



THE LIGHTNING THIEF:

Discussion Guide #2

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
7–9

7. My Dinner Goes Up in Smoke
8. We Capture a Flag
9. I Am Offered a Quest



Comprehension:

- Why do demigods go to Camp Half-Blood, and what do they learn there? Why do some attend only for the summer but others stay year-round?
Camp Half-Blood is the only safe place for demigods. They go there to train to fight monsters. Some attend only for the summer because they're not very powerful and the monsters mostly ignore them, so they can live in the mortal world the rest of the year. Others stay year-round because they need the safety that camp provides. Demigods attract monsters when they reach age ten or eleven, which makes living in the mortal world dangerous for them.
- Who are the Big Three? What does each one control?
"The Big Three" are Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades, three powerful sons of the titan Kronos. They defeated their father and drew lots to see who would control which parts of the world. Zeus got the sky, Poseidon got the sea, and Hades got the Underworld.
- What pact did the Big Three make, and why? How did it impact the cabins at Camp Half-Blood?
The Big Three made a pact long ago to stop having children with mortals because their children were much more powerful than children of other gods. Their power affected the course of human events and caused a lot of destruction. Because of the pact, there shouldn't be any half-bloods living in the cabins of Zeus or Poseidon at Camp Half-Blood.
- How does Percy surprise himself and others at his first sword-fighting lesson?
Although Percy has no experience sword fighting, he surprises himself and the others by using a tricky movement to disarm Luke.
- Who's Thalia? How did she come to be at Half-Blood Hill, and what happened to her on the hill?
Thalia, the half-blood daughter of Zeus, was being escorted to Camp Half-Blood by a satyr. She and her friends were attacked on the hill by monsters. Thalia told the satyr to get the others to safety, and she died fighting the monsters. As she died, Zeus turned her into a pine tree on the hill where her spirit still helps protect the valley around camp.
- After the game, what happens to Percy's wounds when he gets in the water? What does everyone see in the sky, and what does this reveal?
When Percy is in the water, his wounds heal and disappear. A green hologram of a trident appears in the sky above Percy's head. The trident is a sign that Percy is the son of Poseidon.
- Why are Zeus and Poseidon fighting? What is the significance of the summer solstice?
Zeus and Poseidon are fighting over something that was stolen—Zeus's master bolt. Zeus thinks Percy stole the bolt for Poseidon. Though Poseidon knows it's not true, he's too proud to explain Percy's innocence to Zeus. The summer solstice is Zeus's deadline for the bolt to be returned. Poseidon has also set the summer solstice as the deadline for an apology from Zeus for being called a thief.



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Comprehension (continued):

- What does the Oracle say to Percy, and what parts of the prophecy does Percy choose not to share with Chiron?
The Oracle says Percy will go west to face the god who has turned; he will find what was stolen and return it; he will be betrayed by someone who calls him a friend; he will fail to save what matters most in the end. Percy doesn't tell Chiron that the Oracle says he'll be betrayed by a friend. He also withholds that the Oracle says he'll fail to save what matters most in the end.
- What is the plan for Percy's quest? Who's going with him, and what are their tasks and deadlines?
Grover and Annabeth are going with Percy. Their tasks are to go west to get to the Underworld to see Hades, to find the master bolt, and to return the master bolt to Zeus on Olympus. They must complete the quest by the summer solstice, which is in ten days.

Analysis:

- What does Percy learn from Annabeth and Luke about how gods treat their children? What attitude does Luke have about the relationships between gods and their demigod children?
Percy learns that the gods don't make time for their demigod children. Annabeth says the gods are busy and sometimes they don't care about their children. Luke has met his dad once and says it doesn't get any easier once you actually believe in the gods. Luke seems bitter about the way gods treat their children. Percy learns that being a child of the "Big Three" makes his situation more complicated and dangerous.
- Describe the dream Percy has after his father claims him. Based on what Percy later learns about the fight between the gods, how do the dream's details reflect what is happening in real life?
In Percy's dream, two muscular men wearing Greek tunics are fighting on a beach. One of them yells, "Give it back!" Percy shouts at the two men to stop fighting. A voice from below tells Percy to "Come down." Based on what Percy learns about his quest, the two men in the dream are Zeus and Poseidon. They are fighting because Zeus thinks Poseidon stole his master bolt. Percy wants the gods to stop fighting because he feels caught in the middle of the fight since he must find and return the bolt to prevent a war. The voice from below that beckons Percy to come down is from his previous dreams and is likely Hades.

