

***The Road Not Taken* – Family Discussion Questions**

By Robert Frost

Understanding the Poem

1. **What happens in the poem?**
Can you retell the story in your own words? Where is the speaker, and what choice are they making?
 2. **Why do you think the poet chose a road as a metaphor?**
Can you think of other ways to describe life choices?
 3. **What do you think the two roads represent?**
Are they different types of people, decisions, or paths in life?
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Personal Connection

4. **Have you ever had to choose between two things and weren't sure which one to pick?**
What did you choose — and would you do it differently now?
 5. **Do you think taking the “road less travelled” is always the best choice?**
When might it be better to follow the crowd? When might it not?
 6. **If this poem were set in today's world, what kind of decisions might the speaker be making?**
School subjects? Friendships? Hobbies?
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Thinking About Language and Structure

7. **What mood does the poem create?**
Is it peaceful, sad, proud, confused — or something else?
 8. **The speaker says, “I shall be telling this with a sigh.” Why a sigh?**
Do you think they're happy or regretful about their choice?
 9. **Why do you think the poem is often misunderstood as a celebration of non-conformity?**
Do you think Frost is being serious, or maybe a little ironic?
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He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven – Family Discussion Questions

By W.B. Yeats

*Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light...*

Understanding the Poem

1. **What is the speaker wishing for?**
What would he give if he could? Why do you think he imagines “cloths of heaven”?
 2. **What do you think “cloths of heaven” represent?**
Are they real cloths — or a symbol for something else?
 3. **What is the speaker offering instead of the cloths?**
What does “I have only my dreams” tell us about him?
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Personal Connection

4. **Have you ever wanted to give someone something really special but didn't have it?**
What did you do instead?
 5. **The speaker says, “tread softly because you tread on my dreams.”**
What do you think that means? Have you ever felt that way?
 6. **How would you feel if someone said this poem to you?**
Do you think it's romantic, sad, brave, or something else?
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Thinking About Language and Structure

7. **Why does the poet use words like “embroidered,” “gold,” and “silver”?**
What kind of world is he painting in your mind?
8. **This poem is only 8 lines long.**
Do you think it's easier or harder to express big feelings in a short poem?
9. **There are no full stops until the very end. Why might that be?**
How does it affect the way you read the poem?

Pretty Ugly – Family Discussion Questions

By Abdullah Shoaib

*I'm very ugly
So don't try to convince me that
I'm a very beautiful person...
(But read it in reverse and it changes everything.)*

Understanding the Poem

1. **What did you think of the poem the first time you read it?**
How did it make you feel?
 2. **What happens when you read the poem from the bottom to the top?**
How does the message change?
 3. **Why do you think the poet wrote it this way — with a reverse meaning?**
What effect does that have on the reader?
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Personal Connection

4. **Have you ever had a day where you felt like the top half of the poem?**
What helped you feel better?
 5. **How easy or hard is it to believe the reverse version of the poem — the positive one?**
Why do you think that is?
 6. **What would you say to a friend who felt the way the speaker does in the first half of the poem?**
What words would you want someone to say to you?
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Thinking About Language and Structure

7. **The poet uses simple words — but creates two completely different feelings. How?**
Can you spot the turning point?
8. **How does punctuation or line breaks help control the meaning of the poem?**
Would it feel the same if it was just one paragraph?
9. **Why do you think the poem is called “Pretty Ugly”?**
What does that title mean to you?

***The Veldt* – Family Discussion Questions**

By Ray Bradbury

"George, I wish you'd look at the nursery."

