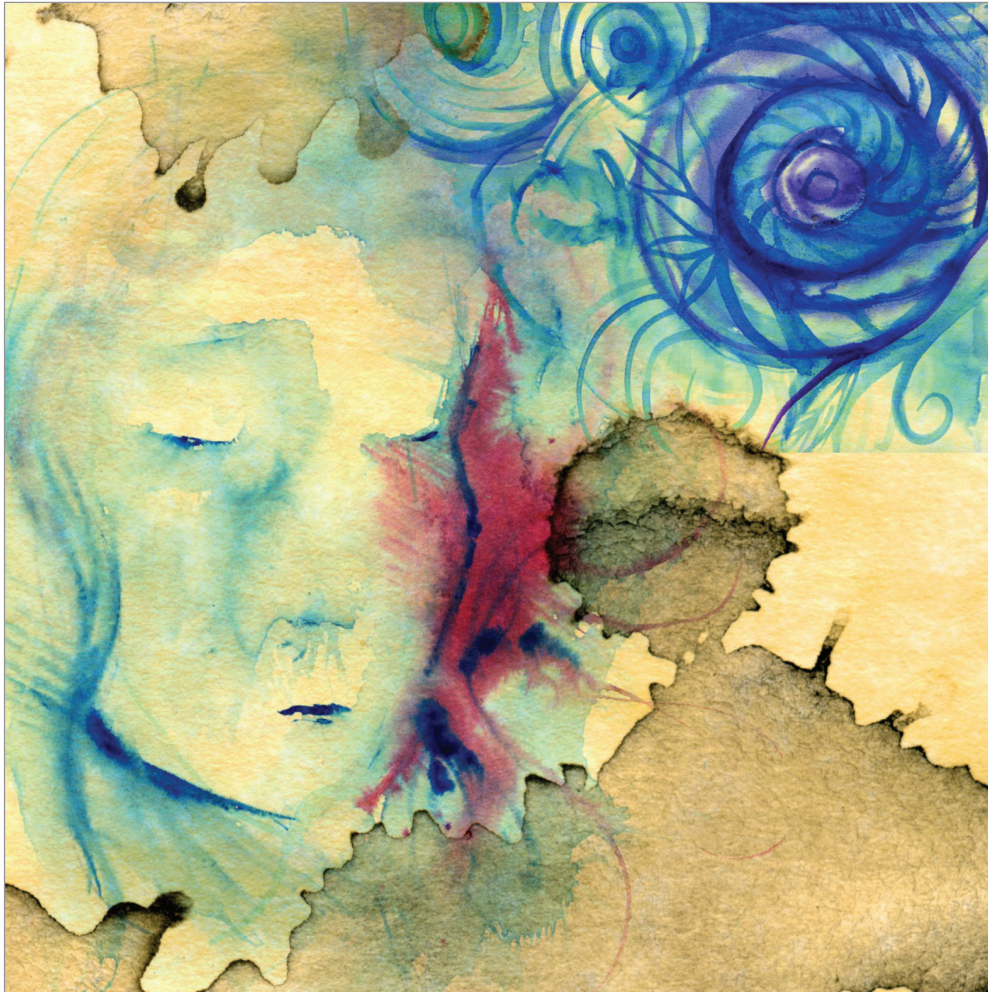


# TEACHER'S GUIDE

Grades 7 & 8



## the deadly conch

— tara trilogy —

mahtab narsimhan

Teacher Resource Guide developed by  
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

I	Book Summary	<b>4</b>
II	Curriculum Connections	<b>5</b>
III	Pre-reading Activities	<b>6</b>
IV	During Reading Questions	<b>8</b>
V	Post Reading/Curriculum Connections Activities	<b>10</b>
VI	Appendix	<b>12</b>
VII	Assessment Tools	<b>19</b>
VIII	Related Resources	<b>22</b>

# I BOOK SUMMARY

After the conclusion of *The Silver Anklet*, Tara's triumphant return to Morni is short lived. Tara's deceased stepmother, Kali, seeks revenge through her daughter, Layla. And so begins a series of carefully orchestrated events to cast suspicion on Tara: a dead dog in the village temple, contaminated well water, and whispers that Tara is possessed by the demonic spirits of Zarku's mother, Zara.

Layla fuels the villagers' blind superstitions and fears. Soon all of Morni is against Tara, even her own family. Death seems to be the only way to stop her evil stepsister.

Tara turns to Lord Yama and his deadly conch for help. He takes her to the underworld to seek advice, but when she returns, she has only twenty four hours to prove her innocence and to save the village before she must return to the world of the dead. Forever.

Can Tara believe in herself, once more, to defeat Layla, or will Lord Yama and his deadly conch claim their next victim? The harrowing conclusion to the Tara Trilogy answers these questions and more.

## About the Author

Mahtab Narsimhan, a native of Bombay (Mumbai), has always been fascinated by Indian mythology, fantasy, and adventure. Her debut novel and first installment in the Tara Trilogy, *The Third Eye*, won the **2009 Silver Birch Award**. The sequel, *The Silver Anklet*, was published in 2009. She lives in Toronto.

## II CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

\*The activities linked to the Grade 7 and 8 Language Ontario Curriculums can be found in the Post Reading Activities section.

\*\*Many of the During Reading comprehension questions address expectations in the reading curriculum.

