



A Readers' and Educators' Guide to

The Door at the End of the World

by Caroline Carlson

Guide written by the author

Correlated to Common Core ELA Anchor Standards

Chapter Check-In

Use questions to guide reading comprehension and spark discussion.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.10]

Before Reading

Before you start reading the book, take a few minutes to ask yourself these questions or talk about them with a friend, teacher, or family member.

Look at the front and back cover of the book. What kind of story do you expect it to be? What clues on the cover help you guess what will happen in the story?

Think about the title. What do you think a door at the end of the world might be? What do you imagine you might find if you opened that door?

Look at the map in the front of the book. What does it tell you about the world of the story? What questions do you have?

During Reading

As you finish each section of the book, pause to ask yourself these questions or talk about them with a friend, teacher, or family member.

Chapters 1-5

What do you know so far about the main character, Lucy?

How does Lucy feel about her family? What does she feel insecure about?

Why does Lucy choose to break the Gatekeeper's rule about opening the worldgate?

How would you describe Arthur?

When they first meet, how does Lucy seem to feel about Arthur?

What problem do Lucy and Arthur need to solve? What will happen if they can't solve it?

How would you describe Henry Tallard? What do you think he was doing at the gatehouse?

What have you learned from *A Visitor's Guide to All the Worlds*?

What do you think has happened to the Gatekeeper and Florence?

What do you know so far about Rosemary?

What is Lucy's plan to get help? How do you think Arthur and Rosemary feel about the plan?

Chapters 6-10

What is your first impression of Thomas?

How would you describe Mrs. Bracknell? How does Lucy seem to feel about her?

What does Mrs. Bracknell think is causing the problems at the ends of the world?

What "exception" do you think Mrs. Bracknell made for Lucy?

How do Lucy and Arthur try to help at Interworld Travel? How do Thomas and Mrs. Bracknell feel about their assistance?

Who was Arabella Tallard, and why was she important?

What do you predict will happen to the worlds as the doors between them close?

Why do you think Lucy wants to see her own employee records?

What does Henry Tallard think Arthur and Lucy are up to?
Why does Lucy think that finding Rosemary will help their situation? Do you think it will help?
Who do you think has been breaking the worldgates?

Chapters 11-13

What is Rosemary's real job?
How does Mr. Silos feel about the worldgates being closed?
What has happened to Arabella Tallard's gatecutters? Why might this be important?
How is Southeast changing now that the worldgates are closed?
Who might have put the thistle-backed thrunt in the archives, and why?
Are you surprised that Rosemary helps Lucy and Arthur? Why or why not?
What is your opinion of Mrs. Bracknell's decision to keep the children safe?
What does Lucy learn from her employee records?
What do you think Lucy has realized at the end of chapter 13?

Chapters 14-17

Why does Lucy think a worldgate must be nearby?
What do you think is happening on the eighth floor?
Does what you've learned about the eighth floor change your guess about who might be closing the worldgates?
Has Lucy's relationship with Rosemary changed at all? How?
How does Lucy feel now about breaking Interworld Travel's rules?
Do you think Lucy, Rosemary, and Arthur are safe at Interworld Travel?
Why do Thomas's words bother Lucy so much? What does she decide to do as a result, and does that decision surprise you?
What do you predict is on the other side of the black door?

Chapters 18-21

How would you describe Michael?
How is West different from Southeast?
What have you learned about Mrs. Bracknell? Does this information surprise you?
What is Mrs. Bracknell's plan? Do you predict it will work?
Has your opinion of Henry Tallard changed at all? How?
What does Tallard urge the children to do next?
Why do you think Arthur and Rosemary agree to help Lucy find the gatekeepers?
Do you trust Thomas?

Chapters 22-25

What kind of world is North? What will happen there if the worldgates aren't reopened?
Where does Lucy think the missing gatekeepers might be?
How do the smugglers feel about the new worldgates?
What is Rosemary's relationship with Sarah like?
Why do you think Arthur tells Lucy a story about his school's running club?
Why do the children have to leave the smugglers' den?

What is particularly dangerous about the new worldgates? Why is Kip worried about threads coming loose?

What world do you think is behind the red door?

Chapters 26-29

What is Lucy's general opinion of East?

What have Lucy and Rosemary learned about Arthur?

Why doesn't the Gatekeeper like Mrs. Bracknell?

What makes the Gatekeeper tell Lucy she's changed? Do you think the Gatekeeper is right?

Why has the Gatekeeper been stuck near the library?

How does the Interworld Travel office in East compare to the office in Southeast?

How would you describe Mr. Wilson?

Why is it difficult for Lucy to convince Mr. Wilson to listen to her?

What do the Daves see on the computer screen that worries them?

What is Mrs. Bracknell planning to announce? How do you think people will react?

What do you predict will happen to Lucy and her friends when they return to Southeast?

Chapters 30-31

Do you agree with Mrs. Bracknell that the new worldgates are a good thing? Why or why not?

Is Lucy still the kind of person who is ignored by others?

What happens to the Gatekeeper and Mr. Wilson?

What convinces Thomas to stand up to Mrs. Bracknell?

Why does Mrs. Bracknell run away?

Who would you say is the leader of the group: Arthur, Rosemary, or Lucy? Why do you think so?

Chapters 32-37

What worlds do you think Lucy and the others visit in these chapters?

These chapters are very short. How does it feel to read them? What effect do you think the author was trying to create?

Chapters 38-40

What do you think is the DANGER the bees mention?

Do you think it was a good idea for the children to split up? Why or why not?

Even Mrs. Bracknell doesn't know what world the rocky beach is part of. Where do you think they are?

What is your opinion of Mrs. Bracknell now?

Rosemary, Arthur, and Lucy tell Mrs. Bracknell they aren't important. Do you agree with them?

How does Lucy use the skills she's learned as the Gatekeeper's deputy to save the day?

What do you think really happened when Mrs. Bracknell reached out for the gatecutters? How does Lucy seem to feel about this?

Chapter 41

What is your opinion of Thomas now?

Do you think Mrs. Bracknell will ever return? How might she be a “much different person” if she does?

Do you think it’s a good idea for Lucy to take on a new job? Why or why not?

How do Rosemary, Arthur, and Lucy feel about one another now? How do you think their adventures have changed them?

Would you say this ending is happy, sad, or somewhere in between?

Word Stretch

Understand new terms in context to build vocabulary.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.6]

Read each excerpt from The Door at the End of the World. What do you think the underlined word means? If it's a word you don't know, try to guess its meaning, and use a dictionary to look up its actual definition. Then use it in a sentence of your own.

contraband

She liked to boast that she had a nose for smuggled goods, and she'd certainly found a lot of them: Every month, I handed off a heavy sack of contraband to the courier who came by from Interworld Travel. (93)

I think this word means:

The dictionary says:

My new sentence:

dubious

Now that I'd reached the other side of the worldgate, I realized why the cows looked so dubious. I'd expected the barn door to be attached to an actual barn, but when I turned around to look at the doorway I'd just passed through, all I saw was a dark rectangle, a gaping hole in the fabric between the worlds. (127)

I think this word means:

The dictionary says:

My new sentence:

pantomimed

Arthur pantomimed locking his lips and tossing away the imaginary key. (25)

I think this word means:

The dictionary says:

My new sentence:

persistent

The gatehouse bell is broken, but if you've managed to travel all the way to the end of the world, you're obviously persistent enough to knock on the door. (1)

I think this word means:

The dictionary says:

My new sentence:

pungent

As soon as I'd started to open the door, the air on the eighth floor had filled with the scent of fresh-cut grass, damp earth, and something more pungent, more fertile... (125)

I think this word means:

The dictionary says:

My new sentence:

sentimental

[The Gatekeeper] let out a loud, crackling laugh as the bees swarmed around her and I gave her a hug. "Now, there's no need to get sentimental," she said, but she didn't push me away or thwack me with her cane. (213)

I think this word means:

The dictionary says:

My new sentence:

tumult

I made my way through the tumult as quickly as I could, climbing over squirming travel officers, dodging flying nightgowns and undergarments. (198)

I think this word means:

The dictionary says:

My new sentence:

A Passport to Other Worlds

Conduct a character analysis supported by evidence from the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9]

It's time for the characters from The Door at the End of the World to apply for new otherworld passports. Choose one main character—Lucy, Arthur, or Rosemary—and fill out this passport application for them. Use information from the book to help you answer each question.

Applicant name:

Age:

Home world:

Family members:

In five words, how would you describe yourself?

How would your friends describe you?

What is your greatest dream?

What is your biggest fear?

Describe your proudest moment:

Describe one important mistake you have made:

Have your previous travels changed you in some way or given you a new perspective? Explain:

Please attach a photograph or self-portrait to this application. Completed forms may be returned to your regional Interworld Travel headquarters or to any gatehouse. Happy travels!

The Other Side of the Story

Retell a narrative from an alternate point of view.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.5, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.10, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.2]

The story events in The Door at the End of the World are told from Lucy's point of view: readers see the world through Lucy's eyes, experience only the events Lucy experiences, and have access to only Lucy's thoughts. How would the story be different if Mrs. Bracknell or Henry Tallard were telling it? How might Arthur, Rosemary, or Michael describe their adventures? What do you think the spelling bees or the cows from Northeast have to say about everything that's happened?

Choose a character from The Door at the End of the World and retell the story from that character's point of view. Use the space below, another sheet of paper, or a computer to write your retelling. If you'd like, you can use some of the new vocabulary words you learned from the Word Stretch exercise. When you've finished a first draft, work together with a friend or an adult helper to check your spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The retelling can be long or short, funny or serious, illustrated or not. Have fun and follow your imagination's lead!

Visit My World!

Write persuasively to support an argument.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.10, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.1, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.3]

Congratulations! You've just been hired to work at a tourist bureau in one of the eight connected worlds. Your job is to convince people in the other seven worlds to come and visit your world on their next vacation. In the space below, write down what you've learned from the book about the world you've chosen, and brainstorm a few reasons why people might want to travel there. Then use these ideas to create a brochure, magazine ad, audio recording, or another kind of advertisement to persuade otherworld travelers to visit your world. (Since it's your first day on the job, you might want to read or listen to real travel advertisements to learn about the kinds of words people use to appeal to visitors.) Share your finished ad with friends or family members.

Continue the Journey

Do you want to keep exploring The Door at the End of the World—and new worlds, too? Try some of these activity suggestions.

- ★ Some of the characters you’ve met want to come up with new ways to make connections among the eight worlds of the story. How would you **design a new way to connect the worlds**? Draw a map or diagram of your design.
- ★ **Be an otherworld explorer in your own neighborhood.** Choose a safe space near you—your living area or an outdoor area nearby—and walk around this space, imagining how a visitor from another world might see it. What would they notice about this place? What might be particularly strange or interesting to them? Take explorer’s field notes to keep track of your discoveries.
- ★ In *The Door at the End of the World*, Lucy is disappointed by the notes Thomas makes about her on her job application. **Write a better letter of recommendation for Lucy**, explaining what her skills are and why she would be an excellent Interworld Travel employee.
- ★ **Start an otherworld book club.** With friends or family members, read *The Door at the End of the World* and at least one more book in which the characters travel from our world to another one. Then talk about the books together. How are they similar? How are they different?
- ★ When Arabella Tallard invented a pair of magical scissors that could cut through the fabric of time and space, she changed all eight of the book’s connected worlds forever. **Research an invention that has made a major change in our own world.** Use library resources, trusted sources on the internet, or other reference materials to find out who created this invention, how it was created, and how has it changed our lives—both for better and for worse. Make a video, poster, or Web page to share the information you’ve learned.

Resources for Educators and Families

Visit corestandards.org to learn about the Common Core standards referenced in this guide.

To learn more about the author, visit Caroline Carlson’s website at carolinecarlsonbooks.com.

If You Want to Read More...

Look for these other fantasy adventures from author Caroline Carlson at your library, your local bookstore, or wherever books are sold.



The Very Nearly Honorable League of Pirates: Magic Marks the Spot

Hilary Westfield has always dreamed of being a pirate. She can tread water for thirty-seven minutes. She can tie a knot faster than a fleet of sailors, and she already owns a rather pointy sword. There's only one problem: The Very Nearly Honorable League of Pirates refuses to let any girl join their ranks of scourges and scallywags. But Hilary is not the kind of girl to take no for an answer. To escape a life of petticoats and politeness at her stuffy finishing school, Hilary sets out in search of her own seaworthy adventure, where she gets swept up in a madcap quest involving a map without an X, a magical treasure that likely doesn't exist, a talking gargoyle, a crew of misfit scallywags, and the most treacherous—and unexpected—villain on the High Seas.

The Very Nearly Honorable League of Pirates: The Terror of the Southlands

Hilary Westfield got her wish and now sails the seas as the Terror of the Southlands, but the Very Nearly Honorable League of Pirates doesn't think she's acting very nearly piratical enough. Hilary needs to prove she's as terrible as the Terror should be and is ready to set off with the crew of the Pigeon for adventure. But when Miss Pimm is discovered missing and the Queen's officers discovered incompetent, Hilary decides to find the missing Enchantress in order to protect the magic of the Augusta. With the help of first mate Charlie, finishing school friend Claire, and the always intrepid gargoyle, Hilary vows to get to the bottom of the mystery. Caroline Carlson brings the unceasing wit, humor, and magic of the first Very Nearly Honorable League of Pirates adventure in this epic sequel.



The Very Nearly Honorable League of Pirates: The Buccaneers' Code

Hilary Westfield is now a freelance pirate. After trying to prove herself to the VNHL, she realized many members of the League weren't all that honorable—not even very nearly. With Captain Blacktooth in cahoots with the Mutineers, the kingdom of Augusta and all its magic are at risk. What the League needs is a very honorable pirate to be their new president. So Hilary—with the help of her friends, including the always spirited gargoyle—challenges Blacktooth to a High Seas battle. Winner takes all. Loser, at best, will be exiled. Caroline Carlson has created a world where magic is currency, pirates are more charming than alarming, and a girl can choose a life as a pirate instead of a life in petticoats. And she once again delivers a story of high stakes, High Seas, and High Society in the hilarious and charming conclusion to the Very Nearly Honorable League of Pirates series.

The World's Greatest Detective

Caroline Carlson returns with *The World's Greatest Detective*, a story of crime, tricks, and hilarity for those who know that sometimes it takes a pair of junior sleuths to solve a slippery case. Detectives' Row is full of talented investigators, but Toby Montrose isn't one of them. He's only an assistant at his uncle's detective agency, and he's not sure he's even very good at that. Toby's friend Ivy is the best sleuth around—or at least she thinks so. They both see their chance to prove themselves when the famed Hugh Abernathy announces a contest to choose the World's Greatest Detective. But when what was supposed to be a game turns into a real-life murder mystery, can Toby and Ivy crack the case?

