

A Teacher's Guide to

The Leviathan Trilogy

By Scott Westerfeld

About the Trilogy

It is the cusp of World War I. The Austro-Hungarians and Germans have their Clankers, steam-driven iron machines loaded with guns and ammunition. The British Darwinists employ genetically fabricated animals as their weaponry. Their *Leviathan* is a whale airship and the most masterful beast in the British fleet. In this striking, futuristic rendition of an alternate past where machines are pitted against genetically modified beasts, Aleksandar Ferdinand, a Clanker, and Deryn Sharp, a Darwinist, are on opposite sides in the war. But their paths cross in the most unexpected way, and together they embark on an around-the-world adventure, one that will change both their lives forever.

In addition to the three novels, there is *The Manual of Aeronautics*, a lavishly illustrated, full-color companion. *The Manual of Aeronautics* is a guide to the inner workings of the Darwinist and Clanker powers. Loaded with detailed descriptions and elaborate illustrations of Darwinist beasties and Clanker walkers, weapons, transport, and uniforms, this manual highlights the international powers that Deryn and Alek encounter throughout their around-the-world adventures. This guide draws back the curtain and reveals the inner depths of Westerfeld's fascinating alternative world.

Book 1: *Leviathan*

About the Novel

Prince Aleksander, would-be heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, is on the run. His own people have turned on him. His title is worthless. All he has is a battle-torn war machine and a loyal crew of men. Deryn Sharp is a commoner disguised as a boy in the British Air Service. She's a brilliant airman. But her secret is in constant danger of being discovered. With World War I brewing, Alek's and Deryn's paths cross in the most unexpected ways, taking them on a fantastical, around-the-world adventure that will change both their lives forever.

Prereading Activities

1. The Leviathan trilogy is an example of steampunk. Some students may be unfamiliar with steampunk, or they may have read stories or seen films that fit the category but do not realize it. Here is a brief description:

Steampunk is a literary genre or sub-genre of science fiction that features steam-powered machinery inspired by the industrialized Western civilization during the nineteenth century. Such machinery may be fictional like those found in this series by Scott Westerfeld, or in the works of H. G. Wells. See <http://www.steampunk.com/what-is-steampunk/> and

<http://steampunkscholar.blogspot.com/> for further background information and to learn more about Steampunk. Some terms cited in the story will likely be unfamiliar to most readers. Ask readers to use reference books or electronic research sources to find out as much information as they can about the following: boffin, bulbous, emissary, fortnight, iridescent, Luddite, propaganda, skulduggery, solidarity, sustenance, translucent, and tremulous.

2. Have students work in small groups to research and present a multimedia presentation on the causes of World War I.

Discussion Questions

The following questions contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (RL.7-12.1, 2)

1. What is Alek doing at the opening of the story that foreshadows events to come?
2. Why does Alek sleep with a knife under his pillow?
3. What kind of relationship does Alek have with Count Volger and Otto Klopp?
4. What was Alek warned of by his father?
5. What shocking news does Count Volger share with Alek?
6. What is Deryn Sharp's "mad scheme"?
7. Why are Monkey Luddites afraid of Darwinist beasties?
8. What is unique about the Huxley ascender?
9. Why does Alek refuse to believe his parents are dead? How does Count Volger convince him?
10. What kind of airship is the *Leviathan*? Why was it fabricated?
11. Why does Count Volger tell Alek he matters more than anyone he knows? How did Alek's father prepare for the coming war?
12. Why does Alek resent the way Count Volger treats him?
13. What does Alek come to appreciate about his men?
14. What is Alek's inheritance?
15. How does Deryn convince the *Leviathan*'s officers to make her a temporary middy on the ship?

16. What does Deryn enjoy most about the bosun's lectures?
17. Why do fabrications make Midshipman Newkirk nervous?
18. How does Deryn feel about Newkirk's war talk?
19. Why does Alek doubt the headlines he sees in the newspapers about Europe's solidarity against Serbia?
20. Who does the *Leviathan* take aboard as a passenger, and what is its destination?
21. What does it mean that the *Leviathan* is "aerostatic"?
22. Why is Deryn sent to meet Dr. Barlow?
23. What is Dr. Barlow's unusual traveling companion?
24. What is Deryn concerned that Dr. Barlow might do?
25. What prevents Alek and the Stormwalker from reaching Switzerland?
26. What does Alek do with his saber?
27. What role do bees have on the *Leviathan*?
28. Where does Count Volger take Alek?
29. What secrets does Count Volger reveal to Alek at the castle?
30. What is Alek's reaction to the sight of the *Leviathan*?
31. What awful stories had Alek heard about Darwinist creations?
32. Under what circumstances do Alek and Deryn meet?
33. Why does Alek say it was "madness to try to cross the gulf between his world and theirs"?
34. How does Alek react when he discovers he is inside an animal? What do Dr. Barlow and Dylan think of his reaction?
35. How is hydrogen for the *Leviathan* produced?
36. Why is Alek surprised about the *Leviathan* heading for the Ottoman Empire?

