

# A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR FINDING SERENDIPITY AND A WEEK *without* TUESDAY

FOR  
USE WITH  
COMMON CORE  
STATE  
STANDARDS



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**ANGELICA BANKS**, the author of *Finding Serendipity*, is not one person but two: Heather Rose and Danielle Wood are both award-winning writers of adult literary fiction and have been friends for years. While working on this book, they ate blueberry chocolate and a witch's broomstick and had lots of fun.

## ABOUT THE GUIDE

This guide is aligned with Common Core Standards for the fifth grade but can be applied to grades three through sixth. To attain a specific Common Core grade-level standard for classrooms and students, teachers are encouraged to adapt the activities listed in this guide to their classes' needs. You know your kids best!

## ABOUT *FINDING SERENDIPITY*

When Tuesday McGillicuddy and her beloved dog, Baxterr, discover that Tuesday's mother—the famous author Serendipity Smith—has gone missing, they set off to find her in the place where stories come from. There, Tuesday meets the pint-size heroine Vivienne Small, duels with the hideous pirate Carsten Mothwood, and learns the truth about her remarkable dog. To save the lives of those she loves, Tuesday must summon all her wit, courage, and imagination. But how will she ever find her way home?



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## PRE-READING ACTIVITY: WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Have students individually mark the opinion that most closely matches how they feel about the statements below. Then as a class discuss the answers and ranking.

| Statement  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Why I Think This: |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------|----------------|-------------------|
| A loyal dog is one of the best things you can have in your life.       |                   |          |       |                |                   |
| Being brave means never being afraid.                                  |                   |          |       |                |                   |
| It's harder to finish a story than to start one.                       |                   |          |       |                |                   |
| We can learn to be like the heroes and heroines we read about.         |                   |          |       |                |                   |
| It's hard for parents to let kids find their own way through problems. |                   |          |       |                |                   |

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU READ

- (CHAPTER 1) Describe Tuesday's life and home. What's the most interesting thing about her family?
- (CHAPTERS 1 AND 2) What are the strange details around Serendipity's disappearance?
- (CHAPTER 2) Explain what happens when Tuesday begins typing at her mother's typewriter.
- (CHAPTER 3) Compare the place where Tuesday and Baxterr land to their home. Who do they meet after their arrival?
- (CHAPTER 4) Why is Serendipity home so late? What does she find? Why is she so worried?
- (CHAPTER 5) Describe the library and the Librarian. List everything Tuesday learns from the Librarian, and then put a star next to the item that you think will be most important to the story.



7. (CHAPTER 6) Why does the Librarian become stern with Tuesday? What does she expect her to do? Describe the food offered in the library? Which type would you sample? Why?
8. (CHAPTER 7) Serendipity tells her husband, Denis, “I think that this is her story, and she’s going to have to find her way through it alone.” What does she mean by this?
9. (CHAPTER 8) Describe what happened to Vivienne Small’s home. What was the cause of this terrible act?
10. (CHAPTER 9) Evaluate the hypothesis that Tuesday creates about Vivienne. What clues did she use to make this educated guess about what had happened to her?
11. (CHAPTER 10) How are things going back at home with Tuesday’s parents? What are they imagining is happening to her? How would other parents handle this same situation?
12. (CHAPTER 11) List all the different skills Tuesday tries to learn in order to sail Vivienne’s ship, the *Vivacious*. What difficulties does she face? How does she try to tackle them?
13. (CHAPTER 12) Explain how Baxterr was revived. What rule must Tuesday now remember about his name? What else does she discover about her beloved pet?
14. (CHAPTER 13) Why doesn’t Vivienne know about Tuesday’s mother, her creator? Why does she seem familiar? What do the girls learn about each other? What plan do they create?
15. (CHAPTER 14) Why do they go aboard Vivienne’s enemy’s ship, the *Silverfish*? What do they hope to find?
16. (CHAPTER 15) Describe and discuss the series of events that makes things worse for Tuesday.
17. (CHAPTER 16) What does the evil pirate Carsten Mothwood plan to do with Vivienne and Baxterr? What options does Tuesday have?
18. (CHAPTER 17) After Tuesday finds herself adrift on the *Vivacious*, what does she decide to do to help Vivienne and Baxterr? What tool must she use?
19. (CHAPTERS 18 AND 19) Summarize what Tuesday learns about herself and her story when she visits the library again. What comparison does the Librarian use to explain the process of writing? Do you agree with it?
20. (CHAPTERS 20, 21, AND 22) Evaluate the choices Tuesday makes to save Vivienne and Baxterr. What was surprising? Brave? Foolish? Memorable? What would you have done in her position? In the end, why does Vivienne decide to stay in her own world?

