

Pre-Reading Activities

Word Fun

Puns – A pun is a play on words. A pun may be based on different senses of the same word, on similar senses of different words or on similar sounds of different words. Puns are often humorous. There are many examples of humorous puns throughout the book. Some use the names of the characters. For example, The Senses Taker is a play on the term Census Taker and The Wicked Which is a play on the term Wicked Witch.

Activity: As you read the novel, list the unusual character and places names that are puns.

Synonyms – While visiting the Word Market, Milo meets the King’s five advisors who use synonyms when they speak. When one man says, “Greetings”, the others say, “Salutations, Welcome, Good Afternoon and Hello.”

Activity: Add to the groups of synonyms that the five men use.

Figurative and Literal Meanings – The author uses many idioms. Idioms are expressions whose words should not be taken literally. For example, the idiomatic expression “eat my words” usually means “take back what was said”. In *The Phantom Tollbooth*, however, the phrase “eat my words” is used literally, and the characters actually eat words and letters. “A square meal” usually means “a nutritious meal”, but in the story the phrase is taken literally, and the characters eat a square-shaped dinner.

Activity: As you read, note the words and terms with different figurative and literal meanings. Use your list to fill in the chart for the Spotlight Literary Skill found on page 32. Compare your findings with those of your classmates.

Vocabulary

Chapters One and Two

Use the words in the box to complete the sentences. You may need to use your dictionary. Not all the words will be used.

Use the words in the box to complete the sentences. You may need to use your dictionary.

Some words may not be used.

**anxious assembled assumed cartographers dawdle dejectedly
depicting effusive encounter grumbled indignantly lobby
loiter monotonous ordinance peculiar wistfully**

1. My grandfather _____ told us stories of his childhood.
2. My artwork was displayed in the _____ of the school. Mum saw it as soon as she entered the building.
3. When talking to her younger sister, the girl _____ an air of superiority.
4. After losing the game, the team left the field _____.
5. Trying out for the play made me feel _____.
6. The food had a _____ taste, so I stopped eating it.
7. Our town council passed a(n) _____ imposing an early curfew.
8. Have you ever had a(n) _____ with a wild animal?
9. Mike made a model _____ the MCG.
10. I _____ my new radio-controlled car in record time!

Choose four words from the box that were not used. Use them in original sentences.

— Comprehension and Discussion Questions —

Chapters One and Two

Answer the following questions in complete sentence form. Give examples from the story to support your response.

1. Why did Milo think that seeking knowledge was a waste of time?

2. Why was Milo willing to follow directions and put the tollbooth together?

3. What are homophones? Use this to explain why Milo thought the Whether Man would know if it was going to rain.

4. Judge the Whether Man's advice: "Expect everything, I always say, and the unexpected never happens."

5. How did Milo get out of The Doldrums?

Spotlight Literary Skill

Plot

A **plot** is a sequence of events that tells a story. You have just read *The Phantom Tollbooth*. Put the following story events in the order they occurred in the plot. Number the events from 1 to 14.

- ___ Milo and Tock visit Dictionopolis and the Word Market Place.
- ___ In the Mountains of Ignorance Milo, Tock and Tock's passengers meet terrible demons.
- ___ Milo gets lost in the Doldrums.
- ___ Tock, the watchdog, joins Milo.
- ___ The armies of Wisdom welcome Rhyme, Reason, Milo, Tock and the Humbug.
- ___ A mysterious package arrives in Milo's bedroom.
- ___ Officer Shrift puts Milo in prison.
- ___ Milo reads a note that says, "FOR MILO, WHO NOW KNOWS THE WAY."
- ___ Milo and Tock leave the prison and attend a banquet.
- ___ Milo says good-bye to Tock, Humbug and the others.
- ___ Milo, the Humbug and Tock begin their quest to rescue Rhyme and Reason.
- ___ Milo meets Alec Bings.
- ___ Milo meets the Dodecahedron.
- ___ The two princesses agree to return to the Kingdom of Wisdom.



Spotlight Literary Skill

Figurative Language: Similes and Personification

The use of figurative language helps to enrich all types of writing. Norton Juster used various types of figurative language to create mental images that make the story more interesting.

Simile: A simile is a stated comparison between two dissimilar things. The word “like” or “as” is used to make the comparison.

Examples of similes found in *The Phantom Tollbooth*:

Chapter 10: “... the world looked like an enormous colouring book that had never been finished.”

Chapter 16: “... the bird looked more like a dirty floor mop.”

Personification: Personification is giving human characteristics to inanimate objects or ideas.

Examples of personification found in *The Phantom Tollbooth*:

Chapter 11: “The entire orchestra washed the forest in colour.”

Chapter 13: “The calm sea bumped it playfully along the sandy beach.”

Now create your own examples of similes and personification.

Write three original sentences with a simile in each.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Write three original sentences using personification in each.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____