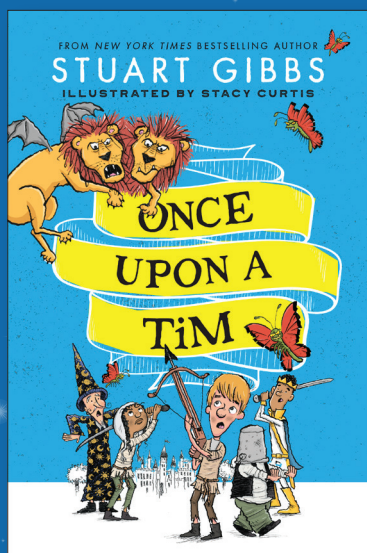


A READING GROUP GUIDE TO STUART GIBBS SERIES



Once Upon a Tim series



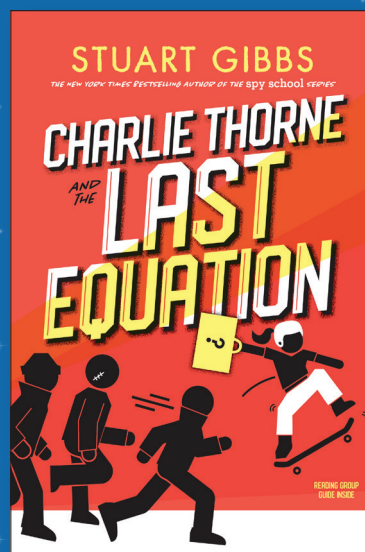
Funjungle series



Spy School series



Moon Base Alpha series



Charlie Thorne series

From bestselling author
STUART GIBBS

HUMOR. SUSPENSE. ADVENTURE.
What will you choose?

There's a story waiting for you.

funjungle



ONCE UPON
A TiM
Ages 7+



spy school



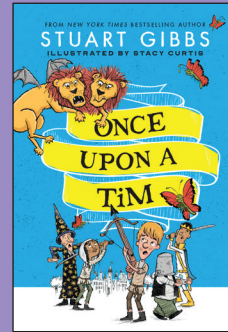
Look for SPY SCHOOL
in Spanish and as a
graphic novel!

moon base
alpha



CHARLIE THORNE
Ages 10+





Once Upon a Tim
 Illustrated by Stacy Curtis
 POB: 9781534499256
 eBook: 9781534499270
 eAudio: 9781797144283
 Grades 2–5
 Ages 7– 0
 Lexile® 710L
 F&P™ V

ABOUT THE BOOK

Tim is just a peasant, but he dreams big. He wants more out of life than to grow up to be a woodsman like his father. Unfortunately, the only route to success in the kingdom of Wyld is to be born a prince. Still, Tim is determined. He is brave and clever and always tries to do the right thing—even though he rarely gets the credit for it.

Then news spreads that Princess Grace of the neighboring kingdom has been abducted by an evil stinx, and Prince Ruprecht needs a legion of knights to join him on his quest to rescue her. Tim finally has the lucky break he’s been waiting for, the opportunity to change his station in life. And even though he doesn’t know how to ride a horse or wield anything more deadly than a water bucket, he’s going to do whatever it takes to make sure his dream becomes a reality.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. As the novel opens, readers discover that while this story includes both a prince and a princess, it’s not about them. Instead, they meet Tim, and he immediately shares that he is a peasant and “being a peasant stinks.” Based on what you learn about peasants in olden times, discuss what makes their lives so difficult.
2. What is your initial impression of Tim? What about Belinda, Ferkle, Ruprecht, and Nerlim? Are there ways in which these characters surprised or disappointed you?
3. Though it is not his choice, Tim reveals that the only clothes he owns are the ones he’s been wearing for two years. If you had to pick and wear the same specific things each day, what would you choose and why? In what ways are you luckier than Tim?
4. Tim shares that there are many things worse than going to school. Consider the list of tedious tasks he offers. (Chapter 3) Which of these do you find to be the worst and why?
5. In *Once Upon a Tim*, readers learn that while all peasants have a terrible life where they mostly focus on survival, there are some differences in opportunities for males and females. How are the expectations and gender roles different for Tim than they are for Belinda?
6. For most people in “olden times” (what we might refer to as the Middle Ages), an individual’s fate was believed to be set. How do Tim and Belinda prove that despite that belief, it’s still possible to find ways to change their fate or choose what happens to them in the future?
7. Tim, Belinda, Ferkle, and the other peasants live in a system of government in which the royalty of the kingdom of Wyld (King and Queen Goodheart and their son, Prince Ruprecht) are in charge. Why is this problematic? What are some of the signs that the king and queen aren’t very smart or good leaders? Can you think of examples of good leadership in *Once Upon a Tim*?
8. While discussing her capture and the belief that the stinx is dangerous, Princess Grace tells them, “You can’t believe everything you hear.” Do you agree? Are there things that look scary, but really aren’t? Can you think of any examples from real life?
9. Belinda tells Princess Grace, “Let me get this straight...You could have rescued yourself at any time, but you stayed because society has taught you to wait for a man to come and save you?” (Chapter 15) Why is it so important that Belinda helps Grace learn that women can do anything that men can?
10. Given what you learn from *Once Upon a Tim*, what makes Ruprecht and Nerlim so disappointing?

11. In what ways is Ferkle more than he appears?
12. In what ways is this story about hope for Tim, Belinda, Ferkle, and even Princess Grace, in spite of the difficulties they encounter?

IQ BOOSTER VOCABULARY ACTIVITIES

Once Upon a Tim is filled with big vocabulary words that are fun to learn and use, and that make the story more engaging. Use the following activities to help readers practice using and learning these words so they can sound like geniuses too.

Vocabulary Relay

Print out IQ Booster words from *Once Upon a Tim* on one set of cards (copy this set a few times) and definitions, context, or sentences (fill-in-the-blank) in which they could be used on another set (just one set).

Mix up the words in a pile in the middle of the floor, and jumble up the definitions, context, and sentences to keep with you. Break students into teams of four or five.

Call out the definition/context/sentence and give students some think time (8–10 seconds) to talk about what word it might be.

After the discussion time, call out “Word!” One member from each team runs to the center and tries to find the word in the pile. Consider having multiple sets of the words so more than one team can get it. Check to make sure they’re correct, and then discuss it briefly before the next round.

Vocabulary Bingo

After the group has learned at least twenty-five different vocabulary words from *Once Upon a Tim*, bingo is a great option that students love to play that will provide a great opportunity to review. Students simply write a vocabulary word from the novel in each space of their bingo card (you’ll need to create a template). Use review and discussion of *Once Upon a Tim* to provide the definition of one of the words and have the students find the vocabulary word and cover it with a bingo chip. The first player to get five in a row, four corners, or blackout (when every spot on the card is filled) wins the game.

Picture This: Vocabulary Word Draw

Drawing detailed pictures of a word’s meaning is another powerful tool to help students learn, understand, and retain a new vocabulary word. Choose the six words prior to making copies, or ask the students to choose the six trickiest words.

Act It Out: Vocabulary Word Performance

Instead of making drawings that depict a word, students use their actions to help create a meaningful connection to the word. Offer students a chance to perform as a group or one at a time in front of the class for the others to guess the vocabulary word and write it down.

ADDITIONAL EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Design a Dwelling

In *Once Upon a Tim*, readers get to explore medieval homes that are magnificent or incredibly modest (including the stinx’s cave). Tim offers a detailed description of his family’s home (Chapter 1), and Belinda’s hut is likely very similar. Given what is learned about these characters from the novel, select one of them and design a dwelling they deserve. Dwellings can be created on paper. To extend the project, consider 3D models using shoeboxes, paper rolls, craft paper or paint, glue, and a lot of imagination!

2. Choose Your Own Adventure: Create a Quest

Though the journey to save Princess Grace is perilous for Tim, Belinda, and Ferkle, it’s also one filled with thrilling adventures. Drawing inspiration from their experiences, work with a small group to create an original quest. Be sure to determine who your characters are, what the goal or prize is, what the biggest obstacles are, and what surprises you might find along the way. As a bonus feature, create an original map of your setting similar to that offered in chapter seven.

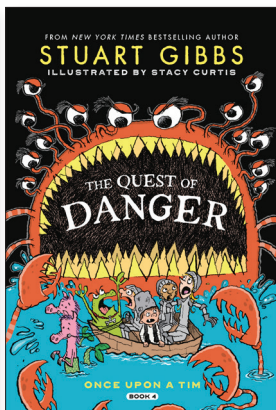
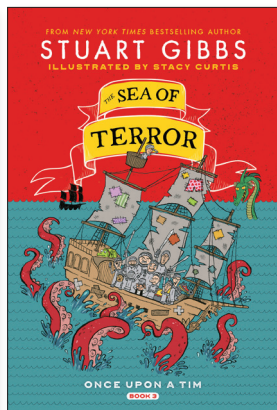
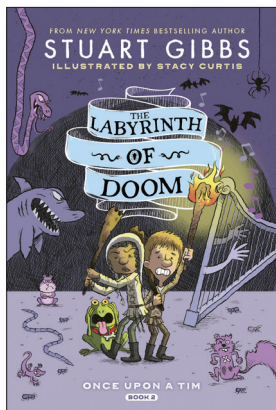
3. Make a Mythical or Menacing Monster

Throughout *Once Upon a Tim*, readers encounter Tim’s fr-dog, as well as several fantastical monsters along with some scary ones while on the journey to find and rescue Princess Grace. Whether it’s bloodthirsty butterflies, gargantuan grasshoppers, elephantine earwigs, Brobdingnagian bees, a sea serpent, or a pair of terrible trolls, these creatures strike fear in Tim and the others on the quest. Ask readers to work independently or with a partner and use their vast imaginations to create an original monster, being sure to offer a description and features that make the creature fierce. As an added activity, have them draft an original story featuring their monster.

4. Create a Comic

Once Upon a Tim is filled with delightful illustrations by Stacy Curtis. Using Stacy's illustrations as inspiration, select a favorite scene from the novel and create either a digitally or manually illustrated graphic for that scene. Use either a digital comic strip creator at <http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/> or a printable comic book storyboard sheet (found online) to begin to design the storyboards for their selected scene.

Other ONCE UPON A TIM Books



Book Two: The Labyrinth of Doom

POB: 9781534499287
eBook: 9781534499300
eAudio: 9781797149462

Book Three: The Sea of Terror

POB: 9781665917445
eBook: 9781665917469
eAudio: 9781797158198

Book Four: The Quest of Danger

POB: 9781665917476
eBook: 9781665917490
eAudio: 9781797163277

This guide was created by Dr. Rose Brock, an associate professor in the library science department in the College of Education at Sam Houston State University. Dr. Brock holds a PhD in library science, specializing in children's and young adult literature.



belly up



Belly Up
 HC: 9781416987314
 PB: 9781416987321
 eBook: 9781442406391
 eAudio: 9781797133836
 Grades: 3–7
 Ages: 8–12
 Lexile® 820
 F&P™ W

ABOUT THE BOOK

Twelve-year-old Theodore “Teddy” Roosevelt Fitzroy has murder on his hands and trouble on his tail. He believes that Henry, the hippopotamus at the brand-new FunJungle, has been murdered. The zoo’s top brass claim the hippo went belly up the natural way, but Teddy and his feisty friend Summer McCracken have other ideas. Could the culprit be FunJungle’s animal-hating head of operations? Or is it FunJungle’s owner—Summer’s dad—a man who is much more concerned about money than animal welfare? The deeper Teddy and Summer dig, the more danger they’re in—because when it comes to hippo homicide, the truth can’t be caged!

PREREADING ACTIVITY

As a prereading activity, have students complete an anticipation guide structured in the following manner:

Before Reading	After Reading	Statements
		Adults always know the right way to approach a problem.
		All mysteries are worth solving.
		The best way to deal with a bully is to fight back.
		When in danger, it is best to play it safe rather than take a risk.

Instruct students to complete the guide by placing a “+” sign in the box next to the statements for which they agree, and a “0” next to those for which they disagree. They must commit to agreement or disagreement—there are no conditional responses. Students should be assured that there are no correct or incorrect positions.

BELLY UP THROUGH WRITING AND RESEARCH

The following questions may be utilized throughout the study of *Belly Up* as reflective writing prompts, or alternatively they can be used as targeted questions for class discussion and reflection.

1. The novel opens with Teddy stating, “I’d just been busted for giving chimpanzees water balloons when I first heard something was wrong at Hippo River.” From this first introduction of Teddy, what can readers infer about him? Did you find those inferences about him to be accurate as you got to know him better throughout the course of *Belly Up*?
2. Consider the novels’ titles: In what ways does it capture the themes of the book?
3. Summer helps Teddy understand that Henry’s death from peritonitis was calculated, and that his killer is most likely someone who is an employee of the park. Why is Summer’s insight so important? What does the park stand to lose from the death of Henry, who serves as the mascot of FunJungle?
4. Describe Teddy. What makes him a dynamic character? Is he the type of person you would want to befriend? Why or why not?
5. Because of his mother’s work at FunJungle, Teddy gets to reside at the zoo/park. Do you have a favorite theme park or zoo? Imagine what it would be like living there. What would be the greatest benefits to such an experience? What would be the biggest challenges? Do you feel that Teddy takes advantage of this unusual situation?

6. While explaining that her life in the limelight isn't as glamorous as one might expect, Summer tells Teddy, "You try to do something normal, like go to dinner or a movie or even just get an ice cream—and the next thing you know, there's a thousand lights flashing in your face and all these greasy guys are shoving up against you, calling you names...it's the worst thing ever." Do you think Summer's life is as bad as she paints it? Why or why not? How does Teddy help her understand that her life isn't as awful as she might think it is?
7. Describe Summer. In your opinion, is she a good friend to Teddy? Why or why not? How does her experience as the daughter of a business tycoon help her better understand the operations of FunJungle?
8. In your opinion, what is the appropriate way to deal with a bully like Vance Jessup? In what ways does Teddy get the better of him? Do you think Teddy is right to retaliate the way he does?
9. Think about the questions Summer constantly asks Teddy about the mysteries they work to solve. How does her questioning shape how Teddy considers the clues and evidence before him? For this reason, do you find that their investigative partnership works? Why or why not?
10. Large Marge tells Teddy, "Right now, you're the only person I see making trouble." In your opinion, why does Large Marge always seem so determined to catch Teddy misbehaving or why does she always seem to desire to get the best of Teddy? Do you think she is at all justified in her actions? Why or why not?
11. Though Teddy is often reprimanded for being a prankster and troublemaker, with the help of Summer he is also the person who helps solve the mysteries that plague FunJungle. What can readers infer about Teddy's motivations?
12. What important lessons about the care of animals can be learned from Kristi Sullivan's neglect of Kazoo the koala?
13. For what reasons do you think Teddy feels connected to Summer? Why do you believe she seeks out his friendship? Consider the evolution of their friendship: How would you characterize the relationship between the two of them, and how does it change over the course of the novel?
14. Consider the unusual cast of secondary characters: Who did you like the most? The least? For what reason? Of all of the characters, who did you feel was most similar to you, due to his/her personality or experiences?
15. *Belly Up* is told in first person: How would the story be different if another character (besides Teddy) were telling it? Do you think changing the point of view would make the story better or worse? Why?
16. What was your earliest impression of Kristi Sullivan? What did you think of her being moved into public relations from animal keeping? In your opinion, has FunJungle made the right decision in keeping her as an employee after the Kazoo disaster? Why or why not?
17. Using the phrase "These stories are about...", supply five words to describe *Belly Up*. Explain your choices.
18. As each novel closes, Teddy has solved a number of important mysteries. Predict what Teddy will have to do to come to the aid of FunJungle in the next adventure of Teddy Fitzroy.

Extended Writing and Research Prompts

1. Though FunJungle has its fair share of mishaps, it has also been able to recruit specialists, like Teddy's mother, from around the world to work with and care for their animals. Using library resources and the internet, have students research a park or sanctuary dedicated to working with and caring for specific types of creatures. Be sure to learn the following:
 - Who established the park and why was it founded?
 - What is the park's mission?
 - How is it supported and by whom?
 - What other animals are cared for (if any)?
 - What can individuals do to help support this facility?

After gathering this information, have them create a visual presentation that illustrates their findings.

2. Throughout the novel, animals from locations around the world are referenced and highlighted. Using the novels as inspiration, use textual descriptions of the creatures to select one particular animal to research. Place students in pairs and have them role-play as news reporters giving a report on their selected animal. To enrich the activity, record the "report" and allow students to use props and costumes for their news report.
3. *Belly Up* focuses on Teddy's relationships with his family, friends, and other acquaintances at FunJungle. Consider your most special relationships. What makes these individuals so important? Compose a personal journal entry where you share their thoughts, and be sure to answer the following questions:
 - Who are the individuals who mean the most to you?
 - Why is that particular relationship so special?
 - What's the greatest sacrifice you've made for the people you love?
 - In what ways have the changes you've experienced in your life affected those to whom you are closest?

To culminate, ask for volunteers to share their writing with the class.

4. Throughout the course of the novels, readers are offered great insight about Teddy’s point of view, based on the events of *Belly Up*. Assume the role of one of the secondary characters from the novel, and draft a diary entry detailing what you experienced and witnessed. To prepare, create an outline using the five W’s (who, what, when, where, and why). Remember to write in first person and give special attention to sensory imagery (what you saw, smelled, heard, etc.).
5. Many of the characters in *Belly Up* are not as they appear. Consider the importance of appearances and the need for disguising one’s self: What might be a rationale to do so? What are the ramifications and consequences of such a choice? Select one character from the novel and write a short analysis of his/her choice to use a disguise.

BELLY UP THROUGH LITERARY ELEMENTS ANALYSIS

Use the following activities to allow students to show their understanding of various literary elements in *Belly Up*.

Setting: Why is the FunJungle location so important? Using the descriptions provided in each of the books, illustrate the four places within the park you believe to be most important to the story. In addition to the illustrations, include a short explanation of the significance of each, and why you believe it is important.

Considering Character: The purpose of this strategy is to help students demonstrate knowledge of a character in *Belly Up* by following written prompts to complete a poem about the individual. Students can be given the prompts to follow on a worksheet or alternatively, students may create an original slideshow using PowerPoint, Prezi, or Movie Maker.

“I AM” POEM

FIRST STANZA:

- I am (name the character)
- I wonder (something the character is actually curious about)
- I hear (an imaginary sound the character might hear)
- I see (an imaginary sight the character might see)
- I want (something the character truly desires)

SECOND STANZA:

- I pretend (something the character actually pretends to do)
- I feel (a feeling about something imaginary)
- I touch (an imaginary touch)
- I worry (about something that really bothers the character)
- I cry (about something that makes the character very sad)
- I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

THIRD STANZA:

- I understand (something the character knows is true)
- I say (something that the character believes in)
- I dream (something the character might actually dream about)
- I try (something the character really makes an effort about)
- I hope (something the character actually hopes for)
- I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

BIOPOEM:

- Line 1: First name
- Line 2: Three traits that describe the character
- Line 3: Relative of _____
- Line 4: Lover of _____ (three things)
- Line 5: Who feels _____ (three things)
- Line 6: Who needs _____ (three things)
- Line 7: Who fears _____ (three things)
- Line 8: Who gives _____ (three things)
- Line 9: Who would like to see _____ (three things)
- Line 10: Resident of _____
- Line 11: Last name

- **Advice Column:** Ask students to describe one of the problems faced by a character in *Belly Up* and write advice to him/her. Students may choose to be serious or humorous. Use the letter format common to newspaper advice columns, where the person with the problem writes for advice and the advisor writes back. Often the person seeking advice “disguises” his or her name with a descriptive name associated with the problem.
- **Fortune Cookies:** Have students imagine they are dining with three characters from the novel. Have them create fortune-cookie statements for each character, making sure they tell you which character received the fortune and why it is fitting.

- **Gift Giving:** Have students select five or more gifts that would be perfect to give to one of the characters in *Belly Up*. While these gifts can be tangible or intangible, they should be things that he/she would really want or need. Be sure that for each gift, an explanation for the gift and why it is appropriate is attached.
- **If These Walls Could Talk:** Ask students to create a conversation between one of the characters in *Belly Up* and some intangible thing (justice, love, goodness, greed, etc.) or his/her conscience. Have them script the conversation for dialogue, making sure they use appropriate punctuation.
- **Character Report Card:** Ask students to examine the ethical nature of a character's actions and choices in *Belly Up*. Have them set up a "report card," using a chart, and include the following eight categories: respect, responsibility, cooperation, caring, integrity, self-control, honesty, and effort. In addition, include a teacher's comments section. In each category, give the character a letter grade that you believe he/she deserves based on actions and choices made in the book. In the comments, use two specific pieces of evidence from the novel to explain/support the grade.
- **Character Analysis T-shirt:** Select a favorite character from *Belly Up* and create a character analysis T-shirt. Identify the literary elements used by the author to describe the character, and then create a visual representation of the character's traits. The front of the shirt must include the book title, author's name, and the character's name, picture, and description. The right sleeve must list the character's strength, and the left sleeve should list the character's weaknesses. List internal and external conflicts, figurative language, and the story's climax on the back of the T-shirt.
- **Character Trait Silhouette:** Working with others, create a character trait silhouette about your favorite or least favorite character in *Belly Up*. Begin by tracing an appropriately sized member of the group onto butcher paper. The silhouette must be life-size. The traced silhouette should reflect physical traits of the character, so modify as you draw. Next, cut out the silhouette and include ten values from your list. These need to be the most important traits of your character. For each trait, a quote that supports the description needs to be included. Inside the silhouette, include symbols which represent your character's interests, personality, beliefs, skills, or profession.
- **Character "To Do" List:** Remind students that, like us, literary characters have tasks they need to complete. Select a character of their choice from *Belly Up*. Ask students to create a list of the most important tasks at hand for that character with explanations as to why those tasks are so necessary.
- **Visualize the Scene:** In small groups, have students select a favorite scene from *Belly Up* and create either a digitally or manually illustrated graphic novel for that scene. Using a digital comic strip creator (<http://www.makebeliefscomix.com/Comix/> or <http://infinitecomic.com/> for example), have students begin by using the strips to create storyboards for their scene. Have students select original art, images, and graphics. Alternatively, students could assume the roles of two of the characters, with each one's personality and voice, and have them interact with each other by creating an extension of a scene from one of the novels. As part of the evaluation component, consider panel size and number of panels, transitions and layouts, artwork, writing, and lettering.

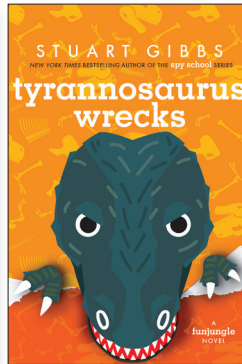
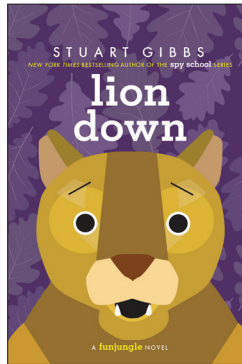
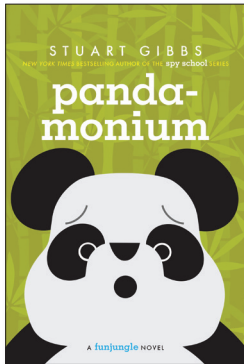
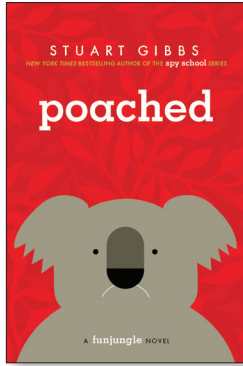
BELLY UP READERS THEATER ACTIVITY

For Teddy, FunJungle is both home and the center of his adventures where mysteries unfold. Using the following directions, have students demonstrate an understanding of text structure by retelling and sequencing a scene from *Belly Up*.

Directions

1. Read *Belly Up* with the class. After reading the novel, have students complete a story-analysis graphic organizer or an SWBS chart as a way to make observations about the characters, setting, conflict, and plot.
2. To enhance understanding, take a well-known story (perhaps a fairy tale) and model writing a Readers Theater script as a whole class activity. After discussing dialogue and performance, divide the class into small groups that will create an original script using a chapter from the book as inspiration.
3. Next, allow students ample time to practice, and be sure to conference with each group to answer or clarify any questions they may have.
4. Finally, it's show time! Allow students to create costumes, props, and sets for the final Readers Theater performance. Groups will perform for other teams of students. For additional fun, consider filming each performance to share with the whole class.

Other FunJungle Books



Book Two: Poached

HC: 9781442467774
 PB: 9781442467781
 eBook: 9781442467798
 eAudio: 9781442369122

Book Three: Big Game

HC: 9781481423335
 PB: 9781481423342
 eBook: 9781481423359
 eAudio: 9781442395060

Book Four: Panda-monium

HC: 9781481445672
 PB: 9781481445689
 eBook: 9781481445696
 eAudio: 9781508234623

Book Five: Lion Down

HC: 9781534424739
 PB: 9781534424746
 eBook: 9781534424753
 eAudio: 9781508266945

Book Six: Tyrannosaurus Wrecks

HC: 9781534443754
 PB: 9781534443761
 eBook: 9781534443778
 eAudio: 9781797100616

Book Seven: Bear Bottom

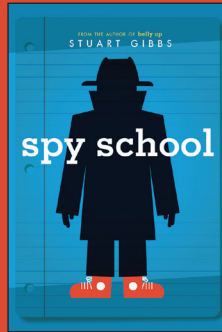
HC: 9781534479463
 PB: 9781534479470
 eBook: 9781534479487
 eAudio: 9781797123608

Book Eight: Whale Done

HC: 9781534499317
 PB: 9781534499324
 eBook: 9781534499331
 eAudio: 9781797152004



spy school



Spy School
 HC: 9781442421820
 PB: 9781442421837
 eBook: 9781442421844
 eAudio: 9781508234562
 Grades: 3–7
 Ages: 8–12
 Lexile® 740L
 F&P™ W



Also available as a graphic novel!
 HC: 9781534455436
 PB: 9781534455429
 eBook: 9781534455443



Also available in Spanish!
 HC: 9781534455405
 PB: 9781534455399
 eBook: 9781534455412

ABOUT THE BOOK

Ben Ripley, an average all-American twelve-year-old boy, has an uninteresting life that changes quickly when the great agent Alexander Hale slips into his house and coerces him to join the CIA. In a single day, he goes from being a middle school minion enrolled in boring math classes to a struggling secret agent taking courses on self-preservation at Spy School. Ben will try to save the day, get the girl, and become the spy he is meant to be while embarking on a mission of self-discovery and true identity.

PREREADING ACTIVITIES

1. Observe old James Bond movies or video clips to incorporate background knowledge of espionage and intelligence agencies. Have students create a list of characteristics that would define the “perfect” spy. Pay attention to the wardrobe, mannerisms, and personality traits of James Bond that make him the quintessential spy. After creating a list, each student can create a picture, either drawing it by hand or using a computer, to show his or her own idea of how the “perfect” spy should look.
2. Brainstorm about spy movies, novels, and graphic novels to remind students of the various stories and plotlines. Guide the class in a discussion about some of the themes in the novels or movies. How are the themes similar or different? What are the similarities in the protagonists? What are the characteristics of the antagonists?

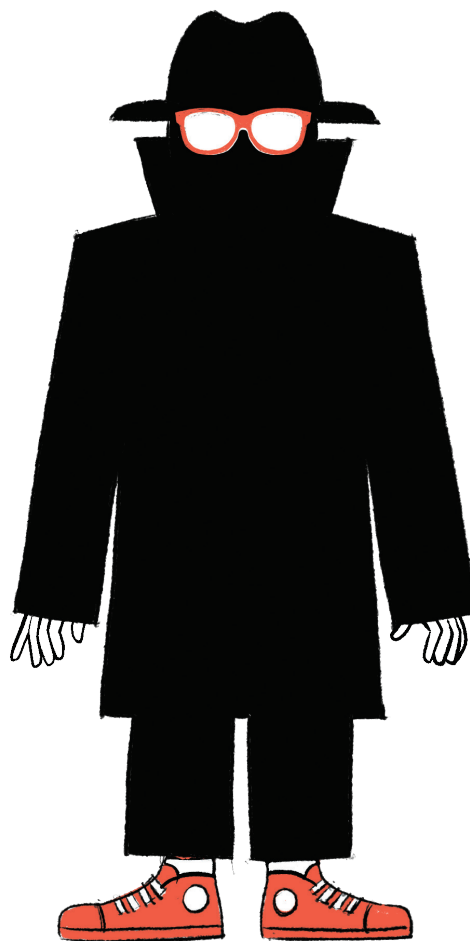
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does the author organize the novel? Why does the author structure it this way and what effect does it have on the overall novel? Use examples from the story to support your analysis.
2. Who is Ben Ripley? What makes Ben an unlikely candidate for the CIA? Why is Ben chosen to join the CIA?
3. What is a Fleming? Explain the allusion the author uses with the phrase, “Don’t tell me you are a Fleming?”
4. The author uses the word espionage throughout the novel. For example, Ben is recruited to the Academy of Espionage. What is espionage? What words or phrases help the reader to understand the definition?
5. How does the action in Chapters 2 and 3 set the tone for the rest of the story? What effect does the tone have on the overall novel?
6. The author uses descriptive language throughout the novel as, “Chip turned crimson in anger. Veins the size of night crawlers bulged in his neck.” Analyze the impact of the author’s specific word choices on the novel. How does the word choice contribute to the tone?
7. Summarize Chapter 6 briefly and objectively. What happens to Ben that advances the plot? How does the incident propel the action forward?
8. Who is Joshua Hallal? What is his relationship with Erica Hale? How do you know?
9. What does Murray Hill think about Spy School? What is Erica’s point of view of Spy School? How are their points of view different?
10. Who is Alexander Hale? Who is Erica Hale? How do they interact with each other? How do their interactions with Ben increase the drama in the story?
11. Compare and contrast Ben’s reputation at home and at Spy School. How is it different? How is it the same? How does Mike Brezinski’s character help to point out the similarities and differences?
12. Chapter 14 is titled “Provocation.” What does provocation mean? Why do Ben and Erica provoke the principal? What effect does the principal’s character have on the story?

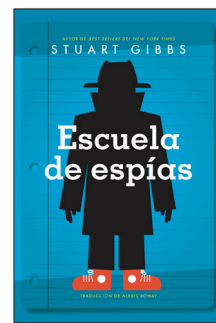
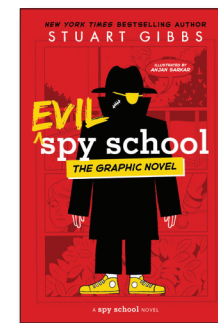
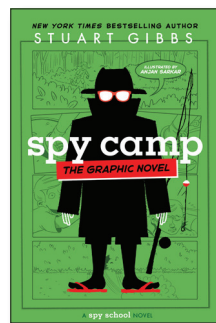
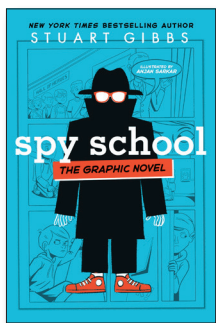
13. The author uses figurative language throughout the novel. For example, Erica asks Ben if anyone's name "rings a bell"? What literary device is the author using in this example? Identify three other literary devices the author uses and determine their meaning.
14. What is Operation Pinwheel? What is Operation Jackhammer? How do you know?
15. Describe how the plot unfolds in a series of episodes from the beginning of the novel. Create a time line in chronological order to help the reader keep the plotline straight. Use details from the story including the setting (time and place) to structure the time line.
16. In Chapter 19, "Abduction," Erica and Ben have a private moment at the Washington monument. How does this incident reveal Erica's conflicting emotions? How does it show she is a complex character?
17. How does the development of Professor Crandall's character help to shape the theme of the novel? What is the theme of the novel?
18. What is Ben's revelation in Chapter 23? How does Murray Hill's character manipulate the reader? How does Murray's character add to the irony?
19. What is SPYDER? What does SPYDER stand for? Why is SPYDER one step ahead of Ben and Erica? How does the SPYDER organization contribute to the drama of the story?
20. The author leaves a letter at the end of the story with certain particulars blacked out. What effect does this have on the reader? Why would the author do this? Why does the author include the letter at the end of the story? Give specific examples from the novel to support your conclusion.

POST-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Have students work in pairs to understand and identify the elements of plot: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. Have student partners create a plot pyramid diagramming example incidents from the novel for each of the elements to show their understanding of the elements of plot. For example, Ben Ripley's first experience at the Academy of Espionage is part of the exposition.
2. Create groups of 3-4 students and have each group act out a scene from the novel. First, have students construct a storyboard to aid the process that includes parts and dialogue for each character, limited props and resources, and changes they may need to make to the script in order to perform it realistically in class. How does watching the staged scene affect the drama versus reading the written scene in a book? Analyze how the students perform characters' dialogue and dialect, alternating the diction for each character. How do the students know to emphasize certain words or change their tone of voice? Guide the class in a constructive discussion to help students understand the changes that may be necessary to make to the novel to translate it into another medium.



Other Spy School Books



Book Two: Spy Camp

HC: 9781442457539 • PB: 9781442457546
eBook: 9781442457553 • eAudio: 9781508234593

Also available as a graphic novel!

HC: 9781534499386 • PB: 9781534499379
eBook: 9781534499393

Also available in Spanish!

HC: 9781534497566 • PB: 781534497559
eBook: 9781534497573

Book Three: Evil Spy School

HC: 9781442494893 • PB: 9781442494909
eBook: 9781442494916 • eAudio: 9781442382633

Also available as a graphic novel!

HC: 9781665931946 • PB: 9781665931939
eBook: 9781665931953

Book Four: Spy Ski School

HC: 9781481445627 • PB: 9781481445634
eBook: 9781481445658 • eAudio: 9781508222958

Book Five: Spy School Secret Service

HC: 9781481477826 • PB: 9781481477833
eBook: 9781481477840 • eAudio: 9781508238393

Book Six: Spy School Goes South

HC: 9781481477857 • PB: 9781481477864
eBook: 9781481477871 • eAudio: 9781508258865

Book Seven: Spy School British Invasion

HC: 9781534424708 • PB: 9781534424715
eBook: 9781534424722 • eAudio: 9781508282754

Book Eight: Spy School Revolution

HC: 9781534443785 • PB: 9781534443792
eBook: 9781534443808 • eAudio: 9781797111810

Book Nine: Spy School at Sea

HC: 9781534479432 • PB: 9781534479449
eBook: 9781534479456 • eAudio: 9781797123752

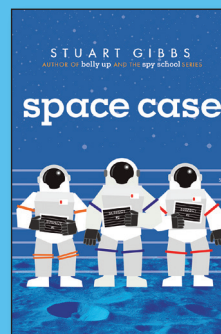
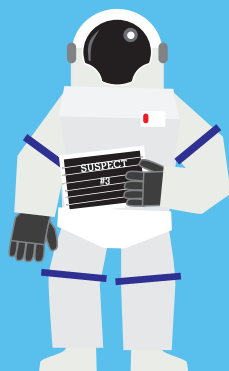
Book Ten: Spy School Project X

HC: 9781534479494 • PB: 9781534479500
eBook: 9781534479517 • eAudio: 9781797145495

Book Eleven: Spy School Goes North

HC: 9781665934749
eBook: 9781665934763 • eAudio: 9781797163444

space case



Space Case
 HC: 9781442494862
 PB: 9781442494879
 eBook: 9781442494886
 eAudio: 9781442376403
 Grades: 3–7
 Ages: 8–12
 Lexile® 750L
 F&P™ X

ABOUT THE BOOK

Like his fellow lunarnauts—otherwise known as Moonies—living on Moon Base Alpha, twelve-year-old Dashiell Gibson is famous the world over for being one of the first humans to live on the moon.

And he’s bored out of his mind. Kids aren’t allowed on the lunar surface, meaning they’re trapped inside the tiny moon base with next to nothing to occupy their time—and the only other kid Dash’s age spends all his time hooked into virtual reality games.

Then Moon Base Alpha’s top scientist turns up dead. Dash senses there’s foul play afoot, but no one believes him. Everyone agrees Dr. Holtz went out onto the lunar surface without his helmet properly affixed, simple as that. But Dr. Holtz was on the verge of an important new discovery, Dash finds out, and it’s a secret that could change everything for the Moonies—a secret someone just might kill to keep...

PREREADING ACTIVITY

As a prereading activity, have students complete an anticipation guide structured in the following manner:

Before Reading	After Reading	Statements
		All mysteries are worth solving.
		Adults always know better ways to approach problems than kids do.
		When in danger, it is best to play it safe rather than take a risk.

Instruct students to complete the guide by placing a “+” sign in the box next to the statements for which they agree, and a “0” next to those for which they disagree. They must commit to agreement or disagreement—there are no conditional responses. Students should be assured that there are no correct or incorrect positions.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

1. In *Space Case*, the novel opens with Dashiell stating, “Let’s get something straight, right off the bat: Everything the movies have ever taught you about space travel is garbage.” From this first introduction of Dash, what can readers infer about him? Did you find those inferences about him to be accurate as you get to know him better throughout the course of *Space Case*?
2. Consider the novel’s title: In what ways does it capture the themes of the book?
3. In *Space Case*, Dash realizes that Dr. Holtz’s death was calculated and no accident, and that his killer is one of the residents on Moon Base Alpha. Why is Dash’s insight so important? For what reason do most of the adults at the base want to dismiss him? What are the ramifications of there being a murderer on the Moon?
4. Describe Dash. What makes him a dynamic character? Is he the type of person you would want to befriend? Why or why not?
5. Because of his parents’ work at Moon Base Alpha, Dash gets to reside on the moon. Imagine what it would be like living there. What would be the greatest benefits to such an experience? What would be the biggest challenges? Do you feel that Dash takes advantage of this unusual situation?

6. What was your earliest impression of Nina? What did you think of her refusing to take Dash seriously? Given her job at Moon Base Alpha, do you think she is within her right to attempt to silence him?
7. In *Space Case*, Dash's nemeses are the Sjoberg siblings. What is it about this family that makes them so particularly difficult? In your opinion, why do they act the way they do?
8. In what ways does Kira's arrival at the Moon change things for Dash? In your opinion, does she have the potential to be a good friend to him? In what ways does her relationship with her father provide her with the ability to help Dash?
9. In your opinion, what is the appropriate way to deal with a bully like Patton? In what ways does Dash get the better of him? Do you think Dash is right to retaliate the way he does?
10. In *Space Case*, what are the most impressive obstacles Dash overcomes? Which of these hurdles did you like best? Why?
11. How does the news that Daphne is a corporate spy for a tourism company affect her relationship with the other residents? Though she shares that she doesn't like her job, she tells Dash and Kira she's agreed to the job because she gets "to go to the moon! To make history!" Do you think she's justified in doing what she does?
12. Though Dash is often reprimanded for being a troublemaker, with the help of Kira he is also the person who helps solve the murder of Dr. Holtz. What can readers infer about his motivations?
13. After she lands on Moon Base Alpha, Zan Perfonic tells Dash, "I just arrived on the rocket—and I think you're right about Dr. Holtz. He was murdered...but I need your help to prove it." Why do you think Zan chooses to enlist Dash to assist her in investigating Holtz's death? Do you think it's appropriate for her to do so? Why or why not?
14. Consider the unusual cast of secondary characters: Who did you like the most? The least? For what reason? Of all of the characters, who did you feel was most similar to you due to his/her personality or experiences?
15. After Chang criticizes Lars Sjoberg about his disrespect toward the late Dr. Holtz, Lars tells him, "I'll do whatever I want." How does this declaration capture the overall attitude of the Sjobergs?
16. *Space Case* is told in first person: How would the story be different if another character (besides Dash) were telling it? Do you think changing the point of view would make the story better or worse? Why?
17. *Space Case* is sprinkled with excerpts from the faux book, *The Official Residents' Guide to Moon Base Alpha*. What did you think of this guide book? Did you find the information highlighted to be particularly useful to the residents on MBA?
18. Using the phrase, "These stories are about....," supply five words to describe *Space Case*. Explain your choices.
19. As the novel closes, Dash has solved an important mystery. Predict how he will have to come to the aid of the residents of Moon Base Alpha in the next installment/adventure of Dash Gibson.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

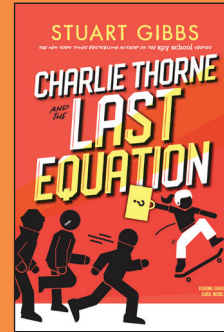
1. Though Moon Base Alpha has its fair share of mishaps, it has also been able to recruit scientists, like Dash's parents, from around the world to work for this groundbreaking project. Using library resources and the Internet, have students research plans for residences in space. Be sure to learn the following:
 - a. Who will be considered for the mission?
 - What is the mission's plan?
 - b. How is it supported and by whom?
 - c. What planets are being targeted for residence?
 - d. What are the biggest challenges of this endeavor?

After gathering this information, have them create a visual presentation that illustrates their findings.

2. Throughout *Space Case*, the challenges of living life on the Moon are highlighted. Using the novels as inspiration, use textual descriptions of living on Moon Base Alpha. Place students in pairs and have them role-play as news reporters interviewing one of the residents of MBA. To enrich the activity, record the "report" and allow students to use props and costumes for their news report.
3. Over the past fifty years, space exploration has been a national priority, but due to other needs, funding for the program has waned, and some people believe it's no longer a necessary or justifiable expense. Have students research how the space program is funded and its current goals and objectives. After examining their collected data, have students determine if they feel support of the program is warranted and write a persuasive paper that shares their position. Alternatively, students can prepare a speech designed to convince others of their view and present it to their classmates.
4. Throughout the course of the novel, readers are offered great insight about Dash's point of view based on the events of *Space Case*. Assume the role of one of the secondary characters from *Space Case* and draft a diary entry detailing what you experienced and witnessed. To prepare, create an outline using the five Ws (who, what, when, where, and why). Remember to write in first person and give special attention to sensory imagery (what you saw, smelled, heard, etc.).



CHARLIE THORNE AND THE LAST EQUATION



Charlie Thorne and the Last Equation
 HC: 9781534424760
 PB: 9781534424777
 eBook: 9781534424784
 eAudio: 9781508287575
 Grades: 5 and up
 Ages: 10 and up
 Lexile® 850L
 F&P™ Y

ABOUT THE BOOK

Charlie Thorne is a genius and a thief, but isn't yet old enough to drive. Now it's up to her to save the world. Decades ago, Albert Einstein devised an equation that could benefit all life on earth—or destroy it. Fearing what would happen if the equation fell into the wrong hands, he hid it. But now, a diabolical group known as the Furies are closing in on its location. In desperation, a team of CIA agents drags Charlie into the hunt, needing her brilliance to find it first—even though this means placing her life in grave danger. In a breakneck adventure that spans the globe, Charlie must crack a complex code created by Einstein himself, struggle to survive in a world where no one can be trusted, and fight to keep the last equation safe once and for all.

PREREADING ACTIVITY

Have students complete an anticipation guide structured in the following manner:

Before Reading	After Reading	Statements
		Kids need to be sheltered from terrible things happening in the world.
		Adults always know better ways to approach problems than young people.
		The government always has your best interest at heart.
		When in danger, it is best to play it safe rather than take a risk.
		Family should always be protected, no matter what.
		During times of crisis, what individuals say is as important as their actions.

Instruct students to complete the guide by placing a "+" sign in the box next to the statements for which they agree, and a "0" next to those for which they disagree. They must commit to agreement or disagreement—there are no conditional responses. Students should be assured that there are no correct or incorrect positions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The following questions may be utilized throughout the study of *Charlie Thorne and the Last Equation* as reflective writing prompts, or, alternatively, they can be used as targeted questions for class discussion and reflection.

1. Readers witness Albert Einstein's last moments and the desperate attempts of Einstein's friend and confidant, Ernest Klein, to protect the information about "Pandorabüschel." Why do you think such attention is given to preventing this information from being discovered? In what ways does the opening scene set the stage for the events to follow?
2. Despite Einstein's instructions, Ernst has an incredibly difficult time destroying Einstein's papers. What makes this act so challenging, even when knowing it's exactly what his friend wants? As he complies with his friend's wishes, what does his sense of urgency indicate?

3. Part 1, "The Fate of the World," opens with the following Einstein quote: "It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity." What do you think Einstein means by this? How does this statement make you feel about human nature? Explain your answers.
4. After learning of Agent Dante Garcia's intentions and scrutinizing a photo of Charlie Thorne, CIA director Jamilla Carter says, "You must be joking." Why does Agent Carter appear dumbstruck over Dante's plan to recruit Charlie? Do you think Dante makes a strong enough case for his plan? Explain your answers.
5. Think about Charlie's appearance, personality, and skill sets. How do these traits and characteristics benefit or hinder her in her line of work? What makes her a great asset to the CIA? Explain your answers.
6. Dante tells Director Carter, "Anyone that brilliant is going to chafe at authority. Because they're smarter than the authorities." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? How or when can this attitude become a problem? How or when can it become an asset? How do you decide when to question authority and when to follow?
7. While making a case for utilizing Charlie for the Pandora mission, Dante compares her to Einstein, da Vinci, Darwin, Franklin, and Newton as children. What do you think makes Charlie similar to these historical figures? Which of these figures would you most like to learn more about? Explain your answers.
8. What is it about Charlie that makes her such an unexpected choice to work with law enforcement? Do you think Agent Carter is justified in her attitude toward Charlie? Think about the judgments Agent Carter makes before meeting Charlie, and how that might affect her opinion of her. What can Charlie teach her adult colleagues, and what might she learn from them?
9. After nicely asking a man for his truck by telling him "it's an emergency" and having him behave condescendingly toward her, Charlie tells him, "I would feel bad about taking your truck. But now that I realize you are a sexist jerk, that's not the case anymore." What made the man's actions sexist? What could he have done or said instead? Do you think the circumstances warranted Charlie's actions? What does this encounter indicate about her personality? Explain your answers.
10. Upon waking up to find she's been captured by the CIA, Charlie tells Dante, "I could have run you over, you know...If I weren't such a nice person, you'd be roadkill right now and I'd already be halfway around the world." After witnessing their bickering, what can you glean about Charlie's relationship with Dante?
11. While being held by the CIA, Charlie declares, "Just so we're clear here, you're making a mistake. I haven't done anything illegal." Consider Charlie's rationale for taking forty million dollars. Do you think this justifies her actions? How might she have handled the situation differently?
12. What are your earliest impressions of CIA operative Milana Moon? Do you find her actions to be trustworthy or suspicious? How does she treat Dante? What are her goals? Using examples from the text, support your position.
13. Charlie tells Dante, "I don't want to be a spy. It sounds like a lousy job. The pay stinks, you answer to government, and people occasionally try to kill you." Do you think Charlie has any valid points with this analysis? Do you think she changes her mind over the course of the book? Based on what you know about Dante, why do you think he wanted to be a spy? What kind of skills does a successful spy need?
14. Dante explains that Einstein was hopeful the Pandora equation would solve the world's energy problems, but soon realized that in the wrong hands, Pandora would allow for nuclear weapons to be built by malicious people. Why is this such a major dilemma? Can you think of anything else that could have a negative effect when used one way and a positive effect when used another?
15. Describe some of the specific ways in which the Furies exercise their power. In your opinion, what makes this terrorist organization so threatening? What do all these men have in common? What are their goals? What, if anything, surprises you about the makeup of this terrorist organization?
16. Alexi Kolyenko's racist and hateful attitude toward refugees and people who are seemingly different from him motivates his decision to organize the Furies and seek to obtain the means to cause major destruction. What are some of the ways in which Alexi's scapegoating is so problematic? How can this kind of attitude escalate to cause serious harm? Can you draw any parallels to what's happening in the United States today?
17. How does learning that they may have a mole impact the CIA's mission? Can you think of ways this is especially difficult news for Dante and Milana to discover? How might this impact their future work with the organization?
18. After an exchange of gunfire with those trying to get to Pandora at the Mount Wilson Observatory, Charlie tells Tim Ralston, "I'm the good guy here." Though Tim has reason to question this statement, why does he ultimately believe her? Do you think he's made the right choice by doing so? Why can it sometimes be difficult to identify who's "good" and who's "bad"?
19. Charlie's participation in the mission to recover Pandora takes her around the world. What are some of the places she sees? What do you think are the most important discoveries she makes along the way, both related to Einstein's equation and to herself?
20. Considering the novel's epilogue, what do you predict will happen in the next installment of Charlie Thorne?

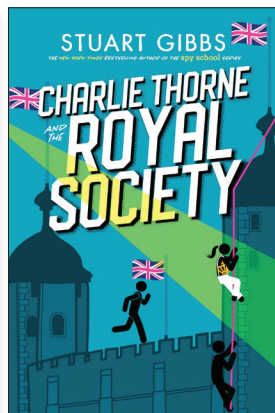
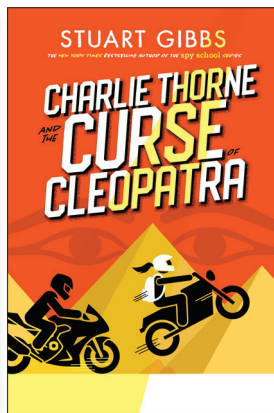
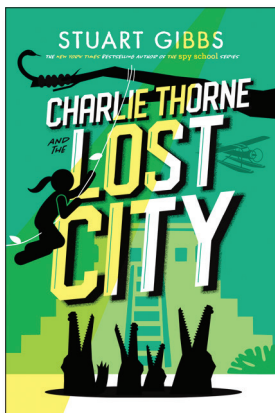
RESEARCH PROMPTS

- Albert Einstein is considered by some to be the most influential scientist and greatest mind to have lived in the past century. Using resources from the library and the Internet, investigate the life and work of Einstein, being sure to look closely at the following:
 - When and where did Einstein live?
 - What was his educational background?
 - What were his most important scientific contributions?
 - What were his goals as a scientist?
 - How did his contributions reshape the world?
 - How did Einstein have a hand in establishing the nation of Israel?
 - What are additional facts you found especially interesting? After conducting your research, create and share a digital artifact, such as an audio clip, video clip, or an image, that synthesizes the highlights of your findings.
- In *Charlie Thorne and the Last Equation*, the United States government finds it essential to maintain the secrecy surrounding Einstein's Pandora equation, or Pandorabüchse. Do you believe the government has a right to keep secrets from its citizens? After a brief discussion about this issue, read "Top 10 Weird Government Secrets" from *Time* magazine (http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2008962_2008964_2008979,00.html). Utilize your library's resources to research and discover other types of secrets that are believed to be kept by the government, being sure to consider the following:
 - What are some of the most common US government secrets believed to be kept from the greater population?
 - What would motivate the US government not to share this information?
 - Are any of these secrets located close to you?
 - What might be the consequences if any of these were found to be true?
 - Which secrets did you find most interesting, and why? Taking what you've learned, select the secret that's of most interest to you and make a case for why you believe this information should or should not be shared widely.
- Readers are introduced to the Manhattan Project, the code name for the project funded by the United States government during World War II that developed the first atomic weapons used in attacks against Japan. Investigate Einstein's role in the development of the project. Be sure to also discover the following:
 - What did Einstein share with President Roosevelt in 1939 regarding the Nazis and atomic power?
 - Where was the Manhattan Project developed?
 - Why was the project given this name?
 - Who were the scientists involved, and other key players?
 - What was Einstein's later reaction to the role he played? After examining what you've learned, engage in a group discussion about Einstein's actions and reactions to weapons of mass destruction. Be sure to consider his shift in beliefs, and discuss why.
- Readers are introduced to the CIA in the United States and Mossad in Israel, as well as their work in investigating crimes in their respective countries and throughout the world. The CIA and Mossad are two of the world's largest intelligence organizations. After selecting one of these two organizations, use <https://www.cia.gov/index.html> or <https://www.mossad.gov.il/eng/Pages/default.aspx> to research the roles of the CIA or Mossad in investigating crime. Then create a digital report about your findings. Consider the following:
 - What is the CIA or Mossad's primary functions?
 - What types of investigative campaigns does this organization undertake?
 - What are some of the specific divisions within the organization?
 - What is the criteria for working as an agent? After completing your research, share your knowledge with a peer.
- Charlie's mission leads her to the Mount Wilson Observatory for a pivotal scene in the race for Pandora. Using the Internet and the library, seek to discover more information about the history of the observatory, being sure to consider the following:
 - Why was the observatory founded? What was its mission?
 - Who was involved in creating the observatory?
 - What did the Los Angeles landscape look like when the observatory was first built, and how has it changed today?
 - What equipment is housed in the observatory?
 - Why was the research performed there so important? What are some of the discoveries that were made? After completing your research, select a digital tool of your choice to share your discoveries with others.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Charlie's grand adventure takes her around the globe. Using the novel as inspiration, use textual descriptions of the locales to select one particular destination to research. Work with a partner to roleplay news reporters giving a report on your selected spot. Ask your teacher to record your report, and use props and costumes to add color and excitement.
2. Imagine that a director-producer wants you to make recommendations for roles in a movie adaption of *Charlie Thorne and the Last Equation* as the casting director. Decide which actors and actresses would play each part. Include photos and descriptions that tell why each is a good fit, and then write a report to convince the producer of these selections.
3. Select a character of your choice from *Charlie Thorne and the Last Equation*. Consider that character's goals, and create a list of the most important tasks they must accomplish. Include explanations as to why these tasks are necessary toward meeting the goal.
4. After reading *Charlie Thorne and the Last Equation*, brainstorm a list of wrongdoings or crimes committed by the characters. As a class, divide into groups to act as the prosecution, defense, and jury. Use several sources to prepare, including the novel and Internet resources on judicial proceedings and roles of the members of a trial. Additional resources for literary mock trials can be found at www.readwritethink.org. Then write a persuasive piece to complement your work.
5. Working with a small group, create a character trait silhouette about your favorite or least favorite character. Begin by tracing a member of the group onto butcher paper to create a life-size silhouette. The traced silhouette should reflect physical traits of the character, so modify as you draw. Next, cut out the silhouette and write in ten of the character's most important traits. For each trait, include a quote that supports the description. You should also draw symbols which represent your character's interests, personality, beliefs, skills, or profession.

Other Charlie Thorne Books



Book Two: Charlie Thorne and the Lost City

HC: 9781534443815
PB: 9781534443822
eBook: 9781534443839
eAudio: 9781797116631

Book Three: Charlie Thorne and the Curse of Cleopatra

HC: 9781534499348
PB: 9781534499355
eBook: 9781534499362
eAudio: 9781797141206

Book Four: Charlie Thorne and the Royal Society

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eBook: 9781665934916
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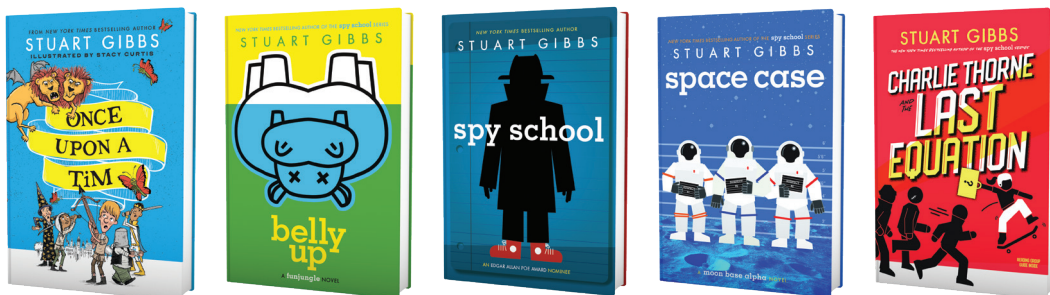


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