



## Reading Group Guide:

### THE LIMIT

by Kristen Landon

Reading Levels: GRL: Z LEX: 690L DRA: 70 AR: 4.4

### PRE-READING ACTIVITY

**Create an anticipation guide** Ask students to “agree” or “disagree” with each of the following statements: 1) It’s very important to live within your means. 2) Credit cards are nothing but trouble. 3) Only irresponsible people get into debt. 4) People who can’t manage their money wisely should be punished. After students have responded, lead the group in a discussion about debt and financial responsibility. Ask students to justify their opinions and respond respectfully to the views of their peers. (SL 9-10.1d, 11-12.1d)

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR WRITTEN RESPONSE

- Describe the Dunston family’s lifestyle at the beginning of the novel. What inferences can you draw about the way Matthew’s parents view money? Use specific details from the text to support your answer. (RL 7.1, 8.1, 9-10.1, 11-12.1)
- What is “the limit”? How is “the limit” in the novel different from a credit card limit? What inferences can you draw about the government and society the author portrays? (RL 7.1, 8.1, 9-10.1, 11-12.1)
- How do Matthew’s feelings about the workhouse change after he briefly escapes and argues with his mother? What does the argument reveal about Mrs. Dunston? (RL 8.3)
- Explain Jeffery’s feelings about living in the workhouse. How does Paige’s point of view differ? Why do Jeffery and Paige have such different outlooks? Use specific details and quotations from the text to support your answer. (RL 7.6)
- How has Matthew changed by the end of the book? Compare his ideas about money before he was taken to the workhouse with his attitude at the novel’s end. What message does the book seem to convey? At what point in the novel did you begin to notice this message? (RL 7.2, 8.2, 9-10.2, 11-12.2)

**OTHER ACTIVITIES TO TRY**

- **Calculate interest** Make copies of a credit card offer to distribute to students and guide them through the “fine print,” pointing out fees and hidden costs and introducing or reviewing the term *interest*. Explain how to use APR (annual percentage rate) to calculate interest. Then, ask students to go on imaginary shopping sprees by making detailed lists of items they want to “buy” on their credit cards. Have students total their lists and calculate the interest that would accumulate if they only made minimum payments for a year. (7 RP 3)
- **Write personal essays** Ask students to write narrative essays in which they describe a time when money elicited a strong emotion (pride, anxiety, compassion, anger, happiness, guilt, jealousy). Essays should include detailed description and dialogue as well as reflection and observation. (W 7.3, 8.3, 9-10.3, 11-12.3)
- **Explore historical background** Have students find multiple print or digital sources of information about workhouses in the 1700s-1900s. Then, ask them to write short essays in which they describe Victorian-era workhouses in detail and compare them to the workhouse depicted in the novel. (W 7.9, 8.9, 9-10.9, 11-12.9)

**BUILD VOCABULARY**

**Preview challenging words** Have students work individually or in groups to determine the meanings of new words. Ask students to use a three-columned chart to record context, word meanings, and synonyms. (RL 7.4, 8.4, 10-9.4, 11-12.4, L 7.4, 8.4, 10-9.4, 11-12.4)

adrenaline	composure	jurisdiction	reverberated	venture
allotment	exponential	leisure	ridicule	viable
antioxidant	glitch	protocol	sauntered	volatile
apprenticeship	jousting	rehabilitation	simulated	workhouse

**SITES TO VISIT**

**Find ideas for teaching about the economy** at <http://tinyurl.com/6kuta55>

**View a glossary of economic terms** for kids at <http://tinyurl.com/6dtr8e8>

**Print a word scramble or word search** containing economic terms at <http://tinyurl.com/crcocyh>

**NOTE:\*** Questions are keyed to the Common Core Standards [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)

- RL: Reading Standards for Literature
- W: Writing Standards
- SL: Speaking and Listening Standards
- L: Language Standards
- RP: Ratios & Proportional Relationships (Mathematics)