

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

MAGIC TREE HOUSE[®]

MERLIN MISSIONS

A Good Night for Ghosts and ***Ghosts: A Nonfiction Companion to A Good Night for Ghosts***



PB: 978-0-375-85649-5
EL: 978-0-375-89464-0
Grades: 2-5
F&P: N • Lexile: 490L

ABOUT *A Good Night for Ghosts*

Jack and Annie are on their second mission to find—and inspire—artists to bring happiness to millions. After traveling to New Orleans, Jack and Annie come head to head with some real ghosts, as well as discover the world of jazz when they meet a young Louis Armstrong!



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F&P: O • Lexile: 820L

ABOUT *Ghosts:*

A Nonfiction Companion to A Good Night for Ghosts

Fact and fiction meet—for Halloween! What are the origins of some of the famous ghost stories in Louisiana? Why do people believe in ghosts? Do most cultures have some kind of ghost stories? Find out the answers to these questions and more in Jack and Annie's guide to ghost stories from all over the world.

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

Comprehension

How does Annie lay a trap with her words that makes Jack come to the magic tree house?

Why are people so mean to Jack and Annie on the streets of New Orleans?

Dipper works really hard each day at his jobs. Why doesn't he go to school? Does Dipper really know Teddy and Kathleen?

Analysis

The research book calls Louis Armstrong the “King of Jazz,” but he doesn't have a crown or a kingdom. What is the difference between a figurative king and a king, complete with a crown and a kingdom? How does a person

become a figurative king?

Jack and Annie see their clothes in New Orleans and decide that they look poor. What do they see that makes them look poor? What does poor look like today?

What are you afraid of?

Why do the children and the pirate ghosts dance together?

Are the boys (Big Nose Sidney, Little Mack, Happy, and Dipper) really friends? Though Jack is tired at the end of a day's work, he says he feels great. What makes him feel this way?

Application

What does a steamboat look like? How does it work?

What does a streetcar look like? Is it similar to any of transportation we use today?

How will the visit with Dipper change Jack and Annie's thinking when they go back home? How does New Orleans honor Louis Armstrong? What kinds of things do cities do today to honor people?

Evaluation

Why is it important for Jack and Annie to be poor as they visit Dipper? (Why did the author make them that way?)

Why does Dipper like being friends with Jack and Annie?

The pirates say, "Y'all be sure to come back! Same time next year!" Is the pirates' invitation a genuine one? Do they really mean what they say? Jack and Annie ask Dipper, "How do you stay so cheerful?" He answers, "I have a rich life . . . I get to feel everything." What does he mean? What makes a rich life today?

Write to Dipper

Ask students to pretend they are Jack or Annie and have them write letters to Dipper. They should imagine that they are back home, remembering the adventures in New Orleans. Encourage them to write using complete sentences and good handwriting. Here are some questions to get the class started:

- What do you remember about your visit?
- What did you learn from Dipper?
- What would you like to tell him?
- What questions do you have now?

In the Mood

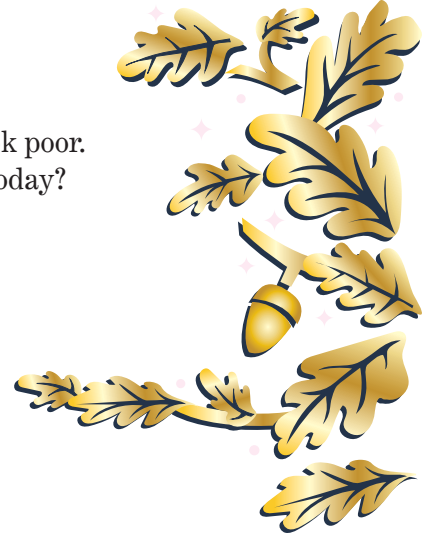
In the book, Jack and Annie go through some pretty wild adventures. Each part of the day has a different mood. Have students page through the book and see if they can identify some of the moods the author created. How does the author create a mood?

CURRICULUM: *Writing*

Then and Now

Have the class reference pictures from the early 1900s to draw a street scene. Then have them draw the same street to show what it might look like in the 2000s. Include details and color.

CURRICULUM: *Art*



Try a New Recipe!

Help the class search cookbooks and the Internet for recipes from New Orleans. Sample some of the food mentioned in the book, like crawfish pies or gumbo soup.

CURRICULUM: *Art*

All in a Day's Work

Dipper was very busy during Jack and Annie's visit. List Dipper's jobs and illustrate the three children at work at each site. It may be fun to turn this into a book or "travel scrapbook."

CURRICULUM: *Art*

**ACTIVITIES FOR *Penguins and Antarctica:*
*A Nonfiction Companion to Eve of the Emperor Penguin*****Discussion Questions**

Do you think it is okay to tell ghost stories? Why or why not?

The Research Guide tells many ghost stories from throughout history, and then offers a scientific explanation for some of the "spooky" things people see and feel. Why do you think the authors chose to write the book this way?

Prove it!

As they read, ask the students to search for words that show the stories in *Ghosts* are not proven facts (e.g., claim, speculate, thought). Use this list to start a discussion about the difference between knowing something for sure and knowing something possibly happened. Students who are exposed to news might also be able to give examples of words used in the criminal justice system before and after a trial.

CURRICULUM: *Language Arts*

Teaching ideas provided by Beth Fawley, the 2006 Magic Tree House Educator of the Year, who is the K-12 Gifted and Talented Coordinator at Columbia Heights Public Schools in Minnesota.

