



ESCAPE FROM SLEEPY HOLLOW: HEADLESS IN NEW YORK

Student Reading Guide

Companion Guide for the Novel by Kevin Purdy

This reading guide includes:

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| ✓ Vocabulary activities | ✓ Literary elements |
| ✓ Reading comprehension questions | ✓ Critical thinking exercises |
| ✓ Prediction activities | ✓ Creative response activities |
| ✓ Character analysis | ✓ Discussion prompts |
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Designed for:

Grades 5 – 7

Classroom Use • Small Groups • Independent Reading • Homeschooling

Aligned with key reading comprehension skills including vocabulary development, prediction, inference, visualization, character analysis, literary elements, and critical thinking.

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Escape from Sleepy Hollow: Headless in New York

Student Reading Guide

Chapter 1: Disappearing Legend

Name: _____ Date: _____

Prereading

As you read this book, imagine it as a movie. Picture the characters, settings, and action scenes in your mind. Think about who might play the main characters and what the locations would look like on the big screen.

Vocabulary Challenge

Vocabulary Words

literary precious frantically improvised descriptive

Using the vocabulary words above and clues from the chapter, write the correct word next to each definition.

_____ related to books and writing

_____ very valuable or important

_____ in a hurried or panicked way

_____ created or changed without planning ahead

_____ using details that help readers imagine something clearly

Reading Focus: Prediction

Good readers look for clues that help them predict what may happen next.

1. What clues suggest that Hammy's book may have been taken instead of simply lost?

Spotlight Skill: Character Analysis

What do Hammy's thoughts and actions reveal about his personality?

Choose TWO words that best describe Hammy.

☐ Responsible

☐ Brave

☐ Nervous

☐ Funny

☐ Creative

☐ Careless

Use details from the chapter to explain your choices.

Literary Spotlight

Authors often create suspense by ending a chapter with an unanswered question or surprising event.

Suspense

What event creates suspense at the end of this chapter?

Cliffhanger

Why do you think the author ended the chapter at this exact moment?

Your Turn

Imagine you are Hammy.

You discover that a valuable family treasure has disappeared, and you may only have a few hours to find it.

Write a five-sentence paragraph explaining what you would do next.

What Happens Next?

1. What do you think will happen immediately after Hammy's backpack is pulled away?

2. What do you predict Hammy, Gwen, and Leo will be doing by the end of Chapter 2?

Rate This Chapter

Rate this chapter from 5 stars (best) to 1 star (least favorite) by circling the appropriate star.



My favorite part was:

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Chapter 2: A Grave Proposal

Name: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary Challenge

Vocabulary Words

belated sinister befuddled proposal offense

Using the vocabulary words above and clues from the chapter, write the correct word next to each definition.

- _____ confused or puzzled
 - _____ arriving later than expected
 - _____ something wrong that a person has done
 - _____ suggesting evil, danger, or trouble
 - _____ a plan, suggestion, or offer
-

Reading Focus: Conflict

A conflict is a problem or struggle that characters face.

1. What conflict is Hammy facing in this chapter?

3. Do you think Hammy should trust James? Why or why not?

Spotlight Skill: Character Analysis

Choose TWO characters from this chapter and describe them using words or phrases from the story.

Character	Description
Hammy	
Leo	
Gwen	
James	
Ely	

Which character would you most like as a friend? Explain your answer.

Literary Spotlight

Humor

Even though this chapter deals with a serious problem, the author includes several humorous moments.

What part of the chapter did you find funniest?

How does humor help make the story more enjoyable?

Your Turn

James proposes a meeting at the Headless Horseman Bridge on Halloween night.

If you were Hammy, would you accept James' proposal?

Write a five-sentence paragraph explaining what you would do and why.

What Happens Next?

1. What do you think James and Ely are planning?

2. What do you predict Hammy, Leo, and Gwen will decide to do after school?

Rate This Chapter

Rate this chapter from 5 stars (best) to 1 star (least favorite) by circling the appropriate star.



My favorite part was:

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Chapter 3: The Plan

Name: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary Challenge

Vocabulary Words

ample rendezvous perilous dilemma optimism

Using the vocabulary words above and clues from the chapter, write the correct word next to each definition.

