

THE BEACON KEEPERS



FIRST LIGHT

COMPREHENSION, ANALYSIS & CONNECTION UNITS 1-6 Support Materials

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.

COMPREHENSION, ANALYSIS & CONNECTION

Scaffolded discussion questions for each unit. Questions are marked by level:

Comprehension (○) for all readers

Analysis (◐) for inference and evidence

Connection (★) for personal reflection and journal writing

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.

Unit 1 (Ch. 1–4)

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 ○

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- 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 ☹

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- 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 ★

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- 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?

Unit 2 (Ch. 5–8)

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?

Unit 3 (Ch. 9–12)

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?

Unit 4 (Ch. 13–16)

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?

Unit 5 (Ch. 17–19)

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?

Unit 6 (Ch. 20)

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?