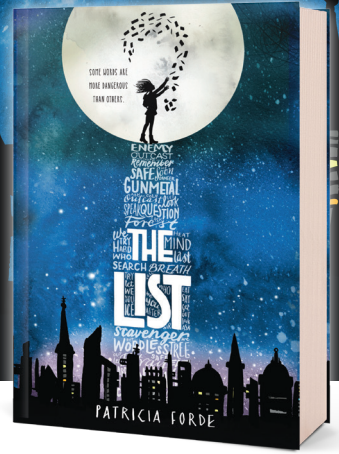


AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE FOR THE LIST

WRITTEN BY PATRICIA FORDE



A Common Core State Standards–Aligned Activity Guide for Grades 6, 7, and 8

Note: The activities in this guide align with Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts for Grades 6, 7, and 8, but standards for other grades may also apply.

Prepared by We Love Children's Books

About the Book

In the city of Ark, speech is constrained to five hundred sanctioned words. Speak outside the approved lexicon and face banishment. The exceptions are the Wordsmith and his apprentice Letta, the keepers and archivists of all language in their post-apocalyptic, neo-medieval world.

On the death of her master, Letta is suddenly promoted to Wordsmith, charged with collecting and saving words. But when she uncovers a sinister plan to suppress language and rob Ark's citizens of their power of speech, she realizes that it's up to her to save not only words, but culture itself.

About the Author

Patricia Forde lives in Galway, in the west of Ireland. She has published five books for children and written for television. In another life, she was a primary school teacher and the artistic director of Galway Arts Festival. Visit Patricia at patriciaforde.com.

Talk About the Book: Reading Comprehension and Conversation Starters

Come together as a class to discuss the following questions. Be sure students support their responses with evidence from the text:

Why is water rationed in Ark? How did the citizens of Ark get water? How important is water to the citizens of Ark? What is the significance of water in this story?

What is Letta's relationship to Benjamin?

Who are the gavvers, and what is their job in Ark?

Why are scientists banned from Ark?

Describe Benjamin's rescue by Letta and her friends. Who helped Benjamin before they arrived? Where do they all take refuge?

Why did John Noa not include words like "hope" and "dream" on The List?

How is Letta affected by the art and music she experiences? How does she explain the official attitude in Ark toward the arts?

Who is Finn, and what role does he play in the story?

Who are the Deer sisters? What role does each of them play in Letta's life?



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What Will Happen?

After students have read the first three chapters, come together as a class. What do students think will happen to Letta, Marlo, and the world they live in as the story develops? What clues in the text make them think that way? Write down these predictions and review them when the class has finished the book. How close did students come to predicting the plot correctly?

RL 6.1, 6.3, 7.1, 7.3, 8.1, 8.3

SL 6.1, 7.1, 8.1

Setting the Scene

In *The List*, the community of Ark and the way its people, institutions, and rules interact are communicated very naturally. As the reader meets and learns about different characters, the environment they live in comes to life. For example, a discussion of what Werber is like provides details about how Ark regulates population size. Break students into small groups to share favorite passages where the author gives the reader details about the community that are integrated into the action of the story. Have the class come together to share their discussions. How do these passages fit into the overall story and contribute to the development of the themes, setting, and plot? What effect does this method of conveying information have on the reader and the story?

RL 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3

SL 6.1, 7.1, 8.1

Why List?

Jonathan Noa makes the residents of Ark use a special language called "List." Discuss as a class the following questions: What is List? Why does he make people use it? How is this enforced? How do people react? What exceptions are made to using List? What are the pros and cons of List as explained in the story? Why does John Noa want to shorten the List? What is his ultimate goal?

RL 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, 7.2, 8.1, 8.2

SL 6.1, 7.1, 8.1

Page 3 copy

How Many Words Do You Really Use?

Using the Internet, have students research typical vocabulary size and word usage. What is the size of the vocabulary of a typical student their age? How does that compare to the vocabulary of an adult and of a younger child? How many different words do people really use in a day? How many words were on the List? How does this compare? Come together as a class and discuss these findings.

W 6.7, 7.7, 8.7

SL 6.1, 7.1, 8.1

Big Ideas and Major Themes

Patricia Forde weaves many powerful themes into her book, from environmental concerns to the question of personal freedom versus making compromises to be part of society. She also touches on ideas such as loyalty, the importance of words, and the power of communication. As a class, discuss the book and identify the central ideas of the text. Then have students each select a theme as the topic for an essay. They should analyze its development over the course of the book and how it is conveyed to the reader. Break students into pairs and have them revise their work based on peer feedback before typing up a final version on the computer.

