

ACTIVITY KIT

SPRING 2016

BOOKS FOR READERS in grades 3–6 play such a crucial role in helping kids bridge from early chapter books to YA. It's vital to nurture that love of reading through these critical years to help kids develop ever more sophisticated language skills and to blossom into lifelong readers.

Use the materials in this kit to celebrate reading
and encourage your reading maniacs
to stay crazy for books!

www.hmhbooks.com/middlegrademia

 Houghton Mifflin Harcourt
Books for Young Readers

Activities

★ Smackdown!

In the spirit of WrestleMania, host a Reading Smackdown! Challenge another group to a reading contest. How many books can your kids read and report on in a month versus the other group? When the month is over, have each group vote to select one title from all the books reported on for the entire group to read. Each group then presents their book through skits, artwork, videos, and the like to an impartial judge—perhaps the school principal or librarian. The judge, who has already read both books, selects the group with the best presentation as the winner.

★ Word of Mouth

Create a “This Reader Recommends” display on a bulletin board in your meeting room or library. Whenever a student loves a book, have him/her fill out a recommendation card you can post in a public space to encourage other kids to give the book a try.

★ Jacket Gallery

As kids finish books, have them create their own cover illustration depicting a particular character or scene. Be sure to have them include the title and the author’s name within the new cover design. Display the new book covers on a bulletin board or in a reading corner.

★ Book Mobile

Have kids create a mobile for a favorite book. Use two pencils as the mobile framework—position them in an X, with one pencil on top of the other, and tape them in place. Wrap a string or piece of yarn from which to hang the mobile around the intersection of the two pencils, with a long length extending from the top. Create two-sided illustrations of characters and events and key elements from the story on card stock, and hang them from the pencil frame. Be sure to include the book’s title and author on one hanging element. Display the mobiles around the classroom or library.

★ Opening Lines

Books often begin with provocative, compelling openings to hook the reader from the very first page:

The first bomb arrives on my twelfth birthday.

—*Eddie Red Undercover: Doom at Grant’s Tomb*

It was the ugliest thing she had ever seen. Obnoxiously ugly. Embarrassingly ugly. Epically ugly.
And it was sitting in her family’s driveway.

—*Far from Fair*

Hiya! Have you ever been woken up by a ghost? I have!

—*Agatha Parrot and the Odd Street School Ghost*

Encourage your kids to keep a journal of opening lines from books to inspire them in their own creative writing endeavors.

★ Character Quilt

Pass an 8.5-by-8.5-inch square piece of construction paper to each student. Have each child draw a portrait of a favorite book character on his/her square using crayons, markers, or paint. Be sure to include the character’s name and the book title on each square. Arrange the squares in a quilt pattern on a bulletin board or wall.

All the activities on this page can be modified and used in bookstores for reading clubs!

This reader recommends . . .

BOOK TITLE

AUTHOR

RECOMMENDED BY

GRADE

Plot summary/characters:

What I liked about the book:



This reader recommends . . .

BOOK TITLE

AUTHOR

RECOMMENDED BY

GRADE

Plot summary/characters:

What I liked about the book:



[illegible]

Bookmarks

Print this page on card stock using a color printer in whatever quantity you need. Cut out the individual bookmarks as indicated.

Meet Agatha Parrot, Ghost Hunter



**Agatha Parrot and the
Odd Street School Ghost**

by KJartan Poskitt, art by Wes Hargis

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EXTRA! EXTRA! Read All About It!