**CCSS.RL.5.5 Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.**

**CCSS.RL.5.6 Describe how a narrator’s or speaker’s point of view influences how events are described.**

**CCSS.SL.5.1.A Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.**

**CCSS.SL.5.1.C Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.**



## POINT OF VIEW: THE SEAT A STORY IS TOLD FROM

Authors decide the way readers experience parts of the story by choosing a point of view. For example, the beginning of *Finding Serendipity* is told through Tuesday's eyes. But later, Serendipity and the heroine of her stories, Vivienne, get to tell parts of the story, too.

In chapter 17, readers are told the story through Tuesday's point of view as she sails off on the *Vivacious* hoping to get help for Vivienne and Baxterr. As a class, discuss how this part of the story would be different if it was told through these other characters' eyes. Have students use the chart to record their thoughts.

| Vivienne or Baxterr | Serendipity or Denis | Carsten Mothwood |
|---------------------|----------------------|------------------|
|                     |                      |                  |

**Follow-Up Question:** Why do you think the author told the story through Tuesday's eyes?  
Does telling the story from Tuesday's point of view build suspense? How?

CCSS.RL.5.6 Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.

## KEY QUOTES: BE AN EVIDENCE DETECTIVE!

Good readers can find right in a story the specific evidence and clues that prove a fact or detail. Ask students to work in pairs to examine the statements below and find a key quote from the text that backs up each statement. Have students use the chart to record their thoughts. Expand this activity by selecting other statements about the story for the class to examine.

| Statement About the Story                              | Key Quote That Proves It Is True |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Tuesday's mother is a famous author.                   |                                  |
| Tuesday's mother is often very busy.                   |                                  |
| Baxterr is a very good dog.                            |                                  |
| Denis does not work outside the home on Brown Street.  |                                  |
| Serendipity Smith writes on the top floor of her home. |                                  |

CCSS.RL.5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.



# COMPARE AND CONTRAST: LOOKING FOR SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Have students work in pairs and compare the details of the following elements (or parts) of Tuesday’s story. Ask the question: How are things different in the land where stories happen? Instruct the students to use the chart to record their thoughts.

|                   | Setting | Characters | Conflict (problems) |
|-------------------|---------|------------|---------------------|
| Tuesday’s Home    |         |            |                     |
| Land of the Story |         |            |                     |

CCSS.RL.5.3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

## VOCABULARY: WORDS IN CONTEXT

Good readers can often figure out the meaning of words by carefully looking at the clues in the surrounding sentences. Ask students to study the following words from chapters 1 and 2 and place them in the sentence where it makes the most sense.

deliberated      disguise      ascended      descending      remark  
imminent      despondently      squall      peculiar      sojourn

1. “I must \_\_\_\_\_ upon the mark from Miss Mistlethwaite in mathematics,” he’d once said mildly.
2. “I can report that when I \_\_\_\_\_ the staircase at lunchtime, the stack of pages on the finished side of the desk was this thick.”
3. “Baxterr lay beneath the table and dozed, although one of his ears was pricked up in the directions of the staircase, waiting for the sound of \_\_\_\_\_ footsteps.”
4. Tuesday wondered what her mother and father had planned for this holiday. *A summer \_\_\_\_\_*, her dad had said.
5. While they \_\_\_\_\_ over 11 down and 23 across [in a crossword], Baxterr snored.
6. “Your mother’s return, I assure you, is \_\_\_\_\_, though probably not immediate.”
7. It never occurred to anybody that Serendipity Smith, the most famous author in all the world, was actually in \_\_\_\_\_ . . . And that is why it was possible for Tuesday and her mother and her father to take holidays together and never be recognized.







## ABOUT A WEEK WITHOUT TUESDAY

Tuesday McGillycuddy plans to spend her summer holiday relaxing with her family, eating pancakes, writing her story, and getting the hang of being a writer. But when real and imaginary worlds begin to collide, putting everything and everyone in grave peril, Tuesday and her dog, Baxterr, set off again to the magical place that stories come from. On their journey, they'll meet friends and foes—and discover strengths they didn't know they had. Will Tuesday be able to write just the right ending to their tale?

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## PRE-READING ACTIVITY: WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Have students individually mark the opinion that most closely matches how they feel about the statements below. Then as a class discuss the answers and ranking.

| Statement   | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Why I Think This |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------|----------------|------------------|
| Writing is even better than reading.                              |                   |          |       |                |                  |
| Pancakes are the best food on earth (and probably elsewhere too). |                   |          |       |                |                  |
| Being “normal” is important for a writer.                         |                   |          |       |                |                  |



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| Statement  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree | Why I Think This |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------|----------------|------------------|
| Reading about fantastical places is more interesting than real-world ones. |                   |          |       |                |                  |
| Every book needs a great villain.  |                   |          |       |                |                  |

## VOCABULARY WORDS BY CHAPTER: EXPAND YOUR WORD POWER!

| CHAPTER | Vocabulary   |
|---------|--|
| 1       | Veranda, ferocious, dismay, vanished, crooning, vicious, savaged, firmament, immense   |
| 2       | Potential, procession, maritime, erratic, migrated, essential, unprecedented, billowing, abducted, sustained, altitude, blathering, transcribe                     |
| 3       | Swift, quiver, concocted, sufficient, intently, embroidery, pearlescent, inquired, perilously, runes, colossal, medallion, etched, tantalizing, gamboling, astride |
| 4       | Confiscated, disconsolate, simultaneous, implements, hydrangea, hospitable, intrude, imperative, pragmatic, heroine  |
| 5       | Persistent, precariously, erratically, striated, formidable, dismal, eerie, dilemma  |
| 6       | Prospect, ornate, tresses, premiere  |
| 7       | Frolic, hurtle, eternal, unfathomably, daunting  |
| 8       | Materialize, bewildered, chic, briskly, capacious, eccentricity, impulsiveness   |
| 9       | Elastic, pliable, cutlery, awry, scouring, knolls, siesta, recall, vacate, fortitude   |
| 10      | Unfathomably, holograms, hysteria, mauve, inhabit, pleated, mangled, savaged, enamel, oblivion   |
| 11      | Hesitantly, partial, nimble, phenomenally, transparent, commission, dwells, essential, devastate   |
| 12      | Perplexed, vivacious, clambered, fronds, foliage, tinderbox, faint, frantic, subsequent, unflappable, murmured   |



| CHAPTER | Vocabulary  |
|---------|---|
| 13      | Restraint, hefted, ration, dinghy, varnished, silhouette, thoroughfare, depths, deluge, helm, debris, helming, plummeted, jetty, marveling, spires, serrated, dimwitted, shabby, ghastly, penetrated  |
| 14      | Viselike, anticipation, torrent   |
| 15      | Grim, earnest, flotilla, assailed, unorthodox, lunatic  |
| 16      | Radicals, enduring, exquisitely, awnings, scarpering, hullabaloo, waterlogged, clambering, superb, eclipse, convene, elaborate, peril   |
| 17      | Velour, garb, corresponding, enigmatic, departed, gleam, pursuit, publicity, crystallize, petite, reassure, sheepish, credibility, agog, contrary   |
| 18      | Dreadful, lingering, boulevards, dispersed, expedition, vague, dissent, councillors, preposterous, erupted, fatigue, retorted, wearily  |
| 19      | Planetarium, implements, secateurs, jetty, chute, laden, boathook, vast, ominously, fossicked, gnashing, recuperative, conservatory, faculties  |
| 20      | Trundled, mechanical, tentatively, fronds, midst, smoldering, skiff, quivering, winced, fractal, lucid, sage, acquainted, khamsin, sirocco, flourished, valiant, roiling, wizened, magnetism, essence |
| 21      | Illuminated, mystified, perchance, hoisted, presumably, conjoined, mustered   |
| 22      | Lament, infuriated, vile, farouche, tormenting, mesmerized, tantalized, anticipated, counterattack, multitude, swerve   |
| 23      | Redistributed, alighted, graze, precisely, amnesia  |
| 24      | Eiderdown, bonsai, platinum, perceptible  |
| 25      | Strode, theatrical, disheveled, antithesis, blustery, lush, successor, imperious  |
| 26      | Pruning, serenely, bewildered, obscure, marbled, bounding, formality, unfurling, kiosk  |
| 27      | Enthusiastic, gaping, apparition  |
| 28      | Vantage, overexert, pirouette, immaculate, livery, indubitably, decorum, plush  |



# TINKER WITH WORDS

Using the table above choose fifteen words to become a resident expert on. Then based on those words, choose three of the following projects to complete.

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Flash Cards</b></p> <p>Create a set of flash cards that have the following information on them: definition in your own words, synonyms/antonyms, a sentence that shows the meaning.</p> | <p><b>Crossword</b></p> <p>Create a crossword puzzle using all fifteen words. The clues should help the player learn the definitions. Provide an answer key.</p> | <p><b>Root Words</b></p> <p>Analyze and identify the parts of the words: root words, prefixes and suffixes, and the meaning of those word parts.</p> |
| <p><b>Etymologies</b></p> <p>Research the origins (the original language) in which these words first appeared. Describe any changes in meaning over time and through languages.</p>           | <p><b>Art</b></p> <p>Create a picture that will help you remember the meaning of the word. Be sure to use color! Explain the meaning if it is not obvious.</p>   | <p><b>Acrostics</b></p> <p>Create acrostics that reveal the meaning of the words.</p>  |

**CCSS.RL.5.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.**

**CCSS.L.5.4.C Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU READ

1. (CHAPTER 1) Describe what Vivienne saw from the top of the tree. Why was she afraid?
2. (CHAPTER 2) Why are the recent disappearances in Tuesday's world so strange?
3. (CHAPTER 3) Describe the people Vivienne meets after trying to heal the winged dog that fell. Why did they arrive?
4. (CHAPTER 4) Why does Denis forbid both Serendipity and Tuesday from writing?
5. (CHAPTER 5) Explain Vivienne's plan to get help and find Tuesday.
6. (CHAPTER 6) Describe Black Luckhurst. What does he warn Tuesday of and why?
7. (CHAPTER 7) Predict where Tuesday is taking Vivienne after they discover that the runes spell "Imagine." Would you go?
8. (CHAPTER 8) Describe the Librarian. Sketch a picture of what you think she may look like.
9. (CHAPTER 9) What happens to Denis at the end of this chapter?



10. (CHAPTER 10) Describe the library. What kind of books does it have? Why is it important to writers?
11. (CHAPTER 11) Describe the Gardener. Why is he important?
12. (CHAPTER 12) Summarize what happened to Denis in this chapter. Where is he now?
13. (CHAPTER 13) What is the vercaka and how do they inflict pain?
14. (CHAPTER 14) What happens to Tuesday after she's abducted by the vercaka?
15. (CHAPTER 15) What are the problems that Serendipity faces with the investigation of Tuesday's disappearance?
16. (CHAPTER 16) Analyze Baxterr's stunt to rid himself of the cats. Is it successful? Why or why not?
17. (CHAPTER 17) Why is Blake is so nervous and anxious to escape from Serendipity's house?
18. (CHAPTER 18) Summarize the Vvercaka's behavior. What effect does it have on the City of Clocks?
19. (CHAPTER 19) Describe where Tuesday has ended up after her abduction. Who is the man with her?
20. (CHAPTER 20) Why is Tuesday scared to become the Gardener? What are the Gardener's responsibilities?
21. (CHAPTER 21) Who does Tuesday encounter in the Conservatory?
22. (CHAPTER 22) Analyze the attack plan of the City of Clocks against the vercaka. What are the strengths of it? The weaknesses? Despite victory, why is Baxterr still upset?
23. (CHAPTER 23) Describe Tuesday's return to the City of Clocks. Why does Vivienne begin to forget soon after Tuesday's departure?
24. (CHAPTER 24) What happens to Garnet? What does this mean for Tuesday?
25. (CHAPTER 25) Does the Librarian regret her decision to make Tuesday the Gardener? Why?
26. (CHAPTER 26) What are the problems Tuesday faces when stepping down from her position as Gardener? Recommend a solution.
27. (CHAPTER 27) Describe the hospital where Denis is getting treatment. Why does Denis awaken from his coma?
28. (CHAPTER 28) How has life changed for the McGillycuddys? Is it better or worse than before?

**CCSS.RL.5.5 Explain how a series of chapters, scenes, or stanzas fits together to provide the overall structure of a particular story, drama, or poem.**

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## READING: REALITY VERSUS IMAGINATION

Create a character chart with two columns. On the left-hand side, list the characters from the “real world.” On the right, list and describe the characters from the world of the book. Characters that can travel to and fro between the worlds should be listed on the left but starred. Beside each character’s name write a brief description of their role in the story.

**CCSS.RL.5.3** Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

## ART: MAP OF WONDER

Create a map of Vivienne’s world. Include the City of Clocks, the Peppermint Forest, the Mountains of Margolov, and the River of Rythwyck. On the back, list what is most important about each of these settings. How do they advance (move forward) the plot?

**CCSS.SL.5.5** Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes.

## STEM (SCIENCE, TECH, ENGINEERING, MATH)

Design three tools that would be useful for the Gardener. You can draw these or build 3-D models of them. Be sure to identify each tool’s parts and how it is used.

**CCSS.SL.5.5** Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes.

## RESEARCH: A WRINKLE IN RESEARCH

Research what novel Mr. Tumnus is originally from, and summarize that novel’s basic plot. Then discuss the following in pairs or as a class.

- ✧ Why do you think that Angelica Banks included a reference to Mr. Tumnus?
- ✧ List the elements that are common across the genre of fantasy.

**Extra credit?** Read that book and then create a Venn diagram comparing the two stories.

**CCSS.RL.5.2** Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

Tracie Vaughan, an author and reading specialist, created this guide.

