

A Curriculum Guide to

Ada Lace, Take Me to Your Leader

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About the Book

Ada Lace has a new hobby, and it's using her ham radio. The only problem is that she just can't get it to work properly. While sleeping over at Ada's, her best friend Nina wakes to hear a strange message coming from the radio: "Release the swarm!" Determined that aliens are sending messages, Nina is now completely spooked. After learning that Milton Edison, Ada's former nemesis from across the street, has a ham radio, Ada is suspicious about the messages Nina heard. Could Ada and Nina have stumbled upon something extraterrestrial, or is it just a practical joke?

Discussion Questions

The discussion questions below particularly address the following English Language Arts Common Core State Standards: (RL.1-5.1, 2, 3) (RL.1-3.7) (RL.3-5.4) (RI.1-5.1, 2) (RI.1.3) (RI.5.3) (RI.1-5.4) (RI.2.6, 8) (RI.3.8) (RI.4.7) (RI.5.8) (SL.1-5.1, 2) (SL.1.4, 5) (SL.2.6) (SL.3.4, 6) (SL.5.3, 5). During the discussion, ask students to give specific examples from the books to support their answers and reasoning.

1. What is the main idea of *Ada Lace, Take Me to Your Leader*?
2. Describe a ham radio. Why would someone need a license to use one?
3. Why is Nina fearful of the radio after her sleepover with Ada? Would you be fearful if you heard what Nina heard?
4. Would you enjoy having a robot like George? List some of the pros and cons.
5. Describe how a radio repeater works.
6. Have you ever had a joke played on you that wasn't really funny? How did it make you feel?
7. Discuss Ada and Nina's friendship. How do you know that they care about each other? In thinking about their reactions to situations in this book, name some of the ways in which Ada and Nina are alike, and how they are different.
8. What kinds of subjects were discussed on the ham radio in the book?
9. What did Ada and Nina see at the California Academy of Sciences? What would you like to visit if you went there?

10. Describe how Mr. Peebles helped Ada in the story. Who are some of the people in your life who you can go to for help? If you don't know someone with information on a certain topic, where might you go or where might you look to learn more?
11. Why does playing a joke on her brother, Elliot, motivate Ada to contact Milton to talk? Do you think that Ada and Milton might become good friends now? Explain your answer.
12. What kinds of questions did Ada, Nina, and Milton ask astronaut Sandy? What questions would you like to ask an astronaut?
13. What do satellites do?
14. What are some of the ways in which people use radio waves?
15. Do you believe aliens might exist? If so, would you like to talk with one? Explain why you think this.
16. Have Nina's feelings toward the ham radio changed from the beginning to the end of the book? Do you think Nina will learn to enjoy using it?
17. Why do you think the author decided to write about ham radios and radio waves? What was your favorite part?

Extension Activities

1. Some ham radio operators like to use Morse code. Look up Morse code symbols and try using them to write a simple message. Share it with classmates and decode their messages.
2. Using the Internet or books from the library, investigate the different uses for ham radios. Choose one and write a brief essay imagining the circumstances and your experience with the radio. Why do you do need it? What might you hear? How long would you spend using it?
3. Visit the California Academy of Sciences website:
<https://www.calacademy.org/events-exhibits>. Which exhibits are most interesting to you? Describe what you can do in those sections of the museum, and what you would see.
4. What is a smart house or smart home? Explain how it works. What features would you have if you could set up your home as a smart home? Explain why you would want those particular features.
5. Describe and then draw what you think an alien or extraterrestrial being might look like if it came to Earth. What would aliens need to survive here? What might we learn from them? What might they think about the way we live?

6. Ada is excited about her ham radio hobby, and spends time learning as much as she can about it. She works to fix up the radio, getting advice from Nina, Mr. Peebles, other ham radio operators, and even astronaut Sandy. To solve the mystery of the alien sounds, she investigates radio signals and lets Mr. Peebles show her how to use a radio repeater. Choose a hobby or subject that you're interested in but don't yet know much about. Make a list of steps you'd take to learn more, and what you're most excited about. Set goals for yourself over the next year so that you can see how far you've come!

Guide written by Shirley Duke, a children's freelance writer.

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