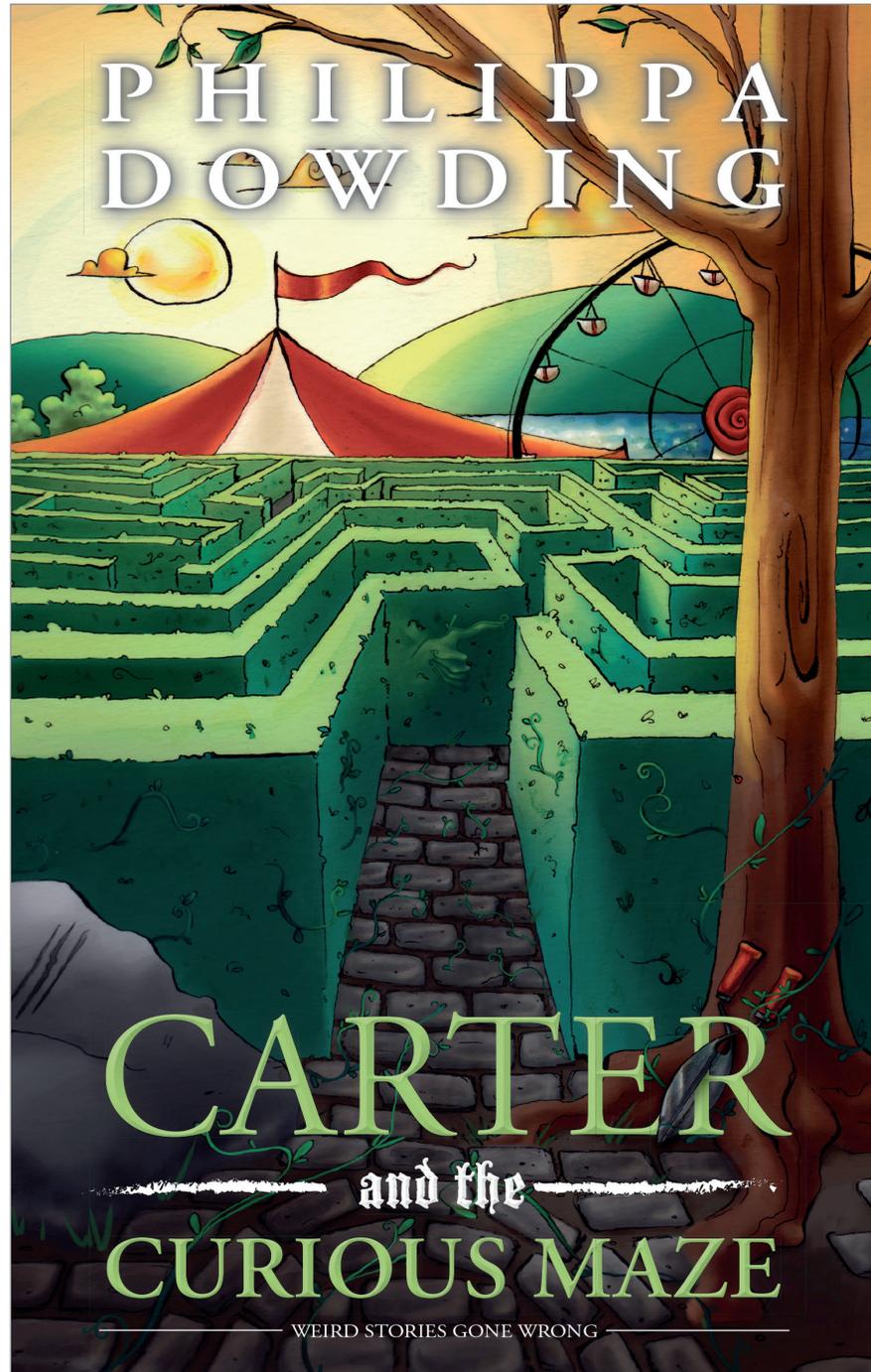


# TEACHERS' GUIDE



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ISBN: 9781459743694



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# I. OVERVIEW

## A NOTE TO TEACHERS

*Carter and the Curious Maze* is the third in a series, *Weird Stories Gone Wrong*, by author Philippa Dowding. In this story, Carter enters a maze at a local fair and finds himself time travelling to a number of destinations: The Grand Fair of 1903 where, in 1813, the Grand Magazine exploded in what was the largest man-made explosion the world had experienced until that time; and a fort where the French traded with Native hunters from 1750–1759. Time travel stories are one interesting way of engaging students in the study of history in that the protagonists are physically placed in the past, which happens with Carter in this novel. Carter’s time travel takes place through a maze, and this offers opportunities for students to learn about mazes in a variety of ways.

In this resource, several activities are suggested as possibilities for working with the novel in grades three, four, and five. It would make a great small group or whole class novel study. The resource has been developed in such a way that teachers can choose the activities that they believe will enhance their own students’ learning. Many of the suggested activities can be modified depending on the level of the students, their learning abilities and needs, and the depth of exploration chosen by the teacher.