**Cub
reporter
solves
dastardly
crime!**

**Isabel Feeney,
Star Reporter
by Beth Fantaskey**

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Reading is WILD



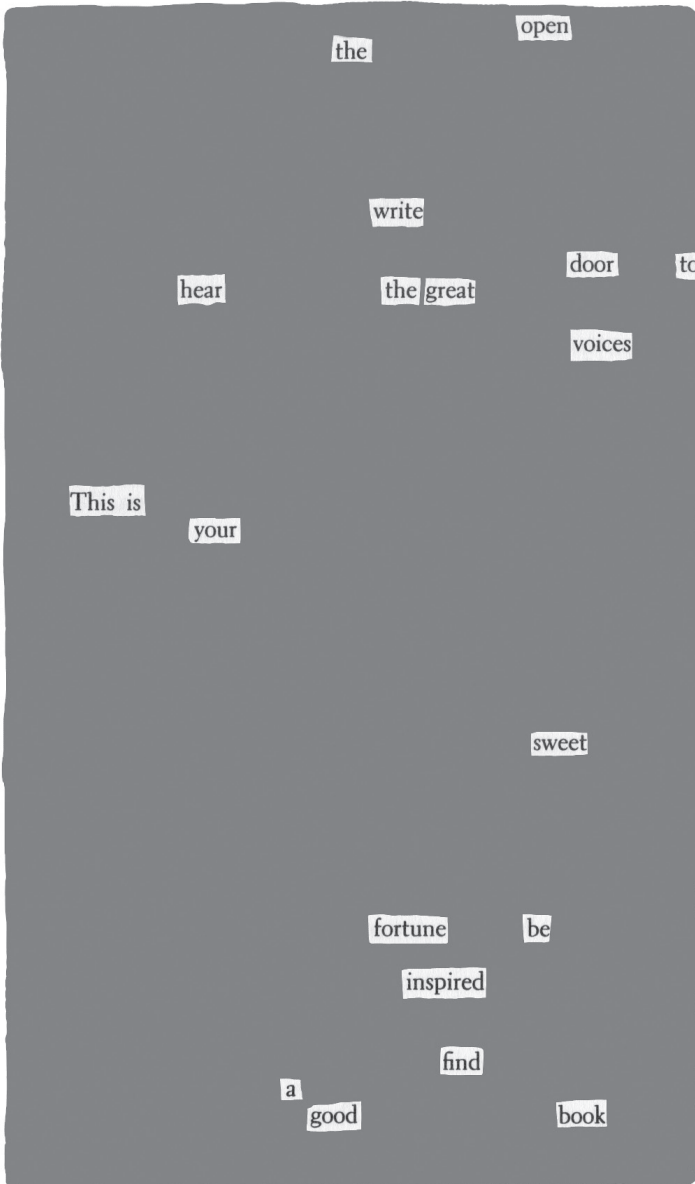
BRIDGE TO THE WILD
BY CAITLIN O'CONNELL

Photograph copyright © 2016 by Caitlin O'Connell and Timothy Rodwell from *Bridge to the Wild: Behind the Scenes at the Zoo* by Caitlin O'Connell. All rights reserved.

Poem Within a Poem

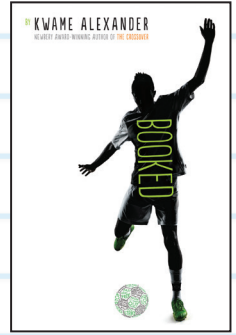
Things are going great for Nick—Coby's been his best friend since first grade; they're both going to play in the Dallas Cup soccer tournament; and April, the girl of Nick's dreams, is noticing him. But then Nick's parents drop a bombshell—they're splitting up. To make things worse, when Nick is daydreaming in class one day, his teacher busts him and assigns him the task of finding examples of a literary device in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Nick's creative presentation of the assignment inspires the cool school librarian, Mr. Mac, to create a poem using Nick's technique of selecting only key words from a text to create something new. See Mr. Mac's example below, and then try your hand at creating a poem by saving only select words from "Do-Over," one of the poems in *Booked*, the new novel-in-verse by the Newbery Award-winning author of *The Crossover*.

Mr. Mac's Example



Do-Over

You know
how sometimes
at night
when you can't sleep
and you're watching
the stars go
round and round
on the ceiling fan,
replaying
that one lousy incident
over and over
in your mind,
wishing
you'd done something
different
and that if you had a do-over
you definitely
woulda swooped down
on them jokers
like a vulture
instead of just circling above,
standing idly by
while your best friend
gets a black eye
and suspended
from school?



