

FRA "The Phantom Tollbooth" (Chapters 1-10)

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Remind the children that they will be reading Chapters 1-10 of *The Phantom Tollbooth*. Tell them not to discuss events of later chapters, in case anyone hasn't read that far.

Set the Stage (Take your time here to engage the children before starting the story):

Ask the students to share their favorite part of the story. Why? Encourage them to elaborate.

Checking Comprehension (all oral work - it is not necessary to ask every question. Do as many as time allows):

1. What is Milo's problem?

He's bored with everything. He doesn't know what to do with himself and feels that everything is a waste of time.

2. What does Milo find in his house?

A tollbooth.

3. What does the note on the tollbooth say?

"FOR MILO, WHO HAS PLENTY OF TIME."

4. Where does Milo decide to go first?

Dictionopolis.

5. Where does he end up first?

Expectations.

6. Who is the first person he meets?

The Whether Man.

7. What is unusual about the Whether Man's speech?

He repeats everything he says.

8. Where does Milo end up without meaning to?

The Doldrums.

9. What are the residents of the Doldrums called?

The Lethargians.

10. What is no one allowed to do in the Doldrums?

Think.

11. Who helps Milo get out of the Doldrums?

The Watchdog, Tock.

12. Why is the Watchdog called "Tock" even though he goes "Tick"?

His parents assumed that his older brother would make the sound *tick* and named him "Tick" because of it, but it turned out that he made the sound *tock*. Because they didn't want to make the same mistake twice, they named their next child "Tock"...only to have him go *tick*.

13. What is the name of the King of Dictionopolis?

King Azaz the Unabridged.

14. What is sold in Dictionopolis?

Words.

15. What two creatures have a fight in Dictionopolis' market place?

The Humbug and the Spelling Bee.
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16. What is the name of the "not-so-wicked Which" that Milo and Tock meet in prison?
Faintly Macabre.
17. Why did King Azaz quarrel with his brother, the Mathemagician?
They fought over whether words or numbers were more important.
18. Why were Rhyme and Reason banished to the Castle in the Air?
They ruled that words and numbers were equally important.
19. Who accompanies Milo and Tock on their journey?
The Humbug.
20. Why does Alec Bings, the boy Milo meets in Point of View, float in the air?
People in Point of View are born with their heads at the exact height they will be when they grow up, and as they grow their legs become long enough to let them touch the ground.
21. What do the giant, the midget, the thin man and the fat man have in common?
They're all the same person!
22. Why did the city of Reality cease to exist?
All the people in it refused to look at it.
23. What does Chroma the Great's orchestra do?
Put color in the world.

Discussing Ideas (all oral work):

1. Milo lacks energy and is bored with all the world. Why do you think he feels this way? Have you ever felt this way?
2. Does this book remind you of any others you have read? (If anyone mentions *Alice in Wonderland*, discuss similarities and differences.)
3. *The Phantom Tollbooth* is an allegory about the pursuit of knowledge. How can we tell this?
4. The message on the Tollbooth says that Milo has "PLENTY OF TIME." What does this mean? (And why is Milo's best friend in the new world he discovers a concrete representation of time? How is the use of one's time important?)
5. Talk about some of the wordplay in the story.
6. Why are Rhyme and Reason important?

Class Activity: (Choose one of the following)

1. King Azaz thinks that words are more important than numbers, while his brother the Mathemagician thinks that numbers are more important than words. This causes a division between their kingdoms. If you lived in their world, whose side would you be on? Divide up the room into opposing factions.
2. The royal banquet in Dictionopolis contains some unusual dishes. Invent a new one.