of Allegiance to the United States of America](#) that immigrants take after passing the U.S. citizenship test, and read [how new citizens felt after taking the citizenship oath](#).
- [Track the shifts in America's official immigration policy from the late 1700s through 2000.](#) In what ways has our definition of a desirable immigrant changed over the course of our country's history? Why?
- Test your knowledge of how the real-life American immigration process works with [this free online game](#).

- Investigate the applications for which holography may be used in the future: [virtual meetings](#), [brain research](#), [open heart surgery](#), [education](#), and [entertainment](#).

Virtual Reality & Audio Animatronics

In the library of the future, will there be 3D Audio Animatronic exhibits that can adapt to our requests for personalized history lessons and board games? Will there be virtual reality games that transport us to historical events, foreign lands, and worlds yet unknown without our ever leaving the room?

Activities

- [Learn about the principles of computer modeling](#) and [simulation](#) that make virtual reality work.
- Consider the [invention](#) and [development](#) of 3D Audio Animatronics by Walt Disney's Imagineers beginning in the 1960s. Was this interactive, experience-based technology the precursor to what we recognize as virtual reality today?
- [Learn how recent advances in computer science and engineering technology](#) enable users to participate in and manipulate imagined scenes, settings, and events.
- [Find out what it takes to be a virtual reality scientist](#).
- [Observe](#) as school kids in County Offaly, Ireland, demonstrate using educational programming software and a virtual reality headset to recreate and experience a historic site they recently visited on a school field trip.
- [Imagine the potential real-world applications of virtual reality](#) technology in the future.

Mathematics: Game Theory

One of Kyle's favorite things about playing games is trying to anticipate moves and outwit his opponents, especially his big brothers! Did you know that there are actually academics, in a wide variety of disciplines, who study this kind of strategic thinking? Let's learn more about the study of game theory and its real-world applications.

Activities

- [Learn how game theorists combine mathematics and logic](#) to gain the upper hand in all kinds of game play situations.
- Listen as Dr. Colin Camerer, Professor of Behavioral Finance and Economics at CalTech, [describes the surprising results of an experiment](#) that tested whether chimpanzees or humans were better at understanding and applying principles of game theory.
- [Consider the way a recent Jeopardy! contestant used game theory strategies](#) to unsettle his opponents and easily win the game.

Clearly, with enough practice, applying game theory strategies can help you win just about any game! Scholars and

researchers are also considering the ways in which game theory is (or could be!) applied in many other real-world contexts involving politics, business management, economics, warfare, education, sports, and parenting. Now that you know how game theory works, which strategy do you plan to try on your family's next game night?

Create

An important part of learning is having the chance to produce something of your own. Here you will find engaging projects that connect with the novel and that allow your creative abilities to shine!

Intern at Mr. Lemoncello's Imagination Factory

The library lock-in was an incredible success. What's more, Kyle and his friends approached the game with such maturity, perseverance, and creativity that Mr. Lemoncello will surely want to add some gifted young interns to his Imagination Factory staff! Imagine you have just been hired as an intern, and Mr. Lemoncello has tasked you with designing a family-oriented board game. Work carefully through the stages of game design described below. When you're ready to unveil your game prototype, invite some friends or family members to help you give it a test run. Just remember, "For Mr. Lemoncello, a game just [isn't] a game if it [isn't] a little goofy around the edges" (16). This is your chance to be just as wacky as you want to be!

