

THE BEACON KEEPERS



FIRST LIGHT

EDUCATOR & FACILITATOR GUIDE

Classroom companion guide for grades 4–8

Educational Use Notice

These materials are provided by Lordsburg Press as optional companion resources for *The Beacon Keepers: First Light*. They are designed to support classroom, library, homeschool, family, and small-group conversations around the themes of the book, including trust, teamwork, integrity, student voice, purpose, and responsible leadership.

These resources are not a formal curriculum, clinical program, counseling tool, psychological assessment, or substitute for professional judgment. Educators, librarians, parents, and facilitators should adapt questions and activities based on student age, readiness, classroom culture, district policy, and local requirements.

Some prompts may invite personal reflection. Students should never be required to share private experiences. They may respond from their own experience, from a character's experience, or through a general "someone might" example.

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WELCOME & OVERVIEW

Welcome, and thank you for choosing *The Beacon Keepers: First Light* for your classroom.

This purpose-driven middle-grade novel helps open meaningful conversations about belonging, trust, leadership, teamwork, integrity, and student voice. The principles land the way they land best through characters who face hard choices, fail honestly, rebuild carefully, and show up for one another when it matters.

What this book can do is real, but quiet. It can help make the invisible social dynamics of school more visible. It can help students see that being organized, observant, energetic, anxious, artistic, technical, or quiet can all be forms of contribution. It can give your classroom a shared language for talking about integrity, inclusion, trust, and project work. And it can invite readers to ask questions that lead. Who feels left out around me, and what could I do about it?

This guide is built to support you however you choose to use it, in whole or in part, at your own pace, in your own way. You know your students. This story is here to meet them where they are.

The book does not promise to change kids. It gives them a story strong enough to help them start asking better questions about who they are, how they lead, and for whom they make room. The rest is up to them, and to you.

First Light is Book One in *The Beacon Keepers* series. The story does not end here, and neither do the conversations it hopes to start.

As the series continues, Leo, Jada, Max, and their crew will face new challenges that deepen what began in a basement room through learning to give honest feedback without losing trust, multiplying leadership beyond the original team, confronting what happens when safety fails, leading through change without losing direction, and building something that lasts after the people who started it move on.

Each book adds a new layer of candor, vision, resilience, continuous improvement, safety, stewardship, and the practical thinking that turns good intentions into lasting systems. The principles grow as the characters grow, giving the conversations your classroom starts with *First Light* room to go further with every book that follows.

— Lordsburg Press

About the Book

When a mysterious note sends Leo Morales, Jada Chen, and Max Vega to Ziggy's Skate & Drone, they discover a challenge bigger than any school competition. They take on building a place where everyone belongs, matters, and can shine.

Together, the Beacon Keepers transform an overlooked art room into something real. Part club, part project space, part safe harbor, their community lab discovers how to navigate through observations, data, design, and student voice to help more kids at Saltwind Bay Middle School feel seen.

But as the Spring Club Challenge gets closer, pressure builds. A polished rival team is watching. Trust is tested. And when an integrity crisis threatens what they have built, Leo, Jada, Max, and their crew must decide what matters most.

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Fiction / Nonfiction	Fiction
Topic / Subject	Leadership, Friendship, Integrity, Belonging, Self-Discovery
Chapters	20
AR Quiz	Sets A & B available for Teacher-Made upload (see AR Quiz Support)

About the Author

G.M. Samuelson spent three decades in operations leadership and safety, and more than a decade coaching youth sports. Across both, he saw a consistent truth that strong teams are built on trust, courage, communication, and people who are willing to show up for one another. He writes middle-grade fiction about friendship, belonging, integrity, and the quiet work of becoming someone others can count on.

Themes

- **Belonging** — Creating room for others instead of waiting to be included
- **Friendship** — Noticing when someone feels invisible and caring enough to respond
- **Teamwork** — Sharing responsibility and using different strengths well
- **Trust** — Built through consistency, honesty, respect, and repair
- **Integrity** — Doing the right thing, even when it costs something
- **Purpose** — Discovered through observation, reflection, and action
- **Student Voice** — Students helping identify needs and design solutions
- **Courage** — Speaking, showing up, and acting even when something feels hard
- **Decision-Making** — Using clear questions to choose wisely under pressure
- **Leadership** — Service over status; helping others move forward
- **Project Management** — Mission statements, pilot testing, correction plans, decision filters, and capacity planning introduced through story
- **Safety** — Psychological safety, process safeguards, and the reminder that speed is not the same as care

How to Use This Guide

This guide is organized around six instructional units, with pacing options, extended discussions, culminating projects, AR quiz support, and appendix resources. Each unit connects to a specific chapter cluster and includes discussion prompts, writing prompts, extension activities, and reflection options tied to that section of the story.

Use the full guide for a comprehensive novel study, or select individual materials based on your classroom goals, schedule, and student readiness. The resources are designed to be flexible, so educators can teach one chapter cluster at a time while keeping the themes, skills, and activities connected. You may also choose the tools that best fit your class from the toolbox within each unit, helping students navigate toward their own North at the pace and depth that works best for them.

- **Welcome & Overview**
- **Section 1: Classroom Pacing Guide** – suggested 3-week, 4-week, and 6-week schedules
- **Section 2: Unit 1-6 Materials** – Comprehension/Analysis/Connection, Values & Leadership discussions, Writing prompts, Extension activities
- **Section 3: Extended Leadership Discussions** – deeper conversations about leadership, teamwork, trust, accountability, and decision-making
- **Section 4: Culminating Projects** – demonstrate comprehension and apply learning
- **Section 5: AR Quiz Support** – Accelerated Reader support information
- **Appendix:** terms glossary, vocabulary quick-reference, CCSS & CASEL reference

Before Reading: Anticipation Guide

Before students open the book, have them respond with Agree, Disagree, or It Depends. Invite students to explain their thinking, then revisit the statements after reading. (see Culminating Project 4.)

- A good leader is someone who wins.
- Trust can begin quickly, but it has to be earned over time.
- If no one complains about a problem, it probably doesn't need to be fixed.
- The best way to help someone is to do things for them.
- The best leader is the loudest voice in the room.
- Being organized can be a form of caring about people.
- People who are quiet usually don't want to be noticed.

Companion Resource: The Beacon Keeper's Logbook

The Beacon Keeper's Logbook is a standalone student journal or personal reflection logbook with six sections that mirror the six units of this guide. It includes reflection prompts, challenges, and personal statements. Logbook section references appear throughout the pacing guide and extension activities. Contact hello@lordsburgpress.com for materials.

CLASSROOM PACING GUIDE

Educator Discretion

The schedules below are suggested options, not mandated plans. Every classroom is different. Use these as starting points and adjust the pace, sequence, and activity selection to fit your students, your schedule, and your instructional goals. The unit structure is consistent across all options, so you can mix and match components freely.

All three schedules use the same six-unit structure. Each unit includes Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection; Values & Leadership Discussion; Writing Prompts; Extension Activities; and optional Logbook connections.