### Grade 7 and 8 Language

Reading – 1.3, 2.4

Oral – 2.2-2.4, 3.1, 3.2

*Literary Devices*

Reading – 1.3, 1.6

*Three types of conflict*

Reading – 1.5, 1.9

Writing – 2.3-2.5

*Alter an event in the story*

Oral – 1.9, 2.1-2.7, 3.1, 3.2

Reading – 1.3-1.6

Writing – 1.5, 1.6, 2.2-2.5

Media – 3.1-3.4, 4.1

*Interview a character*

Reading – 4.1, 4.2

*Assess own reading of novel*

Media – 3.1-3.4, 4.1, 4.2

*Re-design book cover*

Reading – 1.4, 1.5

Media – 3.1-3.4, 4.1, 4.2

*Comic strip/graphic novel of main events*

*CD cover*

### Character Education

*Family relationships*

*Trust*

### III PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

- Discuss trilogies/series books.
- This book can be read as a stand-alone novel; however, if reading this book as part of the trilogy, review characters and main events from previous book.
- Discuss the book cover. What might it tell the reader about the content? Discuss how this cover might encourage people to read the book or discourage them from reading it.
- Discuss elements of narrative fiction.
- Make some predictions about what each chapter might be about based on the chapter titles.
- At the back of *The Deadly Conch* there is a glossary of many of the Hindi words that are used in this book and the English translations. It may be useful to use those words as starting points for discussion/research into Hindu culture and mythology. Possible categories for ‘expert group’ research and presentation are:
  - dress
  - food
  - traditions/superstitions
- Silver Birch Program – the first book in this trilogy novel won the 2009 Silver Birch Award
  - read about the program
  - look at the criteria for nominations
  - look at website for selection criteria  
[http://www.accessola.com/ola/bins/content\\_page.asp?cid=92-228](http://www.accessola.com/ola/bins/content_page.asp?cid=92-228)

### Chapter Titles

<b>1</b> Revenge	<b>2</b> The Temple is Defiled	<b>3</b> The Nightmare Begins...
<b>4</b> A Deadly Rumour	<b>5</b> The Hidden Snake!	<b>6</b> Whispers in the Night
<b>7</b> Secrets	<b>8</b> The Untouchables	<b>9</b> The God of Death
<b>10</b> Fire!	<b>11</b> The Deadly Conch	<b>12</b> The Underworld
<b>13</b> Old Friends	<b>14</b> Zarku	<b>15</b> The Wrath of Kali
<b>16</b> Twenty-Four Hours to Live	<b>17</b> Hated and Alone	<b>18</b> Layla
<b>19</b> Trapped!	<b>20</b> Another Loved One ...Lost!	<b>21</b> Time for Justice
<b>22</b> The Beginning of the End	<b>23</b> Panchayats and Promises	<b>24</b> Framed and a Failure
<b>25</b> The Final Verdict	<b>26</b> Death by Stoning	<b>27</b> Revelations and Regrets

## Vocabulary Building

The following word lists are suggestions for vocabulary building. There are other words in the book that might be more appropriate to meet the needs of the various reading levels in the classroom.

There are many different ways to use the following vocabulary lists. Some suggestions include:

- student or teacher created word searches :<http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com>
- find the meaning and use in a sentence to show understanding of meaning
- find the meaning, and find another word with same or similar meaning
- make a chart showing prefix, root and suffix
- multiple meaning words

## Chapter Chunks

Chunk 1: chapters 1-6, pp.7-79

Chunk 2: chapters 7-14, pp. 80-179

Chunk 3: chapters 15-28, pp.180-280

### Chunk 1 pp.7-79

contorted   p7	replica   p7	chasm   p7	avenge   p7	reverberating   p7
throes   p8	periphery   p9	malice   p11	befallen   p13	rigorous   p13
inauspicious   p15	ferocious   p17	riveted   p20	apparition   p25	reverie   p27
incredulously   p34	indelibly   p34	defilement   p35	raucously   p37	desecrated   p39
blanched   p41	devious   p42	cower   p43	imperceptibly   p44	malevolent   p47
supplicated   p50	deity   p52	surreptitiously   p53	auspicious   p58	gesticulating   p65
embellishments   p77				

### Chunk 2 pp.80-179

parried   p103	imperceptibly   p136	vaid   p129	poultice   p129	unfathomable   p153
devoured   p153	incessant   p153	dissuade   p154	futile   p154	vestiges   p169
emanating   p170	rivulet   p173	goadng   p175		

### Chunk 3 pp.180-280

reviled   p182	luminescence   p182	maelstrom   p182	countenance   p204	mirthless   p233
ensconced   p254				