Booked

BY

Kwame

Alexander

978-0-544-57098-6 hardcover
978-0-544-78771-1 ebook

Also by Kwame Alexander



THE CROSSOVER

Newbery Medal Winner
978-0-544-10771-7 hardcover
978-0-544-28959-8 ebook



Enchanted Drawing

Young Grayling is tasked with the impossible: to reverse an evil spell that has immobilized all the magic makers in the kingdom, including her own mother, wise woman Hannah Strong. First Grayling is to gather “the others”—witches and magicians who escaped the spell—and then she needs to find Hannah’s grimoire, her book of spells and charms. Her relationship with her mother is complicated, but imagine Grayling’s distress when she sees Hannah Strong partially turned into a tree, the same fate faced by other magic makers that Grayling sees on her quest. Read this description of Hannah from *Grayling’s Song* and draw a picture of the wise woman in her enchanted state:

“Grayling, child, open your eyes and look,” her mother said, pulling her hand away and gesturing toward her feet. They were rooted into the earth. What had been toes were now spreading roots, and what had been soft skin was rough and brown as a tree trunk.



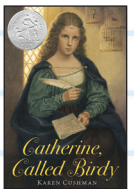
Grayling's Song

BY

Karen Cushman

978-0-544-30180-1 hardcover
978-0-544-30163-4 ebook

Also by Karen Cushman



THE MIDWIFE'S APPRENTICE
Newbery Medal Winner
978-0-547-72217-7 paperback
978-0-547-35000-4 ebook

CATHERINE, CALLED BIRDY
Newbery Honor Book
978-0-547-72218-4 paperback
978-0-547-35010-3 ebook



Word Scramble

Eleven-year-old Zomorod "Cindy" Yousefzadeh is the new kid on the block. When her dad's job brings the family from Iran to Newport Beach, she's determined to fit in with a new Brady Bunch name. But as Iran makes U.S. headlines with protests, revolution, and the taking of American hostages, Cindy's dad loses his job and the neighborhood becomes a bit hostile. Will Cindy's new friends stick by her, or toss her aside like last week's *fesenjoon* (Iranian chicken stew)? This touching, yet laugh-out-loud funny look at being a middle schooler in a strange land is based on the author's own experiences growing up Iranian in Southern California in the 1970s. The chapter titles in the novel hint at the funny tone of the story. Unscramble the words below to reveal a few of the novel's chapter titles.

TUMON DYARULN

M _ _ _ T L _ _ _ D _ _

REVNE NOWDE A LACME

N _ _ E _ O W _ _ _ _ C _ _ E _

LEFI SA A TTRUEL

L _ _ _ _ _ _ T _ R _ _ _

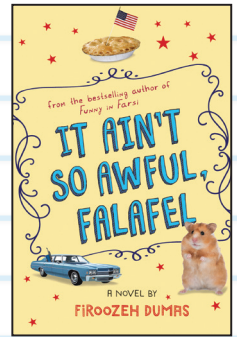
YM FATVIREO TOGHEAS

_ _ F _ _ _ R _ _ _ H _ _ T _ _ _

TSLAUNS FO TUNNAS

S _ L T _ _ _ _ _ S _ N _ _ _

Answer key follows, or can be found at hmhbooks.com/middlegrademania/resources.html.



It Ain't So Awful, Falafel

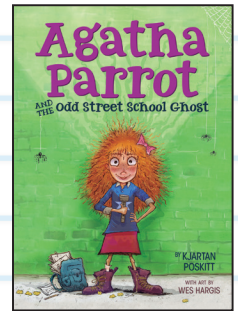
BY

Firoozeh Dumas

978-0-544-61231-0 hardcover
978-0-544-61237-2 ebook

Write a Ghost Story

Agatha and her best friends and neighbors Bianca, Martha, Ivy, and Ellie love going to Odd Street School, with the clock tower that chimes on the hour. One dark and stormy night the school bell goes DONG! DONG! DONG! far too many times and a glowing face can be seen in a window. Is the school haunted? The school principal decides that they must have a Ghost Watch, which involves writing a spooky ghost story! Write your own ghost story below. If you read it out loud, do you think a ghost will visit you?



