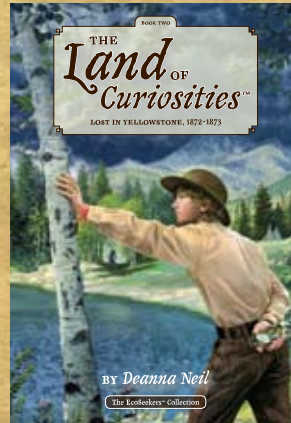
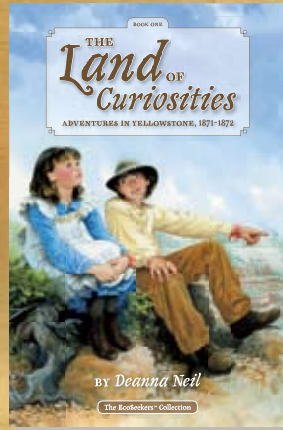


The Land of Curiosities[™]



A Guide for Educators

A tool to enhance the learning experience

Ideal for use in any school, teaching, or community setting

With cross-curricular connections to
English, Social Studies, Science, and Environmental Studies

What teachers are saying about the book ...

“The Land of Curiosities: Adventures in Yellowstone[™] is amazing for predictions, because there is so much prior knowledge from each chapter for students to use to build their predictions ... this has been tons of fun. My kids are incredibly hooked right now.”

AMY ALLOY, 4th Grade Teacher, New Haven, CT

“The Land of Curiosities: Lost in Yellowstone[™] might be the best kid’s book I have ever read. A great story, plus all the extras that a young teen reader could ask for: appropriately challenging vocabulary, multiple levels of internal and external conflicts, splendid characterization of the native belief system, and accurate, eye-opening history.”

DON BORST, 7th Grade Teacher, Federal Way, WA

CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS TO *The Land of Curiosities*™ BOOKS IN ENGLISH, SOCIAL STUDIES, SCIENCE, AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

FORMATS TO CONSIDER

Read Aloud • Whole Class Novel • Book Clubs • Literature Circles
Summer Reading Assignments • Environmental Club Readings • Library Discussions

ENGLISH

The use of various literary elements, character perspectives, and strong vocabulary, make this a natural fit for English instruction.

Letter and Journal Writing

- Write a letter as one of the characters in the novel, relaying their experiences in Yellowstone to a friend.
- Keep journals of possible reflections from the point of view of any character.

Reading Strategies

- **Predictions** Identify foreshadowing as a builder of suspense, and for evidence-based predictions.
- **Visualization** Have students create filmstrips, comics or illustrations relaying how they visualize scenes in the book.
- **Connections** Explore deep connections students may have with James, Alice, and Tom, even though these characters are from the 1870's. This can be a good gateway for discussing the coming of age and personal journey theme in relation to growing-up in any time period.

Literary Elements

- **Figurative Language** Have students keep a “simile and metaphor” log or class list.
- **Conflict** There are ample examples of internal/external conflict throughout the novels.
- **Setting** Explain how descriptive imagery of place enhances the reading experience.
- **Characterization** Act out a scene with partners. Add your own interpretation of character and script.

A Study of Historical Fiction

- Investigate the components of this genre and have students keep a running log of examples of the genre's elements.
- Research events to see which are historically true. Use *The Real History* guide in the book as a tool for this activity. Contact The EcoSeekers™ for primary sources.
- Read another historical fiction novel and compare/contrast the two in an essay or class project.

Linguistics

- Find expressions or words in the stories that are no longer in common use; explore language usage and evolution.

Poetry

- Write a poem from the point of view of a character in the novel.
- Reflect about conservation and preservation in poem format.

CHECK OUT OUR WRITING CONTEST ON OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE WRITING ASSIGNMENT IDEAS.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Historical fiction is an excellent way for students to access history and social issues. The books' *The Real History* sections were meticulously researched and incorporate a lot of facts.

Settling the West

- Study the establishment of Yellowstone National Park.
- Consider using real photographs of the park from "The Real History" section in the back of the novels. See the Library of Congress' website for photos and a lesson plan to accompany the photos that directly connect to the 1871 and 1872 Hayden Expeditions at <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/98/environ/explore.html>

Public Lands

- Acquaint students with the history of public lands in North America and throughout the world.
- See National Geographic's series of lessons "Public Lands: Hidden Histories" at www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/lessons/17/g68/hiddenhistory.html
- Use locations of public lands to teach geography.

Mapping

- Have students create a scaled map of Yellowstone and/or of their own neighborhoods.

Native Peoples

- Examine the relationship between settlers, the U.S. government, and native peoples in history and in the narrative.
- Use scenes in the books to promote discussion: whose land is it anyway? When people explore and "discover" new lands, what about the people that came before on those lands?
- Connect to modern issues native peoples face in relation to the history.

Sociology

- Ask students to explore the meaning of the title *On the Other Side* in Book 2. Does 'other' have multiple meanings? Explore concept of 'other' as a sociological, human construct.

Law

- Explore basic concepts of self-defense. Text references include James and Bloody Knuckles (book 1) and the killing of a mountain lion (book 2).
- Discuss vigilante justice and early laws in the western territories. Ask: How would you run a town?

Spirituality / Religion

- There are numerous references to spirituality and religion. Students could explore religions of the world and their respective views of nature. Have students research five religions and what, if anything, are the main views about humankind's relationship to nature. Encourage students to explore conflicting views within a religion as well.
- As a historical context piece, discuss how various scientific, religious, social, business, and political forces influenced the founding of Yellowstone National Park. For many of the early leaders of the environmental movement such as John Muir and the transcendentalists, their faith and spirituality led them to embrace scientific rigor and exploration and concepts of preservation. It was these varied interests coming together that led to the founding of the world's first national park.

SCIENCE

The natural settings, thermal features, wildlife, and exploratory expeditions easily lend themselves to teachable science moments. The dialogue and plot can also be used to explore various scientific topics, and *The Real History* sections can serve as guides.

Conservation and Preservation:

- Study wilderness protected areas throughout the world.
- In the books, James and Tom discover the wonders of Yellowstone. Consider why these natural wonders are worth preserving.
- Go online and use the back of the books to view photos & live video of Old Faithful eruptions.
- Ask students to consider: what do you have in your community that might be worth protecting?

Yellowstone Wildlife and Extinction

- Information about Yellowstone wildlife is easily accessed online, and students can learn about the wildlife, flora, and fauna, while James, Alice, and Tom are experiencing it in the books.
- Ask: Have humans brought about the extinction of other species and plants? Do humans have an obligation (moral, ethical, self-interested, legal, etc.) to prevent the extinction of animals and plants? What can be done to stop extinction?
- Provide examples of animals today that are facing a similar experience to the near extinction of the American bison of 1800s. Discuss the success of various conservation efforts.
- Discuss the concept and ethics of responsible hunting.

Mapping: Google Earth and Topographic Maps

- Google Earth is an excellent resource. Zoom in on Yellowstone today so students can understand real life topography. Consider this tool to create a “web quest” for students. Students may click on an icon and view a film of a particular area or animal.
- Have students create a topographic map of your school or town. Visit the following link for guidance: www.gelessons.com/lessons/
- Cartographer’s original maps may be acquired from Yellowstone.
- Go to www.Maps.google.com to see state and national parks when the “Map” option is selected.

Volcanic Regions

- Learn the science of geysers, hot springs and thermophiles. Discuss volcanic regions and activity around the world. Yellowstone has the largest concentration of geysers and half of the known hot springs on Earth.
- Show students Old Faithful Geyser live via webcam at www.nps.gov/archive/yell/oldfaithfulcam.htm

Orienteering

- James uses a compass to help him navigate the wild. Have students learn orienteering, even if it’s just around the school grounds. Ask: What was life like before a GPS?

Science Journals

- Have students keep a “science log” of scientific discoveries in the novels. The character Tom keeps his own journal throughout.

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

This topic is, naturally, weaved throughout.

The Pledge

- A major theme throughout the books is the idea of the individual and community's responsibilities to protect the planet. Connect these concepts to students' lives today and join Alice, James, Tom, and friends by taking the pledge together on our website.
- Another main theme is the power of ideas to foster change. Ask: can you provide examples of how ideas have influenced behavior (for good and bad) --- in the books, in history, in society, in your neighborhood, and in your school?
- Promote the pledge around your school or community through posters and signs that students create; make announcements on the school loudspeaker. Print your pledges from our website and post them on your classroom walls.

Educators, we want you!

Now that you've seen the many ways our books connect to learning experiences, join our grassroots movement of EcoSeekers Educators! Share your lesson plans for *The Land of Curiosities*™ and get ideas for new ones at www.theecoseekers.com.

This guide was created by the EcoSeekers' Educational Director, Christy Kingham, with help from three members of the EcoSeekers' Educational Network:

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Don Borst – 7th Grade Humanities, Federal Way, WA;
Stephanie Peborde – 6th Grade Science, Bedford, NY

The Land of Curiosities™ books have been measured according to the lexile® framework for reading. The lexiles® are 710 for Book 1 and 760 for Book 2. If you would like more information regarding lexile® measurement, feel free to contact us at educator@theecoseekers.com.

