



# THE LIGHTNING THIEF:

## Discussion Guide #1

Encourage critical thinking and support your students' literacy development by asking questions during reading. Here are some questions you can ask your readers to engage them in a discussion.



Chapters  
1–3

1. I Accidentally Vaporize My Pre-algebra Teacher
2. Three Old Ladies Knit the Socks of Death
3. Grover Unexpectedly Loses His Pants

### Comprehension:

- Why is Percy both hopeful and nervous about the museum field trip?  
**Percy is hopeful because the teacher taking them on the trip is entertaining. He's nervous because he often finds himself in trouble on field trips.**
- In the first chapter, Percy and Mr. Brunner discuss the myth of Kronos, a Titan from Greek mythology. Explain what Kronos did to his children and what Kronos's wife and Zeus did in response.  
**Kronos was a Titan who ate his children, the gods. When Kronos was ready to eat his child Zeus, his wife fed him a rock instead. Zeus grew up and fed Kronos a mixture that made him throw up the other fully-grown gods he had eaten. Together, the gods killed Kronos, cut him up, and scattered the parts in the darkest part of the Underworld.**
- How do both Mrs. Dodds and Mr. Brunner surprise Percy during the museum field trip? What does Percy do in response?  
**Mrs. Dodds transforms into a shrunken beast with talons and bat wings and begins to attack Percy. Mr. Brunner comes into the museum and throws Percy a pen that turns into a sword. When Percy swings the sword at Mrs. Dodds, she explodes with nothing left behind but a powder and a burning smell.**
- What does Percy conclude after eavesdropping on Mr. Brunner and Grover?  
**Although Percy doesn't understand what Mr. Brunner and Grover are talking about, he concludes that he's in danger.**
- Why is Percy surprised when Grover gives him a card with his contact information and suggests he can protect Percy?  
**Percy has protected Grover from bullies at school all year, so he's surprised that Grover thinks he can or needs to protect Percy.**
- What does Grover observe at the fruit stand that makes him nervous?  
**Grover sees three old ladies who are knitting a huge sock. He's very nervous about the scissors and whether or not the old lady cuts the yarn.**
- Who is Gabe? What does he demand from Percy when Percy comes home from school?  
**Gabe is Percy's stepdad. When Percy comes home from school, Gabe demands that Percy give him all of his money.**
- What are two reasons Percy is shocked and confused after his mom opens the cabin door during the storm?  
**Percy is confused to see Grover standing outside the cabin. He's also shocked to see that Grover looks different—he has hooves instead of feet, and he's not wearing pants.**



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### Analysis:

- How does Percy interpret Mr. Brunner's comments about leaving Yancy? Why do you think Percy is more upset by what Mr. Brunner says than he is by his English teacher's criticism?

**Percy takes Mr. Brunner's comments to mean that he doesn't actually believe in him the way Percy thought he did. All year Percy thought his favorite teacher was on his side, but now Mr. Brunner is saying that Yancy isn't the place for him. This leaves Percy feeling like no one has faith in him. Because Percy has had plenty of negative experiences with teachers in the past, his English teacher's comments don't upset him. Mr. Brunner's comments hurt much more because Percy cares what he thinks.**

- Percy's description of the beach cabin shows that he's content and happy when he's there. Based on what you know about his life at school and home, why is the cabin so special to him?

**When he's at the cabin, he's not struggling to get along with others or succeed in school. He can truly be himself with his mom because she loves him and believes in him. It makes Percy happy that his mom can also relax and enjoy their time together. He has good memories of their trips there from the time he was a baby, and he gets to hear stories about when his dad was at the cabin before Percy was born.**

### Personal Connection:

- Percy follows his description of the shabby, run-down beach cabin by saying he loves the place. Describe a place that's important to you but may not seem very special to others. How does the place look, sound, and smell, and why is it special to you?