# IV DURING READING QUESTIONS

## Chunk 1: Chapters 1-6

1. What nightmare is Tara referring to? p7
2. How could Tara tell that Ananth was angry at her? p9
3. Why did Layla's absence from the group concern Tara? p9
4. The word *vaid* is not in the glossary at the end of the book. How did you figure out what that word meant? p13
5. *Raka* is sometimes written as *Rakaji*. What's the difference? Write down your ideas. p14
6. What shape is an orb? p20
7. Throughout the novel there are similes and metaphors. Keep a list of them as you read the novel. (BLM 1)
8. Who do you think killed the dog? Tara? Someone else? Explain your choice. p32
9. On p34 Tara is being accused of killing the dog. How is Tara feeling right now? Have you experienced being accused of doing something that you didn't do? How did you handle the situation?
10. What were Kali's last words to Tara in the previous book? If you don't remember, draw some conclusions based on what Tara is thinking on p39.
11. What would you do if you were in Tara's situation (on p38)?
12. Why did Tara lie about how she ended up in the temple and discovered the dead dog? Do you think her reasons are justified? pp38-42
13. Do you agree with Tara that Layla is behind the dead dog? Explain your answer. p46
14. Is it logical for the villagers to blame Tara for the things going wrong in Morni just because she spent time with Zarku? p61
15. What is a *panchayat*? Were you able to figure it out using context clues and inferencing? If so, what clues helped you? p71
16. Summarize this chapter chunk. Use point form or other methods to get the main events down.

## Chunk 2: Chapters 7-14

1. "He and Layla were the same age, but like earth and sky when it came to personalities." (p83) What does this mean?
2. Who is Amay? How did Tara create that name? p85



3. Why does Tara call her neighbour Poonam, Poonamji? (hint: culture, respect) p85
4. Why do you think Suraj took Zarku's dagger? Make some predictions about how this might play a roll later in the story. p88
5. What is meant by, "...fanning the fires of discontent"? p96
6. What's going on with Ananth? Do you think he's getting caught up in all the superstition? p118
7. In the midst of the fire in Tara's house, Tara hears Layla telling her to give up. Do you think Tara really hears that or what? p124
8. Do you think Tara is making a good decision by going to the Underworld? p142
9. How does the author make the reader feel Tara's pain when she looks at the ruins of her home? p143
10. Sketch the underworld as it's described in the story. p151-152
11. How was Tara able to call the people in the underworld? p161-162
12. Could you do what Tara did to call the people in the underworld? p163
13. Check your predictions about how Zarku's dagger might come up again. Were your predictions similar? p170
14. Who do you think set fire to Tara's house? p177
15. What do you think Tara is going to do to get rid of Layla? Write down your predictions.
16. Summarize this chapter chunk. Use point form or other methods to get the main events down.

### Chunk 3: Chapters 15-28

1. On p186 Tara learns that another dead dog was dropped into a well and the people believe she did it. Her mother questions her about her whereabouts, but Tara can't reveal where she really was. How do you think Tara feels right now?
2. Ananth got very angry at Tara (on p189) and said some hateful things. Is there any truth to his words?
3. Why did Raka lock Tara in his kitchen? p208
4. Would you have had the same courage that Tara showed to walk out with her captors? p228
5. How is Tara like a scapegoat? p230
6. Could you be strong like Tara and not share her secret (on p243)?
7. The person who set fire to Tara's house comes forward (on p269). Is it who you predicted?
8. Did the story end the way you anticipated?
9. Are you able to forgive like Tara was able to? p280
10. Summarize this chapter chunk. Use point form or other methods to get the main events down.

# V POST READING/CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS ACTIVITIES

- A** The author uses many similes, metaphors and other literary devices (e.g., conflict, foreshadowing, hyperbole, suspense). In small groups, each group taking one chapter chunk, look through the chunk and find as many examples as possible. Beside each literary device, write the example from the text, referencing the page number. Have a class discussion about how literary devices can be powerful writing tools. (BLM 2)

*Reading – 1.3, 2.4*

*Oral – 2.2-2.4, 3.1, 3.2*

- B** There are three types of conflict:

- human against human
- human against nature
- human against him/herself

Find and list 1-2 examples of each of these forms of conflict in the story. Use a mind map or other graphic organizer to show your work.

*Reading – 1.3, 1.6*

- C** Alter the story; change one event and make a written, point form outline showing how the storyline would change with your alteration.

*Reading – 1.5, 1.9*

*Writing – 2.3-2.5*

- D** Interview Tara or Ananth about the emotional and physical struggle he/she had to rid the village of Layla. In pairs, develop questions and answers using the Q-Chart (BLM 3). Present the interview as a live talk show or as a video podcast.

*Oral 1.9, 2.1-2.7, 3.1, 3.2*

*Reading 1.3-1.6*

*Writing 1.5, 1.6, 2.2-2.5*

*Media 3.1-3.4, 4.1*

- E** Assess your own reading of this novel. Did you find it easy or hard to read? What activities/strategies and/or discussions helped you to better understand the story? (i.e. pre-reading, during reading, post-reading). What might have made it easier/harder to get through? Jot down your thoughts to be ready for an oral discussion with the teacher.

*Reading 4.1, 4.2*

- F** Look at the book cover again. How do you feel about it? Do you like it? Re-design the book cover using a graphics program, PowerPoint or other visual media. Present the finished work as a Gallery Walk in the classroom.

*Media 3.1-3.4, 4.1, 4.2*

- G** Using your chapter chunk summaries, create a comic strip or short graphic novel of the main events in this book (BLM 4). Use an online program (bitstrips.com), Comic Life or other graphics software for the finished product.

*Reading – 1.4, 1.5*

*Media – 3.1-3.4, 4.1, 4.2*

- H** Create a CD cover with song titles. The song titles can be the main idea in each chapter. (BLM 5)

*Reading – 1.4, 1.5*

*Media – 3.1-3.4, 4.1, 4.2*

- I** What did you like best about the novel? Make sure you include examples from the text in your answer.

