

Is searching for knowledge  
better than having it?



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Find out in **The Book of Gold** by Bob Staake

# THE BOOK OF GOLD IN THE CLASSROOM

## ABOUT THE BOOK

Isaac isn't interested in much. His parents love books and try over and over to draw him into the exciting world of literature, but it takes a visit to a local curiosity shop to change Isaac's life. There he learns about *The Book of Gold*, which holds the answers to every question ever asked and turns to solid gold once opened. Isaac is determined to find this book and collect his riches. He searches the world, discovering new lands and interesting facts, but never finds the elusive book. What he does find, however, makes him richer than he ever could have ever imagined.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**BOB STAAKE** is the author and/or illustrator of more than fifty books, including *Bluebird*, which received three starred reviews; *My Pet Book*; *The Donut Chef*; and *Look! A Book!* *The New York Times* named Staake's *The Red Lemon* one of the Ten Best Illustrated Books of the Year. Learn more at [BobStaake.com](http://BobStaake.com) and on Twitter at [@bobstaake](https://twitter.com/bobstaake).

## PRE-READING ACTIVITY

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What do you like to read about?

**ACTIVITY:** Have students choose a book from your school library that interests them. Then gather them together and ask why they selected that book. For example, they may have found engaging illustrations, an eye-catching cover, or text that looks intriguing. Continue a more detailed discussion about what they like about books. Ask students to use their senses to describe the book they selected. What does the book feel like? Does it have a smell? What sound does it make when they flip through the pages? Remind them about these feelings as you explore *The Book of Gold* together.

☉ Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening 4

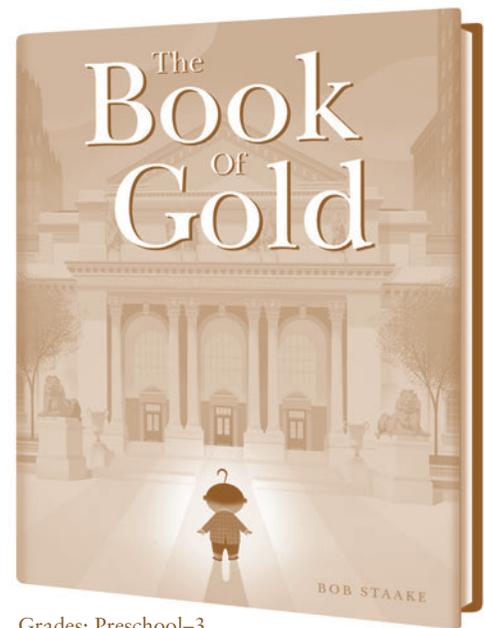
## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

### THE JOURNEY

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What does it mean to “discover” something? How do you feel when you discover something new?

**ACTIVITY:** Gather photographs of interesting people, places, or things. Show each photograph to the class and encourage them to ask a question about something they are curious about. Ask them how they could find the answer to their question. They might say looking in books, searching the Internet, or even asking someone they know. Ask them to write down three questions they have always been curious about, and send them on a journey to discover the answers. Once they have found the answers, have students share their questions, the answers, and the journey they took. Did they discover anything along their journey that they didn't anticipate?

☉ Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Anchor Standards for Writing 8



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### CAN MONEY BUY HAPPINESS?

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** Why is Isaac so excited about *The Book of Gold*? Is it because it holds the answers to many questions or because it will make him rich?

**ACTIVITY:** Show your students a \$1 bill and ask them what they would buy with it. Do the same thing with a \$5 bill and a \$10 bill. Explain that all the things they mention are considered material possessions and many people feel that having lots of these make them happy. Now ask them to think about what kinds of things make them happy but don't cost anything at all. Guide them toward the following:

- Love
- Friendship
- Learning
- Hugs
- Family
- Smiles
- Laughter
- Imagination

Would material possessions have any meaning if we didn't have the things listed above? Is it better to be rich with happiness or rich with money? Have students create a mural titled *The Best Things in Life Are Free*. Ask everyone to contribute a drawing and a sentence about something that makes them happy that isn't a material possession, using the list above as inspiration. Hang the mural in the hallway to spread the word within your school community!

☉ Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening 5

# THE BOOK OF GOLD IN THE CLASSROOM

## STORY QUILT

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What lesson did Isaac learn on his search for *The Book of Gold*?

**ACTIVITY:** This book teaches us so many things about life and the value of knowledge. It teaches us that books can't make you rich, but they can enrich your mind. Give each student a square piece of construction paper. Use different colors. Ask them to think about what this book taught them about their own lives and have them write the answer on their square. For younger children, this could be a drawing and a caption; for older children, this could be a drawing with a paragraph. When everyone has finished, have the students connect their squares to create a "quilt" to hang in the classroom.