_____ a difficult choice between two options

_____ a positive attitude or hopeful outlook

_____ large in amount; more than enough

_____ dangerous or risky

_____ a planned meeting between people

Reading Focus: Problem Solving

Good readers think about how characters solve problems and make decisions.

1. What problem is Hammy trying to solve in this chapter?

2. What plan do Leo and Gwen suggest?

3. Do you think their plan is a good one? Why or why not?

Spotlight Skill: Inference

Authors do not always tell readers exactly what characters are thinking or feeling.

What can you infer about Hammy from the fact that he barely touches his lunch?

What can you infer about Gwen from the way she reacts to James and Ely?

Literary Spotlight

Metaphor

A metaphor compares two things by saying one thing is another thing.

The narrator says that Hammy and the twins had become “a single three-headed creature.”

What does this metaphor tell readers about the friendship between Hammy, Leo, and Gwen?

Humor

Which scene in this chapter did you find funniest?

Your Turn

Hammy must decide whether to follow Leo and Gwen's plan.

Write a paragraph explaining what you would do if you were Hammy.

Would you go to the bridge? Why or why not?

Theme Connection

Friendship is becoming an important theme in the story.

How do Leo and Gwen show that they are good friends to Hammy?

What Happens Next?

What do you think will happen when the friends meet James and Ely at the bridge?

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Chapter 4: Meeting at the Bridge

Name: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary Challenge

Vocabulary Words

dismay mausoleum taunting reputation disposable

Using the vocabulary words above and clues from the chapter, write the correct word next to each definition.

_____ a building used to hold the remains of the dead

_____ able to be thrown away after use

_____ a feeling of disappointment or concern

_____ the opinions people have about a person or thing

_____ teasing or mocking in an unkind way

Reading Focus: Setting and Mood

Authors use setting to create a mood, or feeling, in a story.

1. What details in this chapter help create a spooky mood?

2. How do the rain, bridge, and cemetery affect the mood of the story?

3. Would the chapter feel different if it took place on a sunny afternoon? Explain your thinking.

Spotlight Skill: Fact or Legend?

James tells several stories about the Bronze Lady. Choose one claim James makes about the Bronze Lady.

Do you think it is a fact, a legend, or a rumor? Why?

Literary Spotlight

Imagery

Imagery is language that helps readers create pictures in their minds. Which description helped you most clearly picture the setting?

What did you imagine when you read that part?

Hyperbole

James claims that the Bronze Lady will chase people through the cemetery and haunt them for life.

Do you think James is exaggerating? Why?

Your Turn

Imagine that you are standing on the bridge with Hammy, Leo, and Gwen.

Write a five-sentence paragraph describing what you see, hear, and feel.

Try to include details about the weather, the bridge, and the cemetery.

What Happens Next?

1. What do you think the friends will find when they enter the cemetery?

Rate this chapter from 5 stars (best) to 1 star (least favorite) by circling the appropriate star.



My favorite part was:

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Chapter 5: Into the Cemetery

Name: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary Challenge

Vocabulary Words

threshold proficient unnerving somber dignity

Using the vocabulary words above and clues from the chapter, write the correct word next to each definition.

- _____ serious, sad, or solemn
 - _____ respectfulness and self-control
 - _____ skilled at doing something
 - _____ causing feelings of fear or discomfort
 - _____ the entrance or beginning of something
-

Reading Focus: Visualization

Good readers create pictures in their minds while they read.

1. What details helped you picture the Bronze Lady?

2. What details made the cemetery seem spooky?

Spotlight Skill: Character Analysis

This chapter reveals how different characters react to fear.

Complete the chart below.

Character	How does this character react in the cemetery?
Hammy	
Leo	
Gwen	

Which character reacts most like you would? Explain.

Literary Spotlight

Suspense

Authors build suspense by making readers wonder what will happen next.

List two moments that increased the suspense in this chapter.

1.

2.

Why do you think the author ended the chapter before revealing what Hammy saw?

Foreshadowing

Earlier in the chapter, the characters discuss the Bronze Lady and the possibility that something strange could happen.

Do you think these conversations may have been clues about later events?

Your Turn

Imagine you are writing a journal entry after visiting the Bronze Lady.

Write a paragraph describing your experience in the cemetery.

How would you feel? What would you remember most?

Theme Connection

Friendship continues to play an important role in the story.