RL 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, 7.2, 8.1, 8.2

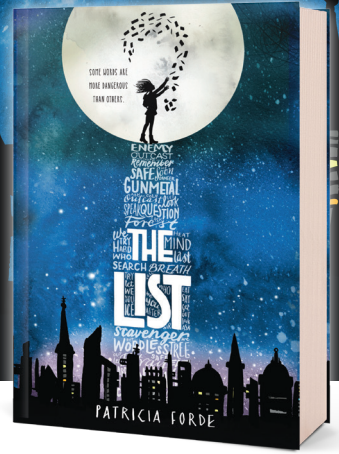
W 6.2, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.10, 7.2, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.10, 8.2, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.10

SL 6.1, 7.1, 8.1



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A Different Point of View

This book is full of well-rounded characters with their own viewpoints and motivations. Most of the story is told from Letta's point of view, with some interludes that show John Noa's thoughts. Have students select a scene from the book and tell it from the point of view of one of the other participants. Break students into pairs to have them share their work and revise it based on peer feedback. As a class, arrange the stories in chronological order and publish a collection that shares this "new point of view" version of *The List*. Have volunteers read their stories aloud to the class in order. What techniques did students find were most effective in conveying information about the character and their point of view?

RL 6.6, 7.6, 8.6

W 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.10, 7.3, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.10, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.10

Leadership: From Hero to Villain

John Noa is a complex character and drives much of the action of the story. He is the one who had the vision and foresight to create a community that could survive the disaster—and the one who kept it flourishing when that disaster struck. However, he is also depicted as a tyrant, a harsh man, and by the end of the book, he has become a villain. As a class, discuss the different aspects of his character. What things did he do that were good? What things were bad? What was his motivation? Does the author have a point of view about his actions? What do students think she is trying to say about his leadership, the demands he makes of the citizens of Ark, and his plans for humanity?

RL 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3

SL 6.1, 7.1, 8.1

Letta: From Beginning to End

As the story progresses, Letta learns more about what is going on with the leaders of Ark and how her community is really run. As a class, discuss how the story is constructed. What events drive the plot forward? How are flashbacks employed to tell the story? How does Letta react to what happens? How does what she learns alter the way she views Ark and her life? Is she the same person at the end of the book as she was at the beginning?

RL 6.1, 6.3, 6.6, 7.1, 7.3, 7.6, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3

SL 6.1, 7.1, 8.1

What Does a Desecrator Do?

As a class, review the two main actions we see the Desecrators take—the music performance in the field and the display of the painting by Hugo. Have students cite specifics from the text to illustrate how the residents of Ark respond to these events. What do students think the Desecrators are trying to achieve? Why are they supposed to be evil? What does the word *Desecrator* mean? What do they call themselves? How do students think the Desecrators feel about art? How do self-expression, art, feelings, and freedom all interact according to Marlo and the other Creators? Compare and contrast the way they view themselves with how they are viewed by the leaders of Ark.

RL 6.1, 6.3, 6.5, 7.1, 7.3, 7.6, 8.1, 8.3

SL 6.1, 7.1



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Research Project: Topics to Explore

The List draws on science and history to create a compelling story of what shape a society might take after an environmental disaster destroys our civilization. Have students select one of the following topics, or create their own, for a research project. They should introduce their thesis, discuss the topic, and include a comparison with how this topic is integrated into *The List*.

Suggested topics include:

- **Environmental Problems:** Research the current views on climate change. What do scientists predict will happen? How are people, governments, and industries reacting? How has this changed since the idea of climate change first entered public awareness? Does the scenario described in the book seem possible?
- **Cultural Control:** Totalitarian governments, particularly revolutionary ones, often try to control the thoughts and self-expression of their citizens. Research how a government made efforts to regulate and control the culture, art, and intellectual life of its population. For example, the Cultural Revolution in 1960s China or the Taliban in Afghanistan. How were the arts affected, and how were intellectuals and scientists treated? How is this similar to John Noa's approach to his community of Ark?
- **Animal Communication:** John Noa plans to remove the power to communicate from people in order to put humanity on par with animals. However, scientists have shown that animals do communicate with one another. Research animal communication. If Noa's plan succeeds, will humans become less capable of survival than other animals?

When students have completed their research papers, have them type them into the computer and publish their final versions. Group students with similar research topics together to discuss their insights and create a presentation that explains their analysis to the class. How do these papers and their insights improve students' understanding of *The List*?

RL 6.1, 6.2, 6.9, 7.1, 7.2, 7.9, 8.1, 8.2

W 6.2, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8, 6.10, 7.2, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8, 7.10, 8.2, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7, 8.10

SL 6.1, 6.4, 6.5, 7.1, 7.4, 7.5, 8.1, 8.4, 8.5

Internet Resources

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's website has comprehensive information about global warming/climate change: <https://www.epa.gov/climatechange>

Encyclopedia Britannica explains the characteristics of a totalitarian government:
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/totalitarianism>

Learn all about animal communication by reading about it on New Hampshire Public Television's NatureWorks website: <http://www.nhptv.org/natureworks/nwep3.htm>

Scroll down Lingholic's blog post to "How many words does a native speaker use in daily life?" for interesting information about vocabulary size:
<http://www.lingholic.com/how-many-words-do-i-need-to-know-the-955-rule-in-language-learning-part-2/>



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