## BOOK SUMMARY

The fair is dull, dull, dull, and nothing interesting will ever happen to Carter again...That is, until Carter discovers the curious maze. Nothing interesting has ever happened here in the history of the world, he thinks. But the maze has some strange secrets, and the spot Carter stands upon has seen some very exciting events over the centuries.

Once Carter enters the maze, odd people begin to appear. First he meets Mr. Green, the mysterious, creepy maze-keeper, then a leaf-covered girl, a lost little boy in old-fashioned clothes, a wounded British soldier, and finally an eighteenth century Native boy who seems very authentic, indeed.

When Carter eventually escapes the curious maze, the fair is all wrong. There are too many horses, ladies in bonnets, and what’s a freak show doing there? Carter begins his travels through time, and his dull afternoon is about to get very interesting.

## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Philippa Dowding is an award-winning copywriter, poet, and children’s author. Her books have been nominated for the Diamond Willow, Hackmatack, Silver Birch, and Red Maple awards. Her third book, *The Gargoyle at the Gates*, was named a White Raven Book by the International Youth Library in Munich. Philippa lives in Toronto.

## II. SETTING THE PURPOSE: PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Prior to reading, it is beneficial to predict what might happen in the story. The process of prediction can engage the reader throughout the reading of the text, but especially at the beginning it can help to capture the interest of the reader in proceeding with the story. What follows are some possibilities for prediction, and for helping to set a purpose for reading as students embark on a study of *Carter and the Curious Maze*. The questions may be addressed as whole class discussions, small group discussions, or individual work.

1. What do you think the book will be about when you read the title *Carter and the Curious Maze*?
2. Examine the illustration on the front cover. What do you see? What does this illustration tell you? When you look at this illustration, what do you think the book will be about?
3. On pages 7, 8, and 9 of the book, there is a prologue (titled This Part Is (Mostly) True.) What do you think a prologue is? Read the prologue aloud, and, after reading, discuss again what you think the story will be about.
4. Read the back cover. What do you learn here to confirm or change what you thought after you read the prologue?
5. Based on what you have learned from the title, the illustration, the back cover, and the prologue, begin a KWL Chart to document your expectations, questions, and predictions about the book.

K WHAT I KNOW	W WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW	L WHAT I LEARNED

At this time, students complete only the first two columns of the chart. Let students know they will be returning to the chart at the end of the study to see if their questions were answered, their expectations were met, or their predictions were correct. Students should have an opportunity to share their information orally once it is collected. This activity can be worked on by the class as a whole, by small groups, or by individuals. If worked on individually or in small groups, there should be plans for sharing with the larger group. Students might want to know, for example, who was the man who grew the maze, and what part does he play in the story? What, exactly, is a maze? Was it really true that green leaves grew out of his thumb? Why did people see strange things in the maze? Did children really go into the maze and not come out again? Students may have many questions based on the information obtained from the front and back covers of the book and the prologue, and this is a good time and place to document them.

# III. EXPLORING THE TEXT

## CHAPTER QUESTIONS

Many incidents occurred throughout the short time Carter was trapped in the maze. The questions that follow have been developed to assist the reader in situating and organizing these happenings. The questions are intended for this purpose, only and not to elicit higher order thinking or responses. Other activities in this guide focus on the possibilities of higher order thinking and responses.

### Prologue (This Part Is (Mostly) True)

- Who are the characters mentioned in the prologue?
- If any of these characters have unique features, what are they?
- What was unique or different about the garden maze mentioned in the prologue?

### Chapters One to Three

- As the story opens, Carter is at a fair with his sister. What word best describes his reaction to the fair?
- What was Sydney wearing, and where did she get it?
- What was beside Carter and Sydney as they ate their ice cream cones?
- Who did Carter see watching him just as he was ready to leave the fair?
- What was the most intriguing activity Carter noticed?
- Who did Carter meet as he entered the maze?
- What was odd or different about this person?
- Who was Carter trying to follow as he entered the maze?
- What was different about the girl Carter saw as he entered the maze?
- What did Mr. Green grab just as Carter was about to pick it up?
- What closed in on Carter when he began to follow Mr. Green?

### Chapters Four to Six

- Who was the person Carter first met when he got trapped in the maze?
- Why couldn't Carter call his mom for help?
- Later in the chapter, Carter comes upon a frightening activity. Describe what he saw.
- When Carter described what he had seen to Mr. Green, what was Mr. Green's response?
- As Carter continued to walk, what other character did he see?
- What did she whisper to him?

- As Carter ran away, who did he notice running beside him?
- When the boy pushed Carter out of the maze, what did he see spinning around and around?

### **Chapters Seven to Nine**

- What were the children on the carousel wearing?
- What were some of the activities Carter noticed at the Grand Fair?
- How were the people dressed?
- In what year did Carter find himself?
- Why wouldn't anyone talk to Carter?
- What did Carter offer to do for Arthur?
- Describe some of the sights the boys saw as they tried to find Mr. Green.
- Who helped them with the direction toward Mr. Green?

