The City of Ember

Novel Study
The City of Ember

Imagine that you have only one hour of electricity available to everyone each day. How do you think daily life would change?
utopia

an imaginary place in which the government, laws, and social conditions are perfect
dystopia

an imaginary place where people are unhappy and usually afraid because they are not treated fairly
The natural world is banished and distrusted.
Citizens are afraid of the outside world.
Citizens are under the illusion that they live in UTOPIA
Dehumanization:
There is a total absence of individual freedoms and expressions.
The citizens of a dystopia are under constant surveillance.
A figurehead is revered

This figurehead is often the leader of an oppressive totalitarian government.
PROPAGANDA is used to control the citizens
There exists a constant state of warfare or violence. A dystopian world often has a large military-like police force.
The Instructions

Read and discuss, The Instructions. (pages 1-3)
Assignment Day

Read and discuss, Chapter 1: Assignment Day. (pages 4-16)
Chapters 1 and 2

Literary Element: Setting -

1. What is the setting of this novel?
2. How important do you think the setting will be to this story?
Chapters 1 and 2

Literary Device: Simile

“...his (the mayor’s) heavy cheeks folded like drapes.”

1. What is being compared in this simile?
A Message to the Mayor

Read and discuss, Chapter 2: A Message to the Mayor (pages 17-39)
Chapters 1 and 2

Literary Device: Metaphor

“Somewhere inside here, a black worm of dread stirred.”

1. To what is the *dread* being compared?
2. How does this help to convey Lina’s feelings?
Chapter 2

Literary Device: Flashback

1. Indicate where the flashback begins and ends in Chapter 2.
2. What purpose does this flashback serve?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASSISTANT GUARD</td>
<td>CLOTHES WASHER</td>
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<td>MOLD SCRAPER</td>
<td>DOCTOR’S ASSISTANT</td>
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<td>MESSENGER</td>
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<td>PIPEWORKS LABORER</td>
<td>GREENHOUSE HELPER</td>
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<td>BUILDING REPAIR ASSISTANT</td>
<td>SUPPLY DEPOT CLERK</td>
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<td>CART PULLER</td>
<td>SUPPLY DEPOT CARRIER</td>
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<td>STREET SWEEPER</td>
<td>TIMEKEEPER’S ASSISTANT</td>
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<td>CLOTHES MENDER</td>
<td>TRASH COLLECTOR</td>
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<td>SHOP KEEPER</td>
<td>TRASH SIFTER</td>
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3 - Writing Activity

The occupations of Lina and her friends are decided by a chance draw of a slip of paper from a bag. Imagine that you are one of the young people picking a job.

1. Describe the job you would want most and tell what you like about it.
2. Then, describe the job you would want the least and tell why it would not suit you.

(At least two paragraphs are needed for this assignment to be complete.)
Chapters 1 and 2 - Group Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Lina and many others in the city of Ember do not rebel against the life they must accept?
2. Why do you think a society would put a twelve-year-old to work instead on continuing his or her education?
3. What does the role of messenger reveal about the city of Ember?
4. How does Mrs. Polster’s way of teaching compare to that in your own classes? Do you agree that there is always a clear choice between right and wrong?
5. What would bother you most about living in Ember? Is there anything you would like about living there?
Under Ember

Read and discuss, Chapter 3: Under Ember (pages 40-53)
The author devotes a chapter to Lina and a chapter to Doon’s first day of work. There are many similarities and differences. Compare and contrast their first days using quotes and page numbers from the text in order to support your writing (@ least 2).

(At least two paragraphs are needed for this assignment to be complete.)
Something Lost, Nothing Found

Read and discuss, Chapter 4: Something Lost, Nothing Found (pages 54-69)
1. What foods are found in Ember? Consider which foods are on the list and which are missing.
2. Why do the people of Ember eat these foods?
3. Why do the greenhouses not grow fruits?
4. Why do the greenhouses not grow grains?
5. Why do the people not raise beef, pork or chicken?
6. Why would the people of Ember have beehives?
On Night Street

Read and discuss, Chapter 5: On Night Street (pages 70-83)
She began to tremble, and she felt the sinking and dissolving inside her that meant she was going to cry. Her legs gave way like wet paper and she slid down until she was sitting on the street, with her head on her knees. Trembling, her mind a wordless whirl of dread, she waited.

1. What mood is set by the passage?
2. What words in the passage help to create this mood?
Chapters 3-5

Literary Device: Personification

*But the darkness pressed against her and she couldn’t summon her voice.*

1. What is being personified?
2. What is the effect?
Chapters 3-5 - Group Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think that nobody in Ember has been able to invent a movable light?
2. Do you believe that Sadge has gone mad in his pursuit of the Unknown Regions?
3. Do you think there is any hope for the city of Ember? If so, what might it be?
4. Is there anything about the plight of the city of Ember that is like the problems we have in our own cities today?
On Night Street

Read and discuss, Chapter 5: On Night Street (pages 70-83)
The Box in the Closet

Read and discuss, Chapter 6: The Box in the Closet (pages 83-92)
A Message Full of Holes

Read and discuss, Chapter 7: A Message Full of Holes (pages 93-112)
Explorations

Read and discuss, Chapter 8: Explorations (pages 113-120)
Lina faced some problems in Chapters 5 and 6. Fill in the problem and write how Lina reacted to the situation or solved the problem.