Find one example of a character helping, encouraging, or protecting a friend.

Why is friendship important in this chapter?

What Happens Next?

1. What do you think Gwen and Leo saw behind Hammy?

2. What do you predict will happen at the beginning of Chapter 6?

Rate This Chapter

Rate this chapter from 5 stars (best) to 1 star (least favorite) by circling the appropriate star.



My favorite part was:

The spookiest part was:

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Student Reading Guide

Chapter 6: Headless in Sleepy Hollow

Name: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary Challenge

Vocabulary Words

reverie terrain amplified insincerity perilous

Using the vocabulary words above and clues from the chapter, write the correct word next to each definition.

_____ dangerous or risky

_____ a daydream or deep thought

_____ made louder or stronger

_____ land or ground in a particular area

_____ not being genuine or truthful

Spotlight Skill: Drawing Conclusions

Readers use clues from the story to draw conclusions.

What evidence suggests that the Headless Horseman is dangerous?

Do you think the Horseman is real, a prank, or something else?

Use details from the chapter to support your answer.

Reading Focus: Cause and Effect

Events in stories often happen because of something else that occurred first.

1. Why do Hammy, Leo, and Gwen jump off the bridge?

Cause:

Effect:

2. Why do the friends hide among the rocks and bushes?

Cause:

Effect:

3. What causes the trio to run deeper into the cemetery at the end of the chapter?

Your Turn

Imagine you are Hammy hiding beneath the bridge after escaping the Horseman.

Write a five-sentence journal entry describing your thoughts and feelings.

Literary Spotlight

Suspense

Authors build suspense by creating uncertainty and danger.

List two moments that increased suspense in this chapter.

1. _____
2. _____

Which moment was the most suspenseful? Why?

Personification

The author writes:

“The clip-clop of hoof beats grew louder and closer.”

What effect does repeatedly hearing the hoofbeats have on the reader?

Theme Connection

Courage does not always mean being fearless. How does Hammy show courage in this chapter even though he is frightened?

What Happens Next?

1. What do you think the cemetery guard will do now that he has spotted the three friends?

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Chapter 7: Out of the Cemetery

Name: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary Challenge

Vocabulary Words

exhaustion sentinel dilemma subdued occupants

Using the vocabulary words above and clues from the chapter, write the correct word next to each definition.

_____ people who are in a place or vehicle

_____ a difficult problem or choice

_____ extremely tired

_____ quieter or less intense than before

_____ a guard or watcher

Reading Focus: Evaluating Decisions

Good readers think about the choices characters make and whether those choices are effective.

1. What was Leo's plan for escaping the cemetery?

2. Do you think Leo's plan was a good one? Why or why not?

Spotlight Skill: Leadership

Different people become leaders in different situations.

Who acts as the leader for most of this chapter?

☐ Hammy

☐ Leo

☐ Gwen

☐ James

Give two examples from the chapter that support your answer.

What qualities make a good leader?

Literary Spotlight

Suspense

The author continues building suspense throughout this chapter.

What moment created the most suspense for you?

Why did that moment stand out?

Imagery

The author describes the South Gate area as being lit by lamps and nearby town lights.

How does this setting differ from the darker parts of the cemetery?

Your Turn

Imagine you are one of the tourists leaving the cemetery when the Horseman charges through the South Gate.

Write a five-sentence paragraph describing what you would see, hear, and feel.

Theme Connection

Friendship and teamwork continue to help the characters.

Describe one example of the friends working together in this chapter.

Why would it have been harder for Hammy to escape the cemetery alone?

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Chapter 8: Legendary Swamp

Name: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary Challenge

Vocabulary Words

minuscule dwindled contemplations conviction monument

Use the words above to complete this activity. The brief definition for each words are listed below. They are in the correct order as the words above. Your job is to write a sentence using each word. Be sure to circle the vocabulary word in your sentence.

very small

became smaller or weaker

serious thoughts or reflections

a strong belief or certainty

a structure built to honor a person or event

Reading Focus: Making Connections

Hammy realizes that Patriots Park was once known as Wiley's Swamp in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*.

Story Connection Detective

Fill in the clues below.

In Washington Irving's story, Wiley's Swamp is important because:

In this chapter, Patriots Park becomes important because:

Literary Spotlight

Sounds in the Story

The author uses sounds to build suspense. Match each sound to its effect by writing the letter of the correct sound with its appropriate effect.