### **Chapters Ten to Twelve**

- What did Carter see at the beginning of Chapter Ten that made him think he was in the right place?
- But where were they in time at this point?
- What happened in front of the boys as they watched and listened?
- How did the boys escape from the battlefield?
- When Carter and Arthur woke up, what did they see coming toward them?

### **Chapters Thirteen to Fifteen**

- How did they escape this time? Who helped them?
- What did they find by following the canoe?
- Who helped them find the maze this time?
- This time, when they entered the maze, who was waiting for them?
- Why had the Native boy been able to help them?
- Why did Mr. Green choose Carter for the maze?
- When Carter saw Creepy Leaf Girl again, what was she trying to tell him with her eyes?
- What was Creepy Leaf Girl's real name?
- Why did Carter refuse to answer Mr. Green's questions?
- What happened when Carter threw the shears to Clarissa?

### **Chapters Sixteen to Seventeen**

- What did Clarissa say were the two ways children could get out of the maze?
- How did Carter find his way out of the curious maze?
- Who did Carter find as soon as he got out of the maze?

- How long had Carter been away from his sister?
- What happened to Mr. Green and the curious maze while Carter was watching?

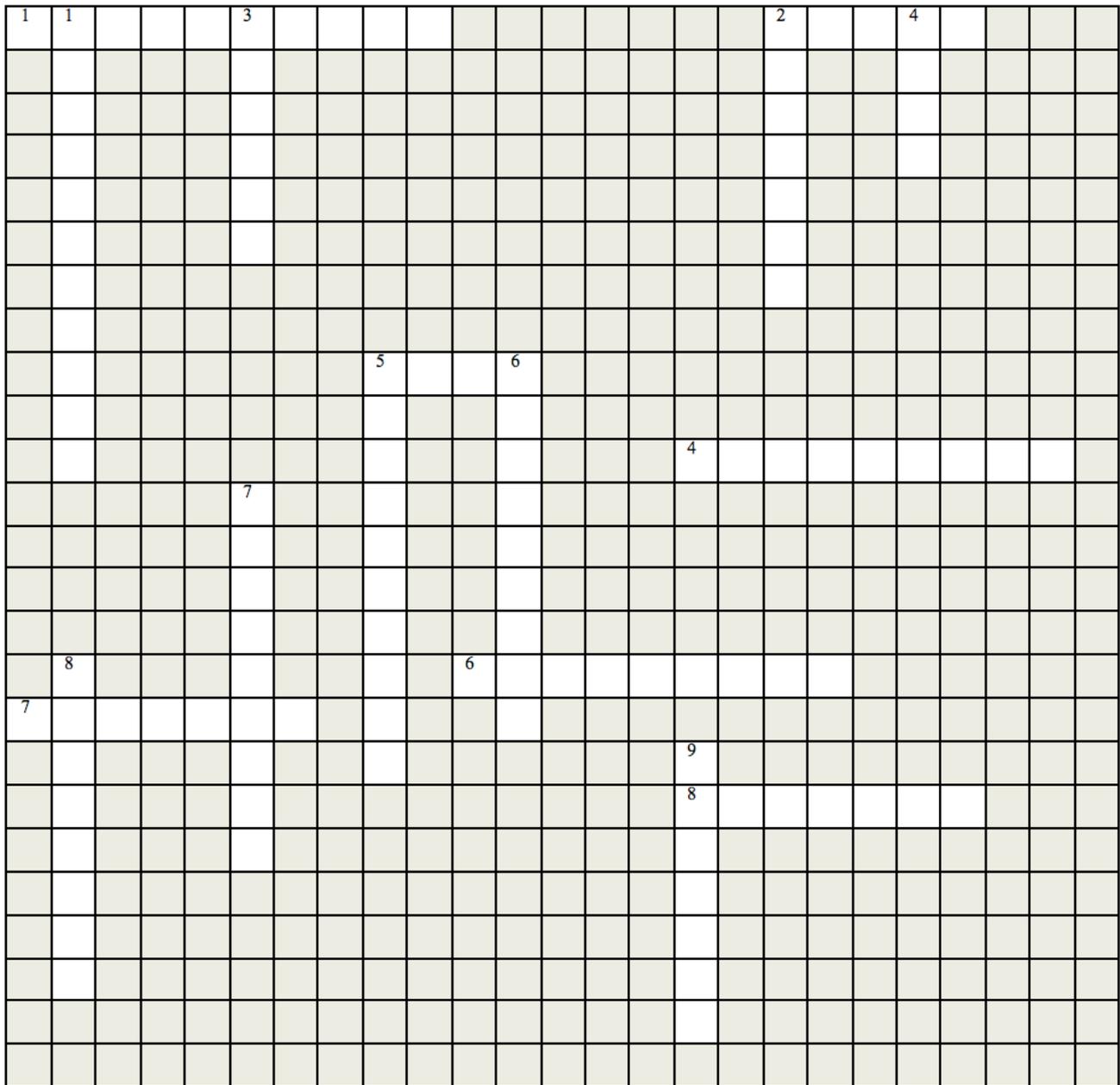
### **Epilogue (This Part Is (Also) Mostly True)**

- What does the author say about time travel?
- When Carter grew up, what was his life like?
- What were two strange things about Carter as a grown up?

