

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Discussion Questions and Enrichment Activities



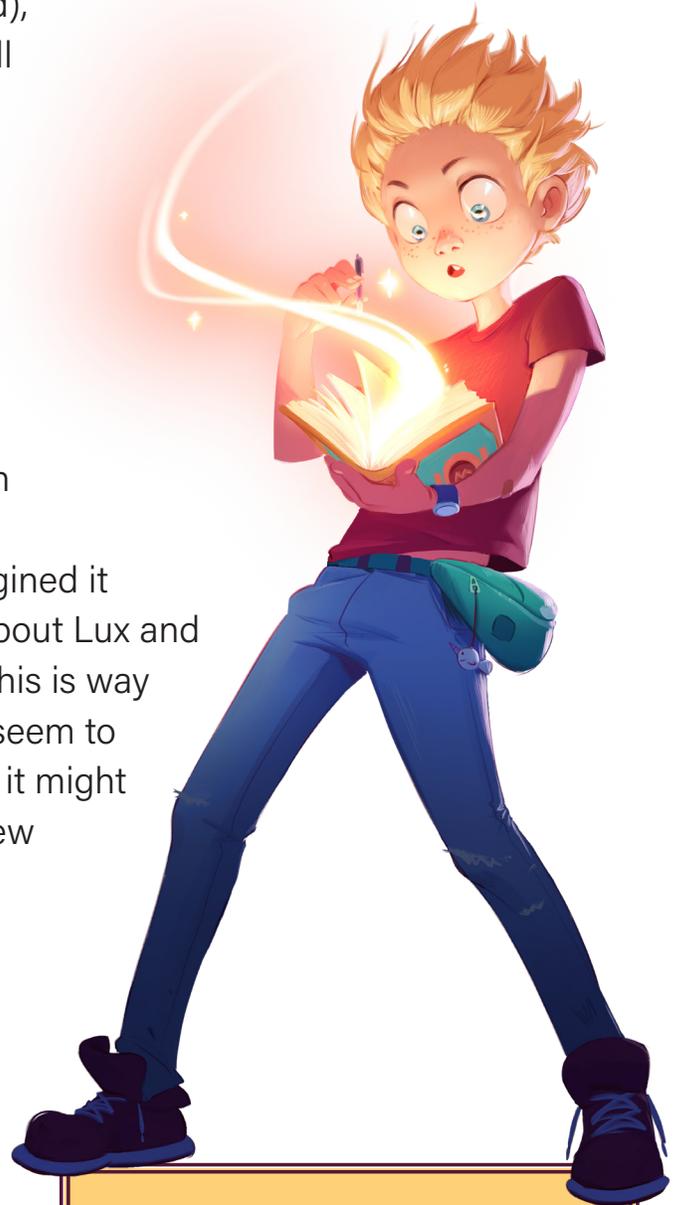
The following Teacher's Guide can be used as guidance for an immersive learning experience with the novel and/or as intellectual preparation for educators to enhance their instructional approach. Ideas are aligned to national standards and include interdisciplinary connections and social-emotional learning considerations.

Happy reading!

About the Book

Ben doesn't feel chosen by anybody—not by his friends, who haven't kept in touch since he moved after his parents' divorce, or by his mom, who is so busy he barely sees her. He spends all his time living in fantasy worlds and writing extensively planned adventure campaigns in his role-playing game notebook. So when Niara, a character who could be right out of one of his favorite games, shows up and tells him he's destined to save her realm (like, foretold-by-a-prophecy destined), Ben has two possible moves: tell her the truth, or play along. He's tired of feeling left behind, so his choice is clear—game on.

One interdimensional portal later, Ben is in full hero mode. At first, adventuring in Lux seems like a dream come true, but pretending to be the Chosen One—and lying to his new friends—isn't quite what he imagined it to be. And the more he learns about Lux and his quest, the more he realizes this is way beyond a game—and the rules seem to be changing as he goes. In fact, it might be time for him to write some new ones.



"Ridonkulously entertaining"
- BookList

"A love letter to escapism and
writing one's own destiny."
- Kirkus

Self-Awareness (Identity), Belonging, Relationship Skills (Teamwork and Collaboration), Responsible Decision-Making (Collaborative Decision-Making) are all competencies of SEL that arise as themes throughout the novel. By centering the lived experiences and identities of students in your classroom through SEL instruction, students will be able to engage more deeply, create connections with the text and each other, and initiate additional opportunities within and outside the classroom to recognize themselves as emerging social change agents. Prepare for SEL connections that can be embedded throughout the reading of this novel by considering the following:

Self-Awareness (Identity): Ben does not passively experience the ultimate role-playing adventure. Along the way he discovers and learns to embrace all the things that make him him, Ben Whitlock, the Not-So-Chosen One. This is a story of identity seeking and identity celebration! Create opportunities for students to reflect upon, discuss, and write about their own identity journeys.

