

# 6th GRADE PROJECT-BASED

Language arts in sixth grade includes seven award-winning, classic literature books, each complete with a comprehensive teaching curriculum that includes not just comprehension questions but provides substantial critical-thinking opportunities. The literature program also includes answer books for the comprehension questions and a grammar and writing workbook. Ancient history is studied concurrently through literature, workbook activities and a wide variety of options for independent research detailed in the curriculum manual. For math, parents choose from the very comprehensive Saxon and the Spectrum series that is clear, concise and covers all the basics. The math curriculum also includes a problem-solving, hands-on component. Science concentrates on the study of earth and space with both a text/workbook, opportunity to make Internet connections as well as independent research and report preparation.

## LANGUAGE ARTS SKILLS BOOKS INCLUDE

*Grammar and Writing Skills*

## SOCIAL STUDIES TEXTS/WORKBOOKS

*World Geography*

Research/hands-on projects  
(included in curriculum manual)

## LITERATURE & SOCIAL STUDIES

*The Cay*

*The Golden Goblet*

*Homesick*

*Johnny Tremain*

*Maroo of the Winter Caves*

*Summer of the Swans*

*Witch of Blackbird Pond*

*The Literature Comprehension Answer Book*

## MATH & SCIENCE

*Spectrum Math, Grade 6*

Or *Saxon Math 76*

*Problem of the Week Grades 5-6*

*Earth and Space* (with Internet connections)

*Earth and Space Workbook*



# The Cay

The Cay by Theodore Taylor is a wonderful adventure story that uses its protagonist to teach the reader a few very important life lessons. Phillip is shipwrecked on a deserted island, with no one to care for him and his injuries but Timothy, a black-skinned slave towards whom he feels contempt. Through their struggle to return to civilization, Phillip learns that people should be judged by the size of their hearts as opposed to the color of their skin.

## BEFORE READING

Briefly review the sequence of events leading up to World War II in Europe. Which countries were involved? What was life like then? Did children go to school? Who was the enemy? Which countries had banded together and which were standing alone?

Scan a map of the islands off the coast of Venezuela. Who owns these islands? How were they involved in the Second World War? When were they originally settled? Draw a map of the group, label each with its correct name, and become familiar with their position in the Caribbean.

Discuss the topic of racism. What is it? What does it mean to be a racist? Ask your student how he or she thinks racism started. Does your student think it still exists today? What are some forms racism can take today?

Have your child complete the following activities or answer these questions after reading the appropriate chapters.

## WHILE READING

It will be very helpful to keep a map close at hand. Chart the direction that the ships headed and see if the island where the shipwreck occurred in the book can be located.

### CHAPTER 1

Use the information here to try to get a feeling for what type of characters these are. What type of person is Phillip? How is his relationship with his parents? His friends? What are his important qualities, both good and bad? Do you think he does well in school?

### CHAPTER 2

What was Phillip's attitude toward the war at the beginning of the chapter? How does this change after the boat he had been standing on was sunk? Why do Phillip and his mother have to leave the Dutch West Indies? Where are they going?

# 6th GRADE PROJECT-BASED

## CHAPTER 3

What are Phillip's first impressions of Timothy? Use the descriptions that Phillip gives in the book to try to draw what Timothy looks like.

Even though he is sick, Phillip treats Timothy very badly at first. What is the difference in their attitudes? Why do you think this is? Where does Phillip get his prejudice toward dark-skinned people?

## CHAPTER 4

How does Phillip feel when he realizes his predicament? Without reading any further, write on paper what you think is going to happen to Phillip and Timothy. Be specific.

## CHAPTER 5

What are some clues that Phillip is beginning to trust Timothy in this chapter? Why do you think Timothy is seeing Stew Cat as bad luck?

## CHAPTER 6

If you are enjoying this book, you might like to find the book *Kon-Tiki* by Thor Heyerdahl in the library and read it too. It is a much more challenging book, but there are some parallels. How do the two stories parallel each other?

Discuss why you think Timothy wanted to be off the raft so badly and onto an uninhabited island that almost certainly had no fresh water?

When was the last time you were so excited that you did something foolish, as Phillip did by falling overboard? Write a story about it.

## CHAPTER 7

Timothy believes the cay on which they have landed is near 15 degrees north latitude and 80 degrees west longitude. Check that area on the map. What islands can you find?

If you were jumping off the raft onto the island for the first time, what are the first three things you would do? Do you agree or disagree with what Timothy did? Why?

What caused Timothy to be "honest while being dishonest," as Phillip says? Would you trust him? Why or why not?

## CHAPTER 8

Foreshadowing is a technique that authors use to give the reader a clue as to what might happen later in the story. What example of foreshadowing does Theodore Taylor provide us in this chapter?