Understanding the Story

1. **What is the Happylife Home, and what does it do for the family?**
Why might some people think that sounds amazing?
 2. **What is the nursery, and how does it work?**
Why is the African veldt so important in the story?
 3. **What clues did you notice that something wasn't quite right in the house?**
When did you start to feel that the story was turning dark?
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Personal Connection

4. **Have you ever used technology to escape from reality (like games, TV, VR)?**
Why do people enjoy doing that?
 5. **Do you think Wendy and Peter were misunderstood, or were they truly dangerous?**
What made them act the way they did?
 6. **What do you think the story is saying about parents giving their children too much freedom — or not enough?**
What's the right balance?
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Thinking About Themes and Techniques

7. **This story was written in the 1950s. How did Bradbury imagine the future?**
What predictions did he get right or wrong?
8. **How does Bradbury build suspense and tension?**
Look at how he uses short sentences, description, or repetition.
9. **Why do you think he chose lions, and not something else, for the children's fantasy world?**
What might they represent?

***The Necklace* – Family Discussion Questions**

By Guy de Maupassant

"She had no clothes, no jewels, nothing. And that was all she cared about."

Understanding the Story

1. **What happens in the story? Can you retell it in your own words?**
Who are the main characters, and what problem do they face?
 2. **Why is the necklace so important to Madame Loisel?**
What does it symbolise for her?
 3. **What's the big twist at the end of the story?**
How did it make you feel when you found out the truth?
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Personal Connection

4. **Have you ever wanted something really badly, like new clothes, gadgets, or something fancy?**
Why do people sometimes think they need those things to be happy?
 5. **Do you think Madame Loisel made a good decision borrowing the necklace?**
What could she have done differently?
 6. **How do you think her life would have turned out if she'd told the truth about losing the necklace?**
Can you think of a time when honesty might have saved trouble?
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Thinking About Themes and Techniques

7. **What does this story say about pride and appearances?**
Why was it so important for Madame Loisel to "look rich"?
8. **Why is this story still relevant today, even though it was written over 100 years ago?**
Can you think of modern examples of people pretending to be something they're not?
9. **What's the author's message or moral of the story?**
Do you agree with it?

***Paranoia* – Family Discussion Questions**

By Shirley Jackson

“Mr. Beresford left the office at five o’clock...”

Understanding the Story

1. **What happens to Mr. Beresford in the story?**
Can you retell the events in your own words?
 2. **Why does Mr. Beresford start to feel anxious on his way home?**
What are the signs that something feels “off”?
 3. **How does the ending twist the reader’s expectations?**
What questions did you have after reading it?
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Personal Connection

4. **Have you ever felt nervous or suspicious about something that turned out to be nothing?**
What helped you calm down?
 5. **Why do you think people sometimes feel like they're being watched or followed, even when they're not?**
Have you ever had that feeling?
 6. **Do you think the story is more about something real happening — or something happening in Mr. Beresford’s mind?**
What makes you say that?
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Thinking About Themes and Techniques

7. **What does the title “Paranoia” mean, and how does it shape your reading of the story?**
Would the story feel different with a different title?
8. **Shirley Jackson doesn’t tell us everything — why do you think she leaves out some details?**
How does this affect the suspense?
9. **What clues are there that Mr. Beresford may be unreliable as a narrator?**
What makes us unsure about what's real?

***Gen Alpha & Italian Brain Rot* – Family Discussion Questions**

Understanding the Trend

1. **What does “Italian brain rot” refer to in the article?**
 2. **Can you name a few of the characters mentioned? What makes them funny or weird?**
 3. **Why do you think this kind of meme is called “brain rot”?**
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Personal Connection

4. **Have any of you seen or shared memes that made no sense but were fun anyway? How did they make you feel?**
 5. **Why do you think Gen Alpha students are so obsessed with these AI-made creatures in school?**
 6. **Do you think creating with AI is helping or hurting kids’ imagination?**
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Thinking About Culture & Technology

7. **How does this trend compare to older memes like “skibidi toilet”?**
8. **What does the spread of AI-generated memes say about today's internet?**
9. **Is there anything tricky or potentially worrying about these memes?**
Discuss issues around stereotypes (“fake Italian”), screen-time effects, or attention span. Some adults even ban them in schools [Parents](#).

Wimbledon: Anyone for Tennis?

History & Tradition

1. **What surprised you most about the first ever Wimbledon tournament in 1877?**
(Hint: Think about who was allowed to play, what they wore, and who provided the equipment!)
 2. **Why do you think it took until 1884 for women to be included in the tournament?**
How have ideas about gender in sport changed since then?
 3. **What does the article suggest about how tennis has changed over time?**
Do you think it's good that Wimbledon has kept some traditions the same?
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Understanding the Tournament

4. **Wimbledon is a knockout competition. Can you explain how that works?**
How does it compare to other competitions you know?
 5. **What makes Wimbledon different from the other tennis Grand Slams (US Open, French Open, Australian Open)?**
Why might playing on grass be more difficult?
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Cool Facts & Record Breakers

6. **Which fact in the article did you find most impressive?**
(Examples: the fastest serve, the longest match, the temperature-controlled balls...)
 7. **Would you enjoy watching or playing in a match that lasted 11 hours? Why or why not?**
What does that say about the players' stamina?
 8. **What's the purpose of all the detailed measurements (like grass height and ball temperature)?**
How do these small changes affect the fairness or challenge of a game?
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GB British Success & Sporting Legacy

9. **Which British players have made an impact at Wimbledon?**
Why do you think Andy Murray's win was such a big moment for the UK?
10. **Do you know any other sports where Britain has struggled or triumphed recently?**
How important do you think national success is in sport?

And Then There Were None – Family Discussion Guide

By Agatha Christie

“Ten little soldier boys went out to dine; One choked his little self and then there were nine...”

Understanding the Plot

1. **Can you retell the main idea of the story in your own words?**
What happens when ten strangers arrive at Soldier Island?
 2. **What is the purpose of the poem “Ten Little Soldier Boys” in the story?**
How does it create suspense?
 3. **How does Christie build tension and suspicion as the characters start to disappear one by one?**
What clues are given — or not given?
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Character Focus

4. **Which of the ten characters stood out to you the most? Why?**
Were there any you felt sorry for?
 5. **Did you trust any of the characters early on?**
How did your feelings change as the story went on?
 6. **Do you think each character deserved their fate?**
What is the story saying about guilt and justice?
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Themes to Explore

7. **How does the story explore the idea of justice?**
Is the killer a villain or someone delivering punishment?
 8. **What does the novel say about how people behave when they’re afraid?**
Can you think of other stories (books, films) that show people turning on each other?
 9. **There’s no official detective in the story — how does that change the experience for the reader?**
Were you trying to solve the mystery as you read?
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Lord of the Flies – Family Discussion Guide

By William Golding

"Maybe there is a beast... maybe it's only us."

Golding's novel tells the story of a group of boys stranded on a deserted island — and how their attempt to govern themselves unravels into chaos. It's a great way to discuss human nature, leadership, rules, and what makes society work.

Understanding the Story

1. **What happens in the story?**
Can you summarise the plot in your own words — who are the main characters and what changes?
 2. **Why is it important that the characters are children?**
How might the story have been different with adults?
 3. **What does the conch shell represent?**
What happens to it and what does that tell us about the group?
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Character Focus

4. **Ralph and Jack both try to be leaders — what kind of leader is each of them?**
Who would you follow and why?
 5. **Why is Piggy such an important character, even though the others treat him badly?**
What does he represent?
 6. **How does Simon's character seem different from the others?**
What might the “Lord of the Flies” scene symbolise?
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Themes to Explore

7. **Do you think Golding is saying that humans are naturally violent, or does something else cause the boys to act the way they do?**
Do you agree?
8. **The boys create rules, then break them. Why are rules important in a society?**
What happens when rules are ignored?
9. **The “beast” is a major part of the boys' fear. What do you think it really represents?**
Is there a “beast” in real life that people fear in the same way?

***A Little Princess* – Family Discussion Guide**

By Frances Hodgson Burnett

“Whatever comes,” she said, “cannot alter one thing. If I am a princess in rags and tatters, I can be a princess inside.”

This timeless story follows Sara Crewe, a wealthy girl suddenly thrown into poverty, and how she uses kindness, imagination, and dignity to face cruelty. It’s a fantastic read to encourage empathy, character analysis, and moral reflection.

Understanding the Story

1. **Can you describe the main plot in your own words?**
What happens to Sara from the beginning to the end?
 2. **What makes Sara different from the other girls at the school?**
How does her behaviour change when her situation changes?
 3. **What are some examples of Sara using her imagination to cope with hard times?**
Why do you think imagination is so important in this story?
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Character Focus

4. **Sara is described as kind and polite, even when others are not. What do you think gives her this inner strength?**
Would you find it hard to stay kind if treated like she was?
 5. **How does Miss Minchin treat Sara? Why?**
Does her character change by the end of the story?
 6. **Are there characters who surprise you with their kindness (or their cruelty)?**
How does the author help us feel differently about certain characters?
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Themes to Explore

7. **What does it mean to be a “princess” in this story?**
Is it about money and clothes, or something else?
8. **The novel deals with wealth and poverty. How do the characters behave differently depending on their status?**
What does this say about class and compassion?
9. **Why is friendship so important in the story?**
Who are Sara’s true friends — and what do they have in common?

***Toffee* – Family Discussion Guide**

By Sarah Crossan

"I am not who I say I am. And Marla isn't who she thinks she is."

This powerful novel-in-verse follows **Allison**, a teenager who runs away from home and ends up hiding out in the house of **Marla**, an elderly woman with dementia who mistakes her for someone named "Toffee." Together, they form an unexpected and moving bond that explores themes of identity, memory, abuse, and healing.

Understanding the Story

1. **Can you summarise the story of *Toffee* in your own words?**
What do you think are the most important moments?
 2. **Why do you think the author chose to write the novel in free verse rather than regular prose?**
How does that change the way you read or feel the story?
 3. **Why is the title "Toffee" important?**
What does it mean to Allison, and why does she keep the name?
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Character Focus

4. **How does Allison change from the beginning to the end of the novel?**
What helps her change — and what holds her back?
 5. **What kind of person is Marla?**
What do you think she sees in Allison, and how does their friendship help her?
 6. **What did you think of Allison's dad?**
How does the novel show emotional or verbal abuse in a realistic way?
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Themes to Explore

7. **What does the novel say about identity — who we are and who others think we are?**
How does Allison struggle with this?
8. **The novel explores both memory and forgetting. How are those things important in the story?**
How do Marla's memories (and confusion) affect Allison?
9. **Toffee shows the power of human connection. How do small acts of kindness shape the story?**
Can strangers become family?

Long Way Down – Family Discussion Guide

By Jason Reynolds

“ANOTHER THING ABOUT THE RULES

They weren't meant to be broken.

They were meant for the broken

to follow.”

In just **60 seconds**, a young boy, **Will**, rides the elevator down from his apartment, on a mission to avenge his brother's murder. Along the way, he's visited by people from his past — all of them victims of gun violence. Each floor, each ghost, and each memory challenges Will to rethink **“The Rules”** he's grown up with: **don't cry, don't snitch, get revenge.**

Understanding the Story

1. **What is the plot of *Long Way Down*?**
Can you explain what happens during the elevator ride?
 2. **Why is the story told in verse rather than prose?**
How does the style affect how you feel the story?
 3. **The story takes place in 60 seconds. Why do you think the author chose this time frame?**
Does it make the story more intense?
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Character Focus

4. **Who is Will? What do we learn about him from the way he speaks and thinks?**
Do you think he's really ready to pull the trigger?
 5. **What do the “ghosts” represent in the story?**
Which one had the biggest impact on Will — and why?
 6. **Do you think Shawn (Will's brother) would have wanted revenge?**
Why or why not?
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Themes to Explore

7. **What are “The Rules” Will lives by?**
How do these rules keep people trapped in cycles of violence?
8. **The novel talks a lot about grief and silence. Why is it hard for Will to express how he feels?**
How do different characters deal with pain?
9. **How does the story challenge the idea of revenge?**
What message is the author trying to send to young readers?