



Story Summary

In Bronze-Age Crete, before horses were common on the island, potter's-daughter Clio continues to raise and train them even though an accident has left her unable to ride. After a series of difficult years in the community, the threat of raiders prompts the town's ruling Lady to demand the sacrifice of a maiden between ages twelve and fourteen, who will be selected at the spring equinox. Certain that she will be named the sacrifice, Clio struggles to go on with the ordinary activities of making pots and preparing the town's defenses. She finds refuge in her horses and a new friendship with younger girl Mika, who takes to riding as naturally as Clio did. Drawing on a spiritual connection with her grandmother Leira, Clio learns to believe that she has the power of choosing her path, and that she, Mika, and the horses may hold the key to saving the town without loss of life.

Award-winning author **Wendy Orr** was born in Edmonton, Alberta. The daughter of an Air Force pilot, she has since lived around the world, including several years in Colorado, in France, and England where she studied Occupational Therapy. After graduation, Wendy settled in Australia, but returns home yearly to visit her family. Wendy's many books for children have been published in 27 countries and won awards around the world. Prominent among them is *Nim's Island*, which was made into the 2008 film of the same name; a 2013 sequel, *Return to Nim's Island*, was loosely based on Orr's book *Nim at Sea*.

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BISAC Codes

JUV016090 JUVENILE FICTION / Historical / Prehistory

JUV002130 JUVENILE FICTION / Animals / Horses

JUV039150 JUVENILE FICTION / Disabilities & Special Needs

JUV022020 JUVENILE FICTION / Legends, Myths, Fables / Greek & Roman

BOOK CLUBS

This guide has been developed for use in classroom book clubs/literature circles. Book clubs support and develop the love of reading as well as help students build comprehension and support the development of collaborative learning and critical thinking.

In book clubs, students:

- meet in small groups (4–8) to discuss a book they are reading
- take turns assuming a leadership role within the group
- meet regularly and set the pace for their reading
- take ownership for their learning by:
 - selecting the book they will read (usually from a predetermined list provided by the teacher)
 - determine the pace of the reading
 - prepare for and run their discussions

Prior to beginning with book clubs, teachers:

- take time to develop and nurture whole-class discussions about books while modeling the skills and behaviors needed to collaborate and work together as a book club
- provide guidance, modeling, and support
- become familiar with all texts prior to making them available to students

During book club discussions, teachers:

- develop a schedule for book clubs ensuring they provide time for reading and discussion
- provide mini-lessons for any needs that may arise
- monitor through observation and conferring as well as supporting student self-assessment

Key elements:

- Groups meet on a regular basis, with time provided in class to read and discuss their book
- Students use a “reader’s notebook” to write notes, comments, insights, and questions while they read
- Students bring their reader’s notebook to each meeting to support their discussion
- Discussion topics may emerge from the students as they read; however, the teacher provides discussion topics and provocations to help students engage in rich discussions (suggestions are provided in this guide)
- Group meetings are collaborative, with each group developing a set of norms for their group
- The teacher serves as facilitator
- Assessment is grounded in teacher observation, student conversations, and student self-assessment
- Book clubs promote a love of reading

Thinking about Assessment...

This Discussion Guide offers a range of prompts, tasks, and provocations to support Book Club discussions. While using this guide in the classroom, teachers have a number of opportunities to use observation, conversation, and products to assess student thinking and learning. The tasks and prompts offered in this guide are designed to support discussion, sharing, and student thinking while providing an opportunity for students to demonstrate comprehension, extension of thinking, and critical literacy. Assessment can include self-assessment, peer assessment, conversations with students through teacher/student conferences, group discussions, and products created by the students.

For the teacher and student to have a clear, common understanding of the expectations and criteria to achieve success while reading the novels, educators develop learning goals based on curriculum expectations and share them with the students in language they can understand. Then together, the educator and students co-create criteria to make the path to success visible and clear.