Six-Unit Spine

Unit	Chapters	Theme	PM & Safety Thread	Logbook
1	Ch. 1–4	Purpose & discovery	Safe spaces, psychological safety	Section 1
2	Ch. 5–8	Belonging & values	Mission statement, team formation, observation, early protocols	Section 2
3	Ch. 9–12	Integrity & accountability	Correction plans, scaffolding, process	Section 3
4	Ch. 13–16	Preparation & courage	PROVE. PROTECT. PRACTICE. Pilot tests	Section 4
5	Ch. 17–19	Growth & sustainability	Decision filter, capacity, saying no	Section 5
6	Ch. 20	Reflection & transformation	Measuring impact, staying steady	Section 6

Culminating Project

Each schedule ends with a “Culminating Project.” This refers to one of four post-reading project options listed in Culminating Projects: (1) Build a Beacon — a class proposal to improve a school space, (2) Character Study Essay, (3) Beacon Keeper Showcase, or (4) Revisit the Anticipation Guide. Choose the option that best fits your class and available time.

Option A: 6-Week Deep Dive

Best for: Whole-class novel study with SEL-aligned discussion advisory block, or literature-focused ELA. One unit per week.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Wk. 1	Read Ch. 1–2	Read Ch. 3–4	Unit 1 Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection	Unit 1 Values & Leadership Discussion + Writing Prompt	Unit 1 Extension Activity + Logbook Section 1
Wk. 2	Read Ch. 5–6	Read Ch. 7–8	Unit 2 Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection	Unit 2 Values & Leadership Discussion + Writing Prompt	Unit 2 Extension Activity + Logbook Section 2
Wk. 3	Read Ch. 9–10	Read Ch. 11–12	Unit 3 Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection	Unit 3 Values & Leadership Discussion + Writing Prompt	Unit 3 Extension Activity + Logbook Section 3
Wk. 4	Read Ch. 13–14	Read Ch. 15–16	Unit 4 Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection	Unit 4 Values & Leadership Discussion + Writing Prompt	Unit 4 Extension Activity + Logbook Section 4
Wk. 5	Read Ch. 17–18	Read Ch. 19	Unit 5 Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection	Unit 5 Values & Leadership Discussion + Writing Prompt	Unit 5 Extension Activity + Logbook Section 5
Wk. 6	Read Ch. 20	Unit 6 Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection	Unit 6 Values & Leadership Discussion + Writing Prompt	Unit 6 Extension Activity or Culminating Project Work	Culminating Project Presentations + AR Quiz / Celebration

Option B: 4-Week Standard

Best for: Standard ELA novel study. Reading and core tools are blended across four weeks, with writing prompts and extension activities used selectively or as homework.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Wk. 1	Read Ch. 1–2 + Unit 1 Vocabulary	Read Ch. 3–4 + Unit 1 Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection	Unit 1 Values & Leadership Discussion + Writing Prompt	Unit 1 Extension Activity + Read Ch. 5–6	Read Ch. 7–8 + Unit 2 Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection
Wk. 2	Unit 2 Values & Leadership Discussion + Writing Prompt	Unit 2 Extension Activity + Read Ch. 9–10	Read Ch. 11–12 + Unit 3 Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection	Unit 3 Values & Leadership Discussion + Writing Prompt	Unit 3 Extension Activity + Logbook Section 3
Wk. 3	Read Ch. 13–14 + Unit 4 Vocabulary	Read Ch. 15–16 + Unit 4 Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection	Unit 4 Values & Leadership Discussion + Writing Prompt	Unit 4 Extension Activity + Read Ch. 17–18	Read Ch. 19 + Unit 5 Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection
Wk. 4	Unit 5 Values & Leadership Discussion + Writing Prompt	Unit 5 Extension Activity + Read Ch. 20	Unit 6 Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection + Values & Leadership Discussion	Unit 6 Writing Prompt or Extension Activity + Culminating Project Work	Presentations + Revisit Anticipation Guide + AR Quiz / Celebration

Option C: 3-Week Intensive

Best for: Grades 6–8 or independent reading groups. Students complete most reading outside class; class time focuses on discussion, writing, and applied activities.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Wk. 1	Unit 1 Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection + Values Discussion	Unit 1 Writing Prompt or Extension Activity	Unit 2 Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection + Values Discussion	Unit 2 Writing Prompt or Extension Activity	Unit 3 Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection + Values Discussion
Wk. 2	Unit 3 Writing Prompt or Extension Activity	Unit 4 Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection + Values Discussion	Unit 4 Writing Prompt or Extension Activity	Unit 5 Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection + Values Discussion	Unit 5 Writing Prompt or Extension Activity
Wk. 3	Unit 6 Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection + Values Discussion	Unit 6 Writing Prompt or Extension Activity	Culminating Project Planning	Culminating Project Work / Presentations	Presentations + Revisit Anticipation Guide + AR Quiz / Celebration

UNIT 1: FIND YOUR BEACON (CHAPTERS 1-4)

Students are introduced to Leo, Jada, Max, Ziggy, and the Beacon, Foundation, and Shoreline model. This unit focuses on purpose, observation, identity, and the idea that leadership often begins by noticing what others miss.

Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection

Scaffolded discussion questions for each unit, plus vocabulary drawn from the text. Questions are marked by level: Comprehension (○) for all readers, Analysis (●) for inference and evidence, Connection (★) for personal reflection and journal writing.

Standards: RL.5.1, RL.5.2, RL.5.3, RL.5.6, SL.5.1, W.5.3

SEL: Self-Awareness, Social Awareness

“Don’t have to be perfect to tell the truth. Sometimes the dents are what make people believe you.”

— Ziggy

Comprehension ○

- What three things does Ziggy say he noticed about Leo, Jada, and Max before he invited them? (Ch. 1)
- What are the three parts of Ziggy’s lighthouse? What does each part represent? (Ch. 1)
- How does each character discover their personal beacon? What specific moment helps each one? (Ch. 2–4)

Analysis ●

- Ziggy says, “Leading and looking important are not the same thing.” What does he mean? How does the cracked compass illustrate this idea? (Ch. 1)
- Compare Leo’s conversation with his mother (Ch. 3) to Jada’s conversation with Nai Nai (Ch. 2). How do both adults help without telling the kids what to do?
- Why does the author give each character their own chapter to discover their beacon, rather than having them figure it out together?

Connection ★

- Ziggy tells the kids: “Watch what you do when nobody asks. Watch what people come to you for.” If you did this for one day, what would you notice about yourself?
- Leo’s mother says, “Speed is not the same thing as care.” (Ch. 3) When have you seen this be true in your own life?

Vocabulary

- deliberately (Ch. 1) — done on purpose and with careful thought
- respect (Ch. 4) — treating people, ideas, and responsibilities as if they matter
- integrity (Ch. 4) — doing the right thing, even when it is hard or costs something

Values & Leadership Discussion

Reflection questions for trust, teamwork, integrity, student voice, and purposeful action

These discussion prompts are designed for morning meetings, advisory circles, small-group discussion, or the first five minutes of class. They are reflection-first conversations, not tests, and there is no single right answer.

Because some prompts may touch on personal feelings, students should always have a choice in how they respond. They may answer from their own experience, from a character's experience, or by saying what "someone might" feel in that situation.

The goal is not to make students share more than they are ready to share. The goal is to help them notice, think, listen, and connect the story to real choices people face every day.

1A

Setup: Ziggy tells Leo, Jada, and Max that he noticed specific things about each of them before he ever said a word.

