

Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

Holes

by Louis Sachar

Copyright © 2002 by Prestwick House, Inc., P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938.
1-800-932-4593. www.prestwickhouse.com Permission to copy this unit for
classroom use is extended to purchaser for his or her personal use. *This material,
in whole or part, may not be copied for resale.*

ISBN: 978-1-60389-567-5

Item No. 201742

PART ONE

YOU ARE ENTERING CAMP GREENLAKE

Chapter 1

1. Assume you are sentenced to three months at Camp Green Lake. You know nothing about the camp. Fortunately, you have access to a computer and are able to find a chat room discussing life at Camp Green Lake. Based on the information in Chapter 1, what advice might the boys in the chat room give you about how to survive at Camp Green Lake?

Chapter 2

2. The judge gives Stanley a choice. He can go to jail or he can go to Camp Green Lake. Stanley selects Camp Green Lake because as a poor boy, he has never been to camp. What false expectations do you think Stanley might have about this camp?

Chapter 3

3. Stanley is often teased by the other students because he is overweight. Mrs. Bell embarrasses Stanley in class when she makes Stanley weigh himself in front of the class to help her to teach the class about ratios. Write about a time an insensitive teacher or other person in authority caused you pain and embarrassment.

Response Journal

4. Whenever something goes wrong in Stanley's life, he blames his great-great-grandfather. In the story, Stanley does not try to explain the family curse to the judge at his trial. Write a dialogue between Stanley and the judge. In the dialogue, Stanley should try to defend himself by convincing the judge that he is cursed. At this point in the story, the reader does not understand the exact nature of Stanley's "crime" but does know that Stanley is innocent but has been convicted anyway. The dialogue might begin as follows:

Judge: Do you have anything to say for yourself before I pass sentence?

Stanley: This is all the fault of my...

5. Stanley remembers the words to a song his father likes to sing. The song begins with the words "If only, if only." Stanley believes that "if only" his great-grandfather had not been robbed of his fortune by Kate Barlow, then he would be living in a mansion. Write about an event in your life or in your family history that would have made your life different today "if only" that one event had turned out differently.

Chapter 4

6. As Stanley, write a diary entry describing your first few minutes at Camp Green Lake. What surprised you about the detention camp?
7. Write a short one- or two- stanza poem titled "This Isn't a Girl Scout Camp." It might begin as follows:

This Isn't a Girls Scout Camp

No point in running

Nowhere to go

I dig a hole a day

Holes

8. Mr. Sir fails to show Stanley any kindness. For example, he does not give him a soda, but he says that he (Mr. Sir) would not waste a bullet on him (Stanley). Why do you suppose he behaves in this way?

Chapter 5

9. Armpit throws Stanley to the ground when Stanley refers to him as Theodore instead of using his nickname. Write a letter to Stanley explaining to him why Armpit prefers his nickname.

Chapter 6

10. Clyde Livingston is Stanley's hero. The worst part of the trial for Stanley is when Clyde says he cannot "imagine what kind of horrible person would steal from homeless children." Write about a famous person that you admire. Under what circumstances would you *not* like to meet this person?
11. The shoes seem to fall out of the sky and hit Stanley on the head. He thinks the incident is a sign. "Stanley had felt like he was holding destiny's shoes." He has a feeling or a moment of intuition that there is something special about the shoes. Have you ever experienced a similar feeling of intuition or destiny about an event in your life? Does your feeling turn out to be a good predictor of the future?
12. Derrick Dunne is smaller than Stanley, but he is still able to bully Stanley at school. Write a letter to Stanley discussing school bullies. Either give Stanley some advice on how to handle bullies like Derrick, or explain how it feels to be bullied.

Chapter 7

13. Stanley is forced to dig the hole to “build character.” After reading the description of Stanley’s struggle digging his first hole, write a list of character traits Stanley may be developing as he digs.
14. At first, Stanley tries to pretend that his piles of dirt are too close to the hole because he does not want to move them. Write about a time in your life when you knew you were making a mistake but chose to ignore the mistake for as long as possible.
15. Elya loves Myra, so he is confident that she also favors him. How do you think he feels when he discovers that Madame Zeroni is correct and that Myra is an empty-headed, spoiled girl?
16. Write a letter from Elya to Madame Zeroni telling her how he feels about breaking his promise to her.
17. Elya’s wife, Sarah, names their son Stanley because he notices that Stanley and Yelnats are palindromes. See if you can write a palindrome. Look up the word on the Internet or in an encyclopedia and make a list of some palindromes.
18. Write a conversation between two students discussing the reasons(s) the boys all spit in their completed holes. The conversation might begin as follows:

Student One: I think the boys spit to rebel.

Student Two: Rebel against who or what? I think Stanley...

Chapters 8 and 9

19. It is clear to the reader that X-Ray is the leader of the boys because Stanley knows better than to argue with anything X-Ray says. X-Ray also insists on using the shortest shovel to dig his hole, and X-Ray gives Stanley the nickname “Caveman.” Most groups have leaders; even groups of friends have one person who seems to be the leader. Describe the leader of the group of friends you have and the privileges that person enjoys as the leader. Include in your description of the leader his or her physical description and the character traits you notice about this person.
20. Irony is an expression or situation in a story in which the intended meaning of the words is the direct opposite of what is really meant. One example might be nicknaming an obese man Slim. A different example of irony might be if a smoke alarm does not work at the first station. Write a note to a classmate who is taking a test on *Holes*, helping your friend to understand why the name Camp Green Lake and the name of the lounge, the Wreck Room, are examples of irony.
21. Stanley begins a letter to his mother in this chapter but stops in mid-sentence because he believes that Zero is reading over his shoulder. Complete this letter for Stanley. What other lies might he write in the letter? What truthful information about his life at Camp Green Lake might he be comfortable sharing with his mother?