Why did Timothy lie about his age to Phillip? Why does Phillip feel so superior to Timothy when he finds out his secret, even when he still must rely on him so much?

## CHAPTER 9

What do you think the change is that Phillip refers to at the end of the chapter? What incident do you think caused the change?

What would you have done if you were Phillip and totally blind and a man you didn't like or trust asked you to start working?

## CHAPTER 10

How does Timothy explain the differences in color between the two? What analogy does he use to really make his point? Why do you think Phillip wanted his mother and father to see him with Timothy in the hut?

How does Timothy coerce Phillip into climbing the tree for coconuts?

## CHAPTER 11

This chapter gives some excellent descriptions of the cay, as Phillip becomes more comfortable with its size and features. As Phillip must do, close your eyes and try to see the things he describes. Then, draw what you see in your mind. Avoid looking at or thinking of other pictures of islands—try to only draw what you see in your mind based on Phillip's descriptions.

## CHAPTER 12

Check out books in the library on malaria. What systems in the body does this disease affect? What are the symptoms? How is it acquired? Is it fatal? How is it cured? When was a cure found? How can it be prevented?

## CHAPTER 13

Choose one of the following sea animals mentioned in this chapter and find out more information about it: langosta, sea urchin, mussel. What other animal life is present on Phillip and Timothy's island?

The end of the chapter marks a turning point for Phillip. How does the question that he asks at the end of the chapter illustrate that he is a much different person from when the book started?

## CHAPTER 14

List the ways that Timothy has taken care of Phillip. Do they become more obvious now that a storm is coming? Do you think Timothy knew that they were in grave danger the second they landed on the island? Why or why not?

## CHAPTER 15

This chapter is an exciting and descriptive one. How does the author make the storm seem so real? What are some of the words he uses that make the storm so vivid in our imaginations?

Does the end of the chapter surprise you? How has the author prepared you for this news all along?

## CHAPTER 16

Explain Phillip's rationale when he says, "I also think that had I been able to see, I might not have been able to accept it all. But strangely, the darkness separated me from everything. It was as if my blindness were protecting me from fear." What do you think he means? Would you feel the same way?

## CHAPTERS 17 AND 18

Phillip goes through moments of jubilation and moments of despair in these two chapters. Imagine that you are a teacher and you must give Phillip a grade on how well he has survived since Timothy's death. What grade would you give him? Write down at least five explanations on a piece of paper that support your opinion.

## CHAPTER 19

How do you feel about how the story ends? Was it what you imagined? Did you think Phillip would get his sight back? What is Phillip planning to do once he gets older? Why do you think Henrik seems young to Phillip now?

Find the islands that Phillip found on a map of the world. Can you find Phillip and Timothy's cay? How many islands are in that area? Why do you think it is called Devil's Mouth?

## AFTER READING

If you have read it, compare Phillip's adventure to Meg's in *A Wrinkle in Time*. How do they compare? How are they different? How do you think Phillip would have reacted if he had tessered and gone through time like Meg did? How do you think Meg would have handled being stranded on a deserted island for months?

## WRITING ACTIVITY

Write a short sequel to the story, in which Phillip actually goes back to the cay to visit Timothy's grave. Along the way, he runs into another storm and is shipwrecked again. How does he survive? What does he do differently? How does he use what he learned the first time to survive? How does he finally get off the island. . .or does he?

## DRAMA ACTIVITY

*The Cay* is a relatively easy novel to act out, because it has only two principal characters and much of the book is dialog between the two. Choose a chapter and attempt to act out the events with a family member. Chapters 12, 13 and 15 are good choices because of their vivid imagery. Attempt to show the pain and fear the two must have been going through each day on the island. Really try to imagine what Phillip was going through by being blind in a new place. Try to show how he adapted.

## SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITY

On a large piece of paper, try to draw a realistic map of the cay. Use descriptions in the book to help you with size and shape as well as vegetation and land features. Use your knowledge, based on where you think the cay may have been located, to include lines of latitude and longitude. Be sure to include a scale and compass rose.

## ART ACTIVITY

Very few people have the opportunity to live through and really experience such a dangerous natural phenomenon as a hurricane. In fact, there are very few detailed photographs of a hurricane in motion because of the extreme danger to the photographer. Imagine that you are in an art studio with Phillip and he is telling you all the details so that you may paint a picture of what the hurricane looked like. Make your picture large. Try to include some of your own interpretations, also.

## MATH ACTIVITY

Using information in the book, figure out exactly how many days Phillip was on the island. Then, turn that into minutes and seconds. How many minutes would he have spent on the island if he were there for a year? For two years?