Agatha Parrot and the Odd Street School Ghost

BY

Kjartan Poskitt

WITH ART BY

Wes Hargis

978-0-544-50672-5 hardcover
978-0-544-50675-6 ebook



Word Search

Truman Capote and Nelle Harper Lee are two of America's most famous writers. But before they wrote iconic American literature, they were misfits growing up during the Great Depression in Monroeville, Alabama. Tru and Nelle didn't care that they didn't fit in. They both loved to read and to make up adventures, so they became fast friends. They loved to pretend they were Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, characters in their favorite books. When the Monroeville drugstore is broken into and a cameo brooch is stolen along with a few other items, Tru and Nelle, as Sherlock and Watson, work to solve the mystery. Can you find character names and key words (green list at right) from *Tru & Nelle* hidden in the puzzle below? Words can appear forward, backwards, and diagonally.



Tru & Nelle

BY

G. Neri

978-0-544-69960-1 hardcover

ALABAMA
BROOCH
CLUE
DRUGSTORE
MYSTERY
NELLE
PECANS
REPORTERS
SHERLOCK
SNAKES
SUSPECTS
TREEHOUSE
TRU
WATSON

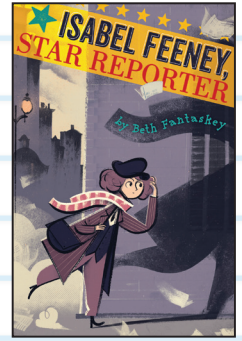
T	T	H	E	G	A	M	S	E	E	S	W	S	H	A
F	R	O	O	T	O	H	F	R	R	T	A	P	C	T
Z	E	E	B	O	E	L	O	E	Y	C	T	M	O	K
B	O	M	E	R	P	T	T	G	R	E	S	Y	O	U
U	L	E	L	H	S	R	S	G	E	P	O	T	R	P
U	I	O	V	G	O	R	U	W	T	S	N	S	B	E
Z	C	F	U	P	S	U	U	H	S	U	I	E	J	U
K	V	R	E	G	E	W	S	T	Y	S	O	K	I	L
N	D	R	O	Y	A	D	C	E	M	Q	E	A	D	C
Y	U	X	L	K	G	H	I	X	O	F	L	N	O	G
T	O	F	X	E	K	V	Q	D	H	R	B	S	J	L
X	R	H	C	L	B	S	C	A	M	A	B	A	L	A
G	H	U	D	L	R	C	E	S	U	P	M	L	Q	B
S	N	A	C	E	P	G	B	M	W	A	I	C	R	T
Z	W	P	U	N	M	P	Y	G	G	J	V	H	E	T

Answer key follows, or can be found at hmhbooks.com/middlegrademania/resources.html.



Reporter's Notebook

"Extra! Extra! Read all about it!" Isabel Feeney is a newsgirl, hawking papers on the street corners of Prohibition-era Chicago. But more than anything, she wants to be a reporter like her hero Maude Collier. When a known mobster is killed and Isabel's best customer, Miss Giddings, is charged with the crime, Isabel must use all her street smarts to solve the mystery. Do you have a nose for news? Make this Reporter's Notebook and carry it with you wherever you go so you can jot down first impressions, interview questions, and story ideas. Remember a reporter's five *Ws*: who, what, when, where, and why.



Isabel Feeney, Star Reporter

BY

Beth Fantaskey

978-0-544-58249-1 hardcover
978-0-544-78766-7 ebook

Cut out the four rectangles and fold in half to create pages. Stack the pages inside the cover. Staple along the spine to bind the pages together. Fold at the seam to create your Reporter's Notebook. Photocopy additional pages if you need them.