1. **Choose a theme.** Think about both the style and setting of your game. Will players sit still at a table, or will your game involve physical activity of some kind? Will the back-drop of your game be a realistic or fictional place? Will you model your game after one you have seen before, or will you come up with something completely new? **Hint:** Look back through *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library* and find the Lemoncello game titles. If one of those stands out to you, feel free to dream up a game to go with it!
2. **Define a clear objective.** Think about how a player will win the game. Will players roll dice, use a spinner, or take turns to move around the game board? Will there be items players must collect or trade along the way? Will players draw cards from a pile for any reason?
3. **Determine the ideal number of players.** Think about how many players your game will reasonably accommodate. How will you ensure the game is competitive but not overcrowded?
4. **Sketch your vision for the game board's surface.** Think about how the game board will look. Where will players begin playing? Will they follow a trail around the board or move in some other nonsequential way? Will you include any booby traps, card stacks, or special action spaces? Where will you hide the secret square (which, according to Kyle, all Lemoncello games have)? **Hint:** For an added challenge, come up with a way to give bonus points or cards to encourage sporting behavior, just like Dr. Zinchenko did for the library lock-in game.
5. **Write out the rules of the game.** Think about how to explain the game as briefly and clearly as possible. What will players need to know to get started? What will players need to know to keep the game running smoothly and fairly? **Hint:** After you have a first draft of your rules, go to your game stash and peruse the rules of some of your favorite games. This will help you pinpoint any potential questions or gaps you overlooked in your new game's instructions.

- Construct the game board.** Think about the size, shape, and number of materials you will need. What do you have on hand that will provide a large, firm surface for drawing or pasting on your game background? What kinds of office supplies (for example, pens, markers, construction paper, note cards, cardboard, stickers, glue, scissors, or tape) will you need to mark the spaces on the board, fill in the background image(s), and make any necessary card stacks?
- Gather the game pieces.** Think about the moveable objects that will enable players to move around the game board. How many and what kind of tokens, coins, dice, spinners, or other items will players need? **Hint:** With your parent's permission, you may be able to borrow some of these things from other games or from around the house. Remember how Mr. Lemoncello used to dig around in Mrs. Tobin's desk and purse?



- Name the game.** Think about a zany word combination that will capture Lemoncello fans' attention!
- Host a game night.** Think about which of your friends or family members would give the most constructive, helpful feedback. Whom will you invite to help you test out your new game prototype? Will there be snacks . . . and, maybe, balloons? **Hint:** Remember, trial and error is part of the fun! If your game doesn't work quite the way you'd hoped, tweak it and try again. Find a way to enjoy the development process and make your game even better with every test run! After all, we know Mr. Lemoncello didn't always succeed on his first try either.
- Have fun!**

Frame a Family Philosophy

In chapter 4 of *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library*, we meet Charles Chilton, who is so intent on winning the library lock-in game that he becomes Team Kyle's chief rival. His antagonistic behavior stems from a fundamental family philosophy he has learned from his parents: "*We eat losers for breakfast!*" (20). This attitude is so deeply ingrained in Charles that it determines the way he treats others, the way he approaches competition, and even the way he measures his own success. Clearly, a fundamental family philosophy can be a strong influence on a kid's point of view. Thankfully, it doesn't have to be aggressive or negative, like the Chiltons'! Have you ever considered your own family's guiding beliefs and values? How have these principles shaped your sense of self, what you believe, and how you behave out in the world? If you were to put into words just what your family is all about, what would you say?

- Begin with some brainstorming. Grab a pen and some paper. Ask yourself, "What does my family believe in

most? Which behaviors or ideals are important to us? How do we interact with others? What are our greatest priorities in life? Why?" Remember, there are no "right" or "wrong" answers to these questions. Let your ideas flow, and try to capture as many of them on paper as you can!

2. Next, go interview the family members who live in (or frequently visit) your household. How do they answer these same questions? Add their ideas to your own.
3. Now that you've got a full list of possibilities, read back over what you've written. Do any particular beliefs or values stand out to you? Were any mentioned by multiple family members? Narrow down your list to the few most important ones.
4. Think of a creative way to "frame" (both literally and figuratively!) your family's core beliefs or values. Here are some possibilities:
 - Write an [acrostic poem](#), using the letters of your family's last name;
 - [Rewrite the lyrics](#) to a favorite tune;
 - Draft a [declaration](#); or
 - Create a family [pennant](#) or [coat of arms](#).

Once your fundamental family philosophy is complete, neatly handwrite, type, or draw it in the center of a clean, crisp sheet of paper. Surround your words with a border of meaningful artwork or a photo collage. Finally, ask a parent to help you find a suitable frame or make one from odds and ends you find around your home.