# VOCABULARY

## Crossword Puzzle

This crossword puzzle highlights several words used in *Carter and the Curious Maze*. The puzzle provides an opportunity to study the context and meaning of these words. Each clue is followed by a number in parentheses. This number is the page where the word is found in the novel. Students should check out the word in its context (a small group of two working together would be good for this assignment) and then add it to the puzzle.



## CLUES

### Across

1. tools, utensils or other pieces of equipment (p. 8)
2. a supernatural power to inflict harm or punishment on something (p. 8)
4. unable to be seen, not visible to the eye (p. 63)
5. a network of paths and hedges designed as a puzzle through which one has to find a way (p. 8)
6. with a spell cast upon (p. 8)
7. a young tree, especially one with a slender trunk (p. 43)
8. belonging to the very distant past (p. 20)

### Down

1. appear in bodily form (p. 26)
2. laughed or talked in a shrill manner (p. 21)
3. the dung of livestock or poultry (p. 68)
4. reasonable; showing sound sense (p. 41)
5. the action or practice of thinking, pondering, or contemplating (p. 20)
6. under a spell; bewitched; magical (p. 8)
7. genuine; real (p. 52)
8. a merry-go-round (p. 51)
9. a blade that can be attached to a rifle for stabbing in close combat (p. 37)

### Make Your Own Crossword Puzzle

Here is another way of working with words in this novel. It would be a good idea to do the previous puzzle prior to giving this activity a try. Students may also need some instruction on crossword puzzles and how they work. This activity would be a good one to try with a partner.

## Steps to follow for making a Crossword Puzzle

1. Make a 25 X 25 grid in Word.
2. Print 3 copies of the grid.
3. On one copy, print each word, putting one letter in each square.
4. Cut out these words.
5. Using the cut-out words and the second grid copy, place the words on the grid, such that crosswords are used; in other words, that letters overlap appropriately. This may take some juggling. Once you have decided, these may be taped or glued to the second grid.
6. In pencil, print the words on the third grid, being careful to put the letters in the right spaces.
7. Add numbers, starting at the top left corner. Make sure each word, across and down, starts with a number.
8. On the third copy of the grid (the one with the words in pencil) shade all the squares that will NOT be used.
9. Erase the words that have been printed in pencil, being careful to leave the numbers in place and unerased.
10. Below the grid, arrange the words in order as to “across” and “down”, and in number order, to form a “CLUES” section.
11. Look up a definition for each word and include it in the “CLUES” section beside the correct word. Continue to work in pencil!
12. Erase the words and leave the definitions ready for your partner.

Your crossword is now ready to trade with and challenge a classmate.

Some words from the novel that could work for this activity:

hallucinations (p. 74)

mayhem (p. 87)

despair (p. 99)

meandered (p. 109)

creaked (p. 113)

snout (p. 79)

prodding (p. 90)

fretted (p. 101)

dawdled (p. 109)

intend (p. 121)

solemnly (p. 87)

eerie (p. 91)

engrossed (p. 104)

peered (p. 112)

astound (p. 129)

Another approach would be to invite the students to choose their own words from the novel to make the puzzle.

## CONTEXT CLUES

Learning the meaning of a word from its context (the examination of the parts of the sentence or sentences surrounding the word) is one way to determine meaning. Below are ten sentences from *Carter and the Curious Maze*. The page number on which each appears is in parentheses following the sentence. Read each sentence and then, using the context of the underlined word, make an educated guess about the meaning of the word. Following completion of the exercise, discuss as a class, using a dictionary as required to verify.

1. "The old man grinned, and Carter thought the ancient face was going to crack like tree bark." (p. 20)

ancient means \_\_\_\_\_

2. "I'm not scared! No one can just materialize out of thin air, right?" (p. 26)

materialize means \_\_\_\_\_

3. "Adults played weird games sometimes, like paintball and war re-enactments. Maybe there was a perfectly sane explanation for the soldier." (p. 41)

sane means \_\_\_\_\_

4. "No one could see him except maybe horses; he knew that now, too. He was invisible." (p. 63)

invisible means \_\_\_\_\_

5. "We have to choose who to follow...and I choose Sydney and your mom. Agreed?" The little boy solemnly nodded. (p. 87)

solemnly means \_\_\_\_\_

6. "They slid down the hill into the thick smoke and mayhem." (p. 87)

mayhem means \_\_\_\_\_

7. "Come on, Sleepyhead, time to wake up," Carter said gently, prodding the little boy. (p. 90)

prodding means \_\_\_\_\_

8. "The canoe had disappeared. Carter watched it vanish with despair." (p. 99)

despair means \_\_\_\_\_

9. "Carter had been so engrossed in watching the Natives and the traders, he'd almost forgotten about the boy." (p. 104)

engrossed means \_\_\_\_\_

10. "You've finally found me. It took you long enough, much longer than most children. You must have dawdled." (p. 109)

dawdled means \_\_\_\_\_

# PLOT

Using a graphic organizer can help students' comprehension of a story. The following graphic organizer could be used at various points throughout the reading to help students organize their learning and understanding. This would be a good whole class activity to provide a visual reminder as the story progresses.