Personal Connection:

- Before his first camp dinner, when everyone fills their glasses to make a toast, Percy requests blue Cherry Coke in honor of his mom. What's a food or drink that is special to you, and why?
Student answers will vary.



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Chapters
10–12

10. I Ruin a Perfectly Good Bus
11. We Visit the Garden Gnome Emporium
12. We Get Advice from a Poodle

Comprehension:

- Describe the gift Luke gives to Percy before the quest. What does Percy do with the gift, and why?
Luke gives Percy a pair of shoes with wings. Percy gives the shoes to Grover because it's not a good idea for Percy to use them. If Percy used them and flew in the sky, he'd be in Zeus's domain.
- Chiron explains that Mist is a powerful thing. Who generates Mist and when? How does it affect a non-mortal, and how does it affect humans?
Mist occurs when monsters or gods mix with the mortal world. When Mist is generated, a non-mortal will see things as they are, while a human's vision will be distorted or obscured. Humans will interpret things differently, not even realizing what really happened.
- Why did Percy's mom marry Gabe?
Percy's mom married "Smelly Gabe" to protect Percy. Gabe's "repulsively human" odor has covered up Percy's demigod scent, making it harder for monsters to find him over the years.
- Who do the three old ladies on the bus look like? Who are they and where are they from?
The three old ladies on the bus look exactly like Mrs. Dodds. They are the Furies, the worst monsters from the Underworld.
- Why is it important to Annabeth to go on a quest?
Annabeth has been training at Camp Half-Blood since she was seven. She wants to see the real world and find out if she's any good against monsters out there.
- What does Percy figure out about Aunty Em's real name? How is she dangerous? What does Percy do to protect himself and prevent Aunty Em from hurting others?
"Aunty Em" is another way of saying "Aunty M" or Medusa. Anyone who looks into Medusa's eyes will be turned into a statue. Percy uses a glass ball to see her so he doesn't look directly into her eyes, and he eventually cuts off her head.
- Who are the searchers, and why does their role exist? How does Grover hope to be different from the searchers before him?
Searchers are satyrs who look all over the world to find the god Pan who protected the satyrs and wild places of the earth. Pan disappeared two thousand years ago, and Grover wants to be the first searcher to find Pan and to return from his search alive.
- How are Percy, Annabeth, and Grover able to get money for new transportation? Where are they going and how will they get there?
Grover meets a pink poodle named Gladiola in the woods and they return her to her family for a reward. The friends plan to use the money to take a train to Los Angeles.



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Analysis:

- Reread the scene at Auntie Em's. What are some details you now see that suggest the three friends should be wary of Auntie Em? What details hint at her identity?

Answers will vary, but may mention that when the friends approach, Grover smells monsters and is uncomfortable about how the statues seem to look at him. Auntie Em locks the door behind them. The statues are all life-size and very life-like with different expressions, poses, and outfits. One statue looks startled or terrified. Percy notices the statues' eyes seem to follow him. Grover hears a hissing sound (the snakes on her head), and Auntie Em doesn't take off her heavy headdress (to hide the snakes). She tells a story about a jealous woman (Athena) who caused an accident to break up Auntie Em and her boyfriend (Poseidon).

- Percy sends Medusa's head to Mount Olympus and Annabeth warns that the gods will think he's impertinent. He responds, "I am impertinent." What does **impertinent** mean, and why would Percy feel that way toward the gods?

Impertinent means rude or disrespectful. Percy feels annoyed at the gods for the fight they're having and that he and his friends are caught in the middle. Although Percy wants to find his mom, he wonders if he's being used by the gods. He resents the fact that the gods don't make time for their children. After a frightening and life-threatening ordeal with "Auntie Em," Percy is especially frustrated about the behavior of the gods and how it affects him and his friends.

Personal Connection:

- In addition to the supplies Chiron gives the group, Grover and Annabeth each choose a few items to take on the quest. Some choices are practical, while others are more emotional or sentimental. What three personal items would you take on a quest and why?

Student answers will vary.