5. Hang your fundamental family philosophy somewhere your whole family will see it and be reminded to strive for what's most important to you, especially on tough days when you're wishing for a "Take Another Turn" card (24)!

Encode a Rebus

To find the library's hidden exit and win Mr. Lemoncello's lock-in game, Kyle and his friends must solve a complex rebus, or pictogram, puzzle. [Rebus puzzles](#) test a person's ability to use visual, auditory, and word-play skills all at the same time.

You know what is even more intellectually and creatively challenging than solving a rebus? Making a rebus from scratch! [Try your hand at decoding some more rebuses](#). Then, when you're ready, follow the steps below to encode your own rebus puzzle.

1. **Select a written text to form the foundation of your rebus.** For example, you could choose a brief but memorable quotation from a favorite literary work, historical figure, or movie. You could write a short letter or invitation to a friend or family member. You could even make up an entirely new inspirational message of your own! Write out the text you've chosen, so you'll have the words for reference as you work.
2. **Brainstorm image possibilities.** For each written word, think of an image that, when named aloud, will give readers a clue about the word that has been replaced. Remember, you can direct readers to add (+) or drop (-) particular letters by including a note underneath the image. Refer to the rebus (or pictogram) puzzle in Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library for a visual.

3. **Encode your rebus.** On a clean sheet of paper, list the images (and +/- codes!) you've planned in order from left to right. You could draw or paint the images yourself. You could cut and paste suitable images from old magazines, newspapers, or photographs. You could also ask a parent to help you look online for free clip art or go on a photography scavenger hunt. Be sure to take your time on this step. Remember, your rebus is equal parts puzzle and art.
4. **Baffle your family and friends.** Who will be willing to tackle your Lemoncello-style extreme challenge (248)? How long will it take to solve your new rebus? Be sure to set a timer and find out!

Archive Your Year-in-a-Box

In chapter 22, Haley Daley's quest for clues leads her to "an old boot box" labeled "Paraphernalia, Accoutrements, and Doodads from Mr. Lemoncello's 12th Year" (112). Inside, she finds an assortment of items that, presumably, young Luigi Lemoncello left for his adult self to find. None of these items has any particular significance to Haley, but, to Mr. Lemoncello, each one is filled with memory and meaning. Each item reminds him of something important that happened to him when he was twelve years old. For some reason, he doesn't want to lose touch with his twelve-year-old self. Perhaps, he wants to remember the year he came up with his "First and Worst Idea Ever" (259). Do these items somehow remind Mr. Lemoncello never to give up, never to let go of his childhood wonder and creativity? He does drive a car shaped like a red boot on wheels, wear a pirate hat, and eat birthday cake for breakfast (22, 72). He is a wildly successful game maker. Maybe we should follow his lead!

Consider this quotation from another creative visionary, the twentieth-century artist Pablo Picasso: "Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up." Is your young self your truest self? How might creating a memory box help you stay connected to what's most important to you? If you could send a message to your adult self, what would you say? Find an old shoe box and fill it with significant items, memories of yourself—in this year—of your life. Here are some possibilities to get you started:

- current picture of yourself or your family
- souvenirs from trips
- project or experiment prototypes
- creative writing, music, or artwork samples
- favorite toys, books, or games (or photos of them!)
- list of hobbies or favorite school subjects
- goals for the future
- letter to yourself

Once you've filled your memory box, seal it tight, write a "do not open until" date on top, and find a safe, dry, temperature-regulated place to archive it—just like a special collections librarian would! Then imagine how you will react when you open it as a grown-up.

Connect Prompts

In Duke TIP's online Book Club, the "Connect" prompts provide an opportunity for students to share their ideas about the book with other Duke TIP students. You may choose to record your responses to these questions in your Reading Journal, or you can use them to talk about the book with friends or classmates who have also read it.