Postreading Activities

The following activities contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (W.7-9.6, 7) (SL.6-8.2)

1. Have students work in small groups to research the following references in the novel and share their findings with the rest of the class: Balkan Wars, battles of Nelson, Charles Darwin, DNA, theories of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Aldous Huxley, Maxim gun, thylacine, and Zeppelins.
2. Look at the map of Europe by Keith Thompson and discuss its symbolism.
3. Create a chronology of events from the story.
4. List what animals are mentioned in the novel and describe their role and/or impact in the story.
5. Compose an acrostic poem describing Darwinist or Clanker.
6. Create a crossword or word search puzzle based on animals, beasties, characters, events, and machines in the novel. See <http://www.discoveryeducation.com/free-puzzlemaker/> and <http://www.crosswordpuzzlegames.com/>.
7. Illustrate a favorite incident or scene from the novel.
8. Retell a favorite episode from the novel in your own words.
9. Create a WANTED poster for Alek.
10. Design a map of Deryn's and Alek's respective journeys with captions and images highlighting important events.
11. Identify three problems in the story and explain how they are resolved.
12. Write a "How to" guide for an activity depicted in the story, such as running in a Walker or riding safely in a Huxley.
13. If you included yourself in the story, who would you be? Why?
14. Create thumbnail sketches of characters from *Leviathan*, including both physical and character traits. Label the character traits you attribute by citing dialogue or events from the story.
15. Write a brief essay in which you explain the differences between Clanker and Darwinist societies.

Book 2: *Behemoth*

About the Novel

The *Behemoth* is the fiercest creature in the British navy. It can swallow enemy battleships with one bite. The Darwinists will need it, now that they are at war with the Clanker Powers. Deryn is a girl posing as a boy in the British Air Service, and Alek is the heir to an empire posing as a commoner. Finally together aboard the airship *Leviathan*, they hope to bring the war to a halt. But when disaster strikes the *Leviathan's* peacekeeping mission, they find themselves alone and hunted in enemy territory. Alek and Deryn will need great skill, new allies, and brave hearts to face what's ahead.

Prereading Activities

The following activities contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (L.6-8.4) (W.8.6, 7, 8)

1. Some terms cited in the story will likely be unfamiliar to most readers. Ask readers to use reference books or electronic research sources to find out as much information as they can about the following: amenable, automaton, colonnade, conspicuous, countenance, halberd, imperious, impertinence, improvisation, keelhaul, luminous, maelstrom, malady, nascent, parley, perspicacious, primordial, scimitar, sinuous, surreptitious, translucent, tumult, undulating, vitriolic, voluminous, and wan.

2. Have students work in small groups to research and present a multimedia presentation on the major conflicts that occurred in one of the World War I theaters of engagement: Africa, Middle East, Eastern Front, Pacific, and Western Front. Students should cite all sources consulted.

Discussion Questions

The following questions contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (RL.7-12.1, 2)

1. What does Deryn observe about Alek when they are fencing?
2. Why does Deryn think it is unfair to think of Alek as an enemy?
3. Why does Alek have reservations about joining in the attack on the ironclads?
4. What are the fléchette bats?
5. In what way is the *Leviathan* an ecosystem?
6. What new weapon does Klopp see the ironclad armed with? What can the weapon do?
7. What is the “diplomatic ruckus” that the *Leviathan* is sent to Constantinople to sort out?
8. What bad news does Captain Hobbes share with Alek? How do Alek and Volger respond to the news?

9. What is Deryn's impression of Constantinople?
10. According to Dr. Barlow, how are the Ottomans different from other Clankers?
11. In what way are Americans an "odd bunch"?
12. What is "the biggest story in Istanbul"?
13. What does Alek see hatch in the machine room? How is his reaction to it different from other Darwinist creatures?
14. What is Dr. Barlow's explanation of a behemoth?
15. What prompts Dr. Barlow to gasp in horror in the sultan's throne room?
16. What offer does Dr. Barlow make to the sultan that shocks Deryn?
17. Why does Alek decide to talk to Malone?
18. Who is Zaven and what group is he a part of?
19. What is important about the Dardanelles Strait?
20. Why does Deryn feel like more of a spy than a soldier?
21. In what way is the Orient Express "a strange crossbreed of Ottoman and German design"?
22. Why is Deryn suspicious of Bovril?
23. Why does Dylan disagree with Alek's idea of telling the Committee of the new developments?
24. What is Lilit's plan to destroy the Tesla cannon?
25. Why does Deryn find it "hardest of all . . . being so close to Alek, while still hiding from him"?
26. What does Volger's news of the pope's death mean for Alek's plans?

