

Literature Circle Questions

Use these questions and the activities that follow to get more out of the experience of reading *The Green Glass Sea* by Ellen Klages.

1. At the beginning of the book, Dewey is sitting on the front steps of Mrs. Kovack's house in St. Louis. Who is she hoping will appear?
2. According to the book, what is a "fizzler"? A "stinker"?
3. What sort of terrain surrounds the Hill? Why is this important, given the work the scientists are doing there?
4. It is now 1944. Several months have passed since Dewey arrived from St. Louis. Based on what you read beginning in the chapter titled "Jumping Rope," how has she adjusted to life on the Hill?
5. On page 224, Suze and Dewey come home to find a man they know as "Oppie" sitting on the couch. Who is Oppie? What do the girls think is the reason he has come to the house?
6. Patriotism is very important to the residents of the Hill. Choose a character in the story and list two things he or she does that are patriotic. Then briefly explain why each action you have described is patriotic.
7. Suze tells Dewey that the rock with Shazam painted on it will give them secret powers, like wisdom or strength. If you had a Shazam rock, what secret power would you want it to give you, and why?
8. Using examples from the text, show how Dewey uses numbers and patterns to comfort herself during difficult situations. Why do you think numbers are so important to her?
9. On page 280, the residents of the Hill have learned that "the gadget" works. Mr. Gordon says, "The genie's out of the bottle, Terry. No way to put it back now." What do you think he means by this? Choose two characters from the story and briefly describe how each character reacts to the successful test of the gadget.
10. Late in the story, Dewey uses the word "kinship" to describe her relationship with Mrs. Gordon. Why do you think these two characters get along so well? Do you think Dewey considers any other adult besides her father a friend?
11. On page 290, Dewey thinks to herself, "People don't change." Do you agree with this statement? In your opinion, does Suze change during the story? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

12. At the very end of the story, Dewey and the Gordons are driving through the desert when they hear the beginning of a radio broadcast. Reread the portion of the broadcast printed in the book. Then make a prediction. What do you think the passengers in the car would have heard if Suze had not changed the station?
13. Reread the first few sentences of the first chapter and the first few sentences of the chapter beginning on page 41. What is different about the way the author is using language? Why do you think the author chose to do this?
14. On page 231, Mrs. Gordon says to Suze, “Dewey’s a private person, you know.” In your opinion, is this an accurate description of Dewey? Support your answer using examples from the text.
15. Secrecy and rules are a part of life for the residents of the Hill. There are off-limits areas, no phones, and the government censors mail. In your own words, explain how you would feel if you were a resident of Los Alamos. Would these restrictions frustrate you or would you view them as a way to contribute to the war effort?

Note: These questions are keyed to Bloom’s Taxonomy as follows: Knowledge: 1–3; Comprehension: 4–6; Application: 7–8 Analysis: 9–10; Synthesis: 11–12; Evaluation: 13–15.

Activities:

1. Reread the letter on page 190 that Jimmy Kerrigan writes to Dewey from Washington, D.C. Then reread the passage on page 199 in which Dewey explains to Suze what the letter really says. Exchange letters with a classmate, using a code like the one Jimmy Kerrigan used. See if you can break your classmate’s code. What information did you try to pass along in secret?
2. Using descriptions from the text, draw a map of the Hill. Include as many places as you can remember from the book. Possible locations to plot on your map might be the Tech Px, the dump, Morganville, and the tree house. Make sure to include a legend for your map. Then, compare your map with a classmate’s map. How are the maps similar? How are they different?
3. Dewey and Suze like to read comic books. Some of their favorite characters are Wonder Woman, Captain Marvel, and Captain America. Use a blank sheet of paper and colored pencils or crayons to create your own comic book hero or heroine. Give your character a name. What special powers does he or she have?

Author Web Site: <http://www.ellenklages.com/>