Question: *What do you think someone would notice about you if they spent a week paying attention to how you show up?*

Follow-up: Would that match what you think is most important about yourself?

Listen for: *Students distinguishing between what they do and who they are.*

1B

Setup: Leo's mom, Jada's grandmother, and Max's sister Carmen all help the main characters figure something out — but none of them give answers directly.

Question: *How does someone help you best — by telling you what to do, or by helping you figure it out yourself?*

Follow-up: Can you think of a time someone helped you without giving you the answer?

Listen for: *Students recognizing the difference between directive and supportive help.*

Writing Prompts

Structured writing assignments for text evidence, reflection, narrative writing, and purposeful response. Each unit includes two prompts with a connection, writing task, scaffold, and skills/standards connection.

Use as journal entries, homework, small-group responses, or extended writing assignments. For personal reflection prompts, students may write from their own experience, from a character's experience, or through a realistic "someone might" example.

1A — Beacon Statement

Connection: Leo, Jada, and Max each discover their beacon through personal moments — not through a test or an assignment.

Prompt: *Write your own beacon statement: one sentence that describes what you stand for. Then explain in 3–5 sentences how you discovered it.*

Scaffold: *Start with: "I stand for ____ because ____."*

RL.5.2, W.5.3 | Self-Awareness

1B — The Moment Before the Beacon

Connection: Leo, Jada, and Max each discover something about themselves because someone or something helps them see it differently.

Prompt: *Choose one character from Unit 1. Write about the moment before they understand their beacon. What are they unsure about? What helps them begin to see themselves differently? Use at least one detail from the story.*

Scaffold: *Start with: "Before ____ understands their beacon, they feel _____. The moment that begins to change this is ____ because ____."*

RL.5.1, RL.5.3, W.5.1 | Self-Awareness, Social Awareness

Extension Activities

Classroom activities for reflection, collaboration, problem-solving, and applied learning

These activities help students connect the story to action through discussion, planning, presenting, creating, and teamwork. Each activity includes a story connection, simple steps, debrief questions, and options for differentiation.

Use them flexibly based on student readiness, classroom needs, and available time. When personal sharing is not appropriate or desired, students may respond through a character, fictional scenario, or general “someone might” example. The goal is thoughtful participation, respectful collaboration, and meaningful connection to the story.

1A. The Beacon Quest | 20 min | Individual → Small Groups

Connection: Mirrors the characters’ discovery process in Chapters 2–4.

Materials: Paper, pencils. Optional: index cards.

Setup: Assign the asking portion ahead of time, or let students complete the activity using a character, fictional student, or trusted classroom example. Tell students: “The Beacon Keepers had to discover their purpose by asking other people what they noticed. You’re going to do the same thing.”

Steps:

1. Students write down 2–3 people they trust.
2. Ask those people: “What do you think I care about most?” Write down the answers.
3. Look for patterns. What shows up more than once?
4. Write a personal beacon statement: one sentence.
5. Share in small groups of 3–4. No critiquing — just listening.

Debrief:

- Was anything surprising about what people said?
- Did the patterns match what you expected?
- How does writing it down feel different from just thinking it?

Scaffolding: *For struggling writers: “I stand for ___ because I always ___.”*

CCSS: W.5.3, SL.5.1 | SEL: Self-Awareness | Logbook: Section 1

1B. Lighthouse Diagram | 30 min | Individual

Connection: The three-part lighthouse is the novel’s central framework.

Materials: Large paper, colored pencils or markers.

Setup: Draw a simple lighthouse on the board. Label: Beacon (top), Foundation (base), Shoreline (visible line where light meets the world).

Steps:

1. Students draw their own lighthouse with personal content: Beacon = what matters, Foundation = values, Shoreline = visible actions.
2. Encourage both drawing and writing.
3. Display on a classroom wall as a gallery.

Debrief:

- Which part was easiest to fill in? Which was hardest?
- How does your shoreline connect to your beacon?

Differentiation: *For advanced students: add a “fog” layer representing fears or doubts.*

CCSS: RL.5.2, W.5.2 | SEL: Self-Awareness | Logbook: Section 1

UNIT 2: BUILD YOUR FOUNDATION (CHAPTERS 5-8)

The Beacon Keepers begin inviting others into the work and shaping the basement room into something real. This unit focuses on welcoming others, using different strengths, creating shared values, and understanding the difference between being invited and truly mattering.

Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection

Standards: RL.5.1, RL.5.2, RL.5.3, RL.5.4, SL.5.1, W.5.1

SEL: Relationship Skills, Social Awareness, Responsible Decision-Making

"This is what belonging feels like. Like I'm not just in the room. I matter to the room."

— Maya

Comprehension ○

- How does each new member join the Beacon Keepers? What does Leo, Jada, or Max do differently for each person? (Ch. 5–6)
- What does Maya say belonging feels like after helping set up the room? (Ch. 6)
- Who names the group "The Beacon Keepers" and what does the name mean? (Ch. 6)

Analysis ●

- Leo arrives at the first meeting with a printed agenda but ends up folding it in half. What does this teach him about planning versus listening? (Ch. 6)
- Max invites Maya by saying the group is "a place where people are allowed to be unfinished." Why is that word important? (Ch. 5)
- Compare how Amil joins (through curiosity) with how Maya joins (through vulnerability). What does this tell us about the different paths to belonging?

Connection ★

- Think about a space in your school where you feel like you belong. What makes it feel that way — the room, the people, or both?
- Have you ever been in a group where someone was trying too hard to lead? What happened?

Vocabulary

- aggregate (Ch. 7) — individual pieces of information combined into totals or groups, so you see overall patterns instead of one person's details
- momentum (Ch. 7) — the energy and drive that builds when something keeps moving forward
- mission statement (Ch. 5) — short statement of what a team is trying to do and why it matters
- risk (Ch. 8) — the chance that something could go wrong, cause harm, or damage trust

Values & Leadership Discussion

Reflection questions for trust, teamwork, integrity, student voice, and purposeful action

These discussion prompts are designed for morning meeting, advisory circles, small-group discussion, or the first five minutes of class. They are reflection-first conversations, not tests, and there is no single right answer.

Because some prompts may touch on personal feelings, students should always have a choice in how they respond. They may answer from their own experience, from a character's experience, or by saying what "someone might" feel in that situation.

The goal is not to make students share more than they are ready to share. The goal is to help them notice, think, listen, and connect the story to real choices people face every day.

2A

Setup: Max invites Maya by describing the group as “a place where people are allowed to be unfinished.”

Question: *What does it feel like to be welcomed into something even when you're not sure you fit yet?*

Follow-up: What's the difference between being invited and being welcomed?

Listen for: *Students distinguishing between being included and truly feeling welcome.*

2B

Setup: After helping set up the room, Maya says: “This is what belonging feels like. Like I'm not just in the room. I matter to the room.”

Question: *Why do you think helping build the room changed how Maya felt about being part of the group?*

Follow-up: What is the difference between being present in a group and contributing to a group?

Optional personal connection: What is one way a classroom, club, or team can help people feel like their contribution matters?

Listen for: *Students articulating the difference between attendance, participation, and meaningful contribution.*

Writing Prompts

Structured writing assignments for text evidence, reflection, narrative writing, and purposeful response. Each unit includes two prompts with a connection, writing task, scaffold, and skills/standards connection.