**Problem #1 -**

**Solution #1 -**

**Problem #2 -**

**Solution #2 -**

**Problem #3 -**

**Solution #3**
Think and Respond

1. Was Mayor Cole correct in calling the people together after the 7-minute blackout? Why or why not?

2. What could Mayor Cole tell the people to relieve their fears?
Chapters 6-8 - Group Discussion Questions

1. Do you agree with Doon’s father that anger should be avoided because it always brings about unexpected consequences? Can anger ever be constructive?
2. What do you think the mayor has done with Lina’s message?
3. Why do the people of Ember know so little about fire?
4. Why would the people of Ember not know common words such as heaven, hog, or boat?
5. How do you think Ember reached its present state?
Chapter 6-8

Literary Devices: Personification

*Fear had settled over the city.*

1. What is being personified in the passage?
2. What mood does that create.
Chapters 6-8

Literary Devices: Simile

*Her heart began knocking at her chest like a fist at the door.*

1. What is being compared in the simile?
Prediction

Who do you think is the person with the key in the Pipeworks? Use details from the story to support your answer.
The Door in the Roped-Off Tunnel

Read and discuss, Chapter 9: The Door in the Roped-Off Tunnel (pages 121-131)
Blue Sky and Goodbye

Read and discuss, Chapter 10: Blue Sky and Goodbye (pages 132-139)
Lizzie’s Groceries

Read and discuss, Chapter 11: Lizzie’s Groceries (pages 140-154)
Chapters 9-11 - Group Discussion Questions

1. Who do you think is the mysterious man who opened the locked door? What do you think is behind the door?
2. If people go to work at the age of twelve, how do you think they get to be doctors?
3. Do you agree with Lizzie or with Lina about using the secret supplies?
Chapters 9-11

Literary Devices: Irony

What is ironic about Lina using blue to color the sky in her picture?
Chapters 9-11

Do you agree with Lizzie or Lina?

First supporting reason:

Second supporting reason:

Third supporting reason:
A Dreadful Discovery

Read and discuss, Chapter 12: A Dreadful Discovery (pages 155-165)
A Dreadful Discovery

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Deciphering the Message

Read and discuss, Chapter 13: Deciphering the Message (pages 166-177)
The Way Out

Read and discuss, Chapter 14: The Way Out (pages 178-192)
Chapters 12-14

Literary Devices: Symbolism

1. Why does the encroaching darkness in Ember symbolize?

2. What might the germinating seed in Lina’s room symbolize?
## 6 - Conflict

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Chapters 12-14 - Group Discussion Questions

1. In your opinion, should Doon and Lina have told the guards about the mayor’s corruption?
2. Do you think Doon and Lina will be able to reveal the way people can go beyond Ember at the Singing?
3. What does Clary mean when she tells Lina, “Everyone has some darkness inside?” What darkness, if any, have you detected in Lina and Doon?
A Desperate Run

Read and discuss, Chapter 15: A Desperate Run (pages 193-212)
Read and discuss, Chapter 16: The Singing (pages 213-225)
Away

Read and discuss, Chapter 17: Away (pages 226-237)
Literary Devices: Symbolism

1. Why does the author include the storyline of the caterpillar that turned into moth?
2. What might Doon’s caterpillar symbolize?
3. In what way does this compare to Lina’s bean sprout?
What are the cliffhangers at the ends of Chapters 15 and 16?
Chapters 15-17

Literary Devices: Building Suspense

In what ways does the author build suspense?
Chapters 15-17 - Group Discussion Questions

1. Do you think Doon is being selfish when he doesn’t share his plans with his father?
2. Do you agree with the mayor that curiosity is a dangerous and unhealthy quality? In what ways has curiosity helped Lina and Doon? In what ways has it put them in danger?
3. Do you think Lina should have taken Poppy with her? Why does having Poppy with her make Lina feel brave?
4. Do you think Lina and Doon will survive their trip and reach another city?
Where the River Goes

Read and discuss, Chapter 18: Where the River Goes (pages 238-249)
A World of Light

Read and discuss, Chapter 19: A World of Light (pages 250-257)
The Last Message

Read and discuss, Chapter 20: The Last Message (pages 258-270)
Lina felt as though a lid that had been on her all her life had been lifted off. Light and air rushed through her, making a song like the songs of Ember, only it was a song of joy.

1. How is figurative language used here to create vivid impressions?
2. What mood does it help to set?
Chapters 18-20 - Group Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think the woman left her journal behind?
2. Why do you think that Stanley and the journal writer named their babies Star and Forest?
3. Describe the common animals and objects in the outside world with which Lina and Doon are unfamiliar. How do you think it would be to live in a world without these things?
4. What do you think Mrs. Murdo will do after reading the message?