

FOR EDUCATORS

Discussion Guides

THE GOLLYWHOPPER GAMES

1. Gil has put himself under a lot of pressure to succeed. Do you think moving out of town will solve his problems?

- How might he otherwise find happiness in Orchard Heights?
- When do you feel under pressure the most? How do you deal with it? Could you handle it in a different way?
- How do you help your friends when they're feeling stressed or pressured?

2. Early in the competition, Gil realizes he has to contend or deal with cheaters.

- Do you agree with the way he handled the cheating? Why or why not?
- What could he have done differently?
- What would you have done in the situation?
- Why do you think Thorn and Rocky felt the need to cheat?
- Can you think of any situations when cheating may be acceptable?

3. When Gil resolves the cheating issue, Bianca wants to elect him as their leader, but Gil says they don't need one.

- Even so, what leadership qualities did he show?
- How about his teammates?
- Why do you think Bert Golliwop might be a successful leader for the company?
- What leadership qualities do you possess?
- Without naming him or her, think of a peer who is a good leader.
- What qualities does he or she have?
- Which qualities would you like to develop for yourself?

4. Gil, Bianca, Lavinia, Rocky, and Thorn each have very different personalities, backgrounds, and abilities.

- Describe the strengths and weaknesses of each: Did one of those traits help the team the most? Did one of those traits hurt the team the most?
- Which two characters would you most want on your team?
- What strengths would they bring to balance yours?

5. If you could choose one character to be friends with in real life, who would that be and why?

- What do you think you would have in common with him or her?
- If you were hanging out at your home, what are some things you would show that person?
- If you were at their place, what might they show you?
- What types of activities would you do together?
- How would that character get along with your other friends?

6. Do you think Gil will stay friends with Bianca, Thorn and Rocky now that the competition is over?

- What makes you want to continue friendships?
- Can you name friends who you're friends with only in certain places, circumstances, or settings?

7. Gil's character changes throughout the book.

- Can you identify the character changes?
- Can you find evidence from the text to support your opinions?
- What are some life lessons Gil learned by participating in the Games?
- Did any other character experience change or growth? How do you know? What evidence is there from the book to support your thinking?

8. What is one main theme of *The Gollywhopper Games*?

- Name some examples of how that theme applies (or doesn't apply) to your life.
- In which ways can you use that theme to improve your life or the world around you?

THE GOLLYWHOPPER GAMES: THE NEW CHAMPION

THE GOLLYWHOPPER GAMES: FRIEND OR FOE

THE SEVENTH LEVEL

1. In *The Seventh Level*, Travis Raines is asked to follow rules, something that doesn't come naturally to him.

- How did Travis do with that? Could he have done a better job? If so, how? If not, why not?
- There's a saying: Rules are meant to be broken. Do you believe that? Might it ever be a good to break rules? In which instances?
- In some situations, you might see a list of rules. In other situations, it is assumed you already know the rules. Give some examples of each. Is one set of rules more important than the other?
- Are rules different than laws? What are the similarities? The differences?

2. Not only must Travis follow rules, he also needs to keep some secrets.

- What was the hardest secret Travis needed to keep?
- If you were asked to keep the same secrets Travis needed to, how would you do? How might you have handled it differently?
- Has a friend ever asked you to keep a secret? Did you keep it? Why or why not?
- Are there secrets you shouldn't keep?

3. In order to keep his secrets Travis believes he needs to lie at times.

- What are some of the lies he feels compelled to tell?
- Are there times when Travis lied, but he shouldn't have?
- What are white lies? Are they different than other lies? Name some situations when it might be appropriate to tell a white lie. When is lying never appropriate?

4. When Travis realizes he may have received an invitation to The Legend, he's ready to be a member even if none of his friends are members.

- Would you join a club or activity without any of your friends? All clubs and activities that interest you or just certain ones? Why?
- If you wouldn't join without your friends, why not?
- What might be the advantages and the disadvantages of belonging to a group without your friends?

5. Some groups, like The Legend limit their membership.

- Do you think it's fair that The Legend only includes a few hand-selected members from each grade?
- How might The Legend be different if anyone could join?
- Imagine The Legend was in your school. How would it feel to be part of the group? How would you feel if you weren't chosen?
- What are the pros and cons of including only certain members?
- Why do you think the students at Lauer Middle School accept and even celebrate a secret group that won't allow them to be members?
- Could a group like The Legend work in your school?

6. One of Mrs. Pinchon's favorite sayings: Things aren't always as they appear.

- Point out some instances in the book that weren't as they first appeared.
- Describe a time when things were different than you originally thought them to be.
- Do you think these things were different because something fooled you or because you came in with a preconceived notion of how they should be?
- There are times when Travis doesn't feel he's good enough to be in The Legend, that they wouldn't take a kid like him. Does Travis fit Mrs. Pinchon's saying? Or is it that, perhaps, The Legend might not be as it appears? Or is it a little of both?
- What qualities does Travis have that are not as they appear? Why might those qualities make him a good fit for The Legend?
- What qualities do you have that might not be obvious to everyone?

7. What do you feel is the main theme of The Seventh Level?

- How does that theme connect with your own life?
- What can you take away from that theme to make you succeed even more?