Belonging: As a part of this identity journey, Ben explores what it means to belong. He grapples with how he belongs in a new school and neighborhood, if he belongs in his old friend group, how he belongs in his ever-changing family, and what it means to belong in not one, but two realms. Consider how Ben's relationships make him feel like he belongs and, at times, like he does not belong anywhere. Allow students to discuss what it means to belong, what communities they belong to, and how their relationships impact their sense of belonging.

Relationships Skills: Ben, Niara, Drake, and Merv are an unlikely group of friends. Each shows up to their friend group differently, but the important thing is that they all show up. Discuss how each friend contributes to the group. How does friendship and a sense of responsibility for their friends impact each character's actions? Discuss what a friend is and what a friend is not. Allow students time to share about times they have shown up for their friends or their friends have shown up for them. Alternatively, allow students a space to share how friends have disappointed them and how they wish their friends had done better.

Responsible Decision-Making: Ben does not passively experience the ultimate role-playing adventure. While at first motivated by the desire for adventure, he soon accepts a sense of responsibility for the people of Lux, adopting the persona of "The Chosen One" in the fight for justice both for and then against The Elders. Discuss with students what decisions they make on behalf of their family, friends, and communities. What role do they play in bettering those people and spaces? Additionally, allow them time to think about and discuss ways they could improve in the area of responsible decision-making.



Book Launch/Pre-Reading Questions

Prior to reading, display the following terms/phrases for students: **dimension, parallel universe, realm**. Ask students to share their understanding of these terms, where they have heard them before, and whether or not they have ever considered the possibility of another dimension, universe, or realm. Consider viewing the following:

[The True Science of Parallel Universes](#)

[What If We Could Open a Portal to a Parallel Universe?](#)

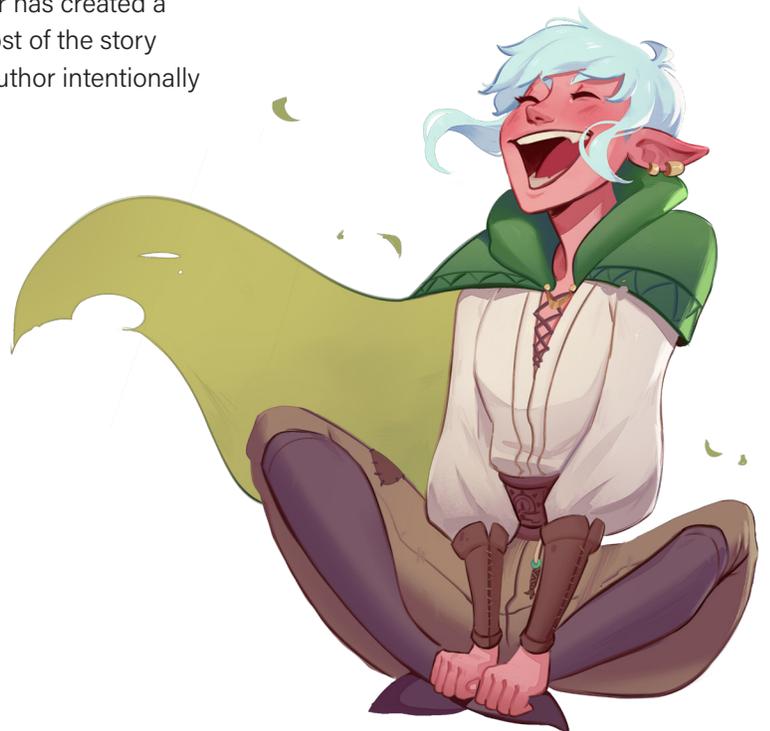
This book takes place across dimensions. The concept of an alternate universe plays a critical role in the development of the main character, Ben, and the plot. Launch this unit of study by discussing the concept of alternative dimensions. Have students discuss the following:

- Do you think there are alternative dimensions? If so, what could this mean for life on Earth?

Allow students time to discuss, write about, or create a visual interpretation of another realm in which they are the creators. Ask them to consider:

- What would it look like?
- Who lives in this realm?
- What are the driving values that exist among the inhabitants?
- What major conflicts arise among the citizens?

Tie this in during reading by focusing on the author's craft and the author's use of imagery, dialogue, foreshadowing, and graphics. The author has created a completely unique realm, Lux, where most of the story takes place. Throughout the novel, the author intentionally uses details to bring this realm to life, to explain its inception, to introduce you to the citizens of Lux, and to entertain the reader through humor.



