

A TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR

# THE LOST BOY'S GIFT

FOR USE  
WITH COMMON  
CORE STATE  
STANDARDS

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Nine-year-old Daniel must move across the county with his mom after his parents' divorce. He's leaving behind his whole life—everything—and he's taking a suitcase of anger with him. But Daniel is in for a surprise when he settles into While-a-Way Lane and meets his new neighbors—the Lemonade Girl, the hopscotching mailman, the tiny creatures, and especially Tilda Butter. Tilda knows how to look and listen closely, and it's that gift that helps Daniel find his way in the curious place called While-a-Way Lane.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**KIMBERLY WILLIS HOLT** is the author of many award-winning novels for young adults and children, including *Blooming at the Texas Sunrise Motel*, *Dear Hank Williams*, and *When Zachary Beaver Came to Town*, winner of a National Book Award for Young People's Literature. Born in Pensacola, Florida, Holt has lived all over the United States and the world. Holt has

a grown daughter and lives with her husband, dog, and pet snail in Texas. You can find her online at [kimberlywillisholt.com](http://kimberlywillisholt.com).



978-1-627-79326-1 • Ages 8–11

## ABOUT THE GUIDE

*The Lost Boy's Gift* can be used in many ways in your classroom. It can be read aloud to students or they can read it in literature circles, with a partner, or independently. The questions and activities in the guide are aligned with the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy for grade four, but they can be applied to grades three through six. Feel free to adapt these questions and activities to meet the needs of your students. You know them best!

## BEFORE-READING ACTIVITIES

### THE LOST BOY

Tell students that Daniel is the title character in *The Lost Boy's Gift*. Explain that his parents are getting divorced and he is moving to a new town with his mother. Then have them respond to the following questions in a “think-pair-share” format.

- How do you think Daniel feels about these changes in his life?
- How could these changes make him feel lost?

### FALLING STAR VALLEY

Invite students to preview the map and map key at the beginning of the book. Have them fold a piece of paper into thirds to do a “3-2-1” activity. In the first section, they write three places in Falling Star Valley they would like to visit. In the second section, they write the names of two people they would like to meet. In the last section, they write one question they have about the town. At the end of the activity, have students share their responses with a partner.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Encourage students to cite specific details from the story when responding to questions.

1. How does Daniel feel about moving to While-a-Way Lane? What is his first impression of his new town?
2. How does Tilda Butter feel about living on While-a-Way Lane? Did she always feel this way? Explain your answer.
3. How does Daniel's first meeting with Tilda get off to a bad start? Why do you think Daniel wants to come back to see her the next day?
4. What is Tilda's special gift? Does she appreciate it? Why or why not?
5. When Daniel watches his neighbors returning from spring break, he feels hollow inside. What does that mean? How do the fireflies help him feel better?
6. In the title, the author refers to Daniel as “the lost boy.” How is Daniel like one of the lost boys in *Peter Pan*? Why is it so important to him to portray a lost boy in the play?
7. When does Tilda realize that Daniel is lonely? What experiences in her life help her understand what he's going through?
8. Why doesn't Daniel tell his mother about the play? How does this make him feel, and what does he do about it?
9. What causes Daniel to be disappointed on the day of the play? Who helps him feel better?
10. Daniel gets two gifts that day. Which one do you think is more meaningful to him? Why?
11. Why does Daniel feel better about his new home at the end of the story?
12. Page 194 states, “The art of noticing is the gift we all own.” What discoveries does Daniel make when he starts to look closely at things?

CCSS.RL.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.RL.4.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

CCSS.RL.4.3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

CCSS.RL.4.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).

CCSS.SL.4.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.SL.4.2 Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.L.4.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 4 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

# AFTER-READING ACTIVITIES

## THEMES

*The Lost Boy's Gift* explores many topics, including special gifts, the ability to look closely, families, divorce, home, change, friendship, and acceptance. Tell students that the theme of a fictional story conveys the author's big idea or message about life. Then have them choose a topic and develop a theme statement about the topic that they feel best exemplifies the author's message, e.g., "An important theme in this book is that friends enrich our lives." Have students write essays that develop their theme statements and use details about the plot and the characters to support their ideas. Provide time for students to read their essays to the class. Encourage them to compare and contrast how multiple students wrote about the same theme.

## GIFTS

Aunt Sippy told Tilda that everyone has a special gift and that gifts should never be wasted. Have students identify each character's special gift and tell how they use them in the story. Ask them to identify their own special gifts. Give them each an envelope and an index card. They should decorate the envelope to look like a gift box and include their name. On one side of the index card, have them write their special gift and, on the back, tell how they use it in their lives. Have them place the card in the envelope. Encourage students to keep these in a special place to remind them about their gift.

## CHARACTER DIAMANTE POEMS

Tell students that a character diamante poem is a seven-line poem that compares or contrasts two characters in a book. Explain its format (one noun, two adjectives, three verbs, four nouns, three verbs, two adjectives, and one noun) and

structure (diamond shape), and provide some examples for them. Have students work in pairs to create a diamante poem about two characters they choose from the book. One student brainstorms adjectives, nouns, and verbs about one character; the other student does the same for the second character. Using a template, have them choose the words they will use to create their poem. Display their poems in the classroom.

## FLASHBACKS

Use a document camera or whiteboard to display pages 5 and 6 for students. Read these pages aloud to them as they follow along. Explain that sometimes authors take a little break from a story to give the reader some background information about a character, often by sharing the character's memories. Reread the passage and ask them to determine when the flashback begins and ends. Mark it on the text. Have students work with a partner. They choose a character and find places in the book where the character has flashbacks. They mark the pages with sticky notes. Provide time for each set of partners to share one example with the class and tell how the flashback helped the reader learn more about the character.

## LANGUAGE

Tell students that authors often use figurative language to make their writing more interesting. One way they do this is by comparing two things that are different. An example in this book is when Spider refers to himself as the captain of his ship and says he has to steer his ship, stay the course, and find a safe harbor. Have students work with a partner to find such references in the book and use the context to explain the meaning of these statements.

CCSS.RL.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

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CCSS.RL.4.3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

CCSS.RL.4.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Hercules).

CCSS.RL.4.6 Compare and contrast the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including the difference between first- and third-person narrations.

CCSS.SL.4.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.L.4.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.W.4.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

CCSS.W.4.9a Apply grade 4 Reading standards to literature (e.g., "Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text [e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions]").

This guide was written by Barbara McLaughlin, a literacy consultant and former Senior Program Director for Elementary ELA in the Boston Public Schools.