These success criteria are posted in the classroom, are visible to all students, and may be revised and edited based on the learning and understanding of the students.

As the Book Club meetings are collaborative and begin with the groups developing a set of norms for their group, it is suggested that all groups open each meeting with a reflection of the previous discussion. These reflections can highlight what went well during the discussions, what needs to improve in these discussions, and considerations for the current discussion.

Discussion Guide:

This discussion guide will offer a variety of tasks, discussion prompts, and questions to provoke thinking and deepen comprehension before, during, and after the reading of the novel. These are suggestions only and it is certainly not necessary to complete the entire list of suggested activities/questions. Educators are encouraged to make choices based on the strengths, needs, and interests of the students.

Highlighted Curriculum Expectations

Ontario Ministry of Education Language Arts Curriculum K–8

Oral Communication

- 2.4 Demonstrating Understanding
- 1.5 Making Inferences/Interpreting Texts
- 1.6 Extending Understanding

Reading for Meaning

- 1.4 Demonstrating Understanding
- 1.5 Making Inferences / Interpreting Texts
- 1.6 Extending Understanding
- 1.7 Analyzing Texts
- 1.8 Responding and Evaluating Texts

Reading: Understanding Form and Style

- 2.3 Text Features
- 2.4 Elements of Style

Before Reading

1. This story takes place during the Bronze Age in what is now known as the island of Crete. Conduct research in your school library and using online resources (recommended by your teacher) to learn all you can about the Bronze Age. Each member of the group is encouraged to explore and learn about one area of interest and then share their learning with the entire group. Some possible topics to consider are family structures, religion, travel/transportation, the arts, business/commerce, education, gender roles, and community/social structures. Refer to the author's note at the beginning of the novel to help you begin your research. Summarize your learning in your reader's notebook. You may summarize in point form, in a short paragraph, or using a graphic organizer or graphic text. Share your learning with your group. As everyone shares, you will all develop an understanding of this time in history.
2. Review the cover of the book, the map of Gournia that is included in the front of the book, and the statement beside the map: "If she had stayed to load the kiln as she should have, she'd never have seen the ship. Mama said the ship would still have been there, so everything had to happen the way it did. But that's not true. Clio saw it and the world changed." What do you notice? What do you wonder? Record your thinking in your reader's notebook and share with a partner.
3. You will notice that this book takes place in the same world as two of Wendy Orr's previous books *Dragonfly Song* and *Swallow's Dance*. Read about these previous titles by Wendy Orr to help you prepare for reading this book.



During Reading

Chapters 1–9

1. At the end of chapter one Clio is faced with a dilemma, and she decides to lie to her mother. Do you feel she did the right thing? Why or why not? Discuss with your group.
2. At the beginning of chapter two, the author uses the senses to help us imagine and visualize the book's setting. Use a quick draw or sketchnotes to help you begin to capture what you are visualizing.
3. On page 46 of the text, Clio reflects on how her grandmother Leira treated slaves. This passage also reveals how slaves are treated in this society. How did you feel as you read this? Discuss with a partner.
4. By chapter six, you will have noticed that Clio and Selena (her mother) have a relationship that sometimes seems tense. At one point Clio thinks that Matti is the only bridge between them. Do you agree with Clio? What do you think of the relationship between Clio and Selena?
5. You will notice as you read these first few chapters that the author has chosen to write this book using both prose and poetry. Do you think this enhances your experience as a reader? Explain your thinking. Why do you think the author chose this specific style? Discuss with your group.
6. In these early chapters we learn a great deal about societal roles and traditions. What are you noticing about the roles of mothers, fathers, and grandmothers? What are you noticing about social classes? What are you noticing about work? What are you noticing about the role of females and girls? Discuss with your group.
7. In these early chapters you learn about Clio and her friends and family. Create a web, or other graphic organizer, that shows the connection between Clio and all the other characters introduced in these first few chapters of the book. Include everyone's name and their relationship to Clio. Share your graphic representation with a partner. What are you noticing about

Clio's bond/relationships with others? What do you wonder?