Characters: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Problem: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Events:

- Beginning: \_\_\_\_\_
- Into the Maze: \_\_\_\_\_
- Time Travel #1: \_\_\_\_\_
- Time Travel #2: \_\_\_\_\_
- Time Travel #3: \_\_\_\_\_
- Time Travel #4: \_\_\_\_\_
- Out of the Maze: \_\_\_\_\_

Resolution (Conclusion): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

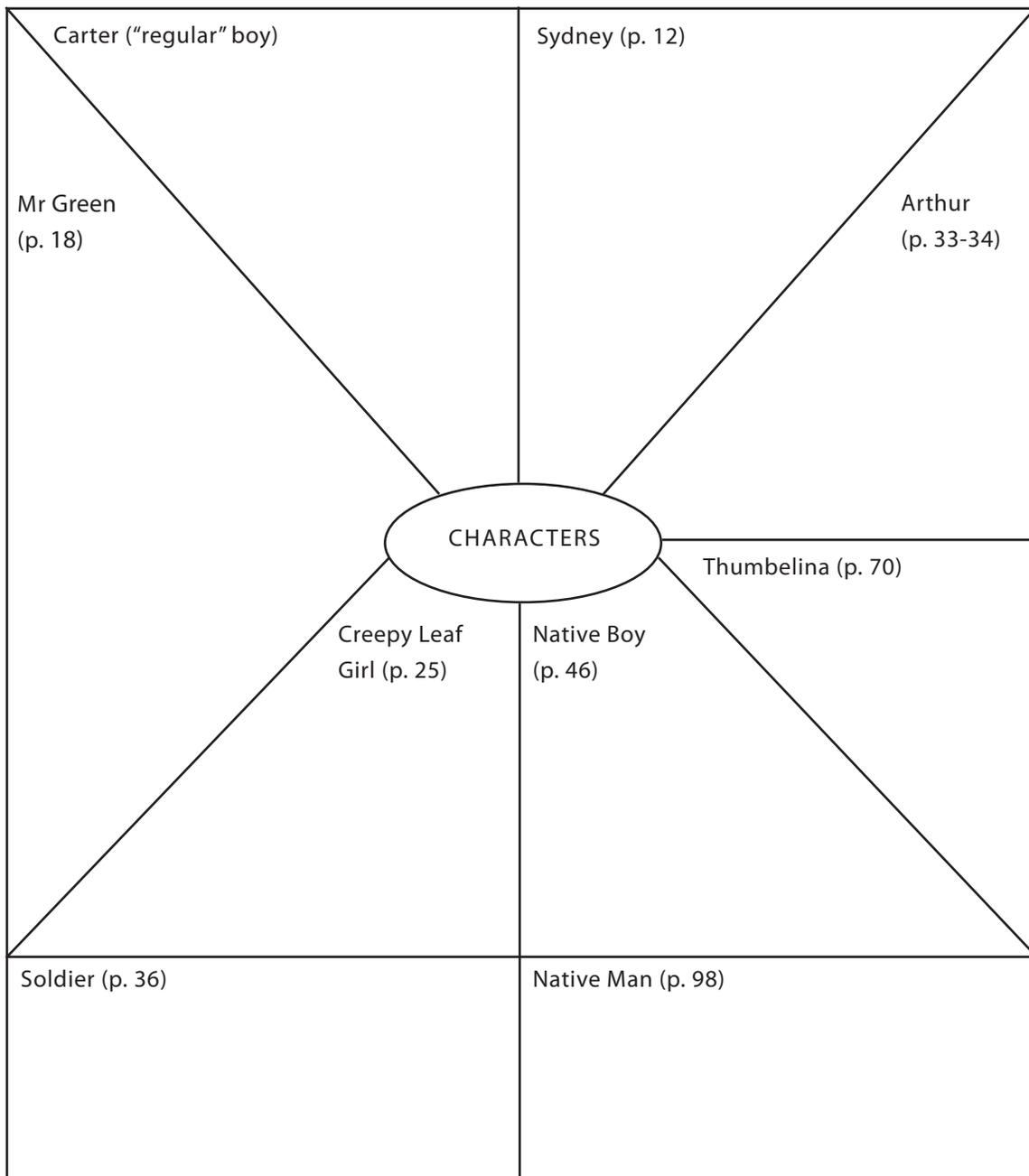
Having completed a graphic organizer for the plot of *Carter and the Curious Maze*, students could be invited to plan their own time travel story, using the same format to organize their story. Once their story is planned, they could go ahead and write it.

# CHARACTER

The characters in this novel are particularly interesting, and students' study will be enhanced by exploring them in a variety of ways.

## Character Sketches/Drawings

To capture the vivid descriptions of the characters, invite students to draw each of them on one page, at the time they are described by the author. When complete, they will have good visuals of the main characters.