Sound

- A. Clip-clop
- B. Hiss

- C. Blaring horns
- D. Screech

Effect

- _____ Creates fear and anticipation
- _____ Shows danger from traffic
- _____ Reveals hidden communication
- _____ Shows sudden fright

Onomatopoeia

Words such as *clip-clop* imitate real sounds. These are called onomatopoeias.

Think of another word that is an onomatopoeia and write it below:

Quick Sketch Activity

Draw a small sketch of Patriots Park as you imagine it from the chapter. Include:

- The statue
- The hiding place
- The Horseman
- The road

Your Turn

Imagine you are hiding beside the statue with Leo, Gwen, and Hammy.

Write a five-sentence paragraph describing what you are thinking while the hoofbeats circle the monument.

Prediction Meter

Circle the prediction you think is MOST likely.

- A. The Horseman rides away.
- B. The Horseman discovers the kids.
- C. The cemetery guards arrive.
- D. Something completely unexpected happens.

Explain your choice.

Rate This Chapter

Rate this chapter from 5 stars (best) to 1 star (least favorite) by circling the appropriate star.



The most suspenseful moment was:

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Chapter 9: Ghouls on Parade

Name: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary Challenge

Directions

Draw a line from each vocabulary word in the left column to its correct definition in the right column.

Vocabulary Words

apprehended

cantering

gravity

decapitated

adorned

Definitions

decorated or embellished

arrested or captured

having the head removed

seriousness or importance

moving at an easy horse-running pace

Character Ranking Challenge

Rank the characters from **most calm** (1) to **least calm** (3) during this chapter.

Write a number beside each name.

___ Hammy

___ Leo

___ Gwen

Explain one of your rankings.

Literary Device Hunt

Find the Humor

This chapter contains several funny moments even though the characters are in danger.

Put a check beside the scene you thought was funniest.

- ☐ Gwen stepping in horse manure
- ☐ Hammy worrying about missing the parade
- ☐ Leo trying to explain things to Hammy
- ☐ Gwen's comments to the Purcell twins
- ☐ "Plan B"

Why was it funny?

Mood Meter

Circle the mood you felt most strongly while reading this chapter.

Relaxed

Curious

Nervous

Excited

Scared

Amused

Find one moment that created that mood.

Mystery Detective

The Horseman appears to be following the friends.

List two clues that suggest he is intentionally tracking them.

Clue #1

Clue #2

Fact, Opinion, or Prediction?

Write F (fact), O (opinion), or P (prediction) beside each statement.

_____ The police station is nearby.

_____ Gwen is the bravest member of the group.

_____ The Horseman will eventually catch the kids.

_____ Randy and Tammy rode horses in the parade.

_____ Hammy worries more than Leo.

Quick Creative Activity

Write a Newspaper Headline

Pretend you are a reporter covering the events of this chapter. Write a headline that might appear in the local newspaper.

Your Turn

Imagine you are Randy or Tammy Purcell.

Write a short paragraph describing what you thought was happening when you met Hammy, Leo, and Gwen on Main Street.

Prediction Meter

What do you think will happen first in Chapter 10?

- ☐ The kids reach the police station.
- ☐ The Horseman catches up to them.
- ☐ An adult finally believes their story.
- ☐ The Horseman disappears.
- ☐ Something completely unexpected happens.

Explain your prediction.

Rate This Chapter

Rate this chapter from 5 stars (best) to 1 star (least favorite) by circling the appropriate star.



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Chapter 10: Unexpected Train Ride

Name: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary Challenge

Directions

Draw a line from each vocabulary word to its correct definition.

Vocabulary Words

apprehensive

barrier

conductor

express

anguish

Definitions

a train that skips some stations and makes fewer stops

emotional pain, distress, or suffering

a person who collects tickets and assists passengers on a train

worried or nervous about what might happen

something that blocks movement or progress

Cause and Effect Challenge

Draw a line connecting each cause to its effect.

Causes

Hammy refused to climb over the fence.

The Horseman jumped the fence.

The friends ran through the train station.

Hammy boarded the train.

The train was an express train.

Effects

The Horseman was temporarily left behind.

The friends were headed all the way to New York City.

The friends headed toward the depot.