★
★

★
★

★
★

★
★

Reporter's
Notebook

★

Who

What

When

Where

Why

1

2

3

4

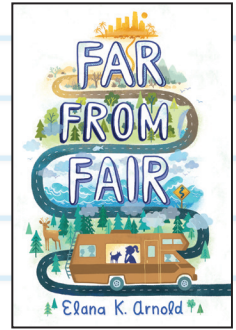
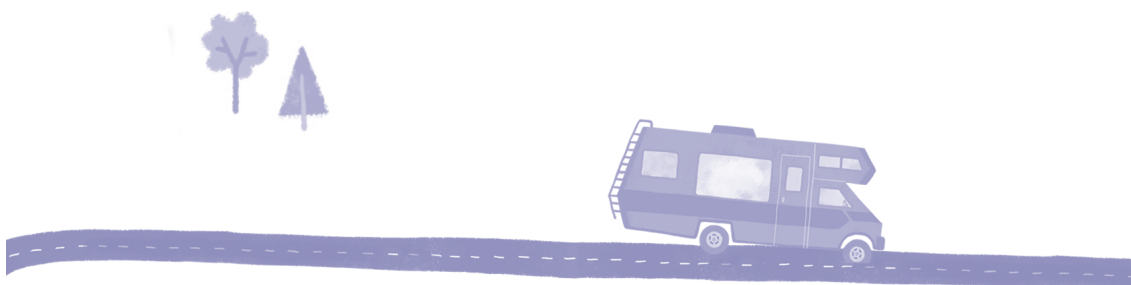
5

6

The Essentials

Odette Zyskowski has a list: Things That Aren't Fair. At the very top of the list is her parents' decision to take the family on the road in an ugly RV they've nicknamed the Coach. And there's definitely nothing fair about what Odette's family will find when they reach Grandma Sissy's house, hundreds of miles later. Can the journey and all the changes help Odette to realize that although life often isn't fair, it's almost always good? Pretend that you have to leave your house and bedroom and friends behind and can only take ten items with you in the Coach. What would you bring? What can't you live without?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____



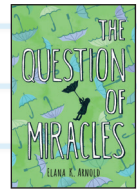
Far from Fair

BY

Elana K. Arnold

978-0-544-60227-4 hardcover
978-0-544-60229-8 ebook

Also by Elana K. Arnold



THE QUESTION OF MIRACLES
978-0-544-66852-2 paperback
978-0-544-33255-3 ebook



Animal Fun Facts Quiz

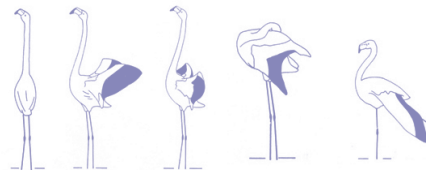
Rebecca Snyder has every animal lover's dream job—she's the curator of mammals at Zoo Atlanta and goes behind the scenes at the zoo every day to observe, research, and care for an amazing menagerie of animals. Would you like to work at the zoo and spend your day with pandas, orangutans, gorillas, Komodo dragons, and meerkats? How much do you know about the unique behaviors of the world's animals? Take the quiz below and find out! Match the fun fact with the correct animal.

Fun Facts

- a. These animals eat scorpions and have developed an immunity to their venom.
- b. These animals raise their babies until the offspring are eight or nine years old. Consequently, they only have babies every ten years or so.
- c. These animals have to eat twenty to forty pounds of food a day, and it takes them ten to sixteen hours to do it!
- d. These animals live mostly in trees when they're young because the adults in the species live on the ground and often eat the young if they're found within reach!
- e. These animals can only eat one food—eucalyptus leaves.
- f. These animals get their beautiful color from eating marine crustaceans such as brine shrimp and algae, which contain beta carotene, a chemical with a reddish-orange pigment.
- g. These animals have large holes lining their lower jaws. The holes are heat-sensing pits that detect infrared light and serve as a primitive eye, helping them to see their prey at night.
- h. These animals have a unique strategy for successful parenting: before laying eggs, the female will enclose herself into the hollow of a tree for up to four months. This keeps her babies safe from predators once they hatch, and also keeps other females from stealing her nesting site.