Thematic Connections

- Coming of Age/Growing Up
- Chosen Family & Friendship
- Believing in Yourself



Discussion/Book Club Questions

- Discuss how Ben changes throughout the story. What parts of him have stayed the same? What parts of him have changed? What impacts this change?
- Discuss how Niara changes throughout the story. What parts of her have stayed the same? What parts of her have changed? What impacts this change?
- Niara asks Ben, "Have you ever wanted something so badly and then when it happens you are left unexpectedly empty?" What is Niara referring to? Why does she feel disappointed?
- Why do Ben and Merv connect so easily?
- Describe Ben and Niara's relationship.
- Why do you think Ben is so eager to go with Niara? Why does he pretend to be the Chosen-One when he knows he is not? How would you respond to this situation?
- How does the author use foreshadowing to reveal that the Prophet was from Earth?
- Merv says, "You can't change what something is, but you can change how you look at it." How does this reveal what Ben learns?
- Explain why Ben is the "Not-So-Chosen One".
- What is a "party" and how does Ben's party impact his sense of self throughout the story?

Author's Craft

Ask students to name specific literary techniques the author uses throughout the novel. If not offered by students, consider introducing the following techniques:

- **Imagery:** The author uses imagery to help the reader visualize Lux, its inhabitants, and the journey Ben experiences. Discuss the use of imagery throughout the novel.
- **Dialogue:** How does the author use dialogue to develop relationships throughout the story?
- **Graphics/Sidebars:** Why does the author use sidebars throughout the novel? What is their purpose? How do they add to the reader's understanding?
- **Foreshadowing:** How does the author use foreshadowing to reveal that the Prophet was from Earth?

MATH CONNECTIONS

Some scientists and philosophers believe that time does not exist, that it is an illusion. They say that time is a construct, something created by people. Watch the video to understand more.

[Does Time Exist Or Is It A Social Construct? » Science ABC](#)

Ben spends nearly a month in Lux, yet he makes it home in time for a late dinner with his mom on the very same night that he first met Niara. Write an equation that shows the relationship between our time and Lux time. Then create an Input Output Table to show the difference in time between the two realms.

Consider the impact that this difference would have if you, like Ben, traveled between realms. How would this impact your day-to-day life?

INPUT (Time on Earth)	OUTPUT (Time in Lux)

See “Visual Arts Connections” for another opportunity to compare the two realms.



VISUAL ARTS CONNECTIONS

- The author describes the realm of Lux in great detail. As a reader it is your job to visualize the scenes and paint a picture in your mind. Now it's your turn to play illustrator. Pick a scene from the book and illustrate what you see.
- Create a map of Lux. Use details from Ben's adventure through the realm of Lux to create a map that details everything from the House of Reflection to the Tower of the Elders and everything in between.
- Use a Venn diagram or other graphic organizer to compare and contrast how the two realms (Earth and Lux) are different and the same.

HISTORY CONNECTIONS

The conflict between the Elders and the King is not unlike many conflicts throughout the history of the world. Consider what the Elders want and compare their motivation to that of the King and the people of Lux. Then compare their conflict with that of an historical conflict you have either studied or one student's research in conjunction with this unit of study.

LITERACY CONNECTIONS

Book Club. Book clubs are a great way to promote student agency, enhance engagement, and launch excitement when reading about a series. (Have we mentioned that this book is book one in a three-part series!). Books clubs can be teacher- or student-led and implemented in whole or small groups depending on teacher and class preferences. Consider using some of the activities and discussion questions provided here or create your own. For more information on book clubs:

[Book clubs in the classroom: 10 tips for success - Center for the Professional Education of Teachers \(columbia.edu\)](#)

Make your own character card. Use the character cards found throughout the book to introduce yourself and summarize the most important elements of you. Include your Class, Faction, Alignment, Abilities, and Special Moves. (Self-Awareness)

Writing and the power of words. Ben says, "When I get ideas, I have to write them down" (pg. 6). His power is then revealed to be the writing he does in his journal. Journaling itself can be a powerful tool. Consider having students keep a journal. This can be a space where they write their story or game ideas, where they reflect on their day or where they track their thoughts as they read. For more information on journaling:

[The Importance of Student Journals and How to Respond Efficiently | Edutopia](#)

[Journaling the Old-School Way | Edutopia](#)

[Journaling for Mindfulness: 44 Prompts, Examples & Exercises \(positivepsychology.com\)](#)

Double Entry Journaling. A double entry journal enables students to record their responses to the text as they read. Students will divide their paper into two columns. On one side students can record phrases or sentences from the text and then write their reflections on the other side. This structure is a simple way for students to cite parts of the text to refer to later in discussion groups or written responses while developing their skills as critical thinkers who respond to text as they read.