Postreading Activities

The following activities contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (W.6-8.3) (W.7.6, 7) (SL.6-8.2) (RL.7-12. 2, 3, 5)

1. Have students work in small groups to research the following references in the novel and share their findings with the rest of the class: Winston Churchill, Constantinople, Dardanelles, Gallipoli Campaign, Gibraltar, Guy Fawkes Day, Orient Express, Ottoman Empire, Suez Canal, Nikola Tesla, Young Turks. Students should cite all sources consulted.
2. Look at the map by Keith Thompson and discuss its symbolism. How do the images reflect events in the story?
3. Create a chronology of events from the story.
4. Have students use atlases or globes to locate the places where events in the story occur.
5. Illustrate a favorite incident or scene from the novel.
6. Retell a favorite episode from the novel in your own words.
7. Design a front-page newspaper story chronicling one of the major events in this novel.
8. Write a letter as if you were Deryn to her brother describing some of her adventures.
9. Write a couple of paragraphs in which you predict what will happen in the next novel concluding the trilogy, *Goliath*.

Book 3: *Goliath*

About the Novel

Alek and Deryn are on the last leg of their round-the-world quest to end World War I, reclaim Alek's throne as prince of Austria, and finally fall in love. The first two objectives are complicated by the fact that their ship, the *Leviathan*, continues to detour farther away from the heart of the war and crown. Falling in love would be much easier if Alek knew Deryn was a girl, and if they weren't technically enemies. The tension thickens as the *Leviathan* steams toward New York City with a homicidal lunatic on board. Secrets suddenly unravel, characters reappear, and nothing is as it seems in this thunderous conclusion to Scott Westerfeld's brilliant trilogy.

Prereading Activities

The following activities contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (L.6-8.4) (W.8.6, 7, 8)

1. Some terms cited in the story will likely be unfamiliar to most readers. Ask readers to use reference books or electronic research sources to find out as much information as they can about the following: apparatus, ballast, capacitor, disreputable, epaulettes, ferrous, Herculean, inundation, mayhem, phantasmal, precarious, presumptuous, sextant, subterfuge, torrent, truncheon, and yackum.

2. Have students work in small groups to research and present a multimedia presentation on the outcomes of World War I. Students should cite all sources consulted.

Discussion Questions

The following questions contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (RL.7-12.1, 2)

1. Why do the *Leviathan*'s officers still see Alek and his men as little better than prisoners? Why does he feel like "deadweight"?
2. Why does the appearance of the imperial message eagle give Alek a feeling of hope?
3. What is Alek's reaction to the sight of the eagle?
4. Why does Alek wish he had stayed in Istanbul?
5. What does the two-headed eagle symbolize?
6. Why does Deryn not want Count Volger to reveal her secret to Alek?
7. Why is the *Leviathan* heading for Tsingtao?
8. What more is there to the lorises than meets the eye?
9. Who does Deryn discover in the fallen forest?
10. What does Tesla reveal to Deryn about the wrecked airship? How does Deryn react to what he says?
11. Is Tesla able to repulse the bears?
12. What are some things Tesla invented? Why is it significant that he is a Serb?
13. What kind of weapon is Goliath?
14. What is the mysterious object Deryn discovers? Why is it important to Tesla's invention?
15. What is Alek's reaction to finding out Deryn is a girl? What does he finally realize about her?
16. How does Alek react to Tesla's confidence that his weapon will stop the war?
17. How is the United States, as "another half-Darwinist, half-Clanker country," different from Japan?

18. Why does Deryn think it wasn't fair of her to kiss Alek?
19. What is Mr. Hearst's treachery?
20. How does Alek help Deryn keep her secret?
21. Why does Alek choose not to say anything about Deryn to Eddie Malone?
22. What does Lilit reveal to Deryn about the Ottoman Republic?
23. Why was it planned that the last water-walker should be destroyed only after making landfall?
24. How does Alek stop Tesla from firing Goliath?
25. How is Tesla proved to be a fraud? How does his death help shorten the war?
26. Why do you think Alek renounces his claim to the throne and takes a position with The London Zoological Society?

