

A Curriculum Guide to

A FunJungle Novel: *Panda-monium*

By Stuart Gibbs

About the Book

Teddy Fitzroy returns as FunJungle’s resident sleuth when the zoo’s newest addition goes missing—before she even arrives—in *Panda-monium*, the latest novel in Stuart Gibbs’s FunJungle series.

FunJungle is frenzied, awaiting the arrival of its most thrilling animal yet—Li Ping—a rare and very expensive giant panda that the zoo went to enormous lengths to secure. But when the truck transporting Li Ping shows up, its precious cargo has vanished into thin air. The FBI steps in to investigate, and Teddy is happy to leave the job in their (supposedly) capable hands. After all, FunJungle has never encountered a crime this serious. But when someone threatens to blackmail Teddy’s girlfriend, Summer, if he doesn’t solve the crime, his involvement in this mystery is no longer black and white.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: READING, WRITING, AND RESEARCHING

Prereading Activity

The following questions contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (RL.4.2) (RL.6.2) (SL.4–6.1, 2, 3)

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

<i>Before Reading</i>	<i>After Reading</i>	<i>Statements</i>
		Siblings always have each other’s best interest at heart.
		All mysteries are worth solving.
		Breaking the law is acceptable if it helps another person or animal.
		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.

***Panda-monium* through Writing and Research**

The following questions may be utilized throughout the study of *Panda-monium* as reflective writing prompts, or alternatively, they can be used as targeted questions for class discussion and

reflection. The questions contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (RL.4.1, 2, 3, 7, 9) (RL.5.1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9) (RL.6.1, 2, 3) (SL.6.1, 2, 3) (W.4–6.4)

1. In *Panda-monium*, the novel opens with Teddy saying, “I almost missed all the mayhem with the giant panda because a dolphin stole my bathing suit.” From what you know about Teddy, does this surprise you? Why does it seem so easy for Teddy to find himself in unique situations?
2. After it’s discovered that Li Ping is missing from her transport truck, Teddy’s mom points out, “We’re also missing a person.” Why does the fact that Doc has also been kidnapped go temporarily unnoticed? How is it determined he has been unwillingly removed from the truck? Why are Teddy and his parents so sure that Doc is in no way involved in this crime?
3. Do you believe Marge could be capable of being part of Li Ping’s kidnapping? Use what you know about her from the other FunJungle books to support your opinion.
4. Readers learn that Li Ping is a picky enough eater that her bamboo must be refrigerated en route. In what way does this make her transfer to FunJungle even more challenging?
5. Describe the PandaManiacs obsessed with Li Ping’s placement at FunJungle. Do you find their enthusiasm for the panda to be helpful or hurtful?
6. What does the discovery of the extra swimsuit in the dolphins’ tank indicate about another potential issue at FunJungle? What are the repercussions of having untrained individuals working with the dolphins?
7. Marge tells Teddy, “We’re gonna find these criminals before my sister does—and we’re gonna make her look like a fool.” Consider the relationship of Marge with her sister Molly, an FBI investigator. What makes it so tumultuous? Why do you think these two sisters are so antagonistic toward each other?
8. After sharing her observations of Summer’s behavior in the FunJungle Emporium, Marge attempts to blackmail Teddy. What does she hope to accomplish by doing so?
9. When Agent O’Malley states that she believes Teddy to be “a real troublemaker,” J. J. defends him and says, “Anything you’ve heard about Teddy being troublesome is erroneous information.” What does J. J.’s defense of Teddy indicate?
10. Why does Teddy’s mom say that she’d prefer for him not to be involved in the investigation of the disappearance of Li Ping and Doc? Given what’s happened to Teddy in the past as a result of his investigations, do you think she’s right to be worried? Why or why not?
11. Do you think Teddy is lucky that he gets to reside at FunJungle? What are the advantages and disadvantages of getting to live at a zoo/adventure park?
12. Summer tells Teddy, “You’re smarter than the whole FBI, Teddy.” Do you think she’s actually right? Using textual examples from any of the FunJungle books, support your position.

13. Considering the other books in the FunJungle books and the events in *Panda-monium*, describe Summer and Teddy’s investigative partnership. Do you think their romance has had an impact on how they work together? How does Summer’s questioning shape how Teddy considers the clues and evidence before him? Do you believe each of them would be as effective in the investigation without the assistance of the other?

14. As *Panda-monium* closes, Teddy has solved another important mystery. What do you think Teddy Fitzroy’s next adventure will be?

Extension Activities for *Panda-monium*

The following activities contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (RL.4.1, 2, 3) (RL.5.1, 2, 4) (RL.6.1, 2) (W.4–6.4)

1. While trying to determine who is behind the kidnapping of Li Ping, the authorities suspect an animal rights groups like Animal Liberation Front or Nature Freedom Force are involved. Using the Internet and library resources, seek to discover more information about various animal rights groups, being sure to consider:

- What is the group’s primary motivation?
- Who are the people generally involved in the organization?
- What do they hope to accomplish?
- How do they go about bringing change for their cause?
- If illegal activity is conducted, what are the ramifications of this behavior?

Taking what you learned, create a digital tool to share your findings.

2. Students regularly retell their “stories” using a variety of social media tools. Working in groups, select a favorite scene from *Panda-monium* and retell the selected scene using a social media platform of choice (Snapchat, Twitter, or Facebook, for example). Alternatively, set up a “Fauxbook” profile for a specific character from *Panda-monium* and create a number of posts as that selected character.

3. In preparation for Li Ping’s arrival and placement at FunJungle, representatives from China have come to the park to engage in a sanctification ceremony. Using a variety of resources, investigate sanctification ceremonies to learn the following:

- What are they?
- Why are they important to Chinese culture and heritage?
- What are the primary elements found in sanctification ceremonies?
- Who participates in these events?
- What other events warrant such a ceremony?

Upon completion of your research, share your discoveries with others.

4. Through *Panda-Monium* and the books in the FunJungle series, readers learn about the illegal activity of animal trafficking. Using the World Wildlife Fund as a resource, investigate animal trafficking to learn:

- What types of animals are typically trafficked?
- What countries have the highest incidences of animal trafficking?
- What problems does the United States face with this issue?
- Are there any exotic animals located in your area?
- What can be done to reduce the number of incidences of animal trafficking?
- What are the general legal consequences for animal traffickers?

Taking what you've learned, discuss possible solutions and ways that students can actively help with this issue.

5. Pandas and dolphins are beloved across the world, with a great deal of work done for their conservation. Using library and Internet resources, select one of these two animals and learn more about them, making sure to learn about the following:

- Scientific descriptions, families, eating habits, life span, intelligence, etc.
- Where are they found in the wild?
- Why are they commonly so beloved by animal enthusiasts?
- Did you discover any interesting/unusual trivia about the animals?

After completing your research, write a short essay, making sure to include all the information you learned from the above questions.

6. 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, 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, create a visual presentation that illustrates your findings.

7. The FunJungle series references animals from all over the world. Using the novels as inspiration, select one particular animal to research. Pair up with a partner in class, and role-play as news reporters giving a report on your selected animal. To enrich the activity, consider filming your report, and/or use props or costumes for added fun.

8. Throughout the course of the novel, readers are offered great insight on the events of *Panda-monium* from Teddy's point of view. Assume the role of one of the secondary characters from *Panda-monium* 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.)

9. 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.

10. Create a BIOPOEM to demonstrate knowledge of a character in *Panda-monium* by following written prompts in the format below.

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

11. Like us, literary characters have tasks they need to complete. Select a character of your choice from *Panda-monium*. Create a list of the most important tasks at hand for that character with explanations as to why those tasks are so necessary.

12. In small groups, select a favorite scene from *Panda-monium* 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), begin by using the strips to create storyboards for your scene. Select original art, images, and graphics. Alternatively, you could assume the roles of two of the characters with each one's personality and voice and have them interact with one another 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.

This guide was created by Dr. Rose Brock, an assistant professor at Sam Houston State University. Dr. Brock holds a Ph.D. in Library Science, specializing in children's and young adult literature.

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