Amazing Animals

1. koalas
2. pandas
3. meerkats
4. flamingos
5. hornbills
6. Komodo dragons
7. orangutans
8. emerald tree boas



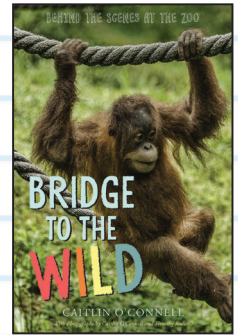
Scoring

7-8 correct answers: Get ready for a job at the zoo!

4-6 correct answers: You're on your way to becoming an animal conservationist!

0-3 correct answers: Read *Bridge to the Wild*!

Answer key follows, or can be found at hmhbooks.com/middlegrademania/resources.html.



Bridge to the Wild: Behind the Scenes

at the Zoo

BY

Caitlin

O'Connell

WITH

PHOTOGRAPHS

BY

Caitlin

O'Connell and

Timothy

Rodwell

978-0-544-27739-7 hardcover
978-0-544-82935-0 ebook



Take the Pledge

It wasn't so long ago that many animals in America were subject to horrific treatment—work horses were whipped to death, slaughterhouse animals were boiled alive, and dogs were chained to treadmills for work. No one was speaking for the animals. They needed a champion to protect them from such cruelty. That person was Henry Bergh. Founder of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), Bergh waged war against dog and cock fighting, cruelty to work horses, inhumane slaughterhouses, and even the mistreatment of sea turtles being transported on ships. Do you believe that all animals should be treated kindly? Sign the pledge below and follow in Henry Bergh's footsteps as a champion of animal rights!

The Be Kind to Animals Pledge

"Mercy to animals means mercy to mankind."

—HENRY BERGH, Founder of the ASPCA and Friend to Animals



I, _____
name

hereby solemnly swear to be kind to all animals.

I will be responsible for my own pets. I will make sure they are fed and have water at all times. I will exercise my pets daily and clean up after them.
I will treat my pets with love and respect.

I will pay attention to other pets in my neighborhood. If I see a pet being mistreated or if I see a dog running loose, I will go to a trusted adult for help.

I will be a friend to birds in my neighborhood, quietly observing them from a distance and not scaring them.

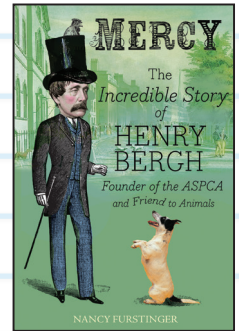
How else will you be a friend to animals? Write your own ideas below:

Signed _____
signature



Signed this _____ day of _____, 20____
date month year

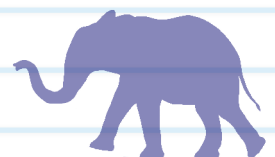
at _____
city, state



Mercy:
The Incredible
Story of Henry
Bergh, Founder
of the ASPCA and
Friend to Animals

BY
Nancy
Furstinger
ILLUSTRATED BY
Vincent
Desjardins

978-0-544-65031-2 hardcover



Code Breaker

Eddie Red, the NYPD's youngest crime-solving hero, smells trouble. Could he be the target of elusive art thief Lars Heinrich, whose last robbery he ruined? And can Eddie and Jonah crack the code to figure out the criminal mastermind's next move? Try your hand at code breaking using the ROT1 code—rotate one letter forward through the alphabet, so A is replaced with B, B with C, and so on. Finish the code chart below and then decipher the secret message.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
B	C	D										

N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

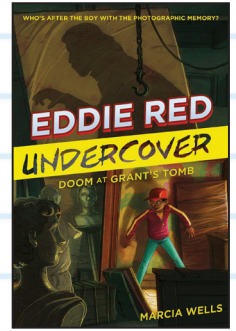
F E E J F S F E J T

U I F O Z Q E ' T

T F D S F U X F B Q P O

Bonus:

Can you write a secret message in the ROT1 code for a friend to decipher?



Eddie Red Undercover:

Doom at

Grant's Tomb

BY

Marcia Wells

ILLUSTRATED BY

Marcos Calo

978-0-544-58260-6 hardcover
978-0-544-78770-4 ebook

More Eddie Red Adventures!