Postreading Activities

The following activities contained in this section particularly address the Common Core State Standards: (W.7.6, 7) (W.6-8.3) (SL.6-8.2) (RL.7.9)

1. Have students work in small groups to research the following references in the novel and share their findings with the rest of the class: Divine Right, Empire of Japan, William Randolph Hearst, Emperor Maximilian, Kokichi Mikimoto, *The Perils of Pauline*, Commodore Perry, Pinkertons, Joseph Pulitzer, Russo-Japanese War, Siberia, Sakichi Toyoda, Tsingtao, Tunguska, Pancho Villa, Vladivostok, Woodrow Wilson, and U-boat. Students should cite all sources consulted.
2. Look at the map by Keith Thompson and discuss its symbolism. How do the images relate to events in the story?
3. Create a chronology of events from the story.
4. Illustrate a favorite incident or scene from the novel.
5. Retell a favorite episode from the novel in your own words.
6. The First World War is known for the first use of barbed wire and many new weapons, including airplanes, dirigibles, long range artillery, flamethrowers, grenades, machine guns, poison gas, submarines, and tanks. In pairs or small groups, use online and print resources to research and report who invented these weapons, how they were developed, and how they were

used in World War I. Identify examples of how these weapons are incorporated into the Darwinist beasties and Clanker machines in the *Leviathan* novels and *The Manual of Aeronautics*.

7. Create a model of one of the Clanker's machine monsters. Use *The Manual of Aeronautics* as a reference guide.

8. Design your own Darwinist beastie or Clanker machine that can be included in *The Manual of Aeronautics*.

9. Have each student communicate a brief message to be deciphered by the class using the Huxley Semaphore as referenced in *The Manual of Aeronautics*.

10. Write an alternate ending to the novel or a chapter that continues the story.

11. Create a sale advertisement for one of the Clanker machines. Use *The Manual of Aeronautics* as a reference.

12. Create a board game based upon the *Leviathan* books. Look at the games Axis & Allies, Diplomacy, and Risk as models for your own game.

About the Author

Scott Westerfeld is the author of the *Leviathan* series, the first book of which was the winner of the 2010 Locus Award for Best Young Adult Fiction. His other novels include the *New York Times* bestselling Ugliers series, *The Last Days*, *Peeps*, *So Yesterday*, and the *Midnighters* trilogy. Visit him at ScottWesterfeld.com or follow him on Twitter at [@ScottWesterfeld](https://twitter.com/ScottWesterfeld).

About the Illustrator

Keith Thompson's work has appeared in books, magazines, TV, video games, and films. See his work at KeithThompsonArt.com.

Recommended Web Sites

The Art of Leviathan, Part I: An Interview with Scott Westerfeld

<http://www.tor.com/blogs/2009/10/the-art-of-leviathan-a-conversation-with-scott-westerfeld-and-kieth-thompson>

The Art of Leviathan, Part II: An Interview with Keith Thompson

<http://www.tor.com/blogs/2009/10/the-art-of-levathan-prt-two-interview-with-keith-thompson>

Leviathan Wiki

http://leviathanscottwesterfeld.wikia.com/wiki/Leviathan_Wiki

Keith Thompson Art

<http://www.keiththompsonart.com/>

Scott Westerfeld

<http://scottwesterfeld.com/>

Suggested Further Reading on World War I

Fiction

Lawrence, Iain. *Lord of the Nutcracker Men*. Delacorte, 2001.

Morpurgo, Michael. *Private Peaceful*. Scholastic, 2004.

Remarque, Erich Maria. *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Little, Brown, 1929.

Slade, Arthur. *Megiddo's Shadow*. Wendy Lamb/Random House, 2006.

Spillebeen, Geert. *Kipling's Choice*. Trans. Terese Edelstein. Houghton Mifflin, 2005.

Spillebeen, Geert. *Age 14*. Trans. Terese Edelstein. Houghton Mifflin, 2009.

Trumbo, Dalton. *Johnny Got His Gun*. J. B. Lippincott, 1939.

Nonfiction

Adams, Simon. *World War I* (Eyewitness Books). DK, 2007.

Batten, Jack. *The War to End All Wars: The Story of World War I*. Tundra, 2009

Brocklehurst, Ruth. *Usborne Introduction to the First World War*. Usborne, 2007.

Freedman, Russell. *The War to End All Wars: World War I*. Clarion,

Granfield, Linda. *In Flanders Fields: The Story of the Poem by John McCrae*. Illus. Janet Wilson. Doubleday, 1996.

Granfield, Linda. *Where Poppies Grow: A World War I Companion*. Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2001.

Murphy, Jim. *Truce: The Day the Soldiers Stopped Fighting*. Scholastic, 2009.

Myers, Walter Dean and Bill Miles. *The Harlem Hellfighters: When Pride Met Courage*. Amistad/Harper Collins, 2005.

This guide was written by Edward T. Sullivan, a librarian and writer.

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