☉ Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Anchor Standards for Literature 2

## THE BOOK OF GOLD, PART 2

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** At the end of the book, Isaac tells another little boy about *The Book of Gold*. Why does he do that?

**ACTIVITY:** Compare the pictures of the little boy on the last four pages of the book. Ask students how they think the boy feels before and after Isaac speaks to him. Based on those observations, ask students why they think Isaac chose that boy out of everyone in the library. Then begin a discussion about what the little boy might do now. Have students write a sequel to *The Book of Gold* that features this little boy as the main character. What will he do? Where will he go? What will he discover? When they are finished, ask students to read their stories to the class so they can see all the possibilities!

☉ Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Anchor Standards for Writing 3

## AND THE AWARD GOES TO . . .

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** How does Isaac change from the beginning of the story to the end?

**ACTIVITY:** As Isaac grows from a boy to an old man, many things about him change. We can probably all agree that while he is uninteresting as a boy, he grows to be an admirable man. Ask students to think about one thing they admire about Isaac or something he does that made them proud of him. Have them create an award they would give him acknowledging this accomplishment. The award can be built from classroom materials or simply drawn on paper. The award should be accompanied by a speech explaining its meaning and what Isaac did to deserve it. Then hold a ceremony and give each student an opportunity to present their award to Isaac.

☉ Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Anchor Standards for Literature 3

This guide was prepared by Jamie Simon, an educational consultant in the Washington, DC, area, who has been involved in education for over 15 years as both a teacher and an administrator.

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## A LETTER FROM ABROAD

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** How does traveling make Isaac's world grow bigger?

**ACTIVITY:** Allow your students to carefully examine the illustration of Isaac visiting Calcutta, India. What is there to learn about? Answers can include the following:

- Different languages
- What people wear
- Types of transportation used
- What people eat
- Where people live

Ask them to imagine that they are Isaac and they have traveled great distances to discover new things. Have them write a letter from Isaac to his parents back in New York telling them about his travels. What has he seen? What has he learned? They can choose one of the places in the book—India, Russia, or Egypt—or a place they have visited. Have books about these countries on hand or offer use of the Internet to gather more information. The letters should answer the question "How has traveling made your world grow bigger?"

☉ Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Anchor Standards for Writing 6

## PATIENCE AND FORTITUDE

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What does *patience* mean? What does *fortitude* mean? How are those words important to the book?

**ACTIVITY:** The lion statues in front of the New York Public Library play a significant role in the story. In some ways, the introduction of the lions at the beginning of the book foreshadows what is going to happen at the end. Give students the Patience and Fortitude worksheet and ask them to list the ways these lions establish a presence in the story.

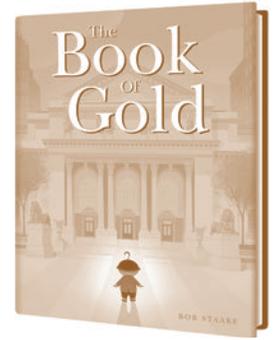
### FOR EXAMPLE:

- On a trip to the library, Isaac's parents tell him that the lions guard the books in the building.
- The curiosity shop owner tells Isaac that he will need patience and fortitude to find *The Book of Gold*.
- On his journey, he learns that the lions' names are Patience and Fortitude.
- In the library, he fulfills his purpose by passing on the idea of *The Book of Gold* to another little boy.

How are all these events connected? Use the finished worksheets to illustrate how the lions are used to foreshadow the events of the story and why they are an important part of the plot.

☉ Correlates to Common Core Language Arts Anchor Standards for Literature 3

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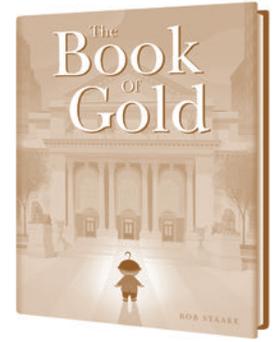


## PATIENCE AND FORTITUDE

In each box, write one way that the New York Public Library lion statues are mentioned in the book. Think carefully about the sequence of these events. You can use the book for reference.

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin brown border, intended for writing the first event in the sequence.A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin brown border, intended for writing the second event in the sequence.A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin brown border, intended for writing the third event in the sequence.A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a thin brown border, intended for writing the fourth event in the sequence.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_



## WRITE YOUR OWN POEM: A BOOK'S PURPOSE

Write a poem that explains the purpose of a book. Why do we read books, and what can books do for us? Fill in the blanks below to help organize your thoughts.

Poem title: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

A book is \_\_\_\_\_

A book can \_\_\_\_\_

A book will \_\_\_\_\_

A book could \_\_\_\_\_

A book always \_\_\_\_\_

### ILLUSTRATE YOUR POEM BELOW.