8. In the early chapters we begin to develop an understanding of Clio's character. What are some of Clio's character traits? List them in your reader's notebook and provide evidence from the text for each trait. Share your thinking with your group.
9. As you read, you will learn about some important traditions and rituals in this community. What have you learned about: work, social structure/hierarchy, and faith/beliefs and religion? Record your thinking and share with your group.
10. A great deal takes place in these early chapters. Use the 3Rs framework to help you summarize, reflect on, and relate to what you have been reading thus far.
11. You may use the following link to help you use the 3R's framework (retell, relate, reflect). <http://www.edugains.ca/resourcesDI/TeachingLearningExamples/COOP/CooperativeEducationExperientialLearning3RsAppendix.pdf>

Chapters 9–15

1. Clio and Mika are developing a bond by the end of chapter 9. How would you describe their relationship? How do you think Clio feels about Mika? How do you think Mika feels about Clio? Record your ideas in your reader's notebook. Give evidence from the text to support your thinking.
2. On page 165 Clio “drops her suddenly heavy praying hands; she can hardly remember what she's just said, as if she's just woken from a dream”. What are you noticing about Clio's feelings and her thinking in this chapter? Discuss with your group.
3. On page 186, Clio again has a striking realization about Hella. What does she realize? Why is this important to Clio? How does she know? Discuss with your group.
4. On page 189 Clio and Sita have a conversation that helps Clio learn more about her world and her society. Discuss this conversation and what is revealed

about Clio's world. Is this similar or different from our own society? Explain your thinking. Discuss with your group.

5. What are some of the things Clio has learned between chapters 9 to 13? Consider both the practical skills she has learned and the life lessons she has absorbed. What has she learned about herself? How do you think she is changing and developing? Record your thinking in your reader's notebook while you read and then share with your group.
6. Clio is emerging as a strong person and as a leader. How does Clio demonstrate strength and leadership? Discuss with a partner and then share with your group.

After Reading

1. How do you feel about the ending/conclusion of the book? What questions remain unanswered for you? Discuss with your group.
2. The author explores many important issues in this book including: perceived disabilities, traditions, group beliefs and values, and coping with change. What message do you think the author is trying to convey about any one of these issues? Record your thinking in your reader's notebook.
3. This book touches on several big ideas including: perseverance, resourcefulness, resilience, and the ability to push through when all seems hopeless. Which “big idea” stands out for you? Explain your thinking in your reader's notebook. Remember to use evidence from the text to support your thinking. Share your ideas with your group.
4. The author touches on a number of important social issues in this book including abuse, slavery, and the treatment of refugees. What is the author's message about these issues? How has this novel deepened your understanding of these issues? Discuss with your group.
5. Describe the evolution of Clio's character over the course of the novel. How has she grown and changed by the end of the book? Record your thinking in your

reader's notebook. Share with your group.

6. There are many strong female characters in this novel. Many seem to be disadvantaged in some way or they are outcast in society. How do these characters overcome the challenges they face? How do they demonstrate courage, intelligence, and resilience? Reflect in your reader's notebook.
7. Return to the beginning of the book. Now that you have read the entire novel, consider the author's decision to begin the book by immersing us immediately in Clio's life. Do you think this is a strong beginning? Why or why not? Discuss with your group.
8. Both animal and human sacrifice are included in this novel. How did you react when you read these parts of the text? Why do you think the author included this despite the fact that this may be difficult for some readers?
9. In every novel, the author is careful to describe the setting, develop the plot, and develop the characters. In *Cuckoo's Flight* the author develops each of these beautifully. Which of these elements were the strongest for you? Explain your thinking in your reader's notebook.
10. The author has selected the title: *Cuckoo's Flight*. In your group, discuss the title. Why do you think the author selected this title? What other/alternative title might you give this book? Explain why.



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