



# THE LIGHTNING THIEF:

## Discussion Guide #4

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  
18–20

18. Annabeth Does Obedience School
19. We Find Out the Truth, Sort Of
20. I Battle My Jerk Relative

### Comprehension:

- How does Percy persuade Charon to let them into the Underworld?  
**Percy gives Charon gold drachmas, expresses sympathy for how challenging Charon's job must be, and says he will mention to Hades that Charon is due for a pay raise.**
- What is the River Styx, and why does it look like that?  
**The River Styx is the river that the souls of the dead travel across in order to reach the entrance to the Underworld. The river is polluted with bones, dead fish, and discarded belongings, like plastic dolls, crushed flowers, and diplomas. Charon says that, for thousands of years, humans have been throwing in hopes, dreams, and wishes as they go across the river.**
- What is the difference between the Asphodel Fields and the Fields of Elysium?  
**The Asphodel Fields are for people who have simply lived life, not having done anything particularly good or bad. The Fields of Elysium are for people who deserve a special reward for doing good in life.**
- Who is Cerberus, and what's his role in the Underworld? What does Annabeth do so that the three friends can get through the lines and into the Underworld?  
**Cerberus is a three-headed creature that guards Hades's door. Annabeth gets a ball from her backpack and plays with Cerberus to distract him so they can run through the line.**
- When Grover's shoes begin flying on their own, where do they take him? Where has Percy seen this place before? What's the place called?  
**The flying shoes drag Grover to a huge dark cavern with a large chasm in the middle of it. Percy has seen this cave and pit in his dreams. It's the entrance to Tartarus.**
- What important object is Hades missing, and what does he think happened to it? What does Percy realize about why his own backpack has been feeling so heavy?  
**Hades is missing his helm of darkness, and he thinks Percy stole it for Poseidon. When Percy opens his backpack, he realizes that it has been feeling heavy because it contains Zeus's master bolt.**
- What choice does Percy need to make about the pearls he was given by the Nereid? What does Percy decide, and why?  
**Percy has three pearls that will allow three people to escape the Underworld, but he has four people he wants to save. Percy decides to give a pearl each to Annabeth and Grover since they've saved him so many times and are willing to sacrifice themselves for his mom. He decides to use the third pearl for himself because he wants to stop the war, and he knows his mom won't forgive him if he saves her instead of himself.**



# THE LIGHTNING THIEF:

## Discussion Guide #4

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  
18–20

18. Annabeth Does Obedience School
19. We Find Out the Truth, Sort Of
20. I Battle My Jerk Relative

### Comprehension (continued):

- What deal does Percy make with Ares in order to get the helm and bolt? How does Percy use his natural gifts in the fight?  
**Percy tells Ares that if Ares wins their fight, he can turn Percy into anything he wants and take the bolt. If Percy wins, he gets the helm and bolt, and Ares has to go away. During the fight, Percy holds back the tide and then releases it, jumping over Ares and stunning him with the huge wave.**
- After the fight between Ares and Percy, what happens to Hades's helm? What is Percy's plan for Zeus's bolt?  
**Percy gives the helm to a Fury to take back to Hades. Percy says they need to fly to New York to return the bolt to Zeus.**

### Analysis:

- Characters in the book discuss Hades as though he's a cruel god who lacks empathy and warmth. Although Hades may not have compassion or show kindness to others, what evidence suggests that Hades does have feelings of his own?  
**Hades is not kind to Percy or others, but he has emotions like any human or god. Hades gets upset about the burdens he feels since his kingdom has grown, and he's offended that his brothers assume he would want a war. Hades seems hurt that nobody cares that his helm was stolen.**
- Why does Percy begin to suspect that Ares hasn't been acting alone and that he's been taking orders from someone?  
**When Percy asks Ares why he didn't keep the bolt himself, Ares looks as though he's listening to someone deep inside his head before he answers. Percy guesses that Ares isn't actually making the decisions and that he's being ordered to act by the voice in the pit.**

### Personal Connection:

- Percy says Elysium contains "neighborhoods of beautiful houses from every time period in history, Roman villas and medieval castles and Victorian mansions. Silver and gold flowers bloomed on the lawns." If you lived in Elysium, what would your dream house look like?

**Student answers will vary.**



# THE LIGHTNING THIEF:

## Discussion Guide #4

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  
21 – 22

21. I Settle My Tab

22. The Prophecy Comes True

### Comprehension:

- After the battle on the beach, what is the story the public hears from the L.A. news?  
*According to the news, a crazy kidnapper (Ares) fired a shotgun at a police car, hitting a gas main that ruptured during an earthquake. This kidnapper had taken Percy and two other adolescents across the country in a ten-day “odyssey of terror.” The news also reports that the kidnapper caused the explosion at the St. Louis Arch and was seen “threatening abductees” outside a diner in Denver.*
- What risk does Percy take in order to get to Mount Olympus on time? How do the three friends get the money to travel to the entrance of Mount Olympus?  
*Percy risks flying on an airplane, which is dangerous for him since the sky is Zeus's domain. The friends receive donations after Percy makes a statement about getting home to his loving stepfather, and they have enough money to travel back to New York.*
- How does Percy convince the guard at the Empire State Building to let him up to Olympus to see Zeus?  
*Percy shows the guard Zeus's bolt in order to get the security key to take the elevator to the six hundredth floor.*
- Once he enters Olympus, what does Percy come to understand about Hades?  
*Percy sees that Olympus is so wonderful, and he begins to feel a little sorry for Hades. Percy thinks being banished from Olympus would make anyone bitter.*
- How does Poseidon respond when Percy tells him what he's learned about Kronos's plans?  
*Poseidon expresses doubt that Kronos could rise from the pit. Then he says that Lord Zeus has closed discussion on the matter, ending the conversation with Percy.*
- What does Percy's mom realize about how she needs to live her life from now on?  
*Sally Jackson realizes that she needs to find the courage to live a meaningful life. She sees that she can't let a god or her son take care of her, and she needs to take care of herself.*
- Why is Grover saying goodbye, and why does Percy have mixed feelings about it?  
*Grover has been granted his searcher's license, and he's leaving to look for Pan. While Percy is happy that Grover has achieved his dream, Grover is his oldest friend and Percy will miss him. Percy is also anxious about Grover's mission because no searcher has ever returned from looking for Pan.*
- After Percy returns to camp, what conclusions does he come to about how the prophecy is completed? Which part of the prophecy still troubles him?  
*Percy concludes that he went west and faced the god who has turned, although it was Ares, and not Hades, who turned. Percy found what was stolen—the master bolt and helm—and returned them. He understands that he failed to save what matters most, but that's because he let her mom save herself. The part of the prophecy that still bothers him states, “you shall be betrayed by one who calls you a friend.” He thinks it may be related to Ares pretending to be his friend, but he's not certain.*



# THE LIGHTNING THIEF:

## Discussion Guide #4

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  
21 – 22

21. I Settle My Tab

22. The Prophecy Comes True

### Comprehension (continued):

- How is Percy "betrayed by one who calls [him] a friend"? How does this character betray Percy, and what are the character's motives?

Luke has called himself Percy's friend, but Luke betrays him. Luke is responsible for summoning the hellhound to Camp Half-Blood in order to make Chiron think camp wasn't safe and send Percy on his quest. Luke gifted Percy the flying shoes, which were intended to drag him into Tartarus. Luke's goal was to create conflict among the gods while he serves Kronos, so he stole Zeus's bolt and Hades's helm of darkness.

### Analysis:

- What does Sally Jackson end up doing to Gabe, and what other changes does she make in her life? What do these choices reveal about Sally's character?

Sally Jackson uses Medusa's head to turn Gabe into a statue herself. Then, she sells the statue, called *The Poker Player*, to an art gallery. With the huge sum of money she makes from the statue, she puts a deposit on a new apartment and pays a down payment on tuition at NYU. These choices illustrate that Sally has hidden strength and determination. Though she seemed unable to stand up to Gabe, she intentionally stayed with him to protect Percy. When she decides she needs to solve her own problems, she takes action.

- How does Percy feel about his dad at the end of the book? Give examples of Poseidon's actions from these chapters that likely affect how Percy feels.

At the end of the story, Percy is less worried about what Poseidon thinks or feels about him, and he's not angry at his dad. Percy seems pleased that his dad is proud of him. On Olympus, Poseidon defends Percy when Zeus is angry about not being greeted first. This shows Percy that he's not alone and that his dad will stand up for him. Poseidon says Percy's mom is a "queen among women." In the past, Percy has been protective of his mom and angry that Poseidon left her, but this comment shows that Poseidon does care about Sally Jackson. Poseidon claims Percy as his, as a true son of the Sea God, and he smiles when he observes that obedience doesn't come easily to Percy. Poseidon shows a sense of pride and connection to Percy.

### Personal Connection:

- After he's attacked by the scorpion, Percy is eager to fight against Kronos, but Chiron insists that Percy needs to be patient and to train more. What is something you're eager to do that requires time and preparation before you're ready to do it? How much time and what sort of preparation do you think you need?

Student answers will vary.