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Answer key follows, or can be found at hmhbooks.com/middlegrademania/resources.html.

Vocabulary Match-Up

In London for an electromobile race, boy scientist Wally Kennewicket and his loyal dachshund sidekick, Noodles, meet a young pickpocket who works for a mysterious criminal called the Tick-Tock Man. Before they know it, Wally and Noodles have fallen in with a band of street urchins and are racing through the city's sewers in a desperate bid to rescue the smallest member of the gang. Can Wally's scientific knowledge save the day? As he does in all the Gadgets and Gears books, Noodles narrates their adventures with his signature use of impressive vocabulary. Match each vocabulary word below with the correct definition. To help you, each word is also given in a sentence from the novel.

1. aptitude

"My current conundrum was the result of Wally's mother Calypso mentioning that he might have inherited an **aptitude** for art."

2. tatterdemalion

"I whirled as a **tatterdemalion** tumbled out of a dark doorway."

3. suffrage

"She meant the members of the International Union of Women's **Suffrage** Societies who were marching behind the Zephyr."

4. constables

"Rhodope cheered as the Sisters passed, followed by two **constables** who appeared to be keeping an eye on them."

5. larceny

"If you mean decent at pickpocketing and acts of light **larceny**, I'd agree."

6. hypothesis

"Both scientific experimentation and crime solving depend on the ability to form a **hypothesis**."

7. abbadons

"It's rats and **abbadons** Tick Tock feeds to the sewer swine, the boy went on."

8. subterranean

"My Coruscating Cannonades proved useful in scattering the **subterranean** herd."

9. ineffable

"More a force of nature—if nature were evil, of course. The creature is **ineffable**."

10. renege

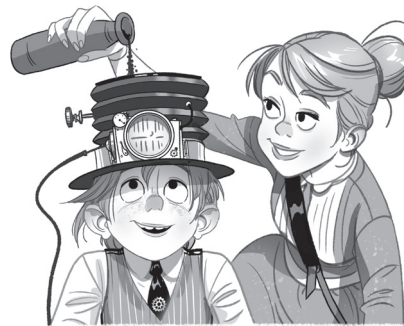
"If Tick Tock said he would be back, he will. He never **reneges**."

11. footpads

"Mind your pockets, Walter. **Footpads** like nothing better than a thick fog."

12. blinker

"Who gave you the **blinker**?"



- a. thieves who prey upon pedestrians
- b. a person dressed in rags and tatters
- c. an educated guess
- d. a black eye
- e. the natural ability to master a skill
- f. the right to vote in political elections
- g. taking someone else's property without permission
- h. things beneath the surface of the earth
- i. criminals who turn informers and rat out their fellow rogues
- j. too powerful or extreme to be explained in words
- k. British police officers
- l. to fail to keep one's promise or to break a contract



The Tick-Tock Man

Gadgets and Gears, Book 3

BY

**Kersten
Hamilton**

ILLUSTRATED BY

James

Hamilton

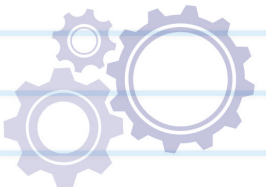
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978-0-544-55684-3 ebook



Answer key follows, or can be found at hnhbooks.com/middlegrademania/resources.html.

Answer Key

It Ain't So Awful, Falafel

Word Scramble

MOUNT LAUNDRY
NEVER OWNED A CAMEL
LIFE AS A TURTLE
MY FAVORITE HOSTAGE
SULTANS OF SUNTAN

Tru & Nelle

Word Search



Bridge to the Wild:

Behind the Scenes at the Zoo

Animal Fun Facts Quiz

a. 3 b. 7 c. 2 d. 6
e. 1 f. 4 g. 8 h. 5

Eddie Red Undercover:

Doom at Grant's Tomb

Code Breaker

EDDIE RED IS THE NYPD'S SECRET WEAPON

The Tick-Tock Man

Vocabulary Match-Up

1. e 2. b 3. f 4. k 5. g
6. c 7. i 8. h 9. j 10. l 11. a 12. d