Use as journal entries, homework, small-group responses, or extended writing assignments. For personal reflection prompts, students may write from their own experience, from a character's experience, or through a realistic "someone might" example.

2A — Welcoming Space Narrative

Connection: Maya says "This is what belonging feels like" after helping set up the basement room.

Prompt: *Write about a time you helped make a space feel welcoming – or a time someone made a space feel welcoming for you.*

Scaffold: *Start with: "The room/space looked like _____. I knew I belonged when _____."*

W.5.3, RL.5.2 | Social Awareness

2B — Foundation Values

Connection: The Beacon Keepers chose integrity, respect, and connection as their foundation values.

Prompt: *Choose three values for your own foundation. They may be your values, a character's values, or a team's values. For each one, explain why it matters and give a specific example of what it looks like in action.*

Scaffold: *Start with: "My three values are _____, _____, and _____."*

W.5.1 | Self-Awareness

Extension Activities

Classroom activities for reflection, collaboration, problem-solving, and applied learning

These activities help students connect the story to action through discussion, planning, presenting, creating, and teamwork. Each activity includes a story connection, simple steps, debrief questions, and options for differentiation.

Use them flexibly based on student readiness, classroom needs, and available time. When personal sharing is not appropriate or desired, students may respond through a character, fictional scenario, or general “someone might” example. The goal is thoughtful participation, respectful collaboration, and meaningful connection to the story.

2A. Room Redesign Challenge | 45 min | Small Groups (4–5)

Connection: The Beacon Keepers observed their school spaces to understand who felt welcome.

Materials: Paper, pencils. Optional: clipboards.

Setup: Tell students: “You’re going to observe our classroom the same way the Beacon Keepers observed their cafeteria.”

Steps:

1. Groups observe the classroom silently for 3 minutes. Write what they notice.
2. Groups share observations and look for patterns.
3. Each group proposes ONE change to make the space more welcoming.
4. Groups present proposals. Class votes on one to implement.

Debrief:

- What did you notice that you’d never noticed before?
- How does the physical space affect how people feel?

Differentiation: *Provide a checklist: lighting, seating, wall displays, entry/exit flow, isolated areas.*

CCSS: SL.5.1, W.5.1 | SEL: Social Awareness | Logbook: Section 2

2B. Invitation Role-Play | 20 min | Pairs

Connection: The Beacon Keepers recruited members one conversation at a time.

Materials: None required.

Setup: One student invites, one is skeptical (like Marcus: “If it turns into a popularity club, I’m out”).

Steps:

1. Pairs decide roles. Skeptic chooses a reason for hesitation.
2. Inviter has 2 minutes to get them interested — without pressuring.
3. Switch roles and repeat.

Debrief:

- What words helped? What pushed the skeptic away?
- How is inviting different from convincing?

Differentiation: *For advanced pairs: add a third person who observes and gives feedback.*

CCSS: SL.5.1 | SEL: Relationship Skills | Logbook: Section 2

UNIT 3: WEATHER THE STORM (CHAPTERS 9-12)

The team's project grows, but so do the risks. This unit focuses on integrity, privacy, mistakes, correction plans, and the difference between good intentions and responsible action.

Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection

Standards: RL.5.1, RL.5.2, RL.5.3, RL.5.6, W.5.1, SL.5.1

SEL: Self-Management, Responsible Decision-Making, Relationship Skills

"Scaffolding isn't a cage. It's how you reach the next floor in the process."

— Dr. Martinez

Comprehension ○

- What concern emerges about the Beacon Keepers' data collection? (Ch. 9–10)
- What does the team's correction plan include? (Ch. 11–12)
- What does Max tell Leo bothered him most? (Ch. 11)

Analysis ☹

- Leo feels a "flare of resistance" when Dr. Martinez sets conditions. Why does accepting help feel like shrinking, even when it's the right thing to do? (Ch. 12)
- Max says, "You notice everything, Leo. And you didn't notice me." Why is this the most important confrontation in the book? What does it reveal about the cost of focusing on systems over people? (Ch. 11)
- Dr. Martinez says, "Exposure is what happens when strong work outruns its support structure." What does this mean for the team? (Ch. 12)

Connection ★

- Think about the time you made a mistake on something you cared about. Was it harder to admit the mistake or to fix it?
- Dr. Martinez says, "Work that matters has structure." Do you agree?

Vocabulary

- anonymized (Ch. 10) — changed so no one can tell which student the information came from
- scaffolding (Ch. 12) — temporary support that helps something reach higher
- team drift (Ch. 10) — when people are still working, but they stop acting like one team
- ethical (Ch. 11) — relating to what is right and wrong

Values & Leadership Discussion

Reflection questions for trust, teamwork, integrity, student voice, and purposeful action

These discussion prompts are designed for morning meeting, advisory circles, small-group discussion, or the first five minutes of class. They are reflection-first conversations, not tests, and there is no single right answer.

Because some prompts may touch on personal feelings, students should always have a choice in how they respond. They may answer from their own experience, from a character's experience, or by saying what "someone might" feel in that situation.

The goal is not to make students share more than they are ready to share. The goal is to help them notice, think, listen, and connect the story to real choices people face every day.

3A

Setup: The Beacon Keepers discover that Amil accessed data he shouldn't have — even though his intentions were good.

Question: *When you find out a friend made a mistake, what do you do? Does it matter whether they meant well?*

Follow-up: Is there a difference between protecting a friend and helping a friend?

Listen for: *Students grappling with the gap between intentions and impact.*

3B

Setup: Max tells Leo: "You notice everything. That's your whole thing. And you didn't notice me."

Question: *Why do you think that moment hurt Max?*

Follow-up: What makes it hard to tell someone they missed something important?

Listen for: *Students connecting honest feedback with trust, vulnerability, and repair.*

Writing Prompts

Structured writing assignments for text evidence, reflection, narrative writing, and purposeful response. Each unit includes two prompts with a connection, writing task, scaffold, and skills/standards connection.

Use as journal entries, homework, small-group responses, or extended writing assignments. For personal reflection prompts, students may write from their own experience, from a character's experience, or through a realistic "someone might" example.

3A — Repairing Mistakes

Connection: The Beacon Keepers chose to disclose Amil's data access rather than wait to be caught.

Prompt: *Write about a time you had to choose between protecting yourself and doing the right thing. What did you choose? Would you choose the same thing again?*

Scaffold: *Start with: "I had to decide between ___ and ___. I chose ___ because ___."*

W.5.3, W.5.1 | Responsible Decision-Making

3B — Letter to Max or Leo

Connection: Max tells Leo: "You notice everything. And you didn't notice me."

Prompt: *Write a letter to either Max or Leo about what happened between them. What do you want that character to understand?*

Scaffold: *Start with: "Dear [Max/Leo], I want you to know that ___."*

W.5.1, RL.5.3 | Relationship Skills

Extension Activities

Classroom activities for reflection, collaboration, problem-solving, and applied learning

These activities help students connect the story to action through discussion, planning, presenting, creating, and teamwork. Each activity includes a story connection, simple steps, debrief questions, and options for differentiation.