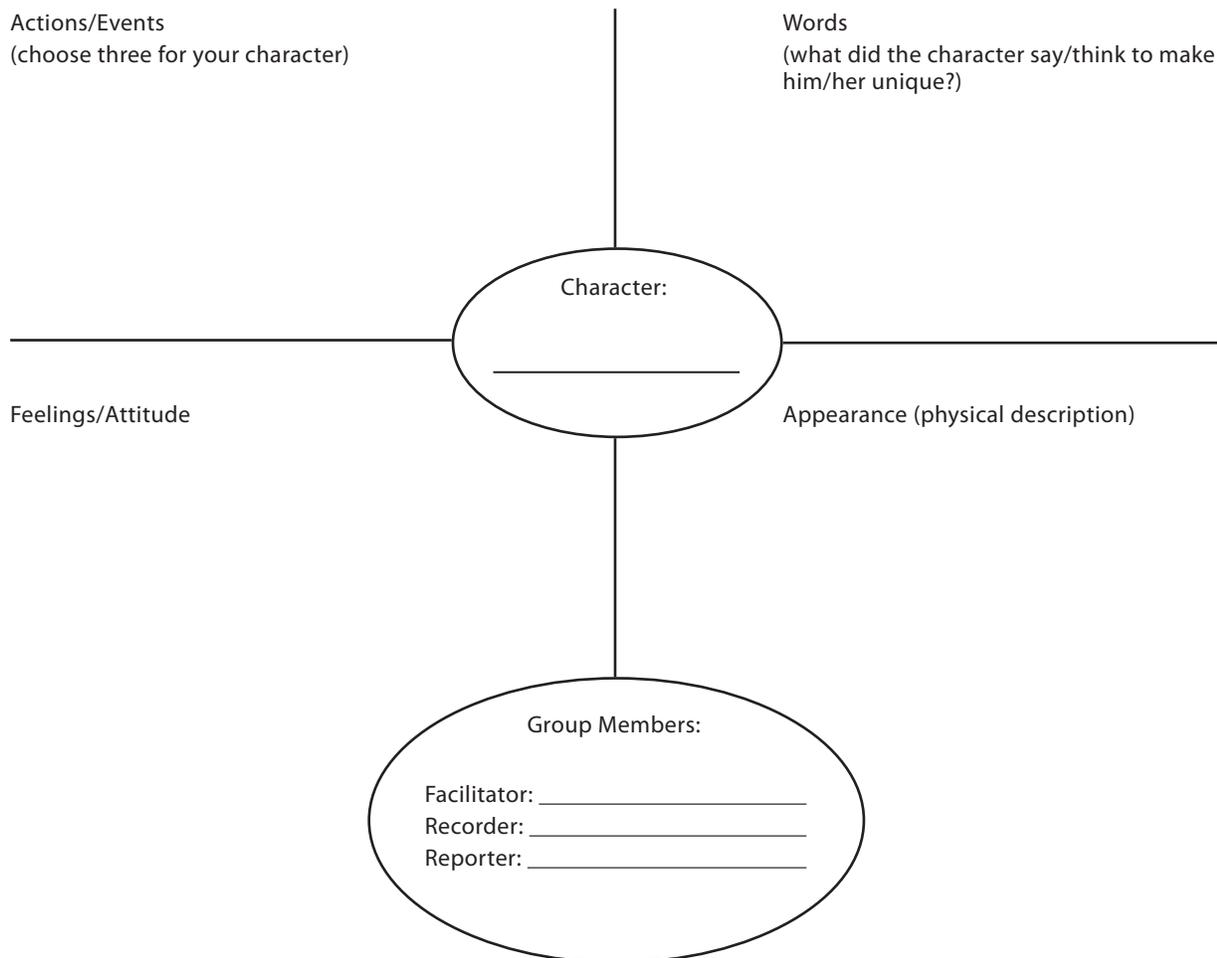


## Character Web

In this activity, students are divided into groups of three. For each group, a facilitator, a recorder, and a reporter are assigned. The facilitator's job is to make sure the group stays on topic and to keep the discussion going; the recorder's job is to document the discussion as it is occurring; the reporter's job is to report back to the large group when requested. All members are responsible for the research and for participating in the discussions in addition to their specific roles.

Each group is assigned a character from the story: Carter, Sydney, Mr. Green, or Creepy Leaf Girl (Clarissa.) It is quite possible that more than one group will be studying a character.

The assignment: Discuss "your" character, record information on the following template, and then present the information to the large group.



## Character Interview

In groups of two, students choose one of the following characters: Carter, Sydney, Mr. Green, or Clarissa (Creepy Leaf Girl.) The pair works together to develop ten questions they would like to ask this character. The group also writes the answers they think this character would give. All of this is to be based upon what they know about the character, and the way the character acts in the story.

When the questions and answers have been developed, the group turns them into an interview. One group member is the interviewer and the other group member is the character. The completed interview is presented to the class (to add colour to this, students may wish to add some type of costuming) and the written portion is submitted to the teacher. Teachers may choose to assess students on the process of working in a group, the authenticity of the questions and answers, and the effectiveness of the oral presentation.

## Character Poetry

Following instruction, students use poetry to demonstrate their understanding of the characters, and they use good descriptive words and phrases to aid in this demonstration. Students can be asked to present this poetry in an artistically pleasing fashion, and may illustrate by drawing, shading, bordering, or computer enhancing.

Some possible types of poetry include:

### Acrostic Poetry

A poem about a particular person, the acrostic poem has the poet write the name of the person in a vertical fashion. A word, phrase, or sentence (depending on the level of complexity desired) beginning with each letter is written next to the letter.

e.g.     Climbs the rock to try to escape the bear  
           Always likes an adventure — until now!  
           Ready to find his way out of the maze.  
           Tries very hard to help little Arthur.  
           Eager to follow her voice to find sister Sydney.  
           Rejoices when he is finally able to leave the maze.

### Cinquain Poetry

This is a five-line poem that does not rhyme. The first line contains a subject, the second line contains two descriptive words (adjectives), the third line contains three action words (verbs), the fourth line contains a phrase or sentence describing the subject, and the fifth line contains a word that means something similar to the subject.

e.g.     Creepy Leaf Girl  
           green, frightened,  
           running, making motions, seeking help,  
           She wants to escape the maze  
           Clarissa

# SETTING

## Diorama Project

Invite students to choose one of the “time zones” travelled to by Carter and to make a diorama (mini-world or entire landscape in a box) of this place. It will be important to include the grass, lake, and big rock beside the water that appeared in every part of Carter’s time travel.

Diorama Possibilities:

- the curious maze
- the war scene, p. 36–37
- the Grand Fair, p. 54–56
- the Freak Show, p. 70–71
- the war scene, p. 77–82
- the bear, p. 93–98
- the fort, p. 101–106

## Sketch Journal

Another possibility for helping students explore the various settings in *Carter and the Curious Maze* is to have them make a sketch journal as they read. This would also be a good opportunity to teach students a little about pencil sketching. Below are some possibilities for sketching.

- “The water lay perfectly still against the pebbles on the shore. It looked pretty, but the water smelled like goose poop, which Carter had never noticed before. A few sailboats bobbed in the lake, but there was no wind. It was too hot and still, even for the sailboats. Carter looked up at the huge grey rock beside them. It stood above his head, above his arms, stretched out. It looked very old and was covered with moss and deep scratches near the top. He finished his ice cream and studied the huge rock.” (p. 13)
- “The Double Death-Defying roller coaster rattled overhead, filled with shrieking people. The Skull-N-Bonz Pirate Ship swung from side-to-side, filled with more loud fair-goers. Riders screamed on the monster Loop-The-Loop or from inside the Zippedy Spinner boxes as they spun in circles.” (p. 16)
- “Instead there was a wooden carousel, a small Ferris wheel, a tiny roller coaster, and something that looked like zip-lining with all the fun taken out.” (p. 54)
- “He suddenly noticed a banner that hung near the entrance to the midway: Welcome to the Grand Fair, 1903.” (p. 58)
- “They skidded to a halt in a crowd of people staring at a man in front of a cage. He wore a leopard skin robe. And he was barking. Carter did a double take. Other than the barking and the leopard skin robe, the man looked totally normal and possibly a little bored. The sign attached to his cage said ‘The Wild Man of Borneo.’” (p. 70)

- “This way,” Carter whispered. The boys hurried past a tiny lady sitting on a stool, holding a small guitar. The woman smiled. The sign beside her chair said, “Meet Thumbelina, the world’s smallest mother.” (p. 70)
- “Carter watched closely as a Native man dropped a bundle of furs on the long wooden table. A French man measured the height of the bundle with a wooden stick and then passed one of the dark red blankets and a bag of silver beads back to him.” (p. 104)
- “The late afternoon sun shone on the midway, lighting up the huge roller coasters and Ferris wheels in the distance. People sat on the picnic benches, eating an early dinner, or ice cream. In cones.” (p. 127)

# IV. RESPONDING TO AND REFLECTING ON THE TEXT

## DISCUSSION AND INDIVIDUAL WRITTEN RESPONSE

These questions encourage students to go beyond the retelling of events in the story and to demonstrate higher levels of thinking about what they have read.

A helpful process for encouraging student thinking and writing is for whole class discussions to occur, followed by discussions in small groups of two, followed by the writing of a response. Sometimes it is also helpful to give students a sentence starter to begin their response. This can help students decide how to frame their writing. The discussion can help them with ideas as to where to go with their writing.

Students should be asked to write a four to six sentence response to the following. When the responses are completed, they might be read aloud to the class.

- On p. 28, Mr. Green says, “Oh, there’s no trick to it, Carter. It’s really quite simple: just keep walking. Every maze is a journey. You just have to choose the right path.” How did Carter feel when Mr. Green said this? How do you think you would feel if you were in Carter’s situation? Discuss.
- On p. 35, we read that Carter wishes he had a cell phone with him so he could call his mom. He did not have one as his mom would not allow it until he was thirteen years old. What do you think about his mom’s cell phone policy? Do you have a cell phone with you at all times? What rules guide your cell phone use? Talk about home rules and school rules.
- In this story Carter gets lost in a maze. Have you ever been in a maze? Did you get lost, or did you think you might get lost? What are your thoughts about mazes? Do you like them or not? Why?
- *Carter and the Curious Maze* contains several episodes of time travel. What are your thoughts about time travel in a story? Do you like reading about travel? Why or why not? Are there particular things you like about time travel stories? What did you learn about the different times to which Carter travelled?
- On p. 52, we read that “Carter was a reasonable boy, trying to make sense of the situation.” Carter could not, however, make sense of the situation. Have you ever been in a situation where, like Carter, you were trying to make sense of a situation but had difficulty? Describe your situation and what you did in the end to make sense of it. If you have not had to face a situation like this, try to imagine one and write about that.
- Throughout his journey in the maze, Carter kept seeing and hearing “snippets” of his sister Sydney, but each time she would vanish when he tried to find her. Why do you think this kept happening to Carter?
- In each of the time periods Carter visited, he always noticed that he could see the lake and the big grey rock. What did you think when you read this each time? Why do you think the author included this detail throughout the story?
- Carter was very kind and caring toward the little boy, Arthur. He made sure Arthur was as safe as possible in each adventure. Has some older child shown kindness and caring toward you? In what ways? Describe how you have shown kindness and caring toward someone younger than you.

- On p. 110, Mr. Green says that, because the Native boy’s people had lived in the spot long before the maze arrived, the maze held no power over him. This fact annoyed Mr. Green. Why do you think Mr. Green was annoyed by this? Do you believe he was correct in thinking this way? Why or why not?
- Carter started out by thinking pretty much everything at the fair was boring or dull. How did his thinking change by the end of the story, and why?
- Mr. Green chose bored children for the maze. Why do you think he did this? Do you think you would have been chosen for the maze? Why or why not?

## COMPLETION OF KWL CHART

Return to the KWL Chart that was partially completed at the beginning of reading the book. Ask students to complete the “What I Learned” (“L” part) of the chart. This can be done individually, in small groups, or by the class as a whole. Regardless, the information should be shared by the larger group to form an effective conclusion to the study. Completing this chart helps students articulate their new learning and what they have gained from reading the book. The “L” part of the chart may contain new learning not previously wondered about in addition to questions answered.

<b>K</b> WHAT I KNOW	<b>W</b> WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW	<b>L</b> WHAT I LEARNED

# V. EXTENDING THE TEXT

This novel presents a number of potential student interests, and a number of possibilities for developing and extending these ideas. Teachers might use the topics to extend the work in some of the following curriculum-related ways.

## RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES

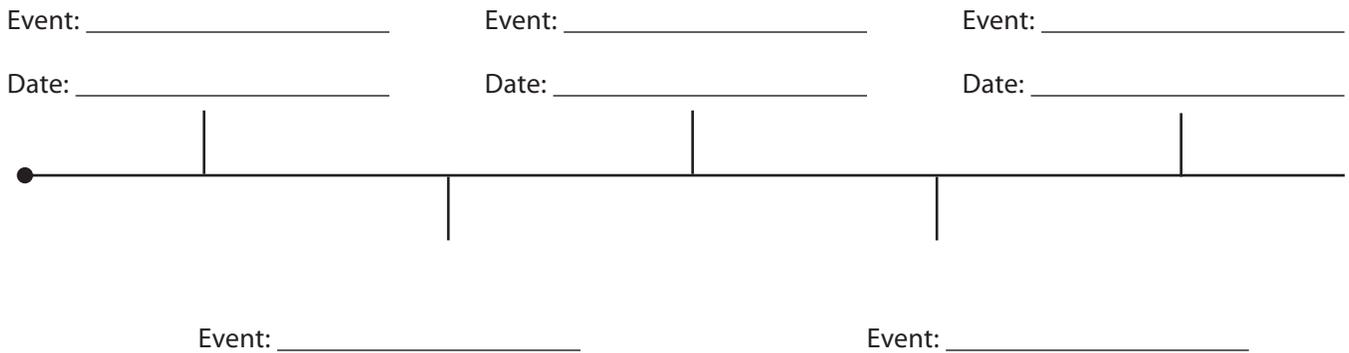
Each of the following topics or activities is mentioned in the novel. Choose one. Research this topic or activity on the Internet. Share your research results through the development of a poster that includes ten facts about the topic and an illustration, collage, traditional report, or presentation using software.

- time travel
- mazes
- The Grand Fair of 1903
- The Grand Magazine Explosion, 1813
- Fur Trading Fort, 1750-1759

## TIMELINE

This story refers to several different times. Students can make a timeline to help develop visual knowledge of how these times are related to the present and to each other.

Here is an example of how this might look:



## SOME POSSIBLE CULMINATING ACTIVITIES

- Dress as your favorite character from the story.
- Have a “making a maze” contest, where each student makes their own maze on paper and challenges a partner to see who can complete theirs first.
- Eat some “carnival food,” e.g. tiny donuts, cotton candy, or McLaren’s Imperial Cheese as mentioned in the book.
- Visit a maze in your vicinity as a class field trip.