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The Aquamarine Surfboard
DISCUSSION GUIDE



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

THE AQUAMARINE SURFBOARD is a story about finding your way through grief by building new friendships and learning to recognize and celebrate everyday magic. Big questions and big mysteries are explored, creating wonder and hope—and offering an important challenge. Will we choose to move toward love, light, and community, discovering the ways we are all the same?

This guide is aligned with Common Core Standards for Grades 5–8. For each part of THE AQUAMARINE SURFBOARD, you will find reading comprehension questions, self-reflection questions, and sensory activities that include creative writing, research projects, and visual arts.



BEFORE YOU READ

1. At the beginning of THE AQUAMARINE SURFBOARD, Condi is sad and avoids kids her own age. But she has a special place that she goes to that helps her feel better. Do you have a special place that you go to when you feel sad and overwhelmed? How and/or why does going to this place make you feel better?
2. THE AQUAMARINE SURFBOARD is about finding hope and connections with others when the world seems dark. What brings you hope when you feel sad, lost, angry, or afraid? Create a list of these things. Examples may be talking with someone special in your life, a pet, being in nature, or listening to music.
3. Another theme in THE AQUAMARINE SURFBOARD is the importance of remembering those who have passed away. Do you have ways of doing this that you've discovered through family or cultural traditions... or things you've discovered on your own?

PART ONE: CHAPTERS 1-3

QUESTIONS FOR COMPREHENSION

Chapter 1 - The Beachlings

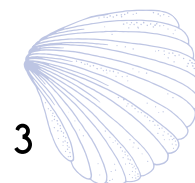
1. Why do you think the author wanted us to meet the Beachlings in the first chapter of the book?
2. What do you learn about the Beachlings in the beginning pages. What else do you want to learn about them?
3. Why do you think Condi takes Trustin to Windy Hollow?
4. What does Trustin think of the Beachlings? Of the old Stinson mansion?
5. According to the kids at school, what is strange about how Trustin arrived in the cove?

Chapter 2 - The Yoga Cove

6. How do the rich ladies feel about the Beachlings?
7. What does the poem that Madelaine is reciting ([Renascence](https://poets.org/poem/renascence) by [Edna St. Vincent Millay](https://poets.org/poem/renascence), <https://poets.org/poem/renascence>) tell you about the lives of the Beachlings?
8. When Madelaine recites the poem, how does Grand Ella respond?

Chapter 3 - The Orange-Red Kayak

9. How did the orange-red kayak get to the top of the Hollow?
10. What happens to the weather when Condi climbs to the top of the Hollow?
11. Why does Condi go out in the kayak?
12. Describe her journey in the kayak. What does she feel?





QUESTIONS FOR SELF-REFLECTION

1. Condi is experiencing some big emotions in the first chapter. When she starts to feel overwhelmed, she reminds herself to “Breathe in, breathe out.” How do you handle your big emotions?
2. When Trustin offers to teach Condi to surf, she tells him, “. . . I better not. Things are better when you wait.” Do you believe things are better when you wait for them? Share an experience that explains why or why not.
3. It’s hard for Condi to see the mothers of kids her own age. When has it been hard for you to see others with something you wish you had? How did you handle it?
4. Condi stands up to Mrs. Arondale and defends the Beachlings. Share a time when you had to choose whether or not to stand up for something you are passionate about. What did you choose? Why?
5. Describe a time when you’ve been “the new kid,” or when you’ve interacted with someone who was “the new kid.” What were the biggest challenges? surprises?
6. Condi’s friend Anda “ditched” her at a time when she really needed friends. Have you ever lost a friend? Describe what happened. How did you handle it?

SENSORY ACTIVITIES

1. Describe one of the Beachlings using sensory language and all five senses.
2. Describe three aspects of Trustin’s appearance, concentrating on colors.
3. Condi describes Grand Ella’s lavender-honey muffins as “the smell of love.” What does love smell like to you?
4. Madelaine uses a poem to communicate her thoughts to Mrs. Arondale. Song writers are our modern-day poets. Can you think of a song with lyrics that would help someone understand you better? What song is it? What does it communicate for you?
5. Condi describes the library as a place where “the world is large.” Describe a place where the world feels large to you, using all of your senses.
6. Create a picture of what Condi’s journey in the orange kayak felt like. Use whatever medium you prefer – words, paint, digital media, music, etc.





PART TWO: CHAPTERS 4-6

QUESTIONS FOR COMPREHENSION

Chapter 4 - Ki's Circle

1. What is unique about Ki's Circle?
2. What is Lily's purpose?
3. What is the Locker?
4. What are Shadow Voices?

Chapter 5 - Surfboard Stories

5. What is the purpose of the Distiller and the Siphoners?
6. Describe the changes in Condi's feelings as she travels through the sea. When she lands in Ki's Circle? When she visits the Locker? When she visits the Surfboard Forest?
7. What do we learn from each of the stories in the surfboards? The golden-green board? The tangerine board? The aquamarine board?