The twins had to follow another route.

The Horseman proved even more dangerous than expected.

Character Spotlight

Hammy Saves the Day

Earlier in the story, Hammy often relied on Gwen and Leo.

In this chapter, Hammy takes charge several times.

Put a check beside the actions Hammy takes.

- ☐ Finds a way around the fence
- ☐ Suggests a plan involving the train
- ☐ Boards the train first
- ☐ Helps the group escape the Horseman
- ☐ Figures out where they should get off the train

Why/how is Hammy becoming a stronger character?

Literary Spotlight

Simile Hunt

The author writes: *“Rather than taking the Hammy’s route around the fence, the Headless Horseman galloped directly at the black, metal barricade. Once it was only a few feet away, it raised its front hooves and flew into the air, like a demon reindeer on Christmas, easily clearing the fence and hurtling right at Hammy and Leo.”*

What is being compared in the simile: *“Like a demon reindeer on Christmas...”*?

Why is this comparison effective?

Quick Activity

Create a Train Warning Sign

Imagine the Tarrytown Station wanted to warn travelers about unusual dangers.

Create a warning sign for passengers.

Examples:

- Beware of...
- Do Not...
- Watch For...

Write the words that would appear on your sign below.

Problem Solvers

The friends face several problems in this chapter.

What would YOU have done?

Problem #1

A horseman is chasing you toward a train station. What would you do?

Problem #2

You accidentally board an express train.

What would you do next?

Prediction Detective

The story just changed in a major way.

Circle all the possibilities you think might happen next.

- ☐ The friends get lost in New York City.
- ☐ They find help.
- ☐ The Horseman follows them.
- ☐ They meet new characters.
- ☐ They discover a clue.
- ☐ Something completely unexpected happens.

Which possibility seems MOST likely?

Your Turn

Imagine you are sitting on the train as it speeds past **Irvington*** Station. Write a five-sentence paragraph describing what you are thinking and feeling when you realize you are heading to New York City.

Rate This Chapter

Rate this chapter from 5 stars (best) to 1 star (least favorite) by circling the appropriate star.



* Irvington is named after Washington Irving, author of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*.

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Chapter 11: Escape to the City

Name: _____ Date: _____

Vocabulary Challenge: Context Clues Detective

Directions

Use clues from the chapter to determine the meaning of each bold vocabulary word. Write the correct letter beside each sentence.

Answer Choices

- A. crowded activity or confusion
- B. leave a train
- C. got off a train
- D. spread out or scattered
- E. high-pitched or sharp sounding

_____ 1. Hammy's voice became **shrill**.

_____ 2. The commuters from the original train had **disbursed**.

_____ 3. Most of the passengers did not even slow down as they **detrained**.

_____ 4. The station was filled with **hubbub**.

_____ 5. "Be sure to **disembark** here and take all of your belongings."

Story Journey Tracker

Directions

Number the locations below in the order the friends visit them during the story.

_____ Tarrytown Train Station

_____ Grand Central Station

_____ Sleepy Hollow Cemetery

_____ Patriots Park

_____ Tarrytown Police Station

Which location would you least like to visit at night?

Character Growth Tracker

One important part of this chapter is how Hammy handles a difficult situation.

Put a check beside the actions Hammy takes.

- ☐ Explains how the trains work
- ☐ Creates a plan for getting home
- ☐ Helps the twins understand the situation
- ☐ Tries to solve the ticket problem
- ☐ Remains calm the entire chapter

Which action shows the most growth from Chapter 1?

Literary Spotlight

Dialogue Detective

Much of this chapter is told through dialogue.

Match each quote to the character who most likely says it.

A. Hammy

B. Gwen

C. Leo

_____ “Cool your jets, both of you.”

_____ “We can’t go all the way to New York City.”

_____ “It’s not rocket science.”

_____ “What do we do next?”

_____ “I have no idea where I’m going, but good luck keeping up with me.”

What does dialogue help readers learn about characters?

Problem and Solution Challenge

Draw a line from each problem to its solution.

Problems

No tickets

Express train

Horseman at the station

Getting to New York City

Horseman appears again

Solutions

Hide in the bathroom

Board the train

Ride to Grand Central

Look for train employees

Run

Grand Central First Impressions

The author describes a busy train station filled with people.

Imagine you have never visited New York City before.