- J** Compare an event from the story to an event in your life. Use a Venn Diagram to organize your thoughts/ ideas. (BLM 6)

## Discussion Topics

### Cultural Traditions

p16 – Does the widow shunning custom seem logical? How/why do you think it developed? Tara questioned some of her cultural traditions, such as the red sindoor on the married women's foreheads (p17). Look at some customs in your cultural traditions. Do they seem fair and reasonable? How/why did those customs develop? Have a critical discussion about some of the traditions in various cultures.

### Placing Blame

p214 – Have a discussion about the angry mob of villagers out to deal with the source of their problems. When things start to go bad, people often look for a source, any source, even if it seems illogical.

### Forgiveness

p280 – Have a discussion about forgiveness. As Tara said, "...what would she achieve by carrying the hatred around in her heart? It would poison the rest of her life."

"Superstition and fear and stronger than reason, stronger than anything else." (p31) Reflect on this statement. Use examples from book and personal experience.

Lord Yama says to Tara, "Just remember, whatever you do, you'll have to live with the decision forever, no matter where you are. So think before you act." (p180) Is this advice useful in real life? What does it mean?

# VI APPENDIX

## BLM 1: Similes and Metaphors

<b>Simile/Metaphor – quote from novel What is it</b>	<b>Simile or Metaphor?</b>	<b>Page #</b>
"words dried up inside Tara"	metaphor	p30

# BLM 2: Literary Devices

Literary Device	Example from book	Page #

## BLM 3: The “Q” Chart

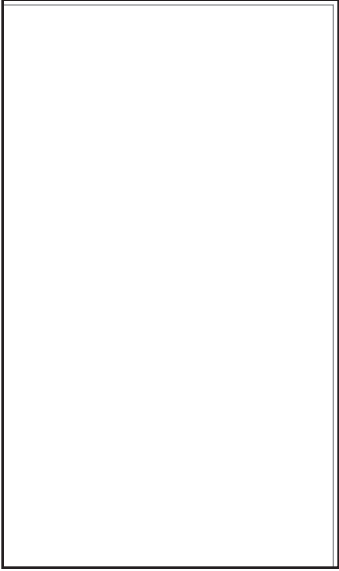
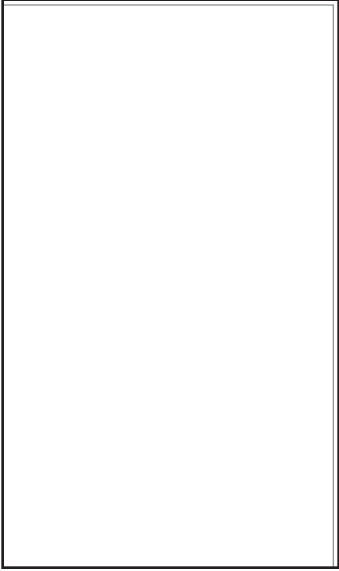
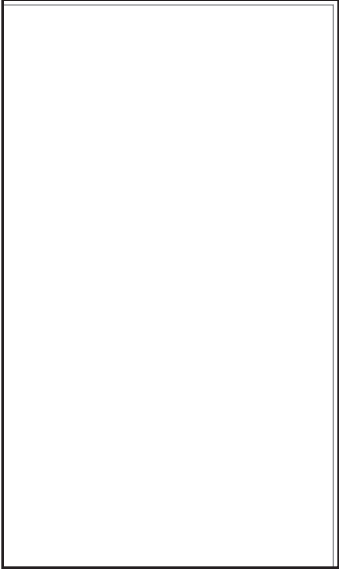
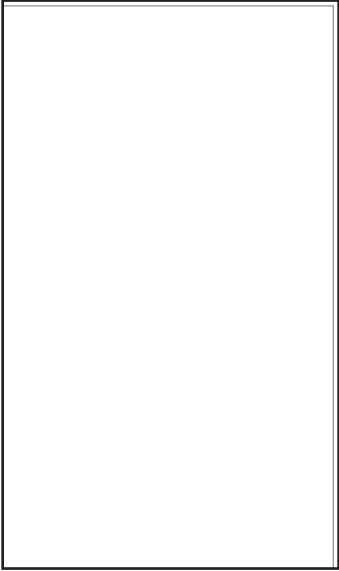
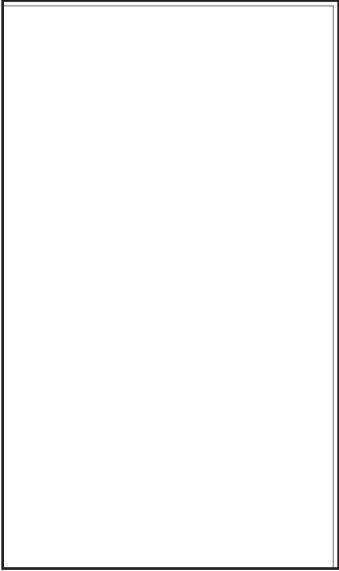
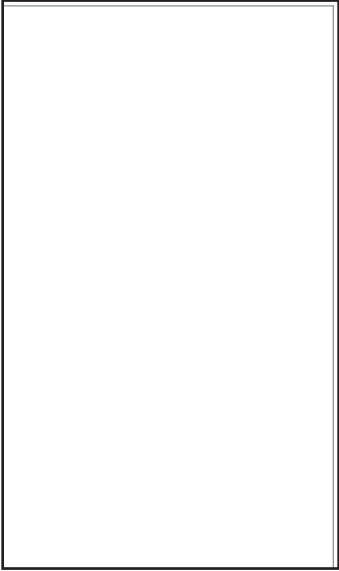
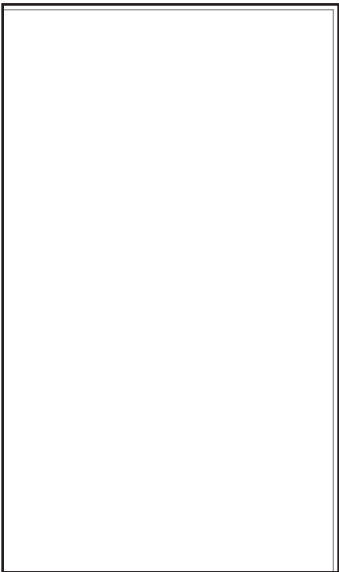
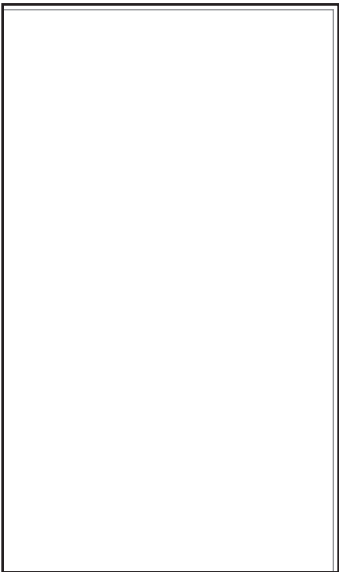
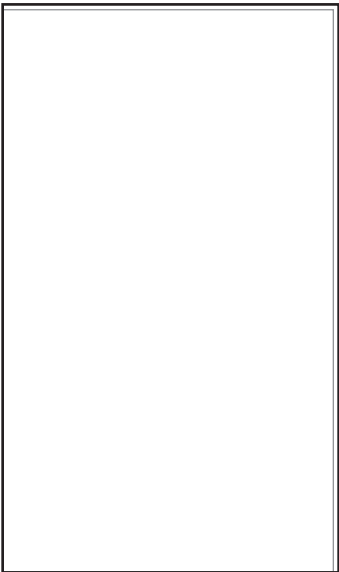
The Q-chart below gives a framework for creating questions. Start your question with a word from the first column and add a verb from the top row. The combination you choose will drive your questions.