Chapter 6 - Koan's Place

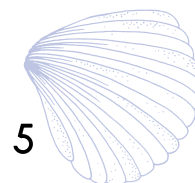
8. What is the purpose of the Infusers? What do they look like? What is Essence?
9. What is Trustin's purpose? Why does he want to change it?
10. What does Koan ask Condi to do when she returns home? How does she feel about the request?

QUESTIONS FOR SELF-REFLECTION

1. In the story, Trustin calls our negative inner voice the "Shadow Voice" and Grand Ella calls it the "Negative Roommate." Do you think you have a Shadow Voice? If so, how do you manage it?
2. Have you ever been asked to do something you thought was nearly impossible? If so, how do you respond?

SENSORY ACTIVITIES

1. Create a playlist of songs that captures the feeling of Condi's journey under the sea.
2. Some people see colors as music, and vice versa. What would the different surfboards sound like? What would be each board's song?
3. Describe how you imagine the sound of Koan's voice.





PART THREE: CHAPTERS 7-10

QUESTIONS FOR COMPREHENSION

Chapter 7 - White Shell

1. How does Condi feel when she arrives back home? What does she find in her pocket?
2. Why is Grand Ella concerned about Madelaine?

Chapter 8 - Surprise on the Beach

3. When Condi discovers the aquamarine surfboard, what does she hope will happen? What is her greatest fear?
4. What does Condi feel when Madelaine reacts to seeing the aquamarine surfboard?

Chapter 9 - Billabong

5. What does Mr. Marshall teach Condi about the shaper's mark on the aquamarine board?

Chapter 10 - Talk in the Library

6. Mr. Poirot's science lessons are unusual. What do the kids think about the teacher?
7. When Condi visits the school library, how does she feel? Describe her secret reading spot.

QUESTIONS FOR SELF-REFLECTION

1. What does Condi learn about Trustin that confuses her when she encounters him in the library? What does Condi do to protect her feelings when meets Trustin? Describe a situation where you felt it was necessary to protect your feelings. Why did you do so?

SENSORY ACTIVITIES

1. Describe three characteristics of Marissa, concentrating on how you imagine that she moves.
2. Casey and Lorelei love studying the ocean and learning about sea creatures. Research an unusual sea creature. Write a sentence describing it. Draw a picture of it. Give it a name.





PART FOUR: CHAPTERS 11-15

QUESTIONS FOR COMPREHENSION

Chapter 11 - Shaper's Mark

1. When Condi claims the aquamarine board, she finds out she has to be in a surfing class with little kids. How does she feel?

Chapter 12 - Tide Pool Lessons

2. When Lorelei and Marissa meet, what do they discover they have in common?
3. How does Marissa build Condi's confidence when she teaches her how to surf?
4. Trustin and Marissa are twins. Describe how they are the same, and how they are different.

Chapter 13 - The Art Shop

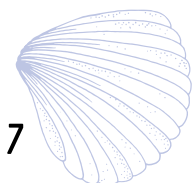
5. Describe Condi's feelings toward Anda.
6. What does she learn about Anda that scares her?
7. Why does she agree to keep Anda's secret?

Chapter 14 - Sapphire Kelp

8. Describe how Trustin interacts with Charlene and Triponica. How does his behavior toward the Beachlings make Condi feel?
9. A storm is coming when Condi takes her first surfing lesson with Trustin. What are you wondering about Trustin at this point in the story?

Chapter 15 - Rescue

10. According to Casey Arondale, why did Javed Holmes go out too far in the ocean to surf?
11. How does Condi respond to Anda when Javed is missing?
12. How do Casey and Lorelei react to the giant squid?
13. When Trustin rescues Javed, what questions does this raise in your mind?
14. What are Marissa's feelings about the rescue? Lorelei and Casey's? Condi's?





QUESTIONS FOR SELF-REFLECTION

1. Have you ever been in a class with kids much younger than you? How did it make you feel?
2. Think of a favorite teacher. Describe how they helped to build your confidence when you were learning something new.
3. Have you ever kept a secret that you knew you shouldn't keep? Describe your emotions.
4. Are you glad Trustin rescued Javed? Would you have done the same thing? Why or why not?
5. Have you ever had a friend who let you down and then later needed your help? Did you agree to help them? Why or why not?

SENSORY ACTIVITIES

1. Describe Mr. Marshall's surfboard storage room, concentrating on light, color, and patterns.
2. Describe the sounds Condi might be hearing as she practices on the beach.

PART FIVE: CHAPTERS 16-20

QUESTIONS FOR COMPREHENSION

Chapter 16 - An Empty Cove

1. After Condi rescues Madelaine and Lucky, nothing goes the way she expected. Describe her conflicting feelings when she returned to the yellow cottage alone by making some of her feelings opposites (Example: she was sad that... but also happy that...)