Write three words that describe how you might feel when stepping into Grand Central Station.

1.

2.

3.

Explain one of your choices.

Quick Creative Activity

Lost and Found Announcement

Pretend an announcement is being made over the station loudspeaker.

Write a funny “lost and found” announcement for one item that might belong to Hammy, Leo, or Gwen.

Prediction Web

The chapter ends with the Horseman appearing in New York City.

Check every prediction that seems possible.

- ☐ The Horseman continues chasing them.
- ☐ The friends find help.
- ☐ Someone finally believes their story.
- ☐ The Horseman causes chaos in the station.
- ☐ The friends become separated.
- ☐ They discover a clue.
- ☐ Something completely unexpected happens.

Which prediction seems MOST likely?

Why?

Your Turn

Imagine you are one of the three friends standing inside Grand Central Station when you suddenly spot the Headless Horseman. Write a paragraph describing what you see, think, and feel.

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Chapter 12: Debacle on Fifth Avenue

Name: _____ Date: _____

Pre-Reading

Before You Read

The title of this chapter is **Debacle on Fifth Avenue**.

A **debacle** is:

☐ A great success	☐ A celebration
☐ A confusing failure or disaster	☐ A mystery

Prediction:

Based on the title, what kind of trouble do you think the characters might experience in this chapter?

Vocabulary Challenge

Lost in the City

Draw a line from each vocabulary word to its correct meaning.

Vocabulary Word

Definition

maze-like

a glowing piece of coal or burning wood

revelers

confusing and difficult to navigate

tirade

people celebrating or partying

inconspicuous

a long, angry speech

glowing coal

not easily noticed

Reading Check

Multiple Choice

1. Why does Hammy want to stay close to Gwen and Leo in Grand Central Station?

- ☐ He thinks they know where they are going.
 - ☐ He is afraid they will leave without him.
 - ☐ He worries they could become separated in the crowded station.
 - ☐ He wants Gwen to stop asking questions.
-

2. Where does Hammy first lead the group?

- ☐ Times Square
 - ☐ A police station
 - ☐ Toward the station exits
 - ☐ A restaurant
-

3. What important mistake does Hammy make?

- ☐ He loses the group.
- ☐ He forgets where his sister works.
- ☐ He confuses his sister's workplace with her apartment.
- ☐ He drops his backpack.

Character Tracker

Place a check beside each statement that best describes Hammy in this chapter.

- ☐ Tries to help
- ☐ Gets frustrated
- ☐ Pretends to know more than he does
- ☐ Gives up
- ☐ Makes an important mistake
- ☐ Continues searching for solutions

Short Response

Which choice above do you think had the biggest impact on the chapter?

Literary Spotlight

Humor in a Serious Situation

Authors sometimes include humor during tense moments. Match the humorous moment to what it reveals.

Event

Reveals

Leo suggests “The Legend of Headless Hammy”

_____ A. Gwen’s frustration

Gwen threatens to create a real headless person

_____ B. Leo uses humor during stress

Hammy keeps guessing where to go

_____ C. Hammy is overwhelmed

Think About It

Why do you think the author includes humor during frightening scenes?

Setting Detective

This chapter takes place in two very different settings.

Write three words or phrases describing each setting.

Grand Central Station

Fifth Avenue

Quick Write

Hammy keeps trying to remember where his sister lives.

Write a five-sentence paragraph explaining whether you think Hammy is helping the group or making things worse in this chapter.

Prediction Time

1. What do you think the friends should do next?

2. Why do you think the Horseman continues following them?

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Student Reading Guide – Chapter 13: A Stroll in the Park

Name: _____ Date: _____

Pre-Reading

Before You Read

Central Park is one of the most famous parks in the world. It sits in the middle of New York City and covers more than 800 acres. Imagine you are walking through a dark park at night. What sounds might you hear?

What things might make you feel nervous?

Vocabulary Challenge

Sort It Out!

Directions: On the next page, place each vocabulary word into the category where it belongs.

Vocabulary Words

reverie

imminent

cajoling

irate

visage

surmised

Feelings & Emotions

Talking & Communication

Thinking & Understanding

Bonus

Choose one vocabulary word and use it in your own sentence.