Get Your Geek On

When Mike jokingly calls Curtis a "nerd" for looking forward to getting a library card, Curtis responds, "I prefer the term 'geek'" (14). Curtis loves books, and he is proud of it! His confident attitude turns teasing into a compliment. Embracing one's inner "geek" (i.e., giftedness in a particular topic, hobby, or skill) can lead to amazing success. Just ask [Bill Gates](#), [Mae Jemison](#), or [Jeff Corwin](#)! What topic, hobby, or skill do you go geek over? Why? How did you first get interested?

The Game of Life

When he realizes what forgetting his extra credit essay has cost him, Kyle is depressed. He wishes real life could be more like one of his board games: "Kyle [stares] at his wilted fish sticks, wishing he could pull a magic Take Another Turn card out of thin air" (24). Have you ever made a big mistake and wished you could have a do-over? What happened? What would you change, or do differently, if you were given the chance?

Everyone Needs a Mrs. Tobin

Kyle and his friends soon find out why Mr. Luigi Lemoncello has poured so much money and energy into reviving their public library. As a young boy back in the 1960s, he struggled to find his way. His parents were Italian immigrants who could barely speak English, so Luigi spent a good deal of time in the old Alexandriaville Public Library trying to fill in the gaps of knowledge they couldn't. The local librarian, Mrs. Gail Tobin, always welcomed him and encouraged him, especially when he began inventing games: "She kept the library open late some nights and let him borrow junk from her desk or her purse—thumbtacks and glue bottles, even Red Barbie doll boots—stuff he used for game pieces so he could map out his first ideas on a library table" (26). She and her husband eventually helped Luigi start his game-making company, "and within a couple of years they were all millionaires" (26). Without Mrs. Tobin, Luigi Lemoncello might never have started the Imagination Factory!

Looking back over your own life so far, who would you say has been your own, personal "Mrs. Tobin"? How has this person encouraged you to pursue your interests, believe in yourself, and make your dreams reality?

Your Vision for a Lock-In

If you could design an overnight lock-in, like the one in *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library* or the movie *Night at the Museum*, what would it be like? Where would you host the lock-in? Whom would you invite? What activities or adventures would you plan for your guests? Tell us about it! Feel free to let your imagination run wild.

Seuss for All Ages, from Wee to Eighty-Three!

Just before releasing the children into the new library, Mr. Lemoncello suggests, "Let us pause to remember the immortal words of Dr. Seuss: 'The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the

more places you'll go" (50). We know Mr. Lemoncello is a very well-read man. Of all the books and authors he could have referenced, why do you think he chose to emphasize this quote from Dr. Seuss's *I Can Read with My Eyes Shut*? In what way(s) does this quotation have significance for both adults and children? What does it mean to you?

Don't Judge a Book by its Cover

SPOILER ALERT

If you haven't finished the book, stop reading here and come back later!

All of the kids at Mr. Lemoncello's library lock-in already know each other from school. Not surprisingly, when they first enter the library, the kids immediately fall into their familiar social roles: Sierra as the book worm, Haley as the sparkling cheerleader, Charles as the shrewd mini-business man, Miguel as the library guru whom Andrew is bent on outdoing, Kyle as the goof off, and so on. As the game progresses, however, Kyle begins to realize that he doesn't really know his classmates as well as he thought he did. True, "Haley [is] the princess of the seventh grade. Blonde hair, blue eyes, blazing bright smile. She [looks] like a walking toothpaste commercial" (26). Yes, Sierra Russell always "[has] her nose buried in a book" (47). Still, when Kyle begins to look beneath the surface and consider who these kids truly are, why they behave the way they do, he sees much, much more. He even makes some unexpected friends in the process!

Why is it so tempting to hide part of ourselves, like Haley and Sierra, when we are worried others won't understand or accept us? Why do you think it is so difficult truly to know---and be known by---the very people we share our lives with every day? How can we learn to look beyond a person's clothes and behavior to connect with the real, authentic person underneath?

Pages or Pixels?

