



THE LIGHTNING THIEF:

Discussion Guide #3

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
13–15

- 13. I Plunge to My Death
- 14. I Become a Known Fugitive
- 15. A God Buys Us Cheeseburgers



Comprehension:

- What makes Annabeth think the voice from the pit in Percy's dream is not Hades?
Unlike the person in Percy's dreams, Hades always appears on a black throne and he never laughs. Annabeth also questions why Hades would ask for the bolt if he already has it.
- What are two details Annabeth gives to explain why she thinks her dad doesn't care about her?
Annabeth says her dad never wanted a baby, and that when he got her, he asked Athena to take Annabeth to be raised on Olympus. When her father married and had kids, he and his wife didn't let Annabeth play with their children.
- Who are Sonny the Chihuahua and his mom, and why are they at the Gateway Arch in St. Louis? Why does Sonny's mom say Percy should be honored?
Sonny is a Chimera and his mom is Echidna, the monster of all monsters. They're at the Arch to destroy Percy. Echidna says that Percy should be honored because Zeus doesn't usually let her test a hero with one of her brood.
- What happens when Percy is underwater in the Mississippi River that confirms Poseidon is his father?
Despite jumping into the water from a few stories up, Percy survives the impact. In the water, he no longer feels the Chimera's poison. Percy can breathe normally under the water, and he's not wet.
- What message does the woman at the bottom of the river relay to Percy? What does she say about his mom, and what does she warn Percy against?
The woman says that Poseidon wants Percy to go to the beach in Santa Monica before he goes to the Underworld. She also says that Poseidon believes in Percy. She says that his mom's fate is not as hopeless as he believes, and she warns Percy not to trust the gifts.
- When he shows up at the diner, what "favor" does Ares ask Percy for? What does he promise in return?
Ares asks them to get his shield from an abandoned water park. If they do that, Ares will help them get out west. He also says that he'll share some information about Percy's mom.
- Explain what Ares means when he says to Percy, "In a way, you got me to thank for your little quest."
Ares told Poseidon that he suspects that Hades stole the lightning bolt. The notion that Hades has the bolt leads to Percy's quest to go to the Underworld to retrieve it.
- How does Annabeth explain why Ares asked them to retrieve his shield from the abandoned water park?
Annabeth says, "Even strength has to bow to wisdom sometimes." She suggests that Ares has physical strength, but that his strength isn't enough because this problem needs brains. Ares may not have the intelligence to solve this problem on his own.



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Comprehension (continued):

- Who sets a trap at the water park, and why?

Hephaestus set a trap to embarrass his wife, Aphrodite, and her boyfriend, Ares.

Analysis:

- Percy thanks his father twice when he's underwater in the river. What prompts Percy to thank Poseidon the first time, and how does he show his gratitude? How does the way he says "thank you" reflect his feelings? Why does Percy's attitude change the second time he thanks his father?

Percy hears a woman's voice asking him what he should say after safely landing in the river. He says, "Um... thanks." He then pauses between "thank you" and "Father," which shows that Percy seems unsure of what to say. He doesn't understand why Poseidon saves him. The second time he thanks his father, Percy is more confident. After the woman underwater shares that his father believes in him and assures him that his father is looking out for him, Percy thanks his father with certainty.

- Describe Ares's physical appearance and behavior in the diner. What effect does Ares have on Percy? Based on details in the text, why does it make sense for Ares to be the god of war?

Ares is dressed in red and black, carries a knife, and has scars from many fights. He has fire where his eyes should be, and he's intimidating and threatening to the waitress and Percy. Percy feels anger, resentment, and bitterness when Ares is near, and he feels urges to lash out, fight, and be aggressive. As god of war, Ares wants to stir up people's emotions, create conflict, and cause fighting. His appearance suggests that he's been in many fights and that he's ready for more.

Personal Connection:

- When he's underwater in the Mississippi River, Percy feels gratitude toward his father that he hasn't felt before. When have you been surprised by gratitude for a person or experience in your life?

Student answers will vary.



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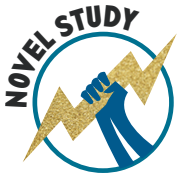


- 16. We Take a Zebra to Vegas
- 17. We Shop for Water Beds



Comprehension:

- How does Ares explain what happened to Percy's mom after the Minotaur attack?
Ares explains that Percy's mom was taken from the Minotaur before she could die and that the shower of gold means she's not dead but in a state of metamorphosis, or transformation. Ares says she's being kept as a hostage to control someone.
- Why is Annabeth terribly afraid of spiders?
Arachne was turned into a spider for challenging Athena, Annabeth's mom, to a weaving contest. Since then, Arachne's spider children have been taking revenge on Athena's children.
- What is Grover's role in the story of Thalia and Half-Blood Hill? What did he do, and who were the two other demigods with them?
Grover was the satyr assigned to escort Thalia to Camp Half-Blood safely. As directed by Thalia, Grover took the other two demigods, Annabeth and Luke, to camp while Thalia fought the monsters.
- What happened when Annabeth last tried living with her dad? What advice does Percy give her about her dad?
The last time Annabeth tried living with her dad, Annabeth's stepmom didn't want her living with them. Monsters attacked, and the family argued. Before the end of winter break, Annabeth called Chiron and went back to Camp Half-Blood. Percy suggests that Annabeth should write her dad a letter.
- Why and how do Percy, Annabeth, and Grover help the zoo animals on their way to Las Vegas?
The zebra, albino lion, and antelope are being mistreated by the drivers, who are animal smugglers. Percy, Annabeth, and Grover give the animals water and the correct food. Grover communicates with them, calming them down and gathering information. When the truck stops, they free the animals from the truck.
- What are some features of the Lotus Casino that make it seem like paradise to Percy, Grover, and Annabeth? What is the downside of the casino for them?
The Lotus Casino has a hot tub and a bar stocked with candy, sodas, and chips. Visitors have unlimited Lotus cash cards, which work for restaurants, games, and rides. There are fun activities, such as bungee jumping and water slides, to please everyone. The downside is that people lose track of time there, which means the friends accidentally spend five days at the casino. When they leave, they only have one day left to complete the quest.
- Why does the Nereid say that Percy should not judge his father too severely? What reasons does the Nereid give?
The Nereid says Poseidon is occupied by the possibility of war and that he's forbidden from helping Percy directly, since that would be a show of favoritism.



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Comprehension (continued):

- What gift does the Nereid give Percy, and what is her warning?
The Nereid gives Percy three white pearls and says to throw a pearl at his feet when he's in need. She warns that Hades feeds on doubt and hopelessness.
- What are Percy, Grover, and Annabeth looking for in L.A.? Why do they need to find the place?
They're looking for DOA Recording Studios, the entrance to the Underworld where they need to go to retrieve the bolt.
- What is Crusty's real name and what is he known for in mythology? What does he do to Annabeth and Grover, and why?
Crusty is really Procrustes, a giant who tried to kill Theseus with excess hospitality. He traps Grover and Annabeth on the beds to stretch them to be six feet tall so they fit the beds perfectly.

Analysis:

- At the beginning of his dream in chapter sixteen, Percy is in a school. How does this part of his dream relate to Percy's waking life in the past and present?
The straightjacket in the dream might symbolize the lack of control that Percy feels in real life. Percy struggles to take a test in the dream, and he struggles on his quest. In the dream, the teacher asks Percy if he's stupid after the other kids go to recess. In reality, Percy feels confused about the quest and the voice in the pit. In the dream, Thalia tells Percy that one of them needs to go, so Percy returns to the cavern to talk to Hades. In reality, Percy is afraid he'll suffer the same fate as Thalia and not survive his journey to Camp Half-Blood.
- What does Percy do when he reaches the ocean in Santa Monica? Explain how Percy's actions and emotions reveal that he's becoming more comfortable with the idea of being a demigod.
Percy walks into the ocean and starts breathing normally underwater. He holds the fin of a shark that pulls him to the edge of a chasm where he meets the Nereid and asks her questions. She gives him some magic pearls and advice. Percy is calmer and more confident. He shows that he's more comfortable with his reality when he enters the polluted water without complaint. He doesn't panic when he needs to breathe, and he trusts the shark. Percy is calm when talking to the Nereid, and he doesn't argue or protest when the Nereid speaks. At this point, he's less afraid.

Personal Connection:

- The Lotus Casino tempts all who enter. What foods, activities, and games would draw you in and keep you munching and playing happily for days?
Student answers will vary.