Discussion questions should lie within the “Predict” and the “Synthesis and Application” boxes. For example, “*When would...?*” or “*Why might...?*” are good beginnings for discussion questions. Avoid starting discussion questions with starters such as “*What did...?*” or “*How can...?*”

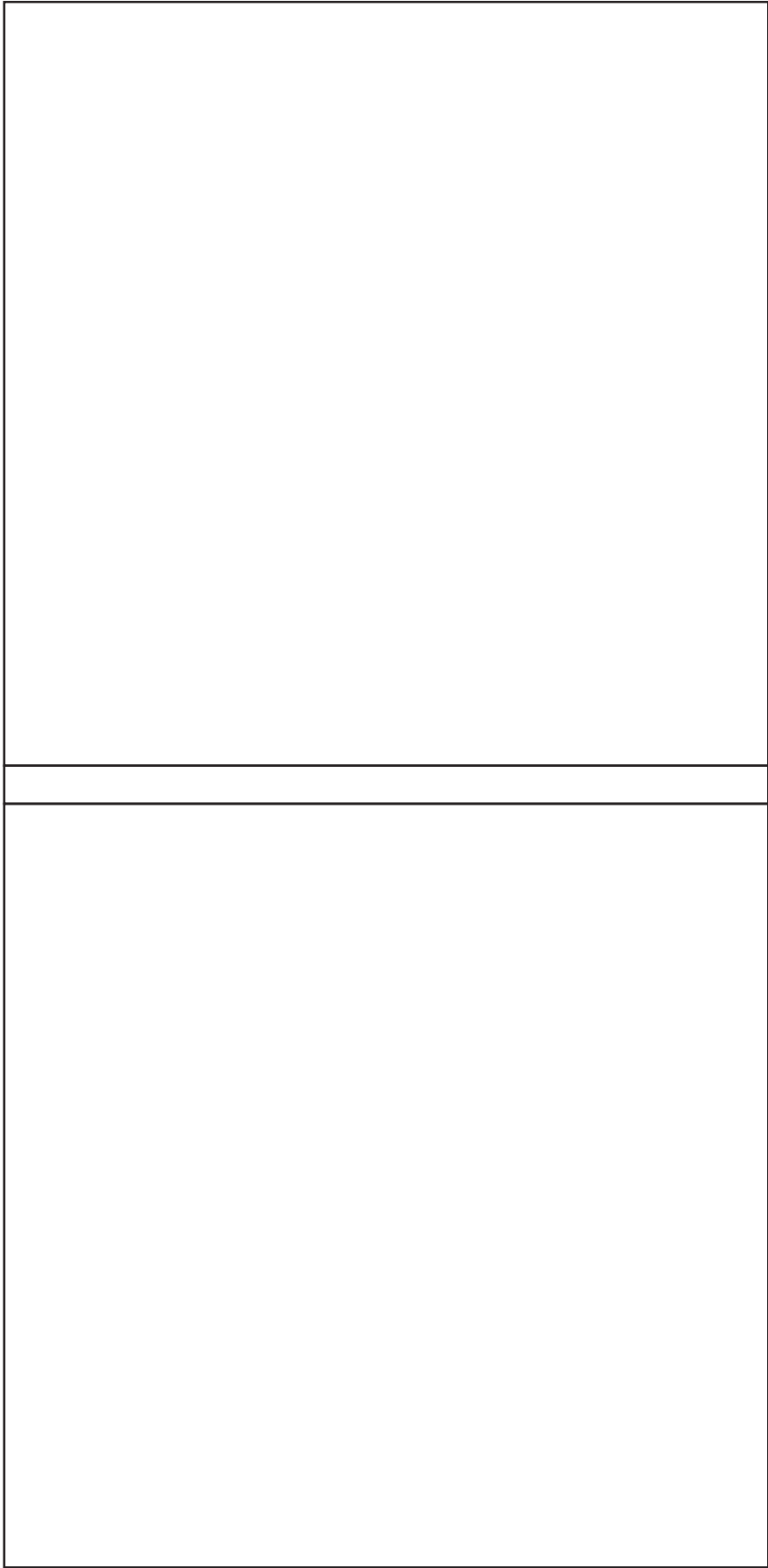
	Is	Did	Can	Would	Will	Might
What						
Where						
When						
Who						
Why						
How						

Source: Jan, McLellan. *ReadIt...Understand It...Communicate It*. Ontario: JEMCON Publishing, 2000.

**BLM 4: Comic Strip Graphic Organizer**



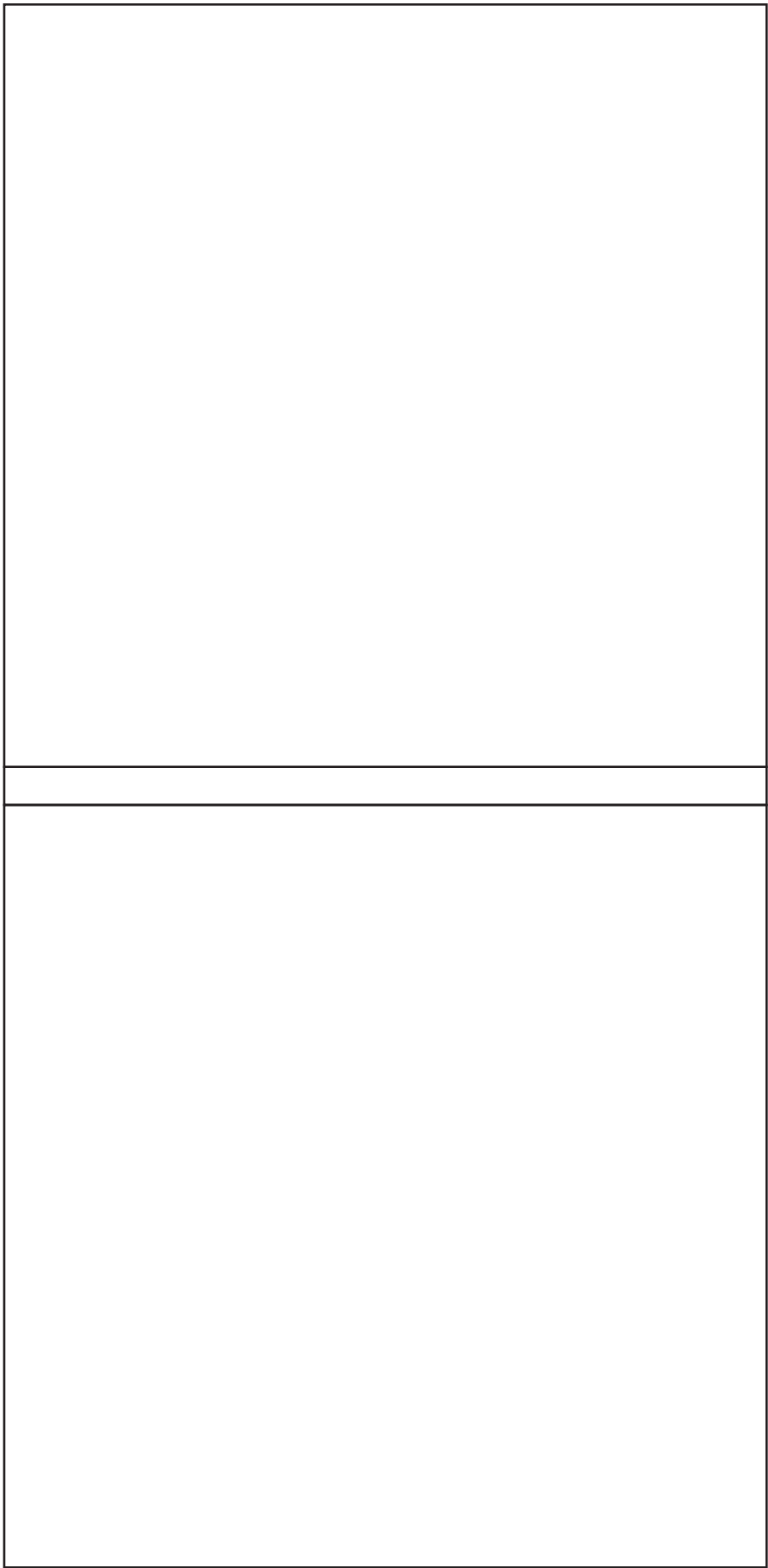
**BLM 5: CD Jacket Outline (not to scale)**



Front outside

Back outside

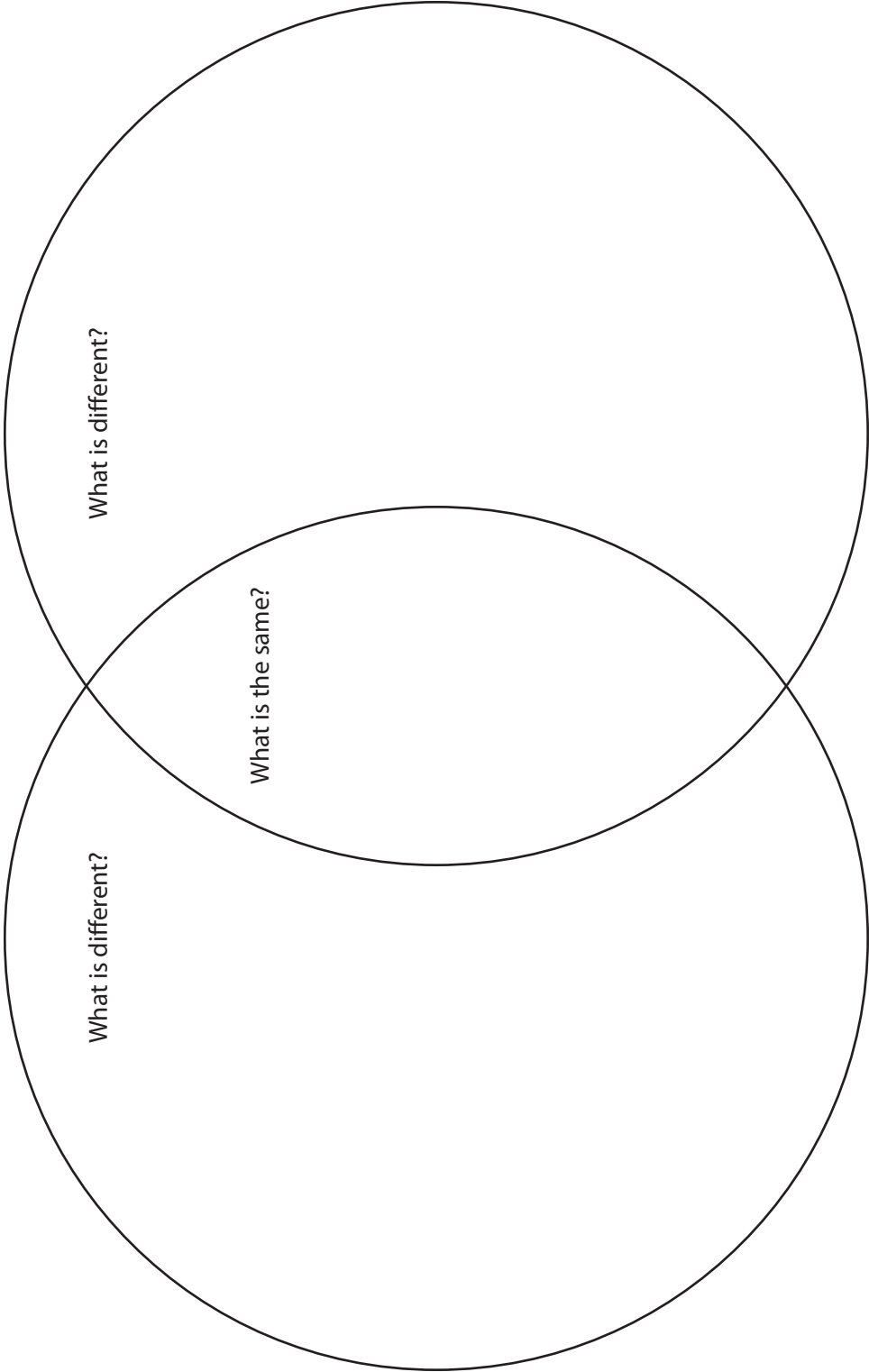




Front inside

Back inside

**BLM 6: Compare and Contrast**



# VII ASSESSMENT TOOLS

## Interview Questions Simple Rubric

	1	2	3	4
1. All questions are open ended (not yes-no).				
2. Questions are not prying (into subject’s personal life).				
3. Questions are polite and respectful.				
4. Your questions suggest a focus for the interview.				
5. Questions are broad, not extremely limited.				
6. The interview should last an acceptable length of time.				

*This section to be completed by teacher* -----

	1	2	3	4
1. All questions are open ended (not yes-no).				
2. Questions are not prying (into subject’s personal life).				
3. Questions are polite and respectful.				
4. Your questions suggest a focus for the interview.				
5. Questions are broad, not extremely limited.				
6. The interview should last an acceptable length of time.				

Source: [chnm.gmu.edu/fairfaxtah/lessons/documents/questionsrubric.pdf](http://chnm.gmu.edu/fairfaxtah/lessons/documents/questionsrubric.pdf)

# Podcast Rubric

Skill	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<b>Introduction/Lead</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no intro</li> <li>• intro gives no info about topic</li> <li>• doesn't engage listener</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trite or overdone</li> <li>• gives little info about topic</li> <li>• minimally engages listener</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• somewhat catchy</li> <li>• gives some important info about topic</li> <li>• engages listener toward end</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• catchy and clever</li> <li>• gives important information about topic</li> <li>• engages listener immediately</li> </ul>
<b>Topic/Depth of Podcast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• podcast has no topic</li> <li>• podcast doesn't engage listener</li> <li>• podcast is completely off-topic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• irrelevant or inappropriate topic</li> <li>• topic minimally engages listener (adds no new info or is off topic)</li> <li>• podcast minimally addresses topic, has only one perspective when more are available, or offers little information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relevant topic but more frivolous</li> <li>• topic somewhat engages listener (covers well-known ground, adds little new info)</li> <li>• podcast addresses topic but doesn't delve into all angles or perspectives (surface-level information)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• important and relevant topic</li> <li>• topic engages listener (is important to or educates listener)</li> <li>• clear focus for topic</li> <li>• podcast addresses topic thoroughly, delves into all angles or perspectives of topic</li> </ul>
<b>Sources for Podcast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• podcast has no quotes at all</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• podcast involves few or no appropriate and informative sources</li> <li>• podcast includes few or no stakeholders</li> <li>• podcast has no quotes from "expert" sources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• podcast involves some variety of appropriate and informative sources</li> <li>• podcast includes some, but not all, stakeholders from all angles</li> <li>• podcast has quotes from some "expert" sources, but quotes are not best choices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• podcast includes a wide variety of appropriate and informative sources</li> <li>• podcast includes stakeholders from all angles</li> <li>• podcast has appropriate quotes from all "expert" sources (best sources for podcast)</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no final summary or conclusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conclusion is too abrupt or offers no summary information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conclusion somewhat wraps up podcast, but does not summarize key information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• conclusion effectively wraps up podcast, summarizing key information</li> </ul>
<b>Professionalism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• podcaster is unprofessional or garbled</li> <li>• podcaster clearly has no script (is impromptu)</li> <li>• no source quotes</li> <li>• sections have no organization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• podcaster is not very clear and does not know topic or script</li> <li>• podcaster has not rehearsed pieces of podcast prior to recording</li> <li>• source quotes are not clear or are not part of podcast</li> <li>• sections show little organization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• podcaster is mostly clear but it is clear podcaster is merely reading off script</li> <li>• podcaster has rehearsed some pieces of podcast prior to recording</li> <li>• source quotes are mostly clear but need some editing</li> <li>• sections show some organization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• podcaster is clear and well-spoken (not reliant on script)</li> <li>• podcaster has clearly rehearsed podcast prior to recording</li> <li>• source quotes are clear and well-edited</li> <li>• sections are organized clearly and cohesively</li> </ul>

Source: [my-ecoach.com/online/resources/3654/podcast\\_rubric.doc](http://my-ecoach.com/online/resources/3654/podcast_rubric.doc)

# Book Cover Rubric

	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Front Cover</b>	The cover is creative and vividly depicts the story.	The cover is creative and depicts the story.	The cover depicts the story.	The cover barely depicts the story.	The cover does not depict the story.
<b>Back Cover</b>	The back cover tells a great deal more about the story.	The back cover tells more about the story.	The back cover is related to the story.	The back cover is barely related to the story.	The back cover does not relate to the story.
<b>Spine</b>	The spine has all of the needed components.	The spine has most of the needed components.	The spine has several of the needed components.	The spine has some of the needed components.	The spine has few or none of the needed components.
<b>Front Flap</b>	The summary of the story is accurate with specific details.	The summary is accurate with some details.	The summary is accurate with few details.	The summary is accurate with no details.	The summary is inaccurate with no details.
<b>Back Flap</b>	The biography information is accurate with specific details.	The biography information is accurate with some details.	The biography information is accurate with few details.	The biography information is accurate with no details.	The biography information is inaccurate with no details.
<b>Effort</b>	The product shows that much time and effort was used.	The product is quality work.	The product is average work.	The product is barely average work.	The product is below average work.
<b>Required Components</b>	The project meets the guidelines.	The project meets the guidelines.	The project barely meets the guidelines.	The project does not meet the guidelines.	The project does not meet the guidelines.



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## VIII RELATED RESOURCES

Reviews/Trailers

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/cm/vol17/no9/thedeadlyconch.html>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J42RljG36IA>

Author's blogspot:

<http://mahtabnarsimhan.blogspot.com/2010/08/deadly-conch-final-chapter-of-tara.html>

Author's website:

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

Skype with the author:

<http://skypeanauthor.wetpaint.com/page/Mahtab+Narsimhan>

Anticipation Guide

<http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/DE/pd/instr/strats/anticguide/index.htm>

Anticipation Guide template resource

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/guided-comprehension-previewing-using-226.html>

Reading Comprehension Templates

<http://staff.harrisonburg.k12.va.us/~cfoster/reading/ReadingTemplates.html>

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