On the second night of the lock-in, Dr. Zinchenko leaves some overnight reading material on the librarian's table for Kyle and his friends. Were you surprised that "Nobody [goes] for the e-reader" (203)? Has something about their library experience changed the way the kids feel about traditional, printed books? What do you see as the pros and cons of print and electronic books? Which format do you prefer and why?

TIP Top Titles

Something about Miguel's corny library joke rings true: "Hey, Kyle—you know what they say about libraries? [. . .] They have something for every chapter of your life!" (21). Whether they're educational or just for fun, books play an important role in our lives, no matter our age or situation. Let's pretend we're creating a shelf of "Our Most Memorable Reads" just like the staff picks in the lobby of Mr. Lemoncello's Library (55). Think back over the books you've read growing up. Is there a special book that stands out to you, perhaps one that has helped you through a tough time, changed your way of thinking, or helped you be a better person in some way? Tell us about it! (Be sure to include the title and author in case one of your TIP peers wants to go check out the book at his or her local library!)

Keep Reading

A few thoughts on books and reading...

"When I have a little money, I buy books; and if I have any left, I buy food and clothes."—Erasmus

"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."—Dr. Seuss

"Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog it's too dark to read."—Groucho Marx

What's next?

We hope that you enjoyed reading *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library*, by Chris Grabenstein. Check your email for information about our next book club selection. In the meantime, if you are looking for a new best friend—and aren't inside a dog—here are some books you might enjoy. Don't forget to use the tips from Writing While You Read (see pages 20 and 21) to deepen your enjoyment and understanding of these books too.

- *The Lost Kingdom*, by Matthew J. Kirby
- *Flora & Ulysses: The Illuminated Adventures*, by Kate DiCamillo
- *The House of Power*, by Patrick Carman
- *Rivers of Fire*, by Patrick Carman
- *The Dark Planet*, by Patrick Carman
- *The Phantom Tollbooth*, by Norton Juster
- *Navigating Early*, by Clare Vanderpool
- *The Apothecary*, by Maile Meloy
- *The Apprentices*, by Maile Meloy (sequel to *The Apothecary*)
- *The City of Ember*, by Jeanne DuPrau
- *The People of Sparks*, by Jeanne DuPrau
- *The Prophet of Yonwood*, by Jeanne DuPrau
- *The Diamond of Darkhold*, by Jeanne DuPrau
- *The Mysterious Benedict Society*, by Trenton Lee Stewart
- *Chasing Vermeer*, by Blue Balliett
- *The Lightning Thief*, by Rick Riordan
- *Fever 1793*, by Laurie Halse Anderson
- *Treasure Island*, by Robert Louis Stevenson
- *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, by Brian Selznick





Writing While You Read

Have you ever read every word on a page, and turned every page, but when you finished reading, you couldn't remember anything that you had read? If so, you're not alone! Reading can be relaxing, but sometimes we make the mistake of thinking that reading is passive, when it should be active. This doesn't mean you need to run while reading – that might not be a good idea. Writing as you read, however, makes reading active. This process involves some effort, but the payoff for that effort is a deeper understanding and greater enjoyment of the books that you read.

Two strategies for being an active reader are keeping a reading journal and annotating your books.

How do I keep a reading journal?

Below are some suggestions of things that you might write in your reading journal. Experiment with them. You may find that one strategy works really well for you, while others don't work at all. There's really not a right or wrong way to keep a reading journal, as long as you use it as a place to explore your thoughts, reactions, and questions as you read.

What Do I Write?

Write a brief summary, in your own words, at the end of each chapter or section. Include the main ideas or concepts of the chapter, major events in the plot, and any new information that you learn in the chapter.

Do you meet a new character? If so, what is the character like? How do you know? What are the reasons behind what that character says and does? How is the character like other characters in the book? How is the character different? Does this new character remind you of characters you've read about in other books?

Does the setting change? If so, how does the new setting compare and contrast with the previous one? Why does the setting change?

Create your own title for the chapter. If the book includes chapter titles, you might write about why the author has chosen that particular title for the chapter. How does it relate to the main ideas or concepts, major events, and character action in the chapter?

Respond to the chapter. What is the most interesting thing in the chapter? What did you learn that you didn't know before? Do you agree or disagree with the choices the author is making about plot and character? Why or why not? What do you think is going to happen next? How can you connect what is happening in the book to other things you've read? To other things you know? To your own experience?

Identify words that you don't know. Some of these words may just be new to you; others may be jargon, terminology that is used in a particular field or academic discipline. Look these words up in a dictionary, write down their definitions in your notebook, and be sure you understand their meanings and how the author is using them. Often these words are some of the most important in the reading.

Make note of passages where you are confused and/or have questions, and be sure to include a page number. Once you finish the chapter, you can return to the passages. Perhaps further reading clarified the confusion. If not, you know exactly which points in the text to further research or to ask questions about.

Write down striking or unusual use of language. Often writers use particular words, expressions, or sentences in ways that we wouldn't have thought to use them, and the effect can really jump off the page at us. If you come across a passage that seems really cool to you, write it down in your reading journal.



Throughout the online book club activities, you will find activities that are specifically labeled “Reading Journal.” When you see that label, read the writing prompt, and respond to it in your reading journal. These prompts will usually ask you to write about a personal connection to what you’ve been reading. For example, a journal prompt might ask you to write about a time when you found yourself in a situation that is similar to a situation of one of the characters in the book.

To Write or To Type, That is the Question!

Your reading journal doesn’t have to be a hard-copy, hand-written one, but there are some advantages to using an old-fashioned journal:

- The physical act of writing promotes a stronger memory for new words, phrases, and strategies you will be learning
- The hard copy notebook can evolve into a collage, a scrapbook, even a work of art that represents your creative, messy, overflowing mind!

How and where you keep a reading journal is much less important than actually doing it! So find an old notebook that may be buried in your desk, ask mom or dad if you can buy an inexpensive composition book, or create a new folder on your home computer and get started!!



How do I annotate a book?

As the word suggests, annotating a book involves making notes or other types of marks that help you focus on particular words or passages that seem important, are often repeated, relate to other things you’ve read, or simply interest you as a reader. An active reader annotates a text by doing any or all of the following:

UNDERLINING

Specific words that convey significant events or elements of the story’s characters, plot or theme

VERTICAL LINE ALONG THE MARGIN

This helps the reader quickly find an important passage underlined, or to highlight a paragraph or other section too long to underline.

ASTERISK/STAR/DOODLE ★

Placed in the margin, this device is reserved for the most important, special ideas, events or elements of the book. There would be no more than a dozen of these in the entire book; by flipping through, one could easily find once again the most significant passages in the text.

4. NUMBERS

Placing numbers in the margin can help count a set of related points or ideas the author is listing.

P.#32 PAGE NUMBERS

Often indicated by “p. #” or “Cf. #” next to the number, this indicates an idea or element is connected to another on different page of the book, and should be considered together.

CIRCLES

These serve the same function as underlining key words or phrases, but may be reserved for the BIGGEST ideas or facts in the book.

Of course, all of these strategies involve marking in the book. So if you’re planning on annotating your book, we recommend that you have your own copy – librarians take a very dim view of writing in books that belong to the media center/library!



Names, Places, & Faces...Oh, My!

Keeping Track with a Character Grid

When reading a new book, it can be helpful to keep track of the characters you meet and what you think about them. This Character Grid is one way to do just that!

Characters in books (or movies!) are often very like people you meet every day in real life. You may notice the way a character dresses, talks, thinks, behaves, or makes new friends. As you record your ongoing thoughts here, remember that some characters will change and grow depending on what happens to them—or whom they meet—as the story progresses. These are called **dynamic** characters. On the other hand, some characters stay the same no matter what happens to them. These are called **static** characters. Whether a character is willing to change and grow can affect the kind of person he or she turns out to be in the end, and it can also influence how we, as readers, feel about that character.