Reading Check

1. Why does Hammy freeze instead of running?

- ☐ He is injured.
- ☐ He is exhausted.
- ☐ He becomes frightened and overwhelmed.
- ☐ He wants to talk to the Horseman.

2. What does Hammy mistake for the Headless Horseman?

- ☐ A scarecrow
- ☐ A carriage driver
- ☐ A statue
- ☐ A tourist

3. Where do the friends hide?

- ☐ Times Square
 - ☐ Central Park
 - ☐ Grand Central Station
 - ☐ A restaurant
-

4. Why do the carriage drivers refuse to help?

- ☐ They are afraid of the Horseman.
 - ☐ They are closing for the night.
 - ☐ They do not believe the children.
 - ☐ Both B and C could be supported.
-

5. What surprising vehicle is the Horseman using at the end of the chapter?

- ☐ A taxi
 - ☐ A train
 - ☐ A carriage
 - ☐ A police car
-

Literary Spotlight

Building Suspense

Authors create suspense by making readers worry about what will happen next.

Find one moment in the chapter that creates suspense.

Why does that moment create suspense?

Setting Focus

Central Park at Night

Complete the chart.

What Makes Central Park Feel Safe?	What Makes Central Park Feel Scary?

Character Comparison

Who handles the situation best in this chapter?

☐ Hammy

☐ Gwen

☐ Leo

Explain your answer.

Give one example from the chapter that supports your choice.

Visualizing the Scene

Close your eyes and picture the bronze statue on the horse.

Draw a quick sketch on a separate sheet of paper OR describe what you imagine.

Quick Fun Activity

What Happens in Central Park?

Hammy mistakes a statue for the Headless Horseman.

Think of another ordinary object that might look scary at night.

Object: _____

Why might someone mistake it for something frightening?

Prediction Time

At the end of the chapter, the Headless Horseman is riding in a carriage.

Why do you think he changed from a horse to a carriage?

What do you think will happen next?

Your Turn

Imagine you are writing a postcard home from this adventure.

Write a five-sentence postcard describing your evening so far.

Rate This Chapter

Rate this chapter from 5 stars (best) to 1 star (least favorite) by circling the appropriate star.

★★★★★

★★★★★

★★★★

★★★

★★

★

Favorite Moment:

Biggest Surprise:

One Question I Still Have Is:

Escape from Sleepy Hollow: Headless in New York

Student Reading Guide – Chapter 14: Headless in New York

Name: _____ Date: _____

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Activity

Mystery Word Challenge

Use the clues to identify each vocabulary word from Chapter 14. Write the correct word on the line.

Word Bank

cantering • formidable • vice • ominous • bewilderment • detour

1. This word means a feeling of confusion or puzzlement.

2. This word describes something that seems threatening or suggests danger.

3. This word means a strong obstacle or something difficult to overcome.

4. This word means a route that goes around something instead of following the normal path.

5. This word describes a horse moving at a steady pace that is faster than a trot.

6. This word describes something that tightly traps or squeezes a person into a difficult situation.

While Reading

As you read, pay attention to clues that help solve the mystery of the Headless Horseman.

Reading Check

1. Why do the friends believe they have escaped the Headless Horseman?

2. What surprise do they discover after stopping near the opening in the trees?

3. Where do the three friends become trapped?

4. What shocking discovery does Gwen make when the Horseman removes his head?

5. Who is Felix?

6. How did Mr. Holland follow the students through Central Park?

Literary Spotlight

The Big Reveal

A **reveal** is a moment when an author uncovers important information that changes how readers understand the story.

Before the Reveal

List two clues that made the Headless Horseman seem supernatural: (involving magic, ghosts, or other things beyond nature.)

1.

2.

After the Reveal

What information completely changes the way readers view the Horseman?

Character Reflection

Throughout the story, Hammy and the twins have reacted differently to danger.

Match each character (in chart) with the description (beneath the chart) that best fits them in this chapter.

Character	Description
Hammy	
Gwen	
Leo	

A. Takes charge and asks direct questions

B. Tries to understand what is happening

C. Helps keep everyone moving and thinking

Reading Fluency Activity

Imagine reading this passage aloud with expression:

“What in the...” Gwen uttered, staring at the Headless Horseman who had grasped his hat and appeared to be lifting his entire head off his neck.

Which emotion should be strongest when reading this line?

☐ Excitement

☐ Confusion

☐ Fear

☐ Anger

Explain your choice.

Making Connections

This chapter changes the story from a supernatural mystery into something quite different.

We have all believed something was scary, only to discover there was a perfectly logical explanation? Describe a real or imagined moment when this has happened to you or someone you know. (Can even be a character from book, movie, etc.)

Quick Creative Activity

Design the Disguise

Mr. Holland successfully convinced everyone that he was the Headless Horseman.

If you were designing the disguise, what three items would be absolutely necessary?

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
-

Rate This Chapter

Rate this chapter from 5 stars (best) to 1 star (least favorite) by circling the appropriate star.

★★★★★

★★★★★

★★★

★★

★

One question I still have is:

Prediction

Only one chapter remains after this one.

Now that the mystery of the Horseman has been revealed, what important questions still need to be answered?

Chapter 15 Student Reading Guide

Escape from Sleepy Hollow: Headless in New York

Name: _____ Date: _____

Pre-Reading

Before You Read

This is the final chapter of the novel. Before reading, think about this question:

What makes a satisfying ending to a story?

Vocabulary Activity

Final Word Match-Up

Draw a line from each word to its correct meaning.

Word	Meaning
sheepish	words or actions that reduce worry
desolate	feeling embarrassed
besieged	surrounded by people
reassurance	switch back and forth
persistent	refusing to give up
alternate	empty and lonely

Reading Check

1. Why was Mr. Holland dressed as the Headless Horseman?

2. How did Mr. Holland know the students were planning to go to the cemetery?

3. What happened to the Purcell family's horse after Mr. Holland boarded the train?

4. How did Mr. Holland stay in contact with the students' parents?

5. What important items did Mr. Holland return to the students?

6. How did James and Ely react after meeting the "Headless Horseman"?

7. How does the story end?

Literary Spotlight

Resolving the Conflict

A **resolution** is the part of a story where the major problems are solved. Match each problem with its resolution by drawing a line between the problem and the corresponding resolution.

Problem

Resolution

Hammy's book is stolen.

Mr. Holland helps them return home.

The students lose their phones.

Mr. Holland recovers it from James and Ely.

The Headless Horseman mystery.

Mr. Holland returns them.

The students are stranded in New York City.

Mr. Holland was the Horseman.

Character Growth Reflection

Think about how the characters changed during the story, then complete the following chart.

Character	How They Changed
Hammy	
Gwen	
Leo	

Theme Detective

Check the box next to the themes that fit this story.

☐ Friendship

☐ Responsibility

☐ Family Importance

☐ Courage

☐ Trust

☐ Perseverance

Choose ONE of the themes and explain why it fits the novel.

Story Timeline Challenge

Number these events from 1–6 in the order they happened.

_____ The friends ride an express train.

_____ Hammy's book is stolen.

_____ The students visit the Bronze Lady.

_____ Mr. Holland reveals himself.

_____ The Headless Horseman appears.

_____ The students return home.

My Favorite Moment

What was your favorite scene in the entire book?

Why was it your favorite?

Final Reflection

Would you recommend this book to another student?

☐ Definitely

☐ Probably Not

☐ Definitely Not

☐ Probably

☐ Maybe

Explain your answer.

Looking Beyond the Ending

Gwen says:

“Maybe we can do this again next Halloween.”

What do you think happens to Hammy, Gwen, and Leo the following Halloween?

Escape from Sleepy Hollow: The Movie

Earlier in this book, you were asked to imagine *Escape from Sleepy Hollow: Headless in New York* as a movie. Now it's your turn to help bring it to life!

Movie Planning

- Who would be a good person to direct the movie? _____
- Who should play Hammy, Gwen, Leo, and Mr. Holland? _____
- What would be some of the most exciting, funny, or memorable scenes in the movie? _____

Persuasive Writing Activity

Write a letter to a movie producer or movie studio. Convince them to turn *Escape from Sleepy Hollow: Headless in New York* into a movie.

Be sure to include:

- Why the story would make a great movie
- Your favorite scenes
- Which actors you would cast
- Why audiences would enjoy the film

Extension Activity

Share your letter with classmates in pairs, small groups, or as a whole class.

As a class, combine the best ideas from everyone's letters into one “super letter.”

Optional: All students sign the class letter and send it to a movie studio, production company, or filmmaker.