**Student answers will vary.**



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Chapters  
4–6

4. My Mother Teaches Me Bullfighting
5. I Play Pinochle with a Horse
6. I Become Supreme Lord of the Bathroom

### Comprehension:

- Percy, his mom, and Grover flee from the beach cabin during the storm. Who does Grover say they're trying to get away from? Where is Percy's mom trying to take them?  
**Grover says they are trying to get away from the Lord of the Dead and his "blood-thirstiest minions." Percy's mom is trying to get them safely to the summer camp Percy's dad wanted to send him to.**
- As Mrs. Jackson tries to get them to safety in the car, Percy has a lot of questions for Grover. What does Grover explain about the three old ladies at the fruit stand? How does Grover's explanation make Percy even more anxious about what's going on?  
**Grover explains that the three old ladies are the Fates and that they only appear when someone is going to die. When he explains this to Percy, Grover first says "you" instead of saying "someone," so Percy thinks he, himself, is supposed to die.**
- Who or what comes to attack Percy after the car crashes into a ditch? During the battle that follows the crash, at what point does anger replace Percy's fear? How does his anger affect him?  
**The Minotaur, a huge bull-like monster, comes to attack Percy after the crash. When the Minotaur makes his mom disappear, Percy's fear turns to anger, and he's energized and strengthened enough to fight back and defeat The Minotaur.**
- Besides Grover, who else from Yancy Academy is at Camp Half-Blood? What's his real name, and why did he decide to teach at Yancy?  
**Mr. Brunner, Percy's Latin teacher from Yancy Academy, is at the camp. His real name is Chiron, and he decided to go to Yancy to teach Percy after Grover alerted Chiron that Percy seemed special.**
- According to Chiron, what does Grover have to do before he's able to pursue his dreams? Why might Grover not get another chance?  
**Grover needs to prove himself by showing great courage as a keeper, finding and bringing a new camper safely to Half-Blood Hill. Grover might not get another chance because he already failed at an attempt five years ago. Bringing Percy to Camp Half-Blood was his second chance, but it's up to Dionysis and the Council of Cloven Elders to determine if he was successful—Grover lost Percy in New York, Percy's mom disappeared at the hands of The Minotaur, and Grover was unconscious when Percy dragged him over the property line, after all.**
- Why are there twelve cabins, and why does Percy get assigned to number eleven?  
**Each cabin represents one of the twelve Olympians. Campers are assigned to the cabin of their god or goddess parent. Percy is assigned to cabin eleven—Hermes's cabin—because they don't know who Percy's father is yet. Hermes is the god of travelers, so all campers whose god or goddess parent is "undetermined" stay there.**



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### Comprehension (continued):

- How does Annabeth explain Percy being kicked out of a lot of schools and being diagnosed with ADHD and dyslexia?

Annabeth says that Percy's brain is hardwired for Ancient Greek, which makes English hard for him to read. His ADHD is due to his battlefield reflexes, so he's impulsive and has trouble sitting still in classrooms. She explains that Percy's attention problems are a result of his keen senses.

- Which god is one of Clarisse's parents? How does Clarisse welcome Percy to Camp Half-Blood, and what happens as a result?

Clarisse's father is Ares, the god of war. To welcome Percy to camp, Clarisse and some friends drag Percy into the bathroom to put his head in the toilet. Percy feels a pull in his gut right before water shoots out of the toilet, all the toilets explode, and showers spray. Clarisse and her friends are washed out of the bathroom. Though everyone else is soaked and the bathroom floods, Percy is completely dry.

### Analysis:

- Percy frequently makes negative comments about himself, and he refers to himself as "troubled" and "not normal." But other characters, such as Percy's mom and Mr. Brunner/Chiron, see Percy in a more positive light. Explain how these characters view Percy and how their views differ from Percy's own. What do you think this difference in perspective reveals?

Percy's mom tells him he's special and important, but Percy sees his differences and troubles as weaknesses and evidence of failure. Mr. Brunner/Chiron has high expectations of Percy, but Percy doesn't feel capable of meeting those high expectations. The difference in perspective reveals that Percy may not see himself clearly and that he likely judges himself too harshly.

- How is Clarisse from Camp Half-Blood similar to Nancy Bobofit, the girl from Percy's old school, and why does Percy find both of them so frustrating? Based on Percy's reaction to these characters, what kinds of people do you think Percy dislikes the most?

Clarisse, like Nancy Bobofit, is quick-tempered, argumentative, and unpleasant. Both girls behave aggressively and bully or tease others in the story. Percy finds these characters frustrating because they're mean to other people and don't behave in a fair or decent way. Based on his reactions to these characters, Percy probably dislikes people who bully others, who purposefully cause harm to others, and who unfairly dominate others.

### Personal Connection:

- At Camp Half-Blood, Percy is surprised to discover abilities he didn't know he had. Tell about a time you surprised yourself with newfound abilities or by being better at a skill than you expected to be.

Student answers will vary.