For example, Marlin, from the movie *Finding Nemo*, starts out as an overprotective dad who doesn't believe his son Nemo should try new things because he might get hurt. As the movie progresses, though, Marlin makes new friends, like Crush and Dory, who help him learn to guide and encourage his son without keeping him from experiencing the fun life has to offer. By the end of the movie, Marlin has changed his way of thinking about how to be a "good" dad. This not only makes him a dynamic character but also makes us like him better and want him to succeed as a parent. (If Marlin had not changed his ways, we might have ended up being frustrated by him.)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Tuck this Character Grid into your book or Reading Journal. Then, each time you meet a new character in the book, take a moment to write down his or her name on the grid and answer the "As You Are Reading" questions. (If you run out of writing room, feel free to create your own grid or answer these questions in your Reading Journal!)
2. Once you have finished the book, go back through your grid and answer the "After You Have Finished the Book" questions. As a way of wrapping up, consider: With which character(s) did you connect most strongly? What does this tell you about yourself?

Character's Name	As You Are Reading...		After You Have Finished the Book...	
	Where/When do you meet this character?	Describe this character's appearance and behavior.	What stands out to you about this character's name, behavior, or choices?	Why is this character important to the story overall?
			Is this character static or dynamic ? What evidence from the book tells you so?	

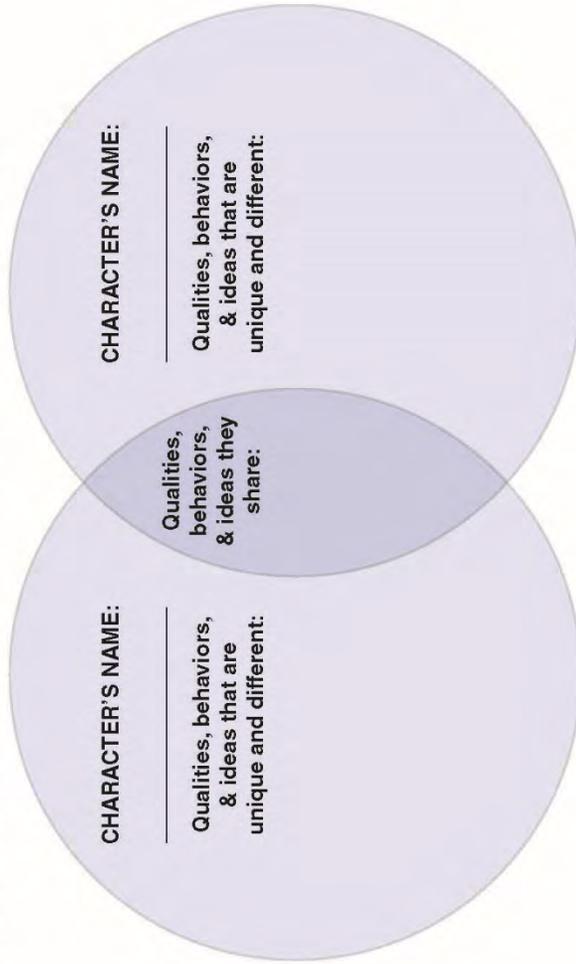
Side-By-Side Comparison with a Venn Diagram

Creating a Venn Diagram can help you visualize and make sense of the similarities and differences between two or more things. For example, as you are reading a book, you could use a Venn Diagram to compare key characters, places, or events.

A basic Venn Diagram is made up of two, partially overlapping circles. Let's say you wanted to compare two characters. In the outer part of each circle, you would write one character's name and list the qualities, behaviors, and ideas that make him or her unique and different. In the space where the circles overlap, write down characteristics the characters share. If we were comparing Marlin and Dory, from the movie *Finding Nemo*, here is how our Venn Diagram might look. (If you've seen this movie, try adding some observations of your own!):



Now you are ready to draw your own Venn Diagram in your Reading Journal! To get started, try something like this:



If you want to compare more than two characters, places, or events, simply add additional circles to your Venn Diagram. Be creative! Just pay attention to the places where your circles overlap and look for similarities there. Here are some other possibilities:

