

Individual Learning Packet

**Teaching Unit**

**Around the World in Eighty Days**

by Jules Verne

written by Lauren Smiley

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# Around the World in Eighty Days

## Objectives

All page references come from the Dover Thrift edition of *Around the World in Eighty Days*, copyright 2000.

*By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:*

1. identify the literary genres to which the novel belongs.
2. discuss Verne's importance as the founder of science fiction.
3. relate the novel to its historical context.
4. analyze Verne's beliefs about science and technology.
5. infer the French writer's feelings and conclusions about different nationalities and colonialism.
6. identify and discuss the type of narrator Verne employs.
7. compare and contrast Fogg and Passepartout and discuss Verne's use of the literary device foil.
8. discuss the value of the Fix subplot and Aouda's role in the novel.
9. characterize the descriptive style of the novel and examine this style's importance to the plot.
10. identify some possible themes of the novel.
11. cite examples from the book of the following literary devices: comic relief, foreshadowing, irony, metaphor, and simile.
12. define vocabulary words from the novel.

# Around the World in Eighty Days

## Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. *Around the World in Eighty Days* was published as a newspaper serial in 1872. How do you think this type of publication affected the narrative?
2. Do you take much sense of place from the journey around the world? What impression do the statistical descriptions leave upon the reader?
3. What type of narrator does Verne employ? Briefly characterize the narrator.
4. What understanding does *Around the World in Eighty Days* give the reader of Verne's views on colonialism and the British Empire? Cite supporting details.
5. As the note to this novel reveals, Verne, a Frenchman, has been called the "founder of science fiction." Science fiction has been termed an American genre. Discuss these two labels in light of Verne's treatment of Americans in *Around the World in Eighty Days*.
6. Do you think names of characters bear any significance in this novel? Explain.
7. How do you think the time period when Verne wrote influenced his feelings on science and progress? Support with historical evidence and details from the novel.
8. Explain how Verne employs the literary device of the foil in *Around the World in Eighty Days*.
9. Discuss Verne's characterizations of different nationalities in the novel, particularly the French, the English, and Americans.
10. Why do you think Verne, a Frenchman, makes his protagonist an Englishman?
11. In his 1998 book *The Dreams Our Stuff Is Made Of: How Science Fiction Conquered the World*, Thomas M. Disch writes, "Reading a Verne novel can be like a visit to a provincial natural history museum, with cases and cases of specimens. In ten minutes, you want to head for the cafeteria." Do you agree or disagree? Discuss.
12. An author's tone expresses his feelings about his subject matter. Discuss Verne's tone in *Around the World in Eighty Days*.
13. While it is clear that this novel belongs in the adventure story genre, it may not be as clear to the modern reader what fantastic elements place the book in the science fiction genre, as well. Verne sets the novel in the year the book was published. What about the adventure must have struck his contemporaries as fantastic? How does Verne make the scenario seem believable?

# Around the World in Eighty Days

## Chapter I

### Vocabulary

**avaricious** – greedy, with a desire to hoard wealth  
**conjectures** – conclusions drawn from guesswork  
**grenadier** – soldier armed with grenades  
**pernicious** – destructive  
**porphyry** – type of rock containing large embedded crystals  
**sufficed** – met a need  
**taciturn** – untalkative  
**whist** – type of card game

1. What is the setting when the book opens, and what year is it?

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2. Characterize Phileas Fogg.

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3. Why does Passepartout replace James Forster as Phileas Fogg's servant?

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4. What explanation does Passepartout give for his surname? What might an English equivalent of "Jean Passepartout" be?

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## Chapter VI

### Vocabulary

**abridged** – shortened

**burden** – amount of cargo a ship can carry

**consul** – official appointed by a government to live in a foreign country and represent its citizens

**dogmatically** – in an arrogantly opinionated manner

**fellahs** – peasants in Arab countries

**importunate** – stubbornly persistent

**jetty** – structure extended into a body of water

**minarets** – tall, slender towers of a mosque

**promenading** – strolling

**quay** – wharf

**roadstead** – place less enclosed than a harbor where ships may anchor

**sojourning** – staying for a time there

**windfalls** – sudden, unexpected pieces of good fortune

1. Which two prominent figures await the arrival of the steamer *Mongolia*?

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2. Describe Detective Fix.

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3. What is Fix's attitude toward the bank robbery? Why does he await the arrival of the steamer so keenly?

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4. Who asks Fix for the British consulate, and what is Fix's response?

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4. What brings the elephant to a sudden halt?

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5. Sir Francis and the Parsee understand the meaning of the interruption. Give the term and explain its significance.

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6. What is Fogg's surprising proposal at the end of the chapter? How does Cromarty react?

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## Chapter XXVI

### Vocabulary

**cowcatcher** – frame on the front of a locomotive for clearing the track  
**ruminating** – chewing cud

1. What is the distance between San Francisco and New York on the Transcontinental Railroad? How has the building of the railroad affected the time it takes to travel across the United States?

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2. What comforts do the travelers find on the train?

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3. What obstacle stops the train for three hours?

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