Chapter 17 - Caves in the Cliffs

2. At first, the Beachlings won't come out of their caves. Why not?

Chapter 18 - The Vintage Surfboards

3. When the Beachlings arrive at the art shop, Triponica asks Condi to help her. Condi fails to do as she asks. What important lesson does Condi learn from Triponica?
4. Condi, Marissa, and Trustin rescue Mr. Marshall's vintage surfboard collection. When she sees the golden-green and tangerine boards, what does she see and smell?





Chapter 19 - Candles and Scarves

5. When Casey and Mr. Arondale offer rooms in the B&B to some of the Beachlings, Condi is relieved. What difference does this make in the art shop?

Chapter 20 - Home

6. What impact did the hurricane have on the town of Dipitous Beach? On the yellow cottage?

7. People can change. Mrs. Arondale changed significantly after the storm. Why do you think she changed?

8. How does Anda change? What does Condi feel about her old friend’s confession about Javed?

9. Why isn’t Duke Holmes rebuilding the Mirage in Dipitous Beach?

10. When Condi and Grand Ella return home to the yellow cottage, what has changed? What is the same?

QUESTIONS FOR SELF-REFLECTION

1. Have you ever been so angry with someone that you unintentionally hurt someone who was innocent?

2. If a close friend hurts you and then later apologizes, how do you respond?

SENSORY ACTIVITIES

1. In the excavation pit filled with water, Condi encounters a Shadow Voice. Describe the Voice, using onomatopoeia words. Here are a few examples:





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2. When Condi wakes up in the middle of the night, the impending storm has caused the ocean to pull back from shore. The weather forecasters are predicting a storm surge when the storm arrives. Research this weather phenomenon. Write a paragraph describing an empty cove, using all five senses.
3. When Condi climbs up to Charlene's cave, she discovers Charly's shell art. If materials are available, create a mosaic using seashells. If not, draw a picture of a beach scene.
4. Trustin and Marissa scale the cliffs to reach the caves. Using the sense of touch (tactile sense), create a list of five words that describe the way it feels to climb up a rock.
5. Often, lost memories are triggered by smell. Can you recall a time when a smell helped you remember an old memory?
6. Tincture of Sapphire is made by Triponica, using ingredients from the sea. What do you think Tincture of Sapphire smells like?

PART SIX: CHAPTERS 21-26

QUESTIONS FOR COMPREHENSION

Chapter 21 - The Molten Black Surfboard

1. When Condi misses Trustin, she goes to the school library so she can feel closer to him. What does she discover about Errol Stinson, Madelaine's husband?
2. Often in the book, Condi hears Papa and Mama's voices, speaking in the language of music. What are some of the things her parents tell her? How do the messages help her cope?

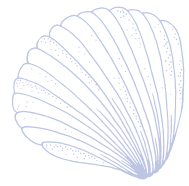
Chapter 22 - Ghost Stories

3. The town of Dipitous Beach is building bunk rooms for the Beachlings and a yoga pavilion for Grand Ella. How has the town changed since the storm?
4. When Condi learns the story of Mari Stinson's accident, how does the story affect her? What are her emotions?

Chapter 23 - The Flame

5. How does Trustin's molten-black surfboard reveal another part of the mystery?





Chapter 24 - The Double Palm Hotel

1. How does the article Sheriff Coodle gives to Condi help to explain Madelaine and Errol Stinson's lives?
2. When Condi goes to the Beachlings for answers, they clarify many things. But they can't explain Trustin Davis. Describe Condi's feelings. What is she hoping for?

Chapter 25 - Top of the Hollow

3. When Condi meets Trustin at the top of the Hollow, many mysteries are explained, though many questions still remain. What are some of the unresolved questions?

Chapter 26 - Surfing Dreams

4. When Condi surfs the cove on Aquamarine, she is connected to Trustin and Marissa. How have they changed her life?

QUESTIONS FOR SELF-REFLECTION

1. When Condi discovers the Davis twins never lived at the Mirage, she is confused. Especially since Trustin's surfboard was discovered in one of the hotel rooms before the storm. Things aren't adding up. Can you think of a time when you discovered something that didn't make sense? How did you handle it?

SENSORY ACTIVITIES

1. Do you and your family have special words or phrases you use to communicate? If yes, describe them.
2. Draw a surfboard and create a unique shaper's mark. Write a brief paragraph that explains the story behind the mark.
3. Often we never get to know everything about a person's story. Using your imagination, write something new about Trustin and his family that is not revealed in the book.





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AFTER YOU'VE READ THE BOOK

1. Do you believe in the magic of Koan's time, the time where there is no time? Why or why not?
2. What are your communities? Where can you develop new ones?
3. Where do you see everyday magic? Describe a time you've witnessed or experienced everyday magic, using all of your senses.
4. The Beachlings are important to Condi. Is there a group or an issue that you are passionate about? What are some ways you've taken action or would like to take action on that passion?

THANK YOU SO MUCH!


I am so excited that you picked up THE AQUAMARINE SURFBOARD! If you have questions for me or if you'd like to share your experience with everyday magic, I'd love to hear from you. You can find me at all these places:

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