Use them flexibly based on student readiness, classroom needs, and available time. When personal sharing is not appropriate or desired, students may respond through a character, fictional scenario, or general “someone might” example. The goal is thoughtful participation, respectful collaboration, and meaningful connection to the story.

3A. Ethical Dilemma Discussion | 30 min | Small Groups → Whole Class

Connection: The Beacon Keepers chose to disclose a mistake rather than hide it.

Materials: Scenario cards or projected on board.

Setup: Present: “Your team collected information to help students, but you didn’t get proper permission first. What do you do?”

Steps:

1. Small groups discuss for 8 minutes. Each must reach a decision with reasoning.
2. Groups present. No debating between groups yet — just listening.
3. Open the floor: “Did anyone change their mind after hearing another group?”
4. Connect to the book: What did the Beacon Keepers actually do? Why?

Debrief:

- Is there a difference between good intentions and doing the right thing?
- What’s harder: telling the truth or living with the secret?

Differentiation: *Provide a second scenario for groups that finish early.*

CCSS: SL.5.1, W.5.1 | SEL: Responsible Decision-Making | Logbook: Section 3

3B. Correction Plan Workshop | 30 min | Individual or Pairs ★ Assessment Option

Connection: The Beacon Keepers wrote a formal correction plan before meeting with the principal.

Materials: Paper, pencils. Optional: four-box template.

Setup: Tell students: “The Beacon Keepers didn’t just apologize. They wrote a correction plan.”

Steps:

1. Students choose a real or hypothetical mistake.
2. Fill in four sections: (1) What went wrong? (2) What did we do about it? (3) How do we prevent it next time? (4) Who do we need to involve?
3. Pairs review each other’s plans and give one piece of feedback.
4. Volunteers share with the class.

Debrief:

- What’s the difference between apologizing and having a plan?
- Why does ‘How do we prevent it next time?’ matter most?

Differentiation: *Provide the four-box template printed for students who need visual structure.*

CCSS: W.5.2 | SEL: Responsible Decision-Making, Self-Management | Logbook: Section 3

UNIT 4: PROVE YOUR GROUND (CHAPTERS 13-16)

The Beacon Keepers prepare to present their project beyond the safety of their own team. This unit focuses on evidence, preparation, courage, comparison, and learning that communicating something true is different from simply performing.

Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection

Standards: RL.5.1, RL.5.2, RL.5.3, SL.5.1, SL.5.4, W.5.1

SEL: Self-Management, Relationship Skills

“Stop trying to be impressive. Be undeniable.”

— Dr. Martinez

Comprehension ○

- What three words does Dr. Martinez write on the whiteboard? What do they mean for the team? (Ch. 13)
- What role does each team member play in the competition presentation? (Ch. 15–16)
- How does the regional competition change the team’s understanding of their own work? (Ch. 16)

Analysis ☹

- How do different characters show courage during preparation and presentation? (Ch. 15–16)
- Compare how the Beacon Keepers present (honesty about failure, real stories) with how Ethan’s team presents (polished, flashy). What does each approach reveal about what they value?
- Leo begins the regional presentation not with numbers, but with the story of a basement room. Why is that more powerful than starting with data?

Connection ★

- Have you ever had to present something you cared deeply about to people who might not understand it? What did you focus on?
- What does it mean to take your own work seriously right now, even as a student?

Vocabulary

- pilot (Ch. 13) — a first small test of an idea before doing it full size
- rigor (Ch. 15) — thoroughness and carefulness in work
- undeniable (Ch. 13) — so clearly true that it cannot be argued against
- compelling (Ch. 13) — powerfully convincing; hard to ignore

Values & Leadership Discussion

Reflection questions for trust, teamwork, integrity, student voice, and purposeful action

These discussion prompts are designed for morning meeting, advisory circles, small-group discussion, or the first five minutes of class. They are reflection-first conversations, not tests, and there is no single right answer.

Because some prompts may touch on personal feelings, students should always have a choice in how they respond. They may answer from their own experience, from a character's experience, or by saying what "someone might" feel in that situation.

The goal is not to make students share more than they are ready to share. The goal is to help them notice, think, listen, and connect the story to real choices people face every day.

4A

Setup: Dr. Martinez writes PROVE. PROTECT. PRACTICE. on the whiteboard. Max calls it "homework with a helmet."

Question: *What's something you care about enough to show with evidence, not just words?*

Follow-up: What kind of evidence would help someone understand that the work matters?

Listen for: *Students identifying things they'd fight for with evidence, not just emotion.*

4B

Setup: The Beacon Keepers have to present their work to judges who don't know them.

Question: *What helps you feel ready for something scary? Not brave — ready?*

Follow-up: Is there a difference between being confident and being prepared?

Listen for: *Students separating preparation from confidence.*

Writing Prompts

Structured writing assignments for text evidence, reflection, narrative writing, and purposeful response. Each unit includes two prompts with a connection, writing task, scaffold, and skills/standards connection.

Use as journal entries, homework, small-group responses, or extended writing assignments. For personal reflection prompts, students may write from their own experience, from a character's experience, or through a realistic "someone might" example.

4A — Evidence, Not Just Words

Connection: The Beacon Keepers had to prove their work to judges who didn't know them.

Prompt: *Write about something you care about enough to present to a room full of strangers. How would you prove it's real with evidence, not just words?*

Scaffold: *Start with: "If I had three minutes to prove ____, I would start by ____."*

W.5.1, SL.5.4 | Self-Management

4B — Compare and Contrast

Connection: At the regional competition, the Beacon Keepers and Apex Robotics both present strong projects, but their approaches are very different.

Prompt: *Compare how the two teams prepare, present, and define success. Use at least two specific details from the text for each team.*

Scaffold: *Start with: "The Beacon Keepers value ____ because _____. Apex Robotics values ____ because _____."*

RL.5.1, RL.5.3, W.5.1

Extension Activities

Classroom activities for reflection, collaboration, problem-solving, and applied learning

These activities help students connect the story to action through discussion, planning, presenting, creating, and teamwork. Each activity includes a story connection, simple steps, debrief questions, and options for differentiation.

Use them flexibly based on student readiness, classroom needs, and available time. When personal sharing is not appropriate or desired, students may respond through a character, fictional scenario, or general “someone might” example. The goal is thoughtful participation, respectful collaboration, and meaningful connection to the story.

4A. Presentation Workshop | 45 min | Individual → Whole Class ★ Assessment Option

Connection: The Beacon Keepers learn that communicating something true is different from performing.

Materials: Paper, pencils. Timer.

Setup: Tell students: “Prepare a 3-minute presentation about something you genuinely care about. Rule: start with WHY you care, not with facts.”

Steps:

1. Choose a topic. Write an outline: (1) Why I care, (2) What I know, (3) One takeaway.
2. Present to the class (3-minute limit, timed).
3. After each, the class asks one respectful, challenging question. The presenter answers honestly.

Debrief:

- What was harder: preparing or presenting?
- How did starting with your story change how the audience listened?

Differentiation: *For anxious presenters: allow presenting to a small group of 3–4.*

CCSS: SL.5.4, SL.5.1 | SEL: Self-Management | Logbook: Section 4

4B. Values Comparison Chart | 20 min | Pairs or Individual

Connection: The Beacon Keepers and Apex Robotics represent two different philosophies.

Materials: Paper, pencils.

Setup: Tell students: “We’re comparing two teams — not to decide who’s better, but to understand what each values.”

Steps:

1. Two-column chart: Beacon Keepers vs. Apex Robotics.
2. List: What do they value? How do they prepare? What do they show judges?
3. Each student writes: “Which team would I rather be on, and why?”

Debrief:

- Can both approaches lead to success? What kind?
- Is Ethan a villain, or does he just define leadership differently?

Differentiation: *For advanced students: write a paragraph from Ethan’s perspective.*

CCSS: RL.5.3, RL.5.2 | SEL: Social Awareness | Logbook: Section 4

UNIT 5: SPARK OTHER LIGHTHOUSES (CHAPTERS 17-19)

After recognition brings new opportunities, the team must decide what to accept, what to decline, and how to protect the purpose of their work. This unit focuses on decision-making, capacity, sustainability, and saying no when something good becomes too much.

Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection

Standards: RL.5.1, RL.5.2, RL.5.3, W.5.1, W.5.2, SL.5.1

SEL: Self-Management, Responsible Decision-Making

"The debt goes forward, not back."

– Ziggy

Comprehension ○

- What requests come in, and why could each be exciting or hard? (Ch. 18)
- How does each decision-filter question help the team avoid saying yes to too much? (Ch. 18)
- Why can't the team say yes to every opportunity? Use one Chapter 18 story detail.

Analysis ●

- Theo says, "That is the first time we decided something by strategy instead of enthusiasm." What's the difference? Why does it matter? (Ch. 18)
- Ziggy says "The debt goes forward, not back." What does this mean? How does it connect to the choices the team makes? (Ch. 18)
- Amil says "Interest creates load. Load creates risk." What does this mean for the team's growth? (Ch. 18)

Connection ★

- Have you ever been overwhelmed by too many things, even good things? What happened?
- If your class started a project that other classes wanted to copy, what would you need to think about before helping them?

Vocabulary

- sustainable (Ch. 18) – able to continue over time without burning out
- capacity (Ch. 18) – the amount of work a person or team can realistically handle
- strategic (Ch. 18) – chosen carefully to serve a specific goal
- legitimacy (Ch. 18) – being taken seriously; having earned the right to be heard

Values & Leadership Discussion

Reflection questions for trust, teamwork, integrity, student voice, and purposeful action

These discussion prompts are designed for morning meeting, advisory circles, small-group discussion, or the first five minutes of class. They are reflection-first conversations, not tests, and there is no single right answer.

Because some prompts may touch on personal feelings, students should always have a choice in how they respond. They may answer from their own experience, from a character's experience, or by saying what "someone might" feel in that situation.

The goal is not to make students share more than they are ready to share. The goal is to help them notice, think, listen, and connect the story to real choices people face every day.

5A

Setup: Dr. Martinez gives the team three questions before saying yes: Does it serve the mission or purpose? Does it make us stronger? Can we do it without breaking?

Question: *What is something good that can still become too much if a person says yes to everything?*

Follow-up: Why is saying no to something good sometimes the right decision?

Optional character connection: How do the Beacon Keepers know when an opportunity is exciting but too much for the team right now?

Listen for: *Students recognizing that wise leadership includes limits, focus, and protecting the team from overcommitment before it harms safety, quality, or trust.*

5B

Setup: Ziggy tells Leo: "The debt goes forward, not back." He means you repay what someone gave you by giving it to the next person.

Question: *What does it mean to "pass forward" help, trust, or encouragement?*

Follow-up: How does a person show gratitude through action, not just words?

Optional character or personal connection: Think of a character, a real person, or a general example. Who gave someone a chance, and how could that chance be passed forward?

Listen for: *Students connecting gratitude to action, recognizing encouragement as something that can continue beyond the original person who gave it.*

Writing Prompts

Structured writing assignments for text evidence, reflection, narrative writing, and purposeful response. Each unit includes two prompts with a connection, writing task, scaffold, and skills/standards connection.

Use as journal entries, homework, small-group responses, or extended writing assignments. For personal reflection prompts, students may write from their own experience, from a character's experience, or through a realistic "someone might" example.

5A — Decision Filter

Connection: Dr. Martinez gives the team three questions: Does it serve the mission or purpose? Does it make us stronger? Can we do it without breaking?

Prompt: *Apply these three questions to a character, team, or realistic student group decision. Answer each question honestly and explain what you should do based on your answers.*

Scaffold: *Start with: "A decision I'm facing is _____. Question 1: Does it serve my purpose? _____."*

W.5.1 | Responsible Decision-Making

5B — Pass It Forward

Connection: Ziggy tells Leo: "The debt goes forward, not back."

Prompt: *Write about someone who invested in you. Then write about one specific way you could pass that investment forward to someone else.*

Scaffold: *Start with: "____ invested in me by _____. I could pass this forward by _____."*

W.5.3 | Social Awareness

Extension Activities

Classroom activities for reflection, collaboration, problem-solving, and applied learning

These activities help students connect the story to action through discussion, planning, presenting, creating, and teamwork. Each activity includes a story connection, simple steps, debrief questions, and options for differentiation.

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5A. Decision Filter Activity | 30 min | Small Groups

Connection: Dr. Martinez’s three-question filter is an age-appropriate introduction to strategic thinking.

Materials: Decision cards (6 fictional opportunities). Paper.

Setup: Prepare 6 cards with opportunities (e.g., “A TV station wants to interview the team tomorrow,” “A school 2 hours away wants help”).

Steps:

1. Groups receive all 6 cards.
2. For each: (1) Does it serve the mission or purpose? (2) Does it make us stronger? (3) Can we do it without breaking?
3. If not YES to all three, the answer is NO.
4. Groups present decisions and reasoning.

Debrief:

- Which opportunity was hardest to say no to?
- Where in your own life could you use these three questions?

Differentiation: *Provide the three questions on a card for each group.*

CCSS: SL.5.1, W.5.1 | SEL: Responsible Decision-Making | Logbook: Section 5

5B. Capacity Planning | 20 min | Individual

Connection: Amil says “Interest creates load. Load creates risk.”

Materials: Paper, pencils. Optional: weekly calendar template.

Setup: Tell students: “The Beacon Keepers had to learn that saying yes to everything leads to burnout.”

Steps:

1. List everything you do in a typical week: school, homework, sports, chores, family, screen time, sleep, free time.
2. Estimate hours per week for each.
3. Identify: Where do I have capacity? Where am I at the limit?
4. Write one thing to add and one thing to protect.

Debrief:

- What surprised you about how you spend your time?
- Is rest a waste of time, or part of your capacity?

Differentiation: *For younger students: provide a pre-printed weekly calendar.*

CCSS: W.5.2 | SEL: Self-Management | Logbook: Section 5

UNIT 6: LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS (CHAPTER 20)

The story closes by returning to Saltwind Bay, but the characters have changed. This unit focuses on reflection, growth, success beyond winning, and how purpose can continue beyond one project, one team, or one moment.

Comprehension, Analysis, and Connection

Standards: RL.5.1, RL.5.2, RL.5.3, RL.5.6, W.5.1, W.5.3, SL.5.1

SEL: Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills

For once, north did not feel like a destination. It felt like a beginning.

— Chapter 20

Comprehension ○

- What happens at the state competition? What recognition do the Beacon Keepers receive? (Ch. 20)
- What does Sara give Jada? Why is this moment important? (Ch. 20)
- How does the final paragraph of the novel mirror the first chapter?

Analysis ●

- The team doesn't win first place, but the novel treats this as meaningful. How does the author make not winning feel like growth? (Ch. 20)
- Sara's drawing shows Jada "looking like she belonged exactly where she was." Jada's grandmother told her, "Sometimes the person who needs to be seen is you." How does Sara's drawing complete Jada's arc?
- Leo notices that the Apex Robotics flyer has been replaced by a drawing of three overlapping circles. What does this suggest?

Connection ★

- The novel ends with Leo thinking that Saltwind Bay was exactly where he left it, but he was not the same. Think about something that changed you even though nothing around you changed.
- If you could start a Beacon Keepers chapter at your school, what would your beacon statement be?

Vocabulary

- innovative (Ch. 20) — introducing new ideas or methods
- recognition (Ch. 20) — being noticed or honored for meaningful work
- framework (Ch. 20) — steps or ideas that help organize and repeat the work

Values & Leadership Discussion

Reflection questions for trust, teamwork, integrity, student voice, and purposeful action

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Because some prompts may touch on personal feelings, students should always have a choice in how they respond. They may answer from their own experience, from a character's experience, or by saying what "someone might" feel in that situation.

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6A

Setup: The Beacon Keepers don't win the state competition but receive a special recognition from the Department of Education.

Question: *When did losing or not getting what you wanted turn out to be okay – or even better than winning would have been?*

Follow-up: Does this change how you think about success?

Listen for: *Students redefining success beyond winning.*

6B

Setup: Sara gives Jada a drawing of Jada herself, the first time Jada has been seen the way she sees others.

Question: *What are some signs that someone really sees you, not just what you do or what others expect from you?*

Follow-up: Why do you think Sara's drawing matters so much to Jada?

Optional personal connection: What is one way a person can help someone else feel truly seen?

Listen for: *Students reflecting on attention, care, mutual respect, and the difference between being noticed and being understood.*

Writing Prompts

Structured writing assignments for text evidence, reflection, narrative writing, and purposeful response. Each unit includes two prompts with a connection, writing task, scaffold, and skills/standards connection.

Use as journal entries, homework, small-group responses, or extended writing assignments. For personal reflection prompts, students may write from their own experience, from a character's experience, or through a realistic "someone might" example.

6A — Full-Circle Writing

Connection: The novel begins and ends in the same place — Saltwind Bay — but Leo is not the same person.

Prompt: *Write a short narrative that begins and ends in the same place, but you have changed. The narrator may be you, a character, or someone you invent. Use specific details about the place and about yourself.*

Scaffold: *Start with a description of the place. End with the same description but add one detail that shows how you see it differently now.*

W.5.3, RL.5.6 | Self-Awareness

6B — Letter to Future Self

Connection: The Beacon Keepers' journey continues beyond Book One...

Prompt: *Write a letter to yourself, to be opened at the end of the school year. Tell yourself what you've learned and what you hope for.*

Scaffold: *Start with: "Dear Future Me, Right now I am _____. By the time you read this, I hope _____."*

W.5.3 | Self-Awareness

Extension Activities

Classroom activities for reflection, collaboration, problem-solving, and applied learning

These activities help students connect the story to action through discussion, planning, presenting, creating, and teamwork. Each activity includes a story connection, simple steps, debrief questions, and options for differentiation.

Use them flexibly based on student readiness, classroom needs, and available time. When personal sharing is not appropriate or desired, students may respond through a character, fictional scenario, or general “someone might” example. The goal is thoughtful participation, respectful collaboration, and meaningful connection to the story.

6A. Full-Circle Writing | 30 min | Individual

Connection: The novel begins and ends in Saltwind Bay, but Leo has changed.

Materials: Paper, pencils.

Setup: Tell students: “The best stories end where they began — but the person has changed.”

Steps:

1. Choose a place that matters to you.
2. Write the opening paragraph: describe the place using 3–5 specific details.
3. Write the middle: what happened that changed how you see it.
4. Write the closing: same place, same details, but one detail has shifted.

Debrief:

- How did changing one detail at the end change the whole meaning?
- Why is it powerful to end where you started?

Differentiation: *For struggling writers: provide the opening frame and write only the closing.*

CCSS: W.5.3, RL.5.6 | SEL: Self-Awareness | Logbook: Section 6

6B. Letter to a Character | 20 min | Individual

Connection: Students write directly to a character, building empathy and textual connection.

Materials: Paper, pencils. Optional: envelope.

Setup: Tell students: “Pick any character. Write them a letter. Tell them what you want them to know, and ask one question.”

Steps:

1. Choose a character.
2. Include: (1) Something you admire, (2) Something you wish they knew, (3) One question.
3. Optional: swap letters and write a response AS the character.

Debrief:

- Which character did you choose, and why?
- If you wrote a response, did it change how you understood them?

Differentiation: *The character-response swap builds perspective-taking for advanced students.*

CCSS: W.5.1, RL.5.3 | SEL: Social Awareness | Logbook: Section 6

EXTENDED LEADERSHIP DISCUSSIONS

Use these prompts when students are ready to move from reflection into deeper conversations about leadership, teamwork, trust, accountability, and decision-making.

These questions are designed for older readers, advanced groups, advisory discussion, or classes ready to think beyond what happened in the story and into why it matters. Students may respond through the characters, real-world examples, or general “someone might” situations when personal sharing is not appropriate.

1. Systems and People

Setup: Leo’s mother tells him, “The system isn’t the point. The people inside it are.”

Question: *When do rules or systems help people feel safe, included, or prepared? When can they accidentally leave people out?*

Follow-up: How could a student help improve a system at school without blaming people?

Listen for: *Students noticing the difference between order for control and order for care.*

2. Intentions and Impact

Setup: Amil wants to help the team, but he accesses information he should not have seen.

Question: *Can someone mean well and still cause harm? What should happen next when that happens?*

Follow-up: What is the difference between hiding a mistake and repairing one?

Listen for: *Students separating blame from accountability.*

3. Busy Is Not the Same as Together

Setup: The team keeps working, but they start drifting into separate corners and stop communicating.

Question: *How can a group look productive but still stop acting like a team?*

Follow-up: What helps a team come back together before things fall apart?

Listen for: *Students identifying communication, shared purpose, and check-ins as part of teamwork.*

4. Safe Enough to Tell the Truth

Setup: The Beacon Keepers learn that trust does not mean avoiding hard conversations.

Question: *What makes a group safe enough for someone to say, “I disagree,” “I made a mistake,” or “I need help”?*

Follow-up: What can students do to make honesty less scary for each other?

Listen for: *Students understanding that safety is not the absence of discomfort. It is the presence of trust.*

5. Quiet Leadership

Setup: Not every Beacon Keeper leads loudly. Some lead by noticing, organizing, checking, listening, or helping others feel steady.

Question: *Which character shows quiet leadership? What makes that kind of leadership important?*

Follow-up: What is one quiet way a student can lead in a classroom, team, or friendship?

Listen for: *Students recognizing leadership beyond popularity, volume, or titles.*

6. Purpose Under Pressure

Setup: Ethan's team looks polished and impressive, but the Beacon Keepers have to decide what kind of team they want to be.

Question: *How do you stay focused on your purpose when someone else looks more impressive?*

Follow-up: What is the difference between wanting to do well and needing to look important?

Listen for: *Students naming comparison, pressure, and integrity.*

CULMINATING PROJECTS

These projects give students a final way to show what they noticed, understood, and can apply after reading. Use one or more as a final assessment, class celebration, portfolio piece, or group presentation. Projects may focus on text evidence, character growth, teamwork, reflection, or applying the Beacon, Foundation, and Shoreline model to a real or imagined need. Students may work individually, in groups, or as a class, depending on time, readiness, and classroom goals.

Project 1: Build a Beacon (2–3 sessions, Class Project)

Identify a real need in the school community. Using the Beacon Keepers' model — beacon, foundation, shoreline — design a proposal to address it. Present to school administration.

Standards: W.5.1, W.5.2, SL.5.4 | Responsible Decision-Making, Relationship Skills

Project 2: Character Study Essay (1–2 sessions, Individual)

Choose one character and write an essay analyzing how they change. Require at least three specific text references.

Standards: RL.5.1, RL.5.2, RL.5.3, W.5.1

Project 3: Beacon Keeper Showcase (2–3 sessions, Group)

Small groups design a “Beacon Keeper chapter” for their classroom: define a beacon statement, identify three foundation values, and propose one shoreline action. Present in a showcase format.

Standards: SL.5.4, SL.5.1, W.5.2 | Self-Awareness, Relationship Skills

Project 4: Revisit the Anticipation Guide (1 session, Individual)

Students return to the Before Reading anticipation statements and write a reflection on any statement where their thinking changed. What caused the shift?

Standards: RL.5.1, W.5.1

AR QUIZ SUPPORT

Lordsburg Press provides two teacher-made quiz templates for *The Beacon Keepers: First Light* that educators may manually enter through the Renaissance Accelerated Reader Teacher-Made Quiz system, if their school uses that feature.

Set A focuses on plot recall and key story events. This is the stronger option for an AR-style reading comprehension check.

Set B focuses on character moments, belonging, trust, integrity, and emotional turning points. This set is best used as a classroom reflection quiz, discussion check, or companion activity after reading.

Both sets follow the Teacher-Made Quiz format: 10 multiple-choice questions with four answer choices each. Teachers and librarians should follow their school or district's AR procedures when creating or assigning teacher-made quizzes.

Download Accelerated Reader support content with quizzes [HERE](#)

Book Title	The Beacon Keepers: First Light
Book Author	G.M. Samuelson
ISBNs	9798995810704 (paperback) / 9798995810728 (hardcover)
ATOS Book Level	4.60 (Confirmation #3164259)
AR Points	6.0
Word Count	40,024
Interest Level	MG (Middle Grades, Grades 4–8)
Quiz Set A	Plot Recall — 6 plot-event + 4 principle-recall questions
Quiz Set B	Character & Belonging Edition — 10 character-moment and reflection questions
Fiction / Nonfiction	Fiction
Passing Threshold	60% (6 of 10 correct)
Topic / Subject	Leadership, Friendship, Belonging, Self-Discovery

APPENDIX

Additional Terms Glossary

aggregate (Ch. 7) – individual pieces of information combined into totals or groups, so you see overall patterns instead of any one person's details

anonymized (Ch. 10) – changed so no one can tell which student the information came from

capacity (Ch. 18) – the amount of work a person or team can realistically handle

compelling (Ch. 13) – powerfully convincing; hard to ignore

continuous improvement (concept thread) – getting better by trying, learning, fixing, and trying again

deliberately (Ch. 1) – done on purpose and with careful thought

disclosure (Ch. 11) – the act of revealing something that was hidden

ethical (Ch. 11) – relating to what is right and wrong

feedback (Ch. 10) – helpful information that shows what is working, what is missing, or what needs to change

framework (Ch. 19) – set of parts, steps, or questions that helps people organize their thinking and make better choices

implementation (Ch. 9) – turning an idea or plan into real action

innovative (Ch. 20) – introducing new ideas or methods

integrity (Ch. 4) – doing the right thing, even when it is hard or costs something

legitimacy (Ch. 18) – being taken seriously; having earned the right to be heard

methodology (Ch. 11) – step-by-step way a team does its work so others can understand it

mission drift (Ch. 10) – when a team starts moving away from the reason it began

mission statement (Ch. 5) – short statement of what a team is trying to do and why it matters

momentum (Ch. 7) – the energy and drive that builds up when something keeps moving forward and gets easier to continue

observation (Ch. 8) – the act of watching carefully to learn something

oversight (Ch. 11) – supervision, review, or guidance from someone responsible

pilot (Ch. 13) – a first small test of an idea before doing it full size

process failure (Ch. 12) – when the way the work was done breaks down, even if people meant well

programming (Ch. 5) – writing instructions/code that a computer can follow

Python (Ch. 5) – a computer programming language people use to write code

respect (Ch. 4) – treating people, ideas, and responsibilities as if they matter

rigor (Ch. 15) – thoroughness and carefulness in work

risk (Ch. 8) – the chance that something could go wrong, cause harm, or damage trust

safeguards (Ch. 11) – protections or checks that help prevent mistakes, harm, or broken trust

scaffolding (Ch. 12) – temporary support that helps someone do something they couldn't do on their own yet, taken away once they can

skeptical (Ch. 6) – not easily convinced; doubtful

strategic (Ch. 18) – chosen carefully to serve a specific goal

sustainable (Ch. 18) – able to continue over time without burning out

team drift (Ch. 10) – when people are still working, but they stop acting like one team

undeniable (Ch. 13) – so clearly true that it cannot be argued against

Vocabulary Quick-Reference

- Unit 1: deliberately, respect, integrity
- Unit 2: aggregate, momentum, mission statement, risk
- Unit 3: anonymized, scaffolding, team drift, ethical
- Unit 4: pilot, rigor, undeniable, compelling
- Unit 5: sustainable, capacity, strategic, legitimacy
- Unit 6: innovative, recognition, framework

CCSS ELA Standards (Grade 5)

Reading: Literature

- RL.5.1 – Quote accurately from a text and draw inferences
- RL.5.2 – Determine theme from details; summarize
- RL.5.3 – Compare/contrast characters, settings, events
- RL.5.4 – Determine meaning of words including figurative language
- RL.5.6 – Describe how point of view influences events

Writing

- W.5.1 – Opinion pieces with reasons and information
- W.5.2 – Informative/explanatory texts
- W.5.3 – Narratives with technique, detail, and sequence

Speaking & Listening

- SL.5.1 – Collaborative discussions building on others' ideas
- SL.5.4 – Report on a topic, sequencing ideas logically

CASEL SEL-Informed Competency Reference

- Self-Awareness – Recognizing emotions, values, strengths, limitations
- Self-Management – Managing emotions and behaviors to achieve goals
- Social Awareness – Understanding perspectives and needs of others
- Relationship Skills – Communicating, cooperating, resolving conflicts
- Responsible Decision-Making – Making ethical, constructive choices



THE BEACON KEEPERS: FIRST LIGHT

Educator & Facilitator Guide

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