

A Curriculum Guide to

Ada Lace, on the Case* and *Ada Lace Sees Red

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About the Books

Ada Lace, on the Case

Ada Lace has recently moved to the Bay Area. Even though she has a cast on her leg and stays mostly in her room, she's looking forward to a new school and making new friends. She works on her field notes, keeping track of only the facts. Her exuberant brother, Elliott, helps her pass the time, but Ada misses her best friend from back home—until Nina bursts into Ada's room one day. Before long, the girls are fast friends.

Ada observes her new neighborhood and writes about the neighborhood ecosystem in her field journal. She watches her neighbors come and go, including Mrs. Reed and her fluffy dog, Marguerite. She also observes Mr. Peebles, a mysterious man in coveralls. One day, Ada notices that Mrs. Reed looks sad all the time, and figures out that Marguerite is missing. Ada tells Nina, and they begin to plot to find the missing dog. Has someone taken her?

Ada Lace Sees Red

Ada Lace's dad is also her art teacher at school. No matter how hard she tries, Ada can't make her art projects look as good as her best friend Nina's. Although Mr. Lace tries to separate his roles at school and home, Ada still feels a little angry at her dad's remarks at school. Only her interest in a robotic dog keeps Ada from dwelling on her problems with her dad and her art assignments.

As Ada continues to build her robot named George, she calls on her friend Mr. Peebles to help her. Mr. Peebles encourages Ada to enter the robotic competition. As Ada works on George, she tries to avoid her neighbor, Milton, and the shiny robot he's entering in the competition. How will she balance her work on George with her challenging tasks for art class?

Discussion Questions

The discussion questions below particularly address the following Common Core State Standards: (R.L.2.1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10) (R.L.3.1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10) (R.L.4.1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 10) (S.L.2.1, 2, 6) (S.L.3.1, 2, 4, 6) (S.L.4.1, 2)

Ada Lace, on the Case

Ask the students to give specific examples from the books to support their answers and reasoning.

1. Describe Ada, and discuss what she's like. Describe her characteristics.
2. How does Nina behave, and what kind of personality does she have?
3. What are field notes, and why did Ada keep them?

4. What did Milton do to show that he isn't always a kind and thoughtful person?
5. What kind of a person is Elliott, and how do his actions reveal his personality?
6. Is it acceptable to spy on someone with a camera? Explain why or why not.
7. Is it okay to go into someone's home when the owner isn't there? Why or why not?
8. Why did Ada and Nina first suspect Milton, Jack, and then Mr. Peebles? Should someone be accused of a crime without any initial proof?
9. What characteristics would a spy need to be successful?
10. Why did Nina try to rescue the mouse? Should she have done that? Give your reasoning.
11. Have you ever argued with a friend? What happened when Ada and Nina had their argument, and how did it end?
12. What was Ada surprised to find in Mr. Peeble's apartment, and why?
13. Was Ada right to tell her mother what was going on? Explain why.
14. What is Mr. Peebles like, and how did the girls help him?

Ada Lace Sees Red

1. What would it be like to have your father as a teacher? How does Ada like it?
2. What kind of artist is Ada? What about Nina?
3. What are Ada's thoughts about her art?
4. How did Ada's art affect her feelings about her dad?
5. What is Ada's favorite thing to do, and why?
6. What part does Mr. Peebles play in helping Ada with the robot?
7. How did Ada feel about Nina getting so much praise from Ada's dad?
8. Was it fair for Ada to have her robot do her paintings? Tell why or why not.
9. How does Ada discover she is color-blind, and how does that explain her trouble in art?
10. Why doesn't Ada want to tell her parents about being color-blind?

11. Was it right for Milton to use a kit for his robot?
12. What were Milton's consequences?
13. How did Nina help Ada with her robot? Why did she do this?
14. What did you think about Ada winning the robot competition? How did Ada feel?
15. Ada and Nina are both talented in different ways; Ada likes science, and Nina likes art. What skills or characteristics does each girl have that makes them good at these activities? How do their skills overlap? How do they differ? What do you enjoy doing? How could you go about improving a skill or learning a new talent?

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Questions:

The following questions contained in these sections particularly address the following Next Generation Science Standards: (LS2.A, LS2.C, LS2.D, LS3.A) (ETS1.A, ETS1.B, ETS1.C) (PS2.B, PS3.B, PS4.C)

1. An ecosystem is composed of a physical environment and surrounding living things—like plants and animals—that work together in the area as a unit. What kind of ecosystem was Ada observing? Describe the living and nonliving things in Ada's ecosystem.
2. Ada named her turtles Hydrogen and Oxygen. What are hydrogen and oxygen? Look them up to find out. Why do you think she named the turtles that?
3. Why do scientists keep field journals? Start a field journal, and keep it for three days. Compare your journal with your friends'.
4. Research Charles Darwin. What is he known for, and what is the *Beagle*?
5. What does it mean to be color-blind? Research color-blindness. Which colors did Ada have trouble distinguishing, and how did she learn that was part of her problem?
6. Describe the Gecko Gloves. Why do you think they are named after geckos? Is it safe to use the Gecko Gloves? Should you use them without supervision? Research geckos and read how they hold on using their feet.
7. Some wireless cameras can connect to an app on a phone or tablet through Wi-Fi so you don't have to be near the camera. What could you use a wireless camera for? How would you use it?
8. What kind of robot would you design? Make a list of all the things you would have a robot do. Draw a design of your robot.

9. Gears are simple machines, but they are good engineering tools. Clocks, cars, and toys all use gears. Gears can work together to make things move in different directions, to change forces, to increase or decrease speed, and to make a job easier to do. Design a machine to do a simple job using gears. Learn how gears work:

<https://vimeo.com/30206625>

<http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/videos/physics/gears.html>

10. Use a flashlight to show that a mix of colors makes white. Using red, green, and blue cellophane, cover the ends of three flashlights. Use a double layer of cellophane and a rubber band to hold the cellophane over the light. Shine the colored lights together and then try different combinations. Relate the experiment to Ada's mention of white from the book. Alternately, have children hold prisms up to a window and shine the light this creates onto a white piece of paper (it will come out as a rainbow); use this to teach children that visible light is made up of many different colors, and each is refracted at different angles through a prism.

11. The colors in a rainbow are red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. Using the seven colors and water color or tempera paints, create your own rainbow. Under the rainbow, mix the colors to show what they make, and write a color equation for each color you made